

Town Manager's Newsletter

January 2026



Featured in this edition:

Town Manager's Message (p1)

Spotlight: Department of the Month (p2)

From the Select Board (p3)

From the Moderator (p3)

Westford Police Department (p4)

Westford Fire Department (p4)

Open Space and Recreation Plan (p5)

J.V. Fletcher Library (p5)

Health Department (p6)

Clean Energy & Sustainability Committee (p6)

Westford Recycling Commission (p7)

Community Wellness (p7)

Westford Recreation (p7)



Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Dear Westford residents,

Happy New Year! To open, I'd like to share an email I sent to the Town Staff last week in appreciation of the work they do for the Town of Westford:

As 2025 comes to a close, I want to thank each of you for the incredible work you've done for the Town of Westford over the past year. Your dedication to the work makes a real difference in the lives of our residents and helps us live out our mission: to foster a vibrant community by delivering excellent public service.

Looking ahead to 2026, let's celebrate and reflect on the progress we've made and embrace the opportunities ahead. In carrying our values—Professionalism, Dedication, Collaboration, Accountability, and Service-Oriented—we can continue to make Westford a place we're all proud to work.

Wishing you and your families a joyful, healthy, and fulfilling New Year!

I'd like to thank Pam McNiff, the Town of Westford's Program/Procurement Specialist, for her dedication and contributions to the Town Manager's Office over the past two and a half years. Pam has been an integral part of our team, and we truly value her work and support. Pam's last day with the Town was January 2 as she transitions to a new career opportunity. We congratulate Pam as she begins this next chapter and wish her continued success.

Along with many of you who have set new year's resolutions or goals, the Select Board and Town Manager have also set goals for FY26 and FY27 and adopted them at their December 9th meeting. Please see them in the document linked [here](#). Many of the goals are linked directly to the FY27 Budget request.

Our Budget Hearings for the FY27 Budget are in full swing and will start on January 8th and continue on January 15th, 29th and February 5th. These hearings are your chance to learn about and provide input on the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. Your participation is key in helping us make decisions that reflect the needs of the entire community.

Westford will be transitioning to a hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash program in July 2026. Learn more about the program, including answers to [frequently asked questions](#), on the [PAYT webpage](#).

You may have noticed steel going up at the J.V. Fletcher Library in the center of town. Construction is going well and more information about the project can be found on the [Library Building Project webpage](#).

I'd like to invite you to Tea with the Town Manager on Thursday, January 8th from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Roudenbush on the second floor. This is an opportunity for residents to connect, ask questions, and share ideas for Westford's future.

I will be giving opening remarks at the Manufacturing in Massachusetts event on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 9 a.m. Read more about the program and details of the event here: [Manufacturing in MA Event](#)

Our Town Meeting is scheduled for March 28th at Westford Academy. Information about the meeting will be posted on the [website](#) and meetings with the Finance Committee and Select Board regarding the articles will be held in February and March. Please see the [Town Meeting timeline](#).

There are also open seats on several elected boards and committees, including the Select Board, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Board of Library Trustees, and School Committee. If you're interested in serving our community in one of these roles, nomination papers will be available starting Friday, January 2, 2026, at the Town Clerk's office and must be signed and returned by March 17.

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.

Again, wishing you a wonderful new year, and I look forward to continuing to serve you in the year ahead.

Kristen D. Las

Kristen Las,
Town Manager

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978-692-5501





Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026



Department of the Month Spotlight Cameron Senior Center



The Cameron Senior Center offers a welcoming environment for Westford residents age 55+. We provide a wide range of social, physical, and educational programs, along with vital support through our Social Services team for sensitive or urgent needs.

During the winter months, we partner with community organizations to host activities off-site, including Orchard Church, Roudenbush Community Center, Franco American Club, and others. Recent and upcoming special events include the Holiday Luncheon, Caroling & Cocoa, and our Valentine Luncheon.

Check out our new [January and February Newsletter](#) for additional information.



Upcoming Events:

ADU 101: Learn, Plan, Build: Friday, January 16 | 10:30 a.m. | Cameron Senior Center
Town staff will present an overview of planning and building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) in Westford. Light refreshments provided. All community members welcome. RSVP: 978-692-5523.

Thoreau and Friends: Friday, January 23 | 1 p.m. | Cameron Senior Center
Public historian Richard Smith explores Henry David Thoreau's rich social and literary world. Free program, sponsored by the Friends of the Cameron. Registration required: 978-692-5523

Lunch & Learn: Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT): Jan. 27 & Feb. 10 | 12 p.m. | Cameron Senior Center
Learn how Westford's Pay-As-You-Throw trash program works and what it means for seniors and smaller households. For many, little or no change is expected. This session is designed to answer questions and explain the program clearly. RSVP: 978-692-5523. Transportation: 978-399-2322.

Valentine Luncheon & Music: Friday, February 13 | 12 p.m. | First Parish Church, 48 Main St.
Enjoy a Valentine Luncheon with violinist Stefani Torode. Menu: Baked ziti & meatballs, Caesar salad, rolls, beverages (including Routes Roasters coffee), and dessert. Cost: Friends Members: \$12 & Non-Members: \$18. RSVP: 978-692-5523. Transportation: 978-399-2322

Free Income Tax Help: Volunteer Hal Schreiber is offering free preparation of 2025 federal and state tax returns for Westford older adults (no income limits). Call 978-692-5523 or 978-692-7906 or email halsch@verizon.net to sign up.

Free Sand Buckets: Need a free bucket of sand delivered to your home this winter? Call 978-692-5523 to be added to the list. Thank you to the Westford Police Department for this service.

The Cameron Senior Center is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. With extended hours on Tuesdays where we are open until 8 p.m. We also offer weekday transportation (Monday-Friday, 8:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.). Questions? Call the front desk at 978-692-5523.



Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Westford Select Board

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



December 9, 2025 - Select Board Meeting Highlights:

The Select Board meeting opened with members sharing several announcements, including a reminder that the Open Space and Recreation Plan Open Forum would be held December 15 and they thanked Public Works, the Fire Department, and Newport Materials for the quick response to the Grove Street water main break. The Board unanimously approved a banner request for the Westford Firefighters Association's Annual Christmas Tree Collection. The Board also held and approved multiple National Grid/Verizon public hearings to authorize new joint-use pole installations on Hildreth Street and Concord Road. Additional actions included adopting the FY26/27 [Select Board–Town Manager goals](#), opening the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant, and receiving a [FY27 budget](#) presentation in a joint session with the Finance Committee and School Committee. The Board also approved a license agreement supporting underground electrical work for the J.V. Fletcher Library renovation and expansion, along with multiple grants, purchase orders, and contracts.

December 23, 2025 - Select Board Meeting Highlights:

Members recognized town staff and milestones, including Judy Madsen's retirement from the J.V. Fletcher Library after 22 years and Pam McNiff's 11 years of service with the Town Manager's Office and Recreation Department. In a joint meeting with the Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, the Board voted to endorse pursuit of the Climate Leaders designation and to support an application for a Technical Assistance Grant for Municipal Building Decarbonization Planning. The Board also approved updates to the Pedestrian Safety Committee, including adding a high school student seat and appointing Raymond Hickey as a full member. Additional actions included approving past meeting minutes, hearing updates on the Open Space and Recreation Plan public input process and unanimously authorizing purchase orders and contracts for Grove Street repair assistance, Microsoft licensing, a new fire pumper, winter plowing, a multi-year Zencity contract, and municipal energy-efficiency projects.

From the Moderator

Contact Town Moderator Angela Harkness at aharkness@westfordma.gov or visit westfordma.gov/891/.



Mark your calendar for Annual Town Meeting on March 28, 2026, beginning at 9 a.m., at Westford Academy. All registered Westford voters are welcome to attend all or part of the meeting and participate.

Annual Town Meeting timeline: [Annual Town Meeting 2026 Timeline](#)

The timeline describes discussions leading up to Town Meeting where you can learn and ask questions about the articles to be voted on. At Annual Town Meeting we vote on the Town's budget, determine what programs to support and decide how our tax dollars will be spent.

For additional information, visit the [Moderator's page](#).

See you at the meeting! Please try to attend because democracy works best when everyone participates.





Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Westford Police Department

For more information, visit: www.westfordma.gov/304 or follow on Facebook, www.facebook.com/Westfordmapolice



WPD kicked off the holiday season with the annual High Five event at the town's elementary and middle schools before Thanksgiving!



On December 5, Ofc. Breault & Ofc. Mills teamed up with the Westford Public Schools Routes program for the Fill a Cruiser Toy Drive. The department's pink cruiser was packed full of toys to brighten the holidays for local children.

On December 9, members of the Westford Police and Fire Departments participated in the first ever Battle of the First Responder tip-a-responder event at Evviva Trattoria. The event raised \$1,700 which will be donated to Massachusetts General Hospital to support patients' holiday wish lists and three boxes of toys.

The Westford Police Department welcomed their newest intern, Danielle Carlson, a senior at Nashoba Valley Technical High School. She will be joining the department through the end of February where she will be gaining hands-on experience and learning more about the law enforcement profession.



Westford Fire Department

For more information, visit: www.westfordma.gov/195 or follow on Facebook, www.facebook.com/westfordfd



Firefighters responded to two separate incidents in December involving lithium-ion battery failures in common household devices. In both cases, the batteries went into thermal runaway, resulting in small fires. Fortunately, no injuries occurred and property damage was minimal.

Incidents involving lithium-ion battery failures have been increasing nationwide. These batteries power many everyday items, including phones, laptops, and tools. When damaged, a battery can enter a condition known as thermal runaway, a dangerous chain reaction producing flammable smoke, fire, or explosions that may restart even after a device appears stable. To reduce risk, use only manufacturer-approved batteries and chargers, avoid damaged devices, and protect electronics from repeated drops or extreme heat. Watch for warning signs such as swelling, overheating, or unusual odors. If a device begins smoking or overheating, move to a safe location and call 911 immediately.

We celebrated the retirement of Acting Capt. Andrew Anderson after more than 31 years of dedicated service to the Town. With his retirement, Acting Lt. Brian Baker was officially appointed permanent lieutenant. We wish Capt. Anderson a long, happy, and healthy retirement and wish Lt. Baker continued success in his new role.





Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee



On December 15, the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Committee, supported by technical assistance from the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), hosted an open-house visioning session. The event gathered community input on parks, recreation, and open space priorities to guide investments over the next 10 years. Guided by an overarching principle of cultivating resilience, the open house featured stations organized around four focus areas: trails, connectivity, and accessibility; recreation and facilities; conservation and water resources; and big ideas for Westford's future. The OSRP planning process supports the Town's Strategic Outcome Area focused on providing recreation opportunities and preserving open space.

Members of the OSRP Committee, the Westford Land Trust, and a Westford Academy student volunteer facilitated station discussions and gathered feedback on priorities, including protecting open space; improving accessibility and inclusion; expanding recreation programming; strengthening climate resilience; enhancing parks, fields, and facilities; and setting long-term community goals. Participation from an 8th-grade civics class from Blanchard Middle School broadened the range of perspectives shared. The next public outreach forum will be held on **Tuesday, January 27, 6–7:30 p.m.**, via Zoom, and will focus on developing goals and strategy priorities. [Registration Link](#)



J.V. Fletcher Library

Subscribe to the Friends of the Library e-newsletter or visit: westfordlibrary.org for more information.



Job Search Help for 50+ - Self Assessment ("Finding Your Whys"):

Jan. 7 | 9:30–11:30 a.m. Virtual | [Registration required.](#)

Historical Fiction Book Recommendations with Bestselling Author Jane Healey:

Jan. 13 | 6:30 p.m. | Virtual | [Registration required.](#)

Don't Toss That! 10 Things to Keep When Decluttering in 2026 (Jamie Novak):

Jan. 13 | 7 p.m. Virtual | [Registration required.](#)

Young Adult Advisory Board: Jan. 14 | 5:30–6:30 p.m. | 515 Groton Rd. | [Registration required.](#)

Email achrobak@westfordma.gov for more information.

Women's Fiction Book Recommendations with Bestselling Author Kristan Higgins:

Jan. 15 | 6:30 p.m. | Virtual | [Registration required.](#)

How Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II (Elyse Graham):

Jan. 21 | 7 p.m. Virtual | [Registration required.](#)

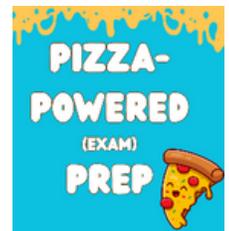
Pizza-Powered (Exam) Prep:

Jan. 22 | 6–9 p.m. | United Methodist Church, 10 Church St. [Registration suggested.](#)

YA Gnome Painting: Jan. 28 | 4:30–6 p.m. | Roudenbush (3rd floor). [Registration required.](#)

[Kids & Young Adult Book Clubs](#): Winter book club registration opens Jan. 5.

[Adult Book Clubs](#): Whether you prefer, mysteries, nonfiction, fiction, or a little bit of everything, we have a book club for you!





Westford Health Department



MRC Members Provide Municipal CPR Classes and Fall Prevention Kits

In December, the UMV MRC supported the Health Department by distributing 100 free Fall Prevention Kits to vulnerable residents and hosting two AHA CPR classes led by Rae Dick and Gail Johnson. The CPR sessions certified 19 participants, and four instructor candidates completed requirements to become AHA instructors.

Respiratory Illnesses and Norovirus

Winter brings highly contagious respiratory viruses such as the common cold, COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and influenza (FLU). In addition to respiratory illnesses, norovirus-often called the "stomach bug" is also circulating.

Protect yourself and your family by:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, and before eating.
- Disinfect frequently on high touched surface areas, such as doorknobs, light switches, phones, and countertops.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep children home if they are ill.
- Cover coughs and sneeze with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay up to date on recommended vaccinations, including flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
- Make sure to get enough Vitamin C and stay hydrated.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and exercise.



Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee

Save on Your Electric Bill Two Ways

New Power Options Program (POP) Contract and the Winter Heat Pump Rate

You should now see new savings on your electric rates in the most recent bill (12/18/25)!

1. If you are on Westford POP, Supply Services should show the new contract rates for your selected option (see below). Now is an excellent time to consider opting for POP Gold - your rate will decrease from the last contract and costs only a penny per kWh to opt up to 100% renewable energy.
2. If you have heat pumps installed in your home, you should show the new winter rate for the Distribution Charge under Delivery Services. You should see a Distribution Charge of \$0.05005/kWh, a savings of \$0.04237/kWh compared to the standard charge of \$0.09242/kWh.

If you had your heat pump installed using Mass Save incentives, you should be automatically enrolled. If not, you can enroll using the simple enrollment form at [Heat-Pump-Rate-Form](#)

View the Westford POP Webpage for more information: <https://masscea.com/westford/>



Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Westford Recycling Commission

Waste Not as We Start the New Year

New Year's Eve is a big night for family and friends to come together and celebrate — but unfortunately, it also tends to be a big night for waste. Throughout the holiday season, from Thanksgiving to the New Year, Americans produce **25% more waste** than usual, between food waste, decorations, and gift wrap.

Start 2026 on a lighter footprint with a few simple party swaps:

- Be thrifty with that sparkly New Year's Eve outfit. Consider thrift-store shopping for a unique look! It's fun and the price is right!
- Give your buffet a classy upgrade with real, not disposable cups and plates. There may be a little more cleanup - but think of the waste you'll avoid!
- It's also a great idea to use cloth napkins rather than paper ones.
- Plan ahead and limit your food waste.
- Ask guests what they'll be bringing and try to make just enough.
- Remember, food waste becomes a major problem at this time of year.
- **[Help your guests recycle.](#)**



Thanks for choosing mindful celebrations over waste—and Happy 2026!

Community Wellness

Buried in Treasures | January 13 | Tuesdays | 2–4 p.m. | Cameron Senior Center, 20 Pleasant St.

This 15-week supportive, skill-building course helps participants declutter, get organized, reduce excessive collecting and addresses hoarding tendencies. The course and workbook are free, and advance registration is required. Learn more about the course at [Buried in Treasures Workshop Flyer](#).

Register at nlaviolette@westfordma.gov or 978-399-2503.

Recovery Meditation | Thursdays | 4:30-5:30 p.m. | First Parish Church, 48 Main St.

Free meditation series created for individuals in recovery and the loved ones who walk beside them.

Whether you're healing from addiction or supporting someone who is, these guided practices offer a space for calm, connection and renewal. Open to all levels, no registration required. For questions call Westford Health Department 978-692-5509.

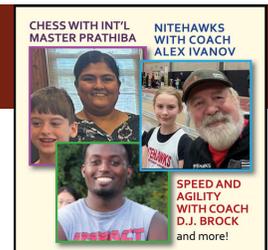
Westford Recreation

WPC After School Enrichment Program, Grades K-5 | M-F, school dismissal to 6 p.m.

Register Anytime! Safe, engaging, and fun, with flexible hours and a variety of activities to choose from. Located at Abbot, Crisafulli, Day, Miller, Nabnasset, and Robinson Schools. Stay tuned for Session Three NEW enrichment activities like classes with Fun World Language Academy, science-based C0deEx, and SNL Sports Academy.

Seasonal Programs Starting Soon - [Register Now!](#)

Jan. 5: Impact Speed & Agility, D.J. Brock | Vinyasa Yoga with Kelly
Jan. 6: Nitehawks Track & Field, Alex Ivanov | Lunch Time Yoga with Kelly
Jan. 7: On The Mark Archery
Jan. 8: Youth Chess, Int'l Master Prathiba | Brazilian United Youth Soccer!





Town of Westford

Town Manager's Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Trash Program

Westford will transition to a hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) curbside trash program in July 2026, following a Select Board vote on November 25, 2025. Learn more—including FAQs, the timeline, and materials on the [Town's PAYT webpage](#), which is frequently updated as new information becomes available.



Adjusted Holiday Hours

Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 19, 2026, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Town Hall Operating Hours

Mon/Wed/Thurs: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday: 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Work Where You Live – Apply for a Town Position Today!

Employment Opportunities:

- Executive Assistant (Project / Procurement Specialist), Town Manager's Office
- Snowplow Contractors, Equipment & Seasonal Snowplow Operators (Part-time)
- Civilian Traffic Control (Public Safety)
- Council on Aging Part-time Van Driver (multiple open positions)
- Library Associate / Juvenile Reference -Youth Services / Program Assistant
- Public Safety Telecommunicator

Learn about Westford Job Opportunities: www.westfordma.gov/jobs

TOWN OF WESTFORD	<u>978-692-5500</u>
www.westfordma.gov	55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886

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Follow the Town on social media



Boards & Committees Seeking Volunteers:

- 300th Anniversary Committee
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Agricultural Commission
- Board of Cemetery Commissioners
- Bylaw Review Committee
- Commission on Disability
- Communications Advisory Committee
- Cultural Council
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Monuments and Memorials Committee
- Norther Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
- Parkerville Schoolhouse Committee
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Pedestrian Improvement Plan for MCMOD Advisory Committee
- Pedestrian Safety Committee
- Permanent Town Building Committee
- Recycling Commission
- Tax Possession Disposition Committee
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Learn more about the important work of our boards and committees:

www.westfordma.gov

Consider lending your time and talents by filling out a [Volunteer Activity Form](#)