



Town of Westford Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

September 2023



Kristen Las
Town
Manager

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www.westfordma.gov/tm
978-692-5500

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Special Town Meeting
Monday, October 16
7:00PM
At Westford Academy

Electronics and More
Recycling Collection
Saturday, September 23
9AM to 1PM
Highway Facility
28 North St (see page 20)

Styrofoam Collection
Saturday, September 23
9AM to 2PM
Highway Facility
28 North St (see page 20)

Dear Westford residents,

September has already brought us a lot of excitement and changes. As many of you can probably tell by traffic patterns in and out of town, school is back in fully swing. The Town held a very successful Strategic Planning Retreat on Thursday, September 7 at Kimball Farms. Over 240 people attended the event as Town Staff, Board and Commission members presenting and town residents interested in the topics we were discussing.



The Budget Task Force (See pages 3-4 to review the information sheet) and the MBTA Communities Advisory Committee held roundtable discussions to obtain feedback on the information they have been collecting and analyzing. Thank you to all who were involved.

I would also like to thank the residents for their patience during the strong storm Westford endured on Friday September 8, 2023. Many residents were without power for an extended period of time during continued heat and humidity. Also, thank you to the Police, Fire, Department of Public Works, Public Facilities and other departments who all worked tirelessly during and after the storm to ensure that our residents and public buildings were safe.

Finally, I would like to remind residents that the fall Special Town Meeting will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023 at 7PM at the Westford Academy Gymnasium. All are welcome to attend. More information on the Special Town Meeting can be found on the Town Website: www.westfordma.gov/393/Town-Meeting. Additionally, the Town Moderator's message on page 5 has some additional details about the specific articles. The Select Board, Finance Committee and Planning Board will be reviewing various articles at their upcoming meetings.

The Select Board held one combined meeting in August and discussed the following:

At their meeting on August 15, 2023 the Select Board thanked the Land Use Department and developers for finalizing the sidewalks along Route 110. The Select Board also thanked Westford Remembers for donating \$300 to the Annual Town Staff Summer Cookout. The funds were used to purchase gift cards that were distributed as prizes during a game of trivia.

The Budget Task force held a joint meeting with the Select Board, Finance Committee and School Committee to discuss and update the Select Board on the FY'25 budget. The final presentation is being scheduled for mid October.

(Continued on next page)



Watch
westford CAT
community access television
www.westfordcat.org

The Nabnasset Fire Station Designer Selection Committee requested to enter fee negotiations with Context Architecture for Designer Servers, which was approved 4-0. A request to approve a Historic Preservation Restriction and Community Preservation Funding Agreement related to the exterior renovation for the Parish Center for the Arts was approved in the amount of \$100,000.

At their meeting on September 12, 2023, the Select Board thanks the Town Manager, DPW and Public Safety Departments for their hard work related to the recent storms.

Select Board Member Peraner-Sweet thanked the Town Manager and Town Staff for a successful Strategic Planning Retreat held at Kimball Farm on September 7, 2023. She also acknowledged the Westford Police Department for their community engagement in town.

Select Board Chair Clay thanked Veteran Service Officer Ryan Cobleigh for a successful 9/11 event held on September 11th in the Public Safety Courtyard.

Diane Wood announced that the League of Women Voters will be holding a Civic Social event at Westford CAT on September 20th at 7:30pm. Al Prescott announced the Westford Sportsman's Club's upcoming 75th Birthday Party and Open House, which will be held on September 30th from 12:00pm-4:00pm.

The Select Board authorized Choice Housing opportunities for Intergenerational and Community Endeavors Inc. ("CHOICE") to act in relation to the proposed permitted and project for 35 and 39 Town Farm Road in a vote of 5-0.

The Select Board was updated on the proposed zoning bylaw amendment to regulate firearms businesses from Jeff Morrisette, Director of Land Use Management, and Mark Chambers, Westford Police Chief. The Select Board approved a recommendation from Town Counsel that special permits granted by the Board of Appeals pursuant to Section 3.6.2 of the Bylaw shall count towards the mitigation, and further that the total number of special permits for retail firearm businesses be limited to 4, where each business location even if providing multiple elements of service counts as 1 special permit.

The Select Board reviewed the proposed warrant articles, set warrant numbers and review draft motions for the Special Town Meeting which will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023 in the Westford Academy gymnasium at 7:00pm.

The Select Board approved a request from the Board of Library Trustees and the Permanent Town Building Committee to enter fee negotiations with Finegold Alexander Architects for Designer Services related to the J.V. Fletcher Library renovation and expansion project.

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including:

Affordable Housing Trust	Council on Aging	MBTA Communities Multi-Family Housing
Agricultural Commission	Cultural Council	Parks and Recreation Commission
Bylaw Review Committee	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Permanent Town Building Committee
Capital Planning Committee	Dog Park Task Force	Recycling Commission
Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee	Economic Development Committee	Scholarship and Grant Committee
Commission on Disability	Healthy Westford Committee	Selectmen Policies & Procedures Sub Committee
Community Behavioral and Mental Health Committee	Housing Authority	Tax Possession Disposition Committee

I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete and submit a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

Would you like more detailed information on the Select Board's meetings? Click the following links to access: [Select Board Documents](#) & [Select Board Meeting Videos](#).

If you have any suggestions for articles or added features in future newsletters, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Town Manager's office at (978)-692-5501 or email at klas@westfordma.gov.

Sincerely,



Kristen Las, Town Manager

WESTFORD BUDGET TASK FORCE

Major town expenses will increase 6% beyond the 2.5% of expected revenue in FY25+

A task force was charged with creating sustainable scenarios to cope with upcoming challenges. Analysis has included: comparing spending against benchmark communities; researching potential new revenue; and quantifying budget challenges.

Data from Mass.gov Municipal Databank	2023 Avg Single Family Tax Bill	2020 Income Per Capita	2023 Avg Property Value	Land Area (Sq mi)	2021 Population	% of Students in Town Population
Westford	\$10,120	\$72,500	\$685,643	30.27	24,446	19.3%
Median of 35 peer towns	\$10,174	\$74,221	\$726,089	16.88	24,379	15.3%
State Avg	\$7,059		\$600,011			

HOW DOES WESTFORD SIZE UP?

Comparison of 21 other communities similar in government services and profile; as well as 'DART' districts (designated by Dept of Ed based on enrollment) plus our adjacent school districts = a total of 35 municipalities: Acton, Arlington, Andover, Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Boxboro, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Franklin, Hingham, Holliston, Lexington, Littleton, Milton, Natick, Needham, North Andover, Reading, Sharon, Shrewsbury, Stoneham, Sudbury, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, Wellesley, Westboro, Westwood, Wilmington, Winchester

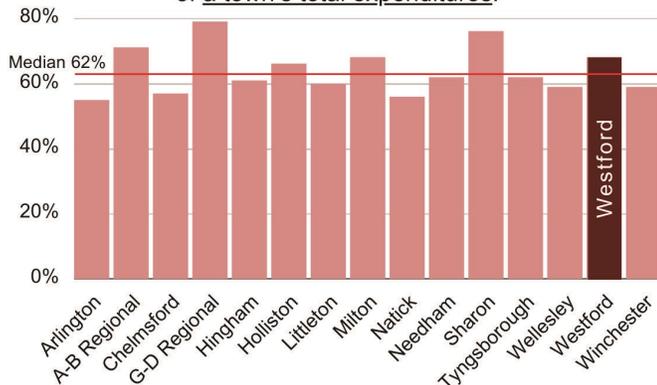
WHERE DOES THE BUDGET GO?

Town Meeting approved an FY24 budget of \$128,802,886 that covers four buckets: schools, shared expenses (employee benefits, health insurance and debt service), enterprise funds separate accounts like ambulance and water) and municipal services (shown below in table).

Municipal Services	
General Govt	4%
Public Safety	10%
Public Works	4%
Health & Human Svcs	1%
Culture & Recreation	2%

Because of shared expenses, determining the town allocation to Westford Public Schools is not as simple as looking at the Education line item approved at town meeting.

To best compare how other towns fund their schools, data from the MA Dept of Ed end-of-year report was used to capture all general fund school-supported expenses as a percentage of a town's total expenditures.



In 2022, Westford Public Schools were supported by 68% of Westford's total funds. (vs a benchmark median of 62%)

DO WE SPEND LIKE OUR PEERS?

TOWN SPENDING: Major town department expense categories were compared to 21 similar communities.

Per capita data normalizes for population.

Department	FY24 Spending
Public Safety <i>*excludes Ambulance Revenue</i>	\$542 per capita (vs \$501 median)
Dept of Public Works	\$142 per capita (vs \$149 median)
Library	\$75 per capita (vs \$68 median)
Health Dept	\$19 per capita (vs \$15 median)
Council on Aging	\$25 per capita (vs \$17 median)

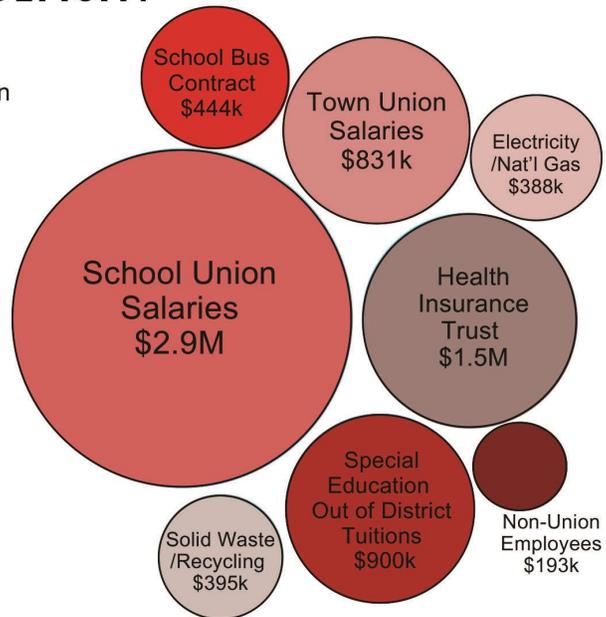
SCHOOL SPENDING: All Dept of Ed function codes were compared to Westford's DART districts & geographical adjacent districts. Per pupil data normalizes for enrollment.

DESE Function Code		2022 Per Pupil \$\$\$
Administration	<i>Supt/AsstSupt/HR/Legal</i>	37% below median
Inst'l Leadership	<i>Principals, Dept Heads</i>	5% below median
Teachers	<i>Salaries, Stipends</i>	2% below median
Other Teaching Svcs	<i>OT/PT/etc, Subs, Paras</i>	7% below median
Prof Development	<i>Inst'l coaches, consultants</i>	76% below median
Inst'l Mat'l/Tech	<i>Textbooks, Supplies</i>	46% below median
Guidance, Testing	<i>Counselors, Assessments</i>	11% below median
Pupil Services	<i>Med/Health, Food, Trans.</i>	20% above median
Ops & Maintenance	<i>Custodial, Utilities</i>	5% below median
Benefits & Fixed Charges	<i>Retirement, Insurance</i>	9% below median

WESTFORD BUDGET TASK FORCE

HOW BIG IS THE DEFICIT?

- MA municipal budgets are constrained by state law to **only increase taxes by 2.5% each year**, which limits the town's ability to increase our major source of revenue (80% is property taxes). In a typical year, there is \$3M new revenue to handle increases.
- Major expense areas are projected to grow by **more than 6% in FY25 with continued impact in FY26 and FY27.**
- Challenges include but not limited to:
 - Renewal of major service contracts (trash/recycling, electricity/natural gas, school transportation)
 - Competitive town and school salaries
 - Increased health insurance costs due to high claims
 - Statewide increase in special education tuitions



Approx cost increase in FY25: \$7,532,120
Approx additional cost increase in FY26: \$7,133,308
Approx additional cost increase in FY27: \$3,943,025

These will generate a \$6-8M shortfall by FY26 over our typical \$3M Prop 2.5 revenue increase.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT?

The Task Force is researching possible new revenue or efficiency ideas, including but not limited to:

- Centralize Tasks:** explore opportunities to combine similar functions (eg. facilities, maintenance)
- Reduce Solid Waste Expenses:** educate residents on recycling and composting to lower disposal fees
 - Westford residents generate 17.8% more waste per household than our neighbors with curbside collection
- Economic Development:** use ARPA-funded coordinator to improve/expand our commercial tax base
- Revisit Cannabis Excise Tax:** voted down in 2017 while nearby towns project FY24 revenue from \$275k to \$1.3M
- MBTA Multi-Family Zoning:** create state-mandated zoning that may promote new development and increase tax base
- Ambulance Revenue:** other towns have private service or have increased service fees; Westford's costs \$500k/year

These items have the potential to create savings and new revenue in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, but all of them will take time and produce gains gradually and likely won't cover the projected increase in expenses.

WHAT IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ADDITIONAL FUNDING?

Possible Impacts to Town Services and Government:

- Reduced police coverage
- Slower response from reduced staff fire/EMT
- Reduced library staffing
- Slower response or delays with Public Works
- Elimination of resident support programs (rental assistance) and social worker support
- Increased health insurance premium for employees

Possible Impacts to Schools:

- Reduction of staff (class size increases, case load increases, greater strain on classroom teachers)
- Reduced class offerings (electives and/or AP classes, increased Integrated Arts class size)
- Reduced support interventions (reading/math interventions at elementary, academic coaching at middle school)
- Reduced extra-curricular offerings or increased fees



Budget Task Force agendas and minutes:
[TinyURL.com/WestfordBudgetTF](https://www.tinyurl.com/WestfordBudgetTF)



Feedback and questions:
[TinyURL.com/BTFRetreatForm](https://www.tinyurl.com/BTFRetreatForm)

From the Moderator



I'd like to invite you to join me for our **Special Town Meeting on Monday, October 16 at Westford Academy starting at 7:00 pm.** This should be a relatively short meeting but, as always, your attendance is important. Anyone registered to vote in Westford may attend and participate.

Of particular interest this year is a zoning bylaw proposed jointly by the Planning and Select Boards seeking to regulate firearms businesses in the Town of Westford. Also, come and vote your opinion on additional funding for a new heating system at the Cameron Senior

Center and Community Preservation Act funding for affordable housing at 70 Boston Road. Please see the [Town Meeting](#) page at the Town of Westford website for more information on these and other issues.

Need a ride to and from the Meeting? [Sign up for free transportation here.](#) Come for all or part of the Meeting and share in the governance of our community.

DEMOCRACY WORKS BEST WHEN THE GREATEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATE – SEE YOU THERE!

September at the J.V. Fletcher Library

Unless otherwise noted, the following programs are made possible by the Friends of the Library.



Online Registration - Book Clubs for Kids in Grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade: Book clubs meet IN PERSON in the large Meeting Room from 4 to 4:45 p.m. Please visit the [Kids Book Club page](#) for registration links, details, and schedules.

Story times are held in the **Meeting Room**. To accommodate a wider variety of participants there will be no registrations or reservations. All Story Times are Drop-In and scheduled Monday – Thursday. There are no story times on Indigenous Peoples Day (10/9/23) and the Thanksgiving holiday (11/23-23).

- **Mother Goose – Mondays 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.** – for babies up and kids up to age 5, September 25 through December 4.
- **ABC and Me – Tuesdays 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.** – for kids ages 2 to 5, October 3 through November 28.
- **Book Bunch – Tuesdays 1:15-1:45 p.m.** – for kids ages 3 to 5, October 3 through November 28.
- **Wiggle Words – Wednesdays 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.** – for kids ages 2 to 4, October 4 through November 29.
- **Stay and Play – Thursdays 10:30-11:30** – for babies and kids up to age 5, October 5 through December 7.

VIRTUAL JOB SEARCH HELP FOR 50 & OVER – JOB SEARCH HELP FOR 50 & OVER – Create A LinkedIn Profile & Personal Branding: Wed., Sept.20, 9:30 -11:30 a.m. The Massachusetts Library Collaborative's 50+ Job Seekers Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month from 6:00-8:00 p.m., via Zoom. If you are unemployed and actively looking, underemployed, seeking a new career direction, re-entering the job market after a long employment gap, or recently retired and looking for your "Encore Career", this networking group program is perfect for you! [Register Here](#)

Preschool Concert with Steve Blunt, Thursday, September 21 at 10:30 a.m. The big kids are back to school so that means the younger kids get an energetic show just right for preschoolers with dancing, singing, and playing along with Steve. If it rains, we will move the show inside to the Meeting Room. No registration is required.

Virtual -The Hollywood Blockbuster : Thursday, September 21 at 7:00 p.m. Hollywood is an industry that has always depended on blockbusters, beginning with The Birth of a Nation and continuing with epics like Gone with the Wind, The Ten Commandments, and The Sound of Music. But beginning in 1974, two young filmmakers, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, would together change the way the movie industry made movies. Spielberg's Jaws and Lucas' Star Wars (neither of which was predicted to be a hit) helped launch the careers of the most influential directors of our time. Whether they were making films together (like Indiana Jones) or separately (E.T., Jurassic Park, The Empire Strikes Back), they introduced the age of the "modern blockbuster," which featured elaborate special effects and thrilling spectacle. This presentation will look at their four decades of filmmaking and discuss how they changed the movies. [Register here.](#)

(Continued on next page)

J.V. Fletcher Library (continued)

Pajama Story Time: Monday, September 25 at 6:30 p.m. Pajama Time meets once a month on a Monday evening in the Meeting Room for children ages 3 to 7. Wear your pajamas and bring a favorite stuffed animal or blanket! No registration required.

Sweet Reads Book Club: Tuesday, September 26th at 6:30pm. The Sweet Reads book club will meet one Tuesday evening per month. We will discuss Middle Grade novels and enjoy an on-theme dessert! Copies of each month's book will be available at the Main Desk. For Grade 6 and up. [Register here.](#)

Heat Pump 101 with Westford Climate Action: Hear from Your Neighbors: Thursday, September 28 · 7:00 pm In-person and on Zoom Join neighbors for an information session on air-source heat pumps, ground-source heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters. Get guidance on replacing old HVAC and water heating systems! Find out about incentive

Follow us!

<https://www.instagram.com/westfordlibraryma/>

<https://twitter.com/westfordlibrary>

<https://www.facebook.com/J-V-Fletcher-Library-131093656901445/>

Friends of the Library e-newsletter: The best way to learn about our upcoming programs and new services is through the FOL weekly e-newsletter. [Sign up here.](#)

Check out our [Museum Passes page](#) or call the Library for reservations. Unless otherwise noted, our museum passes are generously funded by the Friends of the Library. [Have you joined the Friends yet?](#)

Quick Links to Our Most Popular Services!

[Programs – Adults](#)

[Programs – Kids](#)

[Programs – Young Adults](#)

J. V. Fletcher Library Hours:

Monday	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Tuesday	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Wednesday	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Thursday	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Friday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sunday	Closed

Monday, October 9, Indigenous Peoples Day—Closed



Cameron Senior Center

Come Enjoy Early Fall Festivities with Us at The Cameron



FISH FRY AND FIRE FIGHTERS!

Friday, September 29th at 12:00pm

September is National Preparedness Month! Please help us cap off this national observance with an engaging safety event, featuring the **Westford Fire Department and the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps.**

We will be launching a special six-month Senior Safety Series with Lunch & Learn festivities. *Ryan Monat, our new Fire Prevention Officer, and Mike Denehy, Deputy Fire Chief, will discuss some of the amazing things that the Westford Fire Department can do in serving the town.* There will be exhibits to talk about – including smoke detectors and lock boxes. Lastly, Nancy Burns, EMT Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corp Coordinator, with the help of wonderful MRC volunteers, will provide blood pressure and/or medication checks. *The lunch will be a tasty Fish Fry, prepared by our Senior Center Staff.*

RiverCourt Residences sponsor the mouth-watering dessert. Please sign up online, or at the front desk at 978.692.5523. The cost of this event is \$8. **Many thanks to the Friends of the Cameron for subsidizing this event!**



HALLOWEEN PARTY AT THE CAMERON

Tuesday, October 31st at 5:30 pm

Sign up for one spooky night as we turn the Cameron into a haunted house. Costumes are a must! Enjoy a mystery dinner and ghost stories by the spooky queen, Katie Russell. Cost will be \$3.00. Sign up at 978.692.5523.

IT'S TIME FOR TRIVIA A-Go-Go

Friday, October 27 at 1:30pm

Our infamous Ken presents, "Trivia with a Twist". There will be special games for extra points, unique team selection and champion prizes. All this for \$3.00. Sure to be an exciting time! Do not miss the fun; sign up online or by phone 978.692.5523. Many thanks to the Friends of the Cameron for subsidizing this event!

Westford's HOLIDAY Assistance Program

The Cameron Senior Center is partnering with SVdP of St. Catherine's Church and the Westford Food Pantry for the Westford Holiday Assistance Program. This program serves families and individuals who would like to cook a Thanksgiving or Christmas meal and are facing a financial hardship. If you are interested in donating, please contact Kheitkamp@westfordma.gov. If you need assistance this holiday season please contact Alison Christopher, L.I.C.S.W. Town Social Worker at achristopher@westfordma.gov or 978-399-2325.



Tuesday Golf at Quail Ridge 354 Great Road, Acton MA.

Every Tuesday thru October starting at 7:30AM

To reserve your tee time please call Quail Ridge at 978264-0399 and please tell them you are with the Westford group thru the Cameron. Cost- \$20 walking and \$31 with cart.



(Continued on next page)

Cameron Senior Center (continued)

Autumn Casino Trip to Foxwoods!

Wednesday, October 4th

We will be travelling to Connecticut, and we are inviting those age 50 and over. MBT Worldwide Coach will be driving us with departure from FRANCO American Club (55 W. Prescott Street, Westford) with 7:30AM. Please arrive by 7:15 AM and park at the rear parking lot. Departure from Foxwoods at 4PM. The fee for the trip is \$45 which include driver's gratuity and id due at sign-up as there will be limited seating. Currently, Foxwoods does not have a buffet option, nor are they giving bonus or food coupons. You will be on your own for lunch. The BINGO Hall will open. Please call 978-692-5523 to sign up for this fun day.



Groton Hill Free Community Concert

Dave Fox Quartet

Wednesday, October 4 at Noon

Get into the jazz mood with tunes by Monk, Mingus, Corea, Jones, and more. Bill Jones, saxophone, Andrew Stern, guitar, John Lockwood, bass and John Lockwood, bass and Dave Fox drums. To reserve your free seat please call 978.486.9524 for additional information.



Online Registration

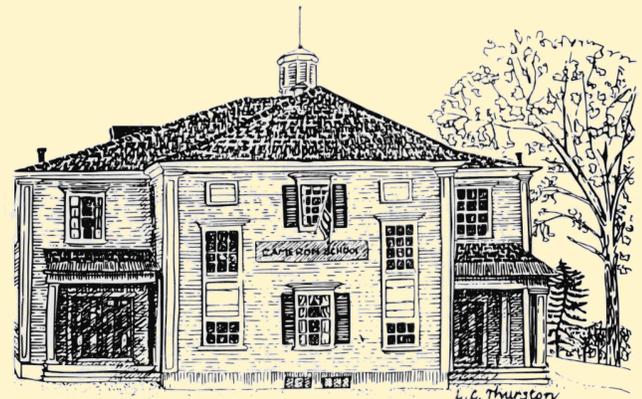
Please visit our new online registration and payment system through My Active Center, which works in conjunction with My Senior Center. To use the online features, you must have a valid MySeniorCenter swipe card. [Please watch a step-by-step tutorial on YouTube.](#) If you would like a copy of this tutorial, send Katie an email at krussell@westfordma.gov. Please call 978.692.5523 to set up a one-on-one appointment with Katie or a student volunteer. We will be glad to help you.

To learn more about the Cameron Senior Center programs and services please visit:

- www.westfordma.gov/coa,
- [www.facebook.com/Cameron Senior Center/](https://www.facebook.com/CameronSeniorCenter/)
- www.youtube.com

To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website:

www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on **Newsletters**.



Westford Senior Center

Health Department

On Wednesday, September 13th “20/20 Onsite” arrived bringing their state-of-the-art Mobile Vision Clinic to Westford. They offered 30-minute appointments for town employees and residents. Each person was able to receive a full comprehensive eye exam and shop their collection of over 300 glasses onboard. It was fast, convenient, and right in our own neighborhood. It was a HUGE SUCCESS !



Health Department (continued)



Mind And Every Body Practice

Come join:

Regional Community Health and Wellness Coordinator, Brittany Nash for a free Mind and Every Body Practice which includes: setting intentions, light stretching, guided meditation, and relaxation. You are welcome to bring your own props but it's not required. Open to all community members.

Register with the Council on Aging front desk or by calling (978) 692-5523

When: 2nd Monday of each month

Where: Westford Council on Aging

Time: 11-11:45AM



Health Department (continued)



Webinar Preventing Suicide, Providing Hope

The North West Public Health Coalition is hosting
Samaritans virtually on:

September, 18th, 2023

7:00PM-8:00PM

This webinar teaches individuals how to recognize warning signs of suicide and provide support. Samaritans provides lifesaving suicide prevention services throughout Greater Boston, MetroWest, and across Massachusetts.

Register by emailing
Brittany Nash:

 bnash@westfordma.gov



Sustainability Update- Sue Thomas, [Sustainability Coordinator](#), 978-399-2798

As we head into fall with the autumn equinox (the day when hours of daylight equals hours of darkness) arriving on September 23rd, it is hard not to reflect on the [ongoing](#) sweltering temperatures, tropical downpours, high humidity, terrifying flooding and wind shear we are experiencing at the [close of the hottest summer on record on earth](#). I hope you will identify actions that you can take in your life this fall to make your family more resilient and to limit your household's CO2 contribution. Fall brings new cuisine, greater demand for heat, light, and space in the garage and the house. Don't get stuck on the idea that a purchase of any size is your only option, although the incentives (see below) and energy savings hopefully make one possible for you.

You could also

1. develop a new habit, like [finding alternatives to putting items in the trash as you downsize your outdoor rooms for the indoor season](#) and see your home through your planned guests' eyes.
2. eliminate an outdated habit, like
 - a. idling. Enlist your kids to help you keep your anti idling pledge and protect you family's lungs while saving gas and dollars!
 - b. use of surplus outdoor lighting. Reevaluate your needs and reacquaint yourself with the mental health benefits of moments spent viewing the night sky and the enjoying the outdoors at night to save carbon, electricity, dollars and wildlife.
 - c. fall yard clean ups that meet a social, but not an environmental standard. Save time, labor, carbon, fuel, soil health, water use and the expense of spring soil amendments, which are often petroleum byproducts, as well as the food chain. Beneficial insects and other life dwell in the leaves and stems you leave in areas your family doesn't frequent and help feed migrating birds and other animals.
 - d. Recreational shopping. Save money and reduce embedded carbon generated in the production and delivery of products don't need, will forget about quickly and/or rarely use. Consumer demand drives deforestation and CO2 production on a global scale.
 - e. Thank you to everyone who endured the heat at Kimballs last week to discuss the budget, MBTA zoning and an array of town projects. Your commitment and ideas are appreciated! Many of you wished to discuss the solid waste and recycling contracts. The town has not yet made a final decision as to policy.
 - f. In case you missed the event, I have included a poster I shared below as the financial complement to the how to electrify guidance in August's newsletter.

(Continued on next page)

Sustainability (Continued)

Be Green and Save Green! Stack the Savings

Solar
 30% Federal Tax credit + up to \$1,000 MA credit
 Year over year electricity savings for 20+ years

Heat Pumps

Air Source Heat Pumps:
 Federal tax credit: up to \$2,000
 State rebate: up to \$16,000

Geothermal (ground source) Heat Pumps
 Federal Tax Credit: up to 30% of project cost
 State rebate: up to \$25,000

**Drive Electric, new or used
 (or lease with some caveats)**

Federal tax credit for qualifying vehicle:	up to	\$7,500
State MOR-EV Rebate:	up to	\$5,000
Average lifetime maintenance savings:		\$4,600
Savings per mile:	5 cents or more per mile	
Federal tax credit for EV charger:	up to	\$1,400
National Grid Rebate for EV charger:	up to	\$1,400

In addition to these resources, the events below are also available to help you gather the information you may need to feel comfortable making a big purchase:

- Heat Pump 101, September 28th at 7:00 P.M. in person at the JV Fletcher Library or on Zoom.
- [Drive Green Week](#), September 22nd through August 1st. For ice cream lovers, Lowell's event is at Heritage Farm Ice Cream.
- Driving electric does involve developing some new habits. Joanna Stern with The Wall Street Journal documented her adjustment [here](#). We have plenty of residents in town who are happy to share their experiences as well.
- You may also find yourself renting an electric car, whether you meant to or not, as rental companies are stocking up, so consider this low pressure test drive option, and if you do not want to learn how to charge on your winter vacation, make sure you understand your reservation!

Best wishes for a safe and more sustainable September!



Clean Energy
and Sustainability Committee



Westford Climate Action presents “Neighbor to Neighbor: Heat Pumps 101” a free, in-person **and** online event on **Thursday, September 28 @ 7:00 pm, at the J. V. Fletcher Library, 50 Main Street, Westford.** The evening will include presentations by HeatSmart Alliance and Westford residents sharing their experience with heat pumps in their homes. A question and answer session will follow.

Learn about financial incentives and rebates.

Cold-climate heat pumps can maintain 100% of their rated capacity down to 5°F and operate to -15°F. In summer, they provide all the benefits of central AC in homes both with and without ducts. Does this technology for heating **AND** cooling make sense for your home? Learn why you should invest in heat pump technology and how heat pumps will reduce your energy bills while lowering your home’s carbon footprint!

This seminar is co-sponsored by the Westford Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, HeatSmart Alliance, and the J. V. Fletcher Library.

[For online registration, please click here.](#) Or go to WestfordClimateAction.org/events/

No registration is needed for in-person attendance at the library.



Heat Pump



Heat Pump Mini Split



**Heat Pump
Hot Water Heater**

Community Wellness

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. The month raises awareness of the supports and resources available for suicide prevention. This article provides resources both locally and nationally.

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - call or text 988

The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States. The lifeline's toll – free number, 988, connects you to a certified crisis center near where the call is placed.

For more information: <https://988lifeline.org/>



Samaritans – call or text 988

At Samaritans, they aim to reduce the incidence of suicide, educate the public about suicide prevention, help those who have lost a loved one to suicide, and reduce the stigma. To do this, the services emphasize nonjudgmental and compassionate listening. They provide a 24/7 Helpline, peer support for people who are grieving a loss to suicide, and suicide prevention workshops. The services are free and confidential. **Call or text 988**

Chat feature available by going to: <https://samaritanshope.org/>

CDC Suicide Prevention Information - <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/index.html>

Suicide Prevention Program - <https://www.mass.gov/suicide-prevention-program>

Suicide Prevention Resources - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/suicide-prevention-resources>

For more information or help connecting to resources:

Community Wellness Coordinator, Nicole Laviolette

(978) 399-2503

nlaviolette@westfordma.gov

<https://www.westfordma.gov/1487/Community-Wellness>

Community Wellness (Continued)

JOIN US FOR THE UPCOMING FREE



ADULT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

WHAT IS ADULT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

The Adult Mental Health First Aid training teaches adults how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults



WHO SHOULD KNOW AND BE INVOLVED?

- Community members
- Employers
- Police officers
- Hospital staff
- First responders
- Caring individuals

HOW IS THIS TRAINING BENEIFICAL?

1. Informs Adults on common signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges
2. Helps reduce stigma
3. Teaches you how to interact with a person in crisis and how to connect a person with help
4. Provides guidance with a simple 5-step action plan (ALGEE) how to properly and safely respond to these challenges

WHEN & WHERE?

Date & Time: September 28th, 2023
9AM-4:00PM
Location: Westford Fire Department,
 65 Boston Rd, Westford, MA 01886

Interested in attending?
 Please contact Nicole Laviolette
NLaviolette@westfordma.gov



Westford Recreation

Westford Partnership for Children (WPC), grades K-5

Recreation's WPC After School Program offers:

- A safe and easy transition from classroom to program.
- Your choice of activities and flexible schedules.
- An experienced, caring Site Director and staff.

WPC runs Monday-Friday, school dismissal to 5:45 p.m., with locations at Abbot, Crisafulli, Day, Miller, Nabnasset, and Robinson. Register for any session, at any time.

Learn more at [About WPC on westfordma.myrec.com](http://westfordma.myrec.com).

Recreation Special Programs September 25

There will be no school on September 25 due to Yom Kippur Observed. Join us for a full day of apple picking, sport, games, s'mores and more! Rec's Special Programs offer full-day and full-week programming during school professional development days, parent conferences, certain holidays, and December, February, and April school vacations. Enrollment is open to Westford as well as other surrounding communities.

Register now at [Special Programs - westfordma.myrec.com](http://westfordma.myrec.com).

Fall Seasonal Programs

NEW Mr. Ben's Light-Up Soccer and Conditioning, grades 3-5

Brighten your night, with illuminated cones, soccer balls, and bracelets, plus our GLOWING instructor, Mr. Ben!

Three consecutive Wednesdays, starting September 27, 6:45-7:45pm, at Frost Field.

and **DON'T MISS:**

Youth Chess Club with US Open Women's Champion, *Master Prathiba Y.*

Impact Sprints Academy with *Coach DJ Brock.*

Nitehawks Track & Field - Cross Country with *Coach Alex Ivanov.*

Pickleball with certified instructor, *Donald Van Dyne.*

BollyX Dance with *Rachana Agrawal*, currently training for Kathak.

CPR/First Aid (9 and up) with experienced EMT and ER Nurse, *Mike Votano.*

PLUS **Marcus Lewis Tennis (MLTEP)** for youth and adults.

Learn more at [Programs on westfordma.myrec.com](http://westfordma.myrec.com).



From Top to Bottom:
Baking with WPC; Visiting XtremeCraze with Special Programs; Playing 4-Square at East Boston Camps.

Westford Recreation (continued)



FUN WITH Recreation's Special Programs!

**On September 25,
for grades K-8,
at Brookdale Farm
and East Boston Camps**

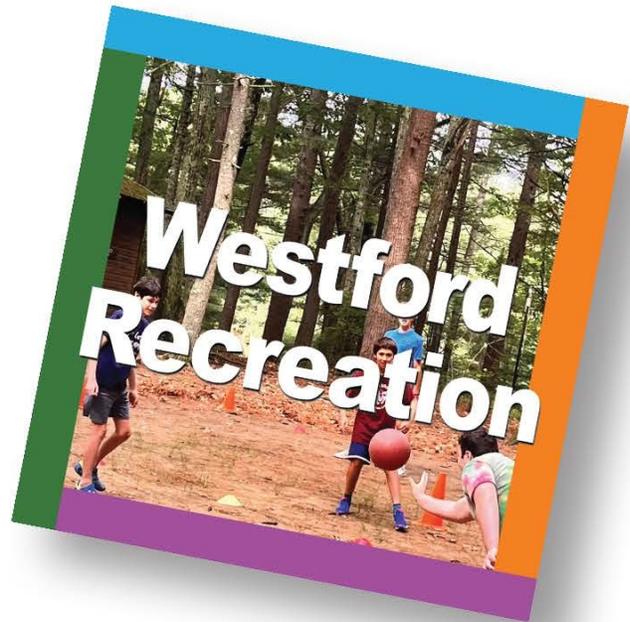
Dont miss out on this early fall treat!



No school day due to observation of Yom Kippur.

Enrollment is open to Westford as well as other surrounding communities.

65 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886
westfordma.myrec.com
978-692-5532



Join us for a morning of **apple picking**, **hayrides**, and a **corn maze** at BROOKDALE FARM in Hollis, NH. Later, children will enjoy EAST BOSTON CAMPS (home of our Destination Exploration summer program!), for **hiking, sports, games**, and a **campfire with s'mores!**

Recreation Special Programs offer full-day and full-week programming during school professional development days, parent conferences, certain holidays, and December, February, and April school vacations.

REGISTER NOW: westfordma.myrec.com.

CALL US. VISIT US. LEARN MORE!

Westford Recycling Commission

Electronics & More Collection

Saturday, September 23, 2023, 9 am – 1 pm
Westford Highway Garage, 28 North Street



This is a fee-based collection FOR WESTFORD RESIDENTS ONLY. Westford utilizes the services of Northeast Materials Handling of Ayer, Massachusetts. CASH OR CHECK ONLY (checks must be made out to "Northeast Material Handling, Inc"). The Town of Westford receives no proceeds from this event.

For traffic safety reasons, entry to the access road off North Street will not be allowed until 8:45 AM. Residents arriving prior to 8:45 will be turned away.

The Northeast Materials' staff will take the items from your vehicle and collect fees from the driver's side window.

***** WE DO NOT ACCEPT TOY PLASTICS, AT ALL *****

For a list of acceptable Items: some free and some chargeable, visit:

www.westfordma.gov/recycling. If you have any questions about what is acceptable, please call 978-772-4545 or email: Francine@liquidatedstuff.com

Styrofoam Collection

Saturday, October 21, 2023, 9 am – 2 pm
Westford Highway Garage, 28 North Street

ACCEPTED:

- #6 (EPS) – pre-formed packing, insulation board, and coolers.
- #4 (EPS) – spongy foam expanded polystyrene,

NOT ACCEPTED: Styrofoam food containers, including cups, meat trays, and packing peanuts.

HELPFUL if you can bring items in a large cardboard box (OK if not full) or a large plastic bag in order to facilitate our transportation.

Sponsored by First Parish Church United, Westford. Donations will be accepted to defray the cost for transporting the Styrofoam.

Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Repurpose, and Recycle!

MA resource for "What is Recyclable?" www.RecycleSmartMA.org.

The Mission of the Westford Recycling Commission is to:

Increase awareness of the financial and environmental impacts of recycling; provide opportunities for non-curbside recycling; educate residents on options to reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle; and organize recycling events that encourage diversion from the trash.

(Continued on next page)

Stormwater Management

Swimming Pools & Surface Water Quality



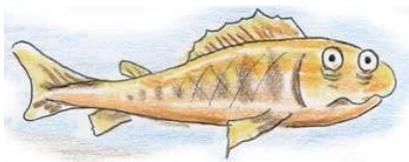
Many pool owners drain their swimming pools to reduce maintenance and potential damage from freezing during the winter.

Please follow the pollution prevention practices listed below when draining your swimming pool or hot tub to ensure you have done your part to keep all of our waterways clean and healthy.

Swimming pools are a major source of chlorinated water discharged into storm drainage systems.

Chlorinated water discharged directly to surface waters or via storm drains has an adverse effect on local water quality.

Chlorinated water from swimming pools that has been discharged into a storm drain, street or gutter ends up in a stream or river where it produces by-products that are highly toxic and carcinogenic to fish and other wildlife.



These by-products then can combine with other organic materials to form extremely toxic organic chemicals.

It's the Law

Sending pollutant-laden runoff down the storm drain is not only bad for our waterways, it's illegal. State and federal laws prohibit the discharge of pollutants into surface water, stormwater, and groundwater.

Best Practices

Never drain pool or hot tub water directly into a body of water (lake, stream, wetland). The best option is to discharge chlorinated water over landscaping when the following provisions are met:

- Shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine several days before draining pool water.
- Make sure the pH level is between 6.5 and 8.5, the normal pH range of surface and groundwater.
- If your pool contains algae, collect the algae and flush down the toilet.
- If your pool is cleaned through an acid cleaning or by water pressure, make sure pH levels are normal before draining the water. Filter out any paint chips that may break away.
- Direct pool water and backwash over grassy or landscaped areas to help filter discharge before it reaches a storm drain.
- Drain pool water where it will not flow directly into a street, gutter, or someone else's property.