



Washington

# WESTFORD NEWSLETTER

February 2014

Westford Town Office

1713 Vermont Route 128

Westford, Vermont 05494

Phone (802)878-4587- Fax (802)879-6503

[www.westfordvt.us](http://www.westfordvt.us)



Lincoln

## Town Office Notes

### Town Charter Public Hearing

The second public hearing for the Town Charter is **Monday, February 3rd, 7pm, at the Brick Meeting House**. Major elements included in the proposed Charter include changing some elected positions to appointed positions, and creating a voter recall provision for all elected provisions. The Selectboard feels these are necessary changes that will address accountability and improve the Town's ability to fill important positions. This is the last opportunity to provide the Selectboard with your questions and comments before the proposed Charter is finalized and presented to voters in March.

### Time Table to Town Meeting

- **February 26<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)** – 5:00 p.m. deadline to submit an application for addition to the checklist, or to file a written notice of intent to apply for those who are not eligible to register to vote but will be by Town Meeting.
- **March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Monday)** – Town Meeting (voting on non-Australian ballot questions) and public hearing for Australian ballot questions (including town and school budgets), 7pm, at the Westford School in the gym.
- **March 4<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)** – Voting day for Australian ballot articles. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Westford School gym.

### Dog Licenses

Dog Licenses are due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. A current rabies certificate is required. If you are unsure if the current certificate is on file, please call the Town Office. For your convenience, you may mail or drop off the fee and rabies certificate along with a S.A.S.E. and your license will be mailed to you. The fee until April 1<sup>st</sup> is \$10.00 for spayed or neutered dogs and \$12.00 for dogs that are not spayed or neutered. Dog licenses obtained **after April 1<sup>st</sup> are subject to a late fee**. We encourage all dog owners to register their dogs before April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Winter Reminders

- Plowing snow from your driveway across town roads is prohibited. This could cause damage to the town road equipment and also poses a hazard to vehicles traveling on the road.
- Please do not park vehicles on the road. This makes it very difficult for the road crew to plow and sand. Vehicles parked on the road may be towed at the owner's expense.
- Snowmobile travel on roads is prohibited unless the Selectboard has granted permission for a specific area.

### Senior Luncheon

Attention Seniors: Our senior luncheons will resume on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Anyone 55+ are welcome to join us. We have been having a wonderful attendance and hope this continues in March. Hope to see you there. If you have questions or comments, please call Carol Howrigan, President, at 878-3090.

### Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the March Newsletter is 12:00 noon on Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

### Town Office Closed

The Town Office will be closed Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\***

**CHANGES TO TOWN NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION  
ACTION REQUIRED**

In an effort to save taxpayers money, the Selectboard has decided to change the way the newsletter is distributed. Although the savings will not be a significant amount of money, every dollar counts. Given today's technology, the newsletter is available electronically by email and on the Town's website, therefore mailing of hard copies will be limited to those who contact the Town Office to request to be put on the mailing list. This change goes into effect for the July Newsletter.

If you currently receive your newsletter in the mail and would like to continue to, please contact the Town Office at 878-4587.

**Exciting News from the Westford Public Library**

The Westford Public Library recently won a sizable grant (\$3700) from the Vermont Birth to Three Community Foundation. This grant is to be used to provide outreach services for non-traditional child care providers, called family, friend and neighbor networks, or FFNs. This also includes grandparents and any other non-registered childcare providers. Westford was seen as a good candidate for this kind of grant.

What does this mean for Westford? Well, besides receiving double the amount of our yearly materials and programming budget for this age group – our library will be focusing on the following things:

1. **Technology as a literacy tool** – We will be getting an iPad and Kindle for in-library use. I will be demonstrating early literacy apps and uses for these devices at storytime or maybe even in special programs. Many parents, grandparents and other FFNs have this technology for themselves, now they can learn to use it with those they take care of.
2. **New and update Express Bags** – I'll call these Grandparent Backpacks. These will be backpacks with seven picture books and a toy or puzzle all related to a theme (dinosaurs, animals, etc.) for patrons to check out and take home. These will be great for families on the go, busy child care providers, or grandparents whose grandkids are visiting for the weekend. Anyone is allowed to check these out. They should be a lot of fun.
3. **FFN – Childcare Outreach Service** – I would like to provide a delivery service of 15 books every three weeks to any child care in Westford, registered or not. If you care for two or more children who are not your own children and would like delivery to your home of books- please let me know. I will be able to provide this service to **five** FFNs in the area. **If you watch children or send your child to some sort of child care in Westford, please contact the library or encourage your provider to take advantage of this great opportunity.**

We receive our funding starting at the end of January, so expect to see these services starting mid-February and March. This is an exciting opportunity for our community.

Thank you,  
Bree Drapa, Librarian  
878-5639 or westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com

► “Town Charter with bold explanations of paragraphs (marked by ►)”

*TOWN OF WESTFORD CHARTER*

*Last Charter Revisions: December 20, 2013*



Note that in this document, the Charter is referred to as “chapter”.

In Vermont, towns are run by state statute. A charter allows us to make changes to the statute to better suit our needs. Only the items spelled out in this charter would change.

Included in a Charter are items that deviate from Statute.

There are some items included which are in the statute, and they are marked with \*\*\*.

**1. General Provisions**

The Town of Westford shall have all the powers granted to towns and municipal corporations by the constitution and laws of the State of Vermont and by this chapter, together with all the implied powers necessary to carry into execution all the powers granted.

► **When a town adopts a Charter, both the Charter and the Statutes are used to run the town. Where the Charter differs from Statutes, the Charter supersedes.**



**Elected and Appointed Officers**

Town Officers are elected or appointed, and there are differences between the two:

**Elected officers**

- **Must reside in Westford (limiting the pool of possible candidates)**
- **Only answer to the voters at election time – i.e., are not subject to oversight by other Town Officers (e.g., Selectboard, Auditors, School Board, etc.)**

**Appointed officers**

- **May reside in or outside of Westford (allowing for a search for more candidates)**
- **Are subject to oversight by other Town Officers (who can oversee the work, and insure that problems are addressed)**
- **May be removed for cause (see Westford Personnel Rules)**

**2. Elected Officers**



**State Statute requires certain positions are Elected unless changed by Charter.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, the elected Officers of the Town of Westford shall be those required for towns by state law, and they shall be elected by Australian ballot.

(b) Elected Officers shall perform all duties and responsibilities necessary or required to carry out the provisions of this chapter as well as those provided by state law generally.

(c) The Selectboard shall constitute the legislative body of the Town of Westford for all purposes required by statute except as otherwise herein specifically provided, and shall have all the powers and authority given to, and perform all duties required of, town legislative bodies under the laws of the State of Vermont.



**The Selectboard shall follow state statutes, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.**

\*\*\* (1) Organization of the Selectboard shall be done in accordance to 24 V.S.A. §871.

(2) The Selectboard shall elect a vice chair at its organizational meeting.

(3) The chair of the Selectboard, shall preside at all meetings of the Selectboard. If the chair is not present, the vice chair of the board will serve as acting chair.

(4) If any member of the Selectboard fails to attend at least seventy percent (70%) of the meetings in any twelve (12) month period or misses three (3) consecutive meetings without the consent of the Selectboard, the Selectboard may declare the position vacant and fill it in accordance with state law.

**This provides assurance that each board member attends most meetings.**

\*\*\* (5) The Selectboard shall determine its own rules and orders of business not addressed by this chapter and state statute.

\*\*\* (6) The Selectboard may appoint or dissolve any authorities, boards, commissions, or committees created by it and under its purview as authorized by this chapter or state statute.

### 3. Appointed Officers

(a) In addition to all other offices which may be filled by appointment by the Selectboard, pursuant to state law, the Selectboard shall appoint the following who shall thereafter cease to be elected:

- (1) town treasurer;
- (2) listers or assessor;
- (3) delinquent tax collector;
- (4) cemetery commissioners
- (5) town agent
- (6) town grand juror

**The office of Treasurer affects most aspects of town government, and all the taxpayers. As the town has grown, so has our budget: The treasurer now must manage about 7 million tax dollars for the town and school which requires specific education and training. We need the flexibility to seek the best candidate for the job, which may mean going beyond the borders of Westford if no one in town has the skills required. It has also become clear that oversight is needed to be sure our tax dollars are managed well. This helps insure that the job is done correctly, or that steps can be taken to correct problems that may arise. It is important to note that all other appointed town employees go through a thorough hiring process, including posting the position, reviewing resumes, checking references, interviews and in some cases background checks. It seems prudent that one of the most important positions in the town should go through the same process, and by appointing them they will.**

**The delinquent tax collector position is proposed to become appointed because it also deals with town financials. The listers (or assessor) are proposed to become appointed largely because the necessary skill set has become more complicated. The cemetery commissioners are proposed to become appointed because we see interest from non-residents with expertise and enthusiasm who still have ties to the community. Town agent and grand juror were added because no one typically runs for these somewhat dated positions, and by appointing, the Selectboard can find someone if needed.**

\*\*\* (b) The number of persons appointed to the offices in section 3(a) shall be determined by the Selectboard.

(c) Appointment of Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector:

For these two appointments the Selectboard will use the following guidelines in addition to following the Town of Westford Personnel Rules.

- (1) Nominating Committee. When a vacancy exists in the office of treasurer or delinquent tax collector, the Selectboard shall call for the formation of a nominating committee comprised of one (1)

Selectboard member, two (2) justices of the peace and two (2) residents. The Selectboard and Justices of the Peace will select which of their members will serve on the committee. These three (3) Officials shall select the two (2) residents. Meetings of the committee shall be warned and conducted as public meetings in accordance with the requirements of Vermont statutes. Members of this committee shall serve until any vacancy is filled by the Selectboard.

(2) Search Process. The committee shall have the authority to solicit candidates, to advertise notice of a vacancy, and to make an investigation of a candidate's credentials and background as the committee deems appropriate. Upon completion of the investigation and interviewing of candidates, the committee shall submit to the Selectboard up to three (3) names of those candidates deemed qualified for the positions.

(3) Appointing a Candidate. Within forty-five (45) days of its receipt of candidates from the committee, the Selectboard shall appoint from such candidates a person(s) to fill any vacancy or notify the committee in writing that none of the candidates shall be appointed. If no appointment is made, the committee shall then reconvene and submit the names of additional qualified candidates to the Selectboard.

(4) Interim Appointment. Until such a time as a vacancy is filled pursuant to this section, the Selectboard may appoint an official on an interim basis to fill the vacancy.

(e) All appointed Town Officers shall be governed by the Town of Westford Personnel Rules.

**The Town of Westford Personnel Rules is available at the town office.**

(f) From time to time, and whenever a job is open the Selectboard shall adopt or revise a general statement of the qualifications and job descriptions necessary to perform the duties and responsibilities of each of the appointed town offices.

(g) Once an appointment has been made pursuant to this section of the chapter, if the office is currently filled by a person who was elected to the office, the Selectboard shall give at least 30 days notice to the Officer that their term shall expire and the elected Officer shall vacate the office.

**If an Officer is elected to a position in March, and this Charter is approved, the Selectboard will give that Officer at least 30 days notice to vacate their office, once an appointment is made.**

#### 4. Independent Audit

The Selectboard shall provide for an independent audit of all Town accounts as it deems necessary. Such audits shall be made by a certified public accountant or firm of such accountants who have no personal interest, direct or indirect, in the fiscal affairs of the Town government or any of its Officers.

**In addition to the yearly audits done by the Town auditors the Selectboard may hire an outside firm for an independent audit, which examines the procedures of the Town and accounts, and issues a report verifying that monies are there and the books are ok, or if there are any red flags.**

#### 5. Removal of Elected Town Officers

**Right now, there is no means to remove an ELECTED official, regardless of how badly they are doing their job. This applies to the Selectboard and other elected officials. This Charter enables the townspeople to remove folks who they believe are not doing the job they were elected to do.**

Any elected town Officer may be removed from office in the following manner:

(a) A petition must be filed with the town clerk seeking the removal of any elected Town Officer or Officers. The petition must be signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of registered voters.

(b) Within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the petition, the Selectboard shall warn a special Town meeting, or if the annual meeting is to occur within ninety (90) days of the filing of the petition, include

an article in the warning for the annual meeting, for the purpose of voting, by Australian ballot, on whether the Officer or Officers shall be removed from office.

(c) Removal shall only occur if a majority of the votes cast at the annual or special town meeting approve removal and the total of all votes cast on the removal question equals or exceeds the total of all votes that were cast to elect the Officer.

➤ **A person can be removed from office if a) a majority of the voters agree to the removal and b) there are at least as many votes cast to remove as there were to elect the person.**

(d) If an Officer is removed the Officer shall immediately cease to hold office and the office shall become vacant. The vacancy shall be filled as provided by law.

(e) Only one (1) petition for removal may be filed against any given elected Officer during any twelve (12) month period of his or her term of office.

## 6. Conflict of Interest

➤ **This section means that an Officer will disqualify him/herself from participating in decisions where they have a conflict of interest.**

(a) A Town Officer shall recuses him/herself or be disqualified from any proceeding in which his/her impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

(b) If anyone thinks a Town Officer has a conflict in a case before a board, commission or committee, they can bring it to the attention of the Officer's respective group. If the Officer does not disqualify him/herself, the board, commission or committee shall consider the factual basis for the question and vote on the member's disqualification, the challenged member abstaining. This vote shall occur before any other business is conducted.

(c) A Town Officer who is disqualified by virtue of a conflict of interest shall not vote upon, participate in the discussion of, or otherwise sit as a member of any board, commission or committee upon the matter from which he/she is disqualified.

(d) Town Officers and employees shall follow the rules outlined in the Westford Conflict of Interest Policy.

## 7. Severability

If any provision of this chapter is held invalid, the other provisions of the chapter shall not be affected thereby. If the application of the chapter or any of its provisions to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the application of this chapter and its provision to other persons or circumstances shall be affected thereby.

➤ **If for any reason, a part of this Charter is determined to be invalid, it does not affect the rest of the Charter. And, if a part of this Charter is determined to be invalid in relation to one circumstance it will also be invalid in like circumstances.**

## 8. Effective Date

This chapter shall take effect upon passage.

➤ **This must be voted on in Town Meeting. Following passage, it then goes before the state for approval, and if approved during this Legislative Session, it would go into effect in July.**

# WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

http://westfordpubliclibrary.org

(802) 878-5639

westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com

1717 VERMONT ROUTE 128, WESTFORD VT 05494

**We love our patrons - during the month of February there will be free chocolates and free coffee, tea, and hot chocolate. (Thank you to everyone who donated K Cups!)**



**\*\*Meditation has moved to Tuesday nights at 7pm\*\* please contact Michael Hechmer for details (878-3725)**

**Tai Chi is back at the Westford Public Library! Starting in March - Sign up now! Mondays and Wednesdays 11:15-12:15, March 3 - April 30. Class is limited to 12 participants.**

Co-teachers Suzan Juskiewicz and Georgette Huffman



Tai Chi for Arthritis is a joint safe activity - proven to reduce pain while you improve balance, agility and strength. Can be done seated or standing. Classes are sponsored by CVAA and are offered at no charge to adults age 50 plus.

Building on skills learned in each class, consistent attendance is encouraged, especially the first several sessions.

Sign up with Bree at 893-2689 or westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com

## Library Hours

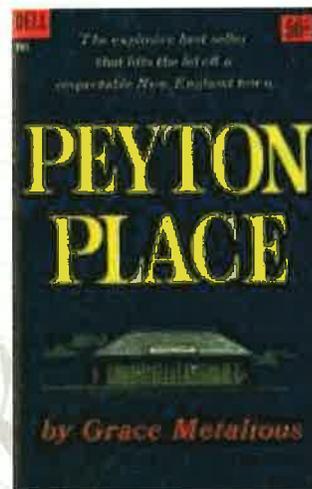
**Wednesday: 1-7pm**  
**Thursday: 10am-6pm**  
**Friday: 1-7pm**  
**Saturday: 10am-2pm**

## Book Group Discussion

**Wednesday February 12, 6pm**

**Peyton Place**

**By: Grace Metalious**



*Peyton Place* was written in 1956. It sold 60,000 copies within the first ten days of its release and remained on the *New York Times* best seller list for 59 weeks. It was adapted as both a

1957 film and a 1964-69 television series. The plot follows the lives of three women—lonely and repressed Constance MacKenzie; her illegitimate daughter Allison; and her employee Selena Cross. The novel describes how they come to terms with their identity as women and sexual beings in a small New England town. Hypocrisy, social inequities and class privilege are recurring themes in a tale that includes incest, abortion, adultery, lust and murder. (wikipedia)

Extra Copies Available at the Librarian's Desk.  
Next month: R. J Palacio's Wonder

## Pajama Storytime

Wednesday, February 19 - 6-7pm

Theme: Mud and Maple!

It's Vermont's special season!

Come dressed in your PJs for a good time! We'll read stories and do a craft and share a sweet snack.



## **Early Literacy Storytime : Birth to Pre-School Every Thursday at 11am No registration required!**

**2/6/14:** Theme: Olympics!

**2/13/14:** Theme: Valentine's Day

**2/20/14:** Theme: Presidents of the USA

**2/27/14:** Theme: Math

Storytime consists of several stories around a theme, as well as a theme-based craft. All ages and levels of attention are encouraged to come. Don't worry if they fidget - they are still getting a lot out of it!

The WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY provides access to materials, technology, reference services and programs to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the Westford community.

# WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

<http://westfordpubliclibrary.org>

(802) 878-5639 ♦ [westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com)

## February Library Events

February 5 - Trustees Meeting 6-7pm

February 6 - VELI Training Session One at the preschool 6-7:30pm

February 7 - Downton Abbey Tea 7-8:30pm

February 8 - DIY Valentines 10:30-11:30am

Co-sponsored by the Rec Dept - goodie bags for kids

February 12 - Book group - Peyton Place - 6-7pm

February 19 - PJ Storytime: Mud and Maple - 6-7pm

February 20 - VELI Training Session Two at the Library 6-7:30pm

February 28 - Lunch and a Movie - Noon-2pm - Bring a lunch, Popcorn and drinks provided. (Drop off 9+ ok)

Storytime every Thursday 11am



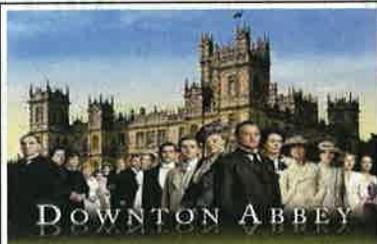
Focused on the new Kindergarten Common Core Math Curriculum

The Westford Public Library and Westford Elementary preschool teacher, Kendra Dibble, present a two night event for parents with children age 3 to 5. Thurs. February 6 - 6-7:30 at the preschool Thurs. February 20 - 6-7:30 at the library Kids are encouraged to come.

3 FREE books and 3 FREE math toys! THIS CLASS IS FULL - IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND, PLEASE CANCEL AHEAD OF TIME, AS WE HAVE A WAITING LIST.

DIY Valentines - Saturday February 8 10:30-11:30am (Co-Sponsored by the Rec Dept)

Come create something special for that special someone! We'll have all the craft supplies to make some really special Valentines. You can also make beaded bracelets and necklaces. Cookies and milk served. Goodie bags for the kids!



### DOWNTON ABBEY TEA

Friday, Feb 7 7:00-8:30pm

Come watch Sunday's episode a few days

early with our copy of the Fourth Season on DVD. Tea (in real teacups) and scones will be served. Come dressed up or not! Attendees may enter a raffle that night to be the FIRST to check out Season 4 on DVD.

You're in for a jolly good time!

Looking for something to do over February Vacation? Remember we have Park and Museum Passes - ECHO, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne Farms, and more!



### Lunch and a Movie Feb 28- Noon-2pm

Bring a lunch and watch this funny animated sequel. Drinks and popcorn provided. Drop off 9+ ok, younger kids, bring an adult.

The Westford Public Library is now accepting donations of books, audiobooks, and DVDs for our annual Fourth of July Book Sale. Please make sure items are in GOOD condition - clean and free of mold. Ask yourself - would I loan this to a friend? We do not accept textbooks, encyclopedias, magazines, VHS or cassette tapes, music CDs, or old travel guides.

The WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY provides access to materials, technology, reference services and programs to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the Westford community.

## SCHOOL BOARD NOTES-TOWN MEETING PREVIEW

The board has agreed upon the proposed school budget to be voted on at Town Meeting. Please review the materials in your town meeting report which will be available in mid-February or visit the Supervisory Union website at [www.ccsuvt.org/school-boards/westford](http://www.ccsuvt.org/school-boards/westford) to review the complete presentation of the budget. Westford, like most if not all of the other school districts in the state finds itself in the unhappy position of proposing a budget with a small increase that translates into a high tax increase. We have been researching the reasons for this situation and will discuss them later in this article. Information about the budget will be presented at Town Meeting on Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 7pm at the school. Voting on the budget takes place on March 4<sup>th</sup> from 7am to 7pm at the school.

**PETITION:** The school board has received a petition asking that the elementary school in Westford be closed and that an approved independent school be opened in its place. The board just received this petition a few days ago and is in the process of researching with legal experts how the question should be legally warned to the voters. We will be meeting on Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> to approve a new warning that includes the intent of the petition.

The petition raises many, many questions for the board as it will for voters in the community. We have been able to answer a few of them and many more will present themselves in the coming days. **WE URGE YOU TO CONTACT A BOARD MEMBER WITH QUESTIONS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE US ANSWER TO INFORM YOUR VOTE.** Perhaps most important for each of us to understand is that **YOU MUST BE PRESENT AT TOWN MEETING ON MONDAY EVENING MARCH 3<sup>rd</sup> TO VOTE ON THIS QUESTION.**

What does it mean for a town to close its elementary school? The law says that if a town does not operate a school it must pay tuition to the public or approved independent school of the parent's choice.

What is an approved independent school? This is a private school that has received approval from the State Board of Education to operate and accept public tuition dollars. It is usually a private, nonprofit entity (although it could be "for profit") run by a board of directors. The directors are not publically elected and there are no requirements for the board to hold public meetings. The board of directors of the independent school determines the amount of tuition it will charge for students to attend the school.

How would the budget for the elementary portion of the school district be determined? Parents can choose to send their child to any public or approved independent school. The law says this: If the school district does not operate an elementary school and a student goes to a public elementary school, the full tuition is paid. Tuition paid to an approved independent school is capped by statute – 16 V.S.A. § 823(b). Unless the voters choose to pay more, the district pays the lesser of the average announced tuition for union elementary schools (\$11,703 this year), the tuition charged by the approved independent school or the average per-pupil tuition paid for the other resident students.

What happens if the approved independent school charges more than the amount of tuition the town is required to pay? As with our high school students the parents must make up the difference.

Have other communities in Vermont voted to do this? We only know of two communities that have done this. They are Winhall and North Bennington. We will be researching their experience.

Would the town be able to save money by moving in this direction? This will be a tough question to answer since it would entirely depend on the choices that parents make. We do know that this would not change the way education funding works. Since most communities in Vermont are experiencing the same situation we are - no or small increases in the budget resulting in high tax increases - we are not certain that this change would make a difference. We do know that in FY13 Westford's total per pupil spending was below the statewide average. We will be learning as much as we can in the coming days to try to help answer this question. Again, if there is information that you think we should research in this regard please let us know.

There are other questions that have occurred to us. Should we vote to close our school without knowing any of the details about what might replace it? Would our time be better spent working with other school boards to lobby for change in the state funding system that would change the present dynamics that are leading to high tax increases? How can we compare the present quality of the school to what might replace it? Should the

town give up its public school and lose its voice in how the school is run and how much it costs? Many more questions will occur to each of you and we hope you will share them with us.

### **WHY ARE RELATIVELY SMALL INCREASES IN SCHOOL BUDGETS RESULTING IN HIGH TAX INCREASES?**

The school budget that we voted for FY10 was \$5,194,034. The budget we are proposing for FY15 is \$5,153,985. How can our taxes be going up so much?

- The funding formula bases taxes on per pupil spending. Our number of pupils have declined.
- The Great Recession has resulted in lower property values across the state. The nonresidential tax (second homes, commercial property, etc.) is not only not growing as it has in the past, it is bringing in less money.
- The revenues other than the property tax that go into the Education Fund are growing more slowly than school spending.
- Last year the state relied on a one time funding source of \$20M. Since 1 penny raises about \$10M for the Education Fund it takes a two cent increase in the base tax rate just to make up for this lost revenue.
- The state's share of Special Education costs are projected to increase by \$10M for FY15.
- The state's reliance on the property tax to fund education has increased from 61% in FY2005 to 68% in FY2015.

Misery probably doesn't love company when it comes to increasing taxes but we are certainly not alone in the situation we face this year.

Please attend Town Meeting on Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 7pm at the school. Please vote on the school budget on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime please contact a board member with your questions or comments about the budget or the petition article(s).

Martha Heath, Mark Drapa, Andre Roy, Scott Cooledge, Glenn Dukes

### **WESTFORD FRONT PORCH FORUM**

If you have not joined the Westford Front Porch Forum, please consider doing so. Everyone is invited to participate and it's free! This is a great way to connect with neighbors and the community.

Check it out at [www.FrontPorchForum.com](http://www.FrontPorchForum.com)!

*This community service is brought to you by Burlington residents Michael and Valerie Wood-Lewis.*

### **Fairfax Fletcher Westford Little League Registration Days**

Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 6pm-8pm, BFA Fairfax High School Library

Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am - 11:30am, BFA Fairfax Elementary Lobby

Forms are available at [www.ffwll.com](http://www.ffwll.com)

# What do you want for Westford?



**Don't leave it all to *Chance*...**

Now is your time to act on development in Westford!

The Westford Planning Commission will hold a Community Planning Workshop Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Westford Elementary School in the common area for citizens interested in what future development should look like in Westford.

This is a hands on workshop in which participants will apply different lot designs to large aerial photography maps using a variety of visual and dimensional aids. Group ideas and discussions will focus on applying different Form Base Code concepts to future residential subdivisions in our AFRII Zoning District (Rte. 128, Rte. 15 & Westford-Milton Rd).

Once again professional consultant, Brandy Saxton of Place Sense, will lead our workshop. So be prepared for an exciting, informative and action packed workshop!

The Planning Commission is collecting data from our public outreach events and workshops to compile a draft code for public review.

The minutes of our previous Form Base Code workshop and link to the project website can be found on the town website at [www.westfordvt.us](http://www.westfordvt.us).

Planning Commission meetings are open to the public and are usually held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month downstairs at the Westford Town Office at 7pm.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

February 2014

The Westford Recreation Department was created to provide recreational, educational, athletic, cultural, and entertainment activities to all Westford residents and neighbors. We strive to offer programs for a wide variety of ages, abilities and interests. We depend on community input, support and volunteers to make these programs successful.

**Coordinator's Corner-**

Even though it has been a cold, ice filled winter, we haven't had a shortage of Rec Dept. events! I almost think we have more activities planned in the winter!

We are looking for **one more person to volunteer** on our Rec Dept. Committee. About 5 hours of volunteer work each month, which includes a monthly meeting. It is a great way to get more programs added in town, and to help out your community and stay connected. Email me for more detailed information and any questions you might have. Thanks for considering!

Watch Front Porch Forum and LIKE our Facebook page for updates.

As always, you can contact me at (c) 338-8235 or WestfordVTRec@gmail.com.

*Yours in Recreation~ Heather Armata*



Our Next Committee Meeting is February 18th.

Please let us know if you would like to attend, and we'll put you on the agenda! Thanks!

**Westford Ice Rink Info:**

The rink is free to use for anyone, but in return, we ask that you follow the rink rules and only use the ice if it is open. There is a sign on the Common Road side: Green is OPEN, red is CLOSED. Rink master Dave Adams is who determines if the rink is usable and he has set up an email address for inquiring minds: WestfordRink@gmail.com or on the new Twitter account, @Westford Rink. Thanks Dave!

**OPEN GYM is BACK!!!!!!**



When: February 2, 9 & 16th  
Where: Westford Elem. School  
Time: 10:30am-12:00pm  
Ages: Birth to 4th Grade

Come shoot hoops, hula hoop or jump loop-d-loops! Whatever you do, get your energy out on those cold winter days! Bring your own trikes, scooters, or bikes (no marking tires, please).

Questions? Email WestfordVTRec@gmail.com

**Nordic Skiing still has openings!**

When: Now until March 14, 2013  
Time: Fridays from 3:00pm until 4:45pm  
Where: Westford Elementary School Trails  
Who: **Kindergarten to 8th Grade**  
Email WestfordVTRec@gmail.com for more information.



**SAVE THE DATES!!!!!!**

- 4/19/14- Egg Hunt on the Common at 10:00am
- 5/10/14- Welcome Baby Tea for all babies born in Westford April 2013- March 2014 (or those who have moved into town with a child born between these dates). 10-11:30am at the Westford Library
- K-2 Lacrosse starts April 28th and runs every Monday night from 6-7pm until June 9th @ WES
- Nature/Outdoor Activities Day Camp running from 8:30am-4:30pm the week of June 23rd-27th. Ages 5-10 years old. Min. 5 kids to run camp. For more info; WestfordVTRec@gmail.com



**ZUMBA**  
fitness

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASSES are HERE!**

Tuesdays at the RBMH from 6-7:00pm, starting 2/4/14  
Fee: \$5/Class and your **First class is FREE!**

Zumba fitness is the Latin inspired dance fitness class that has taken the world by storm. No fitness or dance experience required. Let Stephanie take you through great music & fun moves that will get your heart moving. Modifications available for all fitness levels. Drop-in class...no pre-registration required!

**Recreation Department Committee Members**

Heather Armata, Coordinator	338-8235	George Lamphere	879-6488
Maureen Carpenter	893-5096	Randy Aiken	872-0841
Noel Boutin	878-3632	Meredith Irish	373-9980

Or Email us at: [WestfordVTRec@gmail.com](mailto:WestfordVTRec@gmail.com)

**KEEPING YOUR ACTIVITIES LOCAL AND AFFORDABLE!!!**



**Integral YOGA w/ Tiffany @ RBMH**

Every **WEDNESDAY** evening, now from 6:30-8pm at the Red Brick Meeting House. \$13 drop-in fee; \$100 for 10-class punch card. Contact Tiffany at tiffshannon@gmail.com. Watch Front Porch Forum for up-



**Pick-up Adult Volleyball is BACK!!!**

When: Monday evenings  
Where: The Westford Elementary School  
Time: 8:00-10:00pm  
Fee: \$2 donation per player suggested  
Contact: Tammy Brown 872-8333



**YOGA with Cat Earisman @ RBMH**

Cat Earisman, E-RYT will be coming to the RBMH on **THURSDAY** evenings to teach Flow Yoga! Breathe, stretch, strengthen and laugh in this athletic style of yoga---all abilities welcome, because everyone is encouraged to work at their own level. Class will be held from 6:15-7:30, and you can prepay for the month for \$40, or drop in for \$12.

**3/4 and 5/6 Lacrosse Players.....are you out there????**

We need to know if your child is going to play! Email us ASAP!!!

**2nd Annual Baseball/Softball Clinic—Pre-Spring Training!!!**

Want to get ready for baseball tryouts this Spring and to prepare for the 2014 season? We have EXACTLY what you need!! The goal of this 2-day clinic is to have players ready for the spring tryouts coming up, so they can advance to the next level.

Who: Kids ages 8-12 years old (Coach's pitch to Majors)

**DATE CHANGE!! When: March 8th and 9th** Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Westford Elementary School Gym Fee: \$20/player



Coach Pete Armata is excited to get you ready! All you need to bring is your own glove and indoor sneakers. If you are a catcher, feel free to bring your own gear if you have it. Soft baseballs and softballs are provided, along with batting equipment. Email Heather for reg. form at WestfordVTRec@gmail.com or call 802-338-8235. Scholarships available.

**DIY Valentine's:**

When: **February 8th 10:30-11:30am** Where: Westford Public Library

All Ages Welcomed! Come create Valentine's for all the special people in your life and leave with a few sweet treats! Co-hosted by the Rec. Dept. and Public Library

**A HUGE Thank You goes out to all the folks that made the 15th Annual Broomball Tournament a success!**

- Sue and Dave "The Rinkmaster" Adams for creating the collages and putting up all the past years results and posters, officiating, getting the ice prepared and keeping track of the bracket.....as well as CREATING the event!
- Historical Society for use of the Red Brick Meeting House
- Recreation Department Committee Members George Lamphere, Randy Aiken, Noel Boutin, Maureen Carpenter and Meredith Longworth for all your organizing, cooking, officiating and time volunteering to make the year great!
- Georgia Market for donating some of the food for the concession stand
- Essex Rental for donating the use of the flood light
- Joe Flynn for donating the firewood
- Gene Hallman, Lori Miller, Brent Carpenter, Julie Miller, Shayla Winer, Megan Forbes, Bailey Halliday, Martha, Emilie and Ian Bennett for volunteering to run the Concession Stand
- Food donations from George and Beth Lamphere, Stephanie and Noel Boutin, Randy and Donna Aiken, Meredith and Mark

**The 15th Annual BROOMBALL  
Tourney**



**WINNERS! The HOMEWRECKERS!**

Irish, Barb Vanzo, Cathy Barrows, Lori Miller, Julie Miller and to a mystery cookie donation left at the Town Offices. Your time and donations were greatly appreciated and our community thanks you all!



**RUNNERS-UP: MOTORBOAT NATION**

# WESTFORD RECREATION DEPARTMENT – REGISTRATION FORM

NAME (Parents) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS (only to be used for WRD mailings) \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL/WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCTOR'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please list **medical conditions**, physical limitations, allergies, or restrictions WRD should be aware of:

NAME	PROGRAM	GRADE	T-SHIRT SIZE	FEE
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you hear about this program? Please circle:**      Front Porch Forum      Town Newsletter

Parent/Neighbor    Westford Elementary School    VTGrandpa.com    Rec Dept. Member    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*Please contact a Recreation Department member if your financial situation is preventing you from signing yourself, or your child, up for a program. Scholarships are available.\*\*\***

**RELEASE/WAVIER AGREEMENT:**

I am fully aware of the inherent risk, and give my consent for the above named applicant(s) to participate in the program(s) listed above. I hold harmless the Town of Westford, Westford School, their employees, elected officials, and/or any volunteers or instructors from any and all liability from any injury, claim, costs or loss of services which may be incurred by me, or us, or our minor children on account of participation in said program(s). Permission is hereby granted for me or us, or my child(ren) to receive emergency treatment if needed and I authorize the attending physician to administer any needed medical attention. Furthermore, I certify that I, or we, or my child(ren) are in good health and that there are no limitations to my/our participation except in writing above. I have read this document carefully and sign it voluntarily with full knowledge of its significance.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Send registration with check payable to:  
WESTFORD RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
Town of Westford, 1713 VT Rt.128, Westford, VT 05494**

## **TOWN OF WESTFORD - WINTER ROAD POLICY**

The Westford Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining 39.4 miles of town roads, of which 36.9 miles are gravel and 2.5 miles are paved. This policy is based on the goal of obtaining safe highway travel surfaces during winter months. It is our goal to achieve this at the earliest practical time and in the most cost efficient manner during and after a storm event. Providing bare, dry travel surfaces during a winter storm event is not practical and therefore not expected.

Each winter storm event is unique. It is impractical to develop specific rules on winter maintenance operations. Therefore, the judgment of the Road Foreman often governs the quantities and type of applications used to control snow and ice.

### **Snow Plowing**

The Town of Westford begins plowing when snow has accumulated 2 to 3 inches. Plowing may begin as early as 4:00 a.m. and stops when the storm has ended or 10:00 p.m., whichever comes sooner.

### **Sand**

Sand will be applied to all gravel roads. With the use of sand in winter maintenance material, some particles may be as large as ¾" in size and may cause windshield damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles or town trucks too closely. The Town will not pay for any vehicle repairs, such as the replacement of windshields. When ice is present under the sand, instant stops are impossible.

### **Plow Routes**

Each plow route takes approximately 4 hours to complete, sometimes longer depending on the storm. This means if plowing started when there was 2 inches of snow on the road, by the time the truck finishes the route there is the potential for up to 6 inches or more of snow on the road again. Therefore, during a heavy snowstorm, at times there will be snow on the roads. There shall be no riders in the town trucks other than the operator of the truck and authorized town officials. All town trucks shall be pulled to the side of the road when the operator is using a cell phone.

### **Freezing Rain**

It is important to note that salt or sand is less effective if applied before the rain stops. There is little the Westford Highway Department can do during a freezing rainstorm. Salt and sand will be applied to the roads sparingly during the event and more aggressively as needed once the storm is over.

### **Bare Roads**

The Town of Westford does not have a bare road policy. Travelers who use Town roads should exercise due care and reasonable caution while driving during the winter months.

### **Mailboxes**

The Town will not repair or replace mailboxes damaged by snow or ice clearing operations. Heavy snow coming off the plow blade will often knock over and damage mailboxes/posts that have not been adequately mounted and maintained or braced, or those mailboxes with doors left open. Also mailboxes/posts may be damaged by private contractors or homeowners during driveway clearing operations.

### **Trash Placement**

Trash and trash receptacles should be placed in a manner that will not interfere with winter road maintenance. The Town will not be responsible for damage to trash receptacles or trash clean up as a result of its obstruction of snow removal.

### **Parked Vehicles**

No vehicle shall be parked on the Town's right-of-way from the start of precipitation until 48 hours after the storm ends. The Town reserves the right to tow parked vehicles at the owner's expense. The Town is not liable for damages incurred to vehicles parked in the Town's right-of-way.

### **Plowing Across Town Roads**

The practice of plowing snow from driveways across Town roads is prohibited. Residual snow creates a dangerous obstruction (piles, ridges, etc.). Snow shoveling into the roadway will cause similar problems. Once frozen, the piles/ridges can cause vehicles to lose control and can also cause damage to vehicles and town trucks and equipment. Generally, the Town will warn the responsible resident for a first occurrence. Subsequent violations may result in further action, which may include but is not limited to fines.

## **United Church of Westford February Schedule**

February 2, 8:30am – Traditional Service with Rev. Katherine Arthaud. “Miracles”

February 9, 8:30am – Alternative Service with Rev. Katherine Arthaud. “Who are we? Where are we? Deepening our sense of self and our connections with others.”

## **UCW (White Church) on the Green Westford Music Series**

*Presenting*

### **POSSOM HAW**

**Date of Event:** Sunday, February 9, 2014

**Time:** 4-5pm

**Contact:** Marge Hamrell 879-4028 or [mhamrell@comcast.net](mailto:mhamrell@comcast.net)

Possom Haw's 5 member band has been called “the shooting star of Bluegrass music” by the Vermont press. Members originate from Burlington and have evolved into an award-winning evocative songwriting and singing group with top notch bluegrass instrumentation. They will be making an appearance in Westford on Sunday February 9<sup>th</sup> from 4-5pm as part of the winter music series.

The Possum Haw quintet is rooted in the bluegrass and folk tradition which features the stellar vocals and songwriting of Colby Crehan (lead vocalist for the Bluegrass Gospel Project). Other members include Stephen Waud (mandolin, vocals), Ryan Crehan (banjo, vocals, and harmonica), Charley Eiseman (lead guitar, vocals) and Mitch Barron (upright bass, vocals). The band will be performing songs from their newest release, “Waiting and Watching”. Possum Haw has been featured at First Night, Higher Ground, New England Valley Folk Festival and a various New England venues.

Free will donation and refreshments. Call 879-4028 for information.