



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, MATTHEW COOGAN



We hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving holiday. This is the fifth edition of the *Town of Boxford Quarterly Community Newsletter*. As always, we aim for everyone to find these updates accessible and informative, and welcome feedback for improving communication with the public.

Looking ahead, budgeting and capital planning for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024 (beginning July 1) kicks off this month. The Finance Committee and the Select Board will be holding meetings throughout the winter to review department budgets and capital needs. These meetings will be posted on the town website and are open for the public to attend. They will be hybrid, attendees may join in person at Town Hall or remotely through Zoom.

We are also excited to announce that the **Center at 10 Elm** community center is just weeks away from opening to the public. The Select Board has recently created a committee to help develop and coordinate community events and programs for the newly created spaces. If you are interested in being part of developing the *Center at 10 Elm*, [visit the town website for more information and how to apply](#). Likewise, we are always looking for residents interested in volunteering and getting involved in town government! Please visit the town webpage to see the list of vacant positions on our boards and committees.

Finally, we would also like to recognize our Finance Director, Kathy Benevento, who will be retiring this month. Kathy has served the town as Finance Director since 2006, during which time she reduced expenditures through Finance Department staffing changes, outsourcing of payroll processing and implementing paperless transactions and record storage. During her tenure, she has worked in close collaboration with the Finance Committee, Select Board, and department heads in the management of town finances. Her integrity and professionalism, along with her responsiveness to requests for information, earned her the respect of residents, employees and committee members. She led the financial team in a collaborative manner that directly contributed to the upgrade and maintenance of the Town's AAA bond rating, reflective of a strong budgetary performance and adherence to sound financial policies. She retires leaving the Town of Boxford in excellent financial condition supported by well-maintained records and reporting systems. While we congratulate and thank her for her service to the Town of Boxford, we are fortunate that we don't have to say goodbye; Kathy will be taking on a new role as the part-time Town Accountant. Thank you, Kathy, and best wishes on your retirement!

TOWN CLERK

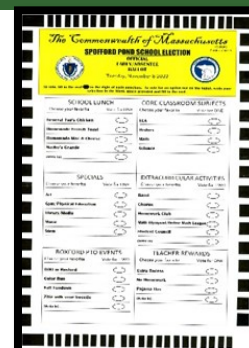
This fall the Town Clerk's office administered two successful elections, which both included three weeks of early voting: the September State Primary, in which Democratic ballots were voted by 998 Boxford residents and Republican ballots by 634, and the November midterm election during which 4,154 of Boxford's 6,590 registered voters (63%) participated either in person or by mail.

Our thanks go out to the dozens of election workers, Town Hall departments, DPW, as well as the Boxford Police and Fire Departments for their support throughout the election season.

We enjoyed hosting a mock election for visiting third and fourth graders from Spofford Pond School and having Masconomet senior AP Government students volunteer to assist in preparing for and participating in Election Day work.

Currently, we are working on putting together the 2023 Annual Town Census. We hope to get it in the mail early next month and request that residents complete it and return it to Town Hall as soon as possible.

Dog licenses expire at the end of December and the census mailing will include a dog license application for the coming year. Applications and payment must be received no later than January 31, 2023.



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccination, including all primary series doses and boosters for their age group. Individuals over 6 months of age should get all COVID-19 primary series doses. Individuals ages 5 years and older should get all primary series doses and the updated BIVALENT booster dose recommended for them by CDC, if eligible. Statewide vaccination sites can be found here: <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>

Everyone is eligible for booster shots. At this time, it is expected that COVID vaccines will be annual, like the Flu vaccine. While there is a need to determine individual risk factors for people before they get vaccinated, vaccination is widely considered a safe and easy way to reduce the severity of the illness and to reduce the spread of disease. Additionally, if variants do not mutate, long-term immunity may exist with a combination of both vaccination and natural immunity. That is still to be determined, however; we just don't know how long the current vaccines last yet.

Next vaccine clinic at Masconomet High School: Friday December 16th, 3-6pm
The Boxford Health Department has Covid testing kits available for Town residents.

TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR

Boxford has a very high (99%+) tax collection rate due to informed and responsible residents.

Online and personally delivered tax payments are a guarantee to timely receipt and avoidance of late fees and interest charges. USPS mail deliveries have resulted in late payments in some cases.

Real estate tax bills are mailed twice each year (on 6/30 and 12/31); payments are due quarterly (on 2/1, 5/1, 8/1 and 11/1). In Massachusetts, interest accrues at 14% per annum on overdue taxes through date payment is **received** by the town.

[Town Code Chapter 109, Article 1](#) provides that town boards and committees may deny, revoke or suspend licenses or permits to a property owner with taxes owing in excess of one year. A tax delinquency for a previous fiscal year could result in the recording of a tax lien if the taxpayer fails to make payment or does not enter into and abide by a payment plan agreement.

Real estate tax records are **public information**. The Tax Collector is legally obligated to respond to all requests about property tax assessments and payment status. Mortgage companies request the entire tax file of the town periodically to verify that taxes have been paid and that the town does not take a primary lienholder position.

It is in a property owner's best interest to pay taxes in a timely manner. Please call the office to discuss any reasons for inability to do so in order to protect your home.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Online payments are available!

Purchase trash stickers, dog licenses, burn permits and pay your property or excise tax.
<https://epay.cityhallsystems.com/selection>

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

At the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, residents voted to adopt Local Option Personal Exemption Clause 57. This exemption allows Seniors who receive "circuit breaker" tax credits on their Massachusetts state income taxes to obtain a reduction of their real estate taxes up to the amount of their credits.



Who is eligible?

- You must own and occupy the property as of July 1st of the fiscal year.
- You must be 65 or older.
- You must have received a "circuit breaker" credit on your Massachusetts state income taxes for the preceding calendar year.

How to apply?

- Applications must be filed annually with the Board of Assessors by April 1st.
- You must include a full copy of your Massachusetts state income tax return for the preceding year, including Schedule CB (Circuit Breaker Credit). For the current Fiscal Year 2023, please submit your 2021 tax return.
- Exemption amounts will be determined once all applications have been submitted for the year (after April 1st). Applicants will be notified of their exemption amount, which will be abated off of the 4th quarter tax bills. Any overpayments will be refunded.

Questions?

- For more information on Clause 57 or any of the other property tax exemptions available, please [contact the Assessor's office](#).
- For more information on the State Circuit Breaker Tax Credit, please contact your tax preparer or the [Massachusetts Department of Revenue](#).

COUNCIL ON AGING

Excitement is rapidly building at the Council on Aging as we watch the new Center at 10 Elm near completion. The parking lot has been paved, the sidewalks are in, planting has been completed, and the lawn has been hydroseeded. The finishing touches are being completed inside, then we should be ready for final inspections. We anticipate being able to start moving in mid- December with our "Grand Opening" in January.

Meanwhile back at 4 Middleton, activities continue and all exercise programs, classes, educational programs and games are running smoothly. Upcoming events include a previously postponed presentation of Julia Child by the Delvena Theater Company, a presentation on Fire Prevention, and the Masco Holiday Concert. Through December 7th, we are assisting with Medicare enrollment and changes. We are accepting applications for tax work-off positions and actively seeking volunteer snow shovelers.

In our spare moments, we are sorting, donating, shredding, and making an attempt at packing up for our move. Hopefully by the next newsletter, we will be up and running in our new home.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES/ZONING

The Inspectional Services office suite has been very busy this year; daily activity at the window has been non-stop. We have many new homeowners in town trying to navigate how we do business.

Town Administrator Matt Coogan has secured the necessary funding and has lined up the relevant contracts so that the online permitting process will go live early next year. Stacey Fournier has been the key point of contact with the software provider and will work to train many Town employees regarding how to utilize this new software. We are excited to get online permitting up and running as we will be able to access our records more efficiently.

We will exceed last year's numbers for issued permits. This is good news that all of our Boxford neighbors are keeping their properties in good condition. Please check out the [Building Department's website](#), as well as our newly created [Facebook page](#).

With all of the permit activity, it is no surprise that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is also busy conducting hearings and issuing decisions on new cases.

The Willows 55 and over community is progressing quite well and the construction has not had too much of an effect on traffic, noise, and dust. They have secured permits and have begun installing foundations at the front of the community.

LAND USE

The Conservation Commission was engaged along with other Town agencies in a response to a truck accident on Middleton Road that occurred on July 9, 2022. The accident resulted in the release of a small amount of engine oil and grease, as well as the use of a fire-retardant foam by the responding fire departments. Affected soils were removed and disposed of in appropriate, licensed facilities. The Commission is currently engaged in reviewing remediation plans for the impacted wetland and wetland buffer area.

The Conservation Commission approved an amended Stormwater Management Permit for the Cole School parking lot improvement project. This amendment is necessary to incorporate the recently acquired property at 27 Main Street into the construction site. The expanded area will provide construction access, stockpile and storage area, and temporary staff parking. A portion of the expanded area will also be used to increase the paved apron at the rear of the school for use as a multipurpose play area and overflow parking.

The Conservation Commission continues to provide oversight of The Willows at Boxford elderly housing project on Willow Road. The Commission is working to finalize Conservation Restriction language that will safeguard the open space land at The Willows at Boxford while ensuring public access to trails for Boxford residents. The Planning Board reviewed and approved an alternate farm stand location at 7 & 9 Ipswich Road (Rte. 97) consisting of an existing garage structure behind the existing residence. The alternate location will allow the farm stand to continue in operation during months of the year when weather might preclude use of the formerly approved mobile trailer stand.

The Community Preservation Committee continues to work with the Land toward the purchase and use of approximately 35.5 acres of undeveloped land on Herrick Road known as the Dorman property. If matters proceed as hoped, the Land Committee will present a request to appropriate funds for the purchase and development of the Dorman land at the next Town Meeting.

BOXFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT



After a quiet summer of motor vehicle traffic enforcement, the fall season has been a busy and productive time.

Patrol Officer Brooke Lindley and Patrol Officer Brian Church have been working as the School Resource Officers at Masco on a regular basis since the beginning of the school year along with Topsfield Police Officers.



The fall is busy with Town events starting with the Cashin Triathlon followed by the Apple Festival and in October we had another successful Boo in Boxford Trunk or Treat event, then the Cole School Halloween parade followed by Trick or Treating at Andrews Farm. We want to thank the Andrews Farm neighborhood for their patience and their continuous support for this Halloween tradition.

Hunting Notice—Shotgun deer season is quickly approaching. We want to remind all residents and hunters that no person shall hunt with, fire or discharge any weapon on any private property except with written consent of the owner or legal occupant of the property. This consent shall be renewed annually. A copy of the written consent shall be turned in to the Boxford Police Department.

The Boxford Police Department does have courtesy cards for this purpose. Please stop by the Police Station to request one. Reminder: no person shall discharge any weapon on Town owned property without the consent of the Boxford Select Board. Be safe! Wear orange!

BOXFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department is pleased to announce the hiring of Firefighter Christopher Patrikas to our full-time roster. FF Patrikas has been with the organization since 2020 as a Call Firefighter. He is an EMT-Basic and graduate of the MA Call/Vol Firefighter I/II program. FF Patrikas replaces Lt. Michael Soltys who left to join Peabody Fire Department. Lt. Soltys spent the past eight years serving Boxford. We are grateful for his service.

We are also happy to announce that Lt. Tyler Brown has been promoted to the rank of Captain. Captain Brown responds out of the West Fire Station and is also one of the full-time firefighters. His promotion is well deserved.

Finally, the Boxford Fire Department is looking to hire call firefighters. Our Town relies on residents to serve on the Fire Department and

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



BOXFORD

respond to help their fellow neighbors during emergencies. Members must be at least 18, reside in Town or within 10 minutes to one of the two fire stations. This is a great way to serve the community. Training is provided! Please call the fire station if interested (978-887-5725).

COMMUNICATIONS

One of the services the Communications Department offers is called the Operation Concern program. Operation Concern is a program managed by the Boxford Communications Department in conjunction with the Boxford Police Department, Boxford Fire Department and the Boxford Council on Aging. It is a voluntary program where senior citizens and at-risk residents of Boxford contact the Communications Department once a day during a specific time period. In the event the participant does not call by a specified time, the Dispatcher will attempt to make contact by telephone. If the Dispatcher is unable to make contact by phone the Police Department and Fire Department will be dispatched to check on the participant's wellbeing. Dispatchers will also attempt to contact persons that the participant has identified as Persons to Notify (PTNs). If you are interested in learning more about the Operation Concern program please contact the Communications Director, Warren Gould, at 978-887-8136 or by email at wgould@town.boxford.ma.us

Pictured in the photo are (L to R) Communications Director Warren Gould, Dispatcher Andrew Jakubasz, and Dispatcher James Fernandes receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from the Massachusetts State 911 Department in celebration of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in April 2022. The State 911 Department visited every 911 PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) in the State to present these certificates.



MASCONOMET

Dear Class of 2023 Boxford Seniors:

Going to college? Pursuing a trade? If you live in Boxford and would like a scholarship to assist you for up to four years, please read on!

This unique needs-based scholarship is only available to residents of Boxford and was funded by a well-known and respected Boxford resident: Barbara C. Perley. Ms. Perley established the Barbara Perley Scholarship Fund in her will in order to provide financial aid to those children who need such assistance to pursue a college, vocational, technical or trade school education.

Each year, as a result of Ms. Perley's vision and through the continued financial support of the townspeople, the Board of Directors of the Fund has been able to extend grants to as many as 16 Boxford students who have gone on to attend post-secondary schools across the nation. This scholarship fund is designed solely for the benefit of Boxford students in need of financial aid.

Recipients of awards will be encouraged to reapply annually for the scholarship during the continuation of their undergraduate schooling.

As prescribed by the bequest that established the scholarship, an applicant "must:

- have need,
- have ability,
- be deserving, and
- be a child of a Boxford resident."

Learn more and complete the application at [Barbara Perley Scholarship Fund](#).

The deadline for this application is MARCH 15. Please consider applying!

BOXFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

It has been a busy and exciting first few months of the 2022-2023 school year across the Tri-Town School Union! To begin, the Boxford Elementary Schools have such gratitude for the many partners that support and enrich the educational experiences for our students. In late September, the Boxford PTO (BPTO) was able to once again hold their annual Fall Fundown event. This is a great event that builds community among our many families and it was a great afternoon of family, food, and fun. The schools also have gratitude to BPTO for continuing the teacher wishes program, as well as our partners at the Boxford Elementary Schools Trust (BEST) for supporting innovative programs such as Sphero Robots, 3D printing, and providing flexible seating options for students.



We are proud to announce that Dr. Scott Morrison received the 13th annual Dr. Patrick A. Schettini Jr. Memorial Award, by The Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth (MPY). For more details, click [HERE](#).

Congratulations to Dr. Morrison!

BOXFORD LIBRARY

What's
Happening
At the



Events For Children

Music & Movement for children up to age 3, with MaryBeth Maes, CFCE of the North Shore: Thursdays, December 1, 8, 15, & 22, at 10:00 am

Come See us at Winter Fest and Write Your Letter to Santa: Saturday, December 3

Storytime and Pictures with Santa: December 10, at 3:00 pm

Events For Adults

A Christmas Carol, with Delvena Theater Company: December 3, at 1:00 pm

Cookbook Club: December 9, at 12:00 pm

Best Bike Rides in New England, with author David Sobel: December 14, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

Poetry Circle: December 20, at 7:00 pm

Evening Book Discussion: December 21, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

Visit our website at www.boxfordma.gov/town-library for information about these events and so much more!

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has transitioned out of summer operations and we are moving into winter and planning for the upcoming snow and ice season. Despite significant volatility in the liquid asphalt prices, the DPW managed to reconstruct several miles of roadway. The DPW resurfaced sections of Main St., Rte. 133, Rte. 97, and Middleton Rd. Additional resurfacing operations will be resumed next construction season, utilizing the favorable bid values. Staff is also working on roadway pothole repairs, tree trimming, brush cutting, and sander/plow maintenance. Beginning after Thanksgiving, the DPW's contractor will be constructing a fabric storage shed to house the DPW's vehicles and equipment. This 72' x 64' structure will be similar to the fabric storage shed that houses the Town's salt/sand and will improve the lifespan of the DPW's equipment.

In addition to this, the DPW is working with the Ipswich River Watershed Association and engineering consultant TEC on a variety of culvert design and permitting projects. The town is leveraging \$275,000 in grant money to design and permit these antiquated culverts and utilizing local funding and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funds to construct them. These culvert replacements significantly improve the town's resiliency to stormwater damage and flooding as well as improve our natural resources.

Lastly, following the historic drought this summer, the DPW put significant resources into field maintenance and soil amendment. All of the Town's playing fields were core aerated and overseeded utilizing the town's new "Seedavator". Further, RAD Sports core aerated, top dressed, and slice seeded the natural fields at the Boxford Commons. We are confident that with adequate rain and well levels at their natural levels, the conditions of the fields will improve greatly next season with this work continuing.



Top Dressing Machine at the Boxford Commons in October

VETERANS SERVICES

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. The PACT Act adds to the list of health conditions that we assume (or "presume") are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their [survivors](#)—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. To help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can call 800-698-2411.

The SPEED Act was also signed into law in Massachusetts as of October 2022 which has 15 different parts. The SPEED Act would also help Massachusetts meet criteria used by the Department of Defense and military officials when considering basing assignments and federal investments for military installations. Please call our office at 978-688-9525 if you have any questions or would like more information.

Veterans Services continues to distribute our monthly mobile food pantry to Veterans and surviving spouses with the support from the Greater Boston Food Bank. If you have any questions or would like to know more information, please contact Jillian Kemp at 978-771-3791.

VA Healthcare enrollment & ID Card Days: VA Bedford will be on-site at the Haverhill VA CLINIC, 209 Summer Street, Haverhill, MA 01830, 2nd Wednesday of the month 9:30 am - 2:00 pm. Call to schedule a telephone appointment 781-687-3348 or email VABEDOUTREACH@BA.GOV

Please be safe and we are here for you all.

For additional information please call (978) 688-9525 -Joe & Jillian

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TOWN!!!**

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BCATV Boxford Cable Access Television

BCATV is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in 2005 currently operating 3 cable television channels for the enjoyment of the residents of Boxford. Our funding comes from a small access fee on each cable subscriber's monthly cable bill.

Our **Government Channel, Comcast Ch 8 / Verizon Ch 39**, records and plays back most Boxford government meetings. Many of the meetings are broadcast live whenever possible. We have been providing this service since our incorporation over 15 years ago.

Our **Educational channel, Comcast 99 / Verizon 40**, is oriented towards Masconomet events. Currently Masco spring sporting events, concerts, special events and Class of 2022 events are being featured with most being broadcast live on our website streaming channel.

Our **Public Access channel, Comcast Ch 8 / Verizon Ch 45**, covers other Boxford events not mentioned above, such as youth sports, local concerts, Memorial and July 4th Parades, BAA Men's Softball starting mid-June, etc.

The homepage of our website, www.BoxfordCableTv.com, lists links to all the upcoming live streaming events for the next 10 days. In addition, there is a [TV Schedules](#) link and an [Upcoming Events](#) link on our home page which provide a quick way to see what is going on in Boxford over the upcoming 10 days.

Further down on our homepage is our **Video On Demand (VOD) widget**, which allows residents to playback previously recorded event videos and even download them as desired. There are also links to other websites of specific interest to the residents of Boxford.

In summary **BCATV** strives to strengthen our community by increasing and enhancing communication among our residents via our website and our 3 local cable access television stations.

BOXFORD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Inclusion Sports wrapped up a successful pilot program this fall with two full sessions for kids ages 3-10 years old. Thank you to the families who participated! The BAA and Inclusion will be partnering to offer more sessions in the spring and summer. Look for updates on Facebook, Instagram, and the SportsEngine website.

The Boxford Girls' Softball booth won "Best Candy Booth" at the Boxford Boo for the 3rd year in a row! This year the theme was "Stranger Swings," with a booth designed by Anna Cooper, January Oliva, and the girls' softball coaches, around the Netflix show "Stranger Things." Thank you as always to the Boxford PTO for organizing this amazing Halloween event for all the kids in town!

WEST BOXFORD IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

Boxford's 16th Annual Winter Fest
Sponsored by the West Boxford Improvement Society
Saturday, December 3rd ~ 9 am to 3 pm
West Boxford Center ~ Rt. 133 and Main Street

Get in the holiday spirit and shop local for the holidays & discover all kinds of treasures. Hop on a hayride which will take you around the West Village, and be sure to start at Lincoln Hall to have a free photo taken with Santa, who is making a special trip to Boxford from the North Pole! You'll find plenty of craft vendors, incredible raffle prizes and gift baskets, letters to Santa, free ice cream at Benson's, holiday gift shopping at Paisley's, B Cheeky and West Village Provisions, pet photos with Santa at the Boxford Animal Hospital, great food at Nason's and Rudolph's Luncheonette at the Church, tour the Historic Document Center, explore our Fire Department's Rescue Truck, visit the Community Giving Tree, and so much more!



Visit the [West Boxford Improvement Society on Facebook](#) for updates.

Photo courtesy of Alex Constan