
SELECTBOARD REPORT

The Westford Selectboard consists of Dave Tilton (Old Stage Road), Cheryl Dunkley (White Church Lane), and John Quinn (Old #11 Road). We come to our positions on the Selectboard from varied backgrounds: Dave works for the Federal government (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Cherie is a lecturer in Geography at the University of Vermont, and John is self-employed. We have been working hard over the last year to address a steady stream of issues associated with roads, dogs, expenditures, ordinances, taxes, zoning, etc. We take our responsibility very seriously to oversee and ensure delivery of the services and local government voted for by the people who make up our community.

General Fund Budget

The new proposed General Fund budget increase reflects rising costs (e.g., fuel), and the need to address some mounting problems. Notable examples include:

- Salaries for the Westford Town Clerk, Treasurer, Road Crew, and Planning Coordinator are each lower than the average salaries for the respective position in nearby towns in Chittenden and Franklin Counties.
- The Town needs to provide better service in its planning and zoning regulatory processes.
- We have recurring problems with the community trash and recycling pickup, a service we in Westford have decided over the years is worth the single largest line item in each year's Town budget.
- We recognized a serious need to upgrade emergency service. We were using an aging rescue vehicle for our volunteer fire department and the emergency response time from Essex Rescue for town residents who live very close to Fairfax was too long.

We feel that changes toward addressing these concerns are necessary to provide quality community services in Westford. We hope voters will support the proposed budget increase.

Town Meeting

We are keenly aware of, and involved in, the ongoing discussion in the community about Town Meeting dates, and the merits of Town Meeting vote versus Australian ballot. The only way to resolve the question is through a vote. The initial vote (which could be a vote about how to vote for a change in voting procedures...) must occur at a Town Meeting; either our regular meeting in March or a specially warned meeting. Given that scenario, it seems appropriate to leave it to proponents of a change to file a petition. Such a petition with signatures of at least 5% of voters would require that a vote be held.

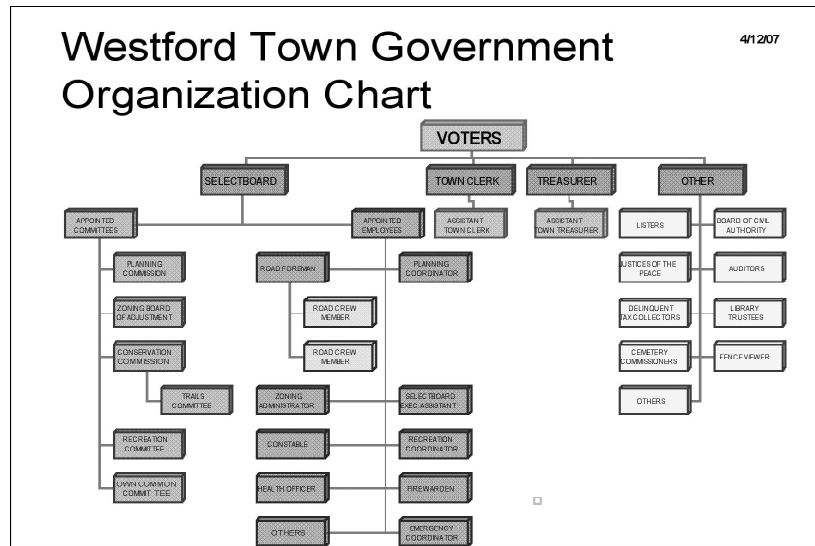
Roads

Milton-Westford Road received a great new repaving job last year. Given the curvy nature of this road and the new smooth surface, new warning signs were also installed. We also reduced the speed limit on Brookside Road near the school to 25 mph. After our successful State grant in 2006 to assess the Town ditches, we received a grant from Vermont Better Backroads Program to correct one of the most difficult erosion/stability problems, which was on Pettingill Road. Please drive carefully on the Town roads!

We had a particularly bad dust season last summer, at least on Old Stage Road and Brookside Road. While much of the problem can be blamed on Mother Nature, we continue to look for ways to maintain our dirt roads to enhance safety and convenience. We also have a few trouble spots, including a difficult intersection at Woods Hollow Road and Phelps Road. We're grateful that several gracious members of our community have volunteered recently to form a new Roads Committee to develop recommendations on how to address issues like these.

Personnel Management

A major theme of our work last year was to focus on our responsibilities to support and guide the Town employees we are charged to supervise. The diagram below illustrates the Town's personnel structure. We spent a significant amount of time developing a formal Personnel Policy addressing leave, time and attendance, recruitment, standards of conduct, and discipline, much of which has never been formally addressed in Westford. Work is ongoing to develop official job descriptions and performance plans for each employee.



High Speed Internet

A great amount of energy was expended by several community volunteers to help create a fiber optic cable network, in conjunction with volunteers from Underhill and Jericho. We owe these people a debt of gratitude for moving this issue forward. Although conditions changed when it became clear that Burlington Telecom was not ready to support the effort, there is cause for optimism that Westford will soon find its way into the 21st Century with high speed Internet service. New energy and volunteers continue to push this effort along.

Policing

We have maintained annual contracts with the State Police and Sheriff's Department, and ask them to provide a visible presence in Town. Typical monthly reports from them include speeding violations and a few miscellaneous incident investigations. True to form in Westford, community volunteers have begun to establish a Neighborhood Watch program to help address chronic problems with burglaries on Osgood Hill Road and perhaps other areas.

Planning and Zoning

During the past year, the Planning Coordinator and members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Selectboard reviewed the way in which Westford conducts its land development application process. After much research and discussion, the Selectboard voted to establish a Development Review Board whose responsibilities will include reviewing all land development, conditional uses, waivers, variances and appeals from a decision of the Zoning Administrator. The Planning Commission will develop the Town Plan, draft development and zoning regulations, and conduct research on special projects. We believe this will be a more efficient system. The Selectboard thanks everyone who took part in these discussions.

Town Lands Stewardship

We assigned stewardship responsibilities for Town-owned lands to the Westford Conservation Commission, another impressive group of volunteers. The Conservation Commission works hard to support landowners, conservation, and outdoor recreation opportunities in Westford's beautiful open spaces, Town properties and easements.

Wastewater Study

Westford obtained a State grant last year to investigate community wastewater disposal options focusing on the Town Center. Yet another committee of committed volunteers agreed to help us understand current conditions and explore alternative approaches to handling wastewater in the Town Center and elsewhere. Initial research reports are under prepa-

ration, and we are hopeful they will satisfy questions and concerns about wastewater options.

Town Center

A new Town Center Committee is working to develop improvements to the Town Center while retaining its unique character. Efforts are underway to improve safety at the Common Road/Route 128 intersection. The Committee is also taking a hard look at parking and pedestrian access at the Town Office and Library. We are looking forward to their analyses.

Finally

We want to express our sincere appreciation to volunteers, committee members, and the community at large. Readers have noticed continued reference to volunteers in this report. Many others aren't mentioned here. There is no doubt that volunteer efforts are essential to our community, and we are grateful.

On a sad note, William "Bill" Leach, a volunteer who set an outstanding example of service to his community, and a leader in Westford for many years, passed away on May 3, 2007. He is truly missed by the community.

We look forward to talking to anyone who wants to express a comment, question, or concern. Please feel free to come to any of the Selectboard's regularly scheduled meetings or contact any of us individually.

Respectfully submitted,
David A. Tilton, Chair
Cheryl M. Dunkley
John Quinn
