

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023

Dedication

It is an honor and a pleasure to dedicate this year's Town Meeting to Richard (Dick) Jon Rossman who left us, along with his wonderful legacy, in January of 2023.

The Rossman's moved to West Brookfield permanently in 1991. Dick and the "love of his life," Barbara, started the eclectic landmark store, *Post and Boot*, just off the town common. It continues to this day under Barbara's capable management.

During his time here in West Brookfield, Dick Rossman was integral in the establishment and development of some of our area's most iconic institutions, most notably, the Asparagus Festival and the annual White Christmas Celebration, along with the local business organization *Browse the Brookfield's*. However, Mr. Rossman is best known for his 24 years of devoted service to our community as Chairperson of the West Brookfield Historical Commission.

Dick truly left an indelible mark on our town!

We would like to offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to Barbara and the family of Richard Jon Rossman for his years of dedicated service to our town.

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
WORCESTER COUNTY
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Established	1660 – Quaboag Plantation
Incorporated	March 3, 1848
Land Area	20.67 Square Miles
Population	3,503

Location: Central Massachusetts bordered on the north-by-North Brookfield, northwest by New Braintree, west by Ware, southwest by Warren and southeast by Brookfield

Topographical Features: Generally hilly terrain with elevation ranging from 598 feet above sea level to 1,206 feet above sea level. A relatively wide valley crosses the southern portion of the Town where the Quaboag River flows. Wickaboag Pond is the only major body of water.

Elevation at Town Hall: 633 feet above sea level

School System: Quaboag Regional M/H School (Warren/West Brookfield)

Congressional District: 1st. Massachusetts
Richard Neal Congressman, Springfield
1-413-785-0325

United States Senator: Elizabeth Warren 1-617-565-3170
Edward J. Markey 1-617-565-8519

State Senatorial District: Peter Durant 1-617-722-1540

State Representative District Donald Berthiaume 1-717 722-2090

Type of Local Government: Town Meeting
Board of Selectmen – Three members

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Accountant

Special Revenue, Fund Balance Detail as of June 30, 2023(Unaudited)

Fund Number	Fund Name	Accounts Receivable	Deferred Revenue	Fund Balance 6/30/2023	Receipts thru 9/30/2023	BAN's	Remaining Deficit 6/30/2023
21	Water Fund	49,770.76	49,770.76	839,540.66			0.00
22	Revolving						0.00
22	Planning			1,163.75			0.00
22	Stormwater			11,237.07			0.00
22	Stewardship Program			2,840.00			0.00
22	Cemetery Revolving			39,726.18			0.00
23	Cable Revolving			118,619.10			0.00
24	Giftsand Donations						0.00
24	Common Committee			12,209.13			0.00
24	Open Space Donations			100.00			0.00
24	Dare Donations			944.62			0.00
24	Explorers Donations			2,947.45			0.00
24	Fire Safe			300.00			0.00
24	Lyons Doantion			2,495.51			0.00
24	COA Transportation Medicar			30,900.62			0.00
24	COA Donations			101.78			0.00
24	Veterans Dinner			492.24			0.00
24	War Memorial Walkway			1,557.19			0.00
24	Library Books			773.51			0.00
24	Greater Worcester Comm			1,387.00			0.00
24	WBTV			669.27			0.00
24	Asparagus and Flower			7,845.98			0.00
24	Historical			1,734.00			0.00
24	White Christmas			4,733.68			0.00
24	Lake Water Quality			20,080.97			0.00
25	SSRP/Housing	2,051.56	2,051.56	4,422.76			0.00
27	Other Town Revolving						0.00
27	Ins. Reimbunder \$100k			33,156.06			0.00
27	Town Document Search			411.35			0.00
27	Conservation Improvement			8,060.05			0.00
27	Conservation Consultant			1,100.00			0.00
27	Road Machinery			4,821.18			0.00
27	Repairs toPrivate Roads			2,571.78			0.00
27	Quaboag Triathlon			7,656.17			0.00
28	Grants						0.00
28	ARPA			1,053,227.03			0.00
28	EMPGFY21			2,162.38			0.00
28	FEMA Covid			5,984.89			0.00
29	Smart Growth			4,558.36			0.00
29	Green Community			0.24			0.00
29	EAOFDisaster Recovery			751.00			0.00
29	Extended Polling			3,710.42			0.00
29	Environmental Planning			(24,700.00)	11,250.00		(13,450.00)
29	Ballot Box Reimb			(10.59)			(10.59)
29	Lap Top			570.85			0.00
29	Police Public Safety			93.85			0.00
29	PD Med Project			1,950.00			0.00
29	Fire Safe			843.00			0.00
29	Fire Public Safety			2,897.57			0.00
29	Fire FY12			2,000.00			0.00
29	VFA Fire			2,443.01			0.00
29	Senior Safe Fire FY16			1,709.49			0.00
29	Student Safe FY16			472.75			0.00
29	Senior Safe FY18			4,149.50			0.00
29	Safe FY2019			2,854.00			0.00
29	Senior Safe FY19			2,100.00			0.00
29	FY21 Firefighter Safety			3,794.00			0.00
29	Safe 21 Senior			2,180.00			0.00
29	FY22 AED			1,397.00			0.00
29	FY23 Fire Fighter Equipment Grant			(3,742.00)			(3,742.00)
29	FY23 Fire Fighter Safety Grant			(8,902.00)			(8,902.00)
29	FY17 EMPG			5,287.42			0.00
29	Storm Water			12,531.89			0.00
29	Mass Works			7,020.09			0.00
29	Completet Streets			(10.01)			(10.01)
29	Shared Streets			(62,001.09)	62,001.09		0.00
29	COA Formula			16,857.51			0.00
29	COA LCC			1,729.06			0.00
29	Veterans Cola			1,185.00			0.00
29	Library			65,077.65			0.00
29	Library LCC			350.00			0.00
29	Library			(802.68)			(802.68)
29	ENV Lake Wickaboag			2,600.00			0.00
29	LCC			18,200.00			0.00
		51,822.32 #	51,822.32 #	2,295,118.65 #	73,251.09 #	0.00 #	(26,917.28)

West Brookfield Town Accountant

Trust Fund Balance Detail

as of June 30, 2023

(Unaudited)

Fund Number	Fund Name	Accounts Receivable	Deferred Revenue	Fund Balance 6/30/2023	Receipts thru 9/30/2023	BAN's	Remaining Deficit 6/30/2023
81	Trust Funds						0.00
	M. Preisach Magnante			41,168.13			0.00
	Col. Fairfax Ayers			5,440.71			0.00
	Common John Shackley			67,397.21			0.00
	Common Hawks/Stickney			16,904.63			0.00
	Helen Paige Shackley Band			19,498.49			0.00
	Peter Brady Memorial			112.76			0.00
	Common I England			767.58			0.00
	Rice Fountain			27,523.18			0.00
	Septic and Housing Rehab Conservation			13,941.44			0.00
				7,702.79			0.00
	Town Hall Reynis			26,814.34			0.00
	Cemetery Perpetual Care			228,094.03			0.00
	Cemetery William A. Edson			30,933.27			0.00
	Cemetery			2,407.86			0.00
	Cemetery Gilbert Landscape			10,478.73			0.00
	Cemetery WG Woodward			8,452.34			0.00
	Library Mary L Brown			10,031.58			0.00
	Library Lydia Lane			2,365.39			0.00
	Library Fairbanks Holmes			2,340.26			0.00
	Library Merriam			2,089.62			0.00
	Library Hawkes			25,504.85			0.00
	Library WG Woodward			595.60			0.00
	Library Gilbert Salary			8,791.28			0.00
	Library I. England			102,579.50			0.00
	Self Insurance			21,002.15			0.00
	Recreation England			2,317.74			0.00
	Priscilla E. Side			5,770.65			0.00
	Cemetery Helen B. Hawkes			59,550.33			0.00
	Historical England			62,956.63			0.00
	Lucy Stone Birthplace			278.37			0.00
	Unemployment			24,970.66			0.00
	Accrued Liabilities			90,000.00			0.00
82	Stabilization						0.00
	General			1,225,895.92			0.00
	Fire Truck			137,260.68			0.00
	Water			280,769.79			0.00
83	OPEB			518,959.53			0.00
				0.00 #	3,091,668.02 #	#	#
Total Expendable Trust Fund Balance		0.00	0.00	3,091,668.02	0.00	0.00	0.00

West Brookfield Town Accountant

Agency Fund Detail
as of June 30, 2023
(Unaudited)

Fund Number	Fund Name	Accounts Receivable	Deferred Revenue	Balance 6/30/2023	Receipts thru 9/30/2023	BAN's	Remaining Deficit 6/30/2023
	90	VH W Brookfield Solar LLC		64,200.00			0.00
	90	Earth Removal		1,500.00			0.00
91	Withholdings						0.00
	91	Employee Health		21,372.08			0.00
	91	State Taxes		0.00			0.00
	91	Retiree Health		(14,840.41)	9,083.54		(5,756.87)
	91	Employee Life and Dental		2,210.10			0.00
	91	Retiree Life and Dental		868.67			0.00
	91	Union		2.66			0.00
	94	Deputy Collector		43,798.84			0.00
	94	Solar at 50 Boston Post Road		453,805.41			0.00
	94	Police Detail		11,456.92			0.00
	94	Fire Arms due		5,985.00			0.00
	94	Repair Private Ways		2,740.74			0.00
	94	Curb Cut		47,404.51			0.00

Total Agency Balance	0.00	0.00	640,504.52	9,083.54	0.00	(5,756.87)
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Please enter amount reported in the agency fund liability cell of the combined balance sheet. 640,504.52

Please enter amount reported in the fund balance section of the combined balance sheet. 0.00

West Brookfield Town Accountant

Combined Balance Sheet - All Fund Types and Account Groups
as of June 30, 2023
(Unaudited)

	Governmental Fund Types			Proprietary Fund Types		Fiduciary	Account	Totals (Memorandum Only)
	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Enterprise	Internal Services	Trust and Agency	Long-term Debt	
ASSETS								
Cash and cash equivalents	2,725,491.38	2,295,118.65	(94,943.45)			3,732,172.54		8,657,839.12
Investments								0.00
Receivables:								
Personal property taxes	40,830.82							40,830.82
Real estate taxes	369,025.91							369,025.91
Allowance for abatements and exemptions	(748,469.67)							(748,469.67)
Tax liens	295,022.33							295,022.33
Deferred taxes								0.00
Motor vehicle excise	146,331.02							146,331.02
Other excises								0.00
User fees								0.00
Utility liens added to taxes								0.00
Departmental	(75,955.00)	49,770.76						(26,184.24)
Special assessments								0.00
Due from other governments			64,768.13					64,768.13
Other receivables	11,217.62	2,051.56						13,269.18
Foreclosures/Possessions	98,329.91							98,329.91
Prepays								0.00
Due to/from other funds								0.00
Working deposit								0.00
Inventory								0.00
Fixed assets, net of accumulated depreciation								0.00
Amounts to be provided - payment of bonds							245,500.00	245,500.00
Amounts to be provided - vacation/sick leave								0.00
Total Assets	2,861,824.32	2,346,940.97	(30,175.32)	0.00	0.00	3,732,172.54	245,500.00	9,156,262.51
LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY								
Liabilities:								
Warrants payable								0.00
Accounts payable								0.00
Accrued payroll								0.00
Withholdings								0.00
Accrued claims payable								0.00
Due to/from other funds								0.00
Due to other governments			64,768.13					64,768.13

Other liabilities									0.00
Deferred revenue:									
Real and personal property taxes	(338,612.94)								(338,612.94)
Tax liens	295,022.33								295,022.33
Deferred taxes									0.00
Foreclosures/Possessions	98,329.91								98,329.91
Motor vehicle excise	146,331.02								146,331.02
Other excises									0.00
User fees									0.00
Utility liens added to taxes									0.00
Departmental	(75,955.00)	49,770.76							(26,184.24)
Special assessments									0.00
Due from other governments									0.00
Other receivables	11,217.62	2,051.56							13,269.18
Deposits receivable									0.00
Prepaid taxes/fees									0.00
Tailings	8,053.10								8,053.10
IBNR									0.00
Agency Funds						640,504.52			640,504.52
Notes payable									0.00
Bonds payable							245,500.00		245,500.00
Vacation and sick leave liability									0.00
Total Liabilities	144,386.04	51,822.32	64,768.13	0.00	0.00	640,504.52	245,500.00		1,146,981.01
Fund Equity:									
Reserved for encumbrances									0.00
Reserved for expenditures	519,699.00								519,699.00
Reserved for continuing appropriations	458,772.99								458,772.99
Reserved for petty cash									0.00
Reserved for appropriation deficit									0.00
Reserved for snow and ice deficit									0.00
Reserved for COVID-19 deficit									0.00
Reserved for debt service									0.00
Reserved for premiums									0.00
Reserved for working deposit									0.00
Undesignated fund balance	1,738,966.29	2,295,118.65	(94,943.45)			3,091,668.02			7,030,809.51
Unreserved retained earnings									0.00
Investment in capital assets									0.00
Total Fund Equity	2,717,438.28	2,295,118.65	(94,943.45)	0.00	0.00	3,091,668.02	0.00		8,009,281.50
AA1:S Total Liabilities and Fund Equity									

FY23 Report of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is comprised of five appointed, volunteer members tasked with understanding the workings of the town, making reports and recommendations to the town on all municipal matters, submitting a budget at the annual town meeting, and providing an annual report of the work we have performed. All meetings are posted and open for public participation, which is encouraged. In 2023 we said goodbye to two members, Pamela Griffing and Doug Aspinall and we thank them for their dedication and contributions to the town. We also welcomed a new member, Camie Lamica. We are actively seeking a fifth member of the Advisory Committee.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Advisory Committee continued to meet regularly. The Committee had identified a number of goals, and in FY23 continued to work with the Board of Selectmen, Town Accountant and Financial Consultant in advancing these goals. In addition to our standard budget commitments, the following priority goals were substantially completed:

1. Continued work on ensuring the Town Accountant has custody of all original contracts, as legally required.
2. Centralized town fuel budget within Highway Department.
3. Centralized IT budget.
4. Met with the school district representative body more often.
5. The Town Administrator position was created and the position was filled.
6. Formed a Capital Planning Committee and Lake Wickaboag Committee

For FY 2025, the Advisory Committee's primary goal is to ensure departmental budgets fall within projected annual revenues without reliance on its diminishing free cash or reserves. The Committee, along with the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator, are hopeful that the Townspeople will approve a much needed one-million-dollar tax override to ensure the Town's fiscal stability over the next five years.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of independent volunteers. We serve the town and make recommendations that are in its best interest. We enjoy hearing from all of the other boards, committees, and department heads. Each of them is enthusiastic and promote their valued ideas and projects. We strive to meet the demands of the town.

Annual Salaries

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>YTD Gross Amt</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>YTD Gross Amt</u>
Acerra	Rebecca	\$62,580.48	ADAMS-WHITE	RENEE	\$34,627.29
ALLARD	DONNA	\$65,078.77	ALLEN	SARAH	\$1,132.54
Allen	Serenity	\$2,861.13	Ash	Benjamin	\$4,680.01
Astrella	Trista	\$6,714.89	Bagg	Ethan	\$161.25
Baptista	Bethany	\$600.00	BELL	JOHN	\$72,911.25
BENSON	ROBERT	\$3,252.47	Berard	Jesse	\$2,278.88
Bonin	Jonathan	\$1,342.59	Borlikoski	Joseph	\$9,392.36
Burrill	Derek	\$60,640.68	CASSAVANT	WESLEY	\$68,889.70
CASSAVANT	DUANE	\$71,711.48	CHARRON	CRAIG	\$81,746.36
Chaves	Kyle	\$1,651.85	Collette	George	\$9,219.73
Cournoyer	Rose	\$6,993.75	COURTMANCHE	ELAINE	\$3,666.15
Culver	Cassidy	\$40,682.05	CZUB	MELINDA	\$3,684.00
DALEY	JAMES	\$103,948.20	Doe	Evelyn	\$573.75
DOLAN	JANE	\$3,904.83	DORMAN	MELVIN	\$1,866.62
DORMAN	KEVIN	\$3,155.88	Dunbar	Donald	\$1,200.00
Dupont	Craig	\$58,723.80	DUPUIS	MICHAEL	\$12,326.62
Florence	Alexandria	\$8,299.49	FLORENCE	CHRISTINA	\$9,425.00
FOLEY	HERBERT	\$6,000.00	FONTAINE	KEITH	\$4,352.26
FREW	BETTY	\$24,833.50	Friend	Tamara	\$685.35
Gadbois	Michael	\$432.00	Gagnon	Joshua	\$4,580.84
Garwood-Hampp	Anne	\$5,500.56	Gough	Heather	\$30,555.28
Haesche	Mary	\$1,373.32	Hagglund	Nathan	\$108,782.31
HARTUNG	KARA	\$14,261.34	Henrichon	Dora	\$2,861.80
HIGGINS	LINDA	\$35,525.84	Hitt	Kelly	\$36,959.37
INGRAHAM	JANE	\$8,760.15	Jano	Ryan	\$660.96
JOLIN	FRANK	\$8,825.79	Kaiser	Sheri	\$16,169.40
Kennan	Richard Jr.	\$12,900.00	Korman	Debra	\$157.50
Kozik	Elizabeth	\$97.50	KURANDA	DARIUSZ	\$7,716.50
Landry	Kathleen	\$25,068.00	Lapierre	Richard Sr.	\$2,314.92
Lapierre Jr	Richard	\$46,636.50	LAPINE	GARY	\$3,685.75
LETENDRE	MATTHEW	\$106,028.24	LEWIS	DEREK	\$1,956.93
Lincoln	Linda	\$1,787.50	LONG	CHRISTINE	\$4,812.23
Lucia	Nicholas	\$1,112.06	LUCIA	CHRISTOPHER	\$1,301.40
Mann	Ann Marie	\$12,858.64	MANSEAU	CORY	\$8,602.64
Mansfield	William	\$4,079.12	MARCHESSAULT	RONALD	\$2,400.00
Martel	Michael	\$5,109.01	Martinez-Mendez	Jorge	\$1,919.25
Meade	Thomas	\$202.50	MELANSON	TAMMI	\$50,668.31
Melendez-Santos	Hector	\$19,509.91	Merrill	Lynne	\$517.50
Mieltowski	Paul	\$10,186.68	NADON	BARRY	\$3,336.79
O'DONNELL	MARK	\$78,088.15	Osborne	Kaitlyn	\$105.00
Oveka	Jacob	\$105.00	PAQUETTE	LESTER	\$400.55
PAQUETTE	JASON	\$1,373.32	Para	Daniel	\$261.94
Patch	Jillian	\$23,749.44	PELLETIER	MARY ANNE	\$45,838.84
Perreault	Nicole	\$17,373.56	PIERCE	DAVID	\$750.00
Pluta	Michael	\$3,404.26	Pratt	Kathleen	\$97.50
QUANSAH	NAOMI	\$24,804.88	RAYMOND	SUSAN	\$12,190.75
Reardon	Charles	\$4,281.57	Rodrigues	Ostaquio	\$38,350.56

Roushia	Emily	\$142.50	RUST	JAMES	\$1,719.00
RYAN	JORDAN	\$102.00	San Angelo	Ronald	\$53,849.60
Santos	Daniel	\$12,316.00	SAUVE'	GERALDINE	\$4,199.47
Schnare	Thomas	\$4,892.38	Searah	Dana	\$2,124.97
SEERY	MICHAEL	\$4,369.00	SHATTUCK	LEAH	\$8,094.83
Sickenberger	Roland	\$1,500.00	SIMEONE	GARY	\$9,183.66
Skowyra	Pamela	\$1,800.00	Stanton	John	\$39,233.36
TAKORIAN	HOLLY	\$40,515.52	TAYLOR	JEFFREY	\$17,154.55
Tessier	Nicholas	\$6,339.72	Tomasino	Susan	\$60.00
TOMBOR	ANDREW	\$2,579.68	VAYDA	DIANE	\$210.00
Von Bleicken	Eric	\$1,500.00	ZACHARIEWICZ	JOHN	\$611.17
Zhang	Ruifan	\$5,497.80			

Police Detail Amount * The amounts are not included in the Annual Salary amounts.

BELL	JOHN	\$1,848.00
CHARRON	CRAIG	\$6,776.50
Hagglund	Nathan	\$870.00
HARTUNG	KARA	\$8,849.00
JOLIN	FRANK	\$990.00
LETENDRE	MATTHEW	\$4,226.00
Rodrigues	Ostaquio	\$2,858.00

Police Overtime Amount * The amounts are not included in the Annual Salary amounts.

Allen	Serenity	\$456.00
BELL	JOHN	\$9,882.54
CHARRON	CRAIG	\$26,461.26
Culver	Cassidy	\$966.88
HARTUNG	KARA	\$1,835.69
JOLIN	FRANK	\$845.70
LETENDRE	MATTHEW	\$26,400.94
Melendez-Santos	Hector	\$11,617.24
Rodrigues	Ostaquio	\$10,284.59
Tessier	Nicholas	\$318.84

Submitted by: Jillian Patch
Treasurer/Collector

Board of Assessors

The mission of the Board of Assessors is to value real and personal property efficiently, fairly and accurately, in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; to administer motor vehicle excise, exemption and abatement programs; to address concerns from the public quickly courteously.

The Town of West Brookfield has 2,458 taxable real and personal property accounts:

- 1420 Residential Improved Parcels
- 757 Vacant Parcels
- 73 Commercial/Industrial/Mixed Use Parcels
- 66 Chapter 61, 61A, 61B Parcels
- 142 Personal Property

The value of all taxable property for Fiscal Year 2024 was \$624,685,775.00. The Fiscal Year tax rate is \$11.23 per thousand dollars of valuation. The tax rate is a formula that uses two basic figures, the total levy, which is the amount to be raised by taxation, and the total value of the Town divided by 1,000.

The major variable in the equation is the tax levy, which is determined by the approved town budget. The higher the levy, the higher the taxes. It is Town spending, not the value, that determines what one will pay in taxes. The assessed values are a mechanism that allows the levy to be distributed fairly among all the taxpayers. The Town is required to appraise property within very strict guidelines by the Department of Revenue (DOR).

Proposition 2 ½ - Levy Limit Explained

TAX RATE=LEVY/TOTAL VALUE

‘Proposition 2 ½’ refers to an initiative statute adopted by the voters of the Commonwealth in November 1980. Its purpose was to stabilize municipal property taxes. It limits the amount by which the taxing capacity of the Town is allowed to increase each year. The allowed growth is 2.5 percent of the prior year’s levy limit. This allowed increase in the limit for FY2024 is \$171,344.48 (which is 2.5% of the FY2023 levy limit, \$ 6,853,779).

Also, added to the levy limit computation is the levy increase attributable to “new growth”. This represents additions to the base of taxable property, typically as a result of new construction, renovations and minor additions, or change of use.

Permitting the levy to be adjusted by “new growth” recognizes the fact that development creates pressures on Town services over the long term. The new tax rate reflects \$38,347 in new growth.

The assessment date for each tax year is the previous January 1. The Town has accepted the provisions of Section 40 of Chapter 653 of the Acts of 1989 regarding assessment date changes for new growth. This legislation allows communities to tax in the current fiscal year all new construction built between January 1 and June 30 of that year. The purpose of this local option legislation is to reduce the delay that can occur between construction and taxation.

Total growth of the levy limit is therefore attributable to two factors, allowed growth, which is fixed (2.5% per year), and new growth that is variable and subject to economic conditions.

Property Inspections

The Assessors continue to work very closely with the Building Inspector, as the Town requires building permits on almost all improvements made to your property. These building permits aid in correctly valuing a property's worth. Upon notification by the Building Inspector of permits issued, the Assessors will visit the property to verify and photograph it. Prior to our inspection, the property owner will receive a questionnaire from our office for them to complete. This will assure that our records are correct. We ask that anyone who receives one of these questionnaires takes the time to complete it and return it to the assessors. When these forms are not returned to our office, we cannot make the necessary changes to ensure that the information we have on file is accurate.

Address Changes

The bulk of information used in the Assessors' Office is indexed by address. It is essential that you inform our office of any changes in your address as soon as the change occurs. It certainly will help us to serve you more efficiently and prevent the necessity of duplicate mailings at an added cost to the taxpayers.

Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills

Many people come into our office with questions regarding their Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills. The Registry of Motor Vehicles sends computerized data to all towns and the bills are then printed and mailed from the Tax Collector's Office. The information you receive on your bill is based on data the Registry of Motor Vehicles has in their files for any calendar year beginning January 1st. Please pay particular attention to the "Garaging Location" on your insurance form. If you have any changes in this location or in any other information, you must notify the Registry of Motor Vehicles so that your license, registration and Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills are correct. This also ensures that you receive a bill at your correct address.

In addition, if you have sold a motor vehicle during the year, you may apply for an abatement of your excise bill by completing an application and providing our office with proof of sale, as well as a copy of the Plate Return Receipt, or new registration if you transferred your license plates.

The Board of Assessors welcomes any comments or questions. We are proud to provide a very personalized service to you and enjoy the opportunity to meet with many of you throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Dorman, Chairman

William Mansfield

Gary Simeone

Renee-Adams White – Assessor's Administrative Assistant

Board of Health

The Board of Health is required by state statutes and regulations to perform many important and crucial duties relative to the protection of public health, food safety, reporting and control of disease, promotion of sanitary living conditions, and protection of the environment from damage and pollution. If the enforcement of regulations may cause manifest injustice, the Board of Health would not conflict with the minimum standards of any applicable statute, code, or regulation. We continue to prevent, promote, and protect public health in the community.

Chrissy Pare, Health Agent, and Alexandria Florence Assistant Health Agent see to the day-to-day activities of the Board of Health. The office is located at Town Hall and the hours are Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5:30-7:30pm. The Board of Health consists of a three-member elected board of Melvin Dorman Chairman, Jason Paquette Vice Chairman, and MJ Haesche Member. The Board meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 pm in the Board of Health Office.

The Board of Health has joined the Mill Town's Health Coalition, this coalition is in collaboration with 3 other area towns. The purpose of the coalition is to provide residents with enhanced comprehensive services.

Board of Registrars

Information for the year ending on December 31, 2023, is as follows:

TOTAL POPULATION 3503

AGE	# of RESIDENTS
0-10	137
11-20	268
21-30	402
31-40	423
41-50	395
51-60	522
61-70	660
71-80	447
81-90	203
91-100	33
100+	13

January 1, 2023

Conservative	5
United Independent Party	16
Democrat	510
Green Rainbow	1
Libertarian	14
MA Independent Party	1
American Independent	5
Republican	396
Socialist	1
Inter. 3 rd Party	3
Unenrolled	1800
Working Families	1
TOTAL VOTERS	2753

December 31, 2023

Conservative	5
United Independent Party	17
Democrat	534
Green Rainbow	1
Libertarian	16
MA Independent Party	1
American Independent	5
Republican	413
Socialist	1
Inter. 3 rd Party	3
Unenrolled	2011
Working Families	1
TOTAL VOTERS	3008

Respectfully,

Jane Dolan

Heather Gough

Doreen Piechota

Deborah Provencher

Board of Selectmen

As the Chief Elected Officials for the town, the Board of Selectmen is charged with the responsibilities of the general direction and management of the town. With authority under Massachusetts General Law, the Executive Board is responsible for the Town Meeting Warrant, making appointments to Town boards and committees as well as the appointment of a Town Administrator. The Board meets regularly throughout the year and residents are encouraged to attend all open meetings.

This has been an exciting year in West Brookfield with a new Town Administrator in place. As a board we are excited to see so many achievements throughout the year. The Town has received almost \$200,000 in Green Communities grants that will allow us to put brand-new LED lighting in our elementary school, weather stripping in our Fire Department, Town Hall, Library, and Senior Center all paid for from the state grant. This will also help us to save energy and tax dollars.

The Town website has been completely redesigned and is up to date. This site is a wonderful place for residents to get information about the Town. You can find the Town Administrator proposed FY 25 Town Budget, all labor contracts, financial audits, American Rescue Fund Grant expenditures (ARPA), as well as agendas for all town meetings. To help local businesses we have created an Economic Development Page and a Business Links page to both provide our businesses with information and highlight their individual businesses. Also, to help residents we encourage you to look at our Substance Abuse Information page that provides very important information that deals with this serious issue affecting so many people in our country.

New LED lighting has been installed in the Town Hall and will be paid for by the energy savings they produce. The Fire Department received a new Command Vehicle because of a grant from former Senator Gobi and federal ARPA Funds. The Police Department also received a grant from the state to purchase 2 new police cruisers. We are working hard to get grants instead of utilizing local tax dollars.

The new Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen have scrutinized the FY 25 budget to ensure that every dollar is spent wisely. The Advisory Committee will be able to use this information to present a quality budget to our citizens at the Town Meeting.

The Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator have worked closely with all department heads to develop a 5 -Year Capital Plan that looks at our capital needs for the future. A new Capital Improvement Committee is now in place that will review all department plans and make recommendations to the Town Meeting.

We were also excited to hire our first combined Treasurer/Collector. She brings a great deal of experience to our Town and will enhance our collection efforts and build on our financial team.

A bit of sadness comes with the departure of our Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator Rebecca Acerra who has been a tremendous asset to our team. Of course, we wish her the absolute best in her new adventure and thank her for the contributions she has made to our community.

The Town Clerk and the Assessor's office are both open more hours for the public's convenience. The Town Clerks office has been reorganized at no additional cost to taxpayers. We appreciate the work that was done by the former staff and look forward to the achievements of our new team as we move into the future.

We are also doing our best to keep citizens informed by developing a new Town Administrators Facebook page where you can get information about upcoming town activities. One of the innovative programs we have created is the "Above and Beyond Program" This recognizes the valuable contributions of employees who have achieved above and beyond what was expected of them,

As a board we want to thank the citizens for their support of this community. We are amazed by those who volunteer their time to serve on a local board or commission, but we are equally amazed by all those citizens who give their time to youth sports, cultural events, or just making our town a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

Sincerely,

Roland Sickenberger – Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Eric von Bleicken – Vice Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Brad Merkel – Clerk, Board of Selectmen

Ron San Angelo – Town Administrator

Rebecca Acerra – Executive Assistant Board of Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator

Building Inspector

Single Family Dwellings	4
Sheds	5
Additions	4
Roofing	33
Garages	6
Windows/Siding	21
Renovations/Remodeling	22
Stoves/Pellet/Wood	9
Pools/In ground/ Above ground	5
Signs	2
Decks	6
Demolition	2
Barns	4
Storage Buildings	1
Temporary Mobile Home for fire purposes	2
Fence	0
Co-Locator/ Cell tower	1
Weatherization/insulation	26
Sheet Metal	4
Solar Residential	33
Solar commercial/covers	2
	TOTAL 192

Total permit income	\$85,223.01
Estimated value on permits	\$13,881,746.61

Respectfully Submitted
Jeff Taylor, CBO
Inspector of Buildings

Cemetery Commission

The Cemetery Commissioners have the oversight of three separate cemeteries: the Old Indian Cemetery on Cottage Street, the Methodist Cemetery on Lyons Road, and the Pine Grove Cemetery on Church Street.

The Cemetery Commission extends sympathy to those who have experienced the loss of a loved one over the past year. We also wish to thank individuals who have taken special interest in providing care for the lots and surroundings.

There were 14 interments in Pine Grove during 2023:

Bertha Nolan	Esther Krasnecky
Dawn Curtis	Ronald Krasnecky
Norman Adams	Deborah Renaldo
Phyllis Adams	Rosemary Pelc
Dermot Woods	Richard Riberdy
Arthur Curtis	James Snider
Martha Beeman	Wallace Joyal

The Total sum collected for burials was \$2,950.00 dollars and the total sum for Lot Purchases was \$1,800.00.

As a reminder and in respect for our deceased, dogs are not allowed at any time on cemetery grounds. Also, please report any vandalism or suspicious activity to the West Brookfield Police Department.

Respectfully submitted,

David Swekla-Chairman
Marc Astrella
Ross Ranks

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission has had 2 Request for Determination (RDA), 1 for stair repair on a right of way to Lake Wickaboag and one from MA DOT for repaving of Rte. 32 on the Ware town line. Negative determinations were made for both.

There were 6 Notice of Intents (NOI) filed this year, 3 for additions and/or demolition and new construction, 1 septic system repair, 1 gas line replacement under Lamberton Brook and 1 for the Rte.9 west reclamation and safety improvements from Rock House to the Ware town line. 4 Orders of Conditions were issued with 2 pending.

There were two National Grid pole replacement projects and one clearing of some APR land not within the buffer zone that were determined not to need either an RDA or NOI submittal.

There were queries into the construction of a boat ramp off Long Hill Road for Fire Department search and rescue operations as well as possibilities of some sort of crossing over Sucker Brook at Pynchon Grist Mill by the East Quabbin Land Trust.

5 possible wetland violations were addressed, and site visits performed. Two were found to be in violation and corrective actions were successfully taken.

There have been many requests for site visits and inquiries as to when the need for filing with the Conservation Commission would be necessary.

We would like to remind all that the protection of our water bodies, waterways, buffer zones and overall environmental assets should continue to be a high priority as we seek to encourage growth within our community.

The Conservation Commission meets once a month on the first Wednesday at 6:00pm. There are currently four members, three actives, and the commission is actively seeking to fill a vacant position. Please contact the Board of Selectmen if interested.

Council on Aging

The West Brookfield Senior Center serves as a comfortable gathering place for our people aged sixty and over. Social and support services are available to not only the older adults, but their caregivers and families.

The WBSC experienced several changes this past year. Karen Phillips resigned as the COA Director to accept a position at the Holden Senior Center as their Director. Betty Frew, the Program Coordinator, stepped in as Interim Director. Her expertise and all the phenomenal volunteers kept the Senior Center moving forward.

Gary Lapine, The Veteran's Agent, decided to retire in November. His service and dedication to all the veterans within the local community will be missed. Ellen T. Moore was appointed as his replacement. She brings another perspective and guidance to our veterans. We look forward to collaborating with her.

Along with exercise classes and our walking club, the Senior Center offers games such as canasta, Mahjongg, pitch, and bingo. Recently there has been the addition of scrabble, monopoly, and dominos. Cribbage is hoping to make a comeback. The Busy Bees needlework group meets weekly to work on various projects. Their contributions of approximately fifty knitted blankets to Camp Putnam throughout the years have warmed many visiting campers. Dunkin Divas also meets weekly to enjoy healthy gossip, coffee, laughter, and friendship. A genealogy group meets when able and a book club meets monthly. New friends are always welcome to join in all these activities.

The Quaboag Plantation Quilting Guild, a HAM radio group and the Disabled American Veterans also meet at the Senior Center monthly. A Coffee Hour is scheduled monthly to help celebrate birthdays, catch up on happenings and often ends up with lots of laughter and socializing.

In addition to our regularly scheduled activities, special programs are planned each month to serve various interests. The monthly newsletter provides the needed information for those activities. Facebook has also become a portal for information about the activities of our Senior Center. You are welcome to stop into the Center and pick up a newsletter.

The non-profit organization, Angels Answer delivers food weekly to the Senior Center. Their generosity has made a difference to those seniors that are facing food insecurity. Senior Center staff and volunteers put together about thirty bags of food every week. Thank you to Hannaford's and Panara Bread for their continued support.

The Senior Center also has a SHINE counselor that assists people with health insurance questions over the phone.

The Hearing Clinic with Dr. Moreno is held once a month to assist people with hearing issues.

Our podiatrist, Allison Williams, LPN, visits monthly to help keep everyone's feet in good shape.

Tri-Valley, Marge Christian, the Meal Site Manager, and her kitchen volunteers continue to use the Senior Center kitchen as the staging center for Meals on Wheels. There is a calendar in our monthly newsletter with the meals available to be purchased and enjoyed here also.

West Brookfield and Brookfield residents can get transportation to routine medical appointments through the Medi car program. Gently used and clean medical equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs and shower seats are accepted.

The Council on Aging Board, members of the Friends Board, and our dedicated volunteers make an enormous difference in how the Senior Center and the Meals on Wheels program are running. Without all their combined efforts, we would not be as successful as we currently are. THANK YOU!

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly J. Hitt, COA Director

Wigwam Road “Drop-Off” Center Price List

78 Wigwam Road

Hours of operation: Wednesday from 9:00 am – 3:00pm, Saturday from 9:00am – 3:00pm
(Saturdays only – December through March)

TVs 27” and under: \$15.00

(Large console TVs: priced accordingly by attendant)

TVs over 27”’: \$20.00

Radios: \$5.00

VCRs: \$5.00

Keyboards: \$10.00

Stereos: \$10.00

Microwaves: \$10.00

Water coolers: \$10.00

Computers: \$10.00

Monitors: \$10.00

Printers: \$10.00

Dishwashers: \$20.00

Stoves: \$20.00

Washers: \$20.00

Dryers: \$20.00

Copiers: \$20.00

Air Conditioners: \$20.00

Refrigerators: \$20.00

Tires with rims: \$8.00

Tires without rims: \$5.00

(Large Tires: Priced accordingly)

Brush: First load is free (no larger than 3” in diameter and 4’ in length)

Second load is \$10.00.

Leaves: Free (no bags, *please*), Grass Clippings: Free, Scrap metal: Free

Batteries are free but must have caps attached. Any motor must have fluids drained.

THE DROP-OFF CENTER IS FOR *RESIDENTIAL* USE ONLY

NO equipment allowed into Drop Off Center

(ie. chain saws, tractors, cut off saws etc.)

*No Contractors, *No Construction materials, *No trash

****NO ASHES****

PROPANE TANKS ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTED

Wood chips and compost can be taken by residents but **MUST** be loaded by hand.

No other materials shall be removed (ie. loam, gravel, stone etc.)

Any littering will be subject to a fine and or Drop Off privilege denied.

****USED MOTOR OIL AND ANTI-FREEZE ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTED****

RULES AND REGULATIONS *SUBJECT TO CHANGE* AS MARKET FLUCTUATES.

Earth Removal Board

“Earth Material Excavation Requiring a Permit” - More than five hundred cubic yards of soil excavated in any one year. Excavation incidental to the construction of buildings or other accessory uses and expansions may be exempt provided that the quantity of materials removed shall not exceed that displaced by the portion of the building or accessory use below grade and all required permits by the West Brookfield Bylaws and/or Zoning Bylaws have been issued. Other exceptions are excavation in the course of customary agricultural use of land for a farm, garden or nursery; excavation of material subject to a licensed issued under M.G.L. Chapter 40 Subsection 21 (7), excavation in compliance with the specific requirements of an approved subdivision plan and excavation in the normal use of a cemetery.

“Earth Material” includes soil, sand, gravel, stones, topsoil, peat, muck, loam, bedrock, or other earth materials from any land in the town.

The Earth Removal Board continues to manage one (1) active permit relative to earth material excavation under Section XII Section 2 of the Town’s General Bylaws.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Dean Wisniewski	Planning Board
Kevin Dorman	Zoning Board of Appeals
Melvin Dorman	Board of Health
Brad Merkel	Selectboard
Steve Carroll	Conservation Commission

Electrical Inspector

During the year 2023 the Electrical inspector received and inspected the following types of projects.

Hot/ Spa 2
Residential renovations 12
Swimming pools 7
Misc. Commercial 9
Roof top solar 32
Fire alarm systems 2
Detached garages 8
Furnaces/ heating systems 7
Mobile homes 1
Generators 5
Residential single circuits/ Misc. 9
Mini split systems 13
Residential ground mount solar 2
Large solar field 1
New dwellings 5
EV changers 3
Fire investigations 4
Emergency Response / National Grid Emergency reconnections 10

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Fontaine
West Brookfield Electrical Inspector

Emergency Management

The office of Emergency Management has been highly active throughout the community. The members are consistently training in hazard mitigation, emergency shelter operations, emergency operation center, fire scene basic rehabilitation (water, food rehab) assist firefighters with the changing of air pack bottles. Some of the team members are also doing classes offered by Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

In 2023 Emergency Management has responded to ten incidents. They also train once a month at least and sometimes train with the fire department and learn how to assist them. They also do traffic during events on the common.

Emergency Management has also received the EMPG grant for 2023 receiving \$2,700.00. These grant funds will be used for a new laptop, replacement batteries for radios and attachable microphones.

Presently, the department has eleven members and is always looking for more.

Fire Chief / Emergency Management Director – Rich Lapierre

Assistant Director – Steve Piechota Assistant Director – Dick Lapierre

Henry Brogna

Jenny Davis

Sean Carroll

Holly Collette

Michelle LaRiviere

John McNeil

Kerri Ann Disbrow

Laura Fitzpatrick

Emergency Management continues to collaborate closely with our neighboring partners in other communities, our town and state agencies. All the members are volunteers and work hard to assist others during emergencies. If you would like to become a volunteer see the Fire chief Rich Lapierre or call 508-612-3635,

Respectfully Submitted,

Rich Lapierre

Fire Chief / Emergency Management Director

Fire Department

The fire department in 2023 had a productive and busy year responding to record calls of service, training and maintaining equipment. Overall, the fire department made 414 calls of service. This is almost double the number of calls from 2022 of which had 214 calls of service.

2023 Incident Report Summary

- Actual Fires – 31
- Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat – 1
- Rescue and EMS Incidents – 81
- Hazardous Conditions (non-fire) Calls – 31
- Service Calls, Mutual Aid, Inspections – 179
- Good Intent – 38
- False Alarms – 50
- Severe Weather & Natural Disasters – 2
- Special Incidents – 2

Total Fire Department Incidents = 414

The fire department trucks are still plagued with breakdowns because of their age. Engine 1 which is the primary fire engine is 31 years old. We have spent thousands of dollars on it this year keeping it in service. Engine 2 is no longer in service because of its age, corrosion, and brake issues. Engine 3 is 28 years old, we purchased it used two years ago from the Town of Brimfield. It is still doing well. Engine 4 is a 2004 and our newest engine designed for brush fires has had no issues. The Tanker is no longer in service because of catastrophic rear axle issues. Rescue 1 has a crack in the pump and the pump is out of service. However, we still use the truck for Ice and water rescue calls and technical rescue calls. The Forestry is a 1977 pickup truck in good shape just aged. Fire chiefs since 2010 have been asking to replace a truck because of their age, corrosion, plagued with maintenance issues and breakdowns. Fire trucks have increased in price by almost one third in the past two years. For example, the fire chief came to the town two years ago and asked to replace a truck that was almost forty years old. It got turned down at the town meeting. The truck price was \$690,000.00. The same truck today is \$935,000.00. A bad choice was made and will cost the taxpayers a lot more. The NFPA recommends fire truck replacement at 20 years. All the town's trucks are 20 – 41 years old.

The Fire Station needs to be replaced with a safety complex to include the Police Department, Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Management. Presently, the building does not meet the national required standards for a fire station, it is not American Disabilities Compliant of which is required, it is too small, newer trucks will not fit through the doors. Some equipment is parked outside. A shower is required for firefighters within an hour returning from a call to wash off all the bad carcinogens. Carcinogens are left over chemicals that get on the skin and clothing from fires and are the number one killer for firefighters that may cause cancer. Firefighters

should not be getting into their vehicles and going home to their families with carcinogens all over their bodies. Also, the building leaks badly during rainstorms and is creating black mold, it is by no means energy efficient with single pane windows and no insulation. We have requested funding from the state (\$75,000.00) for a feasibility study in consideration of a new safety complex.

The Fire Chief continues to write grants to help benefit the community and the fire department.

Department of Fire Service Equipment Grant:	\$9,248.68
National Volunteer Firefighter Grant	\$500.00
FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Truck Grant: (waiting to hear)	\$935,000.00
Baystate Medical AED Grant:	\$3,124.00
Total awarded FY23 year to date:	\$12,872.68

Inspection and Permits

Inspections for the years was a total:	101
Burn Permits sold:	162
Fines	2
Total Inspection, Fines and Permit Fees collected:	\$8,030.00

The men and woman of the fire department train and work very hard for the community and cannot be thanked enough. Every firefighter has something different they bring to the table; we are truly grateful. The department roster is as follows:

Chief Rich Lapierre
Lt. Ben Ash

Deputy Chief Dan San
Lt. Josh Gagnon

Fire Investigator Mike Gadbois
FF Chris Lucia
FF Ryan Jano
FF Dana Searah
FF Ken Collette
E.F. Kaitlyn Osborne
E.F. Jamie Crandall
E.F. Lynne Merrill
E.F. Ivan Davalos
Jr. FF Mason Lucia

FF Cj Reardon
FF Jorge Martinez
FF Mike Martel
FF Ethan Bagg
FF Nick Lucia
E.F. Jon Bonin
E.F. Adhemar Martinez
E.F. Noah LaFlamme

Jr. FF Evey Doe

The red address sign program has worked well for emergency services. We have sold 225 signs so far as part of a fund raiser. If you would like a red address sign, please contact the fire department at (508)867-1408 and we can have one made for you. Remember, it is the law that your home address number must be visible from the street.

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Lapierre, Fire Chief

Highway Department

After a moderate winter and spring clean-up the following projects have been completed:

Madden Road (Chapter 90)

642 tons of superpave top course machine applied and compacted.
All road shoulders backed up with stone or gravel.

Snow Road 2,300” and Cutler Road 1,600” (Chapter 90)

894 tons of superpave top course machine applied and compacted.
All shoulders backed up with crush and run gravel or stone.

Shared Streets Grant Project

Pedestrian safety improvements by the West Brookfield Elementary School

Full depth reclamation Sheldon Drive, a section of North Main Street including school entrance and Winter Street intersection.

3 inches of superpave binder machine applied and compacted to MassDOT specifications (930 ton)

Granite curb installed at school entrance as well as Winter Street and Sheldon Drive intersection.

Bituminous curb installed on Sheldon Drive

(2) new catch basins were installed on Sheldon Drive

All existing catch basins and drain manholes were repaired and rim grader adjusted to new finish grades.

2 inches of superpave state top machine applied and compacted to MassDot specifications (640 ton)

Sidewalks and driveways were paved with 3 inches of superpave top applied and compacted in 2 ½ lifts to MassDot specifications (230 ton)

(6) ADA pedestrian crossing ramps were installed to specification

Grass areas were loamed and seeded.

Road shoulders were backed up with gravel.

(2) solar speed feedback signs were installed

(2) 20 mph solar school zone flashing beacons were installed

Solar RRFB pedestrian crosswalk system was installed on North Main Street by the school.

Center lines, gutter lines and crosswalks were painted as required.

I would like to express my gratitude to the residents of West Brookfield, the Board of Selectmen and all the town employees for their continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
James P. Daley

Housing Authority

We hereby submit our annual report to you, the Honorable Board of Selectmen, and the people of the Town of West Brookfield.

The West Brookfield Housing Authority held eleven regular meetings including our Annual Meeting on Thursday May 18, 2023. The West Brookfield Housing Authority meets on the third Thursday of each month in the Community Building at Olde Village Place, 29 East Main Street. The meetings are held at 10:00 am and are open to the public. All meetings are posted with the Town Clerk. There is no meeting held in August of each year.

All housing authorities have three members elected by the voters of the town, one appointed tenant member, and one member appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts. Our elected members are Susan Rowden (Chair), Anthony M Fernandes Jr (Vice Chair), Eric von Bleicken. Thomas Sanderson (Tenant). Debra Korman is our State Appointee. At the end of the year, we unfortunately lost not only a wonderful tenant, but our tenant board member Thomas Sanderson. We will be looking to appoint an interim tenant board member soon.

The West Brookfield Housing Authority has three employees. We welcomed a new Maintenance Supervisor in November 2023, Scott Davis. Keith Bordeau retired after almost 20 years of employment. Administrative Assistant, Laurie Sokol and Executive Director, Fiona Andrewes.

The Authority currently administers thirty-six one-bedroom units under the State's Chapter 667 program, 6 three-bedroom units and 4 two-bedroom units under the State's Chapter 705 program. Also located on our site is a Ch. 689 program that is now administered by Open Sky Community Services. All these programs are funded by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), operated under state guidelines. The West Brookfield Housing Authority processes applications for state-aided elderly housing from persons who are sixty years of age or older. As in the past, persons with disabilities continue to be eligible for state-aided housing for the elderly regardless of age. The Authority also processes applications for state-aided family housing from persons who are eligible. We continue to use the CHAMP system to manage our waiting lists. Anyone interested in housing here in West Brookfield can go onto the CHAMP website and complete all necessary requirements for applying. By using this system, applicants can now check off as many housing authorities as they want, without having to travel/mail paper

applications to each housing authority. Tenant selection is made from our waiting list and all state guidelines are adhered to in the tenant selection process.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities continues to support us with capital improvement awards. This past year we completed our very extensive skirting project, had permanent speed bumps installed and pressure washed all buildings.

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to the West Brookfield Police, Fire, and Rescue Departments for their continued caring dedication to the safety and security of our residents.

We are happy to continue our great relationship with Dipody Doo Childcare and Development Center. We had an easter egg hunt in April and on Halloween, we did a trick-or-treat with the tenants outside. We hope to continue these activities with them. We live in such a great community that is so supportive of the housing authority.

Respectfully submitted,

WEST BROOKFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Susan Rowden, Anthony M Fernandes, Jr, Eric Von Bleicken and Debra Korman

Merriam-Gilbert Public Library

"In the nonstop tsunami of global information, librarians provide us with floaties and teach us to swim."

Linton Weeks

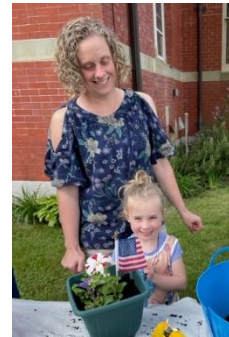
Washington Post, January 13, 2001.

Always proud and happy to serve our community whether it be providing floaties and offering swimming lessons to survive the tsunami of global information, or simply checking out books to offer our patrons a break from the weary world, the staff of the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library works diligently to take care of our beloved patrons. Our service encompasses a great variety of needs... besides visiting the library for reading materials, music, or DVDs; our citizens often arrive needing computer assistance for a job application or other personal matter, copying/faxing services for important documents (without having to travel out of town!); or help finding resources for a myriad of topics. Many arrive anxious and overwhelmed but leave relieved and accomplished. Knowing our staff can help lighten the load in this often-frenzied world is a privilege and an honor – and no one has served more honorably than Adult Services Librarian Holly Takorian.

In December of 2023, our Library family sadly accepted the retirement of Holly Takorian. After 22 years of impeccable service, Holly's retirement was well-deserved and celebrated with a dance party for the librarian that loves to dance. Congratulations, Holly, and thank you for your years of dedication to the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library (MGPL)!

The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library hosts 2,351 registered borrowers (1,715 of which are West Brookfield residents) and hundreds more from neighboring communities. In FY23 the Library circulated over 31,000 physical items including nearly 10,000 interlibrary loans. Patrons have access to over 26,000 items within the library walls (print, audio, and video materials as well as things like a telescope, hotspots, and ukuleles) and as well as more than 209,406 titles available as digital content through the CWMARS (Central/Western Mass Resource Sharing) network.

The year 2023 brought community members back into the library at a bustling pre-COVID rate as patrons visited regularly for borrowing items, attending programs, and for office services like computer use, photocopying, and faxing. Thanks to the Friends of the Library (FOL), the West Brookfield Cultural Council (WBCC), and a Greater Worcester Community Foundation Grant made possible by the generosity of Art and Elizabeth Jay (GWCF/the Jays), hundreds enjoyed many special events such as winter candles with Garine (GWCF), the Solo/Duet Jazz and Poetry series (WBCC), the Boys of the Town Irish music concert (FOL), Klassic Creations Celtic Chocolate (GWCF), The 1970s through Music (WBCC), Coffee & Wood Folk Music Series (WBCC), The Secret Life of Owls (GWCF), Anne Frank – A Life to Remember (GWCF), Guitar Virtuoso Gladius (WBCC), the Gravestone Girls "Welcome to the Graveyard" (GWCF), and Jeff Belanger's The Fright Before Christmas (GWCF), as well as wonderful historical performances such as Sheryl Faye's portrayal of



Eleanor Roosevelt as sponsored by the West Brookfield Historical Commission and the Quaboag Historical Society and her remembrance of Anne Frank – A Life to Remember sponsored by the Jays/GWCF.

Summer Reading 2023 celebrated the theme “Peace, Love, Books” and all things retro including some favorite 60s and 70s crafts like tie dye, sand art, jean flower purses, and more! Library patrons also enjoyed a number of programs sponsored by the West Brookfield Cultural Council (a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council). These included: Macrame with Leslie Taylor of Maple Dragonfly Co., Groovy Jewelry and Crystal Terrariums with Kim Larkin of Klassic Creations, The Beatles: A Cultural & Historical Reflection, Cornell Coley Drum Circle, Didgeidoo Down Under, Comic and Mime Robert Rivest, and Henry the Juggler. The Library Summer Reading Program culminated with a tie-dye popsicle party with prizes given out thanks to the Friends of the Library.

Scores of activities for all ages were also offered by the library staff including toddler playgroups, story times, and crafts such as card-making, seasonal planters, wreaths/centerpieces, home décor projects, and many, many more!

Visitors to the Library enjoyed the beautiful paintings of local artists Louise Douglas and Nancy Birmingham as well as paintings and pottery by Anna Burns, while the historic Quaboag Plantation Quilt depicting each town in celebration of the Plantation’s 350th Anniversary adorned the Fiction Room.



Other staff news included Library Assistant Jane Ingraham moving into the Adult Services Librarian position in December of 2023. Jane confidently stepped into this role after seven years as a library assistant at MGPL. Jane and Director MaryAnne Pelletier, Children’s Services Librarian Linda Higgins, as well as Library Assistant Elaine Courtemanche take great joy in serving the West Brookfield community. Custodian Cory Manseau cares for our beautiful Library, while snow shoveler Jacob Oveka diligently cleared our walkways in the winter months. Library Trustees, Chair Jeff Robbins, Janet Foley, Jane Higgins (secretary), Susan Rowden, Peter Scribner, and David Swekla devotedly lend their life and career experience in planning, policy development, and budgetary decisions. Volunteers Chloe Fredette, Hannah Henry, Sadie Matczak, and Haileigh Swistak also generously gave of their time helping with various tasks in the library – all of which was much appreciated!

On behalf of the West Brookfield community, the library staff and trustees would like to offer a huge thank you to the Friends of the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library for their ongoing support. The Friends are led by Chairperson Elizabeth Jay. Treasurer Laverne Cholewa stepped down from her position after many years of serving in the role. Other devoted members of the Friends include Marie Andrea, Margo Arel, Despina Fazzuoli, Donna Lapenas, Megan Pereira, Elaine Spencer, and Pat Zazula. A special thank-you to Megan Pereira and Elizabeth Jay who co- led the 2023 White Christmas Raffle, Friends’ largest annual fundraiser which makes so many wonderful programs possible!

In closing, the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library trustees, staff, and Friends are forever thankful for the patrons we serve, the Town of West Brookfield and all the local businesses, organizations, and benefactors who continue to support our beloved Library.

Respectfully submitted,
MaryAnne Pelletier
Library Director

Planning Board

The West Brookfield Planning Board presented seven articles at the June 2023 Town Meeting, after over a year working on a comprehensive Zoning Bylaw update with the assistance of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. Four of these articles passed at Town Meeting: (1) Amending the Definitions in the Zoning Bylaws; (2) Amending the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by amending sections 2.1, 2.2, 4.2, 4.33, 5.3.A.5, 5.3.B, 5.3.C, and 5.4 in the Zoning Bylaws ; (3) Amending the title of the existing Section 5.11, General to Section 5.13, General Requirements for Major Site Plan Review; (6) Amending the Zoning Map to expand the General District.

Two of our members are currently serving on newly formed committees, for Capital Planning and Public Safety Complex. Work has begun on a new project with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission on a town-wide Permitting Guidebook.

The Planning Board approved two ANR plans in 2023.

The Board is currently meeting on the second Monday of the month and on an as needed basis for the convenience of those who require Planning Board approval of your projects.

Respectfully submitted,

The West Brookfield Planning Board

Rebekah Cornell (Chair)

Steve Carroll

Dean Wisniewski

David Brown

Timothy Morrell

Police Department

As we conclude the year 2023, the West Brookfield Police Department is pleased to present our annual report, summarizing the department's activities, challenges, and achievements throughout the past year.

Our team consists of a Chief, a Sergeant, four full-time patrol officers, three part-time patrol officers, and an administrative assistant.

In 2023, we responded to 5,995 calls for service, resulting in 134 arrests. We investigated 17 crimes against a person, which was a 70% increase and 32 property crimes, an 88% increase compared to the previous year.

Out of 326 calls meeting criteria for weapons offenses, our department encountered such situations on 13 occasions (4%). This included incidents involving rifles, shotguns, firearms, knives, blunt objects, and hands/feet.

Throughout the nine months of the year, we faced challenges in hiring and retaining personnel, leaving our department understaffed. Despite this, our officers worked diligently to cover open shifts and maintain 24/7 coverage for the town.

We are proud to report that the police department successfully secured several grants in 2023. Awards include \$3,000 for mobile printers for our cruisers, a \$40,000 grant for a new 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe, and \$18,740 to support the Municipal Road Safety program.

These grants also facilitated training opportunities, such as a commercial vehicle weights and measures class and training on roadside impairment for officers. Additionally, we have been accepted into the Bullet Proof Vest Grant program, ensuring the replacement of officers' vests every five years at no cost to the town (funding contingent).

Recognizing the increasing importance of addressing mental health issues within our community, we continue to respond to calls involving mental health concerns. We are actively exploring regional partnerships with neighboring communities to develop a mental health co-response program.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the residents of West Brookfield for your continued support. Your partnership is extremely important as we work together to maintain a safe and secure community for all.

As we move forward into the new year, the West Brookfield Police Department remains committed to upholding the highest standards of service, collaboration, and community engagement. We look forward to continuing to serve you in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Nathan Hagglund

Chief, West Brookfield Police Department

Treasurer/Tax Collector

TAX COLLECTOR

Totals represent posting activity year to date January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023

Real Estate Tax	\$6,473,440.73
Personal Property Tax	\$348,145.52
Motor Vehicle/Trailer Excise	\$562,101.84
Total Receipts	\$7,383,688.09

PARKING CLERK

Totals represent posting activity year to date January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023

Parking Tickets	\$180.00
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Town Clerk

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report to the residents of the Town of West Brookfield in my first year as Town Clerk. The Town Clerk's office has been very busy and has seen a lot of changes this year, such as the hiring of Assistant Town Clerk Anne Garwood-Hampp, the purchase of and training on new election equipment as well as a new dog licensing program. We are excited to serve the great community of West Brookfield and are looking forward to a bright future.

Vital Records processed and recorded for the year:

Births - 31

Marriages - 15

Deaths – 111

ELECTED OFFICIALS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN	Roland Sickenberger	5/7/2024
	Erik Von Bleicken	5/6/2025
	Brad Glennon Merkel	5/5/2026
BOARD OF ASSESSORS	Kevin Dorman	5/7/2024
	Gary Simeone	5/6/2025
	William F. Mansfield	5/5/2026
BOARD OF HEALTH	Melvin Dorman	5/7/2024
	Mary Jane Haesche	5/6/2025
	Jason L. Paquette	5/5/2026
COMMON COMMITTEE	Bob Richard	5/7/2024
	Diane Vayda	5/6/2025
	Cassie Paolucci	5/5/2026
HOUSING AUTHORITY	Anthony Fernandez	5/7/2024
	Deborah Korman	12/12/2025
	Susan Rowden - Chairman	5/6/2025
	Eric Von Bleicken	5/4/2027
	Thomas Sanderson	5/2/2028
LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES	Peter M. Scribner	5/7/2024
	Susan Rowden	5/7/2024
	Jeffrey Robbins	5/6/2025
	David Swekla	5/6/2025
	Janet Marie Foley	5/5/2026
	Jane E. Higgins	5/5/2026
MODERATOR	William Mansfield	5/6/2025
PLANNING BOARD	Steve Carroll	5/7/2024
	David Brown	5/6/2025
	Rebekah Lynne Cornell	5/5/2026
	Dean Wisniewski	5/4/2027
	Tim Morrell	5/2/2028
SCHOOL COMMITTEE	Dustin Atwood	5/7/2024
	Gregory Morse	5/7/2024
	Craig Burgess	5/6/2025
	Bryan Griffing	5/6/2025
	Travis Mathieson	5/5/2026
	Phil Landine	5/5/2026
TOWN CLERK	Heather Gough	5/6/2025
WATER COMMISSIONER	Lester Joseph Paquette	5/4/2024
	Robert Benson	5/3/2025
	Barry J. Nadon Sr.	5/1/2026

ANNUAL LOCAL ELECTION - MAY 2, 2023

SELECTMAN (VOTE FOR ONE) 3 YEAR TERM

BRAD GLENNON MERKEL	141
STEPHEN E. PIECHOTA	118
BLANK	14
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	274

TOWN CLERK (VOTE FOR ONE) 2 YEAR TERM

HEATHER ELYSE GOUGH	219
BLANK	48
WRITE IN	7
TOTAL	274

BOARD OF ASSESSORS (VOTE FOR ONE) 3 YEAR TERM

WILLIAM F. MANSFIELD	229
BLANK	44
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	274

BOARD OF HEALTH (VOTE FOR ONE) 3 YEAR TERM

JASON L. PAQUETTE	215
BLANK	56
WRITE IN	3
TOTAL	274

WATER COMMISSIONER (VOTE FOR ONE) 3 YEAR TERM

BARRY J. NADON SR.	205
BLANK	67
WRITE IN	2
TOTAL	274

LIBRARY TRUSTEE (VOTE FOR TWO) 3 YEAR TERM

JANET M. FOLEY	218
JANE E. HIGGINS	217
BLANK	113
WRITE IN	0
TOTAL	548

COMMON COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR ONE) 3 YEAR TERM

CASSIE MARIE PAOLUCCI	229
BLANK	44
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	274

COMMON COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR ONE) 2 YEAR TERM

DIANE S. VAYDA	212
BLANK	60
WRITE IN	2
TOTAL	274

COMMON COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR ONE) 1 YEAR TERM

ROBERT JOSEPH RICHARD	219
BLANK	54
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	274

PLANNING BOARD (VOTE FOR ONE) 5 YEAR TERM

TIMOTHY S. MORRELL	212
BLANK	62
WRITE IN	0
TOTAL	274

HOUSING AUTHORITY (VOTE FOR ONE) 5 YEAR TERM

THOMAS GUY SANDERSON	208
BLANK	66
WRITE IN	0
TOTAL	274

HOUSING AUTHORITY (VOTE FOR ONE) 4 YEAR TERM

ERIC S. VON BLEICKEN	200
BLANK	69
WRITE IN	5
TOTAL	274

QUABOAG REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 4)

ANDREW D. SCHWENKER	131
MATTHEW J. PELOQUIN	125
PHILIP J. LANDINE	184
BLANK	598
WRITE IN	58
TOTAL	1096

SPECIAL STATE PRIMARY ELECTION - OCTOBER 10, 2023

REPUBLICAN ELECTION

SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT (VOTE FOR ONE)

BRUCE CHESTER	42
PETER DURANT	84
BLANK	0
WRITE IN	0
TOTAL	126

DEMOCRATIC ELECTION

SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT (VOTE FOR ONE)

JONATHAN ZLOTNIK	65
BLANK	2
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	68

LIBERTARIAN ELECTION

SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT (VOTE FOR ONE)

BLANK	0
WRITE IN	1
TOTAL	1

SPECIAL STATE ELECTION – NOVEMBER 7, 2023

SENATOR IN GENERAL COURT (VOTE FOR ONE)

PETER DURANT	349
JONATHAN ZLOTNIK	226
BLANK	3
WRITE IN	0
TOTAL	578

APPOINTMENTS

Trista Astrella	Accounting Assistant	June 30, 2024
Catherine Lamica	Advisory Committee	June 30, 2024
Lori Loughlin	Advisory Committee	June 30, 2025
Keith Arsenault	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2024
Wesley Slobody	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2024
David Salem	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2025
Jim DiMaio	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2025
Kevin Blaine	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2025
Matthew Koziol	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2025
Steven Gould	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2025
Chris Sweeney	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2026
Clinton Jury	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2026
Steven Novak	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2026
Timothy Morrell	Agricultural Committee	June 30, 2026
Steve Novak	Alternate Animal Inspector	June 30, 2026
Katrina Klein	Animal Control Officer	June 30, 2024
Leah Shattuck	Animal Control Officer/Animal Inspector	June 30, 2024
Anne Garwood-Hampp	Assistant Town Clerk	Indefinite
Deborah Provencher	Board of Registrars	June 30, 2023
Doreen Piechota	Board of Registrars	June 30, 2023
Heather Gough	Board of Registrars	June 30, 2023
Jane Dolan	Board of Registrars	June 30, 2023
Drew Douglass	Cable Access Committee	June 30, 2024
Michael Frew	Cable Access Committee	June 30, 2024
Paul Lapenas	Cable Access Committee	June 30, 2024
Ryan Shepard	Cable Access Committee	June 30, 2024
John Vayda	Capital Planning Committee	June 30, 2025
Diane Vayda	Common Committee	May 2, 2023
Robert Richard	Common Committee	May 2, 2023
John Healey	Constable	June 30, 2024
Beverly Cassavant	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Elizabeth Bliss	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Irene White	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Nancy Arsenault	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Nancy Seremeth	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Paula Ye	Council on Aging	June 30, 2024
Brad Merkel	Earth Removal Board - Selectmen's Representative	June 30, 2026
Elizabeth Kozik	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Tracy Crane	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Beverly Kenniston	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Cythnthia Paquette	Election Worker	June 30, 2024

Deb Korman	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Diana Vayda	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Dora Henrichon	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Kathleen Landry	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Kathleen Pratt	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Thomas Meade	Election Worker	June 30, 2024
Rebecca Acerra	Executive Assistant to Town Administrator/BOS	June 30, 2025
David Brown	Grant Writing Committee	June 30, 2024
Rebekah Cornell	Grant Writing Committee	June 30, 2024
Jesse Morrison	Historical Commission	June 30, 2025
Anne-Marie Nolan	Historical Commission	June 30, 2025
Ryan Gough	Historical Commission	June 30, 2026
Heather Walker	Historical Commission	June 30, 2026
Louise Garwood	Historical Committee	June 30, 2026
Heather Gough	Interim Town Clerk	May 2, 2023
Albert Collings	Lake Wickaboag Management Committee	June 30, 2025
Jay Czaja	Lake Wickaboag Management Committee	June 30, 2025
A.J. Kiernan	Local Cultural Council	June 30, 2024
Diane Vayda	Local Cultural Council	June 30, 2024
Jane Higgins	Local Cultural Council	June 30, 2026
Pamela Gemme	Local Cultural Council	June 30, 2026
Susan Rowden	Local Cultural Council	June 30, 2026
Sheri Kaiser	Administrative Assistant to the Police Department	June 30, 2024
Nathan Hagglund	Police Chief	June 30, 2026
Ostaquio Rodrigues-Filho	Police Officer / Full-time & Constable	May 13, 2024
Kara Hartung	Full-time Police Officer/Constable	January 1, 2025
Hector Melendez	Police Officer / Full-time & Constable	June 30, 2025
Cassidy Culver	Police Officer / Full-time	March 14, 2024
Jesse L. Berard	Police Officer / Part-time & Constable	June 30, 2024
Serenity Allen	Police Officer / Part-time & Constable	June 30, 2024
Brad Merkel	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
David Brown	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
Dean Wisniewski	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
Marc Astrella	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
Nathan Hagglund	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
Richard Lapierre	Public Safety Complex Committee	Indefinite
Lisa Girard	Recreation Committee	June 30, 2024
Jennifa Frediani	Recreation Committee	June 30, 2024
Lisa Bardo-Barnes	Recreation Committee	June 30, 2024
Michael Drolet	Recreation Committee	June 30, 2024
Doreen Piechota	Recreation Committee	June 30, 2026
Kelly Hitt	Senior Center Director	Indefinite
Tamara Friend	Stormwater Clerk	June 30, 2023

Ron San Angelo	Town Administrator	June 30, 2025
Eric Von Bleicken	Treasurer Search Committee	Indefinite
Diane Vayda	Treasurer Search Committee	Indefinite
Fiona Andrewes	Treasurer Search Committee	Indefinite
Nathan Hagglund	Treasurer Search Committee	Indefinite
Jillian Patch	Treasurer/Tax Collector	June 30, 2024
Philip Guerin	Water Commissioner	May 7, 2024
Heather Gough	White Christmas Committee	June 30, 2024
Melannie Waugh	White Christmas Committee	June 30, 2025
Amanda Wodyga	White Christmas Committee	June 30, 2026
Kevin Dorman	Zoning Board of Appeals	June 30, 2024
Richard Ullman	Zoning Board of Appeals	June 30, 2025
George Hibbard	Zoning Board of Appeals	June 30, 2026
Gary Simeone	Zoning Board of Appeals - Alternate	June 30, 2024
William Mansfield	Zoning Board of Appeals - Alternate	June 30, 2024
G. Thomas Schnare	Zoning Enforcement Officer	June 30, 2024
G. Thomas Schnare	Interim Zoning Enforcement Officer	June 30, 2026

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 13, 2023

The quorum requirement per Town of West Brookfield By-Laws in the amount of Twenty (20) registered voters was met; the meeting was called to order by the Moderator at 6:33 PM.

The Moderator introduced the Board of Selectmen; Chair Rolland Sickenberger, Eric Von Bleicken and Brad Merkel, and the Advisory Committee; Co-Chairs Pamela Griffing & Lori Loughlin, Douglas Aspinall, Michael Audette and Ronald Garceau. The Moderator also thanked the school for hosting the Special Town meeting.

The Moderator reviewed the rules of procedure and made a motion to allow the following nonvoters to sit in attendance:

Chris Petrini – Petrini and Associates, P.C.
Ron San Angelo – Town Administrator
Donna Allard – Town Accountant
Nancy Talbot – Town Clerk of Ware
Kathleen Landry - Poll worker

The Moderator made a motion to allow the following nonvoters to speak:

Chris Petrini – Petrini and Associates, P.C.
Nathan Hagglund – Chief of Police
Rich Lapierre – Fire Chief
Jim Daley – Highway Superintendent
John Madden – Financial Advisor

Passed unanimously in favor.

Action as follows on Article 1 through 6:

ARTICLE 1:

Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town appropriate the sum of **\$37,721.99** to supplement appropriations previously voted under Article 4 at the Annual Town Meeting of June 7, 2022, for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2022, for various Departments, and to meet said appropriations, transfer the sums as follows.

Item #	Department	Budget	Adjustment	Revised FY23 Budget	Funding Source
1	Winter Roads – Salary & Wages	\$20,718	\$10,668.07	\$31,386.07	Free Cash
2	Winter Roads – Other Expenses	\$83,640	\$27,053.92	110,693.92	Free Cash
3			\$37,721.099		

ARTICLE 2:

Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to transfer from available funds the sum of \$14,444.98 to pay the following unpaid bills of previous fiscal years, and to meet said appropriation, transfer the sums as follows:

LINE NUMBER	VENDOR	DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	FUNDING SOURCE
1	Berry Insurance. Year End Auto Endorsement	Board of Selectmen	\$300.00	Free Cash
2	Mass Municipal Association. Advertising for Treasurer	Board of Selectmen	\$100.00	Free Cash
3	Occupational Health Services. Physicals	Board of Selectmen	\$117.12	Free Cash
4	Endpoint. Endpoint Project	Board of Health	\$562.50	Free Cash
5	Mass. Correctional Industries. Flag Kits for Veterans Service	Veteran Services	\$672.00	Free Cash
6	McClure Engineering. Water Testing	Water Department	\$4,100.00	Free Cash

7	Borden & Remington. Potassium Hydroxide	Water Department	\$7,427.06	Free Cash
8	Solitude Lake Management. Water Sampling	Board of Health	\$950.00	Free Cash
9	Trash Removal	Recreation Commission	\$216.30	Free Cash
Totals			\$14,444.98	Free Cash

ARTICLE 3:

Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town appropriate the sum of **\$5,000.00** to the Unemployment Fund, and to meet said appropriation transfer the sum of **\$5,000.00** from the **Free Cash** to such fund.

ARTICLE 4:

Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town appropriate the sum of **\$100,000.00** to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust Fund (OPEB), and to meet said appropriation, transfer the sum of **\$100,000.00** from **Free Cash** to such fund.

ARTICLE 5:

Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town appropriate the sum of **\$200,000.00** to the Stabilization Fund, and to meet said appropriation, transfer the sum of **\$200,000.00** from the **Free Cash** to such fund.

ARTICLE 6:

Passed unanimously in favor, the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$45,750 from the Fire Truck Stabilization Account for the 5% grant match towards a new Pumper/Tanker Truck, contingent upon receiving the FY 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant.

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to dissolve this special town meeting. Passed unanimously. Special Town Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 13, 2023

The quorum requirement per Town of West Brookfield By-Laws in the amount of Twenty (20) registered voters was met; the meeting was called to order by the Moderator at 7:04 PM.

The pledge of allegiance was recited by those in attendance and a moment of silence was taken. The moderator introduced the Board of Selectmen; Chair Rolland Sickenberger, Eric Von Bleicken and Brad Merkel; the Advisory Committee Co-Chairs Pamela Griffing & Lori Loughlin, Douglas Aspinall, Michael Audette and Ronald Garceau. The Moderator reviewed the rules of procedure.

Eric Von Bleicken read the Annual Selectmen's Letter thanking numerous town employees and volunteers.

The Moderator made a motion to allow the following nonvoters to sit with the Board of Selectmen:

Chris Petrini – Petrini and Associates, P.C.
Ron San Angelo – Town Administrator
Donna Allard – Town Accountant
Nancy Talbot – Town Clerk of Ware
Kathleen Landry - Poll worker

The Moderator made a motion to allow the following nonvoters to speak:

Chris Petrini – Petrini and Associates, P.C.
Nathan Hagglund – Chief of Police
Rich Lapierre – Fire Chief
Jim Daley – Highway Superintendent
John Madden – Budget Consultant
Kelly Hitt – Senior Center Director
Maureen Binenda – Superintendent of Quaboag Regional School District
Passed unanimously in favor.

Action as follows on Article 1 through 27:

ARTICLE 1: (No motion required)

To bring in their votes for one (1) Selectman for 3 years, one (1) Town Clerk for 2 years, one (1) Assessor for 3 years, one (1) Board of Health for 3 years, one (1) Water Commissioner for 3 years, two (2) Library Trustees for 3 years, one (1) Common Committee Member for 3 years, one (1) Common Committee Member for 2 years, one (1) Common Committee Member for 1 year, one (1) Planning Board Member for 5 years, one (1) Housing Authority Member for 5 years, one (1) Housing Authority Member for 4 years, four (4) Quaboag Regional School District School Committee Members as follows: two (2) members from West Brookfield for 3 years and two (2) members from Warren for 3 years. (Sponsored by Town Clerk)

ARTICLE 2: (No motion required)

To hear and act upon the Annual Reports of the Town Officers and Committees; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Sponsored by Town Clerk)

Pamela Griffing, Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee gave a power point presentation on the Town's current fiscal position.

ARTICLE 3: Passed* unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to determine the compensation to be paid to the elected Town Officers as described in the FY 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Handout for the twelve-month period beginning July 1, 2023.

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>BOS</u>	<u>ADV Com</u>
Moderator	300.00	450.00	300.00
Selectmen (2)	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Selectmen chair	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Assessors (2)	2,913.12	2,913.12	1,800.00
Assessors Clerk	4,161.60	4,161.60	1,800.00
BOH (2)	915.55	915.55	915.55
BOH Chair	1,144.40	1,144.40	1,144.40
Town Clerk	31,661.00	33,244.05	33,244.05
Water Commissioners	400.55	400.55	400.55
	44,496.22	46,229.27	42,604.55

Simple majority. (M.G.L. c. 41, § 108. “The salary and compensation of all elected officers of a town shall be fixed annually by vote of the town at an annual town meeting, but said salary or compensation may be revised by a two-thirds vote of any special town meeting called to conduct business later in the same fiscal year for which said salary or compensation was originally fixed; provided, however, that such salary revision occurs prior to the establishment of the tax rate of the town in said fiscal year.”)

***Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend
Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend***

*Motion and second to adopt the Board of Selectmen’s recommendation for stipends paid to elected officials as stated in article #3 which the Board of Selectmen voted 3-0 in favor.

ARTICLE 4: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote, pursuant to G.L. c. 41, § 23A, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint a Town Administrator and, further, to change the current position of Executive Secretary to Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen, such positions to be further defined by Job Description as determined by the Board of Selectmen.

(Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 No Recommendation

ARTICLE 5: Passed* in favor, that the Town appropriate the sum of **\$9,476,597.50** as the operating Budget of the Town as listed in the Advisory Committee Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request for the purposes and in the amounts specified, and to meet said appropriation, raise the sum of **\$9,140,021.00** and to transfer the sum of **\$5,500.00** from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund and the sum of **\$331,076.50** from Free Cash, and further, vote that any State reimbursements which result in available funds to the Quaboag Regional School District, in excess of the approved budget, shall be used to reduce the Town's assessment

(Sponsored by the Advisory Committee)

*Motion and second to amend as follows: to increase and fund from Free Cash, the Education (Budget 320) above minimum contribution line from \$364,500 to \$430,000 (+65,500) and to decrease the transportation line item from \$626,802 to \$605,802 (-21,000) to bring the total school budget assessment from \$4,517,123 to \$4,561,623 (+44,500), and to increase and fund from Free Cash the Assessors (Budget 141) salary line from \$41,133 to \$45,720 (+4,587) to match the motion that passed in Article 3 to support the Board of Selectmen's recommendation for compensation to be paid to the elected Town Officers.

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 6: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, 53E ½ to authorize the use of a revolving fund to pay cemetery related expenses which fund shall be credited with receipts from various Burial Grounds Commission fees, such expenditures not to exceed \$16,000.00 in fiscal year 2024.

(Sponsored by the Burial Grounds Commission)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 7: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, § 53E ½ to authorize the Stormwater Authority’s use of a revolving fund, which fund shall be credited with receipts from various Stormwater Authority fees, such expenditures not to exceed \$25,000.00 in fiscal year 2024.

(Sponsored by the Stormwater Authority)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 8: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, § 53E ½ to authorize the Tree Warden’s use of a revolving fund, which fund shall be credited with receipts from various Stewardship Programs, such expenditures not to exceed \$10,000.00 in fiscal year 2024.

(Sponsored by the Tree Warden)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 9: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote, to authorize the Water Commissioners to employ their Licensed Water Commissioners at Grade 1, Step 2 (\$13.60 per hour) for standby duty and emergency work in the absence of the Superintendent in Fiscal Year 2024.

(Sponsored by the Water Department)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 10: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in the “Town Road Maintenance Account”, and to meet said appropriation transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000.

(Sponsored by Highway Department)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 11: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$25,535 for the purchase of six Tasers, and to meet said appropriation transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$25,535.

(Sponsored by the Police Department)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 12: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$54,0000 to purchase and equip a current model year 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe Police 4-Wheel Drive, and to meet said appropriation transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$54,000.

(Sponsored by the Police Department)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 13: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote will vote to appropriate \$10,000 to be placed in the “Repairs To Private Ways Account” to pay for repairs to private ways within West Brookfield pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40, 6N and Chapter XII, Section 8 of the General Bylaws, and further, that all repairs made to private ways will be completed in strict adherence to all applicable state laws and West Brookfield bylaws, and to meet said appropriation transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$10,000.

(Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 14: A motion was made and second. Voted unanimously to pass over this article.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of funding temporary and or permanent easements, and any and all other incidental or related costs, of proposed improvements of Route 9, as further identified as Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) as MassDOT Project No’s. 606517 and 609049; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Sponsored by the Highway Department)

ARTICLE 15: A motion was made and second. Voted unanimously to pass over this article.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of funding the engineering design and any and all other incidental or related costs, of proposed improvements to the intersection of Route 9; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Sponsored by the Highway Department)

ARTICLE 16: Passed* unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to dispose of the fee or any lesser interest, including a lease of up to 99 years, on such terms as the Board of Selectmen may deem appropriate, in the land and improvements thereon in the real property known and numbered as 27 Front Street, West Brookfield, identified on the West Brookfield Town Assessors Map 38 as Lot 2, said parcel having been conveyed to the Town of West Brookfield by the deed of the Brookfield Realty Company, Inc. dated November 20, 1984 recorded with the Worcester South District Registry of Deeds in Book 8464, Page 218

("Property"), and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all related actions necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this article.

(Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

Requires a 2/3 vote.

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 17: Passed in favor, that the Town vote to accept under M.G.L. c. 40, §15C, the Scenic Road Act, under recommendation of the West Brookfield Historical Commission, the designation of Wickaboag Valley Road in the Town of West Brookfield as a Scenic Road and regulating the improvement thereof.

(Sponsored by the Historical Commission)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 0-4-1 Not to Recommend

ARTICLE 18:

Passed in favor, that the Town vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c. 41, Section 110A, to allow the town to remain closed on any or all Saturdays as may be determined from time to time, and the provisions of section nine of Chapter four shall apply in the case of such closing of any such office on any Saturday to the same extent as if such Saturday were a legal holiday.

(Sponsored by the Town Clerk)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 0-3 Not to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to make No Recommendation

ARTICLE 19: Passed* unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by amending the Definitions in the Zoning Bylaws as shown in **Attachment 1** copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 20: Passed* unanimously in favor, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by amending miscellaneous sections in the Zoning Bylaws as shown in **Attachment 2**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 21: Passed unanimously in favor, that the Town vote amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, Section 5, Site Plan Review to provide for a comprehensive review of site plans for commercial uses and accessory dwelling units to protect the health, safety, convenience and welfare of the citizens, as shown in **Attachment 3**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 22: This article failed to pass*, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by adding a new section "Accessory Dwelling Units" as shown in **Attachment 4**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 2-1 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 0-4-1 Not to Recommend

ARTICLE 23: This article failed to pass*, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by adding a new section "Village Center District" and rezoning parcels from General District to a new Village Center District as shown in **Attachment 5**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to dismiss secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 3-0-2 to Recommend

ARTICLE 24: Passed* in favor, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield's Zoning Bylaws by rezoning the parcels from Rural Residential to General as shown on a plan entitled, "Zoning and Overlay District Map, Town of West Brookfield" as shown in **Attachment 6**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 25: A motion was made, second and passed* to withdraw, that the Town vote to amend the Town of West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by rezoning parcels from Rural Residential to Residential Neighborhood as shown on a plan entitled, "Zoning and Overlay District Map, Town of West Brookfield" as shown in **Attachment 7**, copies of which are available in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town's website at www.wbrookfield.com.

(Sponsored by the Planning Board)

*Motion and second to suspend secret ballot was made and passed unanimously.

2/3 Vote

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 26: Passed in favor, that the Town vote, pursuant to G.L. c. 41, § 1B, to change the position of Town Clerk from elected to appointed, contingent upon acceptance of such change by the voters at the next Annual Town Election.

(Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen)

Simple majority

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Voted 3-0 to Recommend

Advisory Committee Voted 5-0 to Recommend

ARTICLE 27: Passed in favor, that the Town of W. Brookfield hereby adopts this resolution in support of the work of the Special Commission on the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth, established by a Resolve of the General Court in 2021 and appointed by the Governor to recommend changes to the current flag and seal of Massachusetts, and in support of a new flag and seal for the Commonwealth that may better reflect our aspirations for harmonious and respectful relations between all people who now call

Massachusetts home. The town clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to Sen. Anne Gobi and Rep. Donald Berthiaume, with the request that they support the work of the aforementioned Special Commission and advocate for a new flag and seal for the Commonwealth. (Citizens Petition)

(Citizens Petition) Motion to be made by citizen.

Simple majority

Resolution in Support of Changing the State Flag & Seal of Massachusetts:

Whereas the history of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is replete with instances of conflict between the

European Colonists and the Native Nations of the region, who first extended the hand of friendship to the Colonists on their shores in 1620, and helped them to survive starvation during the settlers' first winters on their land;

Whereas members of the Native Nation for whom the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is named were ambushed and killed by Myles Standish, first commander of the Plymouth Colony, at Wessagusett (now Weymouth) in April of 1623, barely two years after the pilgrims arrived;

Whereas the Colonial broadsword held by a white hand above the head of the Indigenous person on the Massachusetts Flag and Seal is modeled after Myles Standish's own broadsword, borrowed for that purpose from the Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth by the illustrator Edmund Garrett in 1884;

Whereas the belt binding the Native's cloak on the Flag and Seal is modeled after a belt worn by Metacomet, known to the English as King Philip, who was among the Indigenous Leaders that resorted to a mutually destructive war in 1675-76 in defense of native Lands against Colonial encroachment;

Whereas the proportions of the body of the Indigenous person on the Flag and Seal were taken from the skeleton of an Indigenous person unearthed in Winthrop, the bow modeled after a bow taken from an Indigenous man shot and killed by a colonist in Sudbury in 1665, and the facial features taken from a photograph of an Ojibwe chief from Great Falls, Montana, considered by the illustrator to be a "fine specimen of an Indian," though not from Massachusetts;

Whereas the history of relations between Massachusetts since Colonial times and the Native Nations who continue to live within its borders includes the forced internment of thousands of so-called "praying Indians: on Deer Island, in Boston Harbor, where they died by the hundreds of exposure in the winter of 1675, the enslavement of Indigenous people in Boston, Bermuda, and the Caribbean Islands, the offering of 40 pounds sterling as bounty for the scalps of Indigenous men, women and children in Massachusetts beginning in 1686, increased to 100 pounds sterling for the scalps of Indigenous adult males by 1722, half that amount for Indigenous women and children;

Whereas Indigenous people were legally prohibited from even stepping foot into Boston from 1675 until 2004, when that Colonial law was finally repealed;

Whereas the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Colonists at Plymouth Plantation, which gave rise to the long chain of genocidal wars and deliberate government policies of cultural destruction against Native Nations of this continent, occurred in the year 2020, affording every

citizen of the Commonwealth a chance to reflect upon this history and come to an appreciation of the need for better relations between the descendants of the Colonial immigrants and the Native Nations of the Commonwealth;

Whereas the land area now known as the Town of W. Brookfield, once part of the Quaboag Plantation, shares a long and difficult history with the Nipmuc, tribe, who have inhabited this area since long before the first colonial settlers arrived in 1664;

Now, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of W. Brookfield hereby adopts this resolution in support of the work of the Special Commission on the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth, established by a Resolve of the General Court in 2021 and appointed by the Governor to recommend changes to the current flag and seal of Massachusetts, and in support of a new flag and seal for the Commonwealth that may better reflect our aspirations for harmonious and respectful relations between all people who now call

Massachusetts home. The town clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to Sen. Anne Gobi and Rep.

Donald Berthiaume, with the request that they support the work of the aforementioned Special Commission and advocate for a new flag and seal for the Commonwealth. (Citizens Petition)

Selectmen's Annual Letter

Good evening,

First, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for attending this evening and voicing your opinion about your town government.

Despite our town's challenging fiscal restraints, the Board of Selectmen, along with our town employees, boards, and volunteers, continue to find ways to maintain and improve our town. This doesn't happen in a vacuum. So, in this regard, within our annual letter, we would like to express our gratitude.

First, thank you, to our financial team who spent countless hours collaborating with our boards and departments in order to present this evening's budget.

This past year has seen significant changes in our town government with regards to staffing. Most notably, the retirement of Chief Tom O'Donnell. After a search committee was formed, the town moved forward in January with the appointment of Nathan Hagglund as our new chief. Nathan brings a fresh perspective to the position, and we look forward to a long relationship with him serving as our top law enforcement officer.

We are also very pleased to introduce Ron San Angelo as our new Town Administrator. Mr. San Angelo comes to us with many years of administrative experience and knowledge. He will be working in concert with the Select Board, our Executive Secretary, department heads, and boards. We look forward to utilizing his vast experience as we move our town forward in a constructive and positive manner.

We would like to extend our thanks to Ms. Linda Lincoln who was appointed as Interim Town Clerk. Linda provided immediate and necessary support in an office that is vital to the town. We would also like to thank our neighboring Town Clerk from Warren. Laurie Stockley worked alongside Linda to ensure the integrity of our town election.

We welcome our newest Select Board member, Brad Merkel. Brad has unique skills and knowledge that will serve us well. Welcome sir!

We feel that special thanks must go to Ms. Heather Gough for assisting in this years' Memorial Day Parade. Ms. Gough took over for Sarah as interim town clerk and was recently elected to the position. If she brings the same passion to that position as she has to giving us back our Memorial Day Parade, then our town's front office will be in very good hands for years to come. We also would like to take the time to thank Mr. Jonathan Bonin for donating the wood for this years' bonfire.

Now, our Board would be remiss if we did not mention someone who has managed to help keep all our boards and departments running for several years, all while dealing with challenging public issues. I have personally spent many hours observing how challenging her position was. Fortunately, with the advent of our new Town Administrator, Rebecca Accera's skills and experience will be utilized and shared equally moving forward. We have a potential dream team here.

Folks, honestly, the atmosphere has begun to change at town hall. There is more enthusiasm for our future. Yes, we have financial challenges. We have physical and personal repairs to attend to, but we have new skills and knowledge. We have imaginative minds. We have work ethic. We have enthusiasm and we have passion. I am truly excited for what will happen next.

Here is your chance to thank all the town residents who selflessly volunteer, or receive only token compensation every year, to keep our town beautiful and special. If you are a town employee or volunteer, please stand. On behalf of the Select Board, thank you! Please join us as we humbly thank them with a round of applause.

Tonight is about making sure that all residents feel their voice is heard. It is an indication that we will be moving forward in a unified front.

Thank you for participating in your West Brookfield town government!

Tree Warden

In the past year we have removed 73 large diameter, hazardous trees as well as numerous smaller trees. We continue to prioritize the hazardous trees for removal and have a large backlog of trees on our list.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jim Daley (508) 867-1417 or jdaley@wbrookfield.com

Veteran's Service Officer

2023 was a transitional year for the Veterans Services Program. During the summer of 2023, Gary Lapine Submitted his intent to retire from position of Veterans Services' Agent, at the end of November; giving the town time to Search for, prepare and appoint a replacement. I, Ellen T. Moore was appointed to start on the 1st of Dec 2023.

I retired from the United States Air Force Reserves in Jan of 2017, as an Air Reserve Technician at the rank of E-8, Master Sergeant. I continued with the Air Force DoD for an additional 6 years as a Financial Resource Advisor and fully retired in Jun 2023.

During the Transition Gary Lapine Prepared the files for transfer, the town administration obtained a laptop for the program, and I attended the Massachusetts Department of Veteran Services Annul Training in Leominster MA. The transition was completed on 1 Dec 2023.

For those that qualify, the Department of Veterans Services, Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L) 115 Program will help defray some home operations and medical costs. So if you are a Veteran in need of services or you know of a veteran in need of services, please feel free to reach out to me at emoore@wbrookfield.com or contact me at (413) 364-7576.

I look forward to supporting those currently receiving benefits and improving the program so that all the town's veterans, or Veteran's family have the information they need to continue a life with quality and pride.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen T. Moore

Water Department

The Water Department is pleased to submit the following Annual Report for the year 2023.

The West Brookfield Water Department has added 3 new members to our department this year as both Operator Tombor (2022) and Commissioner Nadon (2023) resigned. Welcome Operator John Stanton III, Commissioner Philip Guerin, and part time Operator Richard Kennan Jr.

Commissioner Nadon held a water operator license and took care of Water Department duties on Sundays and Holidays. We hired a part time licensed operator to cover this loss and allow the Superintendent and Operator to have a day off.

The Warepoint Road Water Treatment Facility has some major components that need repair. This plant is 40 years old, and the equipment is becoming obsolete. Repairs and replacements are necessary and have been very costly.

We have hired a new engineering firm for the Leland Road Project. We welcome the team at Tata & Howard and look forward to this project moving forward. We are still in non-compliance with the Mass DEP due to high level of iron and manganese. The Water Department is hoping to receive some infrastructure monies from the state to help with this project and would like your support on this matter.

There are still a handful of customers that need to have their meters changed out. This change takes approximately 20 minutes and will save you \$120 per year. Please contact the office so we can complete this project.

Long time Water Commissioner Robert Benson was honored with a Water Works Pride Award from the Massachusetts Water Works Association for his continued support and volunteerism within the public water system. "Benny" holds a combined water license and is always willing to help employees and customers in a friendly and professional manner. Congrats Commissioner Benson.

Our continued thanks to the Highway Department for their help during the year.

Please feel free to call the office at (508) 867-1421 Ext 8 or the Plant at (508)867-1412 with any questions you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

The West Brookfield Water Department

Superintendent Wesley Cassavant

Operator John Stanton III

Administrative Assistant Kathleen Landry

Commissioner/Chair Robert Benson

Commissioner Philip Guerin

Commissioner Lester Paquette, Sr.

White Christmas

The 31st Annual White Christmas Event was held on Sunday December 3rd, 2023.

This is one of the community's biggest events of the year, and many families look forward to it. Throughout the day there were many children's activities including entertainment in the Great Hall by Toe Jam Puppet Band, gingerbread house decorating, gingerbread cookie decorating at the Senior Center, and an elf hunt. Father Christmas and Frosty the Snowman were both seen walking the streets to greet people. And our remarkable Santa, who donates his time for the event, had pictures taken with over 100 children. The children enjoy this tremendously and the smiles on their little faces are so rewarding.

We had sixty-five vendors at the recently added Craft and Vendor Fair at the West Brookfield Elementary School. Many local businesses and churches also participated with Open Houses, providing refreshments and treasures. On the Town Common you could find horse-drawn wagon rides, and hot cocoa with the Boy Scouts.

The lighting of our glorious 90-foot Norway Spruce tree kicked off at 5:45 PM, with carols. It was a glorious event followed by an uplifting acapella quartet concert put on by "Indigo" in the Great Hall at 6:15p.m. This was a new idea this year and we hope all enjoyed it.

Thank you to all the businesses, churches, Fire Department, Rescue Squad, Senior Center, CERT team, Historical Society Museum, and Police Department who participated with open houses, craft shows, refreshments and raffles. Thank you also to the Common Committee and Boy Scout Troup 118 for all their assistance and allowing us to use the common. And lastly, thank you to Jimmy Rust for maintaining our beautiful tree.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Wodgya

Melannie Waugh

Heather Gough

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals for 2023 granted eight special permits. There are no pending solar special permits pending. There are two solar projects that haven't been completed.

The Board meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00PM in the Assessor's Office or the Conference Room.

The Board was represented as follows:

Chairman-Kevin Dorman

Members-George Hibbard and Dick Ulman

Alternate Members-Gary Simeone, Bill Mansfield

The Board advises any applicants to purchase a Zoning Bylaw Booklet before completing the application and submitting it to the ZBA. The booklet is also available on-line at wbrookfield.com. A letter from the Zoning Enforcement Officer stating that a Building Permit has been denied must be issued before an application can be accepted for a hearing. Applications can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. The application must be signed by the Tax Collector stating that all taxes are up to date, as well as other required documents and plans.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Dorman, Chairman

George Hibbard, Member

Dick Ullman, Member

Bill Mansfield, Alternate

Gary Simeone, Alternate