

Wendell Newsletter

*September 2020 Sponsored by the
Wendell Selectboard*

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POLICE SUCCESSION PLANNING UPDATE

The Police Chief Succession Committee formed in January 2018 to review the work of the Wendell Police Department and prepare for the retirement of Chief Ed Chase, who has led the department for over 30 years. Based on data from the 2014 Wendell Public Safety Survey and anecdotes, the Committee reached a consensus that residents have been very satisfied with Chief Chase's service. We appreciate his emphasis on de-escalation, mediation, care, and understanding of the community.

The Committee reviewed possible models for police coverage and is proposing that we contract police services from the Town of Leverett. Following is a summary of our research. Before we make a final recommendation to the Wendell Selectboard, we ask for and welcome community input. You can share your thoughts by emailing the Succession Committee

wpdsuccessioncommittee@gmail.com by
September 21st.

We will be holding a **public forum on September 26th** at 11 am [rain date Sunday, September 27]. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, please know it will be streamed through the Leverett Police

Department Facebook page. If we are unable to hold a safe, outdoor, and masked meeting on September 26th, we will hold the forum via zoom: Meeting ID: 831 715 9950 Password: 554605 or call-in (253) 215-8782

Using a state grant secured with assistance from FRCOG, the Committee hired the consulting firm Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) to help research our options for moving forward once Chief Chase retires. MRI compiled a list of options to consider; below are the models we looked at in-depth.

- 1. Maintain our current model of an independent part-time police department & part-time chief**

Like with many other small towns in our region and nationally facing a similar situation, this option would require a significant increase in our police budget. The amount we would need to offer to attract a new part-time chief as well as update the department to modern policies and practices is considerably higher than our current police department budget.

- 2. Disbanding the Wendell Police Department**

This option would reduce our police budget to zero, and the MA State Police would answer any 911 calls originating from Wendell. The Committee felt that it would be better for there to be a local department available to respond to requests for police services, with officers who would know the community and citizens. The state police are concerned that they do not have the resources and administrative staff to accommodate this option.

3. Share a chief with another town

The committee initially hoped we could create something similar to the model of the Fire Chief role in Wendell and New Salem. The state grant used to hire MRI was issued to New Salem and Wendell collectively to conduct the research. In the end, the timing was not right to undertake this project together.

4. Contract police services from a neighboring town

The committee is optimistic about the possibility of contracting police services for several reasons:

- a. Such a business arrangement between two towns could be renegotiated regularly if/as needed.
- b. The amount of police services contracted can be matched to the amount desired by the town.
- c. Economically this is feasible and could be similar to the Police Department's current budget.

Based on this research, the Committee decided to look deeper into contracting police services. After interviewing several

neighboring towns, we have focused on the Leverett Police Department. The Town of Leverett expressed interest in providing this service, and the Committee met multiple times with Selectboard Member Julie Shively and Police Chief Scott Minckler. The Committee was impressed with Chief Minckler's professionalism and commitment to knowing the community in which he serves.

The Leverett Police Department strives to deliver the best public service possible to our residents. We run our department on a community policing model, working hand in hand with the public. As the Chief, I keep the Police Department as transparent and forthcoming with information as the law will allow. Officers from this department are highly trained and continue with yearly mandatory trainings. De-escalation trainings are areas where officers will continue to get more specialized skills to as a means for achieving peaceful outcomes. "Verbal Judo" is a technique that teaches police to de-escalate situations with words not actions. I was trained with and still use this technique to this day and it has proven very effective throughout my nearly twenty-year career.

*Respectfully,
Chief Scott D. Minckler*

MRI conducted an in-depth study of the possible costs of this contract and we were pleased to learn that such a contract may keep our police budget affordable for the town. Leverett is looking to expand their police services and we are working on developing a practical, affordable and we hope effective agreement to make the town of Wendell a part of Leverett's police "umbrella."

Any citizens who wish to review more detailed information about the Committee and its process is welcome to review our minutes and associated documents by visiting the Wendell townsite <https://www.wendellmass.us/>.

Signed,
The Police Chief Succession Committee:

Jerry Barilla, Ed Chase, Asa de Roode,
Michael Idoine, Dan Keller, Kate Lee,
Carolyn Manley, Ben Sylvia, Doug Tanner,
Anna Wetherby

OPENINGS IN TOWN GOVERNMENT

There is currently a vacancy on the Board of Assessors. If you are interested in serving, please call the Town Offices (978-544-3395) and speak with the Town Coordinator (ext. 0) or the Board of Assessors (ext. 4).

In addition, the Town Clerk, Gretchen Smith, has indicated she will be retiring at the end of December. Contact her (ext. 2) or the Selectboard (ext. 0) if you are interested.

Please consider serving the Town of Wendell in either of these important positions!

**COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF WENDELL
OFFICE OF THE TREASURER
NOTICE OF MUNICIPAL AUCTION**

Notice is hereby given, that on Saturday, October 3, at 12 PM at the Wendell Town Hall, 6 Center Street, Wendell, Massachusetts, 01379, I SHALL OFFER FOR SALE AT PUBLIC AUCTION, said parcels having been taken by the Town of Wendell for non-payment of the taxes due thereon, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 60 § 77B, certain parcels of land acquired by the Town of Wendell by foreclosure of the tax titles thereon as follows:

PROPERTY ADDRESS: OFF WENDELL ROAD (\$2,000.00 Deposit)

PROPERTY: Land and any building(s) thereon

CONTAINING: 28 AC (more or less)

PARCEL ID: Map 411, Parcel 50

REGISTRY: Franklin County Registry of Deeds Book 2691 Page 34

For title, the Instrument of Taking is recorded at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 6304, Page 162. The Judgment in Tax Lien Case No. 17 TL 001046 is recorded in Book 7227, Page 234. In addition, please see the Scrivener's Affidavit recorded in Book 7030, Page 239.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 120 WENDELL DEPOT ROAD (\$2,000.00 Deposit)

PROPERTY: Land and any building(s) thereon

CONTAINING: 3.0 AC (more or less)

PARCEL ID: Map 407, Parcel 49.2

REGISTRY: Franklin County Registry of Deeds Book 2369, Page 215 and Book 2807, Page 90

For title, the Instrument of Taking is recorded at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 3460, Page 147. The Judgment in Tax Lien Case No. 02 TL 128742 is recorded in Book 7236, Page 271. In addition, please see the Scrivener's Affidavit recorded in Book 5688, Page 287.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 85 NEW SALEM ROAD (\$2,000.00 Deposit)

PROPERTY: Land and any building(s) thereon

CONTAINING: 3.5 AC (more or less)

PARCEL ID: Map 413, Parcel 29

REGISTRY: Franklin County Registry of Deeds Book 1600, Page 96

For title, the Instrument of Taking is recorded at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 6304, Page 161. The

Judgment in Tax Lien Case No. 17 TL 000806 is recorded in Book 7369, Page 27.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 40 GATE ROAD (\$2,000.00 Deposit)
PROPERTY: Land and any building(s) thereon
CONTAINING: 5.289 AC (more or less)
PARCEL ID: Map 410, Parcel 63.1
REGISTRY: Franklin County Registry of Deeds Book 2567, Page 155

For title, the Instrument of Taking is recorded at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 7026, Page 32. The Judgment in Tax Lien Case No. 18 TL 001556 is recorded in Book 7389 Page 221. **(PENDING)**

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 0 COOLEYVILLE ROAD (\$1,000.00 Deposit)
PROPERTY: Land and any building(s) thereon
CONTAINING: 1.9 AC (more or less)
PARCEL ID: Map 408, Parcel 25
REGISTRY: Franklin County Registry of Deeds Book 5835, Page 325

For title, the Instrument of Taking is recorded at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 6670, Page 87. The Judgment in Tax Lien Case No. 17 TL 000244 is recorded in Book 7219, Page 105.

The attached terms and conditions apply to the sale of the parcels herein advertised.

Carolyn U. Manley, Custodian of Tax Possessions
Town of Wendell

THE WENDELL ROAD COMMISSION

WRATS:

The Road Commission continues to work with the Franklin County Waste Management in an effort to make the WRATS more efficient and to keep the costs as low as possible. Costs to the town are going up and we need to make adjustments.

Beginning October 1, 2020, the cost of the yellow bags will go up \$.50 per bag, from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per bag; this cost is still lower than most towns in the area. Another increase that we have decided on is to increase the cost of Stickers to \$20 per family/household, and there will be no additional cost for persons that use additional vehicles; this increase will not take effect until the new stickers are required at the new year.

FRANKLIN COUNTY HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY

Next collection: September 26, 2020

We are planning to hold our collection as scheduled but circumstances may change. Collection sites at GCC and Orange Transfer Station

[Pre-registration](#) required! Online pre-registration for the 2020 collection will begin on August 12th.

CARS WITHOUT A REGISTRATION POSTCARD WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO UNLOAD.

For more information:
<http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/hazwasteday.html>

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Highway Crew will include a new employee and we look forward to welcoming Scott Jarvenpaa. Scott comes to Wendell after many years as a DPW

employee for the towns of New Salem and Warwick.

John Bowers has decided to take on new work goals after working on the Crew for many years; he will be missed for his many skills and his willingness to work many long hours when needed.

KENTFIELD ROAD - The Town recently was awarded a grant from the MA Municipal Bridge Program for the design and replacement of the Bridge on Kentfield Road. The award is for \$500,000 and, due to the escalation of costs associated with working around the state's rivers and streams, the Highway Commission will hope that the project can be done for the award amount. The Commission also has contracted for the replacement of the culvert on Mormon Hollow Road, near the Diemand Farm, and for the culvert at intersection of Morse Village Road and New Salem Road.

FOOT CARE FOR SENIORS

The Wendell Council on Aging has started having foot care clinics again. A specially-trained nurse from FootCare by Nurses of Greenfield provides foot care and recommendations for at-home foot treatments each month at the Senior and Community Center. According to FootCare by Nurses, "Everyone deserves great foot care."

Clinics are held the first Wednesday of each month, with appointments from 8 am to 11:30 am. The nurses use COVID-19 safe practices. The next clinics will be held on October 5 and November 4. Contact Katie Nolan at 544-2306 if you want more information or are interested in an appointment

FRIENDS OF WENDELL COVID RELIEF

Are you, or someone you know, a Wendell resident in genuine financial need because of the pandemic? With the donations we have received from Wendellites, we are able to help people in this situation. Send a letter explaining your financial hardship due to the pandemic to: F. of W. Covid Relief, P.O. Box 103, Wendell MA 01379, or call Mez at 544-3177 or Susan at 544-3758 and let us know.

Thank you Wendell for your generous donations. We are still accepting donations to help our neighbors. Send to the above address.

WILDFLOWER AND INSECT WALK

Adam Kohl and Bill Stubblefield, from the Wendell Pollinator Protectors, will be leading a wildflower and insect walk at Fiske Pond on October 3, 10—11:30 AM. We will identify the native and non-native plant species and observe the insects that visit them. The walk is limited to 8 participants to comply with Covid recommendations: please email Sylvia Wetherby, rosebriarfarm68@gmail.com, to register, or call her at 978-544-6146 (email preferred). The walk is supported by the Wendell Cultural Council.

The Wendell Pollinator Protectors (WPP) is a group concerned with the loss of pollinators in our environment. For almost two years they have been working with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to provide us with a Wendell Pollinator Plan, subtitled "Developing and Protecting Wild Pollinator Habitat in the Town of Wendell". This ad hoc group of individuals includes Kate Nolan, Maggie Houghton, Laurel Facey, Laurie DiDonato, Sylvia Wetherby, Melinda Godfrey, Adam Kohl, Bill Stubblefield, and Dennis Harris.



Adam Kohl and Laurie DiDonato post a sign at the Library's Pollinator Garden

BROADBAND COMMITTEE NEWS

Wendell NET has been successfully installed and activated in over 100 homes in the southern third of town and residents have provided very positive feedback. The network's installation company, TriWire, has continued to implement safety protocols as installation teams enter homes and are working diligently to install those who have scheduled appointments.

Over 125 homes are already enjoying service and receiving their first bill. Keep in mind your phone service bill includes additional federal and state taxes. Internet service does not. Residents are able to explore alternative phone service options offered by companies other than Whip City Fiber.

The committee is communicating with schools to prioritize installations for homes with students in time for the upcoming virtual school year. The Town Office

parking lot, the Library's parking lot, and the Senior Center continue to provide a high-speed access point for all residents.

We are eager for the completion of testing and certification for the remainder of town, anticipated in the coming weeks. At that time, the remaining 250 homes that have signed up will be released for install scheduling. The committee will announce the release on the list serv and by emails to our current subscribers.

If you would like high-speed internet in your home and have not started the process, head to Wendell NET's website and navigate to the "Click Here to Sign Up" button on the home page to begin the process. A one-time \$99 activation/sign-up fee will be added to your first bill: <https://www.whipcityfiber.com/wendell/>

Questions are to be directed to Whip City's customer service number 413-485-1251 or by emailing customerservice@wgeld.org (making sure to put Wendell and your address of service in the subject line).

BOARD OF HEALTH NEWS

In Memorium: John Sullivan

The Board of Health is mourning the unexpected loss of one of our members. John Sullivan, who joined us in May of 2019, passed away suddenly on Saturday, September 5, 2020. John was a pleasure to work with and an important asset to our group. He was an eager team player and quickly stepped forward when a task needing action arose. His good nature, thoughtful participation, and appreciation for homemade chocolate chip cookies are

being sorely missed. John was happy to serve Wendell in his position on the Board, and was looking forward to playing a larger role after his retirement from Springfield Water and Sewer. We are thankful for the time spent in partnership with John, and extend our sincere condolences to his partner, Laurie Doubleday, and his extended family.

Septic Repair Funds Still Available

Are you facing an expensive project due to a failed septic system? Funds are still available for repairs and/or upgrades through the Town of Wendell Septic Rehabilitation Loan Program. Each loan has a maximum allowance of \$25,000. For more information on application requirements and repayment details, please contact the Board of Health at boardofhealth@wendellmass.us.

New Board of Health Nurse

The Board of Health is pleased to announce the hiring of a nurse to conduct our state-mandated disease surveillance. Paul Wanta, MSN, RN, joined us in August. Paul's responsibilities include computer monitoring for disease cases that could threaten the public health, notifying the Board of Health when positive cases occur, working with the town's contact tracer, coordinating with nurses from other towns as necessary, and acting in an advisory capacity. Paul has been a nurse for over 40 years and brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the job. In this age of COVID-19, he serves an essential role in preserving the health of our citizens. We are fortunate to have him with us. Welcome, Paul!

COVID-19 and EEE Updates

At the time of this writing (Sept. 9) we still have no confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Wendell. The Board of Health is greatly appreciative of the concern for our health and that of others which is consistently shown by the residents of Wendell. This virus is likely to be with us for

some time, so please- wash your hands, wear masks, practice social distancing, and especially, avoid crowds. We also advise getting a flu shot as soon as possible. Keep up the good work, Wendell. Our efforts are definitely paying off!

So far, Franklin County has also been free of cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE.) We are still considered to be at moderate risk for EEE, so please continue to protect yourselves by avoiding being outdoors from dusk to dawn, covering your skin with clothing, and using mosquito repellent. This is a rare but dangerous mosquito-borne disease, so please take care. More information can be found at www.mass.gov/EEE.

**Wendell Selectboard
Town Offices
Wendell, MA 01379**

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**RESIDENT
WENDELL, MA 01379**

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