

Annual Meeting Guide 2024

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Westford Museum
2 Boston Road, Westford

7:00 p.m. Time to socialize

7:30 p.m. Business meeting

The League will once again hold our Annual Meeting at the Westford Museum! We will start at 7:00 p.m. with time to catch up and chat. A member of the Model Railroad Club will be on hand to give us an exclusive showing of the Museum's special railroad exhibit. We'll start the business meeting promptly at 7:30 p.m.

Your attendance is important!

A Note from the Steering Committee

It's a Presidential Election Year: We've Lots to Do!

Consider using some of your own time and talents to help continue the great work the Westford League has been doing for over 50 years! We hope you have noticed the League taking positions at Town Meeting, co-sponsoring events with other town organizations, and hosting our many signature events. This year, the Westford League returned to holding more in-person events with our in-person Civic Socials as well as our second in-person Candidates' Night since the pandemic.

With the Presidential election coming up in November, we look forward to doing even more events and activities in the coming year. But what really makes the League a vital part of the community is our members! Many of the events from the past year were suggested and implemented by our members. We are always open to new ideas and new voices as we strive to educate and inform Westford residents.

Becoming a part of the Steering Committee is a meaningful way to increase your League involvement. Monthly Steering Committee meetings help provide a fuller picture of the League's activities. Nominations from the floor of our Annual Meeting are always welcome! Please consider joining this dedicated group of volunteers to help support and guide the future of our local League.

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League of Women Voters of Westford

Purposes

The purposes of the LWVWestford shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government, and to act on selected governmental issues.

Policy

The LWVWestford may take action on local governmental measures and policies in the public interest in conformity with the Principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States. It shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates.

Membership Eligibility

Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the League shall be eligible for membership. The complete text of our local positions, bylaws, policies, and board guidelines can be found online at lwv.westford.org.

The Year in Review: What Did We Do in 2023-2024?

Voter Engagement and Citizen Education

Update and Reprint of “Guide to Town Meeting” and “Guide to Running for Local Office”

We once again updated and reprinted our two most popular publications, “A Guide to Town Meeting in Westford” (its ninth edition!) and “A Guide to Running for Local Office in Westford.” Both guides are also available on our [website](#). With the historic voter turnout at the Special and Annual Town Meetings this year, we’ve run out of copies of the Town Meeting guide and are planning to update and reprint it once again.

We received a \$300 grant from LWVMA’s Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund to help pay for reprinting the Town Meeting guide. The grant program’s purpose is to encourage local Leagues to carry out citizen education and voter service events and programs. Local Leagues are eligible to apply for a grant every year, and we’ve successfully applied many times in the past.

Strategic Planning Retreat

Town Moderator Angela Harkness invited the League to co-host a table with her at the town’s Sept. 7th Strategic Planning Retreat to offer information about Town Meeting, town volunteer opportunities, voting, and other topics. We offered copies of our three publications: “A Guide to Town Meeting in Westford,” “A Guide to Running for Local Office in Westford,” and “How Westford Works.” We also created a handout and poster that provided links to resources on the town’s website as well as links to information on the Secretary of State’s website about voting and elections. Our sincere thanks to Angela for inviting us to participate and giving us the opportunity to meet and talk with so many attendees.

Vote and Town Meeting Yard Signs

As she has for many years, Denali Delmar organized the League volunteers who put out our Vote and Town Meeting yard signs. This year she arranged to purchase additional Town Meeting signs to replace those that have been lost or damaged. Sincere thanks to Denali, Lynn Cohen, Vicky Geary, Linda Greene, Ellen Harde, Chris Kandianis, Joanna Myers, Bob Price, Kyle Randall, Tom Spuhler, Diane Wood, and Jil and Cecelia Vosland for continuing to maintain and post the signs, especially for the extra work required to update the signs to show Town Meetings are now held at Westford Academy and to accommodate the rescheduled Annual Town Meeting.

Denali is retiring as our sign wrangler this year. We can’t thank her enough for all the time, effort, organizational skills, and storage space she’s put into making sure the signs are put out and retrieved as needed and that they’re kept in good order. She’s been an invaluable asset to the League’s get-out-the-vote efforts. Many thanks to Jil Vosland for taking over responsibility for the signs.

Town Meeting Previews

As always, the goal of our Town Meeting Previews is to provide an overview of each warrant article. The hope is that viewers will gain a clearer understanding of these issues and hence be better prepared to make informed decisions at Town Meetings. The previews also give town officials and petitioners the opportunity to hear the questions that are on voters’ minds.

Our Special Town Meeting Preview, organized by Vicky Geary with support from town staff, was held on Wednesday, Oct. 12 over Zoom. Town officials discussed all articles, including the Drew Farmhouse Housing Project and the Firearm Businesses Bylaw.

Also organized by Vicky Geary and town staff, our Annual Town Meeting Preview was held virtually on March 14. Most of this preview was spent on budget issues and the MBTA Communities Bylaw. Again, a large number of town officials gave details on the warrant articles and answered questions from voters. Town Moderator Angela Harkness covered procedural questions and what to expect at this Town Meeting to ensure a smoother experience for all attendees.

Our thanks to all those who participated in these events. A big thank-you to WestfordCAT for continuing to broadcast and record the previews so they’re available on demand.

Planning for Town Meetings

Town Moderator Angela Harkness asked for the League’s help in planning for Town Meetings. Before the fall Special Town Meeting, the scheduled March 23rd meeting, and again before the rescheduled meeting on April 27, several League volunteers met with her, town staff, and WestfordCAT to discuss preparations for the meetings as well as to test the audio/visual equipment that would be used at the meetings.

Voters' Guide

Spearheaded by Joanna Myers, the League once again produced our annual Voters' Guide for the local elections held in May. All candidates in contested races returned responses. The candidates for uncontested races chose not to participate this year. Thanks to Marilyn Katler, the guide was posted on the League's website. For the first time, we collaborated with WestfordCAT to provide a unified election resource for voters – they reposted our Voters' Guide on their website and we linked to their Candidates' Minutes videos on ours. And for the first time in several years, the League made print copies of the Voters' Guide available. Lynn Cohen handled the print formatting and then distributed copies at Town Hall, the Library, and Cameron Senior Center.

Candidates' Night

Candidates' Night, organized by Joanna Myers, was held in person at the Millennium School on April 25. Lynn Cohen, Vicky Geary, Marilyn Katler, Gloria Miller, Joanna Myers, and Diane Wood also helped with the planning. Joanna couldn't be at Candidates' Night, so Erika Kohl and Diane Wood stepped in to manage the evening's logistics, and Avery Adam, Lynn Cohen, Denali Delmar, Julie Dodd, Ellen Harde, Vicky Geary,

Marilyn Katler, Erika Kohl, Madonna McKenzie, Gloria Miller, Carol Morse, and Mary Anne Seraphin were there to help setup and cleanup and monitor questions from the in-person and online audience.

Participating in Town Study of Town Meeting and Governance

After the Select Board discussed possibly creating a committee to study changes to Town Meeting and the town's form of governance, the League emailed Town Manager Kristen Las and Select Board Chair Tom Clay asking that a member of the League be appointed to the committee if it is created. Kristen responded that our request would be considered.

Supporting 8th Grade Civics Projects

All Massachusetts 8th graders are required to complete a Civics Project each year. Blanchard social studies teacher Derek Parker asked for the League's help in finding community advisors for his students' project groups but no one responded to our request for volunteers that was published in our Bulletins. Erika Kohl attended the Blanchard Showcase and wrote that it "truly showcased the wonderful civic enthusiasm of Westford's youth." We hope to become more involved next year.

Outreach and Membership

Social Media

The League continues to utilize social media as one of our communication tools. Vicky Geary manages our Facebook page ([facebook.com/LWVWestford](https://www.facebook.com/LWVWestford)). Facebook posts were shared with multiple groups, and community leaders shared relevant posts to their pages/groups as well. We currently have 632 followers, up about 5% from the same time last year. Over the last year, we have reached more than 7,402 people, which is a year-over-year increase of 15.7%. Our highest-reaching post of the year was our Annual Town Meeting reminder, viewed by 3,164 users.

We have 124 Instagram followers, an increase of 34% from last year. Our goal is to continue to grow this number in the upcoming year. This is an important audience as Instagram skews to a younger demographic that we are striving to include. Gloria Miller manages our Instagram account ([instagram.com/westfordlwv/](https://www.instagram.com/westfordlwv/)).

In 2024-2025, we will continue to use Facebook and Instagram as one of many ways to inform about issues and events in Westford. We encourage you to share posts to your page or any local groups.

Publicity

Getting the word out about League activities is challenging, now that so many of the traditional media outlets are gone. We appreciate the growth and reach of WestfordCAT, which has helped the League promote our many programs throughout the year. In addition, Mary Anne Seraphin has written and sent press releases to the online versions of The Boston Globe and the Lowell Sun, and to Wicked Local, Action Unlimited, and Westford Patch. Town Manager Kristen Las has included information about League events in her monthly newsletter, and the Cameron Senior Center has shared our releases, as well.

Bulletin

This year the League emailed 39 Bulletins to our distribution of 228 subscribers, up from 217 last year. The weekly newsletters were filled with information about our events and activities, civic news, town events, news from other local Leagues, and state League programs and information. The open and click-through rates continue to be well above average. We were gratified to receive emails from members and others who

enjoyed that week's Bulletin, or thought it was particularly information-filled!

Marilyn Katler started the year continuing to format and distribute the Bulletin. In February, in a seamless transition, Avery Adam took over the responsibility. With the help of the Steering Committee, Lynn Cohen contributes much of the content.

Civic Socials

The League continued to hold our monthly Civic Socials (except for the months when there was a scheduling conflict), usually on the third Wednesday of the month. Our Civic Socials are meant to connect town officials with residents to discuss a wide variety of topics in an informal, mutually informative atmosphere. This year saw a return to in-person Socials held at WestfordCAT, the Westford Museum, and the J.V. Fletcher Library. Our thanks to them all for hosting our events.

Thank you to all of our guests for the year. The Civic Socials always generated many questions and discussion points, and most had writeups in the Bulletin for those unable to attend.

September – Valery Young and Kristina Greene presented the findings of the town's Budget Task Force.

October – After the challenges of the Special Town Meeting, a larger-than-usual number of attendees discussed how to improve Town Meeting logistics and what are the possible alternatives to Town Meeting. Town Moderator Angela Harkness, Diane Wood, chair of the Access to Town Meeting Committee, and George Murray, chair of the Representative Town Meeting Study Committee of the mid-1990's, were on hand to provide their knowledge and expertise.

December – Our annual holiday party, at the Westford Museum. Laura Dickey was a surprise guest! Our thanks to Linda Greene and the Museum for hosting our party.

January – At the first stop of the town's Budget Road Show, Finance Director Dan O'Donnell, Select Board Chair Tom Clay, School Committee Chair Valery Young, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christopher Chew, Town Manager Kristin Las, and Finance Committee Chair Kristina Greene explained the budget challenges facing the town.

February – Just a few weeks after she started the job, new Town Clerk Laurie Shaw talked to us about the town's first-time use of PollPads at the following week's Presidential Primary as well as the extensive plans being made for the March 23rd Annual Town Meeting.

April – Town Clerk Laurie Shaw and Town Moderator Angela Harkness joined us to describe the plans being made for the rescheduled Annual Town Meeting.

May – Our conversation with the two new Assistant Town Managers, Mike Edwards and Jeff Morrisette, centered on how the town will continue working towards its climate goals with the loss of the Sustainability Coordinator position due to the failure of the overrides and what changes the MBTA Communities Multifamily bylaw might bring to the town.

“Honoring Massachusetts Women Past And Present”

The Westford League and the Westford Women's Club joined forces to present “Honoring Massachusetts Women Past And Present,” an evening presentation with Freddie Kay, president and founder of Suffrage100MA on November 8 at the Westford Museum. Freddie's presentation was educational, inspirational, and entertaining. She recapped the long history of women's suffrage in Massachusetts and nationwide, starting with how native American women influenced the movement's early stages.

Our sincere thanks to Lynne Stader, president of the Westford Women's Club, for reaching out to the League to cosponsor the event and for taking the lead in planning it, and to the Westford Museum for hosting it.

Westford Earth Month

Together with many other community organizations, the League supported and publicized the wide variety of family- and earth-friendly events that Westford Climate Action coordinated throughout Earth Month this year. These events included Roudenbush's Earth Day Poem Contest; Westford Conservation Trust's weekly nature walks; the Health Department's Health and Wellness Fair; WCA's Electric Vehicles 101 presentation, Electric Vehicles Car Show, and Stargazing Party; and the delightful “Heal the Earth with Music” piano recital given by the students of Nancy Eberiel's Westford Suzuki School.

Thanking Town Staff for Its Educational Efforts

The Steering Committee emailed its thanks to the town and school officials, staff, board members, volunteers, and WestfordCAT personnel for planning and organizing the April 27th Annual Town Meeting and the town election. We added that we especially appreciated the extensive time and consideration put into the unprecedented effort to educate voters about the important decisions facing the town. Town Manager Kristen Las and Select Board member Andrea Peraner-

Sweet thanked us for the email; Kristen forwarded it to town staff.

Scholarships to WA and Nashoba Tech Seniors

This year the League established a fund for awarding scholarships to civic-minded graduates at both Westford Academy and Nashoba Valley Technical High School. The \$500 scholarships reward students who have actively participated in government, engaged with citizens on major public policy issues, or influenced public policy through education and advocacy. The League hopes to provide the student awards annually and gratefully accepts contributions to the fund.

On May 23, Vicky Geary, on behalf of the League, attended Nashoba Tech's annual awards night and happily presented our first NT scholarship to Emily Rasmus. Emily will be majoring in Creative Writing at Ringling College of Art and Design this fall. Our congratulations to Emily! Our scholarship to a WA senior will be presented on May 30.

We're asking our members to help us continue to offer scholarships to future graduates dedicated to playing an active role in our democracy.

Your contribution can be made [here](#). Be sure to annotate during the checkout process that the donation is for the scholarship fund. Or mail your check to us at P.O. Box 59, Westford, again annotating its purpose. Please contact us at info@westford.org if you'd like to learn how to make a tax-deductible donation.

Program and Action

Study of Expanding Local Voting Rights

In June 2021, the Westford League voted to approve a study to examine two issues: (1) expansion of the local franchise to permit local voting by 16 and 17-year-old residents of Westford; and (2) expansion of the local franchise to permit local voting by non-US Citizen Westford residents with legal status. Both pro and con arguments were examined by the study group. While the group had some lively and productive discussions, no consensus was achieved and the study was ultimately dissolved at the League's Annual Meeting in June, 2023. At the Steering Committee meeting on February 7, 2024, a final report was approved, officially closing the study effort. The report can be viewed [online](#).

Thank you to everyone who dedicated their time, energy, and curiosity to this study group: Gloria Miller, Lynn

Membership

Gloria Miller picked up the responsibility this year of mailing our membership renewal letters. Thanks to all our members for their support of and dedication to the League!

In a world where so much of our communications are done by email, reminding our members to renew was complicated this year by a technical problem. For several months, Gmail was rejecting all emails from our email account. Most of our members use Gmail, so we could not send them reminders. It took some time but Vicky Geary, Tony Janeczek, and especially Bill O'Donnell, on behalf of Roudenbush, which hosts our website, were able to resolve the problem.

Perhaps because of this problem, our membership declined: from 93 members last year to 84 this year.

Beginning in February 2025, LWVUS is implementing a new membership structure at all levels of the League. LWVUS will be taking over all responsibility for dues collection and membership record-keeping. This will relieve us of some tiresome administrative tasks. All membership dues will be made directly to LWVUS. LWVUS will then return 30% of dues paid for membership in the Westford League back to us. This could benefit us financially, because we currently pay all of our collected dues to LWVUS and LWVMA. However, any donations our members make via LWVUS will not be shared with us. To donate to the Westford League, please do so directly through our [website](#) or by sending a check to P.O. Box 59, Westford.

Cohen, Cathy Creed, Dina Donahue, Cynthia King, Erika Kohl, Madonna McKenzie, Pat Reppucci, Lisa Ratte, Cathy Ricketson, and Peggy Liu. The study group would also like to thank two guest speakers: Robin Chen, a member of the League of Women Voters of Boston, and Jessica Vaughn, Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies.

Since no consensus was achieved and the voting rights study has been dissolved, the Westford League takes no position on the questions examined and no local League advocacy is authorized on these issues. Individual members, of course, may advocate on these issues as they see fit.

Support for Drew Farmhouse Project

At the October 16th Special Town Meeting, Vicky Geary, as spokesperson for the League, read a statement

in support of Article 6, which would allocate \$1,450,000 in Community Preservation funds for the Drew Farmhouse, Inc. Preservation and Workforce Housing project (in the old Coldwell Banker building at 70 Boston Road). We based our support on our Affordable Housing position. The article passed easily.

The League again supported the project in an email to the Zoning Board of Appeals expressing our strong support for the Drew Farmhouse, Inc.'s request to add three additional bedrooms to the two affordable homes to be created in the barn at 70 Boston Road by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell. The board approved the request.

Support for Firearm Businesses Bylaw

Also at the October 16th Special Town Meeting, Vicky Geary spoke for the League urging voters to support Article 9, which would have amended the town's zoning bylaw to define and regulate firearm businesses. Our support of the amendment was based on both state and national positions. Though the article received a majority of votes, it required a two-thirds vote to pass.

Support for Override Budget

At the April 27th Annual Town Meeting, the League supported Articles 1, 2, and 3, which all related to the fiscal year 2025 budget contingent on the passage of the Prop. 2½ overrides. Mary Anne Seraphin read the League's statement. Our support was based on our long-held positions on education and town government and on the LWVMA and LWVUS positions on Natural Resources. Article 1 passed, but because Article 2 didn't, Article 3 was dismissed.

We also supported both of the Prop. 2½ override questions on the May 7th ballot, using the Bulletin to urge our members to vote yes. Both questions failed to get the majority vote required for passage.

Support for MBTA Communities Bylaw

Article 18 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, the MBTA Communities Multi-family Housing Overlay District Zoning Bylaw, was also supported by the League. Again, Mary Anne read our statement. Our support is based on our Housing position and on the LWVMA and LWVUS positions on housing and transportation. The article passed easily.

Support for Proposed Amendment to Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day Warrant Article

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair Anjali Rajput met with the Steering Committee at our

April 3rd meeting to discuss Article 22 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. The article, a citizens' petition, would ask the Select Board to "declare the second Monday in October as both Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day." Anjali told us that the DEI Committee was planning to propose an amendment that would rename the holiday as Indigenous Peoples Day and Italian American Heritage Day. Based on LWVUS's Equality of Opportunity position, the Steering Committee voted to support the amendment and oppose the article in its original form. Town Meeting voted to dismiss the article.

Suggestions for Improving the Town's Website

The town is redesigning its website. The group tasked with deciding on its redesign created questionnaires to solicit input from staff, from committee and board members, and from residents. The Steering Committee emailed the Technology Director our suggestions for making the site more accessible, informative, and user-friendly. We received no response.

Assessing Disability Access to Polling Places

As part of LWVMA's partnership with the Disability Law Center's Rev Up MA campaign, the Westford League worked with members of Westford's Commission on Disability to assess disability access at Westford Academy and the Stony Brook School during the March 2nd Presidential primary. The assessment, based on the Law Center's checklist, revealed several barriers that those with disabilities faced when trying to vote. Wendy Gloyd of the Commission submitted the results to the Law Center, with the intent that they would follow up with the Town Clerk. League and Commission members discussed what we learned in a Zoom meeting with representatives of LWVMA and the Law Center as well as other local League members who surveyed their local. The League and the Commission are continuing to work together on improving disability access at both of Westford's polling places.

Support for Hybrid Public Meetings

In response to the chair of the Planning Board stating that the Board could not offer the public the option of attending its meetings remotely without direction or a policy from the Select Board, in early April the League Steering Committee wrote to the Select Board strongly encouraging them to clarify for the Planning Board how to offer hybrid meetings, just as several other boards and committees are doing. We received no response, the Select Board has yet to decide on the matter, and the Planning Board has yet to offer hybrid meetings.

Treasurer's Report & Proposed 2024-2025 Budget

The proposed budget is on the next page.

Budget 2023-2024 is the budget as proposed and accepted at the June 7, 2023 Annual Meeting.

Actual 2023-2024 shows the actual income and expenses from July 1, 2023 through May 17, 2024 (date of submission for publication).

Proposed budget 2024-2025 projections are based on to-date records and anticipated final figures and adjusted for anticipated income/expenses for next year. Income is conservatively projected.

Status of League Accounts

Checking as of May 17, 2024: \$7,238.68

CD as of April 30, 2024:

xxxx1459: \$4,829.01, 12 month APV 1.98%; 11/22/2024

Highlights 2023-2024

FY23-24 Income:

- Donations were 34% higher than originally projected. Our sponsorships were down by 13%. We also derived additional income from one Grant (Guide to Town Meeting Reprint)
 - We would like to thank all of our donors as their support allows the Westford LWV to fund our local programs and expenses.
 - Sponsorships are also an important source of income for the League. Our thanks to all our generous sponsors. And our deep-felt thanks to Madonna McKenzie, who for many years has been responsible for soliciting sponsorships. We could not have done all that we've done without her dedication and hard work.
- We are seeing a slight increase in the use of PayPal for membership renewal. 52% of renewals came through PayPal in FY23-24 versus 50% in FY22-23. For membership dues and donations, we paid \$83.22 in PayPal fees.
- We started the year with two CDs. We cashed out the lower-interest-rate CD maturing in February to provide funds for our new Westford Academy and Nashoba Tech scholarships. We still have \$4,829 in a 1.98% CD maturing in November 2024.
- Income from memberships was down from 2022-23 by 9%.
- Finally, while it appears on the spreadsheet that our income and expenses are 44% higher than projected, it really is a wash due to the withdrawal and re-investing of funds into a CD.

FY23-24 Expenses:

- Expenses were up by 32% over original projections. This is largely due to three main expense pockets:
 - Establishment of scholarships for Westford Academy and Nashoba Tech: two scholarships at \$500 each (\$1,000 total)
 - Civic Social expenses: In-person socials were not originally budgeted. There were nominal expenses for refreshments.
 - Voter Service expenses: Reprint of guides was slightly larger than originally budgeted. Not originally budgeted – reordering of Town Meeting signs and Freddie Kay posters.

Implications for FY24-25:

- Based on conservative projections for income and expenses, we could potentially be in the red in the next fiscal year due to rising costs and expenses and potential flat to possibly lower donations and sponsorships.
 - It is recommended to split the current CD as it comes to maturity in November into two CDs so that we have access to this cash at six month intervals in the event of deficits.
- A new dues collection system takes effect February 2025. With our current membership drive running August-January, we have one more year in the current structure. We should take this time to do two things:
 - Educate our membership regarding any donations they make. Under the new structure, donations made through the LWVUS portal as part of annual dues will not come back to us.
 - We should gather guidance from early adopter Leagues that utilize the new structure from February onward.

For a clearer view of the budget go to: [2023-24 Actual - 2024-2025 Recommended Budget](#)

LWV Westford: Actual Budget 2023-2024; Proposed Budget 2024-2025

	Proposed 2023-2024	Actual 2023-2024	+/- between planned and Actual for 2023-2024	2023-2024 Notes	Proposed 2024-2025	+/- 23-24 Actual and 24-25 Planned	2024-2025 Income/Expense Assumptions
INCOME							
Dues	\$3,500	\$3,242.00	-7%	Total dues collected 7/1-5/13: \$3,242.00. Of these dues, \$1,697 (52%) were collected via PayPal. We paid \$74.41 to PayPal resulting in our total Fee intake of \$3,167.59 (PayPal fees are noted under expenses)	\$3,242.00	0%	The new dues model takes effect in February 2025. This budget is based on one final year of existing model as our membership renewal efforts run July-January
Contributions (Members/WonMembers)	\$700	\$940.00	34%		\$700.00	-26%	Conservative projection; not inclusive of Scholarship Fund Drive
Other Sources (Grants, Interest/Unclaimed/and including CD cashouts)	\$0	\$2,118.72	100%	Reflects closing of CD \$2111.22 plus Fall Phone LWWMA Appeal (\$7.50)	\$0.00	-100%	
Grant	\$300	\$300.00	0%	FY23 OS Citizens Ed. Grant: \$300 for printing of Town Meeting Guide/Guide to running for Local Office	\$300.00	0%	Assumes awarding of Grant to cover one of our initiatives
Unrelated Trade or Business Income:							
Sponsors	\$600	\$525.00	-13%		\$525.00	0%	Assumes flat YoY
Book Sales	\$100	\$140.16	40%		\$100.00	-29%	
Book Royalties	\$0	\$81.81	100%	Generally not anticipated as it is sporadic and usually occurs every other year	\$0.00	-100%	Generally not anticipated as it is sporadic and usually occurs every other year
Westford Academy/Warhobe Tech Scholarship Fund (new as of May 2024)	N/A	\$150.00	100%	New to 2024	\$500.00	233%	First year promotion; conservative estimate
TOTAL INCOME	\$5,200	\$7,497.69	44%		\$5,367	-28%	Assumes we do not cash out remaining CD. Difference between '23-24 largely due to cashing out of one CD
EXPENSES							
Operations & Management Expenses							
Steering Committee	\$179	\$175.35	-2%	Annual Zoom (increase for FY23 less than expected (\$159 versus 179) plus suitcase/storage for LWV items)	\$163.75	-7%	Assumes modest increase for Zoom but no other purchases
Membership	\$150	\$132.50	-12%	Membership Mailing supplies, Printing Membership Brochures; Reminder postcards	\$150.00	13%	Membership Mailing supplies, Printing Membership Brochures; Reminder postcards; allows for possible rate increase or increased quantity
Annual Meeting	\$0	\$45	100%	Planning for refreshment expenses for June 5 2024 annual meeting	\$50	11%	Planning for refreshment expenses for June 2025 annual meeting
Convention & Workshops	\$400	\$0	-100%	2024 State Conference - Zoom only - no charge	\$0	0%	TED; 2024 was zoom only with no charge
State	\$1,259.25	\$1,466.25	16%	2021-22: 65@423; 16@485.75; 2022-23: 51@423; 15@485.75	\$1,466.25	0%	Assuming flat YoY
National	\$1,872.00	\$2,160.00	15%	2021-22: 65@432; 16@516; 2022-23: 51@432; 15@516	\$2,160.00	0%	Assuming flat YoY
Scholarships & Donations							
Scholarships & Donations	\$225	\$300.00	33%	WestfordCat: \$125; MASuffrage-\$50; \$50 to LWVindower (Candidates Night); \$75 to Library	\$300	0%	WestfordCat, Library, Rodenbush: \$75 each; \$50 for Candidates Night Donation; misc: \$25 for any optional/add-on
Westford Academy/Warhobe Tech Scholarship Fund (new as of May 2024)	\$0	\$1,000.00	100%	Scholarships - new for 2023-24 (2 Scholarships at \$500 each)	\$1,000	0%	Scholarship: WA/WNT - \$500 each
Program Activities							
Voter Service	\$875	\$1,368.12	56%	Reprint of Guide to Town Meeting/Running for Office; Town Meeting Sign Reprint and Candidates Nights Program/Placards	\$500	-43%	Estimated Candidates Night expenses (\$125); should be a little more judicious in FY24-25 and not need Town Meeting Signs
Program Planning	\$0	\$0.00	0%		\$400	100%	250th Anniversary of American Revolution Westford Museum Sponsorship
Action	\$0	\$0.00	0%		\$0	0%	
Legislation	\$0	\$0.00	0%		\$0	0%	
Other (Citizens Education/Civic Social)	\$130	\$125.27	-4%	2023-24 Civic Social and Holiday Party Expenses; Freddie Key Posters; Flyers for Scholarship Fund	\$75	-46%	2023-24 Civic Social and Holiday Party Expenses
Unrelated Trade or Business Expense	\$185	\$182.00	-2%	P.O Box, came in less than 5% anticipated increase	\$187	3%	P.O Box, anticipating 3% increase in 2025
PayPal Fee Deduction		\$83.22		Fees for donations and membership	\$85.00	2%	Estimated PayPal Deductions
Rollover into CD	\$0	\$0.00	0.0%			0.0%	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$5,275	\$7,037.71	33%		\$6,537	-7%	
Income	\$5,200	\$7,497.69	44%	Higher income due to cashing out of CD in February 2024	\$5,367	-28%	Higher income in FY23-24 due to cashing out of CD in February 2024
Expenses	\$5,275	\$7,037.71	33%	More expenses than anticipated as we did not factor in Civic Social in-person expenses or additional membership drive costs (postcards) when originally doing the 2023-24 budget	\$6,537	-7%	While we are in a potential deficit position, we still have CD as income source and possible increased donations/sponsorships.
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(\$75)	\$459.98			(\$1,170)		

Proposed Local Program: What Should We Do in 2024-2025?

<p>Procedure for Adopting Program</p> <p>The Meeting Chair asks if there are any motions to adopt a program item. The Westford League’s bylaws require that only items recommended by members during the program planning process may be considered for adoption. These items are listed below. Any member may move an item for adoption and explain briefly why the item should be adopted.</p> <p>We will discuss and vote on the items in the order in which they are listed, unless there is a motion to take an item out of order. All items require a majority vote of the Annual Meeting to pass.</p>	<p>The League Program and Action Process</p> <p><i>Program Planning:</i> A meeting to decide which issues to study (local, state, or national) and which issues to take action on.</p> <p><i>Study:</i> A committee gathers and coordinates information about a particular issue.</p> <p><i>Unit:</i> A meeting at which the study committee presents the information to members.</p> <p><i>Consensus:</i> Substantial agreement among the members, reached at the unit meeting.</p> <p><i>Position:</i> A formal written statement of the consensus.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> The activities the League undertakes to support its positions and principles such as letter writing, lobbying, citizen education, and supporting or opposing legislation.</p>
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In the coming year, the Steering Committee plans to continue presenting our critical and traditional League events and activities:

- Candidates’ Night in Spring 2025
- Voters’ Guide in Spring 2025
- Town Meeting Previews in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025
- Publicizing elections and Town Meetings with lawn signs
- Monthly League Civic Socials

The Steering Committee recommends the following program for 2024-2025.

Local Positions:

- Readopt all [current positions](#).

Recommended Local Action Priorities:

1. Advocate that all in-person public meetings of town boards and committees allow members of the public to participate remotely.
2. Advocate that all town boards and committees post meeting summaries as soon as possible after their meetings similar to the Select Board’s Actions Taken agendas.
3. Advocate that the webpages for every town board/committee on the town’s website include an email address that forwards to every member of the board/committee or provides another way for residents to contact the board members without having to use their individual addresses, although individual emails should still be available. This includes publicizing the process for how to contact town boards and committees and what happens to those emails. Include education about emails becoming part of the public record, and encourage committees to acknowledge all written communication.
4. Work with the yet-to-be-created town committee that will study town governance.
5. Work with the Town Clerk to promote recruitment of poll workers.

6. Follow up on our survey of polling place accessibility with the Commission on Disability.
7. Investigate ways to register voters at Westford Academy and Nashoba Tech. Run registration drives before the November Presidential election and/or explore ways to promote youth involvement in the local League.
8. Continue scholarship award to one graduating senior at Westford Academy and one at Nashoba Tech to reward active civic engagement.
9. Work with Derek Parker at Blanchard Middle School about working with his students on their civics projects and/or explore ways to promote youth involvement in the local League.
10. Work with the Westford Museum to begin planning for the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution in 2025 and the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026.
11. Revise and reprint “A Guide to Town Meeting in Westford.”
12. Continue to advocate for a robust voting rights bill at the State level that includes same-day voter registration.

Non-Recommended Action Priorities

None

Nominations and Election

Become More Active in the League!

For the upcoming year, the Steering Committee recommends continuing with a Steering Committee. Our goal is to have nine Steering Committee members, with a quorum of five members required to hold a Steering Committee meeting. If you are interested in serving on the Steering Committee, please call and leave a message at 978-347-5989 or email info@lwv.westford.org!

Steering Committee Member Job Descriptions

There is one opening on the nominated slate for the Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee attend as many meetings as possible (missing no more than three consecutive meetings without a valid reason, per our bylaws). The Steering Committee meets every month between September and June. (In December, we have a holiday gathering instead of a meeting.) The meetings usually last 1½-2 hours, and the meeting times are set in advance to make it easy for everyone to plan for them. During and since the pandemic, most meetings have been held via Zoom. However, there is flexibility for when and how the committee meets. Being part of the meeting discussions and decision-making is much of the work. Steering Committee members can also take the lead in new events and activities if they find a project that interests them. New ideas and new energy are always welcome!

Nominations for One-Year Term

Steering Committee June 2024 – June 2025

Avery Adam
Lynn Cohen
Vicky Geary
Marilyn Katler
Erika Kohl
Gloria Miller
oanna Myers
Mary Anne Seraphin
Open

Specialists

Our Annual Meeting does not elect or designate Specialists, but by handling specific functions and activities they are vital to the League's work. Specialists can be Steering Committee members, but are not required to be. The League can always use additional help, so if there is an area that appeals to you, just let us know and we will get you in touch with the right person.

Archives	Lynn Cohen
Bulletins	Avery Adam, Lynn Cohen
Candidates' Night/Voters' Guide	Joanna Myers
DEI Committee representative	Madonna McKenzie
Facebook	Vicky Geary
Instagram	Gloria Miller
Lawn signs	Jil Vosland
Membership	Lynn Cohen, Gloria Miller
Publicity	Mary Anne Seraphin
Sponsorship Program	Chris Robbins
Voter Engagement	Open
<i>(Helping with get-out-the vote and voter registration events and activities)</i>	
Webmaster	Marilyn Katler

Many thanks to all the members who are willing to volunteer in the coming year!

Steering Committee 2023-2024	
	Avery Adam
	Lynn Cohen
Spokesperson, Treasurer	Vicky Geary
	Marilyn Katler
	Erika Kohl
	Gloria Miller
	Joanna Myers
	Mary Anne Seraphin

Connecting with the Westford LWV	
Phone	978-347-5989
Email	info@westford.org
Mail	P.O. Box 59, Westford, MA 01886
Web	lwwestford.org
Facebook	facebook.com/LWVWestford
Instagram	instagram.com/westfordlww
LWV of Massachusetts	lwwma.org
LWV of the United States	lww.org

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting

League of Women Voters of Westford

June 7, 2023

Meeting called to order by Laura Dickey at 7:33pm

In attendance

FY22-23 Steering Committee: Laura Dickey, Lynn Cohen, Vicky Geary, Gloria Miller, Erika Kohl, Mary Anne Seraphin

LWV Members: Linda Greene, Denali Delmar, Marilyn Katler, Diane Wood, Wendy Welsh, Carolyn Lumenello, Julie Dodd, Joanna Meyers (Zoom)

Guests: Kathryn Clear (Zoom), Bill McDonald (Zoom)

Call to Order

Recording Secretary: Vicky Geary

Parliamentarian: Lynn Cohen

Year in review

Laura Dickey provided a synopsis of all the activities the League executed or participated in during FY22-23. This includes Voter Services activities such as Candidates' Night, Town Meeting Previews and hosting. Debate between Rep. Jim Arciero and Dr. Raymond Xi. In addition, we continued Climate Change advocacy including support for a Westford Sustainability Director and our presence at the 2023 Earth Day Festivities.

Our monthly Civic Socials offered our members an opportunity to hear from and interact with our State Senator Jim Cronin and Rep. Jim Arciero. We also had the opportunity to meet and learn more about our new Town Manager, Kristen Las. Finally, we covered off on a variety of issues important to the League including presentations on debt exclusions, mental resources here in Westford and discussing with our Town Moderator, Angela Harkness, ways we can be better informed and drive attendance to town meetings.

Finances

Treasurer's Report presented by Vicky Geary

For full view, please see agenda at: WLWV Annual Meeting Guide 2023

Approval of the 2023-2024 Budget:

Motion:: Erika Kohl seconded by Denali Delmar

Discussion: Brief recap of upcoming expenses in 2023-24

Vote: Passed unanimously

Proposed League Local Programs

Full text can be found at WLWV Annual Meeting Guide 2023

1. Continue presenting our critical and traditional League events and activities
2. Advocate for in-person/hybrid meetings
3. Advocate that all town boards and committees post meeting summaries as soon as possible per SB model of "Actions Taken"
4. Advocate that the webpage for every town board/committee on the town's website include an email address that forwards to every member of the board/committee or provides another way for residents to contact the board members without having to use their individual addresses.
5. Investigate ways to register voters at Westford Academy and Nashoba Tech. Run registration drives before the March 5th Presidential primaries.
6. Work with the Town Clerk to promote recruitment of poll workers.
7. Follow up on our survey of polling place accessibility with the Commission on Disability.
8. Continue to advocate for a robust voting rights bill at the State level that includes same-day voter registration.
9. Explore working with WestfordCAT to combine our Voters' Guide with their "guide to the Town Election ballot."
10. Follow-up with Derek Parker at Blanchard Middle School about working with his students on their civics projects.
11. Work with the Westford Museum to begin planning for the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution in 2025 and the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026.
12. Explore ways to promote youth involvement in the local League such as future educational events and/or reviving the project to create video interviews with town committee chairs to explain what the committees do.
13. Create a scholarship to be awarded to one or more graduating seniors at Westford Academy and/or Nashoba Tech to reward active civic engagement.

14. Revise and reprint “A Guide to Running for Local Office in Westford” and “A Guide to Town Meeting in Westford.”

Motion: Moton to accept all positions by Denali Delmar, seconded by Vicky Geary

Vote: Passed unanimously

Nominations and elections

Steering Committee June 2023-2024

Member: Lynn Cohen (current)

Member: Vicky Geary (current)

Member: Erika Kohl (current)

Member: Gloria Miller (current)

Member: Mary Anne Seraphin (current)

Member: Linda Greene (new – nominated by Erika Kohl)

Member: Joanna Myers (new – nominated by Diane Wood)

Member: Marilyn Katler (new – nominated by Lynn Cohen)

Member: Avery Adam (new – nominated by Gloria Miller)

Motion to accept proposed Steering Committee: made by Denali Delmar and seconded by Julie Dodd.

Discussion: Gloria Miller disclosed involvement with Town Democratic Committee in accordance with bylaws. No issues were voiced with this disclosure.

Motion passed unanimously.

Additional motion: Sadly, our longtime Steering Committee Member and Spokesman, Laura Dickey, will be moving from Westford to Cape Cod.

Motion made and passed to remove Laura from the banking documentation.

Additional discussion at next Steering Committee meeting as to the allocation of Laura’s other responsibilities and transitions.

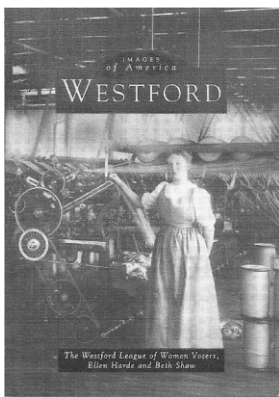
Direction to Steering Committee

Aside from the above voted positions, the floor provided direction to the Steering committee to continue to explore ways to increase attendance/involvement in Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting

Closing

Lynn Cohen closed the meeting with recognition of Laura and her many years of service to the Westford League of Women Voters. Laura has been a tremendous asset to the LWV and she will be sorely missed. Aside from all the work she has done, Laura has always brought positivity to the discussion and her generosity and warm spirit is always appreciated.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.



Westford: A Sense of Community



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The perfect gift for friends, family, newcomers, those who have left, and everyone who still lives here!

You can buy a copy at Muffins on Main or at the [Westford Museum](#), or email us at info@lww.westford.org,

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What would we do without loyal and generous sponsors? Their support continues to ensure the vitality of the League and our valuable programs. We hope members will patronize these businesses, mention they learned of them through the League, and thank them for sponsorship of our work.

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Westford League of Women Voters Membership Form 2024-2025

RENEW TODAY!

Don't let your membership lapse. Renew today to make a difference in your community.

At the local level, we organize Candidates' Night, Town Meeting Previews, and forums on important issues facing Westford. Your membership supports these community service initiatives as well as work at the state and US levels. Help us focus our energy on voter education and issues research by renewing your membership promptly. Please note that dues and contributions are not tax-deductible. Both National and State LWV use dues for lobbying. You can also renew your membership online at lww.westford.org.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

P.S. Consider adding a donation to your dues to support town forums, Candidates' Night, and to purchase additional VOTE signs.

Tear here and Mail or Renew Online at lww.westford.org!

Mail to: Westford LWV, P.O. Box 59, Westford, MA 01886

<p>Yes, I want to renew my membership for the 2024-2025 membership year at the indicated level:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$55 Individual</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$80 Household</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$0 Full Time Student</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am including an additional donation to help support the League's projects and programs.</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p>
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The membership year runs from July 2024 to June 2025.

Let us know where you can help this year!

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Steering Committee member</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Public forums on town issues</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Candidates' Night</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Putting out VOTE! signs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Voter engagement</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Membership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
--	---	--