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SELECT BOARD
ABBOT HALL
188 Washington Street
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Thatcher W. Kezer III
Town Administrator

MEMORANDUM

To: Select Board
From: Thatcher Kezer, Town Administrator
Date: November 19, 2025
Re: Town Administrator Update

This memorandum provides a consolidated summary of key ongoing projects, operational updates, and upcoming initiatives currently underway across town departments.

Town Planner Resignation

I want to inform the Select Board that Town Planner and Conservation Agent **Alex Eitler** has submitted his resignation, effective **December 12, 2025**. During his time with Marblehead, Alex has consistently delivered exceptional work and has earned broad recognition from staff, board members, and residents for his strong planning expertise, professionalism, and collaborative approach.

Alex explained that his decision is driven by personal circumstances. His partner resides outside the United States. After evaluating their options, they have decided to relocate to **Australia**, where they will be able to better pursue their professional goals. Alex expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunities provided by the Town, the Select Board, Town Administration, and his director, Brendan Callahan, to grow his professional career over the past year.

We will be posting the Town Planner position shortly and will begin the recruitment process to ensure continuity of services and support for the boards he staffs. I will continue to keep the Select Board informed as we move forward.

Employee of the Month Program – Implementation Update and First Recipient

I am pleased to update the Select Board on the successful launch of our new **Employee of the Month Program**, an initiative aimed at recognizing outstanding performance, teamwork, and commitment across all Town departments. The program was rolled out in early November by our Human Resources Director Tom Howard, and staff engagement has been exceptionally strong. We received a high number of thoughtful nominations, reflecting employees' willingness to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of their colleagues.

We are proud to announce that our **first Employee of the Month, for November 2025**, is **Amanda Vicelli** from the Payroll and Benefits Office. Amanda will receive a day off next month as part of the recognition.

Amanda was nominated by **Viktorija Babrauskaite**, Senior Clerk in the Assessor's Office, who will receive a half-day off for submitting the selected nomination.

Viktorija highlighted Amanda's exceptional initiative and service, noting:

- **Leadership and Initiative:** Amanda led the Town's recent life insurance open enrollment effort, ensuring employees had clear information, consistent support, and accessible guidance throughout the process. She is known for taking extra steps to make meetings and materials understandable for all staff, approaching each question with patience and clarity.
- **Positive Organizational Impact:** Amanda's work directly supports operational accuracy and helps reinforce employee confidence in payroll and benefits processes. Her commitment to precision and service has strengthened internal communication and improved the overall employee experience.
- **Exemplification of Town Values:** Amanda consistently demonstrates the Town's values of integrity, teamwork, excellence, and customer service. She is admired for her reliability, respect for colleagues, and willingness to help across departments. Her professionalism sets a high bar and positively influences workplace culture.
- **Additional Contributions:** Amanda's positive attitude, strong work ethic, and readiness to step in wherever needed have earned widespread respect. She approaches every task—large or small—with care, humility, and pride in her work.

We have already begun receiving nominations for December, and staff participation indicates that this new program will continue to strengthen morale and highlight the exceptional dedication of Town employees.

Council on Aging – Loss of Eligibility for MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program

Due to the Town's current noncompliance with the MBTA Communities Act, the Council on Aging (COA) is no longer eligible to apply for the MassDOT **Community Transit Grant Program**, a discretionary program that has historically supported the COA's transportation services. As a result, the COA cannot apply in the upcoming grant round for replacement of

aging vehicles or for additional operating funds, resources that have been essential to sustaining this critical program.

The COA's transportation service is a vital lifeline for many of Marblehead's most vulnerable residents, including seniors and individuals with disabilities. Last year, the COA provided more than **5,100 rides** for medical appointments, treatments, pharmacy visits, grocery shopping, and other essential mobility needs for more than **200 residents**.

The Community Transit Grant Program provides up to an **80 percent state match** for vehicle purchases and operational expenses, including salaries for the COA's transportation coordinator and its part-time drivers. Historically, most of the COA's required local match has been supported through charitable funds—such as the Shattuck Memorial Fund—rather than through the Town's operating budget.

Since the program's inception in 2013, Marblehead has been awarded funding for **four vehicles** and **\$45,000 in operating support**:

- **FY2015:** Vehicle Grant – 1 vehicle
- **FY2018:** Vehicle Grant – 1 vehicle
- **FY2023:** Vehicle Grant – 2 vehicles
- **FY2024:** Operational Support Grant – \$45,000

Of the COA's current four-vehicle fleet, **three vehicles** were acquired with assistance from this grant program. Loss of eligibility significantly increases financial pressure on the transportation program, which depends heavily on external funding to support fuel, maintenance, and driver salaries.

Unless the Town addresses its Section 3A noncompliance and restores eligibility for MassDOT funding, both the Town and the Council on Aging will need to identify alternative funding sources as the current fleet continues to age.