

## Westford FY2024 Select Board / Town Manager Goals

September 12, 2023

### Progress Update February 2024

#### Financial

1. Adhere to the Select Board Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Policy Direction, which may include some of the outcomes from the Budget Task Force work.
  - The Town Manager has been adhering to the budget policy direction while preparing the FY25 budget.
  - A budget website was created for FY25.
  - Budget videos were created and published by the Budget Task Force and Town Staff.
2. Continue to work with the Select Board to evaluate and prioritize remaining requests for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to address ongoing COVID-19 concerns as well as other priorities caused by a reduction in revenue due to the pandemic. Monitor the projects that have been authorized and work with the Select Board to re-allocate funds that were earmarked for spending but are no longer necessary. The plan must adhere to the deadlines to allocate funds by December 31, 2024 and to spend all funding by December 31, 2026.
  - The Select Board has allocated ARPA funding for several projects since this goal was established. The fund currently has \$306,224 available.
3. Continue to monitor the Health Insurance Trust Fund, pursuant to MGL Chapter 32B, Section 3A, with the continued goal to reach a Trust Fund Balance of \$3.5M as recommended by the Trustees.
  - The Health Insurance Trust has been meeting frequently to monitor the balance of the Trust Fund and the experience of the users.
  - The Trust Fund balance as of January 31, 2024 is \$2,129,725.02. Please note that this amount fluctuates quite a bit based upon claims and the true-up statements we receive.
  - The Health Insurance Trust is beginning to explore other health insurance opportunities that may lower the costs to the Town and employees.

#### Culture

4. Provide town leadership and departmental support to improve diversity, equity and inclusion practices in town processes, as may be provided with guidance from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Provide town departmental support to the DEI Committee and support the committee's efforts to seek funding for ongoing projects and programs.
  - The Police Chief participated in a Westford CAT video with the DEI Committee, which has been posted <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXC4dYCfS6s>
  - The Library has created monthly multi-cultural and thematic book displays and display case exhibits, as well as multi-cultural and inclusive programming for all ages, and DEI Collection Development.
  - The Town Manager has met with the DEI Committee to discuss ways to improve hiring and retention culture for the Town.
  - The DEI multi-cultural page is being posted to the Town's website every month.
  - The DEI Committee has presented to the Select Board several events occurring in Town and beyond.

5. Work with Pedestrian Safety Committee, Police, Fire, Engineering, Highway, Health, Library and other departments and committees to investigate ways to promote Westford as a healthy community through policies, programs, and infrastructure planning.
  - Staff researched the potential for speed limits of 25 MPH in accordance with MGL c. 17C for Griffin and Boston Road in September 2023. The Select Board voted in December 2023 to change the speed limit.
  - The Engineering Department continues to refine the design of the Carlisle Road sidewalk. Phase I is scheduled for construction in Spring 2024. Phase II is undergoing final design and easement acquisition and construction timing is being evaluated.
  - The Engineering Department continues to refine the design of the Plain Road sidewalk. Phase I from Nutting Road to Grassy Pond is scheduled for construction in Spring 2024. Phase II is currently being designed and easements are being reviewed with property owners.
  - Pedestrian improvements at Texas Road and Jack Walsh Field are being designed and evaluated.
  - West Street Pedestrian Improvements at North Main Street are being designed.
  - Pedestrian Safety Committee meetings are ongoing and supported by the DPW when necessary.
  - Healthy Westford Committee Meetings are being attended by the Health Director as needed.
  - Rapid Flashing Beacons were installed at Nabnasset School and WA in December, 2023.
  - Older Adult and Functional Needs-Falls Prevention Project is ongoing and kits are being distributed January 2024-February 2024.

### **Strategic Efforts/Long Range Planning**

6. Select and onboard a consultant to assist the Town in fostering the development and implementation of a Townwide Strategic Plan. Work with Town staff, boards and commissions and the residents to develop a dynamic strategic plan. Pursue grants and other funding sources to assist with the outcome areas that are determined.
  - The Select Board has authorized the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Zencity for online outreach for the Strategic Plan.
  - The Select Board has authorized the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Raftelis for the Strategic Plan.
  - A Community Survey will be conducted during the month of February and March.
  - A kick-off meeting with the Select Board members, Town Department Heads and Town Board and Committee chairs and vice chairs will be held late February.
7. Continue implementing the Net Zero Roadmap. Work with the Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, other town boards / committees, sustainability coordinator, Town staff, and members of Westford's resident and business community, including 1. implement portfolio wide energy efficiency assessment/audit, including inventory of equipment and building envelope status, 2. create a solar siting plan identifying candidate locations for solar PV installations with optimum mix and distribution of sites to meet the town's energy needs most efficiently, 3. develop comprehensive plan to transition municipal fleet to electric

- vehicles and provide supporting charging infrastructure.
- Supported Sustainability Coordinator in submitting Green Communities Report, November, 2023.
  - Support staff in Ameresco IGA Phase I, October 2023 through present.
  - Support staff in Stony Brook solar repairs, ongoing.
  - Library Building Joint Committee approved a geothermal test bore in January 2024. They have been meeting with MassSAVE to review sustainability choices.
  - Town submitted and received a META grant for Beacon Integrated Services in the amount of \$10,000, November 2023.
  - The Town coordinated and rolled out the Westford Community Aggregation Contract in October 2023. Continued work through present.
  - The Town submitted and in January 2024 received a Green Communities Competitive grant.
  - The Town entered into a MOU with Bootstrap Compost for a residential composting pilot program that started December 2023.
8. Select and onboard an Economic Development consultant by January 2024 to assist the Town in furthering economic development initiatives as outlined in the scope of services.
- The Town received three proposals in January.
  - The proposals are still being considered by the EDC.
9. Support the efforts of the Land Use Management Department to engage with boards, committees, landowners, residents, and other stakeholders to explore the best options for Westford (an MBTA Adjacent Community) to comply with the state's mandate (pursuant to new Section 3A of M.G.L. Chapter 40A) to establish an as of right zoning district that permits multi-family housing to be voted on at the March 2024 Annual Town Meeting warrant and completing the effort by the December 2024 state deadline.
- The Town Manager appointed the MCMAC Committee in May 2023. The first MCMAC Committee Meeting was July, 2023.
  - Ongoing discussions with NMCOC Managers Meetings regarding MBTA Communities attended by Town Manager.
  - After review by the Select Board, Town submitted materials to the EOHLC for preliminary determination of compliance with MGL c. 401A, ¶3.
  - Ongoing Public Outreach regarding the MBTA Adjacent Community Act started September, 2022.
  - PB public hearings on the draft zoning bylaw started January 2024. Preparing for the March 2024 Town Meeting.
10. Explore ways that Westford can participate and contribute to regional resources related to programs, staffing and other efforts as they arise.
- Budget Task Force work on shared services, July 2023 through October 2023.
  - NMCOC Managers Meetings discussions on shared services started February 2023 and are ongoing.
  - Letters sent to area Managers on Regional Animal Control August 2023.

- Email sent to area Managers on Regional Veterans Services November 2023. Compile and continue discussions on Regional Veterans Services – ongoing.
- Conversation with Tewksbury Town Manager on Regional Dispatch November 2023.
- Continue Weights and Measures services under NMCOG contract.
- Health Department to hire regional health inspector position March 2024.

### **Communications**

11. Enhance community engagement, including the redesign and development of a Town Website and enhancement of social media presence.

#### Website

Contracted with Civic Plus for Website Upgrade, Fall 2023.

Formed Website Redesign Group October 2023 and held first meeting.

Survey to Staff issued December 2023 and data collected through January 2024.

Survey to Public issued February 2024.

Navigation process and cleaning up webpages are ongoing.

Launch new website July 1, 2024.

#### Social Media

DPW Facebook Page created Summer 2023.

Consolidated some Town FB pages late Summer 2023.

#### Community Engagement Grant

Applied for Grant for Community Engagement September 2023, and received \$50,000 in October 2023.

Used portion of grant for Zencity online public engagement tool. Contracted in January 2024.

We will use portion of the grant for mailers, flyers, banners, handouts associated with the Townwide Strategic Plan.

12. Coordinate with the Water and Health Departments to educate Westford residents, property owners and business owners on PFAS and how both public water users and private well owners can be assisted by the Town to remediate adverse situations.
- Coordinated executive sessions for litigation updates November 2023.
  - Coordinated with BOH on private well testing December 2023 and January 2024, Meeting with SB on private testing plan January 2024.
  - Meeting with SB and Water Commissioners on MOU to occur in the near future.
  - Overall PFAS mitigation schedule finalization and cost estimate with Water Department and DPW expected end of February 2024.
  - PFAS PILOT Testing started and ongoing.
  - Design of Treatment Plants summer 2024.

### **Facilities**

13. Support the Permanent Town Building Committee, the Library and other applicable Boards and Committees throughout the management of the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project, the expansion/renovation of the J.V. Fletcher Library, implementing

Design Development Phase and investigating and preparing for temporary re-location of library services.

- Appointed Designer Selection Committee Spring/Summer 2023.
  - Negotiated contract with Finegold Alexander.
  - Appointed Working Group and continue to meet with that group.
  - Schematic Design at 95% & submitted for cost estimating and cost reconciliation January 2024.
  - MassSAVE meeting to review sustainability choices January 2024.
14. Select and onboard a consultant who will conduct space planning and capital needs assessment services for the Town's workspaces, public areas, storage, ancillary spaces. The study will determine potential future space needs, make recommendations to optimize current space to meet the needs of current and future employees, and provide ways to develop workspace that is aligned with the Town's mission and goals.
- Prepared Scope of Services, August and September 2023.
  - Issued RFP September 2023.
  - Bids Due October 2023, unfortunately no favorable bidders.
  - Reissue RFP January 2024 and received 4 bids February 9, 2024.
  - The project of space planning is scheduled to begin in March 2024
15. Support the Permanent Town Building Committee and the Fire Department during the feasibility study for the Nabnasset Fire Station project. Prepare for future funding opportunities for the project if the feasibility study provides for an outcome of redevelopment or relocation.
- Appointed Designer Selection Committee late summer 2023.
  - Negotiated and signed contract with Context October and November 2023.
  - Kick off Meeting November 2023.
  - Conceptual plans being developed and presented December 2023 and January 2024.

### **Town Owned Property Planning and Disposition**

16. Assist the efforts of the permitting and conveyance of the 35 Town Farm Road property for the redevelopment of the Town Farm site into senior affordable housing and new home for the Westford Food Pantry.
- Review of Wastewater Agreement and discussion on rates.
  - Guidance of Comprehensive Permit Process including ZBA, which opened its public hearing in October 2023 and closed it in December 2023.
  - Comprehensive Permit Issued by ZBA December 2023.
  - ANR or other plan of land to define "new" lots to facilitate lot line adjustment between 35 & 39 Town Farm Road and conveyance from Town to Developer and other survey work including parking easement, sidewalk easement and wastewater connection to be completed.
17. Work with internal and external resources to seek state and federal grant funding to be used towards the redevelopment of 12 North Main Street, including the remediation of hazardous

materials, master planning of the property and the preservation of this historic community asset. This may also include master planning efforts and coordination for the broader Graniteville neighborhood.

- Received EPA Brownfields Grant July 2023, prepared RFP and issued February 2024
- Received MassDevelopment Brownfields Grant November 2023, preparing RFP for issuance February 2024.
- Received Housing Choice Grant for Infrastructure and Market Studies November 2023 and preparing RFP for issuance February 2024.
- Meeting with various interested neighbors, property owners and groups regarding the property is ongoing.

\*Goals are numbered for ease of reference but the numbering does not indicate order of priority