

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT

www.leverett.ma.us

APRIL 2018

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SATURDAY, 28 April, 2018, 9:00 AM, LEVERETT SCHOOL

Positions up for election:

Assessors: Jim Hicks, N (3-year);

Board of Health: John Hillman, Y (3-year); Jill Roberts, N (1-year); Rich Brazeau U, (3-year); David Stultz, Y (2-year);

Constable: Brian Emond, Y (3-year);

Finance Committee: Tom Powers, Y (3-year); vacancy (3-year);

Library Trustees: Lisa Werner, Y (3-year); Rachel Flint U (3-year);

Planning Board: Ken Kahn, Y (5-year);

School Committee: Levin Schwartz, Y (3-year); Bethany Seeger, Y (3-year);

Select Board: Julie Shively, Y (3-year).

Notes From Around Town

- Been to leverett.ma.us lately? Check it out. You can “subscribe” to be informed about meeting agendas and board minutes. Suggestions about the site can be sent to selectboard@leverett.ma.us
- **Transfer Station summer hours: Wednesday 4pm to 7pm. Saturday and Sunday 9:30 am to 1pm**
- **Taxes are due in the Collector’s Office May 1.** Payments may be made online by going to the Town website: leverett.ma.us

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

1 June 2018

1 October 2018

Send news items and a free live band for September 15 to Lisa Stratford, Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054; leave them in the *Newsletter* box at Town Hall or email to townclerk@leverett.ma.us.

LEVERETT ENERGY COMMITTEE ALERT

Please be assured that your devoted energy committee did NOT match up our little deserving town with a third party energy supplier that would have turned out to be delinquent, dishonest, misleading, or otherwise disagreeable. If you don't know what I am talking about, it has to do with recent publicity given by our Attorney General to dishonest brokers of electricity. Many of you told us about those phone calls some of you have reported receiving and we encouraged you to be skeptical.

We hope you didn't fall for any dishonest ones. We have a reliable and honest broker who, alas, must wait for market conditions to meet our aggregation requirements.

Portia Williams Weiskel for the Energy Committee

Select Board

Budget preparation has preoccupied our attention for several weeks, working with the Finance and Capital Planning Committees. For the second year in a row, the three groups met jointly and collaborated closely to examine the needs of all Town departments. Every department head presented a proposed budget not greater than 2% above last year's budget, together with whatever requests they had for expenditures above that limit. Across the board, we received thoughtful, well-designed presentations. After analyzing the budgets separately, we combined them with the help of the Town Administrator's spreadsheet of the overall Town budget and made decisions within that framework. We presented all this information in a budget hearing.

The major budgetary concern facing the Town and driving our decision-making arises from state law—the tax cap known as Proposition 2-1/2 (M.G.L. Chap. 59, s.21C). The law includes a hard cap on the municipal property tax rate of \$25.00/\$1000.00 valuation. If a town's tax rate exceeds that cap, taxes (and, hence, budgets) must be cut by up to 15% per year until the tax rate goes below \$25.00. The Finance Committee developed a detailed review of the law to guide our approach to the final budget decisions. In a nutshell, **Leverett must restrain its budgetary growth** well below accustomed levels to avoid hitting the tax cap precipitously. Starting this year, **we must reduce annual increases to 1.5%**, to give the Town breathing room to develop longer-term sustainable finances. The Finance Committee review appears elsewhere in this Newsletter and will be presented at Town Meeting.

In other news with potential budgetary impact, a couple of marijuana cultivation companies approached the Select Board about possible business activity in Town. The Board advised them of our zoning and planning processes and encouraged them to continue to explore the options for locating such business in Leverett. Taxes from such businesses would enhance the Town's revenue stream.

Peter d'Errico, for the Select Board

NOTES FROM THE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board has spent much of the past year helping folks grapple with the new zoning regulations surrounding ground-mounted solar systems, trying to be helpful as people transition to environmentally friendly

energy. Looking ahead, as the town feels the financial crunch from rising costs and a fixed tax rate, we will begin examining how zoning might play a role in growing tax revenue while not jeopardizing the rural character of our town. We are committed to doing what we can in this important area and welcome community input. We meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30. All are welcome.

Steve Freedman, for the Planning Board

Leverett Fire Department

The Leverett Fire Department is pleased to announce it has been awarded the SAFE and Senior SAFE grants in the amounts of \$2,808 and \$2,115, respectively. The money obtained from these grants go to fund department members in running the SAFE program for 4th grade students, a smoking awareness program for 6th grade students, purchasing the materials for and installing the red house number street signs for increased visibility when responding to incidents, along with performing other fire prevention and education related activities throughout the year. The fire department has also submitted multiple grants to acquire a new ice rescue sled and suits, an SCBA cylinder-filling machine, and a washer/dryer for firefighting turnout gear. If any town resident is interested in having a red house number installed at their home please contact the fire station at (413) 548-9225 or fire@leverett.ma.us

Tax Relief Committee Update

The Tax Relief Committee wants to thank Leverett homeowners for their generosity in making donations to the fund designated for financial assistance for seniors in town with paying their property taxes. The committee will be meeting in mid-April to review applications for assistance that have been submitted and to make decisions about distributions of these funds.

Looking ahead to next year's tax bill (not that any of us would want to), please consider adding a donation for this purpose when you pay your property tax bill this spring, so we can continue to have funds available to help local senior and disabled residents with future tax payments. Applications for assistance can be obtained from the Assessor's office and the Tax Collector's Office.

Council on Aging

The Outreach Coordinator, Jennifer Glover, is available to inform residents age 60 and older and their families of the available resources in the community and to link them with appropriate agencies and services. **Please call 548-1022 ext 5 to schedule a home visit.**

Call Carole King, Meal Site Manager, (413-367-2694) to sign up for Friday Lunch. Yoga classes are offered on Wednesdays at 10:00 am. (\$6 per class donation) Foot Clinic is held on the 2nd Monday and Thursday of each month (\$25 donation). Call 413-548-9415 to sign up for Foot Clinic or Yoga.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

We have had four homes purchased in Leverett to date, through the Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP), which will continue to be permanently "affordable."

Thanks to the support of Town Meeting a year ago (spring 2017), the Affordable Housing Trust has \$250,000 available for eligible applicants for our two programs: \$150,000 is set aside for the "Homeowner Assistance" Program (HAP) or "Buy Down" Program, and \$100,000 is allocated for the new "Down Payment Assistance" Program (DPA). The HAP Program provides a subsidy of 20% of the purchase price of a home in Leverett, up to a maximum of \$50,000 (on a home with a maximum price of \$270,000), in exchange for a deed restriction which makes the home permanently affordable. A lottery will be held to choose the applicants who will be awarded these funds. The DPA Program provides 5% of the cost of a home in Leverett, with a maximum purchase price of \$280,000. This is a 0% interest loan which is to be repaid when the property is sold. DPA applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

An information session regarding both programs will be held on Wednesday, May 2, 2018 from 7-8:30 pm at the Leverett Town Hall. Melanie Gaier from the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) which be presenting information on both programs. The application deadline for the HAP is 5/15/18. See flyer attached to newsletter for current income guidelines for both programs. Applications can be obtained from FCRHRA, who administers both programs, and inquiries can be directed to Melanie Gaier (see flyer for contact information).

Friends of the Leverett Library

Our new collector's edition coffee mugs are here! It is a lovely painting of North Leverett by Louise Minks. And we have also had book bags made with the famous "Roads of Leverett" design on them. Twenty of these bags are going to Kentucky with the "Hands Across the Hills" project. Both items will be sold at Town Meeting on April 28 for \$10 each. See us there for bags, mugs, coffee and donuts!

We will also be helping out at Ashley's going away party on May 4.

We are in need of a new board member. If you are available to meet 4-5 times a year and wish to join a great group of people working for our library, please give me a call at 549-2057.

And here is a reminder that we purchase discount passes for many of our museums and local attractions. If there are others you are interested in, let us know.

to www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org/trails. There are also trail maps at the Leverett Library. The Trails Committee meets at 7:30pm on the third Monday of the month at the Leverett Town Hall. Please check the Town calendar for changes and cancellations.

LTC is co-sponsored by the Leverett Conservation Commission and the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust.

Leverett Pop-up Pub!

The Leverett Pub is a happening thing! On May 5th, from 6PM to 10PM, please come to the Leverett Crafts and Art Center and bring some friends to bend an elbow and chew the fat, or relax and listen to some local music. The Leverett Alliance is dedicated to creating a space where our community can come together for no other purpose than to enjoy being with fellow residents, catching up with friends or meeting neighbors for the first time. There will be a selection of Valley-brewed craft beers, wines from regional vinters and some satisfying non-alcoholic options.

Much thanks to the Select Board for approving the plan and trusting that we'll enjoy ourselves responsibly with proper protection in the mud-wrestling pit, safe bungee jumping off the roof and controlled drag racing in the parking lot (all subject to prior permission from proper authorities). And another big thanks to the LCA for hosting us in their historic building.

During the evening, we will be soliciting a proper name for our pub as we hope to make this a tradition that residents can rely on. Once we have a suitable selection of names, we're hoping to have some lively competition as we conduct voice voting to select the very best name. Guaranteed cheers and a prize for the winning submission.

Mark your calendars! We hope to see you there.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON LEVERETT POND?

In a word, plenty. The Friends of Leverett Pond is focused on a critical project – replacing the dam at the north end of the pond. Built in the 1930s it is old and leaky. It will fail at some point and we risk losing the pond as we know it. FLP has recently taken ownership of the dam which allows us to move ahead on this project. We are in serious fund-raising mode. You may have noticed our coffee shed at the Transfer Station and we will be sponsoring events at Leverett Crafts & Arts in June – a wine tasting (June 2) and auction (June 16), and many other efforts. You can follow the excitement on Facebook or our web site - <http://www.friendsofleverettpond.org/>. The future of this town treasure is at stake.

Steve Freedman, for the Friends of Leverett Pond

Leverett Trails Committee

The LTC is welcoming spring! Join us for a work day repairing a bridge on the Goding trail (which connects Cave Hill to Montague Rd) on Sunday, April 29 from 9:00AM - 12:00PM. If you would like to receive emails about guided walks and workdays, or have questions, contact concom@leverett.ma.us. For trail maps and updated information about trails and workdays, go

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update Committee is back to work! Last year, with the assistance of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, we completed Section 3, Community Setting, which is available to view on the Town website (see below). We are asking for additional funding from the CPA to cover the cost of the remainder of the project, and will allow us to be free of the constraints and anxieties of yearly grant rounds.

The OSRP is an important tool for imagining and planning for the future of Leverett's landscapes. It describes the current character of the Town and sets a framework for determining land use priorities. The OSRP needs input from a wide variety of Leverett citizens to be both accurate and relevant to our populace. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to get involved, email concom@leverett.ma.us or leave a message at [413-548-1022 ext. 3](tel:413-548-1022). Check out our progress online at <http://leverett.ma.us/g/89/OSRP-Update-Committee>

Hands Across the Hills Reflections on our Dialogue & Discoveries in Rural Kentucky

Tuesday, MAY 15, 7:00-9:00 PM

LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Free & Open to the Public

Come hear about the experiences of fourteen Leverett residents who are visiting Kentucky coal-country April 19-23. Also, enjoy a slide show of our trip and a sampling of music from Appalachia.

Leverett Crafts and Arts (LCA), Leverett's Community Art Center!

Come join LCA for the upcoming events on the spring 2018 calendar. Watch the news outlets for details on schedules and www.leverettcrafts.org. Free to the public or elective donations.

April (now showing): Stacey Temple, *Water, People and Trees, Embraced by Natural Beauty* - oil paintings. Exhibit Saturdays and Sundays 1:00 – 5:00PM. Reception with live music April 21, 4:00-7:00PM. Music by DeepCBand.

May: Leonore Alaniz, All month art exhibit *Cloth of the Community and Fiber Works and Nature Prints*

May 5th: Leverett Pop-Up Pub, 6:00-10:00pm with live music

June: Friends of Leverett Pond – month-long art exhibit, wine tasting, auction of exhibited works, and live music. Proceeds to the Leverett Pond Preservation Fund

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July: Steven and Sarah Stroud – month-long exhibits. Father (Steve) exhibits retrospective of more than 20 years of illustration art, book covers, etc. and daughter (Sarah) exhibits contemporary quilting

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LEVERETT RESIDENT

LEVERETT, MA 01054

APPLICATION FOR A 2018 DOG LICENSE

Renewal _____ or New _____ license

Name of owner _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name of dog _____ Age _____

Breed _____ Color _____

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

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

Annual Town Meeting
Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 9:00 am
Leverett Elementary School Gym

See. You. There.

**(Please bring the copy of the warrant and budget, enclosed, to Town Meeting.
Thank you!)**