

Budget Task Force Public Forum

Budget Task Force Presentation
July 24, 2023

Agenda

- Expectations for the Meeting
- Introductions of Task Force Members
- Review of Task Force Charge
- Review of Budget Challenges, Revenue Opportunities
- Review of Town Benchmarks
- Review of Efficiencies
- Next Steps
- Open Forum

Budget Task Force Members

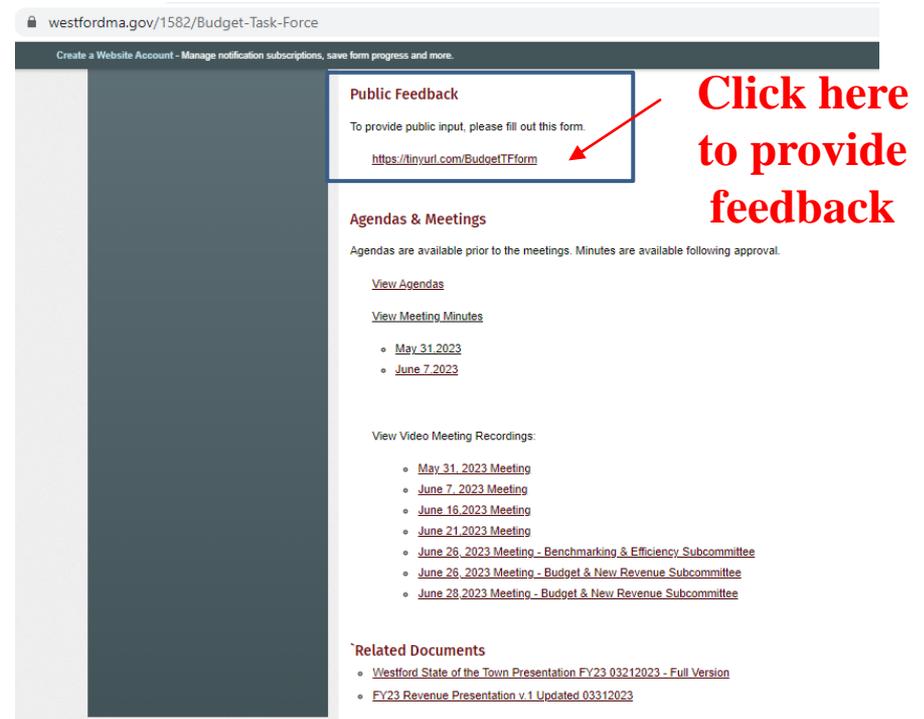
- Tom Clay, Select Board, Chair
- Valery Young, School Committee, Vice Chair
- Chris Chew, School Superintendent
- Shana Farnsworth, Resident, Clerk
- Kristina Greene, Finance Committee
- Vibhu Jain, Resident
- Kristen Las, Town Manager
- Jenny Lin, School Finance Director
- Dan O'Donnell, Town Finance Director
- Erika Kohl, Resident, Alternate
- Amy Lundquist, Resident, Alternate

Budget Task Force Charge

- The Budget Task Force shall be charged with recommending several scenarios for a five-year, sustainable fiscal plan for the Town of Westford. Said fiscal plan shall consider, as an example, alternative revenue sources; overrides and exclusions under Proposition 2 ½; cuts in service; contracting out of services, as well as other measures. Said fiscal plan shall include both operational and capital budgets for the Town. The Committee shall consult with pertinent departments as it formulates its plan.
- The Task Force shall present its findings to a joint meeting of the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee by October 1, 2023.

Budget Task Force Website

- The website includes recordings and minutes for each meeting of the Budget Task Force, including working groups
- <https://www.westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force>
- There is a google form that the public can use to provide feedback to the Task Force
 - Responses may be anonymous



The screenshot shows the website [westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force](https://www.westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force). A red box highlights the "Public Feedback" section, which contains the text "To provide public input, please fill out this form." and a link to <https://tinyurl.com/BudgetTFForm>. A red arrow points from the text "Click here to provide feedback" to the link. Below this, the "Agendas & Meetings" section is visible, listing various meeting dates and recordings.

Public Feedback
To provide public input, please fill out this form.
<https://tinyurl.com/BudgetTFForm>

Click here to provide feedback

Agendas & Meetings
Agendas are available prior to the meetings. Minutes are available following approval.

[View Agendas](#)

[View Meeting Minutes](#)

- [May 31 2023](#)
- [June 7 2023](#)

View Video Meeting Recordings:

- [May 31, 2023 Meeting](#)
- [June 7, 2023 Meeting](#)
- [June 16 2023 Meeting](#)
- [June 21 2023 Meeting](#)
- [June 26, 2023 Meeting - Benchmarking & Efficiency Subcommittee](#)
- [June 26, 2023 Meeting - Budget & New Revenue Subcommittee](#)
- [June 28 2023 Meeting - Budget & New Revenue Subcommittee](#)

Related Documents

- [Westford State of the Town Presentation FY23 03212023 - Full Version](#)
- [FY23 Revenue Presentation v.1 Updated 03312023](#)

Budget Challenges

- Several budget challenges have been identified that will have negative financial impacts on the FY25 budget, including but not limited to:
 - New Solid Waste / Recycling Contract - \$500k - \$1m
 - Energy Costs (Natural Gas and Electricity) – less than \$500k
 - Town and School Collectively Bargained Contracts - \$2m+
 - Employee Non-union Salaries – less than \$500k
 - Health Insurance Costs - \$1m - \$2m
 - Uncertainty of New Growth
 - New Bus Contract– less than \$500k
 - Special Education Fleet Leases – less than \$500k
 - Special Education Tuitions- \$500k - \$1m
 - School Feasibility Study Outcomes - \$2m+
 - Other Expenses Unknown at this Time

New Revenue Opportunities

The Budget Task Force is investigating various new sources of revenue to offset the impact of the known budget challenges. Examples include:

Town and School Facility Rentals

Sale of Town Owned Real Estate

Composting Programs

Fee Increases

Cannabis Excise

Pay as you Throw Solid Waste Program

Short-Term Rental Fees

Split Tax Rate

Real Estate Transfer Fees

Cell Tower Rentals

School Activity Fees

Bus Transportation Fees

Solar Panel Fields

Naming By-Law Fees

Expand Property Tax Work Off Program

Economic Development (New Growth)

MBTA Multi-Family Zoning Requirement

Proposition 2 1/2 Override

Benchmarking

- Town population
- Geographic location
- School District Performance
- School Aged Children
- Similar Municipal Governance
- Union and Non-Union Labor

Task Force Members will have conversations with Westford Department Heads and benchmarked municipalities

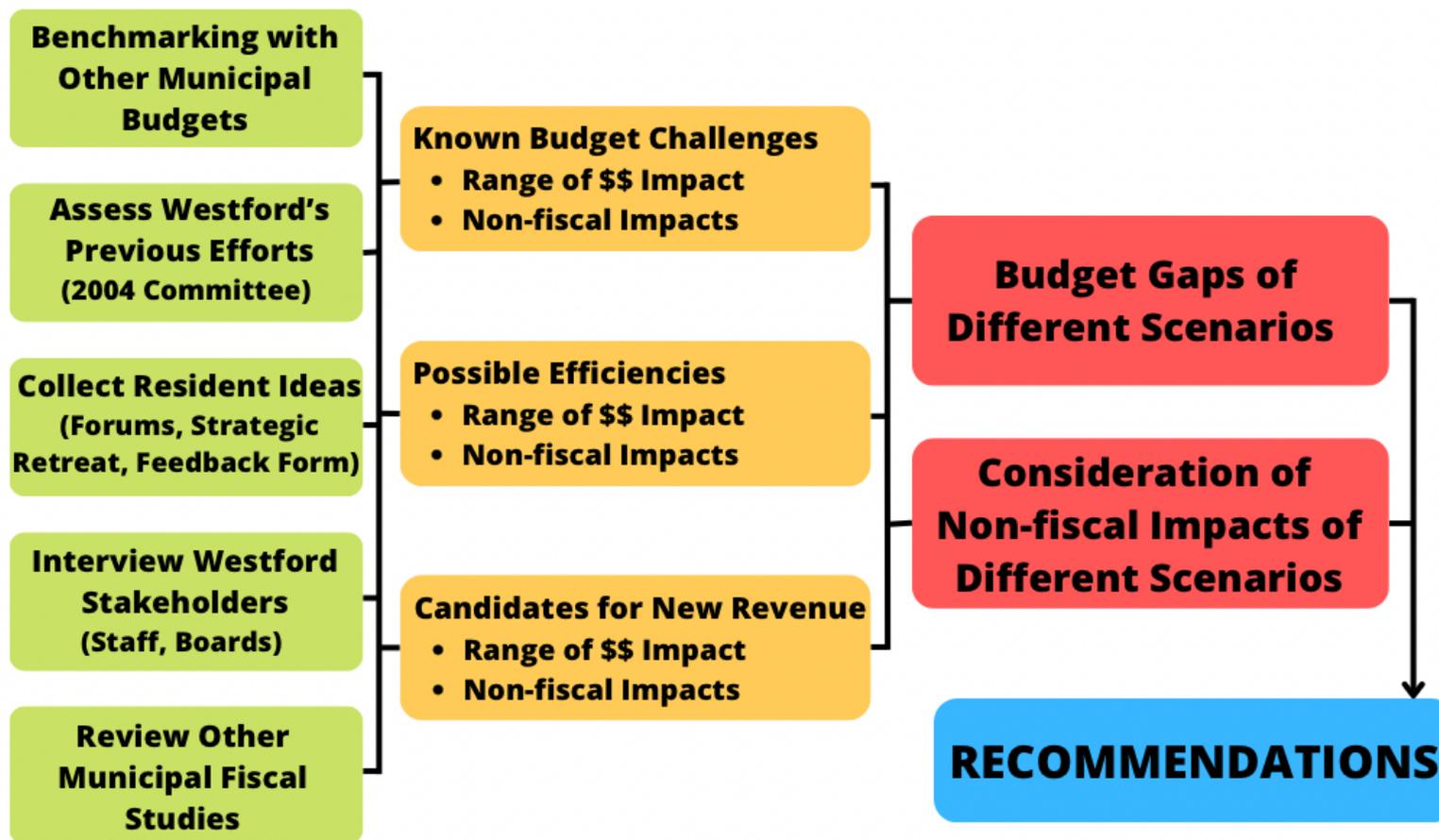
School	Town
Acton	Acton
Arlington	Andover
Chelmsford	Bedford
Concord	Belmont
Groton	Billerica
Hingham	Burlington
Holliston	Chelmsford
Littleton	Concord
Milton	Dracut
Natick	Franklin
Needham	Lexington
Sharon	North Andover
Tyngsborough	Reading
Wellesley	Shrewsbury
<u>Westford</u>	Stoneham
Winchester	Sudbury
	Tewksbury
	Wellesley
	Westborough
	<u>Westford</u>
	Westwood
	Wilmington

Efficiencies

What can Town and Schools do collectively or separately to be affective in providing the best services for our residents, businesses and visitors

- Leveraging technology
- Shared services
- Energy efficiency
- Centralizing processes

Budget Task Force Work Plan



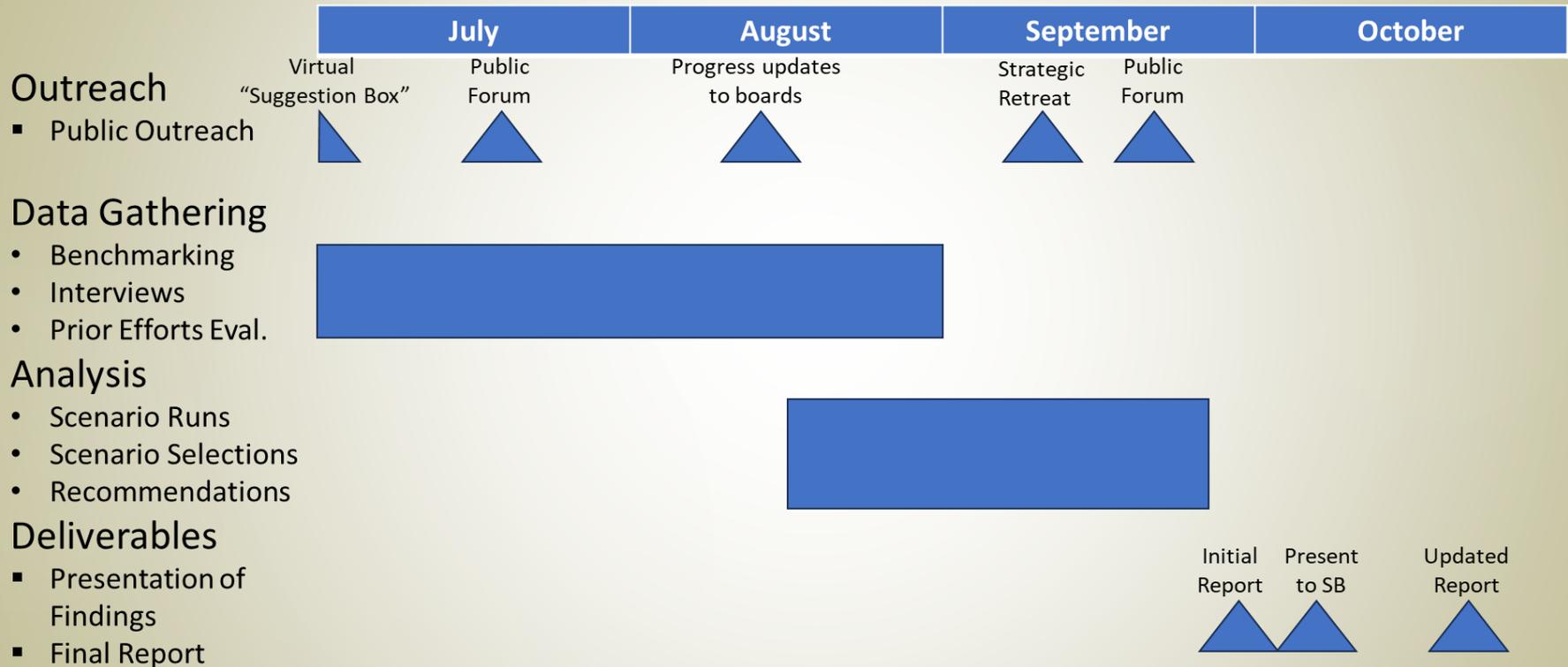
Research & Information

Analysis & Decisions

Report Outline

- Introduction
- Methodology Used
- Westford Background
 - Census Data, Revenue & Reserves, Expenses, Challenges for FY25, Excluded Debt – Capital Projects
- Analysis
 - Size of the Budget Gap, Revenue Opportunities, Expense Reduction Opportunities, Comparative Market Data, Budget Scenarios
- Recommendations
- Community Feedback

High Level Schedule



Next Steps

- Some key dates for the resident to know:
 - Initial Public Forum - July 24th
 - Update Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee on Progress to Date – August 8th or 22nd
 - Strategic Planning Retreat at Kimball Farms – September 7th
 - Update Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee on Progress to Date – September 12th
 - Second Public Forum – September 13th
 - Report due to the Select Board – September 29th
 - Presentation of the Budget Task Force Report to the Select Board - October 10th
 - Revised report submitted, considering feedback from the presentation - October 18th

Open Forum

Suggested Questions

- What is important to you?
- Suggestions for new revenue
- Suggestions for efficiencies
- What are the questions you would like answered in the report?
- Input on the approach we are taking



Thank you!

[Click Here to Leave Feedback](#)