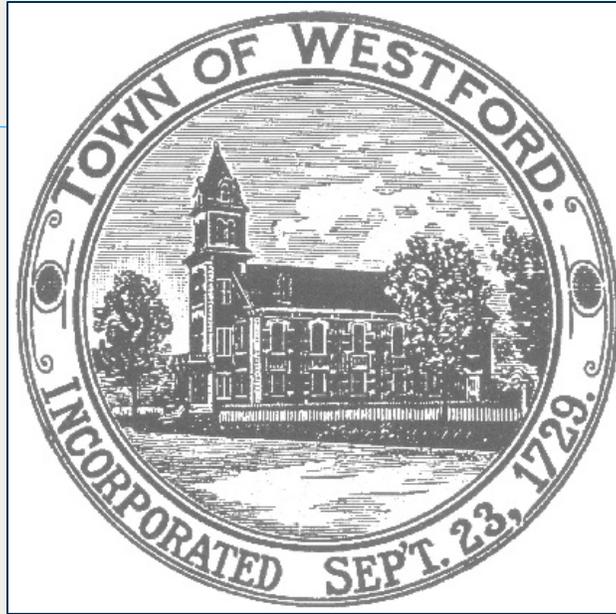


Town of Westford



Tri-Board Meeting

Kristen Las, Town Manager

Dr. Christopher Chew, School Superintendent

October 28, 2025

Agenda

- Reminder of Strategic Outcome Areas
- Close out of FY25
- FY26 Budget Challenges
- FY27 Budget Process
- FY27 Pressure Points
- How to stay engaged

Strategic Outcome Areas



- Responsive and Responsible Town Government



- Caring and Engaged Community



- Opportunities for Recreation and Preservation of Open Space



- Quality Educational Opportunities

- Commitment to Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action



- Diverse and Attainable Housing Options



- Intentional and Appropriate Economic Growth



Close out of FY25

- Revenue exceeded projections presented at the March 2025 Annual Town Meeting
 - New Growth: Approved at \$890,944 vs. projected \$850,000
 - State Aid: Final state budget resulted in a net General Fund Increase of \$195,114 over Governor's Budget
 - Local Revenue: Actual of \$9,323,959 vs. budgeted of \$7,717,769, contributing \$1,606,190 to FY26 Free Cash Certification
- General fund operating and capital budgets closed out \$2,674,047 of expenses.
 - Personal Services: Police \$403,918, DPW \$217,048, Comp Reserve \$198,727, Telecommunicators \$116,987, Library \$104,513 (due to vacancies)
 - Expenses: Waste Disposal \$251,164, Risk Management \$210,376
 - Capital Projects: Wastewater \$320,261
- FY26 Free Cash certified at \$6,201,595

FY26 Budget Update

- Chapter 70 came in Governor's Budget from 1/23/25 had Chapter 70 of \$18,643,944. The final approved budget had \$18,982,269, which is an increase of \$338,325. However, state assessment also increased by \$179,887, which was mostly school choice sending tuition and charter school sending tuition. The net general fund impact from state aid from the Governor's budget to the final approved budget was \$195,114.
- Circuit Breaker will increase by \$700,000 supplementing FY27
- Town accounts reduced for FY26 now needing Special Town Meeting appropriation
- Timely FY26 capital requests went to Special Town Meeting

FY27 Budget Constraints

- Medicare costs increasing
- OPEB funding needs to keep pace to keep AAA bond rating
- Public Facilities
 - Deferred maintenance on facilities
 - Insurance claims
 - Oversight of projects
- Professional development budgets have been cut to absolute minimum
- Need for a management analyst for data analysis and special projects to be more efficient
- Request from Economic Development Committee to keep pace

FY27 Budget Constraints

- Increase in Building Inspector staff for increase in housing and commercial developments
- Technology enhancements to be more efficient and user friendly (example: permitting system, security plans – Town and School)
- Police
 - Strain on Route 110 Corridor - Calls for service are rising, driven by significant community expansion, including 243.8 additional annual calls from the Tech Park West apartments.
 - Upcoming Service Demand – Anticipated additional units for MBTA housing will lead to more than 300+ calls annually
 - Reduction of two officers in FY25 – reduces daily patrol
- Fire
 - Reduction of two firefighters in FY25 - closure of Rogers Fire Station (3 times since July 2024) & increase in overtime costs
 - Paramedic Training \$50K per year needed for retention and recruitment
 - Mutual aid calls in and out of Westford due to overall regional strain

FY27 Budget Constraints

- Schools

- There are class sizes above guidelines, specifically at the elementary schools
 - Able to utilize FY25 carryover Title I funds to support Gr 4 at Day and Gr 2 Miller
 - Need for additional section to reduce K-2 sizes at Robinson for FY27
- Combining of language classes at WA has not been successful - too many levels across one subject area
- Westford is not eligible for FY26 Title I Funding
 - Day/ Miller lost a combined 1.0 School Adjustment Counselor
 - Without FY26 Title I funds, schools are not eligible for FY27 Title IV - A funds (\$10K)
- Mental Health Support – School psychologist for 6-12
 - Legal guidelines on timeframe to get evaluations done
 - Current staffing does not have capacity to provide sufficient consultation regarding student needs
- Initial projections were concerning
- FY26 circuit breaker increase \$700,000 to be used for FY27

FY27 Budget Unknowns

- New Growth
- State Aid
- Special Education
- Collective Bargaining Contracts
- NVTHS Assessment – Projected increase in enrollment of 3 students from Westford
- Health Insurance Utilization
- Local Revenue (Permitting from MBTA, loss of Regency Hotel Excise)

FY27 Budget Process

- September 2025 – Departments submit initial budget requests to Town Manager
- October 2025 – Town Manager reviews budget requests
- October through November 2025 – Capital Planning Committee reviews requests
- December 2025 – Town Manager and School Superintendent present budgets to Select Board and School Committee respectively
- January 2025 – Finance Committee Public Hearings on Budget
- February 2025 – Budget projection updated
- March 2025 – Budget recommendations by the Select Board
- March 2025 – Town Meeting votes on the budget

How the Public Can Stay Involved

- Bookmark the Town's [Budget Page](https://www.westfordma.gov/1625/Budgets) <https://www.westfordma.gov/1625/Budgets>
- Attend the Select Board and School Committee budget presentations in December 2025
- Attend the Finance Committee Public Hearings in January and February 2026
- Attend Town Meeting on March 28, 2026 at 9 AM at Westford Academy
- Sign up for Town Notifications: <https://www.westfordma.gov/list.aspx>
- Town [Facebook](#) / [X](#) accounts
- Email the Town Manager (klas@westfordma.gov) and/or Select Board (selectboard@westfordma.gov) with questions or concerns



Discussion

Efficiencies Back Up Slide if Asked

- PAYT – Presentation to SB on September 23, 2025
- Roudenbush Lease – settled – partnership ongoing
- IGA
- Health Insurance – 7% renewal, received 5 proposals for consultant October 20, 2025
- Economic Development – Presentation to SB October 14, 2025
- Reviewing legal ad legislation