



Town of Westford Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

January 2021



Jodi Ross,
Town
Manager

[jross@westfordma.gov](mailto:ross@westfordma.gov)
www.westfordma.gov/tm

Important:

Please sign up to receive updates on the latest road construction in town.

[Subscribe to Notifications](#)



Check out your Electric power options:
masscea.com/westford

Sign up for Westford's Emergency Notification service:
[Smart 911](#)

Westford's Local Emergency Management Radio Station AM 1630



Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford residents,

At the Select Board's most recent meeting, Health Director Jeff Stephens discussed Covid-19 vaccine distribution plans in Westford. Jeff announced the Westford Health Department is planning to hold vaccine clinics, however details are not yet available. Please stay tuned for more information which will be posted on our website as soon as it is known at the following link: [Westford Health Department](#).

According to the Commonwealth's weekly public health report, Westford remains in the RED zone, reflecting a high-risk for COVID-19 transmission. As such, some of our town buildings remain temporarily closed to the public. The buildings impacted include Town Hall, J.V. Fletcher Library, Water Department, Highway Department, Recreation Department, Cemetery Office, and Cameron Senior Center. Town operations continue uninterrupted as these offices will remain staffed to serve our community. We encourage patrons to contact us via phone and/or email to arrange for meetings in person when online is not satisfactory. For important information on COVID-19, including resident services, the latest town department information, CDC guidance, testing sites in Massachusetts, and more, please visit our town's website at westfordma.gov/COVID-19.

Our Westford Police Chief, Tom McEnaney, is retiring effective January 23, 2021 after 35 years on the police department. The Select Board and I honored Chief McEnaney for his years of service at their meeting on January 12th. Tom was hired in 1985 and had a career marked by many promotions, ending with becoming the Chief in 2008. He has had a remarkable career and he was thanked by all for his contributions. A surprise slide show of his years of service, along with many photos of his large, extended family were shared with others. We wish Tom the best in his retirement and we hope to see him from time to time continuing to assist us when needed.



Chief McEnaney

In response to Tom's retirement, the Select Board approved my request to appoint Deputy Police Chief Mark Chambers as the Provisional Police Chief effective January 24, 2021. They discussed their participation in the promotional process for our next Police Chief, with Select Board Members Scott Hazelton and Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen volunteering to assist. The Select Board approved a resident participating in the process. Residents who are interested in participating in the promotional process may fill out a Citizen Activity Form at the following link: [Citizen Activity Form Application](#) before February 4th. The board will select the resident to participate at their February 9th meeting. A request for proposals for a firm to conduct a Police Chief Assessment Center was released today. Proposal documents may be viewed online by visiting the following link: [Bid Postings](#).

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WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV

Chet Cook, our long serving Assistant Building Inspector, was honored at the board's January 12th meeting for serving our town for 56 years! Chet has held many different positions during those years including Gas Inspector, Building Inspector, Bylaw Enforcement Officer, Tree Warden, Ombudsman, member of Conservation Commission, and more. Pictures were shared for all to enjoy. On behalf of our town, I would like to extend my best wishes to Chet for a long, healthy, happy retirement. Thank you again for all you have done for Westford, and congratulations on your retirement!



Chet Cook

On January 12th, Finance Director Dan O'Donnell presented a Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 financial update to the board, which focused mostly on our revenue projections. Local revenue has been negatively impacted, most notably rooms and meals excise taxes. So far in FY21, we have collected 33% of the rooms excise tax and 70% of the meals excise from the same time period last year. We are expecting to collect approximately \$538,000 less in FY21 from these revenue streams. Other local revenue streams are tracking relatively closely to the budgeted amounts, resulting in an overall projected local revenue deficit of \$206,000 in FY21.

Our town had our tax rate certified at \$16.64 in early December. Since the state budget was not signed until December 18th, we had used the Conference Committee budget for our state aid revenue projection. The final state budget included an increase in revenue to the Charter School Assessment Reimbursement of \$93,000, but the State Aid Assessment for Charter School Sending tuition was offset by the same amount. The assessment for school choice sending tuition was also increased by \$89,000, which resulted in a deficit for FY21. The state level funded Chapter 70 and Unrestricted General Government Aid in FY21. The overall projected revenue deficit for FY21 is currently \$295,000. We will continue to monitor the fiscal situation and provide an update with school budget information at the Select Board's meeting on January 26th.

Westford Power Options Program (POP) is the new name for our Community Electricity Aggregation program. Westford POP has been renewed through December 2023 with new electricity choices for you. New prices take effect this month. Check out our new product offerings, including a 100% renewable electricity choice, and product rates on the program website masscea.com/westford.

On January 5, 2021, the Massachusetts State Legislature finally enacted House Bill No. 4469, An Act authorizing the town of Westford to establish a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption. The full text of the House Bill is available to view at the following link: [House Bill No. 4469](#). We will be issuing a press release and outline next steps to bring this to fruition.

Carter Purple of Westford Boy Scout Troop 159, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, appeared before the Select Board to request approval to install metal coated high-density urethane historical sign markers at the former ski hill on Blake's Hill, 65 Boston Road, the Westford Museum, 2 Boston Road, the foundation of the original Westford Academy, Parcel 059 0002 0000, Boston Road, and 35 Town Farm Road. Select Board Members were enthusiastic to hear of his proposal and supported his request to install these signs. They requested Carter return with photos of his completed project.

The board has approved three M.G.L. c. 138 §12 All Alcohol Restaurant Licenses for new restaurants in town. The first is for Diggy's Pizza located at 175 Littleton Road, Unit J (former location of Bix Bite), which opened approximately three weeks ago. The second restaurant is Ocho Café Tacos & Tequila located at 149 Littleton Road (former location of British Beer Company), which is in the process of preparing to open. The board also approved a license located at 355 Littleton Road (former location of Craft Brewer's Exchange), with a future restaurant name and opening date not yet determined.

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The Select Board and I would like to thank the Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank for gifting Westford a donation of \$2,500 for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, including but not limited to, people of need, women or minority owned businesses, and the like. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will return to the Select Board with ideas and procedures for spending the funding.

The board and I would also like to thank Iverson Guo, owner of Karma, for his donation of an autographed New England Patriots helmet. We intend to donate this wonderful gift to a future town affiliated non-profit fundraiser.

Please join me in welcoming our new Assistant Building Inspector, Ernie Chiavarini. Ernie replaces Henry Fontaine, who was promoted to Building Commissioner several months ago. Congratulations, also, to Matt Salem who was promoted from Assistant Planner to Conservation Resource/Planner, after the retirement of Carol Gumbart.

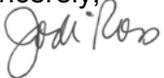
Our Communications Advisory Committee is currently in need of additional members as it has four vacant seats. This committee represents the interests of the Select Board in their role as franchise authority for cable television. They also advise the board in regard to other services provided by Westford's cable operators. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please visit the link below to complete a Citizen Activity Form.

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including: 12 North Main Street Task Force, 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, Affordable Housing Committee, Agricultural Commission, Board of Assessors, Commission on Disability, Communications Advisory Committee, Council on Aging, Cultural Council, Dog Park Task Force, Economic Development Committee, Election Officer, Energy Committee, Historical Commission, Nashoba Valley Technical High School District Committee, Parkerville Schoolhouse Committee, Parks, Grounds and Recreation Commission, Pedestrian Safety Committee, Westford Scholarship and Grant Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

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

Happy new year!

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross
Town Manager



Thank you for your service!

January at the J.V. Fletcher Library

Our programs are generously funded by the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library, Inc.



In observance of Martin Luther King Day, the Library will be closed on Mon., Jan. 18, 2021.
The Library will re-open on Tues., Jan. 19 at 10 a.m. for Curbside service.

Book Club Online Registration: Registration for all of our virtual school age book clubs is ongoing. We have individual book clubs for Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, Third Grade, Fourth & Fifth Grade (combined), Non-fiction for grades 3 and 4 (combined), and just for this spring only – Pop Up Art Club for kids in grades 3 to 5 (combined).

Book clubs meet via Zoom once a month at 4:00 p.m. Please visit our website (www.westfordlibrary.org) and the calendar of events for dates and times and to sign up. This program is for Friends and non-resident Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library.

Virtual Mother Goose: *Mother Goose* will resume on Thursdays at 10:30 starting January 21, 2021, and will be a Zoom program. See the Events calendar (or our Facebook page) for a link to the program. [Register here!](#)

New Virtual ABC and Me! Storytimes: Our newest addition to our virtual story time line up, **ABC & Me** is a 13 week live Zoom program that takes place Tuesday mornings at 10:30 AM. ABC & Me is a celebration of the alphabet that helps kids learn and identify letters through books, songs, puppets, and more! This preschool story time is for kids ages 2-5 (siblings are welcome too). We email registrants a weekly coloring and activity sheet. [Register here!](#)

Virtual Pajama Time! *Pajama Time* is once a month on a Monday evening for children ages 3 to 7. Children can watch in real time – register for each night separately up to 6 pm, you will be emailed a meeting link to log into. Get into those pajamas and grab a favorite stuffed animal or blanket. Use the links below to register.

[Monday, Jan 25 at 6:30](#) ♦ [Monday, Feb 22 at 6:30](#) ♦ [Monday, Mar 29 at 6:30](#) ♦ [Monday, April 26 at 6:30.](#)

Virtual English Conversation Circle: every Tue., at 3:30 p.m. Conversation Circles are back, this time on Zoom! Practice your English conversation skills and meet new friends in a relaxed and friendly environment! This program meets every Tuesday afternoon from 3:30. to 4:30 p.m. and is led by Carol Morse. [Register through our Events Calendar. Registration is required.](#) After you register, you'll receive the Zoom link via email. Each Zoom link is unique, so you must register for each session you wish to attend. If you don't receive the emails, please check your spam folders.

Virtual Mind & Meditation: Thu., Jan. 21 at 7:00 p.m. Lina Shastri from The Art of Living teaches you to unlock the power of your breath and discover the easy, effective approach to meditation. Learn how to rest and get centered, recharge your energy and enthusiasm, build your resilience and get tools to deal with bad times, and tune in to your true self. Every session is slightly different, so if you enjoyed this program in November, why not take it again! Email Sarah Regan at sregan@westfordma.gov for the Zoom invitation.

Virtual: Robert Reich: The System: Thu., Feb. 11 at 7:00 p.m. Millions of Americans have lost confidence in our political and economic system. With the characteristic clarity and passion that has made him a central civil voice, Robert B. Reich shows how wealth and power have interacted to install an elite oligarchy, eviscerate the middle class and undermine democracy. Join us for an engaging conversation with Mr. Reich on his latest book, *The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It*. This program is hosted by and presented in partnership with the Newton Free Library and is made available to Westford residents; space is limited.

[Please register here](#) through Google Docs. All email addresses are accepted, you are not required to use Gmail. Login information will be sent the day of the event. If you'd like to borrow a copy of *The System* from the library, you can reserve it through the [catalog](#). Questions? Email Sarah Regan at sregan@westfordma.gov.

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January at the J.V. Fletcher Library (Continued)

Virtual Westford Job Seekers: The J. V. Fletcher Library's "Westford Job Seekers Network" meets weekly on Wednesdays from 3- 4:30pm. Attracting people of diverse work backgrounds and age groups, this group helps you expand your network of business contacts, discover new job opportunities and connect with others who are in job transition and can become part of your support group. Meetings include guest speakers who are experts in the job search process or in career development. Contact Dina Kanabar, dkanabar@westfordma.gov for more information.

Youth Services February Vacation Virtual Events: Looking for activities to keep your kid, tween, or teen busy during February Vacation? Check out our [Kids Program Page](#) and our [Teen and Tween Program Page](#) for everything from "Build a Polar Bear" to "Stained Glass Picture Frames" and "Sun Catcher Mosaics". Our Youth Services Librarians have something fun planned for all age groups.

Virtual Monday Mystery, Adult Non Fiction, Thursday Night Book Club: All of our adult book clubs continue to meet virtually. Please visit westfordlibrary.org/events/adult-book-clubs/ for more information and upcoming meeting dates.!

Kids craft bundles: Sign up for a craft bundle that includes a book checked out to you and a complete craft kit. We let you know the skill level required, each craft is not exclusively for one age group. Sign up for a craft bundle through our [Events Calendar](#).

Book Bundles for Kids, Teens, and Adults!: Do you miss browsing your favorite section of the library? Looking for new titles? Let us do the browsing for you! Fill out the [Build-A-Bag Bag request form](#) – one for **each kid** – and get a special selection of library materials, chosen just for you! For **adults** – fill out the [Grab and Go Form](#). We select a variety of titles based on what you tell us on the [form](#). We will check everything out to you, fill the bag, and let you know your bag is ready. Pick up your specially selected bag during our [curbside hours](#).

Curbside During Covid: Please place your selections on hold through the online catalog. You will be notified when your order is ready and you may come any time during our pick up hours. Inter-library delivery is now available, please expect longer delays than usual. Items received from other libraries will be quarantined for one week. Curbside Pickup is available Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Monday – Thursday 6:30-8:30 p.m. Please do not come until you receive a notification that your order is ready. When you arrive, please call 978-399-2300 (due to heavy call usage, we have updated the number to one that rings at multiple desks) and a masked staff member will place your order under the rear portico. Please wear a mask to pick up your items. **If you have questions or need assistance placing your holds, please call us at 978-399-2300 or send us an email at westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov.**

Expanded Saturday Hours for "[Book the Browsing Tent](#)": Are you looking for new titles for you and/or your family? Do you miss browsing the stacks of the Library? Look for the form on our website and submit it to schedule a time to come and browse the selections personally picked for you by our staff. The [form](#) will inquire about your reading tastes or you can simply have us "surprise you" with some staff recommendations. We also offer "Book Bundles" for children and adults. Choose a category and we will supply with a "bundle" of books. One of our Library staff will meet you in the tent with personally curated titles just for you! Check the website for the form, submit it, and then a staff member will reach out to schedule your appointed time. Fifteen minute appointments will be available for individuals and thirty minute appointments for families. To comply with Covid-19 safety re-opening guidelines, only one individual or one family will be scheduled at a time in the tent. **This service is available Monday – Saturday from 10-4.** We can't wait to see you under the tent! Per Governor Baker, masks are required.

CLICK! CALL! CHAT! CONNECT!

- CLICK on ebooks, audiobooks, music, streaming video, and more at www.westfordlibrary.org
- CALL us at 978-399-2300
- CHAT with Reference at 978-399-2304
- CONNECT with us on [FACEBOOK](#), [TWITTER](#) and [INSTAGRAM](#)
- CONNECT & sign up for the Friends [eNewsletter](#) to receive updates!
- EMAIL us at westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov



Cameron Senior Center

Cameron looks forward to 2021 Engagement and event happenings for older people.

Brief COVID update: Our services remain open and available by phone. In-person meetings are by appointment only. Please call 978-692-5523 Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m-4 p.m.



ESMV Traveling Chef "Grab & Go" lunch and an unforgettable Cameron cooking show - Sure to make you smile or shake your head in dismay - Thursday, January 21st - Lunch can be picked up at noon at the Cameron - 1:00 WCAT show features:

Cooking with no other than Annette and Bob in the Cameron kitchen

Lunch will feature: Green salad, Bean and beef chili, Corn bread and Chocolate mousse also a vegetarian option is available upon request. The meal is Bean & Beef Chili or Vegetarian Option available upon request. This is a free event sponsored by Elder Services of Merrimack Valley however signups are required. We hope you enjoy this fun lunch and don't forget to RSVP to 978-692-5523.



Coffee with Katie

Tuesdays at 9am via Zoom

During this pandemic, one of the worst things is the isolation we are all feeling. Join Katie for some virtual social time. Everyone is welcome so grab your coffee join us online. Call Katie at 978-399-2330 with your email address and she'll send you the link.

Monthly Virtual B I N G O with prizes

Monday, February 8th at 1pm

Join Bob and Katie for BINGO online with great prizes.

For questions call Katie at 978-399-2330. To sign up call 978-692-5523.



A New Year's message from:

Annette Cerullo, Cameron Outreach Coordinator

May the New Year bring us all hope for an end to the pandemic! It's been a long year of isolation and restrictions but times like this can make us a stronger community. If you need a listening ear, support, and/or services don't hesitate to contact Annette your Outreach worker at 978-399-2326. I look forward to hearing from you!

For more information visit www.westfordma.gov/coa, www.facebook.com/CameronSeniorCenter/ or simply call 978-692-5523. We look forward to hearing from you.



Westford Senior Center

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Cameron Senior Center (continued)

Not sure if you may qualify for Town Property Tax Exemptions?

Simply call your COA Outreach Coordinator

The town of Westford has several property tax exemptions for residents: the low income, widows, adults age 70 and older, blind, disabled, veterans and more. You may be eligible for a tax break so let's review your options together just call Annette to make an appointment at 978-399-2326.

Interested in learning more about SNAP- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- Just give us a call!

Our social service staff is available to share with you the how SNAP provides a monthly financial benefit to buy nutritious foods. The average household SNAP benefit for a household of two is \$215./month. To see if you qualify we can review the income guidelines with you as well as assist with the application process. For example: A household of one the gross income level is \$25, 520 and a household of two is \$34,480. To learn more and see if you qualify please contact Annette or Alison by calling 978-692-5523.

Coldwell Banker Realty - Westford Residential Brokerage

Our social service team would like to thank the realtor and brokerage agents and administrative team who contributed \$800 of their earning to assist with Heat and Fuel assistance for residents in financial hardship. Our center truly appreciates the many ways Coldwell Banker supports our programming, social services, volunteerism, food drives/toy collections and other supportive means through-out the years.

Thank you!

Book Club: Join us from the comfort of your home!

Tuesday at 1:00: January 19th & February 16th

The pandemic has led us to be creative with offering book club ... from parking lot meetings, to indoors spaced 6 feet apart, to virtual online. January and February will be offered virtually to enhance your safety. Call me and we will send you the invite to join.

January's read will be *Saturday Evening Girls Club* by Jane Healey and February will be *Night of Rain & Stars* by Maeve Binchy. I will order books through the town library and can deliver them to your home.

Other ways to obtain books are through Barnes & Noble, Amazon or online at Merrimack Valley Library Consortium "Overdrive". <https://mvlc.overdrive.com> The Overdrive website also has an app called Libby to search and take out books on your Ipad, phone, kindle. Hoopla is another online option. Happy Reading! Annette 978-399-2326

Sweetheart Luncheon at Burtons Grill "Grab & Go"

Wednesday, February 10th at 11:30 - All invited!!

This nice event is being sponsored by the Council on Aging Board, Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Rivercourt Residences, Elder Services of Merrimack Valley and Westford Rotary Club.

Menu Choices:

Fried Haddock Sandwich and/side

Mediterranean Chicken Risotto

Max Burger w/homemade fried pickles and side

Harvest Bowl (Vegetarian & GF Option and can be made vegan friendly upon request)

Brown rice & quinoa blend, julienned vegetables, roasted brussels sprouts, sweet potato, beets, goat cheese, dried cranberries, candied walnuts, maple dijonaise vinaigrette

*Includes non-alcoholic beverage and cheesecake

Cost: Friends Members-\$8 and Non-Friends-\$15

RSVP to 978-692-5523 and don't forget to give your meal choice.



For more information about more Cameron offerings and services please visit

www.westfordma.gov, <https://www.facebook.com/CameronSeniorCenter/>

or simply call 978-692-5523.

Westford Health Department

Mental Health Resources for Westford Residents

The COMPASS Helpline is open during our regular hours – Monday through Friday, 9 am – 5 pm. You can reach us by calling 617-704-6264 or 1-800-370-9085, or emailing us at compass@namimass.org.

COMPASS is the information and referral helpline at NAMI Massachusetts. They provide resources and support to help people navigate the complex mental health system in difficult circumstances.

Massachusetts Dept of Mental Health

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-mental-health>

Crisis number 24-hour line: (877) 382-1609

Main number: (617) 626-8000 M-F 9-5

Voicemail Box: 1-800-221-0053 (checked regularly calls returned within 48 hrs.)

Interface Referral Service- <https://interface.williamjames.edu>

Referral Helpline: 888-244-6843

Monday – Friday 8am-5pm

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline

1-800-327-5050

Crisis Hotline for Domestic Abuse [24-hour line](#)

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/domestic-violence-programs-for-survivors>

877-785-2020

877-521-2601 (TTY)

Samaritans Hotline: (800) 273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline 24-hour line: 1-800-799-7233

National Sexual Abuse Hotline 24-hour line: 1-800-656-4673

CDC stress and coping during COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Suicide Prevention during COVID-19:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/current-events/supporting-your-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

Eviction Diversion Initiative: Free Legal Services

Through the COVID-19 Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP), there is a substantial expansion of free legal help for low-income tenants as well as low-income owner-occupants of 2-3 family properties navigating the eviction process. These services can be used **before** the eviction process begins, as well as once a notice has been received, and can be used in coordination with community mediation services (<https://www.resolutionma.org/>). For the legal services income eligibility is capped at 200% of federal poverty level. Legal services will be available in every region and can be found on a new website built for this initiative: <https://evictionlegalhelp.org/>. Households can also call 2-1-1, and learn more at the Department of Housing and Community Development's website, www.mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp.

Please post and share information about expanded legal services with your organization's members and community. Resources such as a new video in English and Spanish, social media posts and new flyers in seven languages can be found here [website](#).

Legal help is available right now for income-eligible tenants facing eviction. We strongly encourage tenants and landlords to learn about legal help as well as community mediation resources. Eligible tenants and landlords should seek help as soon as possible, before a court filing occurs.

Set your radio presets to Westford's Local
Emergency Management Radio **AM 1630**
For Emergency Information



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While visiting the website consider setting up a profile account. This allows you to gather feeds from the website into a custom portal and as we implement some of the new features of the site you will be able to save data and track the progress of your interactions with the town.