Issue 7 Spring, 2023

TOWN OF BOXFORD



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, MATTHEW COOGAN

I hope everyone has May 9th Annual Town Meeting on their calendars! Town Meeting will start at 7PM in the Masconomet Regional High School Auditorium. This will be Moderator Jerry Johnston's 33rd and final Town Meeting as Town Moderator. He has served in this capacity since 1997, but has decided not to seek re-election. Prior to becoming Town Moderator, he also was a Select Board member from 1993 to 1997. Please join us in thanking Jerry for his 30 years of service to the Town.

Information on Town Meeting, including the Warrant Articles and supporting documentation, is available on the Town of Boxford website, the page URL is boxfordma.gov/TownMeeting2023. The Town Moderator's Forum was held on Tuesday, May 2nd, and a recording of that meeting is available on the BCATv website.

The Town is also looking for ideas from residents for the future reuses of the now former COA at 4 Middleton Rd and the former West Library at 188 Washington Street. The newly formed <u>Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory Committee</u> is hosting an in-person and virtual community workshop with our consultant team led by StudioLuz on Monday, May 15th at 10 Elm and Thursday, May 18 via Zoom. Visit the project webpage for additional information, there's also a link to an online survey: <u>boxfordma.gov/VillageCenters</u>. We want to hear your thoughts - what would you like to see happen at these properties?

Finally, congratulations to all the staff and to the army of volunteers involved in the grand opening of the Center at 10 Elm! It's a beautiful facility and a great accomplishment for the community.

TOWN CLERK

This month it was our pleasure to welcome the Spofford Pond School fifth grade students and faculty to Town Hall to view the original transcription of the Declaration of Independence housed in our vault. We were very impressed with the students' knowledge of American History.

The Town Clerk's office continues to prepare for our Annual Town Meeting and Election. Town Meeting will take place in the Masconomet Auditorium, 20 Endicott Road, on Tuesday, May 9 at 7pm. The Annual Election occurs on the following Tuesday, May 16 at Town Hall, 7A Spofford Road from 7am until 8pm.



Applications for vote by mail ballots may be found at https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/download/vote-by-mail-applications/vote-by-mail-paper-application-2023.pdf The deadline to request a vote by mail ballot is Monday, May 7. The positions and candidates appearing on the ballot are:

Select Board, vote for 1, 3 years	Barbara G. Jessel, candidate for re-election
Board of Assessors, vote for 1, 3 years	Jeffrey G. Linehan
Board of Health, vote for two, 3 years	Heather Lee Forand – candidate for re-election Mark P. Mitch
Boxford School Committee, vote for two, 3 years	Barbara Bisceglia Stefani M. Buonopane
Masconomet Regional School District Committee, vote	Christine P. Bolzan
for two, 3 years	Russell A. Fiore
	Jeffrey M. Horrigan
	Laura Ann Turco
Board of Library Trustees, vote for two, 3 years	Carolyn Anderson
	Christina Covina Eckert
Town Moderator, vote for one, 3 years	Kimberly A. Holliday
Constable, East Parish, vote for one, 3 years	John A. Rowen, candidate for re-election
Constable, West Parish, vote for one, 3 years	David A. Smallman, candidate for re-election
Commissioners of Trust Funds, vote for one, 3 years	Kathleen Zolla, candidate for re-election

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

Assessors are tasked with determining fair market value of all properties. An integral component to this endeavor is the collection of accurate and up-to-date property data.

Assessors use a variety of tools for data collection including aerial imagery, homeowner questionnaires, and real estate listings. However, the most accurate information is obtained from on-site inspections. These inspections may be conducted on properties that have recently sold, properties that have recently been issued building permits, or in accordance with the statemandated ten-year cyclical inspection program. Residents are routinely notified in advance of on-site inspections and we greatly appreciate the cooperation that a majority of residents continue to show.

With the warmer weather upon us, you may notice Assessors out conducting fieldwork in your neighborhood. Please be advised that Assessors' cars will be marked and they will have a town-issued photo ID. Assessors' vehicle information is also on file with the police department. As always, we encourage anyone with questions or concerns to reach out to our office.

STAY UP TO DATE
ON WHAT IS HAPPENING IN TOWN!!!

Like our Facebook page @OfficialTownBoxfordMa



BOOKMARK OUR WEBSITE

www.boxfordma.gov

SUBSCRIBE TO E-ALERTS click here

TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR

Excise tax bills for vehicles on the road on January 1st are now past due. Please contact the office at 978-887-3674 if a bill was not received or if the vehicle is no longer owned. It is the responsibility of the vehicle owner to update the RMV for changes in mailing address or place of garaging.

Real estate tax bills for the 4th quarter of FY 2023 were due on Monday, May 1st. If for any reason you are unable to make payment, please contact Ellen Guerin, Collector of Taxes, at 978-887-3673 to make arrangements for a payment plan. Under Massachusetts law, the \$10.00 demand fee and interest charged at 12% on unpaid balances is applicable.

Preliminary real estate tax bills for FY 2024 will be mailed on June 30th. Each will contain remittance advices for amounts due on August 1st and November 1st.

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





COUNCIL ON AGING

After months of anticipation, the Council on Aging has finally moved into our new home at the Center at 10 Elm. Needless to say, we are thrilled. A Donor's Gala was held on April 15th, followed by on Open House on the 16th. Both events were well attended and residents were impressed with the new building. We ask that everyone be patience while we learn the ins and outs of the of this facility and the Town establishes guidelines on its usage. We hope that you will stop by and see our new digs, perhaps join a fitness class, learn how to play Bridge or just meet friends and have coffee. Upcoming programs include the Institution for Savings speaking on scams on May 9th, Attorney Elaine Dalton on Estate Planning on May 16th and a panel of experts will present a program on the Upside of Downsizing May 23rd. Information on COA events and happenings are listed in the COA monthly newsletter, "Boxford's Boomers & Beyond".

We are planning some new and exciting activities in the upcoming months. And yes, the BBQ's will be back. As always, your suggestions for events and/or activities are welcome and we will try to fulfill them.

BOXFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Have you ever noticed the car behind you with flashing lights? This could be a member of your local fire department responding to the station or emergency scene.

As most of you know, the majority of the fire department staff are on-call firefighters. They respond from their homes or places of work to the station during emergencies. Most have red/white lights installed in their vehicles to give other drivers a warning to their response. If you see one of these responders, please pull over so they can pass safely.

On the note of roadway safety, did you know that you are supposed to pull over to the side of the road in both directions when emergency vehicles are approaching? Please do not feel like you have to pull over abruptly but rather find a safe spot, preferably not on a curve. Also remember that State Law requires you move over 1 lane when passing an emergency scene on the highway.

Now if you are interested in having emergency lights in your car, come join the fire department! We are always looking for new members.

This is a great way to serve the community. Training is provided! Please call the fire station if interested (978) 887-5725).



BOXFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT



Watch for TURTLES! Cyclists! Walkers! If you notice any sign damage left over from the winter, please call the Communications Center and report the damage.

The Police Department has a busy Spring training schedule: annual Active Shooter Training at Masconomet Regional High School with both Topsfield and Middleton Police Departments. The training consists of one four-hour classroom block and a five-hour practical training at Masconomet.

We would like to congratulate Officer Lindley on the birth of her second child!

As the Boxford Common's sports schedule builds throughout the Spring, please remember if the parking lot is full to use the alternative parking at the Cole School.

COMMUNICATIONS

Helpful 911 Tip. If you dial 911 by accident your call will still go through even if you hang up. The best advice is to not hang up, stay on the line and speak with the Dispatcher. The Dispatcher will ask you questions that are for your safety. Don't worry, you are not in trouble, accidental calls happen. Newer Cellular Phones generally have a setting for Emergency or SOS calling that will automatically call 911 if you press a certain button combination. Please refer to online help guides for you cell phone if you experience problems with this feature.

The Communications Department wishes to congratulate Dispatcher Kathleen Zolla for passing a major milestone of 35 years of dedicated service to the Town of Boxford!

We also want to wish Dispatcher Brady Quinn all the best as he if leaving our Department to start the next phase of his College career pursuing his Master's Degree!

LAND USE

The Conservation Commission completed the review and approval of proposed repairs and improvements to the access drive for Camp Wakanda. The improvements include new swales, check dams, and a wetland area to enhance the management of storm water flows. A separate Notice of Intent is anticipated to be filed later this year for non-road related improvements at Camp Wakanda.

The Commission also held a public hearing on proposed changes to the Wetlands Protection Bylaw, which the Commission subsequently adopted. The changes were necessary to reflect increases in permit filing fees previously adopted by the Commission, and to specify standards for the management of wetland soils excavated during the implementation of permitted activities. The wetland soil management standards were developed in coordination with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission as part of a municipal vulnerability preparedness grant program. The adoption of these changes has assisted Boxford in meeting its requirements under the town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. It is anticipated that regulatory changes will also be sought later this year from the Stormwater Management Bylaw regulations.

The Conservation Commission continues to provide oversight of The Willows at Boxford elderly housing project on Willow Road. A turtle nesting habitat area is currently under construction at the site pursuant to a Conservation Management Permit issued by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and an Order of Conditions by the Boxford Conservation Commission.

The Planning Board has continued to make recommendations on matters pending before the Zoning Board of Appeals, following normal procedure as set forth in the Town Bylaw. The Board recommended approval of new cellular antennas and other equipment to be enclosed within the existing cell tower and fenced area at 47C Pond Street. The Board found it lacked sufficient information to make a recommendation on a proposed accessory apartment at 39 Lily Pond Road. The Board recommended approval of an accessory apartment at 49 Mill Road.

The Community Preservation Committee completed its review of proposed projects being considered for funding at Annual Town Meeting, and recommended carefully crafted warrant articles to the Select Board for incorporation into the Town Meeting Warrant. Of these warrant articles, <u>Article 16</u>, if adopted at Town Meeting, would fund the purchase of the so-called Dorman Land for use as open space and recreation. The Dorman Land consists of approximately 35.5 acres of undeveloped land that abuts Boxford Common to the south and Herrick Road to the north.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The DPW has transitioned into spring operations. The staff has been utilizing the warmer weather to prepare the playing fields for spring athletics and activities. In collaboration with a few members of Little League, staff has reconstructed the baseball infields at Cole and Spofford Schools. They have also improved the dugout areas and installed new stone dust to prevent puddling and erosion. The infields were tilled and turned over as well as weeded and dragged with new infield mix. Pitcher's mounds were also reconstructed. The soccer fields also had soil amendment operations and we expect to aerate and overseed in the coming weeks and throughout the season. In May, RAD Sports will deep tine aerate and loosen the soils at the natural field at the commons. These early treatments should strengthen the turf for the summer and fall as well.

In addition to field maintenance, the Town's street sweeping contractor began sweeping in April. It is expected that these activities will be completed in early May, to allow for town-wide line striping to commence. Catch basin cleaning is expected to be in May and June.

Lastly, the DPW contracted with vendors Operations Hero and Alpha Solutions to complete a town wide asset management inventory as the first step in creating an online management system. Alpha spent 5 days beginning on April 10th, to perform an inventory of the town's buildings and their respective assets, such as but not limited to: HVAC, Electric, building conditions, etc. In addition to the buildings, Alpha also inventoried the DPW's vehicle fleet and irrigation systems. Utilizing this information, the town will create an online asset management system developed by Operations Hero. This online portal will allow the DPW to plan and document preventative maintenance, capital expenditures and report on systems for better operation and planning.

MASCONOMET

REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPRING UPDATE 2023

THE BUDGET: KEY INFORMATION/HIGHLIGHTS

Masco School Committee approved a FY24 budget that resulted in a gross expense increase after offset (vs FY23) of \$2,183,304 (+5.8%). It is notable that this year's budget was significantly impacted by unprecedented cost increases for mandated services outside of the Committee's control.

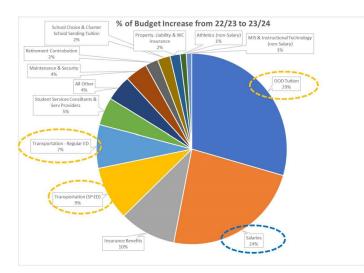
This budget includes no staffing cuts and no new programs or initiatives; Ultimately, the School Committee was concerned with providing appropriate services to ensure that student learning is not further impacted as we recover from the pandemic. The mental health of our students and staff is a critical goal of the School Committee and this budget supports that by retaining class sizes that reinforce the ability of our students to interact with and have meaningful connections with caring adults. The Committee is thankful for the support of our tri-town member towns.

Budget increase drivers:

- \$712,062 increase in tuition for out of district placements (+24.4%)
- \$177,294 increase in regular ed transportation costs (+15.3%)
- \$219,921 increase in special ed transportation costs (+76.3%)
- \$577,445 increase in contracted salaries (+2.5%)

For more info on the FY24 budget:

https://www.masconomet.org/Page/913



UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

TOPSFIELD: 5.2.23, 7PM @ MASCO BOXFORD: 5.9.23, 7PM @ MASCO

MIDDLETON: 5.9.23, 7PM @ HOWE-MANNING GYMNASIUM

THE TURF FIELD PROJECT: KEY INFORMATION/HIGHLIGHTS

The FY24 budget includes a capital assessment of \$449,050 for Design, Engineering & Permitting of turf fields through a free cash appropriation, if approved at Town Meeting through a separate Warrant Article. The Masconomet School Committee & Turf Up Masco (a private group that has committed to privately fundraise to support turf field projects) joined in partnership for this project, which includes two multi-purpose turf fields and related amenities such as a stadium, seating, concession stand, bathrooms, and outdoor lighting.

We are not seeking Tri-Town approval or funding for the construction of turf fields at Masco at this time. This funding request is to move the project through permitting. We will make decisions relative to construction once permitting is achieved and fundraising is underway. At that point, we will have information about what materials will be used and also what the Boxford Conservation Commission requires from the plan.

For more info on the Turf Project:

- · www.turfupmasco.org
- https://www.masconomet.org/Page/914

The Turf Field Project: Frequent Q & A's

Question: If the turf project is supposed to be 100% privately fundraised, why are we asking the town for money now?

Answer: Having this as a town warrant article achieves two important goals: 1. it allows the community be part of the process involved with bringing turf fields to Masco. 2. so far, donor commitments are contingent upon permitting, and this warrant article allows that prerequisite step to be achieved.

Question: Is turf safe?

Answer: The safety of turf at Masco is of highest importance for our students and for the watershed. This design and permitting process will allow us to explore the safest options on the market. A sustainability policy adopted by the School Committee will inform those choices when the time comes.



BOXFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

From the Tri-Town School Union:

With the April school vacation and spring weather upon us that means that school year is entering the final quarter. Once again, it is hard to believe that we are at that point of the school year! We are looking forward to the remaining months ahead and below are a number of updates from the School Department:

- The school department is appreciative of the partnership with Town Hall and the many town boards and committees throughout the FY24 budget development process.
- The last day of school for the Boxford Elementary Schools will be held on June 15th.
- Kindergarten registration for the 2023-2024 school year is underway and there are already 110 registered students.
- Incoming kindergarten screening will take place on May 30th and May 31st.
- Grade three students had a curriculum enrichment experience with a Whalemobile visit (sample picture below)
- The Sixth Grade Activities Committee is working with our sixth-grade students on their service project which involves raising funds to support service dogs.
- We are very excited to have our Masconomet High School seniors in our school now for their senior year internships.



INSPECTIONAL SERVICES/ZONING

Inspectional services has finally made it to the 21st century! As of Monday April 10, 2023, all permit applications for Building, Electrical, Plumbing and Gas will now be received on-line. You can <u>access the permit forms</u> through the town website and selecting the Building Department.

Stacey Fournier, Assistant Assessor, and myself have been meeting twice a week for the past three months of this year preparing for this day. As with any new system there will be a few complications but our support personnel from our vendor OpenGov have made themselves very accessible as we venture down this path.

Great news as of April 18th: we have a new admin assistant in the Building Department. Her name is Teresa Mason and she has a municipal government background and previously worked at the Sewer and Water Department in Lynn. Please stop by on and welcome her to her new position. Teresa will be getting up to speed with the new on-line permitting program with the rest of us.

As we welcome Teresa, I want express my thanks Joan Gordon for all her dedication during these past few months. She gave all her available time to keep the inspectional services office running smoothly.

Peter Delaney, Building Inspector

BOXFORD LIBRARY



Something New and Exciting is now available through your library! Boxford Residents can now access Hoopla Digital content: E-book, E-Audiobook, TV Series, Movies, Graphic Novels, and Music. All through the Library website.

Checkout up to 8 items per month

Library Card and PIN is required to create a Hoopla Account Contact the library for more information at 978-887-7323

Programs & Events

May

For Children:

- Craft for Preschoolers, Monday, May 1st and 8th, at
- Music & Movement, Thursdays at 10 am.
- Preschool Storytime, Tuesday & Wednesday at 1:30 pm,
- Lego Club, Thursday, April 27th, at 4:00 pm.

For Adults:

- Cookbook Club, Friday, May 12th, at Noon.
 Crochet Club, Tuesday, May 9th and 23rd, at 1:00 pm.
 ABCs of LBGTQ+, Monday May 15th at 6:30 pm, via Zoom.
- Poetry Circle, Tuesday, May 16th, at 7:00 pm.
- Evening Book Discussion, Wednesday, May 17th, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.
 Afternoon Book Discussion, Wednesday, May 31st, at 1:00 pm.

June

For Children

Music & Movement, Thursdays at 10 am.

For Adults:

- Cookbook Club, Thursday, June 8th, at Noon.
- Evening Book Discussion Group, Wednesday, June 21st, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.
- Virtual Program: A Sojourn in Venice, June 21st at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

For more information visit our Events Calendar on the Library's website at: www.boxfordma.gov/town-library



ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

MAY 16, 2023 7:00AM—8PM **BOXFORD TOWN HALL** 7A SPOFFORD ROAD

SAMPLE BALLOT



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Town of Boxford Trash Program is changing effective July 1st.

The orange stickers used currently will no longer be valid or required after that date.

Please consider that fact when purchasing stickers.

For more information, please contact the Board of Health Office at 978-887-2875.

"Springing" into Mosquito Season

What a re-leaf! NEMMC is back out in Boxford treating mosquito breeding sites. Spring rains and snow melt create vernal pools. Vernal pools are depressions in the land, covered by shallow water for variable periods from winter to spring, but may be completely dry for most of the summer and fall. These areas of standing water don't last very long and are temporary spring nurseries for many different species of organisms, including those pesky spring mosquitoes. In the spring, when our technicians go into the field, they are looking for mosquito larvae breeding in these shallow pools. The vernal pools are usually found in the woods of suburban areas. At every site encountered, technicians dip for mosquito larvae. Multiple dips in the same area are extremely important to determine the threshold for any larval treatment.

Some vernal pools will have various kinds of frogs, salamanders, and fairy shrimp. These organisms can control mosquito larvae in that pool by feeding on them. Pools with natural organisms tend to show that the overall mosquito larvae population is below the threshold for larvicide treatment. Sometimes, another pool just feet away will not have all these natural predators, and the mosquito larvae in a single dip may be in the hundreds. The untreated larvae create many thousands of flying biting adult females weeks later. Those are the pools that we target for larviciding and are historically sites that breed every spring. Application of these larvicides may be by backpack or by hand, depending on the size of the woodland pool. The larvicide used contain naturally occurring bacteria (Bacillus thuringeninsis & B. spearicus) that targets only the mosquito larvae that ingest it. So, birds, animals, other insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, even your children and family pets are not harmed when encountering the treated water.

VETERANS SERVICES

On Friday, May 26th the Masconomet Student Council will be hosting a luncheon in the high school library at 12:30 for veterans. All veterans of the Tri-Town Community are invited to participate in both the luncheon and a school wide assembly immediately after the luncheon in the field house. At the assembly, we will hear from Steve Bohn (Army SPC – Retired) who will be sharing about his experiences as a soldier and the importance of memorializing those who have served our nation. We look forward to seeing you at the luncheon. Please RSVP to Ben Hanchett (Faculty Advisor to Student Council) at bhanchett@masconomet.org

The James L. Melvin American Legion post would like to share events for Memorial Day Weekend 2023 — all residents are invited to attend.

Sunday, May 28th

8:30 am - Mount Vernon Cemetery (graves decorated)9:00 am - Brookside Cemetery (graves decorated)

9:45 am- Second Congregational Church

11:15 am- (Approximately) Placing wreath at Civil War Monument

Monday, May 29th

7:30am-Harmony Cemetery

8:00am-Round Top Curtis Guild Camp

8:30am- Ancient Cemetery

9:00am - Parade Assembly Community Center in East Boxford village

9:30am - Parade Steps Off Marches to Village Cemetery then reforms and marches to James L. Melvin Green for the Memorial Day Ceremony.

For any questions, please call 978-688-9525



WEST BOXFORD IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY



Mark your calendars for Boxford's best kept secret!

Our 4th Annual Summer Fest to be held on Saturday, July 29 from 12 to 3 pm at the Boxford Gazebo, 188 Washington Street (across from Paisley's Farm and behind the West Library). Free admission – free live music featuring the popular 12 Barz Band!

Bring your children for an afternoon of free entertainment & games (prizes, too!), face painting, and a really fun demo for kids courtesy of Boxford's Fire Department. Be sure to arrive hungry for some grilled hamburgers and hotdogs for purchase.

To quench your thirst, there will be a variety of craft beer for purchase.

Summer Fest is a celebration of music, food and fun that fosters lasting relationships and strengthens community in a neighborhood atmosphere. This free event is hosted by the West Boxford Improvement Society... cultivating community in Boxford for over 100 years!



BOXFORD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



Registration is now open for the Jennifer Tinney July 4th Road Race! This is a Boxford Independence Day tradition, now in its 33rd year. Please visit the BAA website baasports.com, like and follow @BAARoadRace on Facebook for registration link, updates, and more details.

ECATY 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. Masco spring sporting events, concerts, special events and Class of 2023 events are being featured with many 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.