



**Jodi Ross**  
Town Manager  
978-692-5500

### ***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  
for current  
news and  
information.**

### **Dear Westford Residents,**

With several inches of snow still covering the ground, it's hard to think spring is just around the corner – and with it comes our annual town meeting! We are busily preparing the warrant which will be closed by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on March 10th. Although town meeting is scheduled for May 9th, there is an article on the warrant asking voters to change this date back to late March or April, in an effort to increase attendance. I will devote my April newsletter to the town meeting warrant articles, as we will be further along in the process by then.

There are several interesting projects underway which you may have heard about. One is a proposal to implement a waste reduction program. The goal of this program is to reduce waste by encouraging recycling, thus reducing tipping fees. The specifics of this

program are available on our website and there will be a town meeting article to let the voters decide.

As you may have heard, I am proposing to create a Department of Public Works (DPW) at this town meeting. A copy of the presentation I made to the Board of Selectmen on February 24th is on my webpage at [www.westfordma.gov](http://www.westfordma.gov), but I will share some highlights with you now.

When the Board of Selectmen established my 2009 – 2010 goals, they charged me with evaluating cost reduction opportunities, consolidating departments where appropriate to improve efficiency and reduce costs, consolidating vehicle maintenance and centralized fueling for all town and school vehicles, and centralizing management and

maintenance of all municipal facilities. I believe the town will achieve significant cost savings, while improving the services we deliver, both to the town residents and internally, if we combine and form a DPW now.

Currently our town departments function independently and several departments have overlapping or redundant operations. I believe we should centralize resources – such as staff, vehicles and equipment – which will allow us to share or combine jobs, share town resources, and eliminate or reduce duplication.

What kind of duplication do we have? We have administrative staff performing similar functions (payroll, billing, accounts payable, telephones); we have maintenance workers assigned to

*Continued on page 2.*



**Dear Westford Residents,**

*Continued from page 1.*



*"We are busily preparing the warrant which will be closed by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on March 10th."*

specific buildings, not working together to satisfy town-wide needs, and we have duplicate vehicles in many departments. We have mechanics at several facilities, each with their own set of tools.

We are budgeting for operational and capital expenses as individual departments, not as one organization. The town recently formed a Capital Planning Committee, and after we met with each department head, we discovered that we really need a more coordinated effort for maintenance and capital needs. We have already discovered what can happen when a building is not properly maintained (closure of the town hall), and it was obvious to us that we did not have the structure in place to insure all town buildings were being properly taken care of.

This concept of creating a DPW is not

new to the town. Our highway superintendent recommended creating a DPW in 1998 and again in 2002. The Commission for Efficient Town Government, the Long Range Fiscal Planning Committee, and the Master Plan all recommend centralizing, consolidating, sharing, and eliminating redundancies in an effort to reduce costs and provide better service.

By creating a DPW, we will streamline our operations, we will create job consolidation opportunities, and we will provide better oversight and accountability. We will be creating a central point to coordinate sharing of town resources, and provide oversight of facilities to help us identify town-wide infrastructure needs, to better prioritize and coordinate maintenance. We will also create more

flexibility in cross-training, assigning work duties, and deploying staff where needed.

I welcome you to read my [proposal](#) for creating a DPW. I truly believe this will help us to reduce costs, improve services, and implement many of the recommendations we have received from other town officials and committees. Ultimately I believe taking this action will enable us to achieve the goals of the town.

As usual, I welcome any and all comments and opinions.

Sincerely,

[Jodi Ross](#)



## Project Lifesaver

*Submitted by Westford Police Department*

The [Westford Police Department](#) will be training 12 officers for Project Lifesaver March 5th and 6th. Project Lifesaver is a national search and rescue program that is saving lives and community resources across the United States. This program helps protect the most vulnerable citizens – those who wander due to Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down syndrome and related disorders. Since its inception in 1999, public safety agencies at over 700 locations in 42 states and Canada have implemented the program. Project Lifesaver has successfully located 1,715 wanderers nationwide in an average time of 30 minutes or less from time of arrival on scene.

Citizens of Westford who qualify would be fitted with a battery operated wrist band transmitter. The wristband device has its own individual electronic code that

transmits a radio signal. Once a person is reported missing, a Westford Police Officer who is trained in the Project Lifesaver equipment would activate a hand held receiving device. The electronic code from the wrist band would be entered into the receiving device and the officer would start tracking in the area the individual was last seen. To maximize response time, more Officers will be trained in the future. In order to use the device the Officers must be trained.

Batteries in the wristband devices will be replaced every thirty days with the assistance of the Westford's Counsel of Aging. One wrist band device costs approximately \$300.00.

Project Lifesaver International is a nonprofit organization. Anyone who would like to donate to the Westford Police Departments Project Lifesaver can make

the checks out to Project Lifesaver, c/o of the Westford Police Department. Any money raised goes directly to the Westford Police Departments account with Project Lifesaver. The money goes towards purchasing new batteries, wristband devices and related equipment.

The Westford Police Department is the first Department in Middlesex County to implement this program.

Any wanting more information on this may contact Captain Victor Neal at the Westford Police Department 978-692-2161. Also visit Project Lifesaver's website at <http://www.projectlifesa-ver.org>.




---

*“Any wanting more information on this may contact Captain Victor Neal at the Westford Police Department 978-692-2161. Also visit Project Lifesaver's website at [www.projectlifesa-ver.org](http://www.projectlifesa-ver.org).”*



### Ice & Cold Water Safety

*Submitted by Westford Fire Department*



*“Additional information on Ice and Cold Water Safety can be found on the Department of Fire Services website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).”*

Each winter may residents suffer injuries from hypothermia following accidental immersion in cold, icy water. Longer days are now approaching and with the coming of spring there are far too many variables that affect the strength of ice on any body of water. Besides the air temperature, which fluctuates constantly will result in thawing and re-freezing causing uneven ice thickness that can weaken ice. Winter sports such as ice skating and ice fishing people need to be aware about the dangers of ice and cold water. Make sure someone knows where you have planned to be.

#### **Don't Become a Victim**

Should you witness someone fall through the ice call 911 and

give the location from where you witnessed the incident.

Remember “Reach, Throw and Go”.

Reach from shore with a pole, ladder or similar object. Throw a rope to the victim or something to keep them afloat such as a life preserver or a life safety ring. If this does not work DO NOT go out onto the ice where you can become a victim yourself.

#### **If you Fall In**

Should your fall through the ice, try not to panic. Attempt to save yourself by turning toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms onto the ice and place your body against the edge of the ice and kick with your legs to push yourself forward out of the water, onto the ice. If you break through keep trying

until you are on solid ice. Remain lying down to keep your weight distributed evenly (don't stand or you could fall back in) and roll away from the hole. Craw back towards the shore and get medical help immediately.

Additional information on Ice and Cold Water Safety can be found on the Department of Fire Services website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).

[Respectfully,](#)  
[Donald R. Parsons](#)  
[Fire Prevention](#)  
[Officer](#)



## Winter Storm Updates

*Submitted by Highway Department*

The Winter Season has certainly kept the [Highway Department](#) busy! To kick it off, on December 11, 2008 the region experienced a major ice storm, resulting in the declaration of a State of Emergency. Highway Crews were dispatched to remove felled trees and limbs due to heavy ice accumulation. Clearing operations continued through the night until Friday, December 12th, when the sky cleared and the sun came out. Then it began to snow:

December 17, 2008: 2.5"  
 January 19, 2009: 5"  
 December 19, 2008: 10"  
 January 28, 2009: 6"  
 December 21, 2008 13"  
 February 3, 2009: 3"  
 December 31, 2008: 7"  
 February 18, 2009: 2.5"  
 January 7, 2009: 3"  
 February 20, 2009: 3"  
 January 10, 2009: 7"  
 February 22, 2009: 3"  
 January 18, 2009: 9"  
 March 2, 2009: 10"

**Total: 84" or 7' of snow!**

Have you ever wondered what makes a storm a blizzard? Below you

will find definitions of weather related terms. Definitions provided by the National Weather Service.

**Blizzard** - A blizzard means that the following conditions are expected to prevail for a period of 3 hours or longer: Sustained wind or frequent gusts to 35 miles an hour or greater and considerable falling and/or blowing snow (i.e., reducing the visibility frequently to less than a quarter mile).

**Heavy Snow** - This generally means... snowfall accumulating to 4" or more in depth in 12 hours or less or snowfall accumulating to 6" or more in depth in 24 hours or less In forecasts, snowfall amounts are expressed as a range of values, i.e., "8 to 12 inches." However, in heavy snow situations where there is considerable uncertainty concerning the range of values, more appropriate phrases are used, such as "...up to 12 inches..."

or alternatively "...8 inches or more..."

**Ice Storm** - An ice storm is used to describe occasions when damaging accumulations of ice are expected during freezing rain situations. Significant accumulations of ice pull down trees and utility lines resulting in loss of power and communication. These accumulations of ice make walking and driving extremely dangerous. Accumulations are called significant when they amount to a quarter inch or more.

**Nor'easter** - A strong low-pressure system that affects the Mid Atlantic and New England States. It can form over land or over the coastal waters. These winter weather events are notorious for producing heavy snow, rain, and tremendous waves that crash onto Atlantic beaches, often causing beach erosion and structural damage.

*Continued on page 6.*





**Winter Storm Updates**

Wind gusts associated with these storms can exceed hurricane force in intensity. A nor'easter gets its name from the continuously strong northeasterly winds blowing in from the ocean ahead of the storm and over the coastal areas.



**Wind Advisory -** Sustained winds 25 to 39 mph and/or gusts to 57 mph. Issuance is normally site specific.

**Wind Chill -** Increased wind speeds accelerate heat loss from exposed skin, and the wind chill is a measure of this effect. No specific rules exist for determining when

wind chill becomes dangerous. As a general rule the threshold for potentially dangerous wind chill conditions is about -20 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Winter Storm Warning -** This announcement is issued by the National Weather Service when a winter storm is producing or is forecast to produce heavy snow or significant ice accumulations. The criteria for this warning can vary from place to place.

**Winter Storm Watch -** This product is issued by the National

*Continued from page 5.*

Weather Service when there is a potential for heavy snow or significant ice accumulations, usually at least 24 to 36 hours in advance.

We're looking forward to spring where our focus will shift from winter road treatments and snow removal to maintaining the Town's grounds, road maintenance and repairs.

Stay tuned for the April Newsletter for information about debris disposal associated with the December ice storm and Brush Dump operations.

**Property Tax Deferral for Seniors**

*Submitted by Board of Assessors*

This coming annual Town Meeting there will be a warrant article modifying Chapter 59 Section 5 Clause 41A – Property Tax Deferral for Seniors. The proposed new local option change would increase the qualifying income from \$40,000 to the income limits set by the "Circuit Breaker" state income tax credit. This new

qualifying income would then be adjusted annually by the Commissioner of Revenue. It would establish a higher qualifying income. For example, if this change were enacted for FY 2009, the qualifying income would have been \$48,000. Also remember that as of FY 2007 the interest on the tax deferrals is

0%. The [Board of Assessors](#) supports this local option as an increasing viable option, for senior citizens 65 years and older, by deferring their tax burden until such time that a property is sold. The Board of Assessors asks for your support on this important warrant article in May.



## Rain Garden at the Day School

Submitted by Water Department

The Westford Water, Engineering, Highway, Permitting, and School Departments are working together with local company Stantec Consulting to design and construct a rain garden at the Day School. A rain garden uses soils, plants, and microbes to treat stormwater before it is discharged to a water body. The rain garden at the Day School will also be used for educational purposes by the Living Lab. Classes will be able to walk through the garden, learning about the native plant species it contains and why those plants were chosen. The garden will also provide habitat for butterflies and other insects for students to observe. Construction is planned for this spring.

The rain garden project is a volunteer project and Stantec has donated all of its design services as a community outreach effort. We are looking to the residents and businesses of Westford for donations of the plant

material in order to construct the garden. Below is a plant list including the species needed for the rain garden and adjacent areas. If you have any of the listed plant materials that you would like to contribute to the rain garden please contact Jessica Cajigas at the [Water Department](#), 978-399-2457 or [jcajigas@westfordma.gov](mailto:jcajigas@westfordma.gov).

**Perennials** (any size is welcome, but 1 gallon containers or larger are especially appreciated)

**Lavendar Hyssop**  
(*Agastache foeniculum*)

**Wild Columbine**  
(*Aquilegia canadensis*)

**Butterfly Milkweed**  
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)

**Smooth Blue Aster**  
(*Aster laevis*)

**New England Aster**  
(*Aster novae-angliae*)

**Purple Coneflower**  
(*Echinacea purpurea*)

**Dense Blazing Star**  
(*Liatris spicata*)

**Wild Bergamot**  
(*Monarda fistulosa*)

**Black-Eyed Susan**  
(*Rudbeckia sp.*)

**Ornamental Grasses**  
(any size is welcome, but 1 gallon containers or larger are especially appreciated)

**Wood Oats**  
(*Chasmanthium latifolium*)

**Switch Grass**  
(*Panicum virgatum*)  
<Hanse Herms, Heavy Metal and Shenandoah cultivars especially>

**Little Bluestem**  
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

**Prairie Dropseed**  
(*Sporobolus heterolepis*)

**Trees and Shrubs**  
(any size is welcome, but 2'-3' tall shrubs and 6' tall trees or larger are especially appreciated)

**Redbud**  
*Cercis canadensis*

**Redosier Dogwood**  
*Cornus sericea*

**Mountain Witchalder**  
*Fothergilla major*

**Inkberry**  
*Ilex glabra*

**Common Winterberry**  
*Ilex verticillata*

**Dwarf White Pine**  
*Pinus strobus 'Nana'*





**National Nutrition Month**

*Submitted by Council on Aging*



*"If you or a family member would like more information on the Meals on Wheels program please call 800-892-0890."*

Nutrition Programs for senior citizens is the second largest program operated by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Meals are provided at more than 400 congregate meal sites and are delivered to frail elders in their homes.

The Cameron Senior Center is home to a congregate meal site that provides lunch each weekday at 11:30 a.m. The Cameron setting provides opportunities for socialization and companionship. It also offers programs related to nutrition education, exercise activities, health promotion and disease prevention. Transportation is available for those having trouble getting around on their own by calling us at

978-399-2322.

We are pleased to share with you a new feature in our Council on Aging monthly newsletter, which can be viewed at [www.westfordma.gov/coa](http://www.westfordma.gov/coa) ; the monthly menu features the total meal calories, fat, cholesterol and sodium content. Reservations must be made a minimum of two days in advance by calling us at 978 692-4480 between the hours of 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. The donation fee is just \$2. per meal.

Nutrition Services help to address a number of problems faced by many elders, including poor diets, health problems, food insecurity and loneliness. A major goal is to provide at

least one nutritionally balanced meal per day to seniors that are homebound through home-delivered meals. People age 60 and older and their spouses are eligible to receive nutrition services.

These meals tie into our goal to assist older persons in maintaining independence so that they may continue to reside in their own homes for as long as possible. If you or a family member would like more information on the Meals on Wheels program please call 800-892-0890.



**Regional Flyover Project**

*Submitted by GIS Department*

The GIS Department is excited to announce that the aerial photography from the regional flyover project has been delivered. This project was sponsored by Northern Middlesex Council of Governments and involved eight communities in the region. This imagery will provide a great visual resource for staff and will be available to the public on the GIS website shortly.

The image below left shows the new bandstand on the town common. The image to the right shows the town hall, police and fire stations. Both images were taken November 12, 2008.



For more information go to [www.westfordma.gov/gis](http://www.westfordma.gov/gis)



**IT Initiatives for Budget Savings** *Submitted by Technology Department*

IT FY10 Requested Budget Lower than FY07 Actuals.

Reduced IT FY10 Capital Requests.

Completed RFP to generate revenue from sale of Westford's Permitting System.

Meeting with vendors to discuss selling other databases/ web tools.

Rolling out Munis Requisition/PO system to better manage the spending freeze by streamlining requests and approvals and reducing paperwork.

Rolling out Cartegraph software to help manage DPW work orders, vehicle maintenance.

Continuing web improvements to make more

information and services available online-- reducing foot traffic and phone calls.

**FY11**

Rolling out more types of web payments-- more ways to collect revenue online.

Exploring virtual desktops to save on workstation replacements.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**To Provide Marketing, Sales and Technical Support Services for Town of Westford Created and Owned Permitting Software**

The Town of Westford, hereafter referred to as the "Town", is seeking proposals for professional services to market, sell and support the Westford Government Permitting and Licensing (WGPL) software model. More details on these services are outlined under "Objectives." The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to select a qualified organization, hereafter referred to as the "Proponent", with experience in marketing, selling and supporting municipal software pursuant to the following findings:

1. The WGPL software model includes a fully integrated permitting system for land management functions of municipal government. This model, developed by the Town, is critical to the effective and successful implementation of WGPL software.
2. The Town has concluded from preliminary discussions with various municipalities in New England that there is a strong demand for this software product. The Town seeks a qualified company, firm, entity or individual to provide the necessary resources to market, sell, sustain, support, license and continually develop this software product.
3. The Town seeks proposals whereby the Town will enter an agreement to license the WGPL software to the selected Proponent/Vendor and, in exchange for marketing, sales and support services, the Proponent/Vendor will be entitled to a percentage of the sales revenue generated by the software. The exact pricing model with formulas must be outlined in the "Price Proposal."

Copies of the Request for Proposals (RFP) may be obtained during normal business hours from 03/04/2009 through 04/01/2009 at the Office of the Town Manager, 23 Depot Street Westford, MA 01886. Phone: (978) 692-5501, Fax: (978) 399-2557 or by registering on the website [www.westfordma.gov/rfp](http://www.westfordma.gov/rfp). Or by email: [procurement@westfordma.gov](mailto:procurement@westfordma.gov)

Proposals **will be due in the Town Manager's office located at 23 Depot Street (behind the Abbot School) not later than 4:00 PM 04/01/2009** No proposal will be considered which is received after that time for any reason. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.