

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT

www.leverett.ma.us

APRIL 2015

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SATURDAY, 2 MAY 2015, 9:00 AM, LEVERETT SCHOOL

Positions up for election:

Assessors: Jim Hicks, Y (3-year);
Assistant Moderator: Fay Zipkowitz, Y (1-year);
Board of Health: John Hillman, Y (3-year); Claudia Philips, Y (3-year);
Constable: Brian Emond, Y (3-year);
Finance Committee: Tom Powers, Y (3-year); Greg Woodard, Y (3-year); Tom Hankinson, Y (2-year);
Library Trustees: Rachel Flint, Y (3-year); Lisa Sullivan-Werner, Y (3-year);
Planning Board: Jean Bergstrom, U (5-year); Steve Freedman, U (5-year);
School Committee: Kip Fonsh, Y (3-year); Sara Dolven, Y (3-year); Vacancy (2-year);
Select Board: Julie Shively, Y (3-year); Vacancy (2-year);
Tree Warden: Will Stratford, Y (1-year).

Notes From Around Town

- New Elder Outreach Worker – Town of Leverett
The Leverett Council on Aging, through a grant funded by the Exec Office of Elder Affairs, has hired an Elder Outreach Worker. My name is Jennifer Glover and I have lived in Leverett for 14 years. I have worked for Franklin County Home Care for eight years as a case manager and housing coordinator so am familiar with accessing area resources and providing home care services to elders. I look forward to enhancing and supporting the lives of elders in my community. I can be reached at 548-1022 ext 5 or elderoutreach@leverett.ma.us
- **Leverett Community Chorus Spring Concert**
May 17, 2015, 4:00 pm at the Leverett Elementary School
- **Leverett Family Museum will open for the season** on April 11th. Hours are from 10:00 until 2:00 on Saturdays. The museum is also open by appointment-call 548-9452.
- **Taxes are due in the Collector's Office May 1.** Payments may be made online by going to the Town website: leverett.ma.us

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

1 June 2015

1 October 2015

Send news items and snap peas to Lisa Stratford, Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054; leave them in the *Newsletter* box at Town Hall or email to townclerk@leverett.ma.us.

Electricity Update

from the Energy Committee

We are writing to help clarify some confusion you may be experiencing from phone calls or mailings about your electricity usage. Typically, you will be offered an option that promises to save you money on your electric bill and/or to provide you with electricity from "greener" sources—both options to be had by switching to a 3rd party energy supplier. We recommend that you gather all the information that interests you, but refrain from signing a contract with any provider at this time.

Some providers are offering genuinely good options but we think there are too many offers coming too fast right now; in addition there are questions of reliability, accountability, and transparency. We think all options will benefit from a close and disinterested assessment and we intend to continue providing you with exactly that service. Relevant information was included in the last Newsletter; more will be forthcoming, specifically at the May 2 Town Meeting. If you want to share your experience or frustration with us here are three ways to do so: Portia 548-9737; email pweiskel@post.harvard.edu or longhillgang@gmail.com

Select Board

A couple weeks ago, the Town Clerk received a citizen's petition for a warrant article at upcoming town meeting seeking a 2½% override. This petition is Article 32 on the town meeting warrant. The petition voices concern about the 3½% reduction in departmental budgets requested by the select board for FY 15-16 to accumulate funds to set aside \$200,000 for a possible tax abatement that will need to be paid should the MA Appellate Tax Board not decide in the town's favor regarding two large tax abatements that have been requested from the Assessors.

According to Massachusetts law only the Select Board can approve an override vote so the petition to Town Meeting cannot force an override vote. The Select Board appreciates the concern of the petitioners and their concern for the town departments' financial needs, which is a concern that we share. However, this cut in budgets is not permanent; it is for one year so that, should Leverett lose the appeal, we have the funds to pay the abatement which, by law, would have to be paid immediately. Instead of having a budget crisis midyear in FY 16 should we lose the appeal, the Select Board and Finance Committee agreed that it is was prudent to ask town departments to reduce

spending for this one year. This reduction request is not permanent; it is for this year. Should we lose the appeal the reduction in tax revenue from these two properties can be spread across the rest of the taxpayers which would add approximately \$80 per \$100,000 of assessed value of your property. At that point, the Finance Committee and Select Board may decide to ask all departments for a permanent reduction so as not to increase the tax burden on the residents or to go for an override but this is not being anticipated at this time.

Every year we hold budget hearings for each department from January to March and a hearing for the entire budget. We also decide in the fall what the budget message for the upcoming year will be. Very few folks show up at these meetings and hearings, which is when all these budget decisions are being made. We encourage all residents concerned about budgetary issues to come to these hearings to observe and be a part of these decisions.

Julie Shively, for the Select Board

To Residents: Transfer Station Surveys

Thank you so much to the 31% of households who returned a survey regarding the transfer station and additionally to those that included thoughts and ideas in a letter or a note. We agree that the Transfer Station adds much value to our town for recycling and community. In the past month, we have been able to hire a new Coordinator to manage the Station and a new Supervisor to help keep the Station open, so it looks like we will not have to look closely at alternatives at this point. We still may in the future if we are faced with another time of prolonged under-staffing.

We have asked our new Coordinator to use the results of the survey and comments received combined with what she learns about the functioning of the Station to see if there are ways that the operations could be made smoother and that the jobs at the Transfer Station could be made more attractive. You may see some of these changes over the next few years.

We applaud the efforts of those who currently work at the Station and who have worked there in the past and who have made it as successful as it is.

Sincerely, Leverett Select Board

Fire Department: The first 73 Days

The Leverett Fire Department has seen a lot of activities in the first 73 days of being a new Chief of the Department. The change-over of Chiefs went very well. The department continues to train on Thursday nights under the direction of Deputy Chief Olson. The department has responded to 48 emergencies since January 1. Incidents include: sprinkler activation at the school, a barn fire on Long Plain Rd., mutual aid to Montague Center for a house fire, a car fire by the post office and providing first aid during

medical emergencies while waiting for the arrival of Amherst Fire/Ambulance. The department continues its automatic aid with Shutesbury for chimney fires, structure fires and car fires. The department is updating a computer and adding a reporting program to help with tracking of equipment and reporting on department activities as a whole. As Chief I have been very pleased with and proud of the department and its members for the great job they do. The time commitment they all give to the department is not unseen.

John S. Ingram, Fire Chief

Library News

Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 3-8pm, Sat. 10am-3pm and Sun. 12-5pm (closed Sundays Memorial Day to Labor Day).
Special Closings: The library will be closed Saturday May 2 for Town Meeting and Saturday May 23 for Memorial weekend.

Friday April 24, 9:30-11am **Computer workshop: getting connected; basic security for wireless networks; best practices for avoiding scams; and questions answered. Led by Audra Goscenski. Please register in person or by phone. MORE WORKSHOPS COMING SOON!**

Lego Club will meet from 3:15 to 4:30 on Thursday April 30 and Thursday May 28 for new building challenges, led by Phyllis Herda.

Qigong with Dvora Eisenstein on Tuesdays 5:15-6:15, free.

Free Movie Nights one Friday each month. Upcoming dates and titles:

Friday May 15 at 7:30 pm *The Judge* starring Robert Downey Jr and Robert Duvall Mostly filmed in Shelburne Falls! 2014, R.

Friday June 19 at 7:30 *Temple Grandin* starring Claire Danes 2010, PG

S.T.E.A.M. programs for kids wraps up on **Thurs. May 7, 3:15-4:15 with Amazing Animals. Open to children ages 3-6 and their caregivers.** We will meet several small animals and learn about their adaptations. We will have another program in the fall.

Join us for a **Seed Saving Workshop** on Sunday May 3 from 1-4pm with Gail Mason and Nina Renshaw, sponsored by the Leverett Cultural Council.

Hola! Spanish Conversation Group continues to meet Tuesdays from 4:00-5:00pm

Thank you to Macaylla Silver, Chris Nelson, Susan Mulholland, Leslie Fiset, Arlyn Diamond and all the artists and patrons who participated in and/or assisted with this year's *Read it Leverett!* program. *The Art Forger* inspired the creation of over 40 "forgeries" by local artists which were on display through the month of March. Many of these works were donated for a silent auction to benefit the library. Thanks to all our artists!

Ashley Blais, Library Director

Annual Town Meeting

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 9:00 AM

Leverett Elementary School

Warrant and Budget enclosed!

(Please bring copies with you to Town Meeting)

APPLICATION FOR A 2015 DOG LICENSE

Renewal _____ or New _____ license

Name of owner _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name of dog _____ Age _____

Breed _____ Color _____

Male (\$10.00)_____ Neutered Male (\$5.00)_____ Female (\$10.00)_____ Spayed female* (\$5.00)_____

Send check payable to Town of Leverett, **proof of rabies immunization, proof of rabies immunization, proof of rabies immunization**, *proof of spaying, and a **business-size self-addressed stamped envelope** to Town Clerk, Box 300, Leverett 01054. Documents will be returned with license.

TOWN OF LEVERETT
April 2015 NEWSLETTER
LEVERETT, MA 01054

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LEVERETT RESIDENT

LEVERETT, MA 01054