

***TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN,
MASSACHUSETTS***



***ANNUAL REPORT
-2024-***

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN MASSACHUSETTS



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Department reports are for the calendar year 2024 unless otherwise noted

Financial report covers the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Prepared by Linda Sciarappa and Brianna Christie

Cover Photo: Courtesy of Brianna Christie

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www.williamstownma.gov

Land Acknowledgement:

We respectfully acknowledge that Williamstown stands on the ancestral homelands of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans, who are the indigenous peoples of this region. Following tremendous hardship after being forced from their valued homelands, they continued as a sovereign Tribal Nation, known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, which today resides in Wisconsin. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

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COMMUNITY FACTS



Prior to the 1750s the land now known as Williamstown was the home of the Mohicans, who are the indigenous peoples of this region. The current government of Williamstown began to take shape in the 1750s with the arrival of white settlers who founded a settlement known then as West Hoosac. In 1765 the town was incorporated as Williamstown according to the will of Col. Ephraim Williams, who was killed at the Battle of Lake George in 1755. He bequeathed a significant sum to the town on the condition that it be named after him and started a free school. The school opened in October of 1791 with 15 students. The free school became Williams College in 1793 under a charter from the Commonwealth, becoming the only second college, following Harvard, to be founded in Massachusetts.

Elevation: 740 ft. above Sea Level

Area: 46.86 Square Miles

Population: 7806 which includes approximately 2,000 Williams College Student Body

Registered Voters: 4,840

Town Website: www.williamstownma.gov

SCHOOLS

Public

Williamstown Elementary School
Mt. Greylock Regional High School
Charles H. McCann Vocational School
(Grades 9-12 North Adams)
Berkshire Arts and Technologies Charter School
(Grades 6-12 Adams)

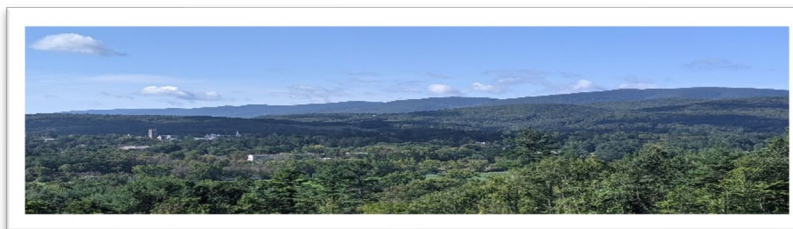
Private

Pine Cobble (preK-9)
Buxton (Secondary)
Williams College

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Williams College
Clark Art Institute
MountainOne Bank
Mount Greylock Regional School District

Williamstown Commons
Williamstown Medical Associates
Town of Williamstown
Williams Inn





CURRENT TOWN OFFICIALS

ELECTED OFFICIALS

SELECT BOARD

Jeff Johnson	2027	Matthew Neely	2025
Stephanie Boyd	2026	Jane Patton, Chair	2025
Randal Fippinger	2025		

MODERATOR

Elisabeth Goodman	2025
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LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Micah Manary, Chair	2025	Jared Della Rocca	2025
Robin Lenz	2025	Katy Evans	2026
Anna Halpin-Healy	2027	Bridget Spann	2025
Ben Lee-Cohen	2025		

HOUSING AUTHORITY

Judith Bombardier	2025	Steve Dew	2026
Thomas Webb	2029	Paula McKenna	2026
Andrea Bryant	2028		

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE VOCATIONAL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Laila G. Boucher	2027	David Westall	2025
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MT. GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Julia Bowen	2028	Christina Conry	2026
Jose Constantine	2028	Curtis Elfenbein	2026
Carrie Greene	2026	Ursula Maloy	2028
Steven Miller	2026		

PLANNING BOARD

Peter Beck, Chair	2025	Smantha Page	2029
Cory Campbell	2028	Roger Lawrence	2026
Ken Kuttner	2027	Paul Harsch, Alt.	2026

APPOINTED BY THE MODERATOR

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Suzanne Stinson	2025	Paula Consolini	2025
Melissa Cragg	2026	Donna Quirk	2027
Molly Magavern	2025	Rachel Tarses	2026
Margo Neely	2025	Fred Puddester, Chair	2026
Michael Sussman	2027		

APPOINTED BY THE SELECT BOARD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Cheryl Shanks	2025	Daniel Gura, Chair	2026
Ruth Harrison	2026	Jane Patton	2026
Kayla Servin	2025	Robin Malloy	2025
Thomas Sheldon	2026		

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Brian Cole	2027	Averill Cook	2025
Bill Galusha	2027	Sarah Gardner, Chair	2027
Darryl Lipinski	2026		

CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Vacancy (3)

COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND RACIAL EQUITY

Andrew Art	2026	Randal Fippinger	2025
Vacancy	2025	Vacancy	2025
Shana Dixon, Chair	2025	Vacancy	2026
Noah Smalls	2026		

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Barbara Halligan (Town Resident)	Philip McKnight (ConCom)
Nate Budington (Historical Commission)	Benjamin Greenfield (Planning Board)
Molly Magavern (Finance Committee)	Randal Fippinger (Parks Commissioner)
Polly Macpherson (Town Resident)	Steve Dew (Housing Authority)
Alison Bost (Town Manager Designee)	

CONSTABLES

Andrew Bernardy	2026	Vacancy	2026
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CULTURAL COUNCIL OF NORTHERN BERKSHIRE

Gerrit Blauvelt	2027	Michael Eagle	2025
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FENCE VIEWERS

Vacancy	2025	Vacancy	2025
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HOOSAC WATER QUALITY DISTRICT

Russell Howard	2025	Hugh Daley	2025
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MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP

Hank Art 2025

MOBILE HOME RENT CONTROL BOARD

Cheryl Shanks	2027	David Levine	2026
Susan Puddester	2025	Martin Mitsoff	2027

MT. GREYLOCK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Vacancy, State Appointed	Scott Lewis
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MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Vacancy	2025	Vacancy	2026
Kris Kirby	2026	Vacancy	2025
Janos Levin	2025		

BOARD OF REGISTRARS

Nicole E. Beverly	Town Clerk	Kurt Gabel (R)	2027
Robert A. Jones (R)	2028	Parvin Hajizadeh (D)	2026

SIGN COMMISSION

Vacancy	2029	Vacancy	2025
Vacancy	2028	Anne Singleton	2026
Vacancy	2025		

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Nancy Nylen 2025

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Brian O'Grady	Appointed by the Select Board Chair
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ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Keith Davis, Chair	2027	Andrew Hoar, Alt.	2027
Amy Jeschawitz	2025	David Levine	2026
Eunice Marigliano	2027	Vacancy, Alt.	2027
Vince Pesce	2027	Vacancy, Alt.	2027



APPOINTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER AND INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS

Ruth Russell, Inspector of Animals
Officer David Jennings, Animal Control Officer

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Jane Miller
David Westall

Chris Lamarre, Chair

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Cory Campbell, Appointed by Planning Board	2025
Roger Bolton, Alternate	2025

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Sarah Rowe	2027	Mark Brandriss	2026
Tim Carr	2027	Philip McKnight, Chair	2026
Lauren Stevens	2026	Barbara Robertson	2025
Robert Baker-White	2027		

COUNCIL ON AGING

Brian T. O'Grady, Director		Rose Oliver	2026
Geoffrey King	2025	Mary Jo Green	2027
Martin Greenstein	2026	Karen Kelly	2025
Paula McKenna	2027	Laurie Bank	2026
Susan Puddester	2026	Vacancy	2027

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Michael Ziemba, Police Chief

FORESTRY/ PEST CONTROL SUPERINTENDENT/TREE WARDEN

Robert E. McCarthy, Jr.

HEALTH INSPECTOR

Ruth Russell

BOARD OF HEALTH

Devan Bartels	2027	Erwin Stuebner, MD, Chair	2026
James Parkinson, MD	2027	Ronald Stant	2025
Sandra Goodbody	2026		

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Nate Budington, Chair	2026	Andrus Burr	2027
Gabriel Perez	2026	Vacancy	2027
Dustin Griffin	2025		

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Michael Ziemba, Chief

POLICE OFFICERS

Craig Eichhammer
Tania Hernandez
Brad Sacco
Shuan William, Sgt.
David Jennings
Ryan Dubie

John J. McConnell, Jr.
Scott Skorupski
Anthony Duprat, Sgt.
Kalvin Dziedziak, Sgt.
Haley Sigsbury

POLICE DISPATCHERS

Carter King
Laura Tuper

Christy Lemoine
Barbara Brucato

PART TIME DISPATCHERS

Melissa Rustin
Morgan Goodell

Keiyara Thoresen
Carson Boyce

ACCREDITATION MANAGER

Charles Chandler



SELECT BOARD

Jane Patton, Chair

June 2024

- Williamstown approved continuing the Inter-Municipal Agreement with New Ashford for Assessor Service.

July 2024

- The Select Board voted to allocate the remaining \$66,000 of ARPA funds to MGRHS for Bias Protocol Partnership/DOJ School Spirit Program. The proposal is for a third-party review of the school district's handling of bias-based incidents, bullying and Title IX cases.

August 2024

- Andy Hogeland announced he was leaving the SB two years into his fourth term on the Board. During his twenty years of service to town on various boards and committees, Hogeland's absence will be sorely missed.
- The Select Board voted to use the State's version of the Select Board Handbook after modifying to ensure compliance with gender neutral and ADA requirements. The revised handbook is available on the town website.

September 2024:

- The annual tax classification hearing detailed the following:
 - The amount to be raised through taxation for FY25 levy is \$20,6707,332, an increase of \$271,270 or 1.3% over the prior year levy of \$20,336,062.
 - Taxable real and personal property is \$1,493,284,945, an increase of \$150,984,433 or 11.2% from 2024. Increases resulted from land and building cost table adjustments required to bring assessments into compliance with DOR Assessment-to-Sale ratio standards. New growth accounted for 12% or \$17,610,153 of overall value increase.
 - The calculated tax rate for FY25 is \$13.80 per \$1,000 of valuation, a decrease of \$1.35 from the prior year rate, and \$3.12 over the past three years.
 - The excess levy capacity is \$3,343,953, increasing \$526,297 from the prior fiscal year amount of \$2,817,793.
 - New Growth of \$17,610,153 (created through new home construction, additions or the creation of condos and by land subdivisions. FY25 new growth will generate \$266,793 in new tax dollars.
 - Median Single-Family Home Value = \$439,100. Overall, FY@% single-family home values increased \$99.4mm with \$10.9mm coming from new growth.
 - Median Commercial/Industrial values = \$499,900. These properties increased 12% or \$14mm to \$118.6mm.
 - As in years past, the SB adopted a residential factor of 1.00, thereby affirming a single tax rate of \$13.80 per \$1,000 of valuation for all classes of property for FY25.
 - The SB thanks Tax Assessor Chris Lamarre for his outstanding preparation and explanation of the FY 25 taxes for Williamstown.
- The Select Board voted to fill the vacancy left by Andy Hogeland by appointing someone to complete Hogeland's second year of his term until the town election. A one-year SB seat will be on the ballot in May 2025.
- Town Manager Bob Menicocci updated the SB about the start of construction of the new home of the Williams College Museum of Art, located behind town hall. Details regarding possible impacts on traffic and parking were provided to the board. Construction is expected to begin next month.

October 2024

- Three candidates came forward to fill the seat vacated by Andy Hogeland through the May 2025 election. The candidates were Hugh Daley, Matt Neely and Alexander Davis. Matt Neely was appointed to the board by a vote of 3-1.
- The Select Board voted to approve a letter of support for NEMBA grant application for the Berlin Mountain bike trails.
- Finalization of the park bench and memorialization policy was approved by the select board by a vote of 4-1.

November 2024

- Andrew Groff provided an update on the comprehensive plan, highlighting its overarching goals the process used to develop the plan. The plan includes four key goals: land use policy audit; housing policy audit; municipal facilities assessment; and diverse housing strategies. The town received a \$100,000 grant from the Commonwealth for the housing policy audit.

December 2024

- Town Manager Bob Menicocci introduced the Intermunicipal Agreement for the North County Appointment Abatement Collaborative and how this relates to opioid settlement funds that have come into the county. The board voted to approve the IMA collaborative by unanimous vote.

January 2025

- Local resident and business owner Justin Adkins asked the select board to consider possible changes to the timing and location of town meetings in order to be as accessible as possible to all residents wishing to attend. The select board agreed that while this is something that needs to be addressed, little could be done at this point to make changes to the 2025 town meeting.

February 2025

- The Select Board voted to implement the Senior Means Tested Tax Exemption overwhelmingly passed by residents at the 2024 Town Meeting.

As we move forward, I want to continue my ongoing requests for residents to find ways to become more involved in town government and the issues they care about. The Williamstown Select Board is committed to improving communication with our residents.

With gratitude and respect,
Jane Patton
Chair, Williamstown Select Board.

TOWN MANAGER

Robert Menicocci, Town Manager

Key priorities this fiscal year include work on improving operational efficiencies, strengthening the Town's financial position through deepening our understanding of our borrowing capacity, investing in recreational opportunities, and building community through better communications.

Our Information Technology infrastructure has been upgraded this year to improve our cyber resiliency as well as create the capacity to add additional functionality to our financial and capital planning abilities. By automating several day-to-day functions, we will create additional staff capacity to improve our systems and methods for updating our strategic priorities and increase our ability to maintain our town roads and infrastructure on a timelier basis.

In order to improve our capital planning process, the Finance Committee created an ad hoc study group to evaluate existing debt issued or to be issued by entities supported by the Town of Williamstown's taxpayers and enterprise fund users. The discussions included the Town of Williamstown, the Williamstown Fire District, Mount Greylock Regional School District (MGRSD), and the Hoosac Water Quality District (HWQD) and sought create comprehensive view of all existing town debt to help inform future borrowing options. Over the past year, the town has begun the process of improving the cataloging of its infrastructure and rating of its building conditions in order to create a comprehensive five and ten year plus capital plan.

This year we also reinvigorated earlier efforts to develop a recreational plan for the community. Prior to the pandemic a committee was formed to discuss recreational opportunities and make recommendations for planning purposes. The recommendations were sidelined by the pandemic but this year community members gathered to reengage this process and work has begun of meeting some of the recommendations. Town meeting approved the purchase of an outdoor fitness pad to be installed along the multi-use path and installation began in the fall with completion expected this spring. Town meeting also approved addition resources to address recreational needs, and we are in the process of contracting for the renovation design of Broad Brook Park with completion of the design recommendations slated for early summer.

A fourth area of focus this year is building community through better communications. Effective means of town communication is not only necessary for the health and safety of the community but also for its sense of belonging and well-being. The Williamstown CARES (Community Assessment Research) Project was initiated in 2020, and its purpose was to develop a thorough understanding of perceptions of community safety and wellbeing. The report recommended a focus on communication through working with government-community communications specialists to develop a comprehensive and dynamic communication network.

To address improving our communication capabilities the town has begun the process of redesigning its website with a goal of a summer 2025 completion. To inform this effort, the town applied for and was awarded a state Community Compact grant for assisting the website redevelopment procurement process, auditing for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and developing a communications plan by conducting interviews and focus group with the Williamstown community.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS

ACCOUNTANT

David A. Fierro Jr., Finance Director

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN FY24 GENERAL FUND EXPENSE BUDGET REPORT 6/30/2024

			2024 BUDGET	2024 ACTUAL
GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENSE				
EXECUTIVE			\$383,550.00	\$355,189.29
	12201	Select Board	\$17,700.00	\$12,673.70
	12301	Town Manager	\$311,025.00	\$296,346.68
	15010	Town Counsel	\$50,000.00	\$41,034.13
	29101	Emergency Management	\$4,825.00	\$5,134.78
ADMIN & FINANCE			\$3,687,621.01	\$3,452,459.69
	12401	Insurance	\$198,500.00	\$191,476.16
	13101	Finance Committee	\$200.00	\$190.00
	13501	Town Accountant	\$292,387.58	\$273,918.76
	14101	Assessors	\$134,027.15	\$133,590.01
	14501	Treasurer-Collector	\$171,574.06	\$168,978.05
	15501	Information Technology	\$237,585.00	\$267,782.03
	16101	Town Clerk	\$102,218.47	\$113,305.99
	16201	Registrars of Votes	\$23,660.72	\$23,498.40
	91101	Employee Benefits	\$2,527,468.03	\$2,279,720.29
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			\$459,992.17	\$419,822.30
	17101	Conservation Commission	\$29,681.00	\$33,622.39
	17201	Agricultural Commission	\$1,000.00	\$213.19
	17501	Planning Board	\$9,936.07	\$8,783.81
	17601	Zoning Board	\$4,250.00	\$2,532.80
	17701	Historical Commission	\$1,000.00	\$-
	24101	Building Department	\$312,065.70	\$304,567.32
	24401	Sealer of Weights	\$4,665.30	\$726.08
	51901	Health Department	\$97,394.10	\$69,376.71
PUBLIC SAFETY			\$1,784,072.19	\$1,784,072.19
	21001	Police	\$1,531,590.26	\$1,571,650.49
	21201	Dispatch	\$252,481.93	\$212,421.70
PUBLIC WORKS			\$2,373,087.07	\$2,160,841.74
	19201	Facilities	\$213,459.54	\$177,675.48
	41101	DPW Director	\$174,337.14	\$152,853.69
	42101	Highway	\$1,255,676.15	\$1,120,012.26
	42301	Snow & Ice	\$250,000.00	\$290,678.53
	42401	Street Lights	\$63,000.00	\$64,029.88
	49101	Parks & Cemetery	\$317,746.17	\$263,229.42
	49201	Burbank Chapel	\$4,650.00	\$4,375.44

	49301	Forestry	\$50,000.00	\$60,413.40
	63101	Recreation	\$44,218.07	\$27,573.64
HUMAN SERVICES			\$1,008,747.57	\$970,025.23
	52301	Mental Health Services	\$30,500.00	\$2,956.00
	54101	Council on Aging	\$266,319.15	\$258,342.21
	54301	Veterans Services	\$98,008.10	\$73,892.31
	69201	Veterans Graves	\$3,500.00	\$2,718.92
	61101	Library	\$610,420.31	\$632,115.79
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			\$9,697,070.01	\$9,142,410.44
DEBT SERVICE				
	71101	Debt Service	\$547,187.50	\$547,187.50
FINANCE COMMITTEE RESERVE				
	13223	Reserve Fund	\$75,000.00	\$34,321.47
TRANSFER STATION TRANSFER FROM GENERAL FUND				
	99923	Transfer Station	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT			\$10,339,257.51	\$9,743,919.41
EDUCATION				
	30223	McCann	\$260,059.68	\$258,182.29
	30123	MGRSD	\$13,258,887.00	\$13,258,887.00
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT & EDUCATION			\$23,858,204.19	\$23,260,988.70
OFF BUDGET ITEMS				
		Cherry Sheet Assessments	\$47,864.00	\$47,864.00
		Overlay (Allowance for Abatements)	\$100,000.00	\$100,938.18
		COLA		
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$24,006,068.19	\$23,409,790.88
WARRANT ARTICLES FUNDED FROM FREE CASH				
CAPITAL PLAN				
		Capital Items	\$497,400.00	Ongoing
			\$620,600.00	Ongoing
NON PROFITS				
		Williamstown Youth Center	\$77,000.00	\$77,000.00
		Chamber of Commerce	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
		Sand Springs Rec Center	\$-	\$-
		Williamstown Community Preschool	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
OPEB				
		OPEB Trust Fund	\$44,550.00	\$44,550.00
COMPENSATED BALANCES RESERVE				

Reserve Fund	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
STABILIZATION		
Stabilization	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
USE OF FREE CASH	\$1,639,550.00	\$-

**WILLIAMSTOWN
COMBINING BALANCE SHEET – ENTERPRISE FUNDS
6/30/2024 (UNAUDITED)**

	Sewer	Water	Transfer Station	
	Enterprise Fund	Enterprise Fund	Enterprise Fund	Totals
<u>ASSETS</u>				
Cash and cash equivalents				0.00
Investments				0.00
Receivables:				
User Fees	184,472.19	194,880.55	6,812.45	386,165.19
Due to/from other funds	2,991,384.27	5,395,085.03	435,021.42	8,821,490.72
Prepays				0.00
Inventory				0.00
Fixed assets, net of accumulated depreciation	1,004,313.49	4,393,504.37		5,397,817.86
Amounts to be provided - payment of bonds				0.00
Amounts to be provided - vacation and sick leave				0.00
Total Assets	<u>4,180,169.95</u>	<u>9,983,469.95</u>	<u>441,833.87</u>	<u>14,605,473.77</u>

LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY

Liabilities:				
Accounts payable	300.00	1,955.50		2,255.50
Warrants payable	6,628.39	17,930.54	8,899.15	33,458.08
Due to/from other funds	1,341,686.35	682,533.40	234,058.16	2,258,277.91
Notes payable				0.00
Bonds payable				0.00
Vacation and sick leave liability				0.00
Total Liabilities	<u>1,348,614.74</u>	<u>702,419.44</u>	<u>242,957.31</u>	<u>2,293,991.49</u>
Fund Equity:				
Reserved for encumbrances	829,072.40	2,927,437.02	7,965.05	3,764,474.47
Unreserved retained earnings	2,002,482.81	6,353,613.49	190,911.51	8,547,007.81
Investment in capital assets				0.00
Total Fund Equity	<u>2,831,555.21</u>	<u>9,281,050.51</u>	<u>198,876.56</u>	<u>12,311,482.28</u>

Total Liabilities and Fund Equity	4,180,169.95	9,983,469.95	441,833.87	14,605,473.77
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PROOF	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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**TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN
SPECIAL REVENUE & TRUST FUND BALANCES
6/30/2024 (UNAUDITED)**

Fund Number	Fund Name	Fund Balance 6/30/2024	Receipts thru 9/30/2024
29	Selectmen - Spruces HMG	34,224.96	
29	Selectmen - Cable Tech Fund	244.71	
29	Comm St Tree Restoration	1,500.00	
29	Dire Grant	1,170.00	
29	Solarize MA Program	3,105.67	
29	ConCom - Wetlands Fees	28,038.44	
29	Con Com - Stone Hill Stewardship Grant	2,805.00	
29	Mass Hsing Partner Zoning Grant	650.68	
29	Econ Develop - Bike Trail Gift	2,871.64	
29	Pub Prop - Green Community Grant	46,075.00	
29	Police - Support Fund	4,140.19	
29	Police - Drug Task Force	(25,047.37)	7,605.46
29	Police - Forfeiture Funds	15,420.46	
29	Police - Defibrillator Gift	714.54	
29	Police - K9 Gifts	6,318.24	
29	Police - E911 Training Grant	3,864.05	
29	Police - E911 Communications Grant	(35,281.56)	6,638.98
29	Police-EMD Grant	(296.58)	
29	Police - COPS MORE Grant	301.89	
29	Police - Community Policing Grant	1,000.00	
29	Police Systems Improvement Grant	(2,920.52)	0.00
29	EMPG PD Grant	309.46	
29	EOWLD Safety Grant	(11,400.00)	
29	Cemetery Bldg. Borrowing	1,778.55	
29	Parks - Litchfield Beautification Gift	1,789.83	
29	Cem - Burbank Chapel Gift	100.00	
29	COA - Activity Fund	5,058.93	
29	COA - MCOA Direct	(3,103.63)	3,103.63
29	COA - Elder Services Meal Grant	1,635.73	
29	COA - Formula Grant	42,060.23	
29	Library Revolving Fund	5,516.70	
29	Lib - Gifts for Books	6,248.26	
29	Lib - Damaged Prop	3,036.98	

29	Lib - Operations Gift	32,521.92	
29	Lib - LIG/MEG Grant	6,060.71	
29	Recreation - Revolving Acct	2,776.86	
29	Benefits - BHG Health Coordinator	1,837.61	
29	COVID-19 ARPA	1,790,959.59	
29	COVID-19 ARPA Broadband	31,565.00	
29	Bee Friendly Williamstown	1,394.09	
29	RRA - Capital Projects	2,451.69	
29	Comm Compact IT Grant	25,000.00	
29	ConCom - Consultant Fee	2,850.00	
29	Comprehensive Plan Gifts	202.42	
29	RRA TNC Ride Assessment	164.60	
29	Housing Needs Assessment	6,339.72	
29	Inspection Fees Revolving	267,381.44	
29	Hazard Mitigation Grant	(1,078.47)	2,700.00
29	MVP Municipal Vulnerability	(25,000.00)	25,000.00
29	Opioid Settlement	74,680.63	
29	COA - Matter of Balance	2,420.00	
29	Lib - Renovation Donations	15,334.07	
29	Lib - McFarland Est Gift	303,575.28	
13	Chapter 90 South Street	23,737.50	
27	Community Preservation	401,789.62	
Total Special Revenue Fund Balance		3,108,894.76	45,048.07

Trust Fund Balances

81-61172	CD - WSB - Carpenter Fund	\$10,613.74
81-49197	Perpetual Care Bequest	\$459,389.35
81-14573	Scholarship	\$38,742.66
81-32571	Helen Renzi	\$10,768.30
81-14581	Margaret Lindley	\$2,771.33
81-14581	JE Bascom	\$12,332.17
81-14581	CD Foster	\$2,076.69
82-14582	South Lawn Cemetery	\$5,250.46
82-14582	Torrey Woods	\$3,359.46
82-49175	Alma Morey	\$7,128.35
82-49372	Bullock Forest - CD - Adams CB	\$68,182.15
82-49174	Westlawn Bentley	\$257,884.64
82-61177	Botsford - HLH	\$46,181.80
82-61176	CD Botsford Mt Washington	\$76,571.91
82-49270	Burbank	\$888,241.17
82-49178	Sale of Lots	\$36,787.17
82-14582	Perpetual Care Income	\$13,805.03
82-61173	Library Annual Fund WSB	\$19,274.35

82-12282	Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$468,660.73	
82-14582	OPEB Liability Trust	\$884,856.62	
82-91182	Comp Balances Reserve	\$235,984.97	
83-14583	Stabilization	\$1,170,828.50	
84-14584	Conservation Fund	\$4,190.14	
Total Trust Fund Balance		4,723,881.69	0.00

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Sarah Gardner, Chair

Email: agcom@williamstownma.gov

Purpose: The Agricultural Commission supports commercial agriculture and other farming activities in Williamstown, MA. The Commission's duties include but are not limited to:

- Serving as facilitators for farmers and farm enterprises;
- Encouraging the pursuit of agriculture in Williamstown;
- Welcoming and supporting new farmers in the community;
- Promoting agricultural-based economic opportunities and grants for farms;
- Mediating, advocating, educating, and negotiating farming issues;
- Supporting the preservation of agricultural lands; and
- Advising town boards on agricultural issues and policies.

2024 Commissioners: Sarah Gardner (Chair), Brian Cole, Averill Cook, Darryl Lipinski, William Galusha, Christopher Sabot (Alternate).

Email address: agcom@williamstownma.gov

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Organized the Agricultural Commission's First Open Farm Day: Oct. 6, 2025
8 farms were open to visitors between 10am to 1pm. Bigfoot Farm, Caretaker Farm, Chenail Farm Stand, Cloverhill Farm, Cricket Creek Farm, East Mountain Farm, Sweet Brook Farm, Wendling Farm.
- Annual Farmer Potluck Dinner: Nov. 15, Sheep Hill. The Agricultural Commission hosted its Annual Farmer Dinner for all farmers and farm workers; 45 people attended.
- Supported the initiative to include the Agricultural Commission in the public notice regarding lands coming out of Chapter 61A and the town's right of first refusal.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Christopher Lamarre, MAA, Chair

The Assessors are responsible for annually valuing real and personal property at its full and fair cash value as of the date of assessment of January 1. The "Mass Appraisal Approach" to value is the methodology assessors across the Commonwealth use when determining values for ad valorem tax purposes. The DOR's Bureau of Local Assessment defines Mass Appraisal as, "the use of standardized procedures for collecting data and appraising property to ensure that all properties within a municipality are valued uniformly and equitably". "It is the process of valuing a group of properties as of a given date, using common data, employing standardized methods and conducting statistical tests to ensure uniformity and equity in the valuations".

In FY 2024 there were 3,021 taxable parcels and accounts. 2,602 were classified as residential, 246 as commercial and/or mixed-use, 14 industrial parcels and 159 taxable personal property accounts having a

combined taxable value of \$1,342,314,312. This represents an 11.3% increase or \$135,994,215 from the prior year value of \$1,206,320,097. At the Annual Town Meeting voters approved a FY 2024 levy of \$20,336,062. As a share percentage of value, the residential sector paid 90.10% or \$18,321,897 of the tax levy. Commercial & Industrial classes paid a combined 7.79% or \$1,584,932 and personal property accounted for 2.11% or \$429,233. Separate from taxable parcels there were 203 parcels classified as “tax exempt” having a combined value of \$553,276,700.

The tax rate for FY 2024 was \$15.15 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The rate is calculated by dividing the tax levy (\$20,336,062), or the amount of money to be raised to fund the budget, by the total value of taxable real and personal property (\$1,342,314,312). The tax rate decreased \$1.02 from the prior year amount of \$16.17. The median single-family home value was \$395,100, an increase of \$36,500 over the prior year’s value of \$358,600. The median single-family home tax bill, exclusive of the CPA and Fire District charges, increased \$187 in FY 2024 from \$5,799 to \$5,986.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the talented staff at Town Hall for their steadfast support and dedication to providing the best possible services to the citizens of Williamstown. They are a fine example of how collaboration and teamwork lead to positive outcomes. I also extend my gratitude to Board of Assessor members, Thomas Elder and David Westall. Their knowledge and expertise in support of delivering fair and equitable assessments to our property owners is invaluable.

Respectfully,
Christopher J. Lamarre, MAA
Chairperson

WILLIAMSTOWN BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Computations for Determining Fiscal Year 2024 Tax Rate

<i>Town Meeting Date</i>	<i>Total Appropriations Each Meeting</i>	<i>From Tax Levy</i>	<i>From Free Cash</i>	<i>From Other Available Funds</i>	<i>From Enterprise Funds</i>	<i>CPA Funds</i>
5/16/2023	\$30,061,546.63	\$23,643,904.18	\$1,639,550.00	\$15,000.00	\$3,036,797.90	\$434,400.00
Totals	30,061,546.63	23,643,904.18	1,639,550.00	15,000.00	3,036,797.90	434,400.00

Local Expenditures.....	\$	28,940,235.73
Cherry Sheet Offsets & Other Amounts.....		47,864.00
Overlay.....		100,938.18
Tax Rate Summary		
1. Gross Amount to be Raised.....		28,940,235.73
2. Estimated Receipts and Available Funds.....		8,604,173.90
3. Net Amount to be Raised by Taxation.....	\$	20,336,061.83
4. Real Property Valuation.....	\$1,313,981,180	
5. Personal Property Valuation.....	\$ 28,333,132	
6. Total Property Valuation.....	\$1,342,314,312	
7. Tax Rate 15.15		
8. Real Property Tax.....		19,906,814.88
9. Personal Property Tax.....		429,246.95
10. Total Taxes Levied on Property.....	\$	20,336,061.83

Recap Abatements and Exemptions				Recap Motor Vehicle Commitments			
Abatements					<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Excise</u>
Real Estate		\$	4,830.00	Commitments			
Personal Property		\$	2,952.00	7	2023	\$ 1,587,674	\$ 4,728.40
Exemptions				1-3	2024	\$ 30,215,182	\$ 669,890.15
Clause 41C		\$	17,000.00	4-6	2024	\$ 7,604,848	\$ 75,898.74
Clause 22, 22E			12,800.00		Totals	\$ 39,407,704	\$ 750,517.29
Clause 17D			1,050.00	Abatements	<u>Number</u>	<u>Excise</u>	
Clause 37			1,750.00		199	\$ 17,617.33	
Clause 42			0.00				
Clause 18			0.00				
Total.....		\$	40,382.00		Totals	\$17,617.33	

FOR A DETAILED REPORT SEE TREASURER'S SUMMARY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Ryan Contenta, MCO, Building Commissioner

Travis Fachini, Local Inspector

Joseph Beverly, Inspector of Wires

Michael Lahey, Inspector of Plumbing and Gas

Williamstown's Community Development Department is comprised of the Town's Planning, Land Use, Economic Development and Public Health and Safety Inspection professionals. Here on the third floor of the Municipal Building we bring together three basic functions of town government that oversee and facilitate development activities. Our local Building Officials, Board of Health and Health Inspector, and Planning, Land Use, and Economic Development. All three basic functions of the Department work together to forward the goals of protecting the town's built and natural environment to ensure a safe, healthy, and thriving Williamstown as well as work together to promote the growth our communities desire. The State Building Code, Board of Health Regulations, The Wetlands and Rivers Protection Acts, as well as the Town's Zoning Bylaw, Sign Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations are all enforced by the Department and the various volunteer community boards that the Department works with. We also work with many of our boards and commissions to further the goals of our recent Comprehensive Plan for growth, community amenities and infrastructure improvements. Below are reports from the Department's Building Officials, Health Department, and the Director, responsible for working with our land use and planning boards. Reports concerning the many different Boards and Commissions the Department works with are separate from this report.

BUILDING OFFICIALS

Ryan Contenta, MCO, Building Commissioner

Travis Fachini, Local Inspector

Joseph Beverly, Inspector of Wires

Michael Lahey, Inspector of Plumbing and Gas

Williamstown's Building Officials issued 460 Building Permits with an estimated construction dollar value of \$230.5 Million for the calendar year 2024. These permits range from small residential work in single family homes, to new homes, to commercial construction projects. The Department continued to work closely throughout the year with Williams College on various projects including construction of the multiuse recreational center (MRC) as well as The Williams College Museum of Arts building (WCMA). The ground was broken for the new construction of the Williamstown Fire Station located at 562 Main Street, Williamstown.



Figure 1: Progress Photo of New Fire Department Building

In addition to reviewing permit applications, plans and inspecting new and ongoing projects, the Building Officials are responsible for performing Annual Certificate of Inspections. In 2024 The building department inspected and issued 150 Annual Certificate of Inspections.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all establishments where alcoholic beverages are consumed to be inspected jointly by the Building and Fire Department. These inspections take place once a year. A valid Certificate of Inspection is required for an alcoholic beverage license. This requirement helps ensure the safety of patrons and staff in the event of an emergency.

The Building Department holds a key responsibility in the Town's Local Emergency Management. Emergency Management consists of natural disasters such as high winds, flooding, heavy snow and ice that result in damage to local residential and commercial buildings. Unfortunately, fires are also a reality with any structure, causing minor damage such as smoke and soot to major structural damage. When damage to a structure happens, the Building and Fire Department work together with the property owner to assess the damage, helping them to move forward with necessary repairs.

Your Williamstown Building Officials are dedicated, striving to ensure that the building environment of Williamstown is a safe place to live, work, and enjoy. We wish you all a happy and safe 2025!



Figure 2: Progress Photo of New Fire Department Building

Another part of the Building Department's responsibilities is in Emergency Management. Natural disasters such as high winds, flooding, and heavy snow and ice can result in damage to buildings. This year, high winds caused multiple houses and accessory structures to be damaged by fallen trees. Unfortunately, fires are also a reality with any structure. A fire can cause minor damage such as smoke and soot to major structural damage. When damage to a structure happens, the Building Department and Fire Department work together with the property owner to assess the damage and help them to move forward with the repairs.

Your Williamstown Building Officials are dedicated individuals who strive to ensure that the built environment of Williamstown is a safe place to live, work, and enjoy. We wish you all a happy and safe 2024.

Williamstown Community Development - Building Department Building and Trades Permits Issued 2024	
New Single-Family Houses	5
Solar Photovoltaic	43
Total Building Permits	460
Wire Permits	298
Plumbing Permits	188
Gas Permits	168

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ruth Russell, Health Inspector (since Nov. 2023)

I became Health Inspector in November of 2023, making 2024 my first full year in the position.

Current Board of Health members include Chair Erwin Stuebner, MD, Vice Chair Ronald Stant, LAT, James Parkinson, MD, Devan Bartels, MD, and Sandra Goodbody, MSW.

Health inspection functions in Williamstown are mandated by State laws and regulations, and by local Board of Health regulations. The inspection and monitoring requirements include, but are not limited to, food establishments, bathing beaches, septic systems, private wells, housing, swimming pools, tobacco product sales, refuse and recycling, manufactured housing communities, beaver control, recreational camps, and nuisances affecting the public's health.

The Board of Health uses (along with the rest of the Community Development Department) the OpenGov online permitting system. All permit applications are completed online.

Food Establishment inspections are performed on restaurants, cafeterias, dining facilities, bed and breakfasts, non-profit organizations serving an occasional meal for a fee or donation, and retail stores. Inspections look at food handling, facility infrastructure and equipment, and employee cleanliness and appearance. Efforts are made to work with the establishments to upgrade their facilities and improve practices, if needed, to ensure patrons are getting a safe meal. New and upgraded food establishments require that an application and plan are submitted for review and a schedule of all the new equipment with specification sheets are also required.

- Food Establishment Permits issued in 2024 – 113.

The Board of Health issues retail establishment licenses to individual vendors selling processed foods at a farmer's market. The Board of Health must assess the facilities available to the farmer's market and prohibit any food-handling operation that cannot be safely performed. In addition, the Board of Health may prohibit the sale of certain food items if the items cannot be handled and maintained in accordance with 105 CMR 590.000 requirements.

- Farmer's Market Prepared Food Permits issued in 2024 – 6.

The Board of Health requires all rental units to have undergone an inspection within 12 months prior to occupancy by the current tenant. The units are inspected for compliance with 105 CMR 410.000. Every unit that meets the standards is issued a Certificate of Compliance. Other conditions also apply, depending upon the length of the tenancy. In addition, complaint inspections, which are not part of the CoC database, were also performed, resulting in Orders to Correct being issued.

- Rental Dwelling Unit Certificates of Compliance issued in 2024 – 75.

Every house without access to community water must have a private water supply approved by the Board of Health or its Agent. The Board requires that the proposed well is sited by a Professional Engineer or Registered Sanitarian to meet all safety setbacks and is drilled by a Massachusetts registered well driller. Following drilling, water quality and quantity reports are submitted by the driller and/or property owner to the Board for review to determine that the supply is sufficient for the house and meets chemical and bacterial standards. If all information is acceptable, a Certificate of Compliance is issued. A building permit for a new home will not be issued for homes on a private water supply until the Board issues a Well Certificate of Compliance. The Board of Health also requires most of this information for ANY well

intended to supply water for ANY purpose. Many geo-thermal system wells have also been permitted recently.

- Well Permits issued in 2024 – 0.

Every home without access to community sewer must have an on-site sewage disposal system that meets the requirements of 310 CMR 15.000, usually referred to as Title 5. Existing on-site systems must be inspected at time of sale or other title transfer, and failing systems or components must be upgraded to meet Title 5 standards. A new system starts with a soil evaluation (perc test) performed by a licensed Soil Evaluator and witnessed by the Board of Health. This ensures that the on-site soils absorption system (leaching field) is correctly placed and sized for the home it services. A Professional Engineer or Registered Sanitarian will submit a design plan to the Board for review. Following review, if the plan meets the provisions of Title 5, and if a properly trained and licensed installer is contracted by the property owner, a permit to construct is issued. Inspections are conducted throughout the installation process by the Board and the designer to monitor compliance with the design plans. Any changes to the plans must be approved by the Board prior to implementation. If the system is constructed properly, and certificates of construction compliance are received by the Board from the engineer and installer, a Certificate of Compliance is issued for the system. Upgrades of failed existing system components are also evaluated for Title 5 compliance prior to installation. The Board of Health requires that all installers working in Williamstown must have attended a training course recognized by the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association and have satisfactorily passed the given exam.

In addition, the Board requires that all new or upgraded septic tanks have an effluent filter installed at the tank outlet. This helps prevent field loss through system clogging due to inattention. In 2015 the Board of Health passed regulations requiring that the agent of the Board of Health witness all septic system inspections. This helps ensure a consistent standard in applying various provisions of the Title 5 regulation. The Board of Health also requires any inspections performed on vacant dwellings to be re-inspected after occupancy. This ensures that a buyer is not buying a dwelling with a system that would normally fail if used and would be issued an inspection pass because it was not in normal operating mode. If a Title 5 Septic System Inspection shows that systems have a garbage grinder and/or a water softener discharging into the system, property owners are now informed by letter that their system is in noncompliance, and are instructed to remove the garbage grinder, and discharge the water softener to a drywell. Failure to do so could result in a damaged septic system requiring costly replacement or repair.

- Soil Evaluations Witnessed in 2024 – 7.
- Title 5 Inspections Witnessed in 2024 – 13.
- Septic System Installer Permits issued in 2024 – 3.
- Disposal System (Septic System) Construction Permits issued in 2024 – 5.

Companies which haul septage are required to obtain permits from the Board of Health in each town they serve. Haulers must keep a record of individual systems served, which is presented to the appropriate wastewater treatment plant. The plant forwards these records to the Board of Health, which keeps a database on how often each system is pumped. At times, these records will allow the Board to determine if an on-site system is functioning properly.

- Septage Transport Permits issued in 2024 – 7.

The Board of Health from time to time examines all motels, hotels, manufactured housing communities, camps, and cabins licensed by it. If, upon such examination, such motel, hotel, manufactured housing

community, camp, or cabin is found to be in an unsanitary condition, the Board may, after notice and a hearing, suspend or revoke such license.

- Lodging Permits issued in 2024 – 13.

Williamstown hosts many recreational camps for children each summer. Camps must meet the standards set by the State in 105 CMR 430.000, Minimum Sanitation and Safety Standards for Recreational Camps for Children. Fortunately, most camps are operating on the Williams College campus, which has dormitories, dining facilities, and other infrastructure subject to periodic building and health inspections. The Board ensures that camp staff and counselors have undergone criminal and sexual offender record checks, that campers and staff have appropriate medical checks, that a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner is contracted as a health care consultant, and that adequate medical staff and equipment are available to meet the campers' needs.

- Recreational Camp for Children Permits issued in 2024 – 10.

All public and semi-public (motels, condominiums, clubs, schools, institutions, etc.) pools and hot tubs/spas are required to be inspected at least annually. Inspections look at the design and construction of the pool, safety equipment and communication devices, first aid equipment, and water quality. All public and semi-public pools are required to have a Certified Pool Operator and perform inspections and water chemical testing at prescribed intervals.

- Public and Semi-Public Swimming Pool, Hot Tub, or Spa Permits issued in 2024 – 12.

Margaret Lindley Park has the only authorized public bathing beach in Williamstown. Beach bacterial sampling of the impoundment water at Margaret Lindley Park is tested weekly from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and has always showed excellent results, well within standards set by the state (No single *E. coli* sample shall exceed 235 colonies per 100 ml. and the geometric mean of the most recent five *E. coli* samples within the same bathing season shall not exceed 126 colonies per 100 ml). This facility continues to be very popular with many people in North Berkshire County and the tri-state area.



Figure 3: Ruth Russell Taking a Water Sample

The Board of Health licenses and regulates through inspection the maintenance of safe and appropriate indoor air quality in ice skating rinks that utilize ice resurfacing equipment powered by combustible fuels which produce carbon monoxide or nitrogen dioxide and thereby protect the health, safety, and well-being of the public. The Williams College Lansing Chapman Rink is inspected annually. Although the rink is primarily serviced with an electric ice re-surfacing machine, it is still licensed and inspected because the seldom used back-up re-surfacer is propane powered.

- Indoor Ice Rink Permits issued in 2024 – 2.

Refuse haulers operating in the Town of Williamstown must be permitted by the Board of Health and must offer recycling services.

- Refuse & Recyclables Hauler Permits issued in 2024 – 4.

Establishments selling tobacco products, including smoking tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, and electronic nicotine delivery systems in the Town of Williamstown must be permitted by the Board of Health.

- Tobacco Product Sales Permits issued in 2024 – 6.

The Board of Health also regulates nuisances and noisome trades and may restrict and/or prohibit any trade or employment, nuisances, sources of filth, injurious odors, and potentials for sickness, which may endanger the public health, safety, or welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Williamstown. Many nuisance complaints are received anonymously by telephone, but still require follow-up and inspection.

Williamstown works closely with the Berkshire County Public Health Alliance to coordinate public health efforts on a larger scale and to assist in planning and implementation of public health functions to smaller communities.

The Board of Health also oversees the duties of the Animal Inspector. The Massachusetts Division of Animal Health appoints a municipal animal inspector for each and every city and town in the Commonwealth. The primary duty of the Animal Inspector has recently become rabies control in the domestic animal population. Municipal Animal Inspectors are also responsible for barn inspections and may be called to assist with domestic animal disease quarantines in the event of an outbreak.

The Town of Williamstown has a very pro-active and involved public health program. The Health Inspector continues to use federal, state, and local regulations in a reasonable manner to ensure the spirit and intent of each are used for the general maintenance and improvement of the community's public health needs.

Sealer of Weights and Measures Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Standards

As of the end of 2023, the duties of the Sealer of Weights and Measures are now being contracted out to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Standards.

PLANNING AND LAND USE

Andrew Groff, AICP, Community Development Director

2024 was a year of change and growth for our department. We saw the first full year with our newly appointed Health Inspector, Ruth Russell, and hired a new Administrative Assistant, Laura King. Its been a pleasure to have Ruth and Laura on our team working for Williamstown.

On the Planning and Economic Development front we saw several exciting developments for '24. We continued with our third award for street tree planting in town from the Woodlands Partnership and were awarded more funding for calendar 2025. We are now expanding off the town green onto Main Street. There were developments with other grant-funded projects as well. We were awarded \$100,000 for the Planning Board to revise our subdivision rules and zoning regulations that pertain to housing. These are a key impediment to the growth of housing opportunities in our community. We were also part of two major collaborations with our neighbors in North Adams winning Mass Trails funding for a close look at new connections to our bike trail, and a \$17 Million award to Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to complete design and right of way for the remaining gap between Williamstown and the Ashwilticook. We also undertook work partnering with DPW on parks improvements, Purple Valley Trails on a new skate park and mountain bike trails on Berlin Mountain, Williams College on mapping sidewalks and analyzing pedestrian traffic in town, and the BRPC on updating both our ADA plan and our Open Space and Recreation Plan.

While working on those many projects was a big part of 2024, our day-to-day work remains most critical. As always this involves providing support to all members of the community who are investigating the possibility of changing how their land or buildings are used. When someone is researching potential development, whether the proposal is a small home addition or a large commercial building, the planner is generally the first town official you will see when undertaking a project. It is our job to help citizens make sense of these laws and regulations and ensure the permitting process is simple, fair and equitable for all stakeholders of any size project.

In addition to assisting the public with navigating the maze of Massachusetts land use law our office is responsible for the staff support, including research, analysis, and GIS mapping capabilities to five of Williamstown's local boards and commissions. Those groups we work with, along with a brief description of each board are:

- **Conservation Commission**

The Conservation Commission is responsible for administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands and Rivers Protection Act (the "Wetlands Protection Act"), this legislation requires approval for activities that involve "digging, dredging, or altering" wetlands or areas near wetlands. The Commission also oversees the management of nine parcels of land owned by the Town which are dedicated to a variety of conservation and recreation goals. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. and are often preceded by site visits to assess field conditions for projects that are brought to the Commission through the Wetlands Act review process. The Planner attends all of the Commission's meetings to provide staff support and also acts as the Conservation Agent, handling enforcement and other day-to-day issues of the Commission.

- **Historical Commission**

The Historical Commission reviews projects for compliance with the Demolition Delay Bylaw. The Planner reviews and processes these applications. The Commission meets on an as needed basis.

- **Planning Board**

The Planning Board is an elected Board, responsible for overseeing the long-term land use patterns of Williamstown through the Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision Rules, and Master Planning process. The Planner is responsible for the review of all plans and permit applications that come before the Board and ensures

they are complete and distributed to all interested parties. The Planner also provides significant time in staff support to the board. Working with individual members on research projects and possible zoning bylaw, and subdivision regulation amendments. The Planner is also responsible for the maintenance of the Board's official maps and frequently updates the Board on important legislation and other planning issues.

- Sign Commission

The Sign Inspector is responsible for reviewing all sign applications and may issue any sign which fully complies with the Sign Bylaw; any deviation from the bylaw requires Sign Commission approval. The Sign Inspector is also the enforcing authority under the bylaw. Fines may be assessed under the non-criminal disposition provisions of the Code of the Town of Williamstown. The Sign Commission meets the 4th Thursday of every month.

- The Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board (ZBA) hears and decides petitions arising from the application of the Williamstown's Zoning Bylaws. These petitions fall into four categories, Special Permits, Variances, Administrative Appeals, and Comprehensive Permits. The Planner is responsible for the review of all of the ZBA's permit applications and ensures they are complete and distributed to all interested parties. Ensuring completion can involve plan review meetings with project stakeholders and other town officials. The Board meets on the third Thursday of every month.

These are all brief descriptions of each Board's responsibilities; please see each individual Board's report for a more in-depth description of all the business the Boards, Commissions and the our department have been working on for the past year.



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Philip R. McKnight, Chairman

The Community Preservation Act (CPA), adopted by the Town in 2002, permits Williamstown to address important community needs under the terms of the law, including:

- Acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources;
- Acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space;
- Creation, preservation, and support of affordable housing; and
- Acquisition of land for recreation and preservation of recreational resources.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts supplements funds that Williamstown raises directly through the CPA surcharge on real property taxes. The match was 100% for the first five years and then steadily declined as a direct result of the economic recession in 2008-2009 to a level as low as 25%. As a result of recent amendments to the CPA, the match in recent years especially after the covid pandemic years has become substantially higher. The Town's Community Preservation Committee makes a recommendation to Town Meeting every year on how CPA revenues should be spent. The Committee's eight members consist of representatives from the Town's Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, Planning Board, Select Board, Town Manager, and an at-large community member.

The Committee held public information sessions and public meetings beginning in the fall in which applications were received and funding proposals were discussed for FY 25. Ultimately, the following proposals were recommended for funding or other action by Town Meeting in May 2024, and they were approved by majority vote:

1. An amount of \$5,000 under the terms of the CPA to meet the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee for FY 2025, all in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee;
2. An amount of \$3,000 in unspent funds authorized in FY2013 for historic preservation purposes, for a total sum of \$50,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund, Inc., to renovate and preserve for the future the structure known as the Meetinghouse, currently owned by First Congregational Church of Williamstown, in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee;
3. An amount of \$29,175.45 in unspent funds previously authorized in FY2013 to the Affordable Housing Commission, now terminated, for community housing purposes and the amount of \$85 in unspent funds previously authorized in FY2007 for community housing purposes, for a total sum of \$70,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust in unrestricted funds for initiatives and programs related to furthering affordable housing in Williamstown, including acquisition of land, and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee;
4. An amount of \$11,100, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to Sands Springs Recreational Center, Inc., for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee;
5. An amount of \$90,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the Town of Williamstown for the creation of a Fitness Court along the Town's Multi Use Path for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee;
6. An amount of \$50,000 in unspent funds authorized in FY2021 for recreation purposes, for a total sum of \$75,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the New England Mountain Bike Association – Purple Valley Chapter for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee; and
7. An amendment to Section 22-1 (Establishment) of the Town's By-Laws, which established a Community Preservation Committee, consisting of eight voting members pursuant to the provisions of MCL, c.44B, Section 5, as heretofore amended, by adding the following: (9) One resident of the Town designated by the Select Board.

NOTE:

The FY24 Community Preservation Committee did not prepare and file a report on its activities in 2023. Here in summary fashion are the recommendations of the CPC to Town Meeting in May 2023 for FY24 which recommendations were accepted by Town Meeting:

1. An amount of \$5,000 to meet the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2024;
2. An amount of \$120,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust in unrestricted funds for initiatives and programs related to furthering affordable housing in Williamstown;
3. An amount of \$100,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the Mt. Greylock Regional School District for recreation purposes with respect to an 8-lane track with field sport facilities and a natural grass playing field with drainage and irrigation for its teams and the greater community in Williamstown;
4. An amount of \$50,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2024, to fund a grant to the Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund, Inc., to renovate and preserve in the future the structure known as the Meetinghouse, currently owned by First Congregational Church of Williamstown;
5. An amount of \$10,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Housing Authority for initiatives and programs related to furthering affordable housing in Williamstown; and
6. An amount of \$35,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2024, to fund a grant to the Williamstown Historical Museum to restore the 19th century Dolan-Jencks barn on the grounds of the Museum.

Community Preservation Committee Annual Report 2024

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND RACIAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Shana L. Dixon, Chair

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is with gratitude and humility that the DIRE Advisory Committee acknowledges that we live and work in the ancestral homelands of the Mohican People, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here; today, their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors, past and present, and acknowledge their continuous presence in their homelands as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

ABOUT THE DIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The DIRE Advisory Committee was created by the Select Board in the Summer of 2020. The Town of Williamstown has expressed a commitment to providing equity, access, and opportunity for all its residents, and believes in the vital importance of a diverse community. The Town of Williamstown wants to be a welcoming community and a safe and enjoyable place of residence for people regardless of background and we continuously strive to make this happen.

The Select Board's charge to the DIRE Advisory Committee includes addressing inclusiveness, diversity, and equity through the development of forums for open and safe discussion of these issues, and for the development of actionable recommendations to improve the attainment of these goals in Williamstown for all residents. The DIRE Advisory Committee is a diverse group of people with different backgrounds and walks of life who don't shy away from discussion of difficult topics of racial justice, inequalities and disparities that relate to individuals in our region and also broader

national and international issues. We strive to provide an open forum for public comment where people can speak their opinion, raise concerns and make suggestions.

The DIRE Advisory Committee meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month, and its meetings are subject to Open Meeting Law and meeting times and agendas are posted in advance on the Town Calendar. DIRE meetings and virtual listening sessions are broadcast live on public access cable television and are also recorded for viewing anytime by Willinet: <https://www.willinet.org/municipal-meetings/dire/>

Current Members

<i>Shana L. Dixon</i>	<i>Andrew Art</i>
<i>Randal Flippinger</i>	<i>Noah Kane-Small</i>

ACTIVITIES IN 2024

We developed a strategic plan to make Williamstown ready for a more diverse future and started planning events to implement part of the strategic plan. Which are currently planned to take place in 2025.

We Continue to focus on seven key points:

- Enhancing and increasing cooperation, understanding, and dialogue among residents of diverse cultural, religious, socio- economic, and racial backgrounds;
- Creating town-wide events that foster cultural awareness;
- Increasing diverse, equitable, and inclusive participation on government boards and committees;
- Increasing diverse, equitable, and inclusive participation in the Town workplaces;
- Creating sustainable methods for continuous improvement in the development of diversity in our community;
- Supporting youth; and
- Supporting the Stockbridge- Munsee Community.

Other highlights of the DIRE Advisory Committee's work in 2024 include:

March 2024 - Attended an Outreach event hosted by Remedy Hall and Berkshire Housing focusing on lower income demographics. We introduced the DIRE Committee to community members and spoke about how we help the community facilitate community conversations as well as present recommendations to the Select Board. We also held easter basket raffles and later delivered them to the winning recipients.

Held a meeting with the Williamstown Ceasefire Resolution Group in support of their Resolution. Mainly to facilitate conversations between them and the public, allowing them to speak freely about the Resolution and how they feel it impacts the community of Williamstown directly. Open to all voices at our meetings allows residents to be able to make their own decisions about challenging subjects that are often avoided in a public setting. Allowing for the process of change starts by having difficult conversations and unbiased views that allow community members to be heard.

June 2024 - Participated in Meetings with members of the School Committee and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Parent and Caregiver Action Network. In support of families and students advocating for positive changes within the school district. This led to a proposal from the parent group to the Select Board. Which proposed the need to have an outside consulting firm facilitate the process of an equity audit. Another outcome was the hosting of the Department of Justice holding a working group session with community members and students with the goal of finding solutions for problems in the district as it relates to conflicts of Diversity, Inclusion, racial equity amongst many other issues.

November 2024 - Visits to the Harper Center to converse with residents with questions of equity and belonging. A theme during these visits was that many residents miss their diverse group of friends that they considered family. Many of

them raised families in neighborhoods in the Northern Berkshire area that were made up of many different ethnicities and cultures, where they would be supportive of one another. This gave them a sense of safety and belonging. This led the committee to plan an event to facilitate their cultural need and belonging.

December 2024 - As in previous years, the Committee enjoyed conversations with community members while providing 200 cups of hot apple cider during the Holiday Walk. People of all walks of life stopped by for a quick exchange. There were those who asked about diversity in town, looking for a place to move their family in the tumultuous political climate. While others were new to the area looking for new opportunities.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Philip R. McKnight, Chairman

The Conservation Commission is the citizen board responsible for administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act (the “Wetlands Acts”) on behalf of the Town of Williamstown. The Commission also oversees the management of nine separate parcels of land owned by the Town which are dedicated to a variety of conservation and recreation goals. Our meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7:00 PM at Town Hall and are available on Willinet channel 1303. They are often preceded by site visits to assess field conditions for projects that are brought to the Commission through the Wetlands Acts review process.

In 2024 the Commission acted on sixteen Requests for Determination of Applicability of the Wetlands Acts to proposed projects. We also acted on nine Notices of Intent applications for projects that clearly came under the jurisdiction of the Wetlands Acts and for which we determined it was necessary to place Orders of Condition as to how the project would be undertaken and managed to ensure the protection of wetlands resources. We issued six Certificates of Compliance, and for the first time in a while, there were no Emergency Certifications. We continued the work of our land and water task forces begun in 2023 as well as our efforts to review the management of Town lands not under Commission jurisdiction with particular attention paid to the development of the Spruces Community Park.



Applications the Commission received over the course of the year involved, among others, the Commonwealth’s Hoosic River bank stabilization project, the Clark Art Institute Lunder Center bridge replacement, Northern Berkshire Habitat for Humanity building proposal, a consideration of the Select Board’s policy on the right of first refusal and Chapter 61 lands, the Town’s policy on memorial donations to Town parks, Williams College multipurpose recreational center, Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation Sheep Hill parking lot expansion proposal, Waubeeka Golf Course, Williams College Cole Field Management Plan, the Commonwealth’s Route 7 (Sabin Drive to the

Rte. 43 intersection) paving plan, plus continuing attention to the statewide drought situation over the course of the year.

Current members of the Conservation Commission are Philip McKnight (chairman), Lauren Stevens, Sarah Rowe, Mark Brandiss, Tim Carr, Barbara Robertson, and Robert-Baker White. We again thank Andrew Groff, the Town Conservation Agent, for his dedicated and effective service to the Commission.

COUNCIL ON AGING
Brian O'Grady, Director

The Council on Aging officially resides in the Harper Center at 118 Church Street. We're directly across from Williamstown Elementary School and easy to find. That's our home base, physical location, whatever you choose to call it. You can find us in other locations as well, we've expanded our reach around Town to reach a wider segment of the community. We've been hosted at Sweetwood during our Dementia Friendly Williamstown launch and offer a monthly Dementia Caregivers Support Group at the Milne Library as examples. You can also find us on Facebook and the Williamstown Municipal Webpage. We'd much rather see you in person so stop by!

We had a busy year in 2024. Here are a few notes:

As you know, two of our primary functions are to provide information and referrals for available resources to help people navigate issues which might be helpful or necessary and to directly intervene to try to help people with services. Of course, we speak with lots of people. Between Sarah Kline, our Outreach Coordinator, Carmel Kushi, and myself we had several every day, that's literally daily folks, encounters in person or via telephone with people seeking information or assistance. The phone here at Harper rings almost continually and walk in requests for help are becoming increasingly frequent.

The population we serve is changing quite a bit as well. While our consumers were once mostly from our parents and grandparents' generation, we're seeing more younger elders with a different set of issues, needs and interests. We're helping people in recovery from drugs and alcohol issues, numerous individuals with active substance problems, mental health problems, some of these have been quite disabling. We've seen individuals who are homeless, hungry or in crisis for one reason or another. We've been discovered by the children of elders, some whom we've known for years, seeking help and advice for family sliding into deepening dementia. The times are indeed changing. Here's a visual; when you enter housing sites and other public buildings, you'll see Narcan distribution boxes. The staff here at Harper has them too. It is a different environment out there now.

Younger elders have joined our "traditional" opportunities in large numbers too. Massachusetts law says that you're an elder at the age of 60. Most of that group, those between 60-67, are still in their working years-we're seeing lots of people 67-on. What are the traditional opportunities? We offered exercise classes some aggressive exercise, others gently chair exercise, Tai Chi (beginner and more advanced) and gentle seated as well as traditional Yoga every week. There are also informal outside gatherings for Yoga on the lawn, weather permitting of course!

We have a certified Reiki practitioner available by appointment weekly.



Figure 4: Community Members Exercising

Also available by appointment are haircuts once a month, foot care, and seasonal Tax Assistance with our friends from AARP.

Our van will carry Williamstown seniors all over North County for life sustaining errands- doctors' visits, therapy appointments and grocery shopping – priorities. We also bring people to the SVMC campus in Bennington or the satellite office in Pownal Vermont by appointment. Other opportunities for travel, lunch in town, library, post office, etc. are also part of the regular menu. Appointments are appreciated and will usually ensure a ride, but not always necessary. Contact Rick Andrews, our van operator for rides. Additionally, BRTA awarded us a brand-new van last summer. How about that!

While we're on the topic of transportation, we have a contract with Northern Berkshire Transport, a branch of Northern Berkshire EMS,

to provide medical transportation to Pittsfield, North Adams Regional Hospital and Bennington to enhance options and get people to their appointments. It's been quite a valuable partnership indeed! In collaboration with Elder Services, we offer Grab and Go hot meals three days weekly, a nutritionally designed take-out. We host Art classes, Diabetes, loss and dementia caregiver support group sessions. We had many community education sessions on varied subjects, health care, food, technology, and history. Of course there are games played, and good times shared, fellowship flourishes.

We also hosted several flu/ COVID vaccine clinics during the year. It's still lurking out there and the flu seems to be worse. Have you gotten your shot yet? We also had a very successful Wellness and Resource Fair, our third fair, in September.

Technology tutoring is another great program we sponsor-it's an opportunity to enlist the assistance of some very talented Williams students to help you with any tech device issues you might have-iPad to Android, give a call and we'll schedule you. We've shared other opportunities with Williams students during the year and hosted McCann Tech's post graduate nursing students-true community intergenerational activities!



Figure 5: Community Members Exercising

We also replaced much of the old furniture, all the computers in the building, and have added other bits of infrastructure, a new copier immediately comes to mind, all courtesy of ARPA funds. The Harper Center, our home for 45 or so years, is becoming dated and it's lacking space and parking spaces. That is a conversation to have at another time.

This report is dedicated in memory of Ed Sedarbaum, a COA board member and LGBTQ community activist who passed in November. You are missed.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian O'Grady, Williamstown Council on Aging Director.

DAVID & JOYCE MILNE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Angela Zimmermann, Library Director
www.milnelibrary.org

2024 marked an incredible year of progress for the David & Joyce Milne Public Library as we celebrated our 150th anniversary. This milestone allowed us to reflect on our long-standing commitment to serving the community while looking ahead to future opportunities. Our mission remains to foster lifelong learning, build community connections, and provide access to knowledge and resources for all. With expanded hours, new services, and enhanced accessibility, we continue strengthening our impact.

One of the most significant changes in 2024 was our extended hours. To better serve the community, we now remain open until 8:00 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. This extension was made possible by strategically adjusting staff schedules, allowing us to accommodate the request for more evening access without impacting the operational budget.

Our committed team has worked tirelessly to improve library services. The staff includes specialists in circulation, marketing, adult and youth services, administrative, and building management. The Board of Trustees also provided strategic leadership, ensuring the library remains a vital community hub.

Working in a public library has always been about books but more importantly, it's about people, community, and access to information. At the David & Joyce Milne Public Library, we recognize that libraries are often one of the few free and welcoming spaces available to everyone. In 2024, we've expanded our services to include 1:1 technology access, social services partnerships, programming and services tailored to diverse needs, from English language learners to individuals experiencing homelessness. By meeting people where they are and adapting to changing community needs, we are ensuring equitable access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities for all.

In partnership with Remedy Hall, the library now hosts two satellite locations where individuals can access essential items, such as warm winter coats, toiletries, and other necessities for those in need. We are grateful to Remedy Hall for recognizing the vital role our library plays in the community and for understanding our ability to reach a wide range of people. Remedy Hall restocks these locations every week.

We've established an ongoing internship program at the library, partnering with Bennington College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and Williams College. These talented interns have taken on roles such as a Community Resource Services Intern, Web Development Intern, and Digital Literacy Intern, contributing to a wide range of impactful projects. Their efforts have led to the success of initiatives like 1:1 Tech Times, digital literacy classes, Summer Reading support in the children's department, and the creation of a comprehensive community resource guide. These partnerships have been invaluable in enhancing library services and fostering community engagement.

We extend our gratitude to the dedicated library staff, Board of Trustees, the Friends of the Library, volunteers, elected officials, patrons and community members for their unwavering support. This report provides a detailed overview of our accomplishments and milestones achieved throughout the year 2024.

As always, the library is here to serve our community, and we welcome your thoughts, ideas, and feedback. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to Angela Zimmermann, Library Director at azimmermann@cwmmars.org or (413)597-8345.

Thank you for your continued support of the library.

By the Numbers (2024)

- **90,502** Items Checked Out
- **90,106** Visits to the Library
- **408** New Library Cards Issued
- **4,961** New Items Added
- **64,693** Total Items
- **15,307** Fulfilled Holds
- **28,509** eBook, Audiobook, & Streaming Uses
- **991 Hours & 28 minutes** of Public Computer Usage
- **124** Usage of 1:1 Tech Time Sessions

Library Programs & Community Engagement

- **334** Programs Hosted
- **5,045** Attendees Across All Programs
- **2024 Summer Reading Program**
 - **150** Children Participated
 - **59** Teens Participated
 - **1,065** Raffle Tickets Redeemed for Prizes

Our library programs continue to be impactful and well-received, fostering community engagement, lifelong learning, and meaningful connections for patrons of all ages.

Children's Programming

In 2024 the theme was “Read, Renew, Repeat” and we did our best, from showing some older movies to repeating popular workshops from the past, to finding uses for the old magazines and newspapers and egg cartons and cardboard tubes we’d been saving.

In February, Leigh of Through Me To You Puppetry did a puppet story time followed by a puppet free-for-all, with some quick tutorials about the different kinds of puppets and how to use them.

In May we were invited to participate in the WES Springfest, and we brought the laminator and about ten thousand stickers so kids could make bookmarks. As far as we could tell when the dust had settled, somewhere around 100 of them got made.

In June we were pleased and proud to host Hannah Moushabeck’s reading of her picture book “Homeland: My Father Dreams of Palestine.”



Figure 6: Balloon Animals at the Library

Our Summer Reading Kickoff party at the end of June was very well attended, despite the on-again-off-again drizzle. Some of the outdoor games from the Thingdom were put to use in the courtyard and also inside, which kept things lively for sure. We rented a popcorn machine, which was extremely popular! (It also was a lot of work to keep up with demand; many lessons were learned that day.)

More highlights from the summer include:

- A very crowded Balloon Twisting workshop led by Ed the Wizard, a perennial favorite here.
- A “LEGO Challenge” series, where participants had a measured amount of time to fill various prompts using a pre-selected tub of LEGO bricks and their imaginations.
- Jay Mankita of Playful Engineers invited folks to make some Creative Contraptions, with step-by-step instructions on how the different components worked.

Our annual Halloween party attracted over a hundred people. We offered face painting, treat bags and wooden pumpkins to decorate, and an air-dry clay workshop; as well as more candy and treats than was probably necessary.

We added many more titles to our ever-expanding video game catalog, over two dozen of which were for the Switch, which has proved to be the most popular system in town by a large factor. And we continue to curate and add to our collection of books so that Williamstown’s kids can have the benefit of a diverse selection of books that reflects the wider world as well as their own.

Young Adult Programming

It was a mix of new offerings and old favorites for our teen community throughout 2024. We continued showing a selection of movies, Escape Rooms, and arts and crafts programs throughout the year. In December, by popular demand, we brought back collage bookmark-making where we created over 200 bookmarks! We also invited back artist Heather Beck to lead copper keychain making for teens and adults. A sampling of offered art programs included Sun Printmaking, Embroidery, decorating miniature journals, water coloring, air-dry clay and more. New offerings for teens included a World taste challenge where we sampled potato chips and sweets from around the world, a summer coding camp, Thingdom STEM kit workshops, and volunteer-led math tutoring.

After a very busy Summer Reading program, we began the school year with a new After School Snacks program in the Teen Room. Every school day from 2:30pm-5pm we put out a selection of healthy and fun snacks for our busy teen patrons. In the chillier weather we added hot chocolate as well. This program was an instant hit and we are seeing a monthly attendance of 60 to 80 participants! Thank you to Friends of the Milne Library for the great enthusiasm they showed in funding this program (and all our programs).



Figure 7: Afternoon Snacks for Teens

In the Teen Room, we added an interactive dry erase board with a monthly question and answer. Recent questions have included, “You can travel anywhere real or imaginary. Where will you go?!” and “Recommend a movie or favorite TV show.” The Teen Room also hosts a rotating Art Corner; a few of the projects in 2024 were origami animals, tracing paper art, stencils and ink stamp card making.

Within our stacks, the manga collection has doubled in size and continues to fly off the shelves. Our world language young adult books have also been well received. We were able to grow this collection in fiction, nonfiction and graphic novels in both Spanish and Korean.

Adult Programming

We address a wide range of needs and interests for adults in the library, including research and technology assistance, purchasing and cataloging select fiction and non-fiction books, managing interlibrary loans, planning programs for adults, organizing monthly book displays and coordinating library volunteers.



Figure 8: Paper Holiday Tree Craft

We interact with quite a few patrons at what is traditionally known as the “Reference Desk,” but has been appropriately re-named the “Reference & Technology Desk.” Questions range from in-depth research questions to readers’ advisory, help in the stacks, hard-to-find title requests to all kinds of technology assistance inquiries. Tech questions have increased greatly over the past few years, so we appreciated having assistance from several Williams interns in 2024 who provided additional, one-on-one technology help to patrons.

In 2024, there were all kinds of programs available to adults! We repeated some events from past years but also gave new ideas a try. In June, we honored Alzheimer’s Awareness Month in collaboration with the Council on Aging by hosting several talks, purchasing books about dementia and starting an ongoing dementia-friendly caregivers’ support group with a licensed mental health counselor. Also, master printer and type founder, Jim Walczak, presented a “visual exploration” of Johann Gutenberg’s achievements and provided a hands-on demonstration of a vintage printing press. In addition, the band Hungrytown

performed a well-attended *outdoor* concert on the front lawn, and tango classes with Dave Gorson became very popular in the fall (and will return in 2025)! We also hosted two unique magic shows.

Nature was a frequent theme for adults, especially in the Spring and Fall, when several Williamstown Garden Club members spoke about native plants and pollinators, a butterfly expert led a talk and walk, and Dr. Kevin Flaherty hosted night sky viewing events in addition to a talk about the solar eclipse in April. For Climate Preparedness Week in September, we hosted an expert-led talk about, and “show and tell” of, electric vehicles, and co-hosted a virtual talk with ecologist and author, Professor Tom Wessels.

The Adult Services and Teen Librarians also collaborated on a few events that were great for both age groups. We hosted our second poetry open mic night, our first “Create a Guessing Haiku” challenge and a Flight of Tea event and tasting. Adults also enjoyed making collage bookmarks with our Teen Librarian and later had the chance to make other creations at art workshops, such as copper bookmarks, paper holiday trees, paper collages, wearable art, and night sky paintings.

We again hosted two reading challenges, Blind Date with a Book in February, and Book Bingo over the summer. These are “passive” programs, in which patrons can participate independently by coming into the library. No meetings take place, but responses are shared through our newsletter and participants can choose fun prizes. Both annual events experience increased participation each year (thus far!) and seem to be enjoyed by those who return their ‘date’ ratings or bingo cards.



Figure 9: Hungrytown Band Performing

Other events included Narcan training, book talks with Tinky Weisblat, Sam Farmer, Steve Nelson, Sam Trudel and Carol Ethier-Kipp, monthly movie showings, board game and mahjong-playing groups, and a 50+ Job Seekers virtual series.

We also now have space for more book displays, and it has been rewarding to change them every month. Themes have included voting and government, Summer Reads, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Native American Heritage Month, holiday baking, love and romance, New York Times’ Best Books of the 21st century, Staff Picks and Best of 2024 books from all kinds of sources.

Expanding Beyond Our Walls

Digital Circulation and Use

Libby:

Patrons can access eBooks, audiobooks, and magazines from the CW MARS collection, along with materials from other library networks across Massachusetts.

- 25,770 borrows in 2024 (compared to 21,275 borrows in 2023)
- 149 new users (compared to 153 in 2023)

Hoopla:

Patrons can instantly access eBooks, audiobooks, comics, magazines, graphic novels, TV shows, and music through Hoopla - no holds required.

- 1,873 borrows in 2024 (compared to 1,105 borrows in 2023)
- 158 new users in in 2024 (compared to 53 in 2023)

Kanopy:

Kanopy offers on-demand streaming of an extensive collection of films, TV series, and documentaries, including classic cinema, foreign films, The Great Courses, and Kanopy Kids.

- 2,526 borrows in 2024 (compared to 2,526 in 2023)
- 135 new users (compared to 149 in 2023)

In 2024, we have also expanded our digital resources to include access to the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, Comics Plus (featuring digital comics and manga), and Little Pim, an online language learning platform for kids. These exciting new offerings enhance our collection and provide even more ways for patrons to explore, learn, and stay informed.

In 2024, we made a concerted effort to extend our presence beyond the library walls, actively engaging with the community in meaningful ways. From connecting with residents at the Farmers' Market and National Night Out to fostering intergenerational relationships at the Council on Aging, we prioritized meeting people where they are. Our outreach extended to Williams College and the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), strengthening our ties with students and faculty, as well as to the Youth Center, where we engaged with the next generation of library users. These are just a few examples of how we are continually working to make the library an accessible, visible, and vital part of our community.

Newsletter

Our library newsletter continues to be a vital source of information and connection for our community. In 2024, we engaged 2,838 active subscribers, keeping them informed about upcoming programs, new collections, and exciting library initiatives. Beyond our dedicated readership, our reach expanded significantly, with the newsletter connecting with an impressive 119,914 total readers throughout the year.

The Thingdom – A Library of Things

Launched in July, our Library of Things offers a diverse collection of non-traditional items for checkout, expanding access to resources that support learning, creativity, and everyday life. This collection of over 300+ items is designed to help patrons save money, explore new hobbies, and access tools that may be used only occasionally. By borrowing instead of buying, our community can reduce waste and make more sustainable choices.

Our Library of Things Include:

- **Arts & Crafts:** Sewing machines, button makers, and various kits to encourage hands-on creativity.
- **Kitchenware:** Specialty appliances, baking kits, canning equipment, bread making machines, air fryers for culinary experimentation.
- **Outdoor Recreation:** Telescopes, birdwatching kits, lawn games, hiking gear, party equipment and more to promote outdoor exploration and family fun.
- **STEAM Kits:** STEAM Kits, building kits, coding challenges, and language-learning tools to support lifelong learning.
- **Technology:** Wi-Fi hotspots, projectors, karaoke machines, Bluetooth speakers, cameras, and other devices to support digital access and creative projects.
- **Tools:** Car diagnostic readers, portable air compressors, repair kits, electric pressure washers, specialty equipment, and more for tackling DIY projects.

Other categories include Board Games & Toys, Gardening, Health, Miscellaneous, and Music.

By expanding beyond books, our Thingdom enhances community access to practical and enriching resources. Whether you're testing a new hobby, working on a project, or simply looking for something fun to try, we invite you to explore and make the most of this innovative collection!

Celebrating 150 Years

2024 was a truly momentous year as we celebrated our library's 150th anniversary, marking a century and a half of learning, connection, and service to our community. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the 150th Committee, we were able to honor this milestone with a series of special events, exhibitions, and programs that engaged over 825 attendees.



Figure 10: Milne 150th Event Lecture Series

Some of the many highlights of our year-long celebration included:

- *150th Anniversary Open House*: We welcomed over 200 visitors, filling the library with excitement, community spirit, and a shared appreciation for our rich history and future.
- *150th Anniversary Film Series*: A curated selection of films that reflected the spirit of our history and community.
- *Gallery tours at The Clark Art Institute*: Featuring remarkable works from the year 1874.

- *Community Art Shows & Lectures*: Featuring local artists and authors who shared their talents and insights, bringing our history to life in new and creative ways.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the 150th Committee for their vision, passion, and countless hours of effort in making this anniversary truly unforgettable. Their dedication ensured that our celebration not only honored the past but also inspired the future of our library and the community it serves. Thank you!

Library Board of Trustees

The trustees finished the search for a new library director. This concluded the search process from 2023, upon the retirement of Pat McCleod, who we thank for her 25 years of experience to both the library and the town. After multiple rounds of both virtual and in-person interviews, the trustees unanimously selected Angela Zimmermann. Negotiations took place in February, and she began work in March 2024.

2024 marked the library's 150th anniversary in Williamstown. The trustees assisted in organizing and securing funds for this celebration, which spanned 12 months and multiple venues. The anniversary was incredibly successful and well received by many different groups of patrons and constituents. We especially thank Judy Ensign for her energy and work throughout the year. This included movie screenings at the Clark, author talks, and capstone celebration at the library.

The building and grounds committee has been hard at work correcting deficiencies in the building outlines in previous assessments and reports, including roofing and window/door issues. This maintenance continues to be done in conjunction with the town, and the \$300,000 appropriated during the 2024 town meeting for library repairs. Some projects remain outstanding but organizational and preliminary work has begun. A number of improvements to the grounds were also completed in 2024.

The trustees financially supported library staff through several initiatives, including library upgrades and individual support.

The trustees supported the opening of several new and returning library initiatives including a library of things, summer reading, and inviting outside programs. The trustees also supported the expansion of the English for Speakers of Other Languages classes held by the library, and the promotion of those classes to underserved and hard to reach residents.

The trustees developed a new policy review schedule and continued our biennial update of all library policies and the trustee bylaws.

The work of the trustees, in combination with the independent nonprofit group the Friends of the Library, continues to expand the scope and reach of the library. This is only possible with the generous support of individuals who choose to donate to the library, and for whose contributions the trustees and all library patrons are exceedingly grateful.

Current Slate of Board of Trustees:

Micah Manary, Chair

Jared Della Rocca, Vice Chair

Anna Halpin-Healy, Treasurer

Katy Evans, Secretary

Ben Lee-Cohen

Robin Lenz

Bridget Spann

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Milne Library is an independent non-profit organization that exists, as our bylaws state, “to advance and encourage appreciation, understanding, enjoyment, and public use of the educational and cultural facilities of the David and Joyce Milne Public Library (the ‘library’), and to cooperate, when appropriate, with other groups to improve the cultural activities of the community.”

What does this mean in everyday language? The large, vibrant, and growing group of volunteers who make up the Friends work together, and in close partnership with library staff and the Trustees, to enhance library services, to support access to the library for as many people as possible, and to work to help advance literacy, in all forms, throughout our community. Our organization accomplishes this in several ways: through the operation of a large center where we accept donations of high-quality secondhand books; by running our beloved bookstore, Chapter Two Books, located on Spring Street; with online book sales; and, from collecting generous membership and memorial/estate funds from our large Friends family.

Funding by the Friends for library services reached new heights in 2024, totaling close to \$100,000! Our organization is thrilled with all the ways in which we are able to contribute to ongoing services and new innovations, including:

- A wide variety of programs for children, teens, and adults that bring community members together to learn and play.
- Installation of an outdoor pavilion in the back courtyard of the library, extending spaces where community members can meet and relax.
- Purchases for the amazing Thingdom that expands the notion of what a person can borrow from a library.
- Support for snacks in the Teen Room and coffee and hot beverages in the Community Room.
- Access to an extensive list of digital resources, museum passes, and other resources.
- Support for professional development for library personnel; and
- Funding interns from local colleges for services such as Tech Times, creation of a community resource guide, and the start of community conversations.

In addition, the Friends donated funds to community literacy events such as Words Are Wonderful at WES, and donated books to children and families who might not otherwise have the beautiful books that our community donates.

The Friends are fueled by a love for the worlds that books can open and for the Milne library. We recognize that the library can be an alive and welcoming community space and look forward to engaging our community to support the hard work of library staff in 2025.



Figure 11: Community Member Using a Library Computer

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Melissa Cragg, Chair – Fred Puddester, Vice Chair

Members of the 2024-2025 Finance Committee serving during calendar 2024 included Paula Consolini, Melissa Cragg, Charles Fox, Molly Magavern, Elaine Neely, Fred Puddester, Suzanne Stinson, Michael Sussman, and Rachel Tarses. Work during 2024 focused on preparation of the fiscal year 2025 operating and capital budget covering the period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. The “Ad Hoc Debt Study Group” to study town debt capacity and existing debt structure and short and long-term capital budget requirements for the Town, the Fire District, Mt. Greylock Regional Schools, and Hoosac Water Quality District. Led by Suzanne Stinson, other participants include Melissa Cragg, Hugh Daley, Don Dubendorf, Carrie Greene, and Fred Puddester. This committee continued work throughout the year and recently completed a report which can be found on the Finance Committee page on the town website. We are grateful to the group’s members, particularly Suzanne who provided patient, persistent leadership.

At the Annual Town meeting held on May 23, 2024, the Finance Committee recommended and the town approved an expense budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 of \$24,745,504, a 3.7% increase over the prior year’s budget. Per usual, over half (57%) of the budget is devoted to funding our schools reflecting the continued commitment the town places on preparing its children for happy, productive futures.

Fiscal year 2025’s budget included no new town government positions. It did, however, include cost-of-living increases of about 3% for our staff and adjustments recommended pursuant to the recently completed Salary and Compensation Study. Health benefits expenses were budgeted to increase by 7%.

“Free Cash,” accumulated funds resulting from excess net tax revenues from prior years, totaled \$1,864,854 on June 30, 2023. The Finance Committee recommended and the town approved \$155,000 appropriation from these funds for three town non-profits, \$200,000 in additions to town reserves including the Stabilization Reserve (expected to bring that total balance to \$1.2 million), and \$1,396,000 for equipment mostly for the Department of Public Works (\$660,000), road repaving (\$425,000), playground rehab/fitness court (\$150,000), and IT improvements for Public Safety and the Department of Public Works (\$96,000), and a Highway Department study of North Hoosac (\$65,000).

The tax levy is the amount required to fund the town’s budget from property taxes, about 84% of the total. The remaining 16% (\$3.9 million) comes from State Aid (\$1.48 million), Motor Vehicle taxes (\$700,000), and Hotel/Meals taxes (\$1.1 million). We have consistently underbudgeted these non-property tax sources resulting in subsequent year “free cash.” The 2025 budget makes a more realistic estimation of revenue. This will have the effect of reducing future year’s free cash levels but it will make more productive and immediate use of collected tax revenue. The combination of revenue and expense assumptions resulted in a modest 1.3% increase (\$271,000) in the 2025 property tax levy,

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA 2025 BUDGET SUMMARY				
	(Draft Audit)	Approved	Approved	Budget v. Budget
	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	% Change
Non-Property Tax Revenue:				
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$ 763,380	\$ 675,000	\$ 700,000	103.7%
Meals Tax	\$ 205,701	\$ 125,000	\$ 200,000	160.0%
Hotel/Motel Tax	\$ 845,739	\$ 475,000	\$ 900,000	189.5%
Cannabis Excise	\$ 136,561	\$ 200,000	\$ 100,000	50.0%
Penalties and Interest	\$ 25,561	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000	100.0%
PILOT	\$ 91,346	\$ 82,000	\$ 82,000	100.0%
Fees	\$ 140,176	\$ 131,750	\$ 131,750	100.0%
Cannabis Impact Fee	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Licenses and Permits	\$ 313,326	\$ 204,150	\$ 204,150	100.0%
Fines and Forfeits	\$ 13,042	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	100.0%
Investment Income	\$ 136,195	\$ 85,000	\$ 100,000	117.6%
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 72,408	\$ -	\$ -	
State Aid	\$ 1,445,679	\$ 1,445,679	\$ 1,480,362	102.4%
Non-Property Tax Revenue:	\$ 4,189,114	\$ 3,455,579	\$ 3,930,262	113.7%
Executive	\$ 355,189	\$ 383,550	\$ 446,667	116.5%
Administration and Finance	\$ 3,452,460	\$ 3,687,621	\$ 3,803,307	103.1%
Community Development	\$ 419,822	\$ 459,992	\$ 461,611	100.4%
Public Safety	\$ 1,784,072	\$ 1,784,072	\$ 1,831,526	102.7%
Public Works	\$ 2,160,842	\$ 2,373,087	\$ 2,414,574	101.7%
Human Services	\$ 970,025	\$ 1,008,748	\$ 1,057,506	104.8%
Subtotal General Government	\$ 9,142,410	\$ 9,697,070	\$ 10,015,191	103.3%
Debt Service	\$ 548,188	\$ 547,188	\$ 533,288	97.5%
Finance Committee Reserve	\$ 34,321	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	100.0%
Transfer Station Transfer	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	100.0%
Total General Government	\$ 9,724,919	\$ 10,339,257	\$ 10,643,479	102.9%
McCann	\$ 258,182	\$ 260,060	\$ 326,687	125.6%
Mt Greylock Regional	\$ 13,258,887	\$ 13,258,887	\$ 13,775,338	103.9%
Subtotal Schools	\$ 13,517,069	\$ 13,518,947	\$ 14,102,025	104.3%
Total Spending	\$ 23,241,988	\$ 23,858,204	\$ 24,745,504	103.7%
NonProperty Tax Rev Less Spend	\$ (19,052,874)	\$ (20,402,625)	\$ (20,815,242)	102.0%
Off-Budget Spending from Free Cash:				
Williamstown Youth Center	\$ 77,000	\$ 77,000	\$ 50,000	64.9%
Chamber of Commerce	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 55,000	110.0%
Sand Springs Recreation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Williamstown Preschool	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	100.0%
Subtotal NonProfits	\$ 177,000	\$ 177,000	\$ 155,000	87.6%
OPEB Reserve	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	100.0%
Compensated Balance Reserve	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	100.0%
Stabilization Fund	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 100,000	40.0%
Classification/Wage Study	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Capital Projects	\$ 1,118,000	\$ 1,118,000	\$ 1,396,000	124.9%
Offset Tax Levy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000	
Total Off-Budget	\$ 1,645,000	\$ 1,645,000	\$ 1,851,000	112.5%
Free Cash		\$ 1,895,508	\$ 1,864,854	
Free Cash Use/(Carryover)		\$ (250,508)	\$ (13,854)	
Approved Property Tax Levy		\$ 20,336,062	\$ 20,607,332	101.3%

Williamstown continues to operate under the Proposition 2.5 limit applicable to all Massachusetts communities. The \$20,607,332 approved 2025 levy is \$3.34 million less than the maximum allowable levy of \$23.95 million.

Long-time Finance Committee member Charles Fox announced his retirement. We are grateful for his service. We welcome Donna Quirk to the Committee.

Late breaking news: Elaine Neely, 40+ year Finance Committee-member recently announced her retirement from the committee. Elaine has not only worked on every annual town budget since the mid-1980s, she and others enhanced the overall effectiveness of the committee with Town Bylaw amendments in 1987 and 2011 to mandate multi-year capital budgeting. More recently, Elaine was asked to work with the Fire District on planning for the new fire station and again she contributed tirelessly. Elaine is a model for town volunteers: well-prepared, open-minded, discerning, challenging, occasionally tough, but always constructive and kind. She has quietly advised and cultivated many FinComm members (and Chairs) and we are grateful.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Craig Clough, Director

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is pleased to present this annual report, highlighting the key projects and initiatives undertaken over the past year. Our commitment to maintaining and improving the town's infrastructure remains steadfast as we continue to serve the community of Williamstown.

This year marks the inception of our comprehensive asset management program. We have embarked on a systematic approach to managing and maintaining our Facilities, Water, Sewer, Fleet, and Streets. This initiative is designed to enhance the efficiency and longevity of our public assets, ensuring they meet the current and future needs of our residents.

For instance, the Sewer Department is currently in the process of collecting data to update an asset management database. This database will be instrumental in developing a capital plan based on the collected data, facilitating targeted repairs and upgrades to the sewer collection system.

Our strategy includes extending this data collection effort to encompass all Public Works utilities and structures. This approach will enable us to develop a clear and actionable plan for routine maintenance and necessary upgrades, ensuring the sustainability and reliability of our infrastructure. Additionally, a key component of this comprehensive management program is the implementation of a rate study for our Water and Sewer services. By acquiring comprehensive asset data and creating a robust capital plan, we will be able to utilize this information to ensure that our rates are appropriately set. This will allow us to maintain and upgrade our systems effectively.

The DPW remains committed to exploring all available grants and financial assistance opportunities to conduct comprehensive assessments of the town's infrastructure. These assessments are vital for identifying areas in need of maintenance or improvement, thereby ensuring the safety and functionality of our public assets. Given the significant costs associated with these assessments, we will continue to seek external support and funding to facilitate this essential work.

The town is diligently working towards finalizing the design to stabilize an additional section of the Hoosic Riverbank near the Syndicate Road intersection. This area is at risk of undermining a critical 24-inch sewer main, and our efforts are focused on preventing further erosion and safeguarding this vital infrastructure. We have encountered several challenges related to design, protected species, and protected vegetation, which have slowed the permitting process. Despite these obstacles, we remain committed to completing this project to provide peace of mind for the residents in the immediate area.

Last summer, despite generally dry conditions, a few significant rainstorms caused additional erosion at the Cole Field post-closed landfill. This resulted in the failure of a 10-foot section of a previously stabilized area. The DPW is currently requesting design on a repair to address this issue to prevent further erosion and maintain the integrity of the landfill site.

We are excited to announce the commencement of the fitness pad project at Stetson Road skate park. This project, which began at the end of 2024, is expected to be completed in early 2025. The new fitness pad will provide a valuable recreational space for residents of all ages, promoting health and wellness within our community.

I invite you to review the annual reports from our Water and Sewer Superintendent and our Public Works Superintendent. These reports highlight the significant achievements and contributions of our Public Works departments throughout 2024.

The Department of Public Works remains dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for the residents of Williamstown through diligent management and the improvement of our town's infrastructure. We look forward to continuing our work in the coming year and appreciate the community's support and cooperation.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our Public Works employees for their unwavering dedication and exceptional hard work.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Justin Olansky, Superintendent

The year began with seasonal temperatures but a fairly easy Winter. Crews had nineteen snow and ice events from the first of the year until the first couple weeks of April. The year ended on a somewhat easy-going winter as well with an additional thirteen snow and ice events. The Public Works Departments prides themselves on making the roads as safe as possible when inclement weather arrives. This not only happens with snow and ice events but also wind and rain events.

Robert Orell, a senior Highway Department equipment operator retired with a little over 34 years of service. Bob spent many late nights plowing snow and numerous days keeping the roads in tip top shape. Kudos and thank you to Bob for his years of service provided to the Town of Williamstown.

With a mild Winter, crews were able to hit the ground running come Spring. Crews split up and tackled several drainage basins that failed throughout Winter. Other crew members cleaned ditches on gravel roads. Almost every gravel road saw some sort of drainage work. One specific event was when a drainage pipe collapsed under Summer Street causing water to back up and disperse down the road. Another was when the Sewer Department found an ancient pipe that came from the roads drainage system being discharged into the Sewer main. This was something that was done many years ago but is highly frowned upon now. The Sewer Department works diligently to make sure this doesn't happen. Departments work hand and hand to correct these findings when they arise. In early July, a micro burst came through Williamstown causing many trees to up root or break off. Crews in all departments worked many days cleaning up from this event.

Gravel roads were graded twice, once in the Spring and again in the Fall. Bee Hill Road and a couple others saw an increase in added gravel. This was done to try to build the road bed back up after years of erosion and heavy rain events. Road side mowing follows a similar pattern; which includes Hancock Road or Rt 43 West of the Five Corners.

Paving was completed throughout Town. These roads included School, Moorland, Park, Meachum and Whitman Street. Alongside a section of North Hoosac Road. Meachum Street sidewalk was reconstructed and during this time many residents were able to witness some sort of pavement preservation which included Crack Sealing and Fog Sealing. These methods of preservation are done hand in hand to completely seal the road from water penetration and to also extend the roads life expectancy by many years.

CEMETERY, PARKS, AND RECREATION

The town owns three cemeteries, several parks, and now a new shared use path. The Mohican Shared Use Path was completed this year providing the town and surrounding communities with a safe place to walk, run, or bike for 2.4 miles. This small public works department takes care of all the town's public areas in addition to the cemeteries and parks. This includes all the small intersection islands around town as well as the Williamstown Elementary School, Spring Street parking lot, Joyce Milne Library, Museum of History, Town Hall, and DPW grounds. All this work is accomplished with

three full-time employees, including the supervisor, and 4 seasonal employees. It still astounds me how much work this crew gets done in a week, especially with all the rain we have been getting which makes it almost impossible to complete their tasks. All of this is done, including cemetery burial services.

TRANSFER STATION

Williamstown Transfer Station is open to all residents who chose to buy either a yearly or temporary pass. You can participate in using the transfer station by purchasing a permit (sticker). This year the Town sold just under 1300 transfer station permits. That is a lot of vehicles visiting our small station weekly. The station offers rubbish disposal, food waste, demolition, metal recycling, plastic bottles, metal cans, glass bottle recycling, and paper recycling. In 2024, the Town saved copious amounts of money by having the paper compactor, which also prolonged the container by having less pulls throughout the year.

FACILITIES

2024 welcomed Stephen Rennell. Steve came to the Town with a heavy background in facility management. This Department takes care of local and state inspections for all Town-owned buildings. On top of making sure everything is running correctly along with custodial duties; Facilities is often called upon for building repairs and any upgrades that are needed within.

WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT

Dave Caron, Superintendent

The Water & Sewer Department is responsible for maintaining approximately 39 miles of water main and 41 miles of sewer main within the town. We have six full-time staff members that tend to the daily operations and keep things running as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Included in the six are Andon Dwyer and Robert Trites, both were welcomed to the staff in May and brought a strong mechanical background and a willingness to learn.

As part of the department's maintenance responsibilities and to ensure that we deliver good, clean drinking water to our residents, responding to and repairing the main water breaks, water service breaks, as well as repairing and/or replacing fire hydrants as needed, will always sit at the top of the priority list for Williamstown. Other maintenance, but no less important include sewer main breaks, sewer main plugs, along with the cleaning and inspections of sewer mains and sewer manholes throughout the year. We also have 18 sewer ejector pump stations throughout the town that we maintain on a weekly basis, this includes testing for proper alarm notification as well as warning light and efficient pump/motor operation.

As a combined department, the water & sewer staff responded to 20 watermain breaks and 6 plugged sewer main calls. Several calls for meter repair or replacement also came in. The replacement of 2 sewer ejector pumps was also required, one at Longview Terrace station and the other on Cold Spring Road. Only one fire hydrant requiring replacement this year was on Berkshire Drive due to age and lack of available parts.

As part of our I & I (Inflow & Infiltration) removal program, we took a step in the right direction with the installation of 3 new precast sewer manholes located on a section of 8" sewer main behind Berkshire Drive. The manholes replaced 3 older block & mortar manholes that were dilapidated and allowing ground water to infiltrate into the sewer system. The work on the manholes was completed by our in-house staff, this allowed us to keep the overall cost down while providing quality work. The epoxy spray lining of 9 sewer manholes located in different sections of town was another step in the right direction for I & I. The process eliminates all ground water from entering in through the manholes without having to replace them. The epoxy lining of the manholes was contracted to The Precision Group. The removal of this clean ground water from our sewer system is one step closer to eliminating the unnecessary treatment process of clean water at the plant, potentially lowering costs over time.

The Water & Sewer Dept. collaborated with the Highway Dept. to purchase a 2024 Sewer Equipment of America Vacuum/Jetter combination truck; the truck will replace a 2007 Camel Vacuum/Jetter Combination truck that had served the town well, but with several costly breakdowns in a short period of time, we knew it was time to remove the truck from the fleet. The combined purchase was to help alleviate such a large expense to either department's budget. The new truck will help both departments maintain the infrastructure within the town at a much higher level.

Another truck that was replaced in the department was a 2012 F250 utility body, this truck was also experiencing some expensive mechanical issues that made replacement an easy decision. The replacement for that truck was a 2024 Chevy 2500 utility body with an onboard air compressor and 50ft of air hose. This added feature will help with repairs and maintenance of the fire hydrants and water/sewer mains.

In closing, the town wide lead service line inventory for the water distribution system has been completed, we have compiled a list of services that will need some further investigation before the material can be identified. The work needed to identify the services with unknown material is slated to begin in the spring of 2025.

HOOSAC WATER QUALITY DISTRICT

Bradley O. Furlon, Chief Operator/District Manager



Hoosac Water Quality District

667 Simonds Road
Williamstown, Mass. 01267
Tel. 413-458-8423 Fax 413-458-5016
hwqd@hoosacwaterqualitydistrict.com

Annual Report to Williamstown & North Adams

Fiscal Year 2024

District Commission

Tim Lescarbeau, Chairman – North Adams
Hugh Daley, Vice Chairman - Williamstown
Barbara Murray, Secretary – North Adams
Russell Howard, Member - Williamstown

Chief Operator – Assistant Chief Operator

Bradley O. Furlon, Chief Operator/District Manager
Jake White, Interim Assistant Chief Operator

Narrative

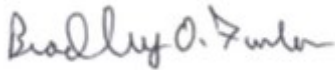
The Hoosac Water Quality District (District), which serves the Town of Williamstown and the City of North Adams, treated a total of 1,725,525,000 gallons of raw sewage during Fiscal Year 2024, which represents an increase in flow of 395,982,000 gallons as compared to Fiscal Year 2023. In addition, the District treated 481,614 pounds of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and 786,359 pounds of Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in FY 2024.

Some key highlights of FY 2024 were:

- The District, which includes six fully licensed wastewater operators, continues to operate for over 25 years with no permit violations. Even with hydraulic overloads from rain and storm events, the District personnel work tirelessly to ensure that all parameters and requirements of the District's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit are met. The District facility continues to produce final effluent better than the standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP). Reports are submitted to EPA and MADEP monthly, which outline all actions being taken to ensure complete compliance.
- In October 2024, the District received its renewed final NPDES permit. The new NPDES permit contains new reporting requirements, sampling requirements and laboratory analysis specifically for Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), which will be challenging for all District operators.
- In FY 2024, the District employees completed in-house capital projects, such as, upgrades to our confined space gas detection system, upgrades to the Aerator Variable Frequency drives, resurfacing of the influent grit channel floor and replacing over 200' of the final effluent sampling lines.
- On January 1, 2024, the District received its renewed 2-year Approval of Suitability (AOS) from MADEP to compost sludge. Since 1983, the District's compost facility has produced Type 1 compost as defined by MADEP. Approximately 4,133 yards were produced in FY24.
- Public interest in the District's facility continues to grow. The District's website, www.hoosacwaterqualitydistrict.com, gives an in-depth description of the operations of the treatment facility. Tours are given regularly to local college students, local grade school students and the general public.

As always, we look forward to the challenges each year presents to us and remain committed to keeping our communities clean and safe.

Respectfully submitted for the district,



Bradley O. Furlon
Chief Operator/District Manager

IT DEPARTMENT

Ken Ward, IT Specialist

It was my pleasure to join the staff at the Town of Williamstown in late July of 2024. I immediately set out to meet the staff and figure out where the Council on Aging, the Library, the DPW and the Police Department were all located. Technically I was fortunate to already have a capable partner in place in Renatus Technologies.

After getting my feet on the ground we set out to prioritize the urgent tasks. Our building firewalls that protect us from malicious actors were coming up to end of life. As a result, we replaced the firewalls at various locations.

As a natural extension to the project to replace the firewalls we also organized and labeled all the wiring. This will, I hope, reduce problem resolution time.

And last but not at all least, we sent out an RFP soliciting a vendor to partner with us and the Colins Center to create a new state of the art website. Each of the respondents met with a group of staff stakeholders who were able to ask questions about their capabilities and show us a few examples of their work. All the vendors had extensive experience working with Towns here in Massachusetts.

We look forward to the website launch soon.

Thank you,
Ken Ward
IT Specialist

PLANNING BOARD

Stephanie Boyd, Chair

Annual Report 2024 – Planning Board

The Planning Board is an elected Board, responsible for overseeing the long-term land use patterns of Williamstown through the Zoning Bylaw, The Subdivision Control Law, and Master Planning process. Following the May 2024 Town Election the Board is comprised of five members, chaired by Peter Beck, with additional members, Cory Campbell, Ken Kuttner, Roger Lawrence, and Samantha Page.

The past year the board worked on crafting a bylaw to allow the creation of cottage housing developments. These types of developments are small clusters of cottages surrounding a shared courtyard area. These were a more common form of housing prior to the rise of single family dominated zoning rules across most of the country in the 20th century. Noting the success of such developments elsewhere in Massachusetts such as the Pioneer Valley, the Planning Board drafted a set of rules allowing cottage housing developments for Williamstown. We were pleased to see the new bylaw gain community support and adoption at the May 2024 Town Meeting.

Additionally, the Board has also been working through the implementation of the Town's 2023 Comprehensive Plan, Envisioning Williamstown. Bylaw projects for 2025 include regulating short term rentals and enhancing zoning protections for our public water supply which is located under the Hoosic River floodplain in an artesian aquifer. We're also looking forward next year to working with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission on an update of our subdivision rules and regulations through Community One Stop funding. This continued focus on housing policy is another major initiative called for by our new Town Plan.

Finally, we want to take this opportunity to remind all our friends and neighbors that throughout 2024 the Planning Board will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month at 7 PM to discuss these and other important issues. We encourage the public to attend and discuss the present and future land use patterns of Williamstown, and how we grow, protect, and manage the fabric of our community.

WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP OF NORTHWEST AMERICA

Henry W. Art, Williamstown, Representative to the Board

The Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts is a public body that started its existence as the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership in 2019, with Williamstown as a charter member. In 2024 the State legislature passed a bill, signed by the Governor, to legally changing the name from its previous one, the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, to better reflect its mission and the cultural heritage of the region it serves. The Woodlands Partnership was established to be a shared forest stewardship collaboration among the US Forest Service, the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 21 municipalities and a dozen public and non-governmental organizations in Western Massachusetts.

Since its inception, the Partnership has had considerable success in providing grants to individual municipalities, and to the northwestern Massachusetts region, to broadly implement the goals of forest-based economic development and enhancing sustainable forest landscapes. This program, funded through grants from the U.S. Forest Service and the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, is now into its sixth cycle of project awards, and it is through these awards that the Partnership can most immediately act in its mission to facilitate the sustainable use and conservation of our regional forests.

Since the establishment of the Woodland Partnership grant program, Williamstown has been fortunate in receiving grants to aid in management of town woodlands in the face of changing local and global climates, and to increase the resilience of our forested lands, including replacing dead sugar maples on the Main Street town common between Field Park and Cole Avenue, and then, in 2021-2022, the Town receive a Woodland Partnership Implementation Grant of \$20,000 for Phase 1 of tree planting to replace trees killed by the emerald ash borer on the Town Green along Main Street. In 2024, the Town received a Woodland Partnership Implementation Grant of \$25,000 for Phase 2 of tree planting on the Town Green, completing the planting of the Main Street parkways with a diversity of species to replace ash trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer.



Figure 12: Greylock from Sheep Hill

Woodlands PARTNERSHIP



The Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts (established as the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership in 2018 state law) is a public body with its board comprised of representatives from the 21-town region (Franklin County: **Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Florida, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe, Shelburne**; Berkshire County: **Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, New Ashford, North Adams, Peru, Savoy*, Williamstown, Windsor**) as well as from Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Berkshire Regional

Planning Commission, Deerfield River Watershed Association, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin Land Trust, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Hoosic River Watershed Association, Lever, Inc., Massachusetts Society of American Foresters, Massachusetts Forest Alliance, Ohketeau Cultural Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the U.S. Forest Service. New England Forestry Foundation serves as Administrative Agent for the Partnership.

Active & Ongoing

- [Ten-Year Plan \(2023-2033\)](#) continues to guide Board action.
- [WoodlandsPartnership.org](#) – our new website – launched in June.
- [TheForestCenter.org](#) also debuted in June – The Forest Center of Northwest Massachusetts (sponsored by the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program) is a resource provided by the Forest Climate Resilience Program, a multi-partner initiative hosted by Mass Audubon. This website provides community members as well as state and municipal staff with information on the region's forests, threats to their healthy functioning, and options for land stewardship.
- The Woodlands Partnership has been awarded \$75,000 through the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs to contract with the UMass Boston Collins Center for Public Management to study the effects of tourism and state Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) shortfalls/inequities on municipal safety services within the region and provide recommendations.
- Planning and implementation of climate-smart forestry practices on properties with Forest Stewardship Climate Plans is underway with cost-share funds and application development. Practices include thinning, riparian buffer planting, invasive species treatment, under-planting, forest regeneration patches, and forest improvement of degraded stands or timber stand improvement.
- "Go Big" Forest Legacy application submitted – local regional land trusts work on pursuing conservation projects following the Partnership's successful admittance into the eligibility area.

*As of January 2025, Savoy has not yet voted to join the Partnership.

2024

- \$550,000 awarded in grant funding to ten rural communities and six regional conservation and economic development organizations (details on the back!)
- Colrain voted to join—welcome!
- Governor Healey signs Partnership name change legislation into law—thank you to Sen. Mark and Rep. Blais!
- U.S. Forest Service formally recognizes the name change to the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts
- The Woodlands Partnership Board votes to pursue National Heritage Area Designation and complete the necessary feasibility study
- The Woodlands Partnership is named a Regional Conservation Partner (RCP) joining a network of over 50 RCPs and over 600 organizations and agencies
- Workshops on Estate planning and land conservation held – at Franklin Land Trust and Williamstown Rural Lands
- Woods walks held in Hawley, North Adams, Rowe, and Savoy
- Trees planted in Charlemont for riparian restoration
- Inaugural Indigenous-led book club reading *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future* by Patty Krawec
- Ethan Tapper book reading hosted in Shelburne Falls – *How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World*

Town(s) or Regional Organization	FY 2024 Project	Project Description	Funding
Rowe & Heath	Highlands Regional Trail – Route and Landowner Agreements	Creates a regional trail extending from Shelburne across these two towns to the Mohawk Trail State Forest.	\$50,000
Berkshire's Tomorrow Inc.	Berkshires Outside Website (Phase II)	Supports improvements to www.berkshiresoutside.org , a county-wide, comprehensive website of information about outdoor recreation assets in the region. This grant will facilitate improvements, as well as outreach and promotion.	\$75,000
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)	Forest, Trees, Ecology and Climate Educational Project	Educates locals and visitors about forests, trees, and ecology through the creation of educational handouts, and hosting tree walks. An estate planning workshop will be hosted to encourage landowners to consider land conservation in their plans.	\$13,164
Windsor	Road Maintenance for a Climate Resilient State Forest (Invasives Reduction)	Implements invasive species inventory and management recommendations for 15 miles of gravel roads through Windsor State Forest maintained by the Town.	\$25,000
Charlemont	Recreational Infrastructure Project and River Access parking	Installation of portable toilets at the Shun Pike rest area to provide facilities for visitors and enhanced parking facilities in town to improve weekend river access and use.	\$25,000
Williamstown	Town Green Plantings for Resilience and Diversity	Completes the planting of the Town Green with a diversity of species to replace ash trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer.	\$25,000
Shelburne	Improve and expand trail access in Shelburne	Establishes the trailhead for a hiking trail along the Deerfield River that will connect to the Mahican Mohawk Trail.	\$9,000
Franklin Land Trust	Lands for Hope	Installation of signage to promote public access, as well as to educate visitors about management practices at three Franklin Land Trust properties located within the Partnership Region.	\$49,532
Connecticut River Conservancy	Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study and Stewardship Plan	Completes a Wild and Scenic River Feasibility Study and Stewardship Plan for the Deerfield River.	\$75,000
Heath	Wayfinding Kiosks	Creates new wayfinding infrastructure to direct the public to trailheads and other public recreation opportunities.	\$25,000
Rowe	Pelham Lake Park – Implementing Climate Smart Forest Plan	Continues to implement one of the first climate smart forestry plans in the Commonwealth with data collection to assess the success towards meeting long-term goals and educational signage.	\$12,840
Greenagers	Youth based jobs program	Develops a youth-based job program designed to address trail safety, accessibility, and sustainability in the City of North Adams, the town of Savoy, and the town of Williamstown with youth, ages 14-24, recruited and hired from local high schools and colleges.	\$18,057
New England Forestry Foundation	A study of the Effects of Tourism on Municipal Services in the Woodlands Partnership Region	Evaluates municipal services in the Partnership region to identify opportunities to improve services to meet increasing tourism, use and accessibility of public forests in the region, and ensure that municipal services can keep pace.	\$75,000
Peru	Purchase of an UTV	Purchase of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) for search and rescue purposes and wildlands fire prevention.	\$25,000
Leyden	Purchase of an UTV	Purchase of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) for search and rescue purposes and wildlands fire prevention.	\$25,000
Adams	Greylock Glen Forest Center (shade structure)	Funds the design and installation of a cantilevered shade structure for outdoor events and educational programs.	\$25,000

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) offers yearly grants to communities that have voted to participate in the Partnership and to regional organizations that work in the Partnership Region to advance the goals of the Woodlands Partnership. To learn more visit woodlandspartnership.org/implementation-grants

WILLIAMSTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Michael Ziembra

Williamstown Police Department

Mission Statement

What we exist to accomplish is at the core of our mission statement. A mission statement allows us to maintain direction, eliminate complacency and remain focused on our goals and objectives.

“The mission of the Williamstown Police Department is to protect and serve our community by enhancing the safety and quality of life for all through education, problem solving and enforcement.”

Agency Values

The value statement informs the community of the way we will conduct our business and deliver services. It is at the core of who we are and serves as our moral compass. Even if we err, we will have the courage to acknowledge our mistake and act in a way that ensures it will not happen again.

“Entrusted with the authority to maintain the public peace, the Williamstown Police Department strives to adhere to five core values. These values provide the guidance and direction for the fair treatment of everyone in our community.”

- **Professionalism**

Our conduct and demeanor display the highest standard of personnel and organizational excellence. As a professional organization, the “Law Enforcement Code of Ethics” guides us.

- **Integrity**

We are committed to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct, which are the cornerstones of our profession. We will uphold public trust and our commitment to our core values.

- **Respect**

We recognize the authority we hold and will treat others as we would like to be treated. We will faithfully, and without bias, honor our obligations to the community.

- **Dedication**

To the organization, each other, our families, and the citizens we serve and having an unquestionable work ethic.

- **Excellence**

There is always room for improvement and the search for improvement leads to excellence. We aim for excellence in everything we do.”

Police Chief Michael Ziembra

The Police Chief oversees the operations of the Police Department which includes the Police Officers and the Dispatchers in the Dispatch Center. We are a regional PSAP or Public Safety Answering Point for E911 calls, one of only six PSAPS in the county.

All these employees are hard-working, dedicated professionals. Williamstown is very fortunate to have these professionals in these incredibly trying times not only locally but also across the country. Every aspect of the policing profession changes what seems like almost daily. The members of this department endure these changes and embrace them with open arms, welcoming new techniques in policing and resisting complacency.

I consider this agency to be part of my extended family and I care about and respect each and every one of them for collectively helping to make this town safe. In the year 2024, your Police Department looks forward to continuing to

listen to community input, demonstrating transparency and finding new ways to address the concerns of the community we serve.

We look forward to the new year as we continue to proceed on the path to accreditation by updating policies and procedures and utilizing a new informative website and social media site while we strive to be the most professional agency we can be, all while continuing to engage with the community we serve. Currently, the timeline for Accreditation has us on schedule to be accredited by late fall of 2025. We have seen the benefits of implementing Body Worn Cameras after being awarded a state grant to assist with the purchase and implementation of the project. The addition of three Sergeants to the management of the department has been a welcome one, as they assist the Chief with some of the administrative duties of the department as well as provide guidance and oversight during shifts when the Chief is not present.

One of the duties of the Police Chief is not only to be the team leader within the agency, but also the face of the department externally to the public. No function is too big or small. In a town such as Williamstown, the Chief may be in the Office one day working on administrative tasks, but answering patrol calls the next or answering the phone in Dispatch.

We still offer our Training/EOC Room (during non-Covid times) as a community meeting space should any groups desire to take advantage of this.

Follow us on Facebook as “Williamstown Police Department, Massachusetts” or at williamstownmapolice.com

Administration / Personnel:

Chief: Michael Ziemba

Accreditation Manager/Analyst: Charles Chandler

Sergeants: Shuan William, Anthony Duprat

Detective Sergeant: Calvin Dziedziak

Patrol Officers: Tania Hernandez, Craig Eichhammer, John McConnell, Scott Skorupski, Brad Sacco, David Jennings, Haley Sigsbury, Ryan Dubie, Raymond Duprea

Dispatchers: Laurie Tuper, Barb Brucato, Christy Lemoine, Carter King, Melissa Rustin (Part Time Dispatcher), Morgan Goodell (Part Time Dispatcher), Carson Boyce (Part Time Dispatcher), Keiyara Thoresen (Part Time Dispatcher)

Custodian: Jim Blair

Staffing:

The POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) Committee and the Police Reform Bill have brought welcome changes and certifications to policing that will continue to professionalize police services across the state.

Many staffing changes in the department over the last several years have continued to keep the department operating below full capacity staffing levels, but due to recruitment efforts and the desire to work for a forward-thinking professional agency, we have been able to return to full staff in late 2024. Much of our recruitment efforts involve communication through specialty schools and universities that have students interested in internships with police departments. Several of our existing full-time staff members were former interns that desired to work for our department after their school experience with us. Most frequently, we partner with Smith Vocational High School in Northampton and Mount Greylock Regional High School here in Williamstown in placing interns in the department for certain semesters of the school year.

We were fortunate to hire two new part time dispatchers during 2024, Morgan Goodell and Carson Boyce.

Dispatch:

Our Police Department is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Aside from dispatching Police Officers and handling walk-in reports, we also dispatch for Williamstown Fire and Northern Berkshire EMS, as well as serving as the after-hours point of contact for both the Department of Public Works and the State Department of Transportation. Our Dispatch Center is a crucial part of our agency and offers the only 24/7 functioning public safety department in town. Our department is also a warming or cooling center as well as a safe place for all residents or people travelling through town at all hours. This is only possible due to the presence of our civilian dispatchers at the station. Having a 24/7 manned station allows people to drop off or pick up paperwork, ask questions, get directions and is the reason we are able to have a drug drop box at the station.

Calls for service are generated through Dispatch in a variety of ways. They can be initiated via the radio or the cruiser's Mobile Data Terminal (MDT), a person can simply walk into the station requesting assistance, or they may come in through phone calls to business, emergency or 911 phone lines. In 2024, the Department received/returned **16,793** calls on the business lines and another **4,124** calls on the emergency or 911 lines.

There were 14,797 calls for service requiring some sort of action and are listed below by Call-Type category and are then broken down by shift:

<u>CALLS BY CATEGORY</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
911 ABANDONED CALLS	83	71	36
911 TEST CALLS	83	84	70
911 WRONG NUMBER CALLS	109	119	70
911 TRANSFER CALL	66	174	117
911 OVERFLOW - ADAMS	1	0	2
911 HANG UP CALL	88	91	76
911 SILENT CALLS	99	88	65
911 OVERFLOW – NORTH ADAMS	41	32	38
ABANDONED MV	3	5	6
ALARM – BURGLAR	182	173	172
ALARM – OTHER	26	25	32
AMBULANCE CALL – WILLIAMSTOWN	1212	1448	1377
AMBULANCE CALL – HANCOCK	54	28	3
AMBULANCE CALL – MUTUAL AID	5	6	4
AMBULANCE CALLS – NEW ASHFORD	4	7	1
AMBULANCE CALL - NORTH ADAMS	9	5	7
AMBULANCE CALLS – POWNAL	1	2	0
AMBULANCE TRANSFERS	300	378	150
ANIMAL BITE	13	13	20
ANIMAL CONTROL	259	233	273
NEW ALARM PERMITS ISSUED	46	1	0
ALARM PERMIT RENEWALS	71	72	46
ANNOYING PHONE CALLS	11	1	5

ASSAULT	15	14	13
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – DPW	54	59	46
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – FIRE	45	25	42
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – MGRSD	11	23	10
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY	202	171	114
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – RMV	3	3	5
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – POLICE	127	122	124
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – UTILITY	73	71	93
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – WCSS	28	21	22
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY – REPO	4	3	6
BREAKING & ENTRY	3	11	9
B.O.L.O.	110	84	174
BOMB SCARE	-	-	2
BUILDING CHECK	2454	3841	4842
BURGLARY	1	1	2
CODE RED NOTIFICATION	-	-	4
DISTURBANCE	137	117	120
DISABLED MV	87	78	82
DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE	30	41	35
ESCORT / TRANSPORT	5	11	11
FINGERPRINTING	30	60	47
FIRE DISPATCH – WILLIAMSTOWN	296	255	407
FIRE DISPATCH – MUTUAL AID	8	10	13
FIREARMS OFFENSE	1	4	1
FOLLOW UP / INVEST	-	-	22
FOREST WARDEN DISPATCH	16	17	9
ILLEGAL DUMPING	9	4	5
JUNK MOTOR VEHICLE	0	2	0
K-9 REQUEST – WILLIAMSTOWN	6	4	6
K-9 REQUESTS – OTHER AGENCY	10	6	10
LARCENY	60	93	91
LICENSE TO CARRY	58	86	113
LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION	1	3	17
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	92	89	169
MISSING PERSON	12	25	10
MOTOR VEHICLE LOCKOUT	79	83	69
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT	211	197	185
MOTOR VEHICLE STOP	690	775	1583
NARCOTICS INVEST	4	3	6
NOISE COMPLAINT	24	15	19
PARKING COMPLAINT	62	34	51
PARKING/OVERNIGHT APPROVED	-	-	80
PERSONNEL COMPLAINT	1	1	3
PROPERTY DAMAGE	10	10	22

PARKING CHECK	397	377	510
POWER OUTAGE	4	18	9
RECORDS REQUEST	331	400	402
FOUND / LOST PROPERTY	130	101	93
PUBLIC SERVICE	198	178	180
PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT	57	63	60
RECOVERED STOLEN MV	1	1	1
ROAD CONDITIONS	139	167	236
SERVE RESTRAINING ORDER	19	12	14
SEXUAL OFFENSES	3	13	10
SUDDEN DEATH	6	7	7
SECTION 12	64	36	25
SHOPLIFTING	3	6	6
SUSPICIOUS MOTOR VEHICLE	120	140	225
SYSTEMS TEST	-	-	80
AUTO THEFT	1	4	1
SOLICITING	58	42	82
SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION	0	5	4
SPEED TRAILER ASSIGNMENT	4	3	5
SYSTEM TROUBLE	11	6	5
SERVE SUMMONS	18	25	31
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY	306	290	312
THREATS / HARASSMENT	70	69	75
TRAFFIC CONTROL	498	513	640
TRAFFIC COMPLAINT	215	201	222
TRESPASS	25	61	30
UNWANTED GUEST	30	28	31
VANDALISM	24	17	20
VIOLATION RESTRAINING ORDER	5	3	11
SERVE WARRANT	8	16	25
WELL-BEING CHECK	123	149	181
TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE:	11665	12479	14797

2024 CALLS FOR SERVICE BY SHIFT:

<u>SHIFT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF CALLS</u>
Days / 7am to 3pm	8532
Evenings / 3pm to 11pm	3932
Nights / 11pm to 7am	2333
Total Calls for Service	14797

Criminal Charges/Arrests/Protective Custody/Incident Reports:

The Police Department issued to court one hundred and thirty-three (133) arrest reports against people for various criminal activity throughout the year 2024. Nine (9) adults were placed into Protective Custody. Many calls for service

require much more than a simple log note entry into our Records System. These types of calls are assigned an incident number where Officers can provide a much more detailed narrative as to what occurred. In 2024, two hundred and thirty-three (233) incident reports were generated. All these report types are submitted monthly to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS):

Traffic Enforcement:

Traffic enforcement is a portion of the Police Department's duties. The town has approximately eighty-six (86) miles of public roadways, with the major routes being State Routes 2, 7, and 43. Specific traffic complaints are received regularly at the Police Department. As cell phone technologies advance with improved reception, more motorists are calling to report the improper operation of other motorists. When possible, patrols are directed to these areas in an attempt to locate the specific motor vehicle. A second type of complaint commonly received is when a resident or group of residents in a specific neighborhood report speeding vehicles in a specific section of town. To assist in strategizing enforcement in these specific areas, the Police Department deploys a speed monitoring trailer to record the number of vehicles, speed, direction and time of day to allow for more specific enforcement action. These trailers also serve as a deterrent as well by displaying both the posted road speed and the vehicle's speed, and then flashing red when the posted speed is exceeded. In addition to the mobile trailers, we also have two (2) permanent speed monitoring signs installed on Route 43 (Water Street and Green River Road); two (2) signs on School Street and two (2) signs on North Hoosac Road.

In 2024, the Police Department responded to one hundred and ninety-seven (185) motor vehicle crashes.

<u>CRASH ACTIVITY SUMMARY</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
FATAL MV CRASHES	0	0	0
CRASHES INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS / CYCLISTS	3	2	1
TOTAL MV CRASHES:	211	197	185

<u>TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
CRIMINAL MOTOR VEHICLE VIOLATIONS	89	68	67
CIVIL MOTOR VEHICLE VIOLATIONS	72	146	132
WARNING MOTOR VEHICLE VIOLATIONS	660	1044	1384
TOTAL MOTOR VEHICLE STOPS:	690	775	1583

<u>PARKING ENFORCEMENT</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
HANDICAP ZONE	0	1	11
PROHIBITED AREA	24	43	63
DOUBLE PARKING	1	0	2
ALL NIGHT PARKING	652	690	820
WITHIN 10' OF FIRE HYDRANT	1	0	1
ACROSS PRIVATE DRIVE / ROAD	1	1	2
WITHIN 20' OF INTERSECTION	0	0	2
UPON CROSSWALK / SIDEWALK	2	2	1
WRONG DIRECTION OR MORE THAN 12" FROM CURB	26	38	37

SNOW & ICE REMOVAL	0	4	1
OVERTIME PARKING	95	74	570
TOTAL PARKING TICKETS:	804	853	1510

Training:

Training is a very important element for effective policing. Laws are constantly being created or updated, and technology is rapidly advancing in the world of law enforcement. There is a delicate balance between staying current, and sometimes even ahead of these changes, while working within the strict confines of a budget. Williamstown is pleased to announce that our staff logged a grand total of 1520 hours of training collectively in 2024 as a department. The Police Department recognizes the importance of training, and every year all officers receive a minimum of forty (40) hours of state-mandated In-Service training through classroom sessions conducted by the Berkshire County Chiefs of Police Association, or online through various agencies such as the Municipal Police Training Committee, Massachusetts State Police or the Municipal Police Institute. Mandated topics in 2024 included: Legal Updates; Rules of the Road; Reports and Testimony; Officer Wellness, We Are What We Do; CPR, AED and First Responder; Defensive Tactics; Peace Officer Standards and Training; CJIS Security Training and Fingerprint Background Checks; and Firearms Training and Qualifications. Officers also completed non-mandatory training for Narcan and Active Shooter Hostile Event Response Training as well as refreshers on other departmental policies and procedures.

Most of these training opportunities were held online, or on site in our training room where we were able to host multiple dates and invite surrounding law enforcement agencies to participate and network, also allowing many to attend while on shift to reduce overtime costs.

All Williamstown Police Officers are also certified Dispatchers, and therefore, all officers and civilian dispatch staff are mandated by the state to also receive a minimum of sixteen (16) hours annually of In-Service training in the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) field as well as maintaining bi-annual recertification in Call Handling Foundations, CPR Certification, and Emergency Medical Dispatch with Pre-Arrival and Telecommunicator CPR. This year the 16 hours of education was centered around Law Enforcement Dispatch. All Employees also completed the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Law Review required for town employees.

Eight (8) hours of continuing education each calendar year is required to maintain status as an animal control officer. Officer David Jennings also maintains this certification as an Animal Control Officer for the department. We handle a variety of animal concerns (sick/injured) as well as operate the Animal Shelter. Health Inspector Ruth Russell is also a certified Animal Inspector and assists with state-mandated rabies quarantines when necessary.

We also conduct training within the Police Department, as well as for other agencies, with our own staff functioning as instructors. Within the department, Officer Brad Sacco instructs the annual qualifications of handgun & long guns at the firearms range as well as the use of the Taser.

Grants:

In early 2024, the following grant money was awarded to the Department to be used for the 2023 fiscal year. In most instances, the grants come with specific rules regarding implementation, and they generally do not allow their use to supplant any portion of the operating budget.

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
State 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Support	Dispatch Equipment & Personnel Costs	\$38,392
State 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Training	EMD Training	\$18,597
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Equipment Grant	Operations Center Equipment	\$2700

Specialized Assignments:

While each officer serves in both the patrol and dispatch roles as their primary function, some are given specialized assignments to enhance our role in public safety. The specialized assignments often require additional specialized training and allow the officers to work regularly with other agencies to further hone their skills. In return, the department fosters relationships that work seamlessly when additional resources and manpower are needed from outside agencies.

- **Animal Control:**

All officers respond to the various animal calls received within the year and enforce the Town Bylaws as they apply to dogs & cats. Oftentimes, callers are redirected to private pest control companies for nuisance wildlife calls as the Department is not authorized to relocate any wildlife. Dogs and cats with possible rabies exposure through bites or wounds of an unknown origin are viewed and quarantined as required by law. To maintain a level of consistency, Officer David Jennings is the certified Animal Control Officer.

- **Berkshire Law Enforcement Task Force (BLETF): Sergeant Shuan William**

While assigned to the BLETF-DEU (Digital Evidence Unit), Officer Shuan William has assisted in numerous investigations with the BLETF, along with the downloading of cell phones & similar electronic devices (tablets/GPS). The information that has been gained from these data extractions has helped law enforcement significantly strengthen the criminal cases they were derived from.

Since the implementation of the DEU eleven (13) years ago, a growing number of towns from Berkshire County, along with the patrol barracks of the Massachusetts State Police, have taken advantage of having a Digital Evidence Unit in the county. DEU members have assisted in numerous investigations by assisting other police officers in authoring and obtaining the necessary search warrants to be granted permission to search these electronic devices for evidence of a crime.

- **K-9 Program: Sergeant Anthony Duprat and K-9 Shelby**

Officer Anthony Duprat and K-9 Shelby have proven to be a great team, with many calls for service requesting their service and consistent training logged to date.

The Williamstown K-9 team is generally requested to respond to multiple calls for service in and around Williamstown. Several scenarios that may require the use of the K-9 for a search are: suspects that have just committed a crime and fled on foot; persons who have indicated that they wished to harm themselves and walked away; persons fleeing from a motor vehicle crash or stop, and lost or missing persons. Even in instances where a specific subject is not located, the tracks for suspects may provide vital information where evidence is found along the track or ending in certain locations where motor vehicles were used to remove the suspect from the area.

The K-9 Unit also participated in public service events which covered a range of topics from informative presentations on the role and use of the K-9 to school children of varying ages, presentations as well as question and answer sessions and demonstrations at various local parades and block parties as well as National Night Out. They also participate in the

annual MPTC Police Academy instruction/presentation to new recruits, explaining the entire process for utilizing a tracking dog in the field.

Training is a constant process for the K-9 Unit which, on average, logs many hours each month. Most training is done locally, in different scenarios, and in varied communities. Many times, training time is also spent with the Pittsfield Police Department, Adams Police Department and other local departments that benefit from a K-9 program.

Many local communities have recognized the benefit of having a certified K-9 Unit as part of the Police Department and have acquired one of their own. At the inception of Williamstown's K-9 program there were no grants that were offered to assist with expenses and startup costs, but that has now changed. Many area municipalities have been awarded these grants and now have K-9 Units trained to respond to calls for service, providing a larger resource of K-9 responses, easing the burden on the existing K-9 Units in the area.

To date, the new K-9 Units have selected either a Shepherd or Malinois canine, focusing training on tracking, article and/or narcotics detection and/or a patrol dog, leaving Williamstown's Shelby as the only bloodhound in all Western Massachusetts. Bloodhounds are renowned for their scent tracking ability, and this is Shelby's only responsibility. Shelby has also proven to be a great bond between law enforcement and the community as she is a very friendly dog who loves attention.

- **School Safety: Officer Brad Sacco**

Under normal circumstances, patrols are directed to the area of Williamstown Elementary, Pine Cobble and Mt. Greylock Regional High School, and the surrounding streets during the commutes to and from school.

While Williamstown is a safe community, the Police Department has dedicated much time to planning and preparing for a variety of emergency scenarios. While we hope these tragic events that occur across the nation never become a reality here, training for them is unfortunately a necessity. Keeping the schools safe is a team effort and would not be possible without full cooperation and communication between several agencies. These agencies consist primarily of educators and administrators of the Williamstown Elementary School, Mount Greylock Regional High School and Pine Cobble School, and the Williamstown Police Department. Neighboring agencies also play a vital role in school safety as well. The Massachusetts State Police, North Adams Police and Lanesborough Police also assist and participate in our drills on a regular basis as their respective agencies would be called to respond if an event were to occur. In turn, we have assisted with drills and training in the North Adams, Adams, Florida, Lanesborough and Hancock Schools. Officers from each agency that are assigned to the school safety initiative communicate with and update each other on a regular basis regarding any changes/advancements in the schools.

To fully understand the topic of school safety and to stay current with national responses, Sacco was certified several years ago as an instructor for the ALICE (Alert. Lockdown. Inform. Counter. Evacuate.) curriculum, a nationally recognized program designed to educate and instruct Law Enforcement responses to active threats within the schools. Sacco is also certified in ALERRT, a similar program to ALICE.

This training is fact and statistics-based and encourages a whole new way of addressing threats within the school; a drastic departure from the formerly accepted practices of simply locking students and staff into classrooms. The program also encourages attendance by school personnel and allows for law enforcement and school staff to take the curriculum practices back into the school for dissemination to the rest of the staff for implementation. This program, while more specifically designed for schools, can be adapted for most businesses, and can be presented by the Police Department upon request.

Williams College, Williamstown Elementary School, Mount Greylock Regional High School, Williamstown Youth Center, Pine Cobble School, Williamstown Commons, Sweet Brook Care Center and Images Cinema have also received this training presentation.

Sacco spends time each day between calls for service at the schools interacting with faculty, staff and the student body. The relationships he builds are quite evident when you see children seeking him out at our community events and asking for him by name.

- **Field Training Officers**

Training is an essential element for effective policing in the 21st Century. Laws in the Commonwealth are constantly being created or updated while technology rapidly advances in the criminal justice system. The police department is mandated by law to receive forty (40) hours of In-Service training yearly. However, your police department recognizes the significance of progressive instruction and strives to meet the measures of a contemporary law enforcement agency to serve our community best.

In its second year now, we recognize the importance and consistency of having certified field training officers (FTO), within our department. Sgt. Anthony Duprat and Detective Sgt Kalvin Dziedziak became the department's first two certified FTOs after completing the certification program hosted by the Massachusetts Police Training Council (MPTC) employing the nationally accepted "San Jose Model." In 2023, Officers John McConnell and David Jennings were also certified as FTOs. While the police academy provides new officers extensive training on basic competency to perform the job, a notable gap remains between classroom exercises and real-world police work. Our certified FTOs will train new officers for our department and the community's needs while acting as mentors, coaches, and evaluators in an intensive one-on-one 12-week program. All newly hired officers of the Williamstown Police Department must successfully complete the FTO program to continue employment with the department. Our FTOs will provide daily and weekly reports to the Chief of Police throughout the entire training program assessing the trainees' performance.

Community Oriented Programs

The Police Department continued its Community Policing approach throughout 2024 and will do so well into the future. Community Policing is a style of police work that puts heavy emphasis on partnering with the community and problem solving as many issues as possible that threaten to erode the quality of life within the community. A large emphasis is placed on the smaller, less obvious issues to help establish ways of dealing with them before they can become a source of erosion to the quality of life for the residents and visitors of our community. The Community Policing philosophy tackles the smaller issues that tend to lead up to these more serious crimes to prevent them from occurring altogether.

- **A Safer Williamstown:**

This program allows the Police Department to issue an informational brochure to all residents that apply for and receive either a Firearms Identification Card (FID) or a License to Carry (LTC) a firearm. The brochure focuses on safe gun storage, gun safety rules, and important points of law. Through a partnership with Project Child Safe, the Police Department is also able to distribute gun safety locks, free of charge, to all residents. Anyone in need of gun safety locks should call or stop by the Williamstown Police Department. Officer Sacco performs all License to Carry (LTC) and Firearms Identification Card (FID) applications and renewals. This is generally done between 8AM - 2PM. Residents should call first to check availability.

The issuance of the FID or LTC by the Police Department has been expedited by the Police Department implementing MIRCS (Massachusetts Instant Record Check System). MIRCS is a program implemented through the Criminal History

Systems Board for online instant record checks, photos and fingerprinting for firearms licensing applicants. It improves efficiency in the licensing process by confirming data and fingerprint identification immediately. This system allows for an electronic application process to reduce the delays caused by forwarding paper applications by mail.

- **Community Events/Planning:**

The Police Department usually stays busy directing traffic around numerous events throughout the year. We were able to assist with Trick or Treat on Halloween and the July 4th parade as well as several other parade events. This year, in addition to more roaming patrols to keep the children safe while out trick or treating, Officer Skorupski and Sigsbury set up a location for handing out candy and small toys to all the children out that night. This event is yet another great way to interact with our community during happy times that are enjoyable for the officers just as much as it is for the children! The extra patrols assisted with traffic control and interaction with community members for successful events with no injuries or issues.

This year saw a dramatic increase in the amount of community events we sponsored and participated in. Thanks in part to the SPCP (Strengthening Police Community Partnerships) Council, we were able to engage with the community and the youths for multiple kickball games in town throughout the summer. We also hosted another very successful National Night Out at the Spruces Park in August that drew hundreds of community members. The event was incredibly well attended, enough so that we look forward to hosting it again this year!

The event was sponsored and organized by Chief Ziemba through the Police Department as well as the North Berkshire Community Coalition and local community member Andrea Bryant. Many entities donated time, resources, and money to make this event a success. The evening at the Spruces saw many local vendors, kids' games, demonstrations, tractor rides, hot dogs, hamburgers and ice cream. Police, Fire and EMS interacted with the community for the four-hour event that was a great way for the community to get to meet with each other and get to know local first responders at the same time.

When the weather got cooler, we switched to board game nights at the Harper Center that also were well attended. These events culminated with a Holiday Gathering at the Police Department in mid-December that saw roughly one hundred and twenty community members enjoying crafts, games, holiday themed decorations and food. The primary points of contact for organizing these events were Officers Tania Hernandez and Haley Sigsbury who both did an outstanding job seeing these through successfully. We look forward to the events on the horizon for 2025!

- **Department of Justice Program**

In July of 2021 Chief Ziemba contacted the DOJ (Department of Justice) requesting to participate in their program of Strengthening Police and Community Relations. This endeavor was an effort to continue to open communication and dialogue with the community we serve, answering questions and providing transparency. All who live and work in the community were welcome to participate.

After many meetings, the event was held in early March of 2022. It was attended by roughly eighty community members and was a great day of dialogue, problem solving and perspective sharing. The process was methodical and purposeful on the part of DOJ as they follow a structured program they have used in many communities. Several key topics of concern/improvement were identified. Roughly a dozen of the attendees volunteered to sign up for the after-action group to meet with the Police Chief and other department members to implement and discuss the concerns. That group was identified as the SPCP Council.

In July of 2022, the SPCP Council began monthly meetings where a process was established for their role. Since then, many topics have been addressed and explained with much action taken that ultimately results in a better functioning

police department and stronger community relationships. I'm thankful for the community members that have agreed to spend their time on this endeavor.

After concluding its primary mission during the Spring of 2023, the SPCP group agreed to, at Chief Ziemba's request, stay on as a community sounding board for issues that may arise in the future. This group continues to discuss and ask questions as needed throughout the year and still meets/emails with Ziemba on a regular basis. They also assisted at many of our community events this year and we thank them for their continued support and presence.

- **Hub Initiative:**

We are excited to participate in and help launch a coordinated group of professional service providers that will assist community members that are struggling on multiple fronts. Officer Brad Sacco is the liaison to this group and attends weekly meetings to address issues in our community. This effort is hopefully the start of many new alliances to assist people in our community that need it.

- **Reform:**

Continual training on our policy reform will be ongoing through our PowerDMS system. This process involves adapting each policy to our agency (from an already accredited agency) and then formatting it for review by the entire department. Each policy is then acknowledged and signed off on to ensure accurate accountability from every member. Now that this has been accomplished, PowerDMS tracks each policy and brings it up for review by the administration and review by all employees. Tests on the policies are regularly assigned to all staff to ensure that the policies are understood.

We have incorporated roughly one hundred (100) new policies into our department, phasing out older outdated versions for the modernized model that will ultimately allow us to follow through on the accreditation process. It's anticipated that the policy update will continue to streamline operations with best practices as we approach the next phase of the accreditation process. This is a necessary, continual process to ensure we stay current and on the cutting edge of best practice for our agency.

We have much more rigorous standards of documentation, accountability and detailed record keeping, following State mandates for Internal Affairs documentation and reporting. This adds transparency and ownership to the professional standards we are implementing.

- **Lock Box Program:**

Special attention is focused on the senior citizens of Williamstown such quality-of-life issues, crime prevention measures and identity thefts and scams. One such initiative continued in 2024 included the purchase of numerous Lock Box units that are utilized to secure a spare key at an individual's home. In the event that a person may be locked inside their residence and is in need of emergency care, responding officers and/or emergency personnel can access the key from the Lock Box and make entry without causing any damage to the residence.

- **Noise Abatement Program:**

This program partners the Police Department with Williams College Campus Safety & Security, Williams College administration representatives, landlords who rent to off-campus students and the students themselves. The purpose of this collaboration is to make students aware of the quality-of-life issues within their neighborhoods and how they can help maintain them and still have a college-related social life. Referred to as the "Three strikes program" by some students, this project advises students about the consequences of repetitive police response to off campus housing and the consequences to tenants and property owners. In the years since its inception, we've had a dramatic drop in the number of neighborhood

noise complaints. The student body seems thankful for the proactive program that outlines how the college and the community can live together without dramatically impacting one another.

- **CodeRED:**

CodeRED is an electronic emergency notification system that enables local public safety personnel to notify residents and businesses of emergencies that may require action. Alerts come via telephone, text message, and email. Any time there is an urgent public safety message. Officials will send messages to alert you of emergency details, instructions, or precautions that you need for you to make well-informed decisions and remain safe.

- **Prescription Round-Up:**

The Prescription Drop Box is now located outside of the Police Station entry door, and it continues to be a valued tool for the community. The drop box is available 24/7 to the community as a safe alternative to dispose of unwanted, unused and expired medications.

*** SHARPS ARE NOT ACCEPTED ***



Figure 13: Cricket Creek Farm

TOWN CLERK/BOARD OF REGISTRARS

Nicole E. Beverly, Town Clerk

Robert A. Jones, Registrar

Kurt Gabel, Registrar

Parvin Hajizadeh, Registrar

The Town Clerk's office serves as the repository of vital records for the town; conducts all activities related to the Annual Street Listing, voter registration, elections and town meeting, administers oaths to all public officials, issues dog licenses and fuel tank registrations, records vital records and issues certified copies, provides notary public services, oversees employee and board members compliance with the Conflict of Interest law, Open Meeting Law and serves as the Public Records Officer in addition to many more daily tasks.

Total Registered Voters as of December 31, 2024 – 4,834

Democrat (D) – 1,958

Republican (R) – 216

Unenrolled (U) – 2,637

Libertarian (L) – 11

Conservative (A) - 1

United Independent Party (CC) – 3

American Independent Party (Q) – 1

Pirate Party (X) – 1

Green Rainbow (J) – 1

Green Party USA (G) – 1

Working Families (Z) – 3

Other (FF) – 1

Dog Licenses Issued – 2024

Male	44
Female	30
Neutered Male	309
Spayed Female	268
Kennel License	1
Revenue from Dog Licenses	\$3,923.00

Vital Records Recorded in 2024

Births	16
Marriage Intentions	27
Marriage Licenses	26
Deaths	85

Certificates & Certified Copies Issued per Request in 2024

Business Certificates	39
Certified Birth Certificates Issued	25
Certified Marriage Certificates Issued	27
Certified Death Certificates Issued	346

**TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2024 to JUNE 30, 2025
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Berkshire, ss:

To either of the Constables of the Town of Williamstown, in the County of Berkshire.

GREETING:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Williamstown qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs to meet at Williamstown Elementary School, 115 Church Street, in said Williamstown on

TUESDAY, THE FOURTEENTH OF MAY 2024 at SEVEN O'CLOCK A.M. for the following purpose:

To bring their votes to the election of officers for the election of all Town Officers

The polls will be opened at 7:00 o'clock A.M. and will close at 8:00 o'clock P.M.

And furthermore, to meet at Mount Greylock Regional School, 1781 Cold Spring Road, on THURSDAY, THE TWENTY THIRD DAY OF MAY 2024 AT SEVEN O'CLOCK P.M. for the following purpose:

To act on all Articles of this warrant, except Article 1, which has been acted upon at the above meeting for the election of officers.

Proceeding: Moderator Elizabeth Goodman opened the Annual Town Meeting at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, May 23, 2024, at Mt. Greylock Regional School in the gymnasium.

The first order of business was to elect a temporary Town Clerk. One vote was cast by the Chairman of the Board Selectmen for Thomas Webb. Mr. Webb was duly sworn in by the Moderator.

Jeffrey Johnson represented the Select Board as Chair.

Melissa Cragg represented the Finance Committee as Chair.

Phil McKnight represented the Community Preservation Committee as Chair.

Polly McPherson presented the League of Women Voters Town Employee Award to former Town Librarian Pat McLeod, who retired earlier in the year after 25 years of service.

The Moderator announced the recipient of the Scarborough, Solomon & Flynt Community Service award to Andi Bryant for her work in bringing Remedy Hall to the town.

The Town Manager recognized Julie Snow from the Accounting department, who passed away last year.

Electronic voting devices were used for tabulating the votes. The Moderator instructed the audience on how the devices work. Two hundred ninety-five (295) registered voters checked into the town meeting.

The Moderator made a motion to dispense the reading of the warrant. The motion passed using electronic devices.

ELECTION OF TOWN OFFICERS

Article 1. To choose one Select Board member, for a three-year term; one Library Trustee member, for a three-year term; one Housing Authority member, for a five-year term; one seat on the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School Committee for a three-year term and one Planning Board member for a five-year term. *The election occurs on May 14, 2024 after this document has gone to the printer. Election results are posted on the town website www.williamstownma.gov.*

REPORTS OF TOWN COMMITTEES

Article 2. To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of the Select Board, the Town Manager, and all other officers and committees, and act thereon.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen moved, and it was seconded to accept the reports of the Select Board, the Town Manager and all other officers and committees. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 2 carried by unanimous voice vote.

TO APPLY UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE TO REDUCE THE TAX RATE

Article 3. To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$100,000 from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate. There being no discussion the Moderator declared Article 3 passed by unanimous voice vote.

APPROPRIATION FOR DEBT SERVICE

Article 4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$645,487.50 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt, or take any other action in relation thereto.

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Year Borrowed</i>	<i>Years Left</i>	<i>Total Outstanding 7/1/23</i>	<i>FY2024 Principal and Interest</i>
Elementary School	2005	1	\$193,800	\$193,800.00
Police Station	2018	14	\$3,770,000	\$339,487.50
Cable Mills	2015	1	\$112,200	\$112,200.00

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$533,287.50 from taxation and \$112,200.00 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Each of the above items is a bond issue the Town has committed to repay over the number of years remaining as indicated.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$645,487.50 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 4 carried by unanimous voice vote.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Article 5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$2,006,000 or any other sum, for the following capital expenditures, or take any other action in relation thereto.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Water, Sewer, Culvert Vac/Jet Truck (50%)	Highway	\$350,000
North Hoosac Road Mill & Pave (1.4.mi.)	Highway	\$350,000
DPW Dump Truck/Plow/Sander	Highway	\$310,000
Broad Brook Playground Rehab/Fitness Court	Recreation	\$150,000
Whitman Street Mill and Pave	Highway	\$75,000
North Hoosac Slide Stabilization Study	Highway	\$65,000
Tough Book Computers for Vehicles	Police	\$56,000
DPW & Backup Server Upgrades	IT	\$40,000
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$1,396,000</i>
Water, Sewer, Culvert Vac/Jet Truck (25%)	Sewer	\$175,000
Inflow & Infiltration Repair	Sewer	\$150,000
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$325,000</i>
Water, Sewer, Culvert Vac/Jet Truck (25%)	Water	\$175,000
Repave Route 7 Water Break	Water	\$110,000
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$285,000</i>
Total Capital		\$2,006,000

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$1,396,000, that \$325,000 be transferred from Estimated Sewer Receipts and that \$285,000 be transferred from Estimated Water Receipts.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Public Works, Highway, Facilities, Parks and Library items are funded by Unreserved Fund Balance a/k/a "Free Cash" transfers. Sewer and Water Department items are funded by user fees.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$2,006,000 or any other sum, for the capital expenditures as set forth in the warrant Article 5. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 5 carried by unanimous voice vote.

Proceeding: A motion was made from the floor to take Article 41 out of order. The motion was seconded and was carried by majority vote.

SEWER DEPARTMENT

Article 6. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Estimated Sewer Receipts the sum of \$1,478,372.49 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt, and for charges, expenses, and outlays of the Sewer Department, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,384,640.18 from Estimated Sewer Receipts and the sum of \$93,732.31 from Sewer Fund Unreserved Fund Balance.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The sewer rate was \$3.31 for FY24 and will remain unchanged for FY25. The HWQD rate will increase from the FY24 rate of \$4.66 to \$5.16 for FY25. This is a \$.50 increase. The Sewer Department is an Enterprise Fund. All expenses related to the operation of the department are paid by user fees rather than taxation.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,478,372.49 from Estimated Sewer Receipts and the sum of \$93,732.31 from Sewer Fund Unreserved Fund Balance. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 6 carried by majority vote.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Article 7. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Estimated Water Receipts the sum of \$681,392.63 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt, and for charges, expenses and outlays of the Water Department, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$663,099.00 from Estimated Water Receipts and the sum of \$18,293.63 from Water Fund Unreserved Fund Balance.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The water rate was \$3.85 for FY24 and will remain unchanged for FY24. The Water Department is an Enterprise Fund. All expenses of the Department are paid by user fees, not taxation.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$663,099.00 from Estimated Water Receipts and the sum of \$18,293.63 from Water Fund Unreserved Fund Balance. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 7 carried by unanimous voice vote.

WATER RATE

Article 8. To see if the Town will, in accordance with § 7, Chapter 606 of the Acts and Resolves of 1941, vote to approve a municipal water rate of \$3.85 per 100 cubic feet of water as fixed by the Select Board at their meeting of April 8, 2024 to be effective July 1, 2024, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to approve a municipal water rate of \$3.85 per 100 cubic feet.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

There is no increase in the rate from the previous year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to approve a municipal water rate of \$3.85 per 100 cubic feet. There being no discussion the Moderator declared Article 8 carried by unanimous voice vote.

TRANSFER STATION DEPARTMENT

Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Estimated Transfer Station Receipts or other available funds the sum of \$261,879.73 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt, and for charges, expenses, and outlays of the Transfer Station Department, including costs of public trash removal or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$210,170.00 from Estimated Transfer Station Receipts, the sum of \$31,709.73 from Transfer Station Unreserved Fund Balance and \$20,000 from general taxation.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The sticker permit fee remains unchanged at \$120 for a primary sticker and \$20 for secondary/temporary stickers. The tag fee also remains unchanged at \$2/bag. The Transfer Station is an Enterprise Fund.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$210,170.00 from estimated Transfer Station Receipts, the sum of \$31,709.73 from Transfer Station Unreserved Fund Balance and \$20,000 from general taxation.

There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 9 carried by unanimous voice vote.

CHAPTER 90 HIGHWAY FUNDS

Article 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate from Chapter 90 funds that are, or may become, available to the Town during the fiscal year for Capital Projects, and to authorize the Treasurer to borrow such amounts in anticipation of reimbursement by the Commonwealth, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Chapter 90 funds are distributed by the State for approved highway projects. The Town is required to spend the money before being reimbursed by the state. Since the Town cannot spend money, it does not have, this article authorizes the Treasurer to borrow money in anticipation of receiving the Chapter 90 reimbursement from the Commonwealth. During FY25, the Town plans to replace water and sewer infrastructure and repave South Street at an approximate cost of \$3 million.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to adopt Article 10. There being no discussion the Moderator declared Article 10 carried by unanimous voice vote.

TO FUND OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Article 11. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to the Other Post Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, established under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 32B, Section 20, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$48,037 from Unreserved Fund Balance; that \$1,070 be appropriated from Estimated Water Receipts; that \$658 be appropriated from Estimated Sewer Receipts; and that \$235 be appropriated from Estimated Transfer Station Receipts to the OPEB Trust Fund.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Last year's appropriation of \$50,000 continued the process to put the Town on a pay-as-you-go basis for Other Post-Employment Benefits, primarily health insurance for retirees.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$48,037 from Unreserved Fund Balance; that \$1,070 be appropriated from Estimated Water Receipts; that \$658 be

appropriated from Estimated Sewer Receipts; and that \$235 be appropriated from Estimated Transfer Station Receipts to the OPEB Trust Fund. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 11 carried by unanimous voice vote

APPROPRIATION TO COMPENSATED ABSENCES RESERVE FUND

Article 12. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to the Compensated Absences Reserve Fund, established under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 13D, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$50,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance to Compensated Absences Reserve Fund.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

This appropriation sets aside funds to meet our legal obligation to pay accrued employee benefits upon separation from the Town’s employment.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to the Compensated Absences Reserve Fund, established under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 13D. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 12 carried by unanimous voice vote.

APPROPRIATION TO STABILIZATION FUND

Article 13. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$100,000 to the Stabilization Fund.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$100,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance to the Stabilization Fund.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

This appropriation continues to replenish funds that had previously been used from the Stabilization Fund and brings the expected principal balance to approximately \$1.2M.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$100,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance to the Stabilization Fund. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 13 carried by unanimous voice vote.

REVOLVING FUND SPENDING LIMITS

Article 14. To see if the Town will vote to set annual spending limits for revolving funds for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, under the provisions of MGL chapter 44, §53E½.

Revolving Fund	Authorized to Expend	Revenue Source	Use of Fund	Spending Limit
Inspection Services	Building Commissioner	Inspection Fees: Gas, Plumbing, Electrical	Salaries/ Expenses	\$75,000
Public Library	Library Trustees	Fees and Fines	Supplies, Services and Equipment	\$25,000

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to set annual spending limits for revolving funds for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 under the provisions of MGL chapter 44, Sec. 53E1/2 as set forth in Warrant Article 14. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 14 carried by unanimous voice vote.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Article 15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$10,015,191.09 or any other sum, to pay interest and maturing debt, and for charges, expenses, and outlays of the several Town Departments, namely:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2024</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2025</u>
Executive	\$433,550.00	\$446,667.38
Administration and Finance	\$3,687,621.01	\$3,803,306.52
Community Development	\$459,992.17	\$461,611.06
Public Safety	\$1,784,072.19	\$1,831,526.45
Public Works	\$2,373,087.07	\$2,414,574.17
Human Services	\$958,747.56	\$1,057,505.51
Total	\$9,697,070.00	\$10,015,191.09

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$9,800,891 from taxation; that \$117,081 be appropriated from Estimated Water Receipts; that \$82,219 be appropriated from Estimated Sewer Receipts; and that \$10,000 be appropriated from the Sherman Burbank Memorial Trust; and that \$5,000 be appropriated from Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article with appropriations as shown above.

The General Government appropriation is a 3.28% increase over the current year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$9,800,891 from taxation; that \$117,081 be appropriated from Estimated Water Receipts; that \$82,219 be appropriated from Estimated Sewer Receipts; and that \$10,000 be appropriated from the Sherman Burbank Memorial Trust; and that \$5,000 be appropriated from Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 15 carried by unanimous voice vote.

FINANCE COMMITTEE RESERVE FUND

Article 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for the Finance Committee Reserve Fund, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for the Finance Committee Reserve Fund.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Reserve Fund is established under G.L. c. 40 § 6 to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures authorized by the Finance Committee.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for the Finance Committee Reserve Fund. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 16 carried by unanimous voice vote.

PRIOR FISCAL YEAR UNPAID INVOICE

Article 17. To see if the Town will vote to pay Kelley & Ryan Associates, Inc. the sum of \$588.74. Invoice is for work performed in a prior fiscal year and dated 4/23/2021 but the invoice was received in a subsequent fiscal year.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to pay Kelley & Ryan Associates, Inc. the sum of \$588.74. Invoice for work performed in a prior fiscal year and dated 4/23/2021. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 17 carried by unanimous voice vote.

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE VOCATIONAL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Article 18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$326,687.00 or any other sum, being Williamstown's share of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District FY25 budget, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$326,687.00 from taxation.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Note: This is an Omnibus Budget, i.e. Town Meeting may vote only a total amount.

The Williamstown assessment is a 25.6% increase from the current year which is attributable to increased enrollment.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$326,687.00 or any other sum, being Williamstown's share of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District FY25 budget. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 18 carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOUNT GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Article 19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$13,775,336 or any other sum, being Williamstown's share of the Mount Greylock Regional School District FY25 budget, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Note: This is an Omnibus Budget, i.e. Town Meeting may vote only a total amount.

	<i>FY2024</i>	<i>FY2025</i>
Operating Assessment	\$12,101,198.00	\$12,623,947.00
Capital Assessment	\$ 1,157,689.00	\$1,151,389.00
Total Assessment	\$13,258,887.00	\$13,775,336.00

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,775,336 from taxation.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Williamstown assessment is a combined budget of the Elementary School and Mount Greylock Regional School due to regionalization. The capital assessment includes debt repayment for the high school renovation as approved in March 2016, and excluded from the levy limit. This bond was for a term of 30 years. The portion of operating assessment attributable to Williamstown Elementary School is \$6,204,368 and the portion attributable to Mount Greylock Regional School is \$6,419,479.

This is a 3.9% increase from the current year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$13,775,336 or any other sum, being Williamstown's share of the Mount Greylock Regional School District FY25 budget. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 19 carried by unanimous voice vote.

Articles 20 - 25 are appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund which is funded by a 2% surcharge on the real property tax levy.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – COMMITTEE EXPENSES

Article 20. To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Community Preservation Committee on the FY25 Community Preservation Act budget and to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY2025 estimated annual revenues in the sum of \$5,000 to meet the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee for FY25, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded, as set forth in the warrant which provided \$5,000 to meet the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee for FY25. Mr. McKnight informed the voters of the provisions of the Community Preservation Act. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 20 carried by unanimous voice vote.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Article 21. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY25 estimated annual revenues for historic preservation purposes under the Community Preservation Act, including the amount of \$3,000 in unspent funds authorized in FY2013 for historic preservation purposes, for a total sum of \$50,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund, Inc., to renovate and preserve for the future the structure known as the Meetinghouse, currently owned by First Congregational Church of Williamstown, in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded to approve Article 21 as set forth in the warrant, which authorizes the sum of \$50,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund to renovate and preserve for the future the structure known as the Meetinghouse, currently owned by First Congregation Church of Williamstown. Following a short discussion the Moderator declared Article 21 as passed by a vote of 187 in favor and 67 opposed.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – COMMUNITY HOUSING

Article 22. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY25 estimated annual revenues for community housing purposes under the Community Preservation Act, including the amount of \$29,175.45 in unspent funds previously authorized in FY13 to the Affordable Housing Commission, now disbanded, for community housing purposes and the amount of \$85 in unspent funds previously authorized in FY07 for community housing purposes, for a total sum of \$70,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust in unrestricted funds for initiatives and programs related to furthering affordable housing in Williamstown, including acquisition of land, in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceedings: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded, to approve Article 22 as set forth in the warrant, which provides the sum of \$70,000 to fund a grant to the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust in unrestricted funds for initiatives and programs related to furthering affordable housing in Williamstown. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 22 carried by unanimous voice vote.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION - RECREATION

Article 23. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY25 estimated annual revenues for recreation purposes under the Community Preservation Act, the sum of \$11,100, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to Sands Springs Recreational Center, Inc., for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded, to approved Article 23 as set forth in the warrant, which provides the sum of \$11,100 to fund a grant to Sand Springs Recreational Center,

Inc. for recreation purposes. Following a short discussion, the Moderator declared Article 23 carried by majority voice vote.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – RECREATION

Article 24. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY25 estimated annual revenues for recreation purposes under the Community Preservation Act, the sum of \$90,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the Town of Williamstown for the creation of a Fitness Court along the town's Multi Use Path for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded, the approval of Article 23 as set forth in the warrant, which proved the sum of \$90,000 to fund a grant to the Town of Williamstown for the creation of a Fitness Court along the town's Multi Use Path for recreation purposes. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 24 carried by unanimous voice vote.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION - RECREATION

Article 25. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY25 estimated annual revenues for recreation purposes under the Community Preservation Act, including the amount of \$50,000 in unspent funds authorized in FY2021 for recreation purposes, for a total sum of \$75,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2025, to fund a grant to the New England Mountain Bike Association – Purple Valley Chapter for recreation purposes in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded, the approval of Article 24 as set forth in the warrant, which proved the sum of \$75,000 to fund a grant to the New England Mountain Bike Association – Purple Valley Chapter for recreation purposes. Following a short discussion the Moderator declared Article 25 carried by unanimous voice vote.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN BYLAW AMENDMENT

Article 26. To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 22-1 (Establishment) of its By-Laws which established a Community Preservation Committee, consisting of eight voting members pursuant to the provisions of MGL, c.44B, Section 5, as heretofore amended, by adding the following: (9) One resident of the Town designated by the Select Board; or to take any other action relative thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee moved, and it was seconded the approval of Article 26 as set forth in the warrant which amends Section 22 of the towns bylaws which established a Community Preservation Committee, consisting of eight voting members pursuant to the provisions of MGL, c44B, Section 5, as amended, by adding" (9) One resident of the Town designated by the Select Board." There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 26 carried by unanimous voice vote.

WILLIAMSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Article 27. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 6A to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$55,000 for the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce to advertise the Town's resources, advantages, and attractions, in accordance with the application submitted to the Finance Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$55,000 for the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The appropriation for the Chamber of Commerce is intended to promote tourism.

The Chamber of Commerce appropriation is increased by \$5,000 from the current year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$55,000 for the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 27 carried by unanimous voice vote.

WILLIAMSTOWN YOUTH CENTER

Article 28. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 for the Williamstown Youth Center to provide youth recreation services, in accordance with the application submitted to the Finance Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to support the Williamstown Youth Center.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Youth Center appropriation is decreased by \$17,000 from the current year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to support the Williamstown Youth Center. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 28 carried by unanimous voice vote.

WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Article 29. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 for the Williamstown Community Preschool to provide preschool services for Williamstown residents, in accordance with the application submitted to the Finance Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate or take any other action in relation thereto.

The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to support Williamstown Community Preschool.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Community Preschool appropriation is unchanged from the current year.

Proceeding: The Chairman of the Finance Committee moved, and it was seconded, the Town vote to transfer from the General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$50,000 to support Williamstown Community Preschool. There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 27 carried by unanimous voice vote.

CLARIFICATION AND MODIFICATION TO EXISTING CHAPTER PROVISIONS

Article 30. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the legislature for the following changes to the Town Charter:

A. Charter Section 6: Clarification of Who Can Administer Oath for Offices.

Change the last sentence of Section 6 of the Charter to be a new paragraph that reads as follows:

All appointed and elected officials shall be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties by the Chairperson of the Select Board, Town Clerk, Justice of the Peace, notary or any other officer qualified to administer oaths.

Rationale: To clarify that being qualified for office means by taking the oath for office, and to broaden the number of parties eligible to administer oaths.

B. Charter section 7: Clarification of when elected terms end

Delete the current text of Section 7 (about the former school committee), and replacing it with:

7. Terms of elected offices. The term of office of all elected town officials shall end when their successors are elected and qualified, provided, however, that if annual town elections are held prior to annual town meeting then, in addition, such terms shall end either at the conclusion of town meeting or within 20 days of the election, whichever is sooner.

Rationale: To confirm past practice that newly elected officials are sworn in at the conclusion of Town Meeting. If Town Meeting is delayed, officers can be sworn in within 20 days of election.

C. Charter section 9: Broaden scope of authority to cooperate with other government entities

Delete the current text of Charter Section 9 and replace it with:

Section 9. Services provided to other government entities. The Select Board on behalf of the town may provide by written agreement for the performance by the Town Manager of such services for other government entities as may be appropriate to the duties of their office and for the reimbursement of any expense incurred.

Rationale: The current text of Section 9 only applies to services provided to the Fire District and the proposed amendment would broaden the Town's ability to provide services to all governmental agencies.

D. Charter section 10: Modification of dual office restrictions

Replace the first sentence of Section 10 with the new text:

A member of the Select Board or of the Finance Committee shall, during the term for which they were elected or appointed, be ineligible either by election or appointment to hold any other town office established by vote of Town Meeting except they may hold such office in their capacity as a member of the Select Board or the Finance Committee if the Town Meeting vote so provides. Such members may serve on advisory committees and as town representatives to intergovernmental bodies.

Rationale: The current text in Section 10 generally prohibits members of the Finance Committee and Select Board from serving on “other town offices” and this has resulted in some ambiguities in the scope of what is meant by “other town offices”.

E. Charter Section 15(b): Modification of Town Manager Authority over Boards

Replace section 15(b) with the following text:

15(b) The Town Manager, in accordance with the provisions of this Act and except as otherwise expressly prohibited by the General Laws, (i) may reorganize, consolidate or abolish departments, commissions, boards or offices under their direction and supervision and not established by Town Meeting, in whole or in part; (ii) may establish such new departments, commissions, boards or offices as they deem necessary and, (iii) in so doing, may transfer the duties and powers, and so far as possible in accordance with the vote of the town, the appropriations of one department, commission, board or office to another. The Town Manager may not make any such changes to boards and committees established by Town Meeting except upon approval of Town Meeting.

Rationale: This change is designed to eliminate an ambiguity arising from the interplay of existing sections 6 and 15(b) relating to the Town’ Manager’s control of town boards, commissions and committees. The existing sections seem to imply, perhaps unintentionally, that the Town Manager can reorganize, consolidate or abolish such boards and committees established by Town Meeting. The proposed amendment establishes that the Town Manager only has this authority over boards and committees not established by Town Meeting.

F. Charter Section 15(k): Clarification of Litigation Authority

Replace section 15(k) with the following text:

15 (k) The Select Board has the authority, except as otherwise provided by law, to prosecute, defend and compromise all litigation or claims to which the Town is a party and to employ special counsel to assist the Town Counsel whenever in the Board's judgment necessity therefore arises. The Select Board may delegate such authority, in whole or in part, to the Town Manager who shall keep the Select Board informed of the progress of all such litigation and claims.

Rationale: The topic of authority over litigation is addressed differently in Charter Section 15(k) and Town bylaw 4.9. The Charter gives this authority to the Town Manager with the approval of the Select Board and the bylaw gives it to the Select Board. The proposed amendment to the Charter keeps this authority with the Select Board but allows it to be delegated to the Town Manager, who has the obligation to keep the Select Board informed of such matters.

G. Charter Section 17: Elimination of Budget Due Date.

Replace the second sentence of section 17 of the Charter with the following text:

On or before such date as the town may by bylaw prescribe, the Town Manager shall prepare and submit to the Finance Committee a budget for the ensuing year and all supplementary information in such form and detail as the Finance Committee may deem necessary or the town may require by bylaw.

Rationale: This proposal removes the specific date of December 15 for submission of the budget from the Charter, and allows it to be set in a bylaw, where a different deadline of February 15 has already been established. By having the deadline only in the bylaw, it can be more easily changed in the future.

H. Charter – Sections 5, 7, 15(c), and 15(h): Deletion of out-of-date references

In the first sentence of section 5, delete the text “, and School Committee”.
In section 7 delete the entire section and replace with this warrant article B.
In the first sentence of Section 15(c), delete the text “a welfare agent”.
In section 15(h), delete the text “schools and”.

Rationale: Sections 5, 7 and 15(h) of the Charter refer to the school committee, which was the school committee as it existed in 1956, before the establishment of the Mt. Greylock Regional School District and the subsequent consolidation of the Williamstown Elementary School, so these provisions should be deleted. Charter section 15(c) refers to a Welfare Agent, a position that no longer exists, so this reference can be deleted.

I. New Charter Provision in Section 19: Ensuring Town Managers are recused from investigating allegations of their own misconduct

Add the following new sentence to be added at the end of section 19 of the Charter:

If any claim or allegation is made against the Town Manager, the Town Manager shall recuse themselves from the investigation and promptly refer the matter to the Select Board.

Rationale: This is to confirm that the Town Managers may not be in charge of inquiries into their own conduct.

The Charter Review Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 30 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a unanimous vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 30 passed by unanimous vote.

NEW CHARTER SECTION ON RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Article 31. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the legislature for the following new section in the Town Charter:

SECTION 24. Recall of elected officials

(a) Application -- Any holder of a town elected office in the town, including vocational school district representatives, with more than 6 months remaining in the term of office for which the officer was elected, may be recalled therefrom by the voters of the town in the manner provided in this section. No recall petition shall be filed against an officer within 6 months after taking office.

(b) Recall Petition -- A recall petition may be initiated by the filing of an application containing the name of the officer sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for recall, provided that the application is signed by at least 200 voters. The town clerk shall thereupon deliver to those voters making the application, copies of petition blanks demanding such recall, copies of which printed forms the town clerk shall keep available. The blanks shall be issued by the town clerk, with signature and official seal attached thereto. The blanks shall be dated, shall be addressed to the Select Board, and shall contain the names of all the persons to whom the blanks are issued, the number of blanks so issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the office from which removal is sought and the grounds of recall as stated in the application. A copy of the petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the town clerk. Said recall petition shall be returned and filed with the town clerk within 28 days after the filing of the application shall have been signed by at least 10 percent of the voters of the town registered as of the date of the petition is filed. Within two business days of receipt of the petition, the town clerk shall submit the petition to the registrars of voters and the registrars shall, within 5 days of their receipt of the petition, certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of voters.

(c) Recall Election -- If the petition shall be found and certified by the town clerk to be sufficient, the town clerk shall submit the same with such certificate to the Select Board within 5 days, and the Select Board shall give written notice of

the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled and shall, if the officer does not resign within 5 days thereafter, order an election to be held on a date fixed by the Select Board not less than 64 days and not more than 90 days after the date of the town clerk's certificate that a sufficient petition has been filed; provided, however, that if any other town election is to occur within 120 days after the date of the certificate, the Select Board shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If the person subject to a recall vote vacates said office after a recall election has been ordered but before the election is held, the election shall not proceed.

(d) Office Holder - The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office until the recall election. If said incumbent is not recalled, the incumbent shall continue in office for the remainder of the unexpired term subject to recall as provided herein. If recalled, the officer shall be deemed removed and the office vacant. The vacancy created thereby shall be filled under Chapter 41 of Massachusetts General Laws (or by other charter designated method). A person chosen to fill the vacancy caused by a recall shall hold office until the next regular town election. Should the person be a candidate in the subsequent election, that person will not be allowed to have "candidate for re-election" appear on the ballot at such election.

(e) Ballot Proposition - The form of the question to be voted upon shall be substantially as follows:

"Shall [here insert the name and title of the elective officer whose recall is sought] be recalled?" Yes No

If a majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall are affirmative, such elected officer shall be recalled.

(f) Repeat of Recall - In the case of an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, no recall petition shall be filed against such officer until at least 270 days after the election at which the officer's recall was submitted to the voters of the town.

(g) Office Holder Recalled – Any person subject to a recall who vacates their office for any reason, including by recall or by resignation while recall proceedings were pending against such person, may run for re-election or election to other offices, but may not be appointed to any board, commission, or committee within 2 years after such recall or such resignation.

Rationale: Currently the Charter has no mechanism for the removal of an elected official from town office, no matter what conduct may be at issue. Other municipalities are now adopting such procedures. Although we may hope that no incident would arise to invoke these procedures, it seems prudent to have them available if needed. The procedures are designed to be difficult to invoke to avoid frivolous challenges or to address concerns of only a few citizens. There are deadlines to make sure the recall is not too soon after the election or before the next regularly scheduled one. It takes 200 signatures to get a petition, then 10% of registered voters to sign the petition. Currently, there are over 5,000 registered voters in Williamstown, so over 500 signatures would have to be obtained within the 28-day period. If the recall results in a vacancy, including by resignation, the vacancy will be filled by appointment until the next regular election. An official who has been recalled, or who has resigned during recall proceedings, may run for re-election, but may not be appointed to any board, commission, or committee for two years.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 31 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a majority vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 31 passed by majority vote.

NEW CHARTER SECTION ON ENFORCEMENT

Article 32. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the legislature for the following new section in the Town Charter:

Section 25. Compliance with the Charter

(a) The Town Manager, as the administrative officer of the Town, shall be responsible for monitoring whether Town Departments, Boards, Officers and Employees are complying with the Charter. Whenever the Town Manager determines

that any Town Department, Board, Officer or Employee may be failing to comply with the Charter, it is the responsibility of the Town Manager to meet with them to discuss the matter.

(b) Whenever the Town Manager determines that any Town Board may be continuing to not be in compliance with the Charter after that potential failure has been discussed with them, the Town Manager shall refer the matter to the Select Board to determine the appropriate response.

(c) The Select Board shall be responsible to ensure that the Town Manager complies with the Charter.

(d) Any registered voter of the Town may petition the Town Manager to ensure faithful compliance with the Charter by any Town Department, Officer or Employee, except with respect to matters related to employment, or to petition the Select Board to ensure faithful compliance with the Charter by the Town Manager or a Town Board. The petition shall be filed with the Town Clerk and shall state the person or government body that may not be in compliance, the section of the Charter involved and the time of the potential failure to comply. The Town Clerk shall deliver a copy of the petition to such person or government body, the Town Manager, and the Select Board within three business days of receipt. Such person or government body shall file with the Town Clerk a written response within thirty days of their receipt of the petition, with copies to the Town Manager, Select Board and the petitioners.

(e) Following receipt of a petition by a registered voter, the written response from the subject of the petition, and the passage of 30 days, the Town Manager and the Select Board shall take such action with respect to the petition as is deemed appropriate and authorized by law.

(f) The foregoing sections shall not limit the right to seek enforcement of this Charter as otherwise provided by law.

Rationale: The Charter has no provisions for ensuring compliance with its provision, and any formal legal rights to claim violations of the Charter appear to be cumbersome. This provision takes an approach to enforcement based on assigning responsibilities for ensuring compliance, and having discussions to make sure the requirements are understood and adhered to. The proposal allows any citizen to file a claim of noncompliance and to have the person or board against whom the claim is made to file a response. The petition and the response will be on file with the Town Clerk. Other legal rights to enforce the Charter are not affected by the process.

The Charter Review Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board recommends the adoption of this article by a vote of 4-1.

*Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 32 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a majority vote as amended by a majority vote with the proposed amendment that was handed out at the meeting** (see below)** also being passed by majority vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 32 passed by majority vote.*

Proposed Amendment to Article 32 (Handed out at Town Meeting)

(a) The Town Manager, as the administrative officer of the Town, shall be responsible for monitoring whether Town Departments, Boards, Officers and Employees are complying with the Charter. Whenever the Town Manager determines that any Town Department, Board, Officer or Employee may be failing to comply with the Charter, it is the responsibility of the Town Manager to meet with them to discuss the matter.

(b) Whenever the Town Manager determines that any Town ~~Board~~ Department, Board, Officer or Employee may be continuing to not be in compliance with the Charter after that potential failure has been discussed with them, the Town Manager shall refer the matter to the Select Board. ~~to determine the appropriate response~~ The Select Board may take action that it deems appropriate and authorized by law for those Departments, Boards, Officers and Employees for which they are the appointing authority and, for all other Town Boards, shall file any documentation of the matter with the Town Clerk subject to the public records law.

(c) The Select Board shall be responsible to ensure that the Town Manager complies with the Charter.

(d) Any ~~resident registered voter~~ of the Town may (i) petition the Town Manager to ensure faithful compliance with the Charter by any Town Department, Board, Officer or Employee, except with respect to matters related to employment, for which they are the appointing authority, or (ii) petition the Select Board to ensure faithful compliance with the Charter by the Town Manager or those Departments, Boards, Officers and Employees for which they are the appointing authority or (iii) petition any elected position or board, or position or board appointed by any other appointing authority, to ensure faithful compliance with the Charter by them. The petition shall be filed with the Town Clerk and shall state the person or government body that may not be in compliance, the section of the Charter involved and the time of the potential failure to comply. The Town Clerk shall deliver a copy of the petition to such person or government body, the Town Manager, and the Select Board within three business days of receipt. Such person or government body shall file with the Town Clerk a written response within thirty days of their receipt of the petition, with copies to the Town Manager, Select Board and the petitioners.

(e) Following receipt of a petition by a ~~resident registered voter~~, the written response from the subject of the petition, and the passage of 30 days, the Town Manager, ~~and the Select Board~~ and any other appointing authority shall take such action with respect to the petition as is deemed appropriate and authorized by law for those Departments, Boards, Officers and Employees for which, respectively, they are the appointing authority. Petitions for potential failures to comply with the Charter by elected positions or boards shall remain filed with the Town Clerk subject to the public records law.

(f) The foregoing sections shall not limit the right to seek enforcement of this Charter as otherwise provided by law.

BYLAW MODIFICATIONS AS TO WARRANT DEADLINE AND BUDGET CYCLE

Article 33. To see if the Town will vote to modify Town bylaws as follows:

A. Bylaw modification of deadline to submit warrant articles

Replace text of bylaw § 4-3 Insertion of articles in warrant with the following text:

Any article to be inserted in the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting must be submitted to the Select Board on or before the 50th day preceding said meeting. All citizen petitions must be signed by the required number of petitioners who must be voters of the Town, and all such petitions shall be placed in the warrant as presented.

Rationale: Current bylaw 4-3 requires 45 days' advance filing of warrant articles, which in some years means the Select Board has only one meeting in which to consider them for the warrant, so this proposal adds five more days to the notice period. Also, current 4-3 is being rewritten to clarify that the filing deadline applies not only to citizen petitions, but also to proposed articles from any source, including town boards and committees.

B. Bylaw section 14-1 modification of budget preparation process

Insert the following as a new first sentence in bylaw 14-1:

On or before the 15th day of November in each year, the Select Board shall meet and discuss with the Town Manager priorities to be included in the budget for the ensuing fiscal year.

Rationale: This amendment establishes a new obligation for the Select Board to submit its priorities early in the budget cycle so they can be considered by the town manager in preparation of the budget. Currently, there is no formal step and the Select Board's participation in the budget process has varied depending on the approach taken by the members at the time. This gives the Select Board, as the chief elected representatives of the town residents, a formal role in the budget process. The next step in the budget cycle would remain as in the current bylaw, with the Town Manager submitting a budget to the Finance Committee by February 15 of each year. The remaining text shall remain as written.

The Charter Review Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 33 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a majority vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 33 passed by majority vote.

NEW BYLAW PROVISION ON PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE CHARTER

Article 34. To see if the Town will vote to amend town bylaws by adding a new section 4-13 as follows:

The Select Board shall, by July 31 of every year which ends in four after 2024, appoint a committee to review the town charter. Said committee shall submit a report, with recommendations, to the Select Board concerning any proposed amendments or revisions to the town charter which it believes to be necessary or desirable. The Select Board may appoint a committee to review the town charter at other times if it deems it appropriate.

Rationale: The Town Charter had not been comprehensively reviewed since its adoption in 1956. This provision establishes a period for regular review every 10 years, but allows reviews at any time if the need arises.

The Charter Review Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 34 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a unanimous vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 34 passed by unanimous vote.

ADOPTION OF LOW-INCOME EXEMPTION TO COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TAXES

Article 35. To see if the Town will vote to amend its acceptance of the Community Preservation Act, sections 3 to 7, inclusive, of chapter 44B of the General Laws, to accept the exemption set forth in section 3(e)(1) of said chapter 44B, creating an exemption from the CPA surtax for certain low-income residents, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Rationale: The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows towns to exempt from the CPA surcharge property owned and occupied as a domicile by a person who would qualify for low-income housing or low- or moderate-income senior housing in the city or town.

CPA income guidelines are derived from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) areawide median income (AMI) figures. They are updated annually.

Low income means persons and families whose annual income is less than 80 percent of the AMI. Moderate income for seniors means persons age 60 or over whose annual income is less than 100 percent of the AMI.

Williamstown Area AMI for families of 1-4 are as follows:

*80% AMI: single-\$56,840; two-\$64,960; three-\$73,080; four-\$81,200
100% AMI: single-\$71,050; two-\$81,200; three-\$91,350; four-\$101,500*

Acceptance requires approval of both Town Meeting and then the electorate at the next regular municipal or state election. G.L. c. 44B, § 3. If Town Meeting passes this article the question will appear on the November election ballot.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 35 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a unanimous vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 35 passed by unanimous vote.

HOME RULE PETITION TO EXPAND FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Article 36. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation as follows:

The Town of Williamstown, by vote of Town Meeting, may increase the amounts of the gross receipts and whole estate, real and personal, limitations as set forth in clauses Forty-first, Forty-first B and Forty-first C of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, in excess of the limitations established by statute, including but not in excess of the so-called “circuit breaker” state income tax credit limit determined by the commissioner of revenue for the purposes of subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws for married persons filing jointly, regardless of the taxpayer's marital status; provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court which are within scope of the general public objectives of the petition, and to authorize the Select Board to approve such amendments, or take any action relative thereto.

Rationale: The legislature adopted certain dollar limits of gross receipts and whole estate for the senior property tax exemption effective July 1, 2002. Acts of 2002, c. 184, section 5. The legislature has not updated these values since that time. Municipalities are allowed to adopt an inflation factor based on the Consumer Price Index, but that adjustment is only prospective from when the municipality adopts it. Williamstown adopted the CPI adjustment factor in 2023, but it only applies to values that were set over two decades ago and so are very out of date and provide little relief. If the legislature approves this petition, town meeting can establish higher financial eligibility factors. This will allow more relevant and current values to be used as a basis of property tax relief for eligible residents. The difference is illustrated in the table below.

	<i>Income single limit</i>	<i>Income limit married</i>	<i>Estate limit single</i>	<i>Estate limit married</i>
<i>Current 41D limit, adopted by Williamstown</i>	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$55,000
<i>41D Limit that would have been applicable with inflation from 2002 passage of 41D (Acts of 2002, c. 184, sec. 51) to October 2023, per Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Calculator</i>	\$34,204	\$51,307	\$68,409	\$94,062
<i>Current Circuit Breaker Income Limit (<u>maximum</u> allowed by this petition)</i>	\$69,000	\$103,000		

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 36 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a unanimous vote. Hearing no further discussion, the moderator declared Article 36 passed by unanimous vote.

HOME RULE PETITION TO EXPAND AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Article 37. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation as follows:

The Town of Williamstown, by vote of Town Meeting, may reduce the age for eligibility for the senior property tax exemption in Clause Forty-first C of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws below the permitted age of 65 or older; provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court which are within scope of the general public objectives of the petition, and to authorize the Select Board to approve such amendments, or take any action relative thereto.

Rationale: In 2023, Town Meeting voted to lower the age of eligibility from 70 to 65, as permitted by G.L. c.59, §5, Clause 41C, the minimum allowed by the statute. The purpose of this petition is to allow Town Meeting to set the age of eligibility below age 65. 65 is no longer a meaningful age in this context. Regardless of age, homeowners may have low incomes and assets before or after 65. They may be working before or after 65. If the goal is to give some relief to those homeowners who need it, there is no reason to use 65, or any other age, as a dividing line.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 37 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a majority vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 37 passed by majority vote.

HOME RULE PETITION TO ESTABLISH A MEANS TESTED SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Article 38. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation to allow the Town to establish a means tested senior property tax exemption substantially as follows:

SECTION 1. There shall be an exemption from the property tax for each qualifying parcel of real property classified as class one, residential in the town of Williamstown in an amount to be set annually by the select board as provided in section 3. The exemption shall be applied only to the domicile of the taxpayer; provided, however, that for the purposes of this act, “parcel” shall mean a unit of real property as defined by the board of assessors under the deed for the property and shall include a condominium unit. The exemption provided for in this act shall be in addition to any and all other exemptions allowed by the General Laws.

SECTION 2. The board of assessors in the town of Williamstown may deny an application if they find the applicant has excessive assets that place the applicant outside of the intended recipients of the exemption under this act. Real property shall qualify for the exemption in section 1 if:

- (i) the qualifying real property is owned and occupied by a person whose prior year’s income would make the person eligible for the circuit breaker income tax credit under subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws;
- (ii) the qualifying real property is owned: (A) by a single applicant not less than 65 years of age at the close of the previous year; or (B) jointly by persons either of whom is not less than 65 years of age at the close of the previous year and the other joint applicant is not less than 60 years of age;
- (iii) The qualifying real property is owned and occupied by the applicant or joint applicant as their domicile;
- (iv) The applicant or at least 1 of the joint applicants has been domiciled and owned a home in the town for not less than 5 consecutive years before filing an application for the exemption;
- (v) The maximum assessed value of the qualifying property is no greater than the town’s median single-family assessed value of the prior fiscal year plus 10 percent; and
- (vi) The board of assessors has approved the application.

SECTION 3. The select board of the town of Williamstown shall annually set the exemption amount under section 1 up to 150 per cent of the amount of the circuit breaker income tax credit under subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws for which the applicant qualified in the previous year. The total amount exempted by this act shall be allocated proportionally within the tax levy on all residential taxpayers.

SECTION 4. The exemption under section 1 shall be in addition to any other exemption allowable under the General Laws, except that there shall be a dollar cap on the total exemptions granted pursuant to this act of up to 1.0 per cent of

the fiscal year's total residential property tax levy for the town of Williamstown, including the levy for the regional high school if not included in the town's tax levy at some subsequent date, with the total exemption amount granted pursuant to this act allocated proportionally within the tax levy on all residential taxpayers. The total cap on the exemptions granted pursuant to this act shall be set annually by the select board within a range of up to 1 per cent, inclusive, of the residential property tax levy for the town. If benefits to the applicants may be limited because the cap on exemptions established annually by the select board would otherwise be exceeded, the limitation on benefits shall be allocated pro rata among the qualifying applicants.

SECTION 5. A person who seeks to qualify for the exemption under section 1 shall, before the deadline established by the board of assessors of the town of Williamstown, file an application, on a form to be adopted by the board, with supporting documentation relative to the applicant's income and assets as described in the application. The application shall be filed each year for which the applicant seeks the exemption.

SECTION 6. No exemption shall be granted under this act until the department of revenue certifies a residential tax rate for the applicable tax year where the total exemption amount is raised by a burden shift within the residential tax levy.

SECTION 7. This act may be revoked by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voters of the town at any regular or special town election at which the question of revocation is placed on the ballot. Revocation shall take effect 30 days after an affirmative vote of the town to revoke those sections unless the vote designates a different date.

The General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court which are within scope of the general public objectives of the petition, and to authorize the Select Board to approve such amendments, or take any action relative thereto.

Rationale: The goal of this article is to establish a program for property tax relief that is focused on granting an exemption to those who most need it based on income and assets. Other towns have been granted home rule petitions for such programs by the legislature, and this article is modeled on those other successful petitions. This program builds off of a state income tax program that gives an income tax credit to residents over 65 who meet eligibility requirements based on income and home value, both of which are adjusted annually by the state. The income limits for tax year 2023 were: \$69,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household, \$86,000 for a head of household, and \$103,000 for married couples filing a joint return. Residents who qualify for the state income tax credit can apply for this new property tax exemption. This new exemption imposes additional limits on assets by tying house value to Williamstown median values (rather than the much higher state average value for 2023 of \$1,025,000 used for the income tax credit) and by allowing the assessors to deny an application if other assets are excessive. Applicants also must have lived in town for at least 5 years. The extent of a resident's exemption would be set annually by the Select Board, in amounts up to 150% of the income tax credit. The total cost of the program would be capped at up to 1% of the town's residential tax levy, which was just over \$18.3M in fiscal 2024.

Voters are advised that the legislature currently has before it legislation filed by the Governor that would establish a means-tested property tax exemption that could be adopted by Town Meeting without further legislative approval. If such a local option is available by the time of Town Meeting, it may be considered as an alternative to, or substitute for, the above petition, so we are providing the text below.

The current version of the Governor's bill, in section 54 of S. 2571, provides as follows:

SECTION 54. Said chapter 59, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after section 50 the following section: -

Section 5P. (a) In a city or town that accepts this section, there shall be an exemption for income and age qualified domiciliary homeowners as provided herein. For the purposes of this section, "parcel" shall mean a unit of real property as defined by the board of assessors under the deed for the property and shall include condominium units. The exemption provided for herein shall be in addition to any other exemptions allowed by the General Laws.

(b) With respect to each qualifying parcel of real property classified as class one, residential in the municipality, there shall be an exemption from the property tax in an amount to be set annually by the chief executive officer as provided in paragraph (d). The exemption shall be applied to the domicile of the taxpayer.

(c) A parcel of real property shall qualify for the exemption under this section if each of the following criteria is met:

- (i) The qualifying real property is owned and occupied by a person whose income from the prior year would make the person eligible for the income tax credit allowed under subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62;
- (ii) The qualifying real property is owned by a single applicant age 65 or older as of July 1 of the applicable fiscal year or jointly by persons either of whom is age 65 or above as of July 1 of the applicable fiscal year and the joint applicant is 60 years of age or older;
- (iii) The qualifying real property is owned and occupied by the applicant or joint applicants as their domicile;
- (iv) The applicant or at least 1 of the joint applicants has been domiciled and owned a home in the municipality for at least 10 consecutive years before filing an application for the exemption;
- (v) The assessed value of the domicile is not greater than the prior year's maximum assessed value for qualification for the income tax credit allowed under subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62, as adjusted annually by the commissioner of revenue;
- (vi) The total assets of the applicant do not exceed any asset limitations established by the chief executive officer under paragraph (e) to determine eligibility for this exemption; and
- (vi) The board of assessors has approved the application.

(d) The chief executive officer shall annually determine the exemption amount, which shall not be more than two hundred per cent of the maximum amount of the income tax credit allowed under subsection (k) of section 6 of chapter 62 for which the applicant qualified in the previous year.

(e) The chief executive officer may establish limits on the total assets that may be owned by an applicant for purposes of eligibility.

(f) A person who seeks to qualify for the exemption shall, on or before April 1 of the applicable tax year, or within 3 months after the bill or notice of assessment was sent, whichever is later, file an application, on a form to be adopted by the board of assessors, containing supporting documentation to demonstrate the applicant's income and assets as described in the application. The application shall be filed each year for which the applicant seeks the exemption.

(g) The total amount exempted by this section shall be allocated proportionally within the residential tax levy. No exemption shall be granted under this section until the commissioner of revenue certifies a residential tax rate for the applicable tax year.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andrew Hogeland moved Article 38 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed with a unanimous vote. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 38 passed by unanimous vote.

COTTAGE HOUSING BYLAW

Article 39. To see if the Town will vote to authorize revision of its bylaws to allow cottage housing developments. Amend Section §70-3.3A (1) Use Regulation Table by adding the following row:

	RR1	RR2 RR3	GR	LB	SG	VB	PB	LI
<i>Cottage Housing Development (See §70-7.1.L)</i>	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Amend §70-7.1 Residential development by adding a new §70-7.1.L as follows;

§70-7.1.L Cottage Housing Developments.

A parcel may be developed as a Cottage Housing Development (CHD) comprising no fewer than 4 and no more than 12 cottages.

(1) Definitions

Cottage: a single- or two-family structure satisfying the dimensional and design requirements in (2) and (4) below.

Common open space: An area improved for passive recreational use or gardening.

Common area: An area consisting of common open space, which may include a shared-use structure.

Footprint: The gross floor area of a structure's conditioned ground-level story.

(2) Dimensional Requirements

- (a) The minimum lot area for a CHD shall be 14,000 square feet.
- (b) Impervious surfaces may not exceed 40 percent of the CHD's total area. If a CHD is located within an overlay district with a more restrictive impervious surface requirement, the overlay district's requirement shall apply.
- (c) Yard Requirements
 - [1] Structures within the CHD lot shall meet the Dimensional Standards of the Dimensional Schedule 70-4.3 with respect to neighboring properties.
 - [2] All cottages shall have a five-foot front setback from neighboring structures within the CHD.
 - [3] All cottages shall be a minimum of 8 feet from other cottages.
- (d) The maximum density shall be 1 cottage per 3,500 square feet of lot area.
- (e) Dwelling size
 - [1] The maximum footprint for a cottage shall not exceed 900 square feet, excluding the porch.
 - [2] The total floor area of each cottage shall not exceed either one and three-quarters times the area of the footprint or 1,575 square feet, whichever is less.

(3) Common area

- (a) A common area of at least 400 square feet per cottage is required.
- (b) The common area may include a shared-use structure with a maximum footprint of 25 percent of the total common area or 800 square feet, whichever is less. The remainder of the common area must be contiguous open space, with no edge less than 20 feet in length. There may be a maximum of three common areas within a CHD providing that each one complies with all the requirements for a common area.
- (c) At least 75 percent of the cottages shall abut common open space. The common area shall have cottages abutting at least two sides. Every common area must have at least three abutting cottages. All of the cottages shall be within 60 feet walking distance of a common open space.

(4) Design requirements

- (a) All structures in CHDs shall be limited to 18 feet in height.
- (b) The ridge of pitched roofs may extend up to 25 feet. All parts of the roof above 18 feet shall be pitched at no less than 6/12 and no greater than 12/12.
- (c) The main entrance of each cottage shall face the common area and have a covered porch of at least 64 square feet and no side less than 7 feet in length.
- (d) Each unit shall have access to enclosed storage space of at least 40 and no more than 100 square feet, which may be in an exterior attached or unconditioned detached storage space, or in a shared-use structure in the common area.
- (e) Exterior lighting shall be downlighting type, and other than porch lights, shall be limited to bollards with a height no greater than three feet above grade.

(5) Existing structure

An existing structure, which may be nonconforming with respect to the standards of this section, shall be permitted to remain on the parcel as follows:

- (a) Existing One- or Two-Family Dwelling: An existing one- or two-family dwelling may be incorporated in the CHD but the extent of nonconformity may not increase.
- (b) Other Existing Structures: Any other type of existing structure that is not a one- or two-family dwelling and is not a commercial building may remain on site and be utilized for common area or storage requirements.

(6) Parking

- (a) Parking shall be on the same property as the CHD.
- (b) The CHD shall provide one assigned parking space per dwelling unit, plus an additional parking space for every three dwelling units.
- (c) Parking may be in or under a structure or outside a structure, provided that it is adequately screened from direct street view, by one or more street facades, garage doors, fencing, or landscaping, meeting the requirements of §70-5.4B(3). Parking may not be located in the required front yard.

- (d) Common parking areas shall have no more than five spaces in a row without a break equal to the size of one parking space.
- (e) One parking space per unit in alleys between cottages is permitted.

(7) Short-term rentals

- (a) For the purposes of Cottage Housing Developments, “short-term rentals” shall be defined as the rental of a whole or a portion of a Cottage, in exchange for payment, as residential accommodations for not more than thirty consecutive days.
- (b) No Cottage in a Cottage Housing Development may be used as a short-term rental for more than 150 cumulative days in a calendar year. This limitation shall not apply to individual bedrooms offered for short-term rental when the owner is residing within the cottage at the time of the rental.
- (c) In the event there is a conflict between a provision of this subsection (“Short-Term Rentals”) and any other provision in the Code of the Town of Williamstown regulating short term rentals, the provision outside of this subsection shall control.

Amend Section §70-9 Definitions as follows:

COTTAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT:

A collection of densely spaced small single-family or duplex structures, arranged around a common area or areas, developed under a single land development plan.

The Planning Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Roger Lawrence moved Article 39 and it was seconded Ken Kuttner. Motion to amend changes 70-7.1, Section 7(b) from 150 to 90 days majority voice vote. Motion to postpone indefinitely moved and seconded defeated by majority voice vote. Motion passed by clicker voter 194 in favor and 56 opposed the vote was greater than 2/3 vote.

TRANSFER CONTROL OF SPRUCES TO THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Article 40: To see if the Town of Williamstown will vote to transfer to the care, custody, management, and control of the Conservation Commission for all purposes included in G.L. Ch.40 Section 8C as it now reads or may hereafter be amended, or take any other action in relation thereto, the following parcel of land: The property located at 60 Main St. (f.k.a ‘The Spruces, n.k.a. ‘Spruces Park’) consisting of approximately 114.4 acres conveyed by Morgan MHP Mass, LLC to the Town of Williamstown by deed recorded at the Northern Berkshire Registry of Deeds: Book 01594, Page 635.

Uses of the Spruces Park property are predominantly governed by FEMA. However, there is currently no official local managing authority for this Town owned property, with documentation merely stating ‘The Town’ as the managing authority. The area of the Spruces Park property is almost entirely jurisdictional to the Conservation Commission, and includes lands under water, riverfront areas and banks, bordering vegetated wetlands, lands subject to flooding, estimated wildlife habitats, and other wildlife estimates. Approval of this article would align the management of Spruces Park with other Town owned properties (e.g. Margaret Lindley Park, Hunter Property, Stone Hill Property, etc.). These other properties are already managed by the Conservation Commission for their ecological, cultural, and recreational value. It is in the interest of the Town to transfer this property to the care, custody, management and control of the Conservation Commission in order to establish a clear management authority to ensure the protection of its natural resources as well as its agricultural and recreational uses.

The Select Board does not recommend the adoption of this article by a vote of 0-5.

At its April 11th meeting the Conservation Commission unanimously voted to have Town Meeting refer this article to committee. If referred, the Commission calls on the Select Board to establish a task force to bring together various stakeholders related to the Spruces to propose future management for the park.

Proceeding: Lauren Stevens, Member of the Conservation Commission, moved to take no action on Article 40, and it was seconded. The Moderator declared Article 40 as carried by unanimous voice vote.

CITIZENS PETITION - AMEND BYLAW 4.12

Article 41. We the undersigned citizens of Williamstown submit this petition to respectfully request the amendment of bylaw 4.12a to include the display of the Progress Pride flag (designed by Daniel Quasar) as an expression of the Town's official sentiments.

WHEREAS: Inclusion and Representation: The addition of a Progress Pride flag to the list of flags permitted for display by the Town is essential to reflect the diversity and inclusivity of our community. It serves as a meaningful gesture of respect, support, and recognition of the LGBTQ+ individuals and allies with the Town of Williamstown.

WHEREAS: Symbol of Equality and Unity: A Progress Pride flag is globally recognized as a symbol of equality, acceptance, and unity. By officially allowing the display of a Progress Pride flag alongside other recognized flags, the Town of Williamstown can showcase its commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all residents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

WHEREAS: Importance of Visibility: Public visibility of the Progress Pride flag serves to create a sense of belonging, safety and affirmation for LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. It sends a powerful message of solidarity and support, contributing to a more welcoming and cohesive community.

WHEREAS: As concerned citizens, we believe that the inclusion of the Progress Pride flag in the official display of flags aligns with the values of diversity, equality and inclusivity that we hold dear in our community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Bylaw 4.12a shall be amended to say, "and fourth, a Progress Pride flag."

The DIRE Committee unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

The Select Board unanimously recommends the adoption of this article.

Proceeding: Andy Hogeland moved Article 41 and it was seconded Jeff Johnson. This motion passed by a clicker vote with 175 in favor and 90 opposed. Hearing no further discussion the moderator declared Article 41 passed by clicker vote of 175 in favor and 90 opposed.

CITIZENS PETITION - CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE LAND USING COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FUNDS

Article 42. At the 2004 town meeting, Williamstown voted to purchase approximately 1.2 acres of Community Preservation - Conservation of Open Space land using Community Preservation Act funds. The land was never put under permanent restriction as required by the Community Preservation Act. This petition directs the Williamstown Select Board to place the property under permanent restriction as required by the act.

Proceeding: This article was passed over as no one moved for a vote for the article

Adjournment

Motion: There being no further business before the Town Meeting, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Following a unanimous vote the Moderator declared the meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Mary Courtney Kennedy

Acting Town Clerk

Williamstown Select Board

Date: April 8, 2024

Jeffrey Johnson, chair
Jane Patton, vice chair
Andrew Hogeland

Randal Fippinger
Stephanie Boyd



Figure 14: Annual Town Meeting 2024

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION - MAY 14, 2024				
SELECTBOARD	<i>PREC. 1</i>	<i>PREC. 2</i>	<i>PREC. 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
JEFFREY L. JOHNSON, JR.	180	44	184	408
WRITE INS	1	0	1	2
BLANKS	12	4	12	28
TOTAL	193	48	197	438
LIBRARY TRUSTEE	<i>PREC. 1</i>	<i>PREC. 2</i>	<i>PREC. 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
ANNA HALPIN-HEALY	188	44	187	419
WRITE INS	0	1	0	1
BLANKS	5	3	10	18
TOTAL	193	48	197	438
HOUSING AUTHORITY	<i>PREC. 1</i>	<i>PREC. 2</i>	<i>PREC. 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
WRITE INS	22	7	21	50
BLANKS	171	41	176	388
TOTAL	193	48	197	438
NORTHERN BERKSHIRE VRSD	<i>PREC. 1</i>	<i>PREC. 2</i>	<i>PREC. 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
LAILA BOUCHER	185	43	184	412
WRITE INS	0	0	1	1
BLANKS	8	5	12	25
TOTAL	193	48	197	438
PLANNING BOARD	<i>PREC. 1</i>	<i>PREC. 2</i>	<i>PREC. 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
SAMANTHA PAGE	182	44	180	406
WRITE INS	11	0	1	12
BLANKS	0	4	16	20
TOTAL	193	48	197	438

Treasurer's Receipts

For the year ending June 30, 2024

Department	Description	Amount
Tax and Excise		
Treasurer-Collector	Personal Property	\$425,415.65
Treasurer-Collector	Real Estate Tax	\$19,720,706.24
Treasurer-Collector	Motor Vehicle Excise	\$763,380.16
Treasurer-Collector	Interest on Property Tax	\$20,628.83
Treasurer-Collector	Interest on MV Excise	\$4,183.97
Treasurer-Collector	Interest on Tax Liens	\$811.53
Treasurer-Collector	Tax Liens & Foreclosures	\$2,735.15
Treasurer-Collector	Payments in Lieu of Tax	\$91,346.08
Treasurer-Collector	Meals Tax	\$205,701.04
Treasurer-Collector	Hotel and Motel Tax	\$845,739.30
Treasurer-Collector	Community Preservation-State Match	\$62,911.00
Treasurer-Collector	Community Preservation Surcharge	\$315,231.45
Treasurer-Collector	Cannabis Local Option Excise	\$136,561.21
Total Tax and Excise		\$22,595,351.61
Utility Charges		
Sewer Department	Sewer Charges	\$1,568,059.36
Water Department	Water Charges	\$1,050,807.97
Landfill Department	Landfill Payments	\$28,003.56
Landfill Department	Landfill Stickers	\$107,560.00
Landfill Department	Landfill Bags	\$57,220.00
Total Utility Charges		\$2,811,650.89
Other Charges for Services		
Cemetery	Cemetery Interments	\$15,150.00
Police	Off-Duty Fees	\$151,397.12
Total Charges for Services		\$166,547.12
Fees		
Assessor	Fees	\$-

Community Development	Fees	\$(560.55)
Cemetery Department	Perpetual Care	\$12,300.00
Conservation Commission	Fees	\$5,877.47
Council on Aging	Fees	\$6,929.46
Energy Credits	Fees	\$727.68
Health Department	Fees	\$6,530.00
Highway	Fees	\$505.00
Library	Fees	\$679.50
Landfill Department	Fees	\$2,103.86
Planning Board	Fees	\$510.00
Police Department	Fees	\$4,884.52
Police Department	Dispatch Services	\$71,734.01
Selectman	Fees	\$-
Treasurer - Collector	Cannabis Host Impact Fee	\$-
Sealer of Weights	Fees	\$-
Town Clerk	Fees	\$8,295.00
Treasurer - Collector	Fees	\$103,004.09
Insp Services-Revolver	Fees	\$39,820.00
Sewer Department	Fees	\$2,824.00
Town Manager	Fees	\$554.00
Water Department	Fees	\$7,179.73
Zoning Board	Fees	\$(80.00)
Total Fees		\$273,817.77

Licenses and Permits

Community Development	Licenses and Permits	\$264,033.36
Health Department	Licenses and Permits	\$21,547.50
Highway	Licenses and Permits	\$3,600.00
Police Department	Licenses and Permits	\$3,050.00
Selectmen	Licenses and Permits-Liquor Licenses	\$28,526.00
Selectmen	Licenses and Permits	\$1,795.00
Sign Commission	Licenses and Permits	\$917.50
Town Clerk	Licenses and Permits	\$3,880.00
Total Licenses and Permits		\$327,349.36

State Government - State Aid

Treasurer-Collector	Veterans Services	\$29,179.06
Treasurer-Collector	Abatement Reimbursement	\$1,012.00
Treasurer-Collector	State Owned Land	\$253,951.00

Treasurer-Collector	Chapter 90	\$115,452.92
Treasurer-Collector	Lottery	\$1,141,373.00
Treasurer-Collector	ARPA	\$-
Total State Aid		\$1,540,967.98

State Government - Grants

Treasurer-Collector	Green Communities	\$49,075.00
Treasurer-Collector	Blackington Connector	\$120,000.00
Treasurer-Collector	E-911	\$56,082.05
Treasurer-Collector	Police-Drug Task Force	\$12,018.37
Treasurer-Collector	Police- EMD GRANT	\$206.48
Treasurer-Collector	Police -EMPG GRANT	\$2,700.00
Treasurer-Collector	Police - Community Policing	\$500.00
Treasurer-Collector	Library Title LIG/MEG Grant	\$20,997.28
Treasurer-Collector	Council on Aging - Formula Grant	\$30,072.00
Treasurer-Collector	Sustainable Materials Recovery Grant	\$5,950.00
Treasurer-Collector	Polling Reimbursement Grant	\$498.69
Treasurer-Collector	Community Compact IT Grant	\$25,000.00
Total State Grants		\$323,099.87

Fines and Forfeits

Commonwealth		
Police Department	Court Fines	\$6,587.44
Total Fines and Forfeits	Parking Tickets	\$6,455.00
		\$13,042.44

Sale of Assets

Cemetery	Sale of Lots	\$4,000.00
DPW	Sale of Vehicles	\$4,800.00
		\$8,800.00

Interest Income

Treasurer-Collector	Unrestricted Investment Interest	\$244,179.15
Treasurer-Collector	Special Revenue Investment Interest	\$61,519.97
Treasurer-Collector	Trust Interest	\$8,271.16
Treasurer-Collector	Investment Interest Net of UNREALIZED LOSS	\$139,247.62
Treasurer-Collector	Trust Interest Net of UNREALIZED LOSS	\$79,875.38
Total Interest Income		\$533,093.28

<u>Gifts and Contributions</u>		
Council on Aging	Donations & Fundraisers	\$3,631.35
Library	Operations Gifts	\$63,803.00
Library	Books	\$1,605.00
Police Department	Contribution - General	\$10,570.00
Town	Health Coordinator	\$2,000.00
Library	Sarah MacFarland Gift	\$3,575.28
DIRE	Community Grant	\$1,170.00
Total Gifts and Contributions		\$86,354.63

<u>Payroll and Insurance</u>		
Payroll Deductions		
Payroll Deductions	Federal Withholding	\$487,010.24
Payroll Deductions	Medicare Withholding	\$147,259.64
Payroll Deductions	State Withholding	\$249,502.83
Payroll Deductions	Retirement Withholding	\$445,143.77
Payroll Deductions	Health Insurance	\$1,410,745.46
Payroll Deductions	Life Insurance	\$8,922.25
Payroll Deductions	Dental Insurance	\$67,736.95
Payroll Deductions	Other Withholdings	\$132,936.41
Total Payroll and Insurance		\$2,949,257.55

<u>Fund Transfers</u>		
Transfers between Funds		\$199,299.96
Total Fund Transfers		\$199,299.96

<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
Miscellaneous	CLEAN WATER TRUST GRANT-Federal	\$61,447.00
Miscellaneous	OPEB Fund	\$50,000.00
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous Trust Distribution	\$15,000.00
Miscellaneous	Williamstown Scholarship Fund	\$2,315.33
Miscellaneous	Compensated Balance Transfer	\$50,000.00
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous Trust Contributions-Stabilization	\$250,000.00
Miscellaneous	Library Annual Fund	\$40,441.00
Miscellaneous	Reimbursement for damages	\$3,454.99
Miscellaneous	Westlawn/Sherman Burbank Contributions	\$7,269.86
Miscellaneous	Opiod Settlement	\$40,057.35
Miscellaneous	CPA to Affordable Housing Trust	\$120,000.00
Miscellaneous	To Transfer Station	\$20,000.00

Miscellaneous	Compost Pilot	\$740.00
Miscellaneous	Fire District (Overpayment between FY Years)	\$(1,780.41)
Miscellaneous		
Total Miscellaneous		\$658,945.12
Total Receipts		\$32,487,577.58

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Keith Davis, Chair

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of 5 members and 3 alternate members. Serving on the Board in 2024 were; Chairman, Keith Davis, David Levine, Amy Jeschawitz, and Eunice Marigliano, and Vince Pesce. Alternate Members are Andrew Hoar and two vacancies. The Board meets the third Thursday of every month to hear and decide petitions arising from the application of the Williamstown's Zoning Bylaws. These petitions fall into four categories:

- **Variances** seek relief from the requirements of the Bylaws due to circumstances that are unique to a property.
- **Special Permits** seek permission for uses or changes allowed under the Bylaws under certain conditions. These permits allow the Board to permit important projects while protecting neighborhoods from adverse impacts.
- **Administrative Appeals** seek relief from a decision made by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.
- **Comprehensive Permits** seek permission to circumvent certain local zoning laws to construct affordable housing under the authority of Massachusetts General Law Ch. 40B.

Any application for any of these four types of permits requires the Board to place advertisements in the local newspaper, *The Berkshire Eagle*, and notify all abutters of the subject property of the time and date of the public hearing on an application by postcard. This process ensures that all neighbors of a proposed project have a chance to voice any concerns regarding a proposal. If you ever receive a post card notifying you of a permit request in your neighborhood the folks in the Community Development Department at Town Hall are very helpful and can explain any questions you might have about an application or the process in general.

The Board approved some large Williams College projects this past year. The new field house and a new home for the College's Museum of Art were on the Board's docket this past year and were approved with various conditions to ensure the community impacts of these projects were managed appropriately.



Figure 15: ZBA Site Visit, New WCMA Museum

WILLIAMSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2023-2024 Academic Year

Superintendent: Dr. Jason McCandless

Principal: Cindy Sheehy

Assistant Principal: Griffin Labbanca

WILLIAMSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2024

2023-2024 Academic Year

Guiding beliefs identify the core values of the Williamstown Elementary School:

We believe...

- Every child has the right and potential to learn;
- In inspiring and nurturing children to care about and contribute to their world;
- All children deserve to have high expectations set for them and the support to achieve them;
- In commitment to professional growth for our faculty and staff;
- Parents and community play a critical role in education;
- All members of our school community need to feel safe;
- It is important to have built-in systems that support, implement and evaluate innovations;
- In respecting and fostering unique and diverse learning and teaching styles;
- In a curriculum that is coordinated and consistent, flexible and challenging to meet the needs of every learner;
- Mutual respect, honesty, and responsibility are vital to a healthy learning environment;
- It is the responsibility of the educational community to anticipate the changing needs in society and to evaluate and adopt the best educational practices.

WILLIAMSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT and STAFFING 2023-2024

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

School Year/ Grade	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
PreK	12	16	11	27	33	36
Kdg	59	38	36	56	53	44
1	62	56	37	41	60	54
2	57	61	55	45	44	70
3	72	58	54	63	47	42
4	62	68	60	60	66	58
5	55	60	66	61	64	63
6	57	52	57	69	64	72
TOTAL	436	409	376	422	431	439

EDUCATIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFFING (Full-Time Equivalents)

Administrators	2
Teachers	46.3
And Professional Support Staff	
Paraprofessionals	24
Medical/Health Services	1
TOTAL:	73.3

Data reflects FTE by Job Classification as reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Staff Professional Development: In order to support student development, we continually assessed student needs and areas that our staff could grow in. With this assessment, we continually looked at how we could provide opportunities for our staff to not only learn from outside presents, but also learn from each other as colleagues. Staff were provided with opportunities to share areas that they felt a need for support in, as well as assigned areas. There was an emphasis on supporting the social emotional need, as well as supporting behavioral needs within the classroom in a way that allowed for a safe and positive learning environment for all students and staff.

Williams College Collaboration: This year, Williams College continued their support within our school community by having students each day serve in various leadership roles and support positions. All Williams College students within the building were coordinated through the Williams College Center for Learning in Action. The partnership with this group allows college students to support and enhance our school community with roles ranging from classroom helpers, recess buddies, big siblings, homework helpers, and science fellows. This year, we had more than 45 Williams College students present in our building throughout the course of the week. Also, under the CLiA umbrella, was the Adventures in Learning after school program. This program that ran during the month of January, immersed our WES students in various after school activities that targeted specific topics of interest.

Student Incentive Initiatives: We continued to look for ways to support student growth and encourage positive citizenship within our building. Creating the OWLS award allowed students to nominate their peers for positive contributions to the WES community. Each week, 6 awards would be awarded to students throughout the building. The hope in the year to come is to expand these awards to connect to the school wide Book Vending Machine that will be put out for students in the fall of 2024. The OWLS awards are given to students who exemplify Open Mindedness, Willingness, Leadership and Strength.

PTO/FS4WES Restructure: Formerly the WES PTO, FS4WES (Families and Staff for WES) was restructured and renamed to work to include a wider range of the school community. This restructure created a new election process and timeline for the executive board, as well as an updated process for reimbursement for both families and staff using funds from the group's budget. All updates were with the hope to streamline the various processes

Words are Wonderful: The 26th Annual Words Are Wonderful Week began the week before with our students being exposed to stories by our visiting author, Michelle Cuevas. During the WAW week, students participated in the annual book character parade, as well as various workshops and events throughout the week to celebrate and highlight literary creativity. The Literary Character Parade was inspiring as usual, with students and staff dressing up as their favorite character, book, or vocabulary word. The WES FS4WES hosted a Book Fair and participated in a school-wide Read-A-Thon, encouraging students to increase their reading minutes both at home and at school. The school was filled throughout the week with guest authors in our classrooms; reading stories from various countries to the classrooms and speaking on their personal connections to the stories and cultures. Another very successful week of activities and celebrations.

Updated Tiered Discipline Response: The staff worked to update our response to various behavioral concerns within the building. The update was to focus on making sure the correct response was being issued for specific behavioral infractions. Updating how we respond to concerns creates a fair and equitable model. In doing so, our goal was to allow students the ability for a restorative and educational process, rather than simply punitive.

MOUNT GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent: Dr. Jason McCandless

Principal: Jacob N. Schutz

Assistant Principal: Samantha Rutz

MOUNT GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Mount Greylock Regional School remains unwavering in its commitment to fundamental education and innovation. It ensures that every student is engaged academically and supported socially and emotionally. The school has realigned its resources to introduce new student programs, strengthen existing support systems, and expand and reimagine professional development opportunities for educators.

In the 2023-24 school year, building upon the previous year's work and guided by the MG School Council's School Improvement Plan, the district continued centering efforts on Academics.

The district conducts a systematic and thorough review of academic practices from the previous year to assess successes and identify areas for improvement. This process involves using qualitative and quantitative data to determine which strategies to keep, adjust, or eliminate and create a multi-year plan to assess progress against school improvement and strategic goals. Professional development and dedicated time allow educators to make informed decisions that positively impact curriculum, instruction, and programming.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development efforts at Mount Greylock focus on providing diverse opportunities for growth in both academic and social-emotional aspects of teaching. Off-site academic programs include participation in well-established institutes and conferences such as the College Board's AP Institutes and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Additionally, programs like the Crisis Prevention Institute's "Train the Trainer" and the Empowering Teachers Program offer staff essential skills to manage student behavior and facilitate effective interventions. The faculty also engages in reflective practices through book studies, workshops, and participatory learning, enhancing their ability to implement best practices, especially for middle-grade students. Furthermore, the "Teachers Teaching Teachers" program supports integrating instructional technology and personalized approaches to address diverse student needs.

Focusing on social and emotional wellness complements these academic efforts, emphasizing resilience, anti-racism, restorative justice, and healthy digital habits. Programs such as the "A Resilient Stance" PD webinar and the "Anti-Racist and Care for Language Presentation" foster personal and community growth by promoting integrity, responsibility, and social awareness. Restorative practices and social awakening initiatives help students and staff address stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges, contributing to a healthier and more supportive school environment. To ensure a holistic approach, additional needs are supported, such as transportation, staff appreciation, and other professional fees, reinforcing the importance of community well-being in the educational process.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER (LMC)

The Library Media Center is the heart of the school. Collaborations with teachers continue to grow, and the LMC is a popular site for independent study and cooperative learning. The school library teacher, Liza Barrett, hosts a diverse books club and a writing club and is the site coordinator for the many Williams Center at Mt Greylock (WC@MG) programs run out of the library.

Improvements to the Collection:

The new "bookstore-style" browsing has significantly increased circulation, starting during the 22-23 school year and continuing into the 23-24 year. The final step in updating the collection was digitizing it and the circulation process. The district's library management system is now Follett. 2023-24 is the first full year using Follett.

Williams Center at Mt Greylock Programs:

The Afterschool Tutoring program met on Monday and Thursday afternoons in the MG library, where Williams students provided daily homework tutoring/mentoring to middle school students. The Sunday Tutoring program continued to meet the needs of HS students every Sunday, primarily offering support in STEM classes. Williams Writing Fellows were stationed in the library four days a week during Directed Study to offer "drop-in" writing support for the College Essay (and any classroom essays), helping nearly 100 students over the year. MG also hosted several Williams Fellows who provide Classroom Support in HS English, HS biology, and all levels of academic support classes.

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS 2023 - 2024

Mount Greylock students continue to receive recognition for academic achievements.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS 2.0): Massachusetts implemented computer-based testing across all disciplines this year. Tenth graders took MCAS exams in English and Math; 80% earned scores meeting or exceeding expectations in English, and 65% earned equivalent scores in mathematics. 95% of seventh and eighth graders earned passing scores in English and Math exams. Science 8 exam scores revealed that 56% of eighth graders achieved or exceeded expectations.

Aptitude Tests: The average SAT score achieved was 1238. The state average is 1112, and the national average is 1028.

Scholarship: In 2023-24, Mount Greylock had four National Merit Commended Students: one Semi-Finalist and three Commended Students. Ten students earned the MG Seal of Biliteracy, which is a unique distinction displayed on the Mount Greylock High School Diploma to students who demonstrate proficiency in English and any other language, whether they speak or sign the language other than English at home or learned it at school or in the community. Seven juniors and 41 seniors took dual enrollment college courses. 40% of seniors were enrolled in dual enrollment college courses in the first semester.

Four-Year Graduation Rates: 89 percent of the 105 graduates of the Class of 2024 planned to continue their education by enrolling in four- and two-year college programs. Others will pursue the military, join the workforce, and take a gap year. The 2024 class headed to various colleges and universities, including American University, Amherst College, Bard College, Berkshire Community College, Boston University, Bowdoin College, Coastal Carolina University, Colorado College, Connecticut College, Dartmouth College, Davidson College, Johns Hopkins University, Kenyon College, Lehigh University, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, McGill University, Merrimack College, Middlebury College, Newcastle University, Norwich University, Princeton University, Providence College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Sarah Lawrence College, St. Lawrence University, Smith College, Springfield College, The New School, Trinity College, Tufts University, University of Massachusetts - Boston, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Wellesley College, Williams College, Yale University.

OUTREACH & SERVICE

American Legion Boys and Girls State participants undergo an immersive experience, delving into the intricacies of citizenship rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities within a simulated government framework. The program provides practical and objective training, allowing students to operate city, county, and state governments by electing peers to various offices. Engagement in legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies, and recreational programs enriches the experience. Mount Greylock students have long benefited from this platform, honing leadership skills, exploring democratic values, and fostering civic engagement. Sponsored by Williamstown American Legion Post 152, representatives including Katherine Goss, Vera De Jong, Emily Alvarez, Jayne Beringer, Knowl Stroud, Noah Klompus, Micah Zasada, Silas Sims, and Gavin Heatherington attended the Stonehill College conference.

Mount Greylock remains actively involved in Project 351, a statewide initiative to unite 8th graders across Massachusetts through service commitments. Representatives from surrounding towns, including Olivia Perez (Williamstown), Annabelle Coody (Williamstown), Jackson DuCharme (Lanesborough), and Sam Chase (Hancock), participated in the 2023-2024 Project 351 sessions. Additionally, Mount Greylock continues to strengthen its partnership with Berkshire County's Anti-Defamation League, furthering efforts to promote diversity and combat discrimination.

Mount Greylock continues to be a Unified Champion School. As such, our dedicated families continue to orchestrate the participation of middle and high school students in PALS (Promoting Acceptance and Learning through Sports), a program designed to facilitate interactions between differently-abled students and their peers. PALS pairs students with developmental disabilities from all three Mount Greylock Regional Schools with high school students, providing opportunities for inclusive engagement in sports activities.

EXTENSIVE ARTS PROGRAM

Mount Greylock continues to offer a variety of visual arts and media courses for students to express themselves and explore ideas through drawing, painting, ceramics, stained glass, and photography. Student work is on display in units throughout the first floor. It has been curated for shows at the Norman Rockwell Museum, local libraries, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

The extensive visual arts department at Mount Greylock has garnered widespread acclaim, exemplified by its recent participation, and continued recognition at the Mass MoCA Teen Invitational for excellence in artistic achievement.

THRIVING MUSIC PROGRAM

Mount Greylock's ensembles showcased their talents by performing in Greylock Plays before school and during daily Breaks. These performances punctuate the school year during festive moments (e.g., before vacations or holidays). They brought positive energy and school spirit to the entire school community.

The program remains vibrant, continuing recruitment concerts at elementary schools, participating in Memorial Day parades and ceremonies, and ensuring the jazz band performs at all major concerts throughout the year. This further solidifies its reputation as a school's arts education cornerstone.

- Massachusetts Music Educator's Association Senior District Festival Participation
- MMEA Junior District Festival Participation
- All-State Acceptance: Mai Dekel (vocals)
- All-State Recommendations: Simon Shin, Emily Dupuis, Claire Burrow, Thomas Warren, and Frankie Evans (vocals)
 - Mount Greylock had the highest showing from Berkshire County at senior districts.

- All-State Acceptances: Emily Dupuis (flute)
- All-State Recommendation: Grace Winters (double bass)
- October Showcase Concert was a great way to get all the students playing and give families a taste of our ensembles for the year.
- The Winter and Spring Concerts were also filled with rich and challenging repertoire.
- Our Prism Concert was a great success with our theme: "To the Stars"
 - Hancock, Lanesborough, and Williams elementary schools attended, which helped to ignite a passion for music in the future of the music department.
 - Students played in a Full Orchestra with winds, brass, strings, and vocals in one piece.
- We are excited and preparing for our 2025 Europe trip with 40 MG students
- Our MG Marching Band contributed to the civic life of our community by lending their talents to the Memorial Day Parades.
- The Band, chorus, and orchestra closed the year by performing for students and families at the Graduation Ceremony.

CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

The Mount Greylock School District is dedicated to offering an outstanding activities program to the students of this district. Mount Greylock students can choose from an extensive selection of co-curricular organizations that are integral to the educational process. Through participation in these opportunities, students can have experiences and training in events not ordinarily obtainable in the general curriculum.

The school offered twenty-two after school organizations throughout the school year, including opportunities in the performing arts, student governance and leadership, school publications, and other organizations designed to get Mount Greylock students involved. There were approximately 250 students (44% of the school) who were able to take advantage of one or more of these programs.

The newspaper, *The Echo*, maintained the school's online news at greylockecho.mgrhs.org and produced multiple printed editions throughout the year, including "*The Greylock Eggplant*," the annual April Fool's spoof issue. A group of 22 students worked diligently with advisor Emily McCarthy to create the school yearbook with various events from the school year, including student and staff portraits, student-submitted candids, team/club pages, superlatives, and various other essential student memories from the 2023-2024 school year.

Shakespeare & Company returned to Mount Greylock with school performances of "*Romeo & Juliet*" in mid-November, followed by a performance at Tina Packer Playhouse as part of the Fall Festival of Shakespeare. We packed the auditorium for the winter musical with three performances of "Kiss Me Kate" under the direction of Jeffrey Welch and Jacqueline Vinette. This performance included fifty student actors and crew members. The final performance of the school year was a special one. For the first time in Mount Greylock school history, the spring drama performance was both student written and student directed. Senior *Quin Repetto* and Sophomore *Frankie Evans* worked together to create and direct "Light's Off" a comedic murder mystery. Working with advisor, *Tom Ostheimer*, the two writers directed 35 of their peers for two months to prepare for the performance. The school Jazz Band continued to meet after school and performed at two of the School Concerts.

The Mechanical Mounties travelled to Waterbury, CT and Springfield, MA for FIRST Robotics Competitions. The student government continues to host elections each year to elect students to serve their classes, the Student Council, and the School Council for the following year.

The Gender Sexuality Alliance, led by student *Jack Uhas* worked with the Williamstown SelectBoard to author a bylaw amendment at the Town Meeting to allow the display of the Progress Pride on town flag poles.

The Spanish Club hosted a Spanish Table every Tuesday during lunch led by Seniors, *Caleb Low* and *José Brito*, held various competitions throughout the school year and raised funds to sponsor a child for Cuernavaca, Mexico. Students were given the opportunity to join the school trip to Argentina.

The Youth Environmental Squad (YES) created two raised beds behind the school to grow vegetables and worked with the school administration on composting plans for the school. The Greylock Multicultural Student Union (GMSU) hosted a community Multicultural Food Fair at the school to celebrate food from the various cultures that make up our community.

The Mount Greylock athletic program continues to be strong and, more importantly, an excellent opportunity for the students. Student-Athlete participants benefit from an enriched educational experience and are provided with lifelong and life-quality learning experiences. Participation helps with organizational skills, dealing with pressure, and handling the successes and disappointments in competition, all the while enhancing the student's achievement of educational goals. The 2023-2024 school year saw more than 330 students participate in at least one athletic program, reaching 60% of the enrolled students.

Highlights of the Fall 2023 season included the 2nd Annual Unified Basketball “Red vs. White” Classic, providing an opportunity for our team to be split into two groups, each coached by a senior athlete on the team, and showcase their skills and enthusiasm in the Mountie Dome at the end of the season. The coaches for the teams were *Kaylie Bryan* and *Savannah Mabey*.

The Volleyball Team had an undefeated season and became the Western Mass Champions as well as the MIAA State Champions. Both the Boys and Girls Cross Country Teams placed 2nd in Western Mass and 3rd in the MIAA Class C Championship. The Boys Team finished 8th in states and the Girls Team became MIAA State Champions. The Boys Soccer Team earned a Western Mass Championship and made it to the Round of 16 in the MIAA Tournament. The Girls Soccer Team were Western Mass Finalists and MIAA Quarter-Finalists. The Golf Team finished the regular season as Berkshire County Co-Champions and 4th in the Western Mass Championship.

The Winter 2023-2024 season is the smallest at Mount Greylock, with only Basketball, Nordic Skiing, and Wrestling hosted at the school. In addition, seven students from Mount Greylock were guests of the Drury High School Hockey Team, four students traveled to Taconic High School to participate in the cooperative Alpine Ski Team and one student travelled to Taconic to participate on the Swim Team. The Nordic Ski Teams continue to be a great opportunity for younger athletes to join a program and an excellent chance for our more experienced skiers to shine! The Girls’ Team earned another MIAA State Championship, and the Boys’ Team placed 2nd. The Wrestling Team finished 4th in the MIAA Division III Western Championship qualifying nine students for the MIAA Division III State Meet. Three of those students went on to place at the MIAA All State Championship. The Boys Basketball Team qualified for the MIAA Tournament.

The Spring 2024 season was an exciting one. The Girls' and Boys' Track & Field Teams finished the regular season undefeated, earning Western Mass Class B Championships. The Girls Team went on to become the 2024 MIAA D6 State Champions and the Boys Team placed 3rd! The Boys Lacrosse Team hosted by Hoosac Valley earned the Western Mass Championship Title. The Girls Lacrosse Team and the Girls Tennis Team ended their MIAA Tournament runs in the MIAA Round of 16. The Softball Team qualified for the tournament. The Unified Track Team had multiple students qualify for and medal at the MIAA Sectional and State Championships.

SUPPORTIVE PARENTS AND A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY

The Mount Greylock community benefits greatly from the ongoing support of parents, caregivers, and dedicated volunteers. Athletic booster clubs and co-curricular organizations such as Friends of the Arts and Parents4Greylock play pivotal roles, offering unwavering assistance throughout the year. Through fundraising efforts, transportation provisions, and onsite support, these groups ensure the smooth operation of various activities and programs. Parents4Greylock (P4G), established in 2021 as a replacement for the traditional PTO, adopts a collaborative approach

encapsulated by its mission to "Partner, Participate, Provide, and Promote." P4G aims to foster family engagement in both school and community endeavors.

Meanwhile, a dynamic School Council collaborates closely with administrators to assess and address students' diverse needs. Furthermore, community organizations and local businesses generously offer Mount Greylock students opportunities to participate in job shadowing, internships, and school-to-work programs. Additionally, partnerships with Williams College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and Berkshire Community College allow students to enroll in credit-bearing courses, enriching their educational experiences.

MOUNT GREYLOCK REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT ENROLLMENT and STAFFING 2023-2024

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Grade 7	92	77	102	100	112
Grade 8	131	87	84	105	99
Grade 9	85	116	77	72	94
Grade 10	77	89	103	72	72
Grade 11	84	73	84	103	71
Grade 12	84	87	74	83	106
SP	4	3	3	1	1
TOTAL:	557	532	527	536	554

Data reflects enrollments as counted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, where district and school profiles report students physically enrolled in a school.

EDUCATIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFFING (Full-Time Equivalents)

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Administrators	2.98	3	3	4	4
Instructional Staff	46.07	47.26	47.36	48.11	53.79
Paraprofessionals	15	21	20	21	22
Medical/Health Services	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL:	68.91	76.09	75.23	77.98	80.79

Data reflects FTE by Job Classification as reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

LEARNING MORE

Community members are invited to stay current with Mount Greylock events and accomplishments by visiting the Mount Greylock website at www.mgrhs.org or following Instagram accounts @MGMounties and @MGActivities and Twitter accounts, @MGMounties, and @AthleticsMG.



Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District

McCann Technical School

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

The Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District, McCann Technical School, students, faculty and staff continued their record of noteworthy accomplishments in fiscal year 2024 and this report highlights some of these accomplishments.

Our mission is to graduate technically skilled, academically prepared, and socially responsible individuals ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Our mission and educational philosophy are implemented by adhering to the following core values:

Respect for self, others, and the learning environment promotes a positive learning experience for all students.

Effort is demonstrated through an applied work ethic that includes punctuality, improvement, and a determination to succeed.

Accountability develops personal responsibility for both behavior and learning.

Communication facilitates collaboration, promotes self- advocacy, and develops positive relationships.

Honor requires students to act with integrity, honesty, positivity, and empathy for others.

McCann continues to offer high quality vocational and academic education. The faculty and staff pride themselves on meeting the needs of all of our learners as the best practices in teaching and education are constantly being developed and refined. Our vocational programs are updated annually to the latest industry- recognized techniques and equipment. We are excited to announce that we have added a new vocational training program, HVAC/R Technician. The construction of a new 5,800 square foot training facility was completed in May of 2024. The project was funded by a

\$3,110,000.00 Skills Capital Grant. Academic programs consistently implement updated and relevant material for their disciplines. The support from our member towns is integral in creating this culture of learning which is reflected in our students' accomplishments.

The accomplishments of our students reflect the McCann culture of learning. The class of 2024 was the twentieth class in a row to attain 100 percent competency determination as designated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). 109 graduates of the class of 2024 saw 60% continue their education in a variety of colleges and universities, 38% enter the workforce, and 2% proudly enter into military service. In 2024 we once again held our commencement exercises at MCLA with 109 graduates and a full campus center audience.

GRADE 10 – ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				
PERFORMANCE LEVEL	2021	2022	2023	2024
EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS	9%	4%	6%	9%
PASSING	82%	94%	88%	83%
NOT MEETING EXPECTATIONS	9%	2%	6%	8%

GRADE 10 – MATHEMATICS				
PERFORMANCE LEVEL	2021	2022	2023	2024
EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS	2%	0%	1%	3%
PASSING	83%	94%	91%	93%
NOT MEETING EXPECTATIONS	15%	6%	8%	4%

GRADE 10 – SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG				
PERFORMANCE LEVEL	2021	2022	2023	2024
EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS	NA	14%	7%	10%
PASSING	NA	49%	87%	84%
NOT MEETING EXPECTATIONS	NA	32%	6%	6%

There were no MCAS tests in 2020 and no science and tech/Eng MCAS in 2021.

The 2023-2024 athletic calendar featured a number of successful accomplishments for our teams who represented the school well. The baseball team won the Western Mass. Championship that served as the culmination of a positive athletic year.

In the fall of 2023 McCann hosted an accreditation team from the Council on Occupational Education. The visiting team reviewed our programs and we received the maximum of six years continued accreditation.

Similarly, we hosted an accreditation team from the Commission on Dental Accreditation for our dental assisting program and received numerous plaudits and continued accreditation for seven years. The results of these two accreditation visits is a testament to our faculty, students, alumni and employers.

Our continuous facility improvement program allowed us to complete the furnishing and equipping of the new HVAC/R facility, renovate our business technology laboratory, our front entranceway and several improvements in the gymnasium.

The integration of new educational technology continues to be our priority. We used our Perkins Grant to continue our upgrade of software in all of our technical areas. We replaced approximately 155 computer systems both desktop and

laptops to ensure all systems are Microsoft Windows 11 compliant. We installed 6 new Smartboards throughout the building to enhance the use of the latest educational technology. Similarly, we upgraded all of the CAD department's computer systems to accommodate new design software requirements.

McCann continued its ongoing participation in SkillsUSA, a national organization of more than 380,000 student and teacher members and more than 440,000 total members working to ensure America has a skilled work force. McCann is a 100% member of SkillsUSA which has provided the opportunity for our students to earn scholarships, tools for their trade, opportunities for employment and awards in recognition of their accomplishments. The 2024 SkillsUSA district competition was held virtually at McCann in accordance with the school's policies and the SkillsUSA guidance. McCann students earned eighteen gold medals in 3-D visualization and animation, additive manufacturing, automated manufacturing technology, carpentry, cosmetology, dental assisting, information technology services, medical assisting, restaurant service, sheet metal, technical computer applications, technical drafting and web design. Fifteen silver medals were awarded in 3-D visualization and animation, additive manufacturing, architectural drafting, carpentry, customer service, dental assisting, medical assisting, sheet metal, technical computer applications, technical drafting, web design and welding. Seventeen bronze medals were also earned in 3-D visualization and animation, automated manufacturing technology, automotive service technology, carpentry, CNC 3 Axis Milling Programmer, dental assisting, electrical construction wiring, industrial motor control, medical assistant, sheet metal, technical computer applications, web design and welding. The 2024 SkillsUSA state competition was held in Marlborough, MA. McCann students earned two gold medals in technical drafting and dental assisting. Four silver medals were awarded in automated manufacturing technology and dental assisting. Three bronze medals were also earned in 3-D visualization and animation and carpentry. The gold medal winners advanced to The National Leadership & Skills Conference in Atlanta, GA in June. McCann earned a gold medal in dental assisting. We are incredibly proud of our competitors!

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is the premier CTSO (Career and Technical Student Organization) for students pursuing careers in business management, information technology, finance, office administration, health administration and other related career fields. The mission of Business Professionals of America is to develop and empower student leaders to discover their passion and change the world by creating unmatched opportunities in learning, professional growth and service. With 45,000 members in over 1,800 chapters across 25 states and Puerto Rico, as well as an international presence in China, Haiti and Peru, BPA is an organization that supports business and information technology educators by offering co-curricular exercises based on national standards. This organization's activities complement classroom instruction by giving students practical experience through application of the skills learned at school. BPA is contributing to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills.

At the 2024 BPA State Leadership Conference (SLC) in March, McCann BPA members earned two 2nd place, one 3rd place, two 4th place, and two 5th place awards.

McCann students competed in finance, business administration, management information systems, digital communication and design, and management, marketing and communications. Four students traveled to Chicago, IL for the National Leadership Conference in May.

Cooperative education is a program of vocational technical education for students who, through a cooperative arrangement between the school and employers, receive instruction, including related vocational instruction, by the alternating of study in school with a job in the occupation field. Such instruction shall be planned and supervised by the school and the employer so that each contributes to the student's education and employability. Work periods will be on alternate weeks during the school year. The experiences gained through cooperative education are critically beneficial to graduates entering the workforce, continuing their collegiate education or entering into military service.

During the 2023-2024 school year there were fifty-four seniors placed in co-op positions with thirty-seven of our cooperative education industry partners. The senior placement rate was 50% of the senior class during this time period.

The junior placement from March-June was thirty-five placements with eighteen of our cooperative education industry partners. The junior placement rate was 27% of the junior class during this time period.

McCann students continued to excel in receiving industry-recognized credentials through their vocational programs. All of our sophomores school-wide earned their OSHA-10 certifications. Industry-recognized credentials such as these are prevalent in all of our vocational programming and offer our students a competitive advantage when entering the workforce.

All five culinary arts seniors achieved the American Culinary Federation Certified Fundamental Cook Certifications and four of our seniors achieved the ServSafe manager certification. All seniors also achieved their Massachusetts Food Allergy Certification. All eight of our freshmen students for the first time achieved the ServSafe Food Handler Certification and all sophomores achieved their 10-hour OSHA certification.

Fifty-one of the business technology students earned their certifications in a number of Microsoft Office programs including Access Expert, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and Word Expert.

Advanced manufacturing technology students continued to excel as evidenced by their performance on the MACWIC exams. MACWIC is an industry-recognized credential that provides students with certifications demonstrating their proficiency in the manufacturing industry. 16 of our underclassmen received level 1 certification and 12 of our upperclassmen received level 2 certification which includes the Massachusetts Department of Labor pre-apprentice status.

Our computer assisted design drafting students were similarly successful in a variety of certifications as follows:

- Certipoint Autodesk Certified User certifications: AutoCAD 16, Revit 12, Maya 1, Fusion 360 5.
- OnShape Certifications: Certified OnShape Associate 3, Certified OnShape Professional 1.

All of our automotive technology seniors achieved the following certifications through the NC3 Snap-On program: EHP System V tire and wheel service; B2000P Wheel balancing; Pro 42-wheel alignment and the 504 multimeter certification.

Two metal fabrication seniors received a total of five welding certifications in various processes and positions and two junior students qualified for three welder certifications. All sophomore students earned their Massachusetts Hot Work Certification.

The success of our student body continues to be measured by our 100% competency determination, high career placement, high college matriculation rate and technical expertise in national skills competitions.

The district continues to operate on sound financial management principles and incorporates technology in this process to ensure maximum benefit for all of our programming. At the end of the fiscal year, we returned \$82,740.00 of unused transportation monies to our communities. The district continues to search out grants to support our educational funding to improve instructional services and vocational equipment.

Our Massachusetts Board of State Examiners of Electricians 8 module (600 hour) journeyman electrical program continues to expand with over 79 electricians completing modules in 2023-2024. We also had 28 complete the master electrician course.

FY24 Budgeted Revenues		Budget	Actual
City & Town Assessments			
Municipal Minimum		\$3,758,739.00	\$3,758,739.00
Capital		\$18,260.00	\$18,260.00
Transportation		\$181,691.00	\$181,691.00
Municipal Assessment		\$112,490.00	\$112,490.00
Ch. 71 Transportation		\$336,288.00	\$419,028.00
Ch. 70 General School Aid		\$6,841,032.00	\$6,841,032.00
Tuition		\$235,702.00	\$235,702.00
Miscellaneous Revenue		\$14,864.00	\$14,864.00
Total Revenue Received		\$10,656,491.00	\$11,581,806.00
Member City & Town Transportation Refunds			(\$82,740.00)
		\$11,499,066.00	\$11,499,066.00
Source	Grant	Amount	
(Federal Entitlement)			
Fed	Sped IDEA	\$165,182.42	
Fed	Title I	\$144,016.19	
Fed	Title II A	\$15,422.00	
Fed	Title IV	\$11,578.00	
Fed	Perkins	\$68,516.00	
Fed	Perkins Improvement & Equipment	\$23,600.00	
Fed	Perkins Postsecondary Reserve	\$5,263.00	
Fed	ESSER III	\$363,715.00	
(Federal Grants Other)			
REAP		\$68,457.00	
(State Grants)			
MyCap		\$6,492.00	
Workforce Skills Capital		\$3,110,000.00	
MassHire Berkshire: Connecting Activities		\$2,000.00	
MassHire Berkshire: College & Career		\$5,981.19	
MassStep Culinary Arts NAPS		\$71,017.43	
(Private)			
Private	Olmsted	\$5,000.00	
Private	BHG Wellness	\$2,000.00	
Private	General Dynamics	\$2,000.00	
Private	Char. Ed Content Inst. Special Earmark HVAC FC196 DESE Admin	\$39,812.00	
Private	Linwood Rhodes	\$7,000.00	
Private	Culinary Arts – Heidi Moulton	\$2,000.00	
Private	Gene Haas Foundation (AMT)	\$18,000.00	
TOTAL GRANTS		\$4,138,052.23	

WILLIAMSTOWN FIRE DISTRICT



Williamstown Fire District 2023 PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Williamstown Fire District is an independent governmental entity created by a 1912 act of the Legislature. The District is governed by a board of five commissioners elected on a rotating basis on the same day as the District's annual meeting. The 2024 annual meeting took place on Tuesday, May 28, 2024. At the annual meeting, the District sets its budget and its tax levy for the following year. All registered voters of Williamstown are entitled and encouraged to attend the annual and monthly meetings at the District firehouse on Water Street or any other location designated by the commissioners and advertised as such.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

David R. Moresi, Chair
Lindsay Neathawk, Vice Chair
Joseph P. Beverly
John J. Notsley
Michael Alex Steele

Craig A. Pedercini, Chief
Billie Jo Sawyer, Treasurer
Paul Harsch, Moderator
Sarah Currie, Clerk and Records Access Officer
34 Water Street
(413) 458-8113

The Williamstown Fire District had a productive year. The Prudential Committee met monthly, on the fourth Wednesday of the month using a hybrid meeting format, both at the fire station and online. Prudential Committee meetings are public meetings and community members are welcome to attend. Meeting notices and login information for online meetings can be found on the town calendar and on the calendar on the fire department website. Most meetings are also recorded and can be viewed on WilliNet. The District thanks WilliNet for presenting the meetings.

The District's Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 28, at 7:30 p.m. at the Williamstown Elementary School. Voting for elected positions within the Williamstown Fire District took place before the annual meeting, from 4 - 7 p.m. David R. Moresi and Lindsay Neathawk were elected to the Prudential Committee, each for a three year term. Elected Prudential Committee members and term expirations are Joseph P. Beverly 2025, David R. Moresi 2027 (Chair), Lindsay Neathawk 2027 (Vice Chair), John J. Notsley 2026, and Michael Alex Steele 2025. The moderator is Paul Harsch 2026. Appointed officials of the Williamstown Fire District in 2024 include Billie Jo Sawyer, Treasurer, and Sarah Currie, Clerk and Records Access Officer.

At the 2024 Annual District Meeting, the District voted to authorize the purchase and fit-up of a new fire truck vehicle totaling \$420,000, with funds taken from the stabilization account. The District also voted to appropriate \$80,000.00 to be placed in the Stabilization Fund. The District voted to appropriate \$10,000.00 to be used for the purchase of essential communications equipment to support department operations. The District also voted to appropriate \$12,000.00 to be used for the purchase of firefighter turnout gear and personal protective equipment (PPE) for members of the Department. The District also voted to transfer \$36,000 remaining from the appropriation previously approved by the

vote taken under Article 9 of the May 23, 2023 Annual District Meeting for the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), to instead be used for the purchase of a Solo Rescue® Decon Washer. The District voted to appropriate a sum of up to \$25,000 from the available free cash reserves to address budget overages in the current fiscal year and also voted to raise an appropriate \$60,000.00 to be used for project review, value engineering and consulting in support of the construction of the new fire station.

The Fire District continued to work diligently to plan and commence building the new fire station and the Building Committee was active in 2024.

Building Committee

The Fire District Building Committee aims to provide for the community a facility that meets the operating and safety needs of our firefighters for more than the next 50 years and advances the town's and the commonwealth's goal of attaining net-zero carbon emissions, and to do so at the best possible lifetime cost.

The Building Committee is composed of seven voting members and one non-voting position. Five members have positions with the fire department, three members are community volunteers, and one member (non-voting) position is reserved for the town manager. The Building Committee is chaired by Elaine Neely. Other members of the Building Committee include Don Dubendorf, Ryan Housman, Jim Kolesar, David Moresi, Mike Noyes, and Craig Pedercini. Town Manager, Robert Menicocci, serves as a non-voting member.

The fire station project groundbreaking took place on September 4, 2024 and progress was made with early site work and masonry work throughout 2024. The Building Committee will meet periodically over the next year to review project progress. Updates about the building project are also provided at each monthly Prudential Committee meeting.

Personnel Committee

In February, the Prudential Committee voted to establish a Personnel Committee to make recommendations and proposals for personnel at the Fire District. The committee members are Joe Beverly (Chairperson), Lucy Gerold, Jim Kolesar, Michael Noyes, and Fred Puddester.

Outreach - Chief

The fire department continues its outreach to the community. Firefighters participated in the annual 4th of July parade and oversaw the fireworks that evening. The fire department continues to participate in National Night Out which is sponsored by the Williamstown Police Department. The annual Fire Prevention Open House was held on October 26th. Even though it was a damp and cold day, the event was well attended by our community members, parents and their children. The national theme for 2024 was "Smoke Alarms, Make Them Work For You!" The Forest Warden's department also participated in the open house. The department's new brush truck was put into service in 2024 and was on display for all to see. We had a special visit from Sparky the Fire Dog and Smokey the Bear, mascots of the fire and forestry service. The Gale Hose Company provided hotdogs and hamburgers for attendees. Hot coffee, cider and donuts were also served. The fire department continued its participation in Halloween, during trick or treat. This has become an annual event for the fire department for promoting safety by distributing glow sticks with the hope of ensuring better visibility so our children enjoyed a safe Halloween. The fire department continues to educate our children in fire safety with visits to the local daycares and schools as well as hosting field trips to the fire station. Visits to the senior housing were also made to discuss fire safety with the residents. Safe cooking practices and planning your escape along with accountability were high on the list of topics.

Staffing

On September 30th, Michael Noyes and Paul Thompson aka PT, two longtime firefighters, retired from the Williamstown Fire Department. Mike joined the Williamstown Fire Department in 1975, he has been a firefighter for 48 plus years of which six years he spent on the Pownal Fire Department. Mike retires at the rank of Second Assistant Chief. His knowledge and leadership have proven a great asset to the department. Mike has been instrumental in helping to maintain the apparatus fleet. His passion and knowledge when it comes to designing new fire apparatus is exceptional.

Paul also joined the Williamstown Fire Department in 1975 and has been a firefighter for 33 years of which six years he spent on the North Pownal Fire Department. Paul rejoined Williamstown in 2002 and has been a dedicated firefighter, driver and pump operator for the department. Paul's knowledge of driving and pumping fire apparatus has proven invaluable to the department. He has mentored other firefighters/drivers over the years and is well respected by his peers. The fire district cannot thank these two firefighters enough for their dedicated commitment and service they have unselfishly given to their community for all these years.

In December, Amira Jagne and Peter Deegan-Krause, two Williams College Freshman, were hired onto the department. They were selected from a pool of Williams Freshman applicants. The fire department currently has 29 firefighters and 7 deputy forest wardens, three of which are also firefighters.

Grants

The fire department applied for the FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Department of Fire Services. Following the review process, the fire district was awarded \$15,500. The district purchased the following equipment: 26 EMS jackets with winter liner, 26 pairs of structural firefighting gloves, 2 sets of structural firefighting gear consisting of coats, pants, suspenders, helmets, and boots.

Operations:

The fire district conducted regular day-to-day operations which included inspections of public and private schools, restaurants, theaters, motels, inns and nursing homes. The fire department continues to do plan reviews and inspections of new construction. The fire chief and building commissioner work closely together throughout the year while performing inspections of fire alarms, sprinkler systems and liquor license renewals. 159 permits were issued for smoke/co detectors, liquid propane gas, tank removals, oil burners, oil tanks, tank truck storage, fuel tank storage, hot works, fireworks, hood suppression systems, floor refinishing, PV/energy storage systems (ESS) and fire reports.

In 2024, the fire department responded to 45 medical assist calls. The fire department responds whenever NBEMS request us or if they must call for a mutual aid ambulance from out of the area (i.e. Pownal Rescue or Lanesboro Ambulance). The fire department has responded to lift assist, difficulty breathing, fall with injuries, unconscious person and cardiac arrest to name a few.

381 Incident Calls:

Trash Fire in Dorm - 2, Electrical Wall Fire - 1, Compost/Garage Fire - 1, Fire in Garage - 1, Car Fire - 2, Generator Fire - 1, Grill Fire - 1, Chimney Fires - 4, Illegal Outside Fire - 3, Gas Appliance Issue - 2, Transformer/Pole/Tree/Wires down - 9, Boiler Issues - 1, Motor Vehicle Accidents - 16, Natural/Propane Gas Odor/Leaks - 30, Gasoline Odor/Spill - 1, Stalled Elevators - 15, Water Issues/Broken Pipes/Flooding Basements - 1, Carbon Monoxide Alarms - 32, Rescue/Missing Person - 1, Activated Fire Alarms 146, Activated Sprinkler Systems - 1, Assisted Residents with Alarm System - 14, Smoke/Good Intent Calls - 19, Medical Assist NBEMS - 45, Smoke Complaint (forest warden) - 7, Assisted PD with Traffic - 1, Pellet Stove issue - 1, Dog Rescue - 1, Hazardous Material with no Haz-Mat - 3, Vehicle leaking Gasoline - 1, Mischievous False Alarms - 1, Electrical Burning Odors - 4, Over Heated Tractor Trailer Brakes - 1, Broken Water Pipe - 1, Mutual Aid Calls: Structure Fires - 4, (North Adams, Adams, Hancock and Pownal VT), Brush Fire - 4 (2 Pownal, 2 Bennington), Chimney Fire - 1 (Pownal), Utility Pole Wire Arcing - 1 (New Ashford)

Training

Firefighters participated in the following training classes this year: Fire Attack, Pumps & Hydraulics, Aerial Ladders, Fire Officer I, SCBA Maze Trailer, Emergency Vehicle Operations, Elevator Rescue, Risk Based Battery Response, Pumps, Basic Six Day Training, Roadway, Safety Emergency Personnel, Use of Gas Meters, Fire Attack, IS-700B, IS-100, IS-200, IS 5A, and Photovoltaics for the Fire Service. In-house training is conducted on Monday evenings. Topics include: Ladders, hydrants, vehicle extrication, advancing hose lines, search and rescue using self-contained breathing apparatus, tanker operations (dumping, drafting, and pumping), tower operations, review of truck equipment, chimney fires, ropes and hauling systems and firematic drills. The members of the fire district continue to maintain their first responders and CPR/AED certifications. The fire department and forest wardens continue to train in Ice Water Rescue to maintain their technician certification. The Forest Warden held training on the operations of the brush trucks and went over all their equipment.

Forest Warden

The Warden's department took delivery of their new 2023 F350 Brush Truck (W6) this past summer and put it in service in August. The vehicle has a 100 GPM pump, 200 gal. water tank and a 30-gallon class A foam tank. W6 has already responded to smoke complaints, illegal outside fires, three mutual aid calls (Bennington and Pownal), and assisted the WPD with a road closure due to a tree on wires. W6 also responded to medical calls, assisting NBEMS with access to inaccessible driveways due to ice. For the year of 2024, the Forest Wardens Department issued burning permits from January 15th through May 1st as well as permits for Agricultural and outdoor event fires year-round. The Department issued 284 total permits.

The Forest Warden's Department is trained in Wildland Firefighting and Ice Rescue. All members are First Responder and CPR/AED certified. The department also participated in the 4th of July Parade, National Night Out and the fire department's open house.

2024 Report of the WFD Treasurer:

Williamstown Fire District		FY 2024	
		7/1/2023 - June 30, 2024	
RECEIPTS:			
Town of Williamstown (Taxes collected)	\$721,267		
Williams College	\$34,814		
Inspection Fees	\$8,030		
Interest Income	\$147,970		
Miscellaneous	\$9,000		
Donations	\$325	\$921,406	
			\$921,406
EXPENSES			
Audit	\$14,500		
Berkshire County Retirement	\$22,734		
Communications	\$5,780		
Debt Service	\$0		
Dispatch	\$74,983		
Education and Training	\$19,417		
Forestry Department	\$11,890		
Insurance	\$61,042		
Legal	\$9,399		
Maintenance & Operation	\$63,438		
Outreach & recruitment	\$1,925		
Pay of Firemen	\$58,960		
Salaries	\$131,444		
Services & Supplies	\$7,737		
Utilities	\$5,940		
Water Rents	\$1,650		
Total Operations	Article 5		(\$490,839)

Other Articles			
Matching Grants	Article 8	FY '20	\$1,909
Matching Grants	Article 9	FY '21	\$4,817
OPM - Design	Article 6	FY '22	\$22,093
Station OPM Design	Article 7	FY '23	\$55,496
Brush Truck	Article 8	FY '23	\$4,111
Design Fund	Article 7	FY '23	\$25,000
Station OPM Design	Article 6	FY '24	\$70,000
Legal Bonding	Article 11	FY '24	\$20,000
Armored Gear	Article 12	FY '24	\$1,625
Stabilization	Article 7	FY '24	\$80,000
Communications	Article 10	FY '24	\$2,085
PPE/Uniforms	Article 8	FY '24	\$6,471
			(\$293,607)
			(\$784,446)

Income / Expense	NET Balance	June 30, 2024	\$136,960
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Stabilization Fund	July 1, 2023	\$444,931
Additions		\$80,000
Withdrawal		-
Interest		\$17,279
Fund Balance	June 30, 2024	\$542,210

Billie Jo Sawyer, Treasurer

WILLIAMSTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Michael Nixon, Museum Director

David Dewey, Board Director

The Williamstown Historical Museum in 2024 continued its mission of collecting and preserving items of historical significance, as well as promoting interest in the history of Williamstown. A special addition to the collection has been a number of agricultural implements, including two wonderful farming wagons, with a storied history of farming in the Hopper. We have also gained a marvelous one-horse doctor's buggy and we hope to display it in town parades. Throughout the year, we continue to respond to research requests, update our exhibits, host school field trips and lectures. We held a well-attended presentation on the Berkshire veterans of World War II.

Our signature Harvest Fair was held in late September and it was a great success. This was again a time for the community to gather and participate in an old-time, carnival-themed fair. Families with young children enjoyed the games and carnival stand, a photo booth, jugglers, a stilt walker, food and drinks, and the local folk band Rosin the Beaux set the mood, as well as the Butterfly Swing Band in our reassembled 1800s Dolan-Jenks historic barn. The Museum is grateful for the volunteer support, including students from Williams College and Buxton School, who helped make this event possible.

In 2024 the 1753 House became part of the WHM. The 1753 House Committee tended to minor maintenance issues and was available to school groups in 2024. Dedicated volunteers opened the building weekends and holidays from May through October. Unfortunately, a small animal made its nest out of the pages of our sign-in book, so we can't provide information on the number of visitors or where they were from. One comment that escaped the rodent's depredations, however, was written by Vermonter Robert J. Danaher, Jr.: "Dad helped build this for the bicentennial."

Organized by Gail Burns, the House hosted the annual Carol Sing on a cold snowy evening - led by Deborah Burns, fire tended by Dave Loomis, wassail provided by Provisions - for a capacity crowd on December 23.

The Williamstown Historical Museum is self-funding, and relies on your continued support. The Museum was able to meet its ambitious fundraising goals, raising more than \$40,000 to support its lean operating budget. Thanks to the generosity of more than 150 donors and the support of important granting agencies, including the Community Preservation Fund and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, WHM can provide educational programming and build a strong community.

We invite all town residents in 2025 to contribute to the diversity of the collection by sharing your stories and suggestions, and any artifacts related to the town's history. We thank you for your investment in our town, helping us keep history alive.

WILLIAMSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY

35 Adams Road

Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267

Tel: 413 458-8282 Fax: 413 458-9698

The Williamstown Housing Authority administers 145 units of subsidized housing, both rental assistance and conventional units. This includes: 30 elderly apartments, Meadowvale, on Adams Road, 75 units of federally subsidized Section 8 rental assistance, 8 units of family housing at Cole Ave and Stetson Road, 8 units for people with special needs at 45-47 Adams Road, and 23 state funded project based rental vouchers. The Housing Authority office is located at Meadowvale, 35 Adams Road.

We are presently accepting on-line applications for elderly and family housing at www.publichousingapplication.ocd.state.ma and at www.affordablehousing.com for the Section 8 federally funded rental assistance program.

