

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT <http://townhall.Leverett.ma.us> FEBRUARY 2014

Annual Town Meeting, Saturday, 3 May 2014, Leverett School, 9:00 a.m.

**Running for Office?*

Elected officials with expiring terms who are running again as well as new candidates for office are asked to submit substantive statements to the *Newsletter* editor at townclerk@leverett.ma.us or leave in Town Clerk box at Town Hall, by **1 March 2014**. Offices up for election are:

Assessors: One three-year term

Board of Health: One three-year term

Library Trustees: Two three-year terms

Constable: One three-year term, one two-year term

Finance Committee: Two three-year terms

Assistant Moderator: One one-year term

Moderator: One three-year term

Planning Board: Two five-year terms

School Committee: One three-year term; two two-year terms

Select Board: One three-year term

Tree Warden: One one-year term

***If you are interested in running for office (and you are) please take a minute to read the short synopsis of each "job." You may find something that suits you.**

Assessors: Includes three elected Assessors and one appointed half-time Administrative Assessor. The primary responsibility is to assure that property assessments are established and maintained in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with state mandates, and to process warrants for real estate, personal property, forestry, and vehicle excise taxes. The office of the *Assessors is the only elected position in town that has state-mandated qualifications that must be achieved within the first term of office*. Qualified individuals can handle razzing about the high taxes in Leverett. **Meetings:** approximately twice per month.

Assistant Moderator: Performs the duties of the Moderator (running town meeting) in his/her absence.

Board of Health: Primary duties relate to the protection of public health, promotion of sanitary living conditions, control of disease, and protection of the environment. The Board of Health oversees soil evaluation and perc tests and approves disposal systems (for new

construction, additions, and repairs or replacements of existing systems), and applies well regulations. **Meetings:** two or more times per month.

Constable: Responsible for posting warrants for town meetings and elections. Constable is present during elections to ensure safety of polling place, to refill the donut plate, and to make the coffee.

Finance Committee: Oversees town spending. Works with Select Board prior to town meeting on budget issues; run the annual budget hearing; approves (or not) expenditures from the reserve account. **Meetings:** Several per year, more during the months of January-March when the next fiscal year budget is being drafted.

Library Trustees: Responsible for overseeing the library and establishing policies and plans to provide services to the community, determine final budget, and conduct public relations. The trustees value individuals who are team players, have a sense of humor, and are avid readers. **Meetings:** once per month (except in July and August).

Planning Board: Writes zoning and subdivision bylaws. Members meet with individuals seeking to build or modify homes or divide land, and help decipher bylaws for the confused. The board is in the process of modifying the subdivision regulations as they relate to developments of 6 or fewer homes and making amendments to the conventional subdivision regulations. **Meetings:** once a month (except in summer).

Select Board: Official governing body of the town charged with setting polices and regulations which are not within the realm of town meeting. Members make appointments to ad hoc boards, committees, and commissions; work directly with police, fire, and highway departments; authorize spending, calls town meetings; set the warrant for Annual Town Meeting, develop town budget in cooperation with Finance Committee. ETC, ETC, ETC. **Meetings:** Second, fourth (and fifth if there is one) Tuesdays of the month.

NOTES FROM AROUND TOWN

• **Dogs:** 2014 dog licenses are in. Unlike the RMV (that stopped sending reminders) this is me reminding you to license or relicense your dog.

• **Candidate's statements:** Candidates for elected office **must submit a statement of intent to the Newsletter by 1 March 2014.**

• **Census forms** are green this year. Please return them by mail or drop off at the school or town hall (yes, even if I know you and know you still live here).

• **2014 Motor Vehicle Excise Bills are due in the Collector's Office by Tuesday, February 24.**

Forgetting the deadline could cost an extra \$10 plus interest so send payment today, or pay online.

• **WANTED: FIREFIGHTERS**
PLEASE CALL JOHN MORUZZI AT
548-9225

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES:

1 March (candidate statements only), 1 April,
1 June 2014

Send news items, candidate's statements, bouquets of freesia and other beautifully-scented flowers to Lisa Stratford, P.O. Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054 or e-mail to townclerk@leverett.ma.us Call 548-9150 for information, guidelines, and gluten-free recipes.

SELECT BOARD

Budget season is in full-swing. Once again, the total budget will probably be uncomfortably close to the levy limit with little to spare to put toward reserve funds, increased staffing for the Fire Dept. (as recommended by the Leverett Fire Study committee), or the OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) fund which we have talked about in other reports and town meeting. Every year there is a town-wide budget hearing and we encourage everyone who is interested to come; this is a good chance to get informed for the vote on the budget at the annual town meeting (which is on Sat. May 3rd this year).

Siemens has agreed to replace the new furnaces at Town Hall which were installed a few years ago as part of the ESCO contract to improve energy efficiency. There has not been a problem-free season with these furnaces since they were installed and this year, on New Year's Eve, there was a "melt down" in the 2nd floor furnace leading to a release of carbon monoxide and lots of smoke. John Kuczek and the Leverett Fire Department responded promptly to the smoke alarm and got the situation under control. The furnace was repaired the next day but this was really the last straw for these furnaces. New furnaces (Regal Lowboys) from a different manufacturer (Boyertown Furnace) will be going in soon. Meanwhile John K. installed new smoke/CO monitors throughout the Town Hall and easy-to-read CO detectors in every office and downstairs. The new furnaces will be slightly less energy-efficient than the ones being replaced but presumably they will work.

The Attorney General's Office has promptly approved the zoning bylaw amendment passed at the Dec. 17 (postponed to January 14) Special Town Meeting regarding the placement of solar panels between LES and the Public Safety Complex. The Town is now ready to move ahead on this project. Final contract details are being worked out with The Solar Store of Greenfield. Thanks to everyone for showing up at the special town meeting; although we were concerned that there might not be a quorum it was clearly no problem!

The Affordable Housing Trust has been working to promote a couple of projects in town, one of which will be on the Town Meeting Warrant this May as a CPA proposal from Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity to build 2 units on Cave Hill Rd. This is a great opportunity for the Town to partner with this esteemed national organization to help fulfill affordable housing goals. There are more details in this newsletter.

The second project involves the use of the Town's mortgage buy-down program which is part of the *Town of Leverett Strategic Housing Plan*. One requirement for enacting this program is an affordable housing deed rider; although this seems like it should be simple (just use an existing rider) it has involved much back-and-forth between the MA Community Preservation Commission and the DHCD (Dept. of Housing and Community Development). When developing this plan it was decided that we did not want to be part of the state's affordable housing program which requires applicants to have an income of 80% AMI (average median income) for the region and that no particular groups of applicants are shown preference. CPA rules allow affordable housing for applicants at 100% of AMI, which widens the pool; also, by not being part of the state's affordable housing program we can give preference to town employees and residents. We are now close to having the deed-rider approved so we can move forward with the application that we have. The *Town of Leverett Strategic Housing Plan* is on the town's website.

The proposal for a region for the Leverett, Shutesbury, Pelham and Amherst schools that includes preK-12 has gone through some changes. The initial proposal that was voted on by the RSDPB was for a region for Prek-6 and did not involve the current ALPS 7-12 region. As the process went along it became clear that a Prek-12 made more sense from a fiscal and administrative point of view. The procedure for this requires an amendment to the existing regional agreement which is a different process. The RSDPB will be replaced by a Regional Agreement Working Group (RAWG) appointed by the Regional School Committee (RSC). As of this time the RSC has voted to keep the current members of the RSDB as members of RAWG.

Julie Shively, for the Select Board

From the Leverett School Committee:

The School Committee is in the process of budget planning for Fiscal Year 2015 (July 2014 - June 2015). The school principal, Anne Ross, with the help of the Union 28 central office, has drafted a budget for the school which meets the Select Board's request (informed in turn by Proposition 2 ½ town-wide budgetary constraints) that the overall school budget not rise by more than 2%. The budget is under discussion but is not final as of this writing (early January). It will be discussed with the Select Board within the next few weeks, some adjustments may be made to account for personnel and other changes, and it will be voted on at a subsequent School Committee meeting prior to being presented at Town Meeting in May.

Preparing a budget is a challenge for any department, and there are many components to the school budget. State and federal mandates require that we provide certain services and assessments, and many costs are fixed even though the school population has declined in recent years. Last year's budget was a decline over that of the previous year, primarily because a larger-than-usual grade of students (requiring two classes and two teachers) moved on to the middle school, and three teachers who retired were replaced at a lower pay rate. Prior to last year, the budget had been level-funded for the past five years, requiring cuts in instructional materials, professional development, and other areas. However, the School Committee believes we are still providing an excellent educational experience at LES. Teachers, staff, and administrators are dedicated to providing a rich, intellectually challenging, and warm environment. Students have the opportunity to take part in educational programs that are not traditionally provided at an elementary school, such as the outdoor adventure program, the greenhouse program, and laboratory science outside of the classroom, that enhance learning and make it enjoyable. Our current budget leaves these programs intact.

We are also pleased to announce that Robert Mahler, the current interim superintendent of Union 28, will continue as interim superintendent until July 2015. This will allow the Union to defer hiring a permanent superintendent until Leverett and Shutesbury decide whether to remain within Union 28, or to regionalize with Amherst and Pelham at the elementary level. We have received only positive feedback on Bob's first six months as an interim superintendent and are happy that he will be with us for another 18 months.

Catherine Brooks, for the School Committee

Thank you Edie Field, JoAnne Mully, Judy Ricker, Terry Allen, Judy Hobart, Betsy Douglas, Barbara Alfange, and Chris Nelson for cheerfully (and with some gossip) helping to fold and staple the Newsletter as part of it's journey to your mailbox.

Fire Department

Brush burning season started January 15th and will run until April 30th. There are two ways to obtain a burning permit. If you have access to the web, go to www.fcburnpermits.com, and follow the directions, or you can also go to the town website and it will direct you to this address. If you do not have access to the web, call the dispatch center at 625-8200 and they will issue you a permit. Using the web is the best method for obtaining a permit. It is strongly recommended that burning be done early in the season because of the possibility that it will be shut off as it becomes dry and windy. Note: The DEP will not allow open burning if adverse weather conditions are forecast.

Did you know that smoke detectors are only good for 10 years? Even if you push the button and the alarm sounds, it does not mean it still works properly. If yours are ten years or older, replace them. It is a small price to pay for your safety. The same applies for carbon monoxide detectors, except their life span is 7 years. The best way to check the age of a detector is by removing it and looking on the back for the date of manufacture.

If you burn wood, when you empty the wood ashes, they must be placed in a metal bucket with a lid and taken outside, away from your home. The ashes may seem cold, but many times they are not and still give off carbon monoxide as well as smolder, sometimes for days. Once you are sure they are cold through and through, dispose of them.

*Respectfully,
John Moruzzi*

Keep your **aluminum flip tabs** from can lids coming for Les Allen. Drop your lids off at the Town Hall or Transfer Station. Money collected from the aluminum goes to the Shriner's Hospital.

TOWN STREET LIST/CENSUS

Annual street list/census forms were sent to each household in town in mid-January (they are green). In order to stay on our voting list, make accurate predictions of our school population, and to keep reliable records for our emergency responders, it is important that these forms be returned quickly. Please note that the political party designation next to a name on this form indicates that you are registered, and in which party. This is not an official voter registration form. No additions, deletions or changes will be made to the voting list based on the street list form. If you want to change parties or register to vote, please do so in the Town Clerk's office, or by mail (forms available at Town Hall).

Council on Aging News

FOOT CARE CLINIC: The COA is introducing a foot care clinic to Leverett as requested by some of our seniors. Older people, people with compromised health and people with diabetes and/or neuropathy are at greater risk for infection, skin breakdown, or other complications related to their inability to look closely and critically at their feet. A thorough inspection of the foot, early intervention and good care can ward off painful or potentially life threatening conditions. Kate Clayton-Jones, RN, will be offering half-hour sessions on February 27, April 10, May 22 and June 26. She says, "As a foot care nurse I start off with an assessment and then I take care of the feet. I do a reflexology-guided massage at the end, which my clients say they really enjoy. I also make recommendations and if need be, referrals." Due to uncertainty of how much this service will be used, and limited funds, a suggested amount to cover some or all costs is requested, from \$15-\$25.

To sign up for a one-half hour session, please contact the COA at coa@leverett.ma.us or 548-1022x5. Someone will return your call within a few days.

CHAIR YOGA: Wednesdays, 10:00, Town Hall. \$5, first class free. Have you tried it yet?

THE CIRCUIT BREAKER TAX CREDIT: Amount #1 - Add up all your income, including social security. Now find 10% of that number. Amount #2 - Figure out what you paid for property taxes last year on your home (not on large pieces of land too). If amount #2 is more than amount #1 and you or your spouse is over 65, you may qualify for the circuit breaker tax credit on your Massachusetts tax return. This refundable credit can be worth up to \$1030 this year (you can receive it even if you do not have any taxes to pay).

FILE OF LIFE: Do you have a File of Life card on your refrigerator? On it, you fill out a mini medical history with an emergency contact and then place it visibly on your fridge. We would like all senior and disabled homes to have one. Pick one up downstairs at town hall.

GOLD CANE: At the end of last year, for the first time in our town's history as far as we can figure, the Boston Post Gold Cane Award was given to a married couple: Paul and Arlene Woodard, who were the oldest man and woman living in Leverett. Sadly, they have both passed away since and we send condolences to their family. They will be missed by many.

NEW MEMBERS: Again, we are pleased to welcome new members to the COA – Judy Raphael and Chris Nelson. Our next meeting will be held Thursday, February 20th, at 10:00, downstairs at Town Hall. We would love for you to join us as a guest or possible member.

Submitted by the COA

Library Low-Down

Library Hours_ *Tuesday 3-8 *Wednesday 10-3 (story hour at 10:30) *Thursday 3-8 *Saturday 10-3 *Sunday 12-5 (closed Sundays Memorial Day to Labor Day).

Special Closings: Sunday Feb 16 in honor of President's Day.

Please join us for Read It Leverett! 2014 The book selection for this year is:

***Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela.**

This year's program will include a series of events running through the month of March: a book discussion group, a screening of the 2013 movie *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*; a talk or panel discussion; a performance by the Leverett Chorus; and more. This year we also invite kids and young adults to join in the Read. We have books on Mandela for a variety of age groups, and we will offer special events for kids. Books are available at the library now.

Art in the Community Room

Through February, Leverett artist Paul Root shares his large colorful abstract paintings. In March and April the Leverett Trails Committee will display a collage project of photos, poems, art work, and materials gathered and created by residents.

Sunday Feb 9, 2pm. Turn it Off! Turn it Off! Adventures in Building Interactive Museum Exhibits

Leverett resident Rocky Adriance will talk about his thirty years of building interactive museum exhibits all over the world, including the National Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. and the Hong Kong Museum of Science. As director of the company's Interactive Dept., he designed and built one-of-a-kind machines for teaching purposes. Adriance will share photos and movie snippets of some of his projects.

Sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust.

Leverett Library Film Club

February 7, 2014 at 7:30

***Tootsie* (1982) rated PG Comedy, Romantic Comedy**

An unemployed actor with a reputation for being difficult disguises himself as a woman to get a role in a soap opera. One of the classic comedies of the 1980s with Dustin Hoffman, Jessica Lange, Charles Durning, Teri Garr, Bill Murray, and Geena Davis.

March 14, 2014 at 7:30

***Bless Me, Ultima* 2013, rated PG-13 Indie Drama, Drama based on Contemporary Literature**

Director Carl Franklin (*One False Move*, *Devil in a Blue Dress*) directed this adaptation of Rudolfo Anaya's controversial novel about a young boy in New Mexico and the enigmatic healer who opens his eyes to the wonders of the spiritual realm. Featuring [Luke Ganalon](#), [Miriam Colon](#), [Benito Martinez](#), [Dolores Heredia](#), [Castulo Guerra](#), [Joaquín Cosío](#), [Manuel Garcia-Rulfo](#), [Reko Moreno](#), and [Juan Martinez](#).

Thursday Feb. 20th 7-8pm Local author Harriet Rogers will talk about her book *The Taxi Chronicles*, the first in the Honey Walker series set in Northampton. *A rollicking romantic ride for readers everywhere, murder, mobsters and mayhem abound in this quirky debut novel by S.G. Rogers. Part Bridget Jones, part Evanovich and entertaining all the way, Honey's drawn into a complex web of intrigue populated by reformed working girls, Glock-toting grandmas, and lovable local lunatics.* –Goodreads

Lego Club will meet Feb. 27 and March 27, from 3:15 - 4:30 pm. Please register at the library. Elementary school age children are invited to join us for all new building challenges, led by Phyllis Herda. Come check out the latest creations on display.

Fri, Feb 21, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Do you have a new Kindle/ Nook/ ipad/ other device? New to ebooks? IT professional Shirley Keech will show you how to use the CWMARS digital catalog to download eBooks using a range of devices, and will offer a question and answer session for other problems. You are welcome to bring your own or use the devices provided. Please call or sign up at the front desk to register.

Thu Feb 27, 6-7pm Wild PJ Storytime sponsored by the Community Network for Children. Kids are invited to listen to a story, take home a book, enjoy a snack and make a craft. Most appropriate for kids 0-8 years.

Ashley Blais, Library Director

Habitat for Humanity/CPA Project

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity (PVHH) has been working closely in partnership with the Leverett Affordable Housing Trust on a Habitat project in Leverett. Last week the Leverett Affordable Housing Trust voted full support of our proposal to the Leverett Community Preservation Committee. We have recently negotiated an option to purchase a parcel of land on Cave Hill Road for the development of two permanently deed-restricted affordable homeownership units and are requesting \$150,000 to help fund the cost of the project.

The total project costs are estimated at \$411,400 which includes land acquisition, site work, construction and soft costs. Each home will have 3 or 4 bedrooms and at least 1.5 baths and will be built for a high level of energy efficiency in order to provide additional affordability for the families who purchase them. PVHH's model for building affordable housing fully engages the community and the eventual homeowners to provide the majority of the labor in the construction of Habitat homes. This volunteer component is unique to

Habitat for Humanity and significantly reduces the cost of construction which is Habitat is able to successfully-complete small scale projects and sell the completed homes at an affordable price. In their 25 year history in the Pioneer Valley, Habitat has built 35 homes in Hampshire and Franklin Counties with significant support from area churches, college students, small businesses, high school students and hundreds of individual volunteers. CPA funds are a vital source of support for small scale projects as there are no state or federal funding sources for projects of this size.

Tom Wolff
Affordable Housing Trust

From the Collector's Office:

2014 Motor Vehicle Excise Bills are due by 5pm Tuesday, February 25th. Remember, it is the responsibility of the taxpayer to pay on time, regardless of when or if a bill is received. If you own a car and did not get an excise bill, call the collector's office. If you move, be sure to notify the registry of your new address so your bill can be delivered promptly. **PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE AN EXCISE BILL**; if you don't think you owe it, contact the Assessors' office 548-4945. Late payment can cost an additional \$71 in fees plus interest, and the bill must be paid in full before you can renew your license or registration.

Market value is NOT considered for the purpose of assessing motor vehicle excise tax. It is based on a five-year decreasing percentage (90%, 60%, 40%, 25%, 10%) of the *manufacturer's list price in the year of manufacture* and billed at a statewide rate of \$25 per \$1,000 of valuation. It is assessed for a *calendar year* and paid in advance; so if you don't own the vehicle for the entire year, file an application for abatement with the Assessors' Office. The excise will be adjusted accordingly or, if already paid, a refund issued. If abatement is not granted by the due date, pay the bill in full and, if applicable, a refund will be processed.

Pay online at the link on the Town's homepage Leveret.ma.us. (only .25 for electronic check; variable fees apply for credit card payments). You can also sign up for direct pay, and your account will *automatically* be debited on the due date. If paying by check, please write bill# in memo section. Mail payment to Collector, PO Box 300, or drop off at the Town Hall (there is also a drop-off box at the back entrance). If office is closed, please do not interrupt other Town Hall staff with questions regarding your tax; you can leave your check (or question) in the Collector's mailbox. Office is generally open M TU Wed 2:30 – 9:30pm (weekend hours by appointment; call 548-9666 or email treasurercollector@leverett.ma.us).

Thank you for your prompt payment!

Dee Ann Civello, Tax Collector

Real Estate Tax Relief Committee

Thanks to all of you who continue to contribute to the **Real Estate Tax Relief Fund** to help reduce the real estate tax bills for low-income residents. We encourage everyone to consider making a donation when paying your next Excise and/or Real Estate Tax. You can simply add the amount to your payment or send a separate tax-deductible contribution anytime during the year to: Tax Relief Committee c/o Treasurer's Office, PO Box 300, Leverett. You can also request that your payment to be applied to a specific bill. If you are 60 or older and having a difficult time making ends meet, call 548-9666 to request an application for tax relief.

Donations can also be made to the **Kimball Trust Fund** which provides funds to purchase clothing for children of low-income families and to the **Scholarship Fund** for Leverett students continuing their education at the college level. We thank you for your support.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Committee has funds available for open space preservation, affordable housing, historic preservation, or recreation. Applications for CPC funding this year are:

1. For rehabilitation/repair to the roof and chimney of the Leverett Family Museum (\$17,817 requested from Community Preservation funds);
2. For repairs to gravestones at the Moores Corner Cemetery (\$5,875 requested from Community Preservation funds);
3. For purchase and conservation of approximately 90 acres of land on Cave Hill Road (\$190,000 requested from Community Preservation funds);
4. For replacement of windows at the Leverett Crafts and Arts center (\$44,000 requested from Community Preservation funds);

In addition, Habitat for Humanity has indicated it's intention to apply for funding for 2 affordable homes to be constructed on Cave Hill Rd. See Habitat for Humanity/CPA Housing Project on previous page.

Completed applications will be presented at a public meeting to be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 7:30 at Town Hall. Please come hear about the proposed projects at the public meeting.

Copies of all applications submitted are available at Town Hall. Any projects recommended to Town Meeting will be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting.

Danielle Barshak, Community Preservation Committee

**WANTED: FIREFIGHTERS
PLEASE CALL JOHN MORUZZI AT
548-9225**

LEVERETT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

"Celebrating the Civil War Era in Leverett"

The Historical Commission is thrilled to report several upcoming events celebrating our rich history:

On Sunday afternoon, March 9, 2-4PM you are invited to join your neighbors at the Leverett Library to hear Frederick (Rick) Schneider, local illustrator, designer, and educator give a **talk and slide show on "American Illustration in the Civil War Era."** We hope the timing will allow parents to bring their children – particularly the LES Sixth Grade who are researching notable Leverett "people/ places/ things" from the Civil War period.

The Leverett Cultural Council has blessed us with a grant to present a **staged reading of "Hallowed Ground," a contemporary play (IRE Best New Play 2002) which looks at issues raised for families in Leverett 150 years ago** of friendship/growth, grief/loss, life/death, peace/war. We will be looking for interested Leverett actors and directors to help put on this performance. If you are interested please call Carole DeSanti at 413-549-2731. More about this in the March newsletter.

LES sixth grade students have visited four local cemeteries to do research on the Leverett citizens who fought in the Civil War. They plan to visit the Town Hall vault, Leverett Family Museum and Moore's Corner School House museums to study objects in those collections from the Civil War era in Leverett.

Improvements at historic sites which have received Community Preservation Commission funding - Silas Ball cleared brush which was encroaching on the outhouse behind the Moore's Corner School House Museum.

LHC voted to support the Leverett Historical Society's application for funding to the Community Preservation Commission to restore broken and fallen stones in the Moore's Corner Cemetery and to begin the process outlined in Lisa Lipshire's 2013 Preservation Report for the Leverett Family Museum, beginning with restoration of the roof and chimney.

Strategic Plan for Leverett Cemeteries - There was consensus on the Commission that it would be useful to survey the cemeteries of Leverett and to set forth a strategic plan for sustainable maintenance of all of them in the future.

Commission members voted to alternate meeting times between weekday evenings @ 7:30PM, Saturday mornings @ 10AM and Friday mornings at 9:30AM or after 1:30PM. **NEXT MTG. - Saturday, March 1, 10AM Town Hall. All interested friends/neighbors are welcome**

Susan Mareneck, Chair, Historical Commission

Broadband Committee Report

Our project is moving along with the expected date of completion of December 2014.

To recap what this project is all about, and how we got here . . .

At the Town Meeting in April 2012, a warrant article passed with a 306-33 vote that authorized the Town to borrow 3.6 million dollars to build a fiber broadband network in town. A subsequent debt override vote in June 2012 passed 461-90. The goal of this project is to bring internet and voice services to each home. There is no traditional video service similar to a cable TV offering, although streaming services like Netflix and Hulu will be available. This project will not have any direct effect on cell phone reception in town. No one in town is required to accept either internet or phone services that will be offered by the network; anyone who does want either service will need to pay for it, at a cost to be determined soon.

The committee is in the process of selecting a single provider for the network, and expects to reach an agreement with a provider in the coming months. At that time, we'll announce the costs of the internet and phone services, and plan to have informational meetings in the fall to introduce the provider and its services to Leverett residents.

In September and October, our contractor Millennium Communications/Matrix Design visited most homes in town in order to plan for the construction of the fiber connections to each home. As part of the process, each homeowner must sign off on the plan. The plan is to have the fiber follow the path of the existing utilities (electrical, phone) from the road. If the phone/electrical connections are buried between the road and the home, we will bury the fiber, using any conduit that is available. If the phone/electrical connections are aerial between the road and the home, the fiber connection will also be aerial.

Most home owners have signed the plans, indicating that they agree with the plan to bring the fiber connection to their homes. If you have questions about the plan, or whether or not you have signed them, please contact our contractor's senior Project Manager Joe Decker. He can be reached at jdecker@matrixdg.com, 973-929-2586 or 973-390-4519 (his cell phone).

Please visit our web page at <http://leverett.ma.us/content/broadband-committee> to see the latest news of what we are doing. In order to receive ongoing information on our progress, please sign up to join a Google Groups listserv at <http://groups.google.com/group/leverett-broadband-project>.

The committee meets every Thursday at 7pm at the Town Hall. These are public meetings open to everyone, and the committee invites town residents to attend.

If you have any questions about any of the above, please contact Robert Brooks at 253-0887, or robert@brooksresearch.org.

Rob Brooks, for the Broadband Committee

Personal Property Tax

The Personal Property tax is a relic of the colonial era, when the number of goats, swine and neat cattle (even the language is ancient) owned was a valid measure of a person's wealth. Today it is often a source of confusion and misunderstanding. However, the law is still on the books, and the Assessors are required to collect property data and bill for qualified property.

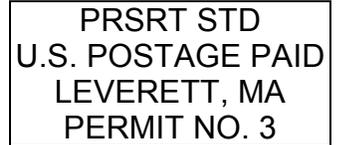
Determining what property is subject to the personal property tax can be confusing. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue defines Personal Property as "...goods, material objects and other things capable of ownership, which are not so firmly attached to, or specially designed for, real estate as to become part of the real estate ..."

Typical items Leverett taxpayers need to report are:

- Merchandise and stock in trade. Goods and wares for sale, whether in a store or any other place for sale, on consignment, or in storage or a warehouse.
- Business and professional office furnishings, fixtures and equipment. Computers and other office equipment if used in a business.
- Machinery, equipment and tools not exempted above. Includes stationary tools such as table saws, etc, heavy machinery, farm machinery and restaurant equipment.
- Medical and dental office equipment; professional libraries.
- Animals (Spot and Fluffy appear to be exempt, while Black Beauty, Bossy, Babe and just about any other creature that might reside in a barn, coop, pen or paddock are taxable).
- Unregistered motor vehicles & trailers (includes tractors, snowmobiles, golf carts and all other kinds and types of unregistered vehicles).
- Household furnishings not situated in the owner's primary residence, i.e. furnishings of summer/second homes. (Please file **Form 2HF**).

Personal property subject to taxation must be reported to the assessors on **State Tax Form 2**, known as the **Form of List**. Forms are mailed to taxpayers who have been subject to the tax in past years, or we believe might have taxable property. Any taxpayer who believes that they are subject to the tax and does not receive a Form 1 should contact the Assessors office for a copy.

*Steve Schmidt, Administrative Assessor
Jim Hicks, Cat Ford, Tom Maczka Board of Assessors*



LEVERETT RESIDENT

LEVERETT MA 01054

APPLICATION: 2014 DOG LICENSE

Renewal _____ or New _____ license

Name of owner _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name of dog _____ Age _____

Breed _____ Color _____

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

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

Dogs must be licensed on or before April 1st! Thank you.



Friends of Leverett Library P.O. Box 250 Leverett, MA 01054-0250

Membership Application/Membership Renewal for the calendar year 2014
Individual: \$10 Family: \$20 Patron: \$50 Lifetime: \$200

Name: _____ Tel #: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: (For future annual meeting notices) _____

All Dues and Donations Are Tax Deductible