



Town of Great Barrington Town Manager's Office



www.townofgbma.gov



(413) 528-1619



334 Main Street,
Great Barrington, MA 01230



lhartsgrove@townofgbma.gov

Liz Hartsgrove
Town Manager

—
Chris Rembold
Assistant Town Manager

Report to the Select Board

To: *Great Barrington Select Board*
From: *Liz Hartsgrove, Town Manager*
Date: *December 1, 2025*

To support the Select Board's FY26–27 Strategic Priorities and to enhance clarity, transparency, and alignment across our work, the Town Manager's Report will now be organized according to the Board's established Areas of Focus. While items may not be directly connected to initiatives or tiers within the approved priorities, this new structure of my reports intends to provide a clearer connection between the Town's ongoing efforts, ensuring that our updates are purposeful, easy to navigate, and fundamentally aligned with the community's expectations.

As a reminder, the Select Board can request the Chair place an item within the Manager's report on a future agenda item for discussion.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS

- a) Recently, the **Town completed paving on Round Hill Road** in Great Barrington and **Oak Street** in Housatonic, marking another step forward in maintaining safe, reliable local infrastructure. As part of this work, fog lines were added to both roads to enhance visibility during low-light and night-time conditions. These painted edge lines help drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians more clearly identify the boundaries of the travel lane, especially on narrower or winding sections of roadway.

This small but meaningful improvement supports our ongoing commitment to roadway safety, contributes to a more walkable and bike-friendly community, and reflects the Town's focus on proactive, user-centered maintenance across our transportation network.

- b) The new crosswalk and accompanying stop signs have now been installed at the intersection of **East and Anderson Streets**, marking an important step forward in improving safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists in this well-traveled area. The Police Department is coordinating the placement of portable message boards to reinforce awareness of the updated traffic pattern. Residents and visitors are encouraged to remain conscious of this change, approach the intersection with caution, and allow extra time as everyone adjusts to the new configuration.

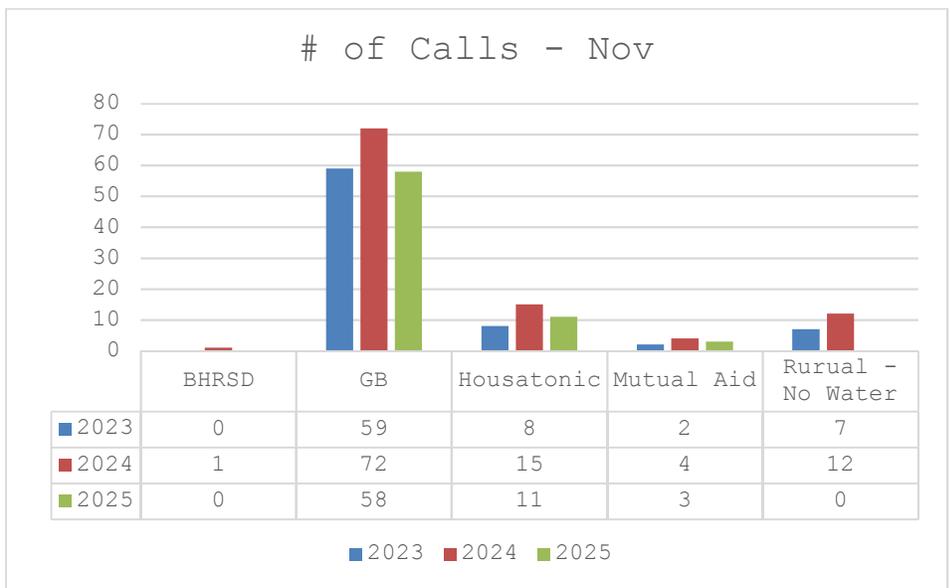
- c) MassDOT held a well-attended public engagement meeting on November 19th to review the 25% design for the **State Road (Route 7/23) Bridge replacement**, a project expected to enter final design and procurement in Fall 2027, begin construction in 2028, and reach completion in 2030. The presentation and community feedback made clear that this long-term project will significantly affect this important gateway—impacting vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation; safety; nearby businesses and parks; and the overall character of the area. At my request, all meeting materials are now available online at: www.mass.gov/event/great-barrington-bridge-replacement-state-road-routes-723-over-the-housatonic-river-11-19-2025.

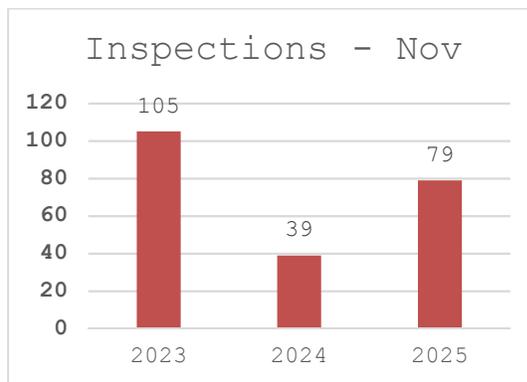
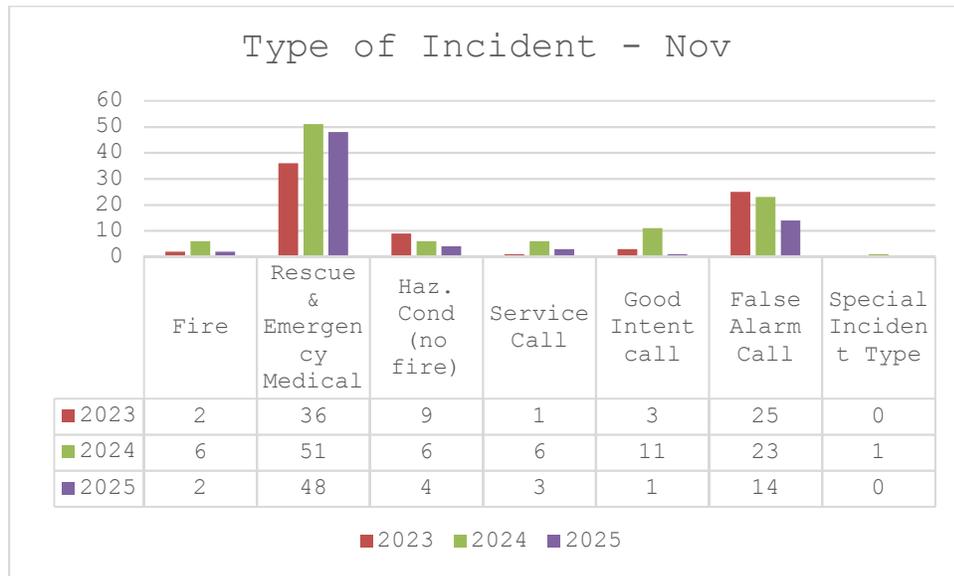
MassDOT is accepting public comments until **Thursday, December 4th**, and I encourage residents, local boards and committees, and community organizations to review the materials and submit their perspectives so the State fully understands local priorities as design work continues.

2. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- a) Starting tonight, I will be including a regular summary of Fire Department activity in the Town Manager’s Report to provide the Select Board and the community with clear, month-to-month visibility into call volumes, incident types, and inspection activity. These updates will help track service demands, identify emerging trends, and highlight the department’s continued commitment to public safety and prevention.

For November 2025, the Fire Department responded to 72 calls. The majority of incidents were Rescue and Emergency Medical calls (48), followed by False Alarms (14), Hazardous Conditions (4), and a small number of service, good intent, and fire calls. Calls were primarily concentrated in Great Barrington (58) and Housatonic (11), with 3 mutual aid responses and no rural/no-water incidents recorded. The Department also completed 79 inspections, more than double the number completed in November 2024, underscoring their strong focus on prevention and community risk reduction.





b) At the fall elections, our Health Agent, Rebecca Jurczyk, was elected President of the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association, the regional public health organization. In this role, she will chair the Association’s monthly governing board meetings and play a key part in both local and countywide emergency preparedness efforts. I want to congratulate Rebecca on this achievement and thank her for representing Great Barrington at the regional level, ensuring that our community has a strong voice in public health planning and decision-making.

3. HOUSING

a) Two weeks ago, our Assistant Town Manager/Town Planner, Chris Rembold joined State Representative Leigh Davis and regional partners for a housing roundtable focused on the pressures facing Berkshire communities. Shortly after that meeting, Great Barrington was announced as newly eligible for the Seasonal Communities designation: a tool created under the Affordable Homes Act to support municipalities with significant seasonal housing demand, visitor impacts, and workforce fluctuations. This designation provides access to new policies and resources aimed at strengthening year-round housing, including the potential for a Year-Round Housing Trust Fund,

worker-focused housing initiatives, and additional zoning and occupancy tools tailored to towns with strong seasonal patterns.

Staff and I will be working on preparing a clear overview of what this designation entails, along with options for how Great Barrington may choose to participate and benefit from these provisions, at an upcoming Select Board meeting in preparation for a possible article on the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

4. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

- a) I'm pleased to share that through a collaborative effort between the Health Department and Public Works, the Town of Great Barrington has received several awards through the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program. This MassDEP grant includes \$420 in Recycling Dividends Program funds, \$3,000 for food-waste drop-off equipment, and \$8,000 for a dedicated glass container to support improved recycling operations at our Transfer Station. These awards strengthen our local efforts to reduce waste, expand diversion programs, and improve recycling infrastructure. I want to extend a sincere thank-you to Joe Aberdale, Rebecca Jurczyk, Steve Larkin and Lisa Richards their excellent work on this grant application to securing these funds for the community.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

None this week.

6. MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- a) As a reminder, the Council on Aging serves Great Barrington community members ages 55 and above, and provides a wide range of services, events and ways to interact with fellow neighbors or volunteer. The Council on Aging Newsletter "Grapevine" is a great way to find out more information. The December edition is now available on the town's webpage, a hard copy can be picked up at the Council on Aging or sign up via email so the newsletters are sent to your inbox every month.
- b) Lastly, my first month as Town Manager has provided an important opportunity to examine the Town's procurement practices across multiple departments. In doing so, I have identified several approaches that are unfamiliar to me and may not fully align with the traditional best-practice standards followed in other communities including those I previously served. While some of these differences may simply reflect local variations in process, others raise uncertainties.

To that end, within the authority of the Town Manager, I am notifying the Board of my decision and planned next steps of appearing before the Finance Committee to request a reserve fund transfer to engage a qualified third-party firm to conduct a town-wide, in-depth inspection or audit of procurement activities.

As part of helping Great Barrington continue to strengthen its internal systems, a town-wide assessment will allow us to take a thoughtful, detailed look at our current practices, reviewing projects department-by-department and start-to-finish to ensure we are meeting all state requirements and industry expectations. This type of

comprehensive review not only promotes clarity and consistency but also positions the Town to make improvements that support smoother and more efficient processes moving forward. If approved by the Finance Committee to be funded, I will keep the Select Board informed of the audit's progress and any results that can legally be shared, understanding that certain findings may be confidential under applicable law.

Thank you.

LH