



TOWN OF STOUGHTON

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

10 Pearl Street – Stoughton, MA 02072 (781) 341-1300 Fax (781) 297-2879

Town Hall Flooding

I hope you made it through the coldest period in recent history. I recognize the burden that such drastic weather can place on people and their homes. Please know that your town Government stands ready to be helpful during those difficult times.

As you may have heard, your historic Town Hall did not fare well with the bitter cold. On Sunday morning, I received a call from Chief Carroll and another from DPW Superintendent Paul Giffune. They informed me that a sprinkler head exploded in the Great Hall. Due to the quick response of our Fire Department, the water and power to the building was shut off within 7 minutes. Unfortunately, thousands of gallons of water had already flooded the Great Hall and adjoining offices, eventually finding its way to every floor of the building. Water ran through the walls, crashed through the ceilings, destroying equipment, rugs, and furniture along the way. When I arrived on site, Chief Carroll and DPW Superintendent Paul Giffune had already implemented an Emergency Action plan. More than a dozen DPW employees and local contractors had been mobilized in an effort to minimize the damage. In only six hours, both water and electrical power were restored. Elevator repair specialists were activated. ServPro was hired to begin the drying process. As I write to you today, approximately 3 dozen high powered fans are blowing throughout the building and every employee is in the office (enduring the noise of the blowers).

Fortunately, for the Town of Stoughton, all of our buildings are well insured. Based on the insurance adjusters preliminary estimate, significant demolition and reconstruction of the building will be needed. We are developing a work plan in an effort to minimize interruption in services while this work is ongoing. I will have more to report on that as information becomes available.

The Town Hall building is more than 100 years old. Like many of our roads, and much of our water and sewer infrastructure, these systems are operating well beyond their useful lives. Because we are well insured, we will get through this disaster with minimal distraction and expense. However, it is so vitally important that we recognize and acknowledge that which we cannot see. With 100-year-old water and sewer lines, as well as roads that have not been replaced or resurfaced in many decades, we need to anticipate and plan for sudden infrastructure failures. Potential failures could range from a major failure of a road system to a pipeline that runs thru the center of town, creating major damage and disruption to businesses and residents alike. Most of those breaches would not be covered by insurance. Therefore, we must prudently plan for infrastructure investments and unforeseen breaches. Failure to do so is irresponsible. The only way to deal with both challenges is through investment and substantial increases to our stabilization fund. We plan to address both of those needs at the Annual Town Meeting.

I understand that this type of news is unwelcome. I also know that replacing roads and underground infrastructure is not very exciting. I've never attended a ribbon cutting to celebrate investments in

underground infrastructure! I also know however, that the time is now for us to recognize and deal with all of our challenges. That is your Governments obligation to Stoughton residents.

In closing I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the members of the Fire and DPW departments as well as contractor Bill Lima at Atlantic Carpet cleaning. They responded immediately to our call and worked tirelessly throughout the evening to minimize damage and make it possible for Town Government to work effectively on Monday.

I look forward to talking to the citizens of Stoughton again next week.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Calter".

Thomas J. Calter,
Town Manager