

Budget Task Force Joint Select Board, School Committee, & Finance Committee Meeting

Budget Task Force Presentation

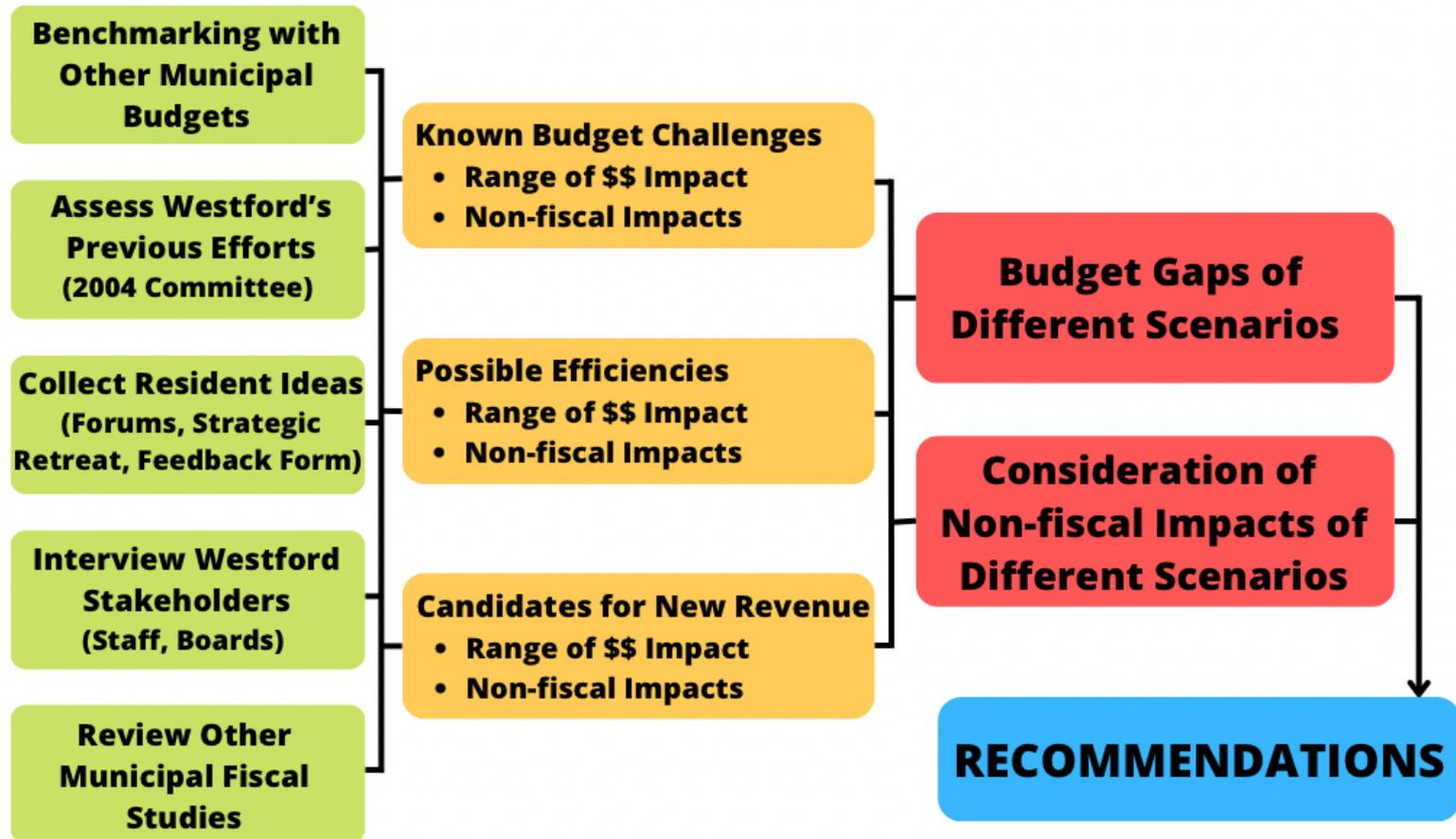
August 15, 2023

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

Agenda

- Update on Budget Challenges
- Update on Revenue Opportunities
- Status of Town Benchmarking and Efficiencies
- Timeline

Budget Task Force Work Plan



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 for FY25 and beyond

Total Estimated Range: \$8M - \$10M

New Revenue Opportunities

The Budget Task Force is investigating various sources of new and existing revenue to offset the impact of the known budget challenges. Some examples are listed below. Thus far in our research, only a few opportunities have the potential for revenue generation above \$250K per year; those possibilities are marked with asterisks.

Cannabis Excise **

MBTA Multi-Family Zoning Requirement **

Proposition 2 ½ Override **

Economic Development (New Growth) **

Ambulance Revenue **

Real Estate Transfer Fees

Composting Programs

Bus Transportation Fees

Fee Increases

Solar Panel Fields

Town and School Facility Rentals

Naming By-Law Fees

Pay as you Throw Solid Waste Program

Expand Property Tax Work Off Program

Short-Term Rental Fees

School Activity Fees

Split Tax Rate

Cell Tower Rentals

Benchmarking & Efficiencies

- Data analysis compared Westford spending to other municipalities or school districts
- Members are interviewing TOW department heads as well as a few select municipal counterparts
- Working to identify what Town and Schools can do collectively or separately to be effective in providing the best services for our residents, businesses and visitors, such as:
 - Leveraging technology
 - Shared services
 - Energy efficiency
 - Centralizing processes
- Balancing time constraints with the level of detail needed to determine feasibility and scope of savings

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

Timeline

Working toward a draft report with scenarios and recommendations

- ▶ Data gathering and analysis is on-going

Breakout sessions planned for Town Strategic Planning Retreat

- ▶ September 7th from 5:00 – 8:00 PM at Kimball Farms

Additional update and public forum in September

- ▶ Update to SB/SC/FinCom – September 12th
- ▶ Second Public Forum – September 13th

Presentation expected to Select Board on October 10th



Thank you!

Please visit our Budget Task Force website for meeting recordings and minutes

<https://www.westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force>

Feedback form for public input: <https://tinyurl.com/BudgetTFform>

Responses may be anonymous

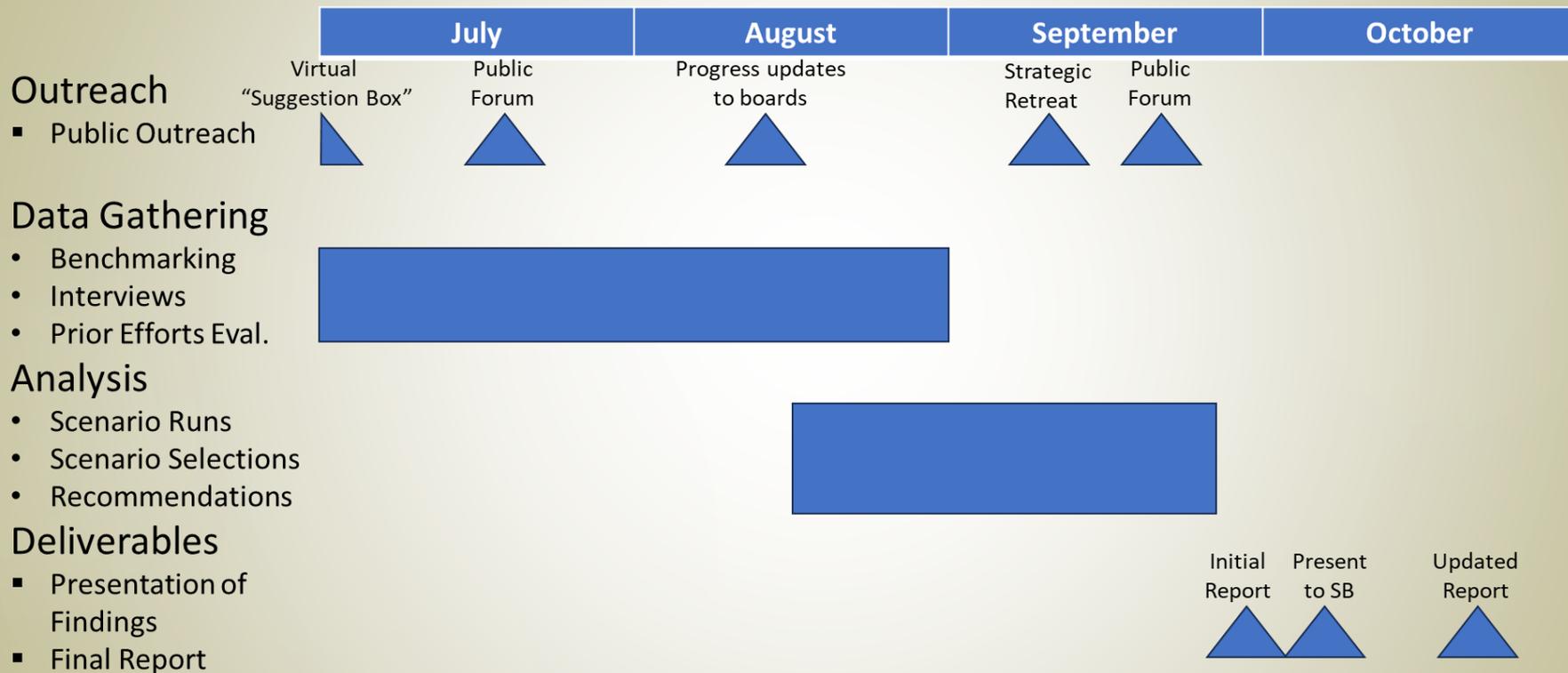
Back up



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.

High Level Schedule



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

Next Steps

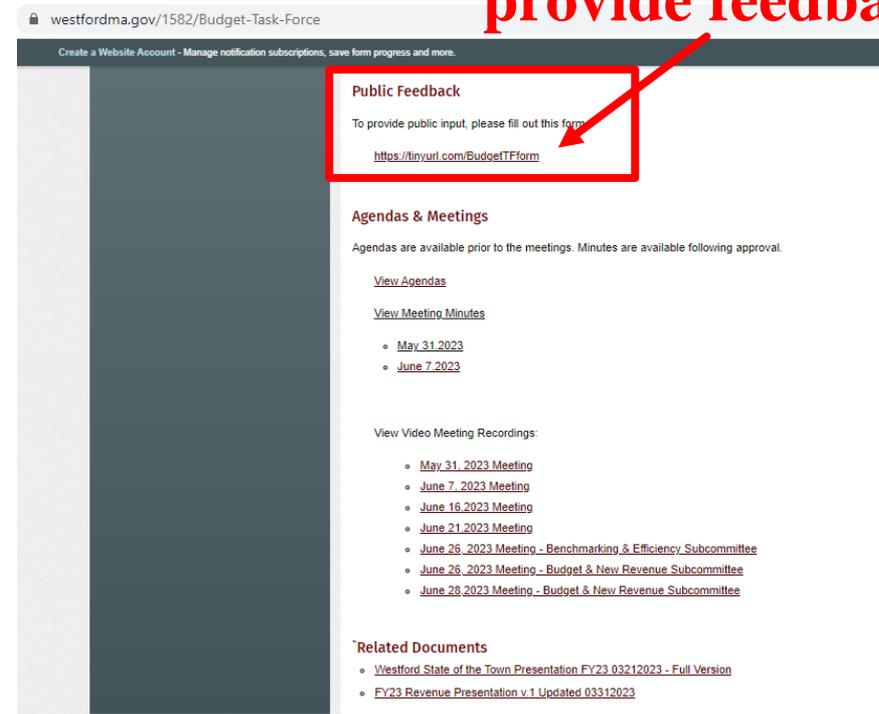
- Update Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee on Progress to Date – August 15th
- Strategic Planning Retreat at Kimball Farms – September 7th
- Update Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee on Progress to Date – September 12th
- Second Public Forum – September 13th
- Report 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

Budget Task Force Website

- Meeting recordings and minutes
- Feedback form for public input
 - Responses may be anonymous

<https://www.westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force>

**Click here to
provide feedback**



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 includes 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 this link. Below the feedback form, there are sections for "Agendas & Meetings" and "View Video Meeting Recordings:", each with a list of links to various meetings and documents.

westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force

Create a Website Account - Manage notification subscriptions, save form progress and more.

Public Feedback

To provide public input, please fill out this form

<https://tinyurl.com/BudgetTFform>

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](#)