

To: Salem Town Council
From: Joseph Devine, Town Manager
Date: December 1, 2025
Re: Town Manager's Report



MEMORANDUM



News and Noteworthy:

Civics 101 – Learn How Your Town Works

Residents are invited to take a behind-the-scenes look at how their local government operates during Civics 101, a special community event designed to foster understanding, transparency, and engagement. The event will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Ingram Senior Center, 1 Sally Sweets Way.

Attendees will have the opportunity to:

- Meet the Town Manager and department heads
- Learn how services are delivered across departments
- Understand how decisions are made and budgets are developed
- Explore ways to get involved through boards, committees, and public service

This event is free and open to all Salem residents. Whether you're new to town or a lifelong resident, Civics 101 is a great way to better understand the roles, responsibilities, and people behind Salem's municipal government.

Menorah Lighting Ceremony on the Town Common

I am pleased to announce that a Menorah lighting ceremony will take place on the Town Common at 5:00 PM on the first evening of Hanukkah, December 14th. This annual celebration is organized by Rabbi Borenstein, who has once again reached out through Ross Moldoff to coordinate the event.

As in previous years, the Menorah will be brought to the Town Common specifically for the ceremony and removed immediately afterward. Rabbi Borenstein has opted not to have the Menorah remain on display beyond the event itself.

This ceremony is a meaningful way to celebrate the beginning of Hanukkah and to honor the traditions and diversity within our community. We encourage all residents to join us for this special celebration.

New Fire Engine – Engine 3 Delivery

The Fire Department has officially taken ownership of a new fire engine, designated as Engine 3. This apparatus was funded through a 2021 warrant article.

Engine 3 is the first Pierce Enforcer to join Salem's Fire Department, complementing our existing fleet of Pierce ArrowXT and Pierce Impel apparatus. The new engine was delivered this week, and we extend our appreciation to Allegiance Fire & Rescue and Pierce Manufacturing for their partnership and service.

We are grateful to the residents of Salem for their continued support of our public safety initiatives. Engine 3 will significantly enhance the department's ability to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies across the community.

Winter Fest – December 11, 2025

Join the Town of Salem Community Services Department for a night of festive and cozy fun at Winter Fest!

Thursday, December 11, 2025

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Ingram Senior Center – 1 Sally Sweets Way, Salem, NH

This family-friendly event will feature:

- A Cocoa Crawl
- Food trucks
- Local crafters
- Letters to Santa
- Raffle prizes
- Onsite parking for convenience

Vendor space is still available for local crafters — just a \$10 table fee. The event is free for Salem Senior Center members. Come celebrate the season with neighbors, warm treats, and holiday cheer!

For more information or to reserve a vendor table, please contact the Community Services Department.

Town Hall and Senior Center Closure for Staff Holiday Party

Please be advised that both Town Hall and the Senior Center will be closed on Wednesday, December 17th, from 11:45 AM to 2:00 PM to allow staff to gather for our annual holiday party.

This event provides an opportunity to celebrate the season, recognize the hard work of our employees, and foster camaraderie among our team. We appreciate the community's understanding and support as we take this time to come together.

Regular operations will resume promptly at 2:00 PM. We encourage residents to plan accordingly for any Town Hall or Senior Center services needed that day.

71st Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Returns to Veterans Park

The Town of Salem is proud to support the return of one of our most cherished holiday traditions—the Salem Lions Club's 71st Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. This heartwarming event will take place on Tuesday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m. at Veterans Park on Salem Common, located at 308 Main Street.

Hosted by the Salem Lions Club, this year's celebration promises to bring the community together in the spirit of the season. The evening will begin with a welcome from Lions Club President Michelle Ackroyd at the gazebo, followed by live music from Jimmy Kozcat and festive performances by the North Salem United Methodist Church Choir and the St. Joseph School Choir. Guests will enjoy classic Christmas carols and plenty of holiday cheer.

The event will also feature remarks from State Senator Daryl Abbas, who will share memories of growing up in Salem and present the Lions Club with a New Hampshire Senate Resolution in recognition of 71 years of dedicated service to the community.

Families are encouraged to stick around for a visit from Santa Claus, with photo opportunities, hot cocoa, and cookies provided by the Lions Club.

This long-standing event is a true reflection of Salem's strong sense of community, tradition, and volunteer spirit. We thank the Salem Lions Club and the many volunteers who make this event possible each year.

Salem Development Corporation – Next Steps & Request for Council Input

Earlier this year, the Town Council voted to adopt a resolution formally authorizing the creation of the Salem Development Corporation, a nonprofit entity established under RSA 292 and intended to operate as a 501(c)(3). The purpose of this corporation is to support economic development, infrastructure improvements, revitalization initiatives, and other activities that lessen the burdens of government while strengthening Salem's tax base and quality of life.

As outlined in the resolution, the Town Manager was tasked with taking all steps necessary to incorporate the organization, including filings with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General's Charitable Trusts Unit, and initiation of the federal nonprofit application.

To complete the incorporation process, we must identify five initial board members who will serve solely to establish the corporation and execute the organizational documents. These individuals are not the same nine members who will ultimately serve on the permanent Board of Directors once the bylaws are adopted and appointments are made in accordance with the categories approved by the Council.

For purposes of incorporation, I am proposing the following five individuals:

- Councilor Joe Sweeney – as the Councilor who brought the resolution forward
- Town Manager Joe Devine – responsible for filing and organizational work
- Town Council Chair Cathy Stacey
- Town Council Vice Chair Jeff Hatch
- Town Council Secretary Lisa Withrow

This temporary group would serve only to complete the state and federal formation requirements. Once established, the Corporation would then proceed to adopt bylaws, and the Town Council would appoint members according to the nine-member structure detailed in the resolution.

Alternative Option for Council Consideration:

If the Council wishes, we can issue a "call for candidates" and bring forward a list of interested residents or stakeholders for appointment at a future meeting. The Council could then select five individuals to serve as the incorporators. Those appointed individuals would execute the incorporation documents in place of the Council officers listed above. This approach would allow the organization's initial formation to begin with non-Council incorporators, if that is the preference of the Town Council.

At this time, I am seeking the Council's input and confirmation on how it would like to proceed with the incorporation board so we may continue moving forward with forming the Salem Development Corporation as directed. If the Council concurs with either approach, the incorporation process can begin immediately.

Petition Processes Under the Town Charter – Overview of Articles 5 and 7

To help clarify the processes available to residents who wish to propose or challenge municipal actions, the following provides an overview of petition procedures under Article 5 (Town Meeting) and Article 7 (Initiative & Referendum Petitions) of the Town Charter, along with applicable deadlines for the 2026 Town Meeting cycle. These processes differ depending on whether the proposal involves an appropriation or a general policy measure.

Article 5 – Annual Town Meeting & Petitioned Warrant Articles (Appropriations Only)

New Hampshire State Statute and the Town of Salem Charter control how petitioned warrant articles relating to appropriations are filed.

Under Article 5, Section 5.6.C of the Town Charter:

- Petitioned warrant articles involving appropriations must be submitted in accordance with RSA 39:3.
- RSA 39:3 applies only to appropriations; non-appropriation matters must follow Article 7.

Signature Requirement:

- At least 25 signatures of registered voters.

Deadlines for 2026:

- Tuesday, January 13, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
Deadline for all appropriation-related petition articles.
- Friday, January 9, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
Earlier deadline for petitioned warrant articles requiring a bond.

Residents may also refer to the detailed RSA 39:3 petition guidelines available on the Town Manager's Department webpage.

Article 7 – Initiative, Referendum & Group Petitions (Non-Appropriation Matters)

Petitions not involving appropriations—policy changes, ordinances, or challenges to Council actions—must be filed under Article 7 of the Charter.

Initiative Petitions (Section 7.3)

Initiative petitions allow residents to propose new measures or ordinances.

Signature Requirement:

- 200 registered voters.

Filing Requirements:

- Filed with the Town Manager's Office.
- Must clearly state the nature of the proposed measure.
- The Town Clerk certifies signatures before forwarding to the Council.

Council Options:
Upon certification, Council must either:

1. Adopt the measure without alteration,
2. Place it on the ballot at the next municipal election, or
3. Call a special election *if* petitioners gather an additional 500 signatures and the next election is more than 120 days away.

Initiative Petitions Deadline for 2026 Ballot:

- To appear on the March 10, 2026 Municipal Election Ballot, initiative petitions must be filed by:
Friday, December 26, 2025 – 5:00 p.m.

If the initiative requires Town funds, it must appear on the annual Municipal Election ballot after Budget Committee review.

Summary of Petition Types & Requirements

Petition Type	Purpose	Signatures Required	Key Deadline
RSA 39:3 Petitioned Warrant Article (Appropriations)	Add appropriations to the Town Meeting warrant	25	Jan 13, 2026 (Jan 9 for bonds)
Initiative Petition (Article 7.3)	Propose new ordinance or measure	200	Dec 26, 2025 for March 2026 ballot