



Jodi Ross  
Town Manager  
978-692-5501

### *Rabies Clinic*

March 21, 2009  
at the Main St  
Fire Station  
from 9am-11am

The cost will be  
\$15.00 per  
animal. Cats are  
also welcome.

### *Town Meeting*

Saturday, May  
9, 2009 at the  
Abbot School  
Gymnasium

Visit  
[westfordma.gov](http://westfordma.gov)  
for current  
news and  
information.

Dear Westford Residents,

As the unrelenting winter season continues, so does our Fiscal Year 2010 (FY10) budget review process. Recognizing the need to examine every cost expenditure of the town, with the intent to not reduce services for our residents, we are in the midst of weekly joint Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee meetings with each department head. Although we recognize the challenges of this economic crisis for all, Westford is fortunately faring better than many other Massachusetts towns.

Although our town has historically maintained strong cash reserves, we have relied upon Free Cash to balance our operating budget in the past. The Board of Selectmen directed me to reduce this reliance in the future, or in other words – truly balance the budget. I explained to the board that although I believed it was an attainable goal, it might take a few years to accomplish this. With this goal in mind, the FY10 budget that I submitted to the selectmen and Finance

Committee has reduced the reliance on Free Cash from \$3,174,500 in FY09 to just under \$1,000,000 in FY10. As we are still in the midst of budget meetings, and do not have the final state aid figures yet, this number may change prior to town meeting.

We are carefully tracking revenues for the current fiscal year, and will adjust FY10 if necessary. We had anticipated that Governor Patrick might reduce our state aid, so we had prepared our initial budgets with a 10% reduction assumption. We were not expecting to also receive further cuts in FY09, but with conservatism in mind, we took numerous steps over the past six months to prepare us for that eventuality. This is why Westford is able to absorb the recent reductions in this fiscal year, and we are not forced to initiate layoffs, as many other Massachusetts municipalities have been forced to do.

Some of the cost containment measures we instituted in this FY include the following:

- Through bidding of our town employees' health insurance, we were able to reduce these costs from 8% to 3.1% resulting in a savings of \$186,000.
  - Through a selectmen initiated hiring-freeze, and by consolidating positions, we were able to save approximately \$200,000.
  - Although we were initially rejected from receiving federal and state reimbursement for '08 ice storm costs – we were able to overturn that decision and expect to receive approximately \$487,500 in federal and \$81,250 in state relief.
  - By going out to bid and locking in reduced rates for both electricity and natural gas, we are realizing substantial savings from last year.
  - We reduced the usage of town vehicles which has lowered our gasoline costs.
- In preparation for FY10, the town's operating budget absorbed a 7% decrease from FY09. Some of the budget reductions for FY10 include the following:

*Continued on page 2...*



Dear Westford Residents,

*Continued from page 1.*



*"Town Meeting is just around the corner and it is our intent to present a FY10 budget that will be balanced, streamlined, proactive, yet realistic."*

- Reduced geographic information (GIS) expenses: \$13,000
- Reduced printing services: \$25,000
- Reduced police gasoline: \$30,000
- Other department job sharing and/or reduced hours: \$36,000
- Reduced town office supplies: \$41,000
- Reduction of contracted highway position: \$60,000
- Library consolidation of positions: \$75,000
- Reduced technology expenses: \$81,000
- Reduction in health insurance (first 4 months): \$93,000
- Reductions of personal services in police department: \$96,000
- Recreation subsidy reduced: \$137,000
- Utilities absorbed into individual budgets: \$171,000
- Reduction in town's compensation reserve: \$300,000
- Utilities absorbed into school budget: \$465,000

In addition, last fall we participated in a regional Request for Proposal process with 12 other communities and were able to greatly

reduce our tipping fees for the next five years (anticipated savings of \$200,000.) Also, at the request of the selectmen, we are working with the Recycling Commission to research and recommend a solid waste reduction program, with the intent of further reducing our tipping fees, while continuing to actively encourage recycling.

We are also looking at ways to generate new revenue, including marketing a town-created permitting software program to other municipalities in the New England area. We have also researched comparable towns and adjusted our user fees as appropriate. We do have some exciting economic development occurring which will help bring in significant permitting fees, and ultimately contribute to the tax revenue we receive.

We plan to be as fiscally conservative as we can, without seriously impacting town services if possible. Even with streamlined operations, I believe we will be able to maintain services at current levels if we use creativity, hard work, and an openness to

trying new ways of operating and conducting town business.

Recently we formed a Capital Planning Committee which has been meeting weekly with all department heads or committees who requested capital funds. We intend to complete this process in late February, when we will define what constitutes a capital item, and then organize and prioritize all capital requests to present to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and ultimately the residents for approval.

Town Meeting is just around the corner and it is our intent to present a FY10 budget that will be balanced, streamlined, proactive, yet realistic. We are optimistic about our future, and we are committed and prepared to work harder than ever to maintain the services you have come to expect.

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross



## Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Reaches Targeted Budget for FY10

What was done for the [Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery](#) department FY'10 Budgets to meet the Town Manager's targeted amount? Staffing for all three areas was analyzed resulting in reduction of part-time/seasonal staff and/or staff hours without compromising services. Expenses were also analyzed in the context of increased demand on parks and recreation usage as

residents look for more local options to meet their leisure activity needs. Cost savings through bulk purchasing, quotes, and better tracking of materials and supplies has resulted in a reduction of expenditures. Energy saving measures implemented in 2008 are showing a cost savings for 2009 and it is anticipated this will continue through 2010.

New programs and existing programs are continually evaluated to be cost effective and revenue generating. The Recreation Enterprise fund established for FY'09 is on target to meet its fiscal goals and it is anticipated this will continue through FY'10.

Pat Savage  
Recreation Director



*"Expenses were also analyzed in the context of increased demand on parks and recreation usage as residents look for more local options to meet their leisure activity needs."*

## LIBRARY RETAINS CERTIFICATION IN FY10

To meet the Town Manager's budget target, the [Library](#) department was able to seize the opportunity to radically re-organize, automate and streamline in order to cover two vacancies due to retirement. Staffing duties and hours were re-organized amongst management, union, full-time, part-time and seasonal staff to cover the duties of former positions. Kudos to all the dedicated Library staff for their professionalism in achieving a personnel reduction with minimal

public service impact! In energy costs, the Library is seeing the savings from the installation of energy efficient lighting, three highly-efficient boilers, new computerized thermostats and a new energy management system – all of these improvements will result in utility cost reductions. The most salient feature of the Library department's FY10 budget is not what is cut, but what is protected! As submitted, the Library budget meets both the Town Manager's target

and the state funding and book budget requirements, thereby retaining library certification. This means the J. V. Fletcher Library remains certified and Westford residents may continue to enjoy the hours, technology, collections, and walk-in service afforded them at other Commonwealth libraries as well as inter-library loans delivered to the library "door"!

Ellen Rainville  
Library Director



### Town Clerk Document Management Project

The [Town Clerk's](#) Office is one of many departments currently scanning public documents into the Town's Document Management System (DMS). This system was implemented by our Technology Dept. to help alleviate document storage issues that led to the structural problems at Town Hall and the accessibility issues that followed the relocation of departments in so many directions. New documents are now being scanned as they are received. The best

part of this system is that the public has on-demand access to public documents 24/7 through the web interface.

We are only in the early stages of this scanning project, but each week hundreds of additional pages are being scanned. Many records must still be retained in their original format, so a suitable storage area is needed to safeguard their preservation. As time allows, older documents are also being scanned, but this is a longer term project and we are grateful for

the ongoing support of volunteers and tax work program participants.

If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer on any preservation-related project, whether scanning, packing in boxes or creating inventories, please let us know! Browse through our volunteer opportunities database to see what projects other departments are offering as well.

Kaari Mai Tari  
Town Clerk



*"The best part of this system is that the public has on demand access to public documents 24/7 through the web interface."*

### Engineering Department

Through attrition, the [Engineering Department](#) has been put on the cutting edge of recent changes in the budget. The necessary reduction in staff has given the department an opportunity to reevaluate its priorities

and shift resources to make sure that important services are not affected.

Engineering will continue to meet this challenge by looking for new ways to increase efficiency.

Paul Starratt, P.E.  
Interim Town Engineer



## Water Department Fix a Leak Week

### Every Drop Counts

More than 1 trillion gallons of water are wasted in U.S. homes each year from easy-to-fix leaks. That's why the Westford Water Department is participating in Fix a Leak Week [www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak), March 16 to 20, 2009, and we encourage you to join us.

Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) WaterSense® program, this week is an opportunity to improve the water efficiency of your homes by checking for and fixing leaks, which waste an average of 11,000 gallons of water per home each year. That's more than enough water to fill up a backyard swimming pool!

Here's how to identify and address leaks around your home:

Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak.

To determine if you have a leak, now is a great time to check water usage. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons per month in the winter, you probably have leaks!

Search for toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank or stopping by the Water Department for free dye caplets. If any color shows up in the bowl without flushing first, you have a leak. (Be sure to flush immediately to avoid staining the tank.)

If you decide it's time for a new commode or faucet, look for [WaterSense labeled products](#), which use 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

The vast majority of leaks can be eliminated after retrofitting a household with new WaterSense labeled fixtures and other high-efficiency appliances.

### Learn More

Fix a Leak Week is March 16 to 20, 2009. Grab a wrench or contact your favorite handy person, plumber, or WaterSense irrigation partner to address leaking toilets, faucets, and irrigation systems around your home. Visit the WaterSense Web site to learn more [www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak).

Warren Sweetser  
Water Superintendent



"Fix a Leak Week  
[www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak), March 16 to 20, 2009"



### Police Make Arrests in Area Business Break-ins

Two arrests were made in a late night business break from February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Arrested:

John Roy McGinley  
Age: 26  
18E Strawberry Hill Road, Acton, MA

Leroy A. Martin  
Age: 31  
86 Whitman Street, Apt. 2, Malden, MA

On February 5<sup>th</sup> the Westford Police responded to break-in at C&L Limousine located on Littleton Road. With the assistance of Acton Police we were able to identify McGinley and Martin as being involved with the break.

Subsequent search of the vehicle they were driving yielded evidence from C&L Limousine. Arrest warrants were issued and a weekend man hunt which involved several cities and towns ended with their arrests.

Both were charged with:

- B&E Building Nighttime for Felony
- Larceny from a Building
- Malicious Destruction of Property over \$250
- Trespassing

Since the middle of January, Westford has had 15 business break-ins. Neighboring towns of Acton and Littleton have also had similar breaks. We believe they are connected with these breaks and we are closely examining all evidence. We will also be looking into their connection to any recent house breaks.

Captain Victor Neal  
[Westford Police Department](#)

