

# Town Topics

A municipal newsletter for the Wilmington community

## From the Manager's Desk

Life since early March has been anything but normal for residents, people across the country and throughout the world. No one alive today has experienced a pandemic like Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19). First and foremost let me offer my deepest sympathies to all those who have been personally effected, or seen family and friends sidelined or pass away, from this devastating respiratory illness. Many lives have been upended due to impacts from job loss, quarantine requirements and restricted access to medical care to name a few challenges.

The Town has responded to the pandemic on many fronts with the underlying goal of protecting the health and wellbeing of residents and employees and doing our part to keep the number of COVID-19 cases in Wilmington low. One of the greatest challenges as we work through providing services in a COVID-19 environment is the uncertainty about future conditions. Will there be a second wave and, if so, when? While Town Hall has been closed to the public, drive up window service is working. The Senior Center remains closed to patrons with limited outdoor programs, Wilmington Memorial Library has curbside pick-up of library materials and limited "by appointment" access and the Veterans' Services Office is operating by appointment. Residents will be informed as Town offices more fully reopen. Understandably, these measures have presented a level of inconvenience. The patience of residents and all patrons is greatly appreciated.

Both the spring local elections and the September state primary have also been impacted. While modifications were made to the polling locations, due to lower voter turnout the existing three polling locations were able to be used in a safe and efficient manner.

November 3, 2020 is Election Day here in Massachusetts and across the country. Residents will be voting to fill both state and national offices including President of the United States. The Presidential election historically generates the largest voter turnout in the election cycle. At their September 14, 2020 meeting, Selectmen approved the recommendation to change voting locations in light of this ongoing pandemic.

Customarily residents in Wilmington's six precincts vote either at the Town Hall, Wildwood Early Childhood Center or the Boutwell Early Childhood Center. For the November 3rd election only, voters seeking to cast in-person ballots, regardless of precinct, will vote at the Shriners Auditorium at 99 Fordham Road in Wilmington. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. The last day to register to vote is Saturday, October 24, 2020. The Town Clerk's Office will be accepting registrations on that date between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. and between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Access to the Shriners Auditorium will enable the use of more voting booths than could be used in the three locations customarily used. More voting booths will increase the number of residents permitted to vote simultaneously and expedite voting. Expedited voting will reduce the wait time. The three locations where voting currently occurs do not have adequate queuing space which would likely result in lines extending outside. Voters standing in line outside could be problematic with November weather. The Town wishes to thank the Shriners Auditorium for their generosity and eagerness to make their space available to the Town at no charge.

Alternatives to in-person voting at the Shriners Auditorium are also available. Early voting begins on October 17, 2020 and



continues through October 30, 2020 at the Town Hall. During this period residents will be able to vote Monday through Friday. Additionally, polls will be open for in-person voting on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>; Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>; Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. All early voting will take place at Town Hall.

The second alternative is to vote by mail. The deadline to apply for a mail in ballot is Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Completed ballots can be mailed in the self-addressed envelope provided by the Town or brought to the Town Hall and placed in the mail drop slot which is to the left of the main entrance to the Town Hall. Specific hours for voting and other details about the election may be found by going to the Town Clerk's website at [www.wilmingtonma.gov/town-clerk/pages/voting-elections](http://www.wilmingtonma.gov/town-clerk/pages/voting-elections). Questions about the upcoming election may be directed to the Town Clerk's Office by calling 978-658-2030.

Due to the discipline exercised by most residents who wear masks, social distance and refrain from organizing or participating in large social gatherings, the number of COVID-19 cases in Wilmington has remained relatively low. As impatient as we all are to return to life as we knew it "pre-COVID," getting beyond this pandemic is a marathon not a sprint. It requires diligence in following the guidelines. Please do your part to help all of us weather this storm.

Linda Pavluk recently retired after serving as Assistant Librarian since 1999. Her dedication to library patrons over the past 21 years is truly appreciated and she is extended best wishes for a healthy and active retirement.

As we close out calendar year 2020, it is my sincere hope that the measures we are taking make COVID-19 a pandemic that we can refer to in the past tense. Be safe.

## REMEMBER OUR VETERANS

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."



The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.

A sincere thank you is extended to our veterans and their families for sacrifices made on behalf of freedom.

The Wilmington Department of Veterans' Services invites all the residents of Wilmington to attend, remember and honor all our past and present veterans on **Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. on the Wilmington Town Common**. Participants will assemble at the Fourth of July parking lot at 10:45 a.m. All current social distancing and safety protocols will be followed and the ceremony will be livestreamed on Facebook.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Department of Veterans' Services at 978-694-2040 or [veterans@wilmingtonma.gov](mailto:veterans@wilmingtonma.gov).

## PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

By Massachusetts General Law, applications for FY 2021 are due to the Board of Assessors on or before April 1, 2021. The Board has 3 months to act on the application and may request further information from you regarding your eligibility during that time.

Filing for an exemption is by ANNUAL application. Your qualifications and status may change year to year, as well as the eligibility requirements for certain exemptions change annually. Income and Asset Limits also change annually, if you have not qualified in the past you may now qualify.

Senior Exemptions have age, ownership, residency, income and/or asset requirements. The FY21 Senior Income requirements for Clause 41C are as follows:

|         | <u>INCOME LIMIT</u> | <u>ASSET LIMIT</u><br>(excluding domicile) |
|---------|---------------------|--|
| SINGLE  | \$24,834            | \$40,000                                   |
| MARRIED | \$37,251            | \$50,000                                   |

For Seniors (over 70) or Surviving Spouse, the Clause 17D FY21 ASSET Requirement may not exceed \$50,000, excluding the domicile. There are NO income requirements for this exemption.

If you apply and qualify for an exemption, the Board will notify you by sending a green Exemption certificate after the January 1st tax bill.

The Assessors' office will have brochures available explaining the types and qualifications for the various exemptions.

For more information you may also review the back of your tax bill which outlines the application filing deadline or visit the Exemption section of the Assessors' webpage or contact the Assessors' Office at 978-658-3675.

While the Town Hall is closed to the public, applications will be accepted by mail, fax to 978-657-6437, email at [boa@wilmingtonma.gov](mailto:boa@wilmingtonma.gov) or through the drop box located in the wall to the left of the front entrance of Town Hall.

## LIBRARY SERVICES DURING COVID-19

**By Appointment** — Following the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Phase 3, the Wilmington Memorial Library is now open to the public by appointment. Patrons may make an appointment to browse on the first floor, use the copier/FAX machine, use a public computer or visit the Youth Services Department. Reservations may be made online or by calling the library at 978-658-2967.



Per the Governor's directive, all patrons over the age of two are required to wear masks while in the library. For more information about available services and restrictions, and to book an appointment, visit the library's website at [wilmlibrary.org](http://wilmlibrary.org) or call the library at 978-658-2967.

**Curbside Service** — Library patrons request books online and are notified when items are ready for pick up. When they arrive at the library, they call and library staff brings the items out to the car and places them in the trunk. Curbside service will continue to be offered through the fall but hours will be modified as days grow shorter.

**Library on the Lawn** — Patrons can enjoy browsing and checking out new books and a variety of children's items outside on the library's front lawn on Tuesday mornings, 10 am to 12 noon, and Thursday evenings, 5 pm to 7 pm.

**Virtual Programs** — Check the library's calendar of events for virtual programs including storytime, book discussions, guest speakers, tech help and more! Register at [www.wilmlibrary.org](http://www.wilmlibrary.org).

## TRASH AND RECYCLING INFORMATION

Residents are reminded to have their Trash and Recycling placed curbside by **6:30 a.m.** on their collection day. Once trash and recycling have been collected, residents should pull their barrels off of the street.



Contamination levels in recycling have become a serious issue with recycled materials. Residents continue to include items that are not recyclable such as diapers, wood, gas jugs, paint cans, garden hoses, lights, party supplies (disposable dinnerware) and, **worst of all, plastic bags of any kind.** These items and others cannot be placed in recycling receptacles. Due to the current depressed recycling market conditions, there is zero tolerance for any unacceptable items without financial consequences for the Town. Please **DO NOT** include plastic bags in the recycling barrel. All soft plastics such as grocery bags, dry cleaning wraps, bread and produce bags, food storage bags and case wraps (plastic surrounding a case of water, a package of diapers or paper towels) must be kept out of your recycle container. Plastic grocery bags can be returned to the supermarket for recycling and other soft plastics may be disposed of in your trash. We want all to be aware of these facts to help with keeping Wilmington green and minimize the escalating costs for solid waste disposal.

**Casella Phone Number: 1-800-Casella (1-800-227-3552)**

Call this number for missed trash/recycling collection or to schedule a bulk item pickup. Every residence is allowed to dispose of one bulk item at a time. Bulk items include but are not limited to sofas, chairs, bureaus, mattress and box spring, and tables.

Please see <http://www.wilmingtonma.gov/trash-recycling> for further information regarding the Trash and Recycling Collection Program.

If you move from your home, the trash and recycle barrels **must** remain with the house.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Wilmington Economic Development Committee was formed in the summer of 2019 with the stated mission of promoting an atmosphere conducive to smart economic growth by thoughtfully identifying and targeting key business sectors that complement the fabric of our community, are beneficial to the residents and create jobs. The committee was formed by the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager and is comprised of ten volunteers and staff support provided by the Director of Planning and Conservation.

Just prior to the onset of COVID-19 the committee was in the midst of evaluating over 1200 responses to a survey that was intended to obtain opinions from residents about the strengths and weaknesses of Wilmington's economic position. As a consequence of the shutdown and subsequent phased reopening of our economy in MA and locally, the WEDC pivoted its focus toward efforts to help businesses access local and state resources and information as well as make recommendations to town government on measures it could implement to help local businesses remain, or become, open and serve their clients and customers in a safe manner.

Residents and businesses interested in learning more about the Wilmington Economic Development Committee should visit the committee's web page at: <https://www.wilmingtonma.gov/economic-development-committee>. Additionally, any suggestions, comments or questions may be made by emailing the Committee Chairman at [wedc@wilmingtonma.gov](mailto:wedc@wilmingtonma.gov).

## WILDWOOD CEMETERY CHANGES TO RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Wildwood Cemetery is a treasured final resting place for individuals who lived in Wilmington. The Public Works Department takes pride in keeping the grass cut and maintaining an attractive and inviting place. The Town recognizes that everyone has their own perspective on the types of items to place on, or near, a loved one's grave marker or monument. Limits are placed on the types and size of items permitted to enable the Cemetery Division personnel to properly trim and maintain the grounds and to avoid infringing upon the space of neighboring lots or graves. At a posted meeting of the Cemetery Commissioners on August 26, 2020 the following changes were adopted;

### Decorations of Lots and Graves

- ✿ Flowers and decorations must not exceed the width of the lot, the height of the headstone, and no more than one foot (12 inches) forward of the headstone. Any decorations outside these limits will be removed. Any decorations or objects that create safety concern for the public and cemetery staff will be removed by staff when encountered.
- ✿ Funeral flowers and decorations will be allowed for 14 days following an interment and for 7 days before or after a federal or religious holiday.
- ✿ The Commission has the right to have removed any shrub, hedge, root or branch that they may deem detrimental to other cemetery lots or public safety.
- ✿ Nothing is permanently allowed on top of or attached to the top of any monument.
- ✿ Decorations located in the Veterans Section and single graves are limited to one shatter-resistant container with a maximum diameter of 8 inches or one floral basket not to exceed a width of 12 inches per grave.
- ✿ Flags and flag holders honoring Veterans may remain year-round. Flags will be placed adjacent to horizontal monuments.
- ✿ No Shepard hooks will be allowed on any lot or grave.

### Decorations in Veterans Section

- ✿ Decorations in the Veterans section are limited to one shatter-resistant container with a maximum diameter of 8 inches or one floral basket not to exceed a width of 12 inches per grave.
- ✿ Funeral flowers and decorations beyond the above will be allowed for 14 days following an interment and for one week before and after a federal or religious holiday.
- ✿ No Shepard hooks will be allowed on any lot or grave.

For the complete Cemetery Rules and Regulations go to:  
[https://www.wilmingtonma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif5221/f/uploads/current\\_wildwood\\_rrs\\_2020.pdf](https://www.wilmingtonma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif5221/f/uploads/current_wildwood_rrs_2020.pdf)

## FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

While the flu shot won't protect you from developing COVID-19, it is still a good idea to get the shot. Most people older than six months can, and should, get the flu vaccine. It is more important than ever to protect yourself and others from the flu, not only for you and your household, but for the entire community. If you get sick and have to go to the doctor, your chances of being around someone with COVID-19 are much higher. Reducing the burden that the flu and other respiratory infections have on the health care system can preserve already scarce resources for the frontline workers who care for patients with COVID-19.

To find out where you can get a flu vaccine, ask your primary care provider, go to a local pharmacy, visit [vaccinefinder.org](https://vaccinefinder.org) or watch for details regarding our local flu vaccination clinics. The flu vaccine helps your body protect against the flu and it is your best protection against the virus. Getting flu vaccine will not give you the flu.

It is especially important that the following individuals receive a flu shot each year:

- ✿ Children aged 6 months through 18 years;
- ✿ People 50 years of age and older;
- ✿ Pregnant and postpartum women;
- ✿ People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, neurologic and neuromuscular conditions and weakened immune systems;
- ✿ People with muscle and nerve disorders that make it difficult to breath or swallow;
- ✿ Children aged 6 months through 18 years on long-term aspirin therapy;
- ✿ People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities;
- ✿ Anyone who might transmit flu to someone at risk. For example, health care workers, including those in training, emergency response workers, direct care staff, people who live with or care for anyone listed, and people who live with or care for infants under 6 months of age, including parents, siblings and daycare providers

### FUEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Community Teamwork, Inc. Fuel Assistance Program is available to new applicants starting November 1, 2020. Any Wilmington resident 60 years or older who is in need of fuel assistance should contact the Elderly Services Department at 978-657-7595. Wilmington residents who applied last year and are receiving renewal applications in the mail may also call for an appointment. Residents under the age of 60 in need of assistance should contact the Veterans' Agent office in Billerica at 978-671-0968. The income guidelines are as follows:

| <u>Household Size</u> | <u>Maximum Annual Gross Income</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1                     | \$39,105                           |
| 2                     | \$51,137                           |
| 3                     | \$63,169                           |
| 4                     | \$75,201                           |



## FALL YARDWASTE PROGRAM

The end of the year **curbside pick-up of leaves and grass clippings will begin on November 2 and extend for five weeks through December 4**. Residents should place their yardwaste in biodegradable paper bags or uncovered barrels at curbside on their regular trash collection day. Yardwaste in plastic bags will not be accepted.

Residents may also use the recycling center off Old Main Street near the Woburn line for leaves and brush drop-off. **The center will open for 9 weeks on Wednesdays and Saturdays from October 7 through and including December 5**. Hours of operation are Wednesdays, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. and Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

In order to use the yardwaste recycling facility, residents must purchase a \$15 punch card which is good for five visits to the center. The card may be purchased at the Treasurer/

Collector's Office, Room 1, Town Hall. **Wilmington residents only** are allowed to use the facility for leaves and brush drop-off. **NO GRASS CLIPPINGS**. The punch card and an ID must be presented at the entrance. **No contractors or commercial vehicles** are allowed to use the facility.



## PROTECT YOUR PIPES

As the colder weather approaches, residents are encouraged to review items around their home that need to be protected from freezing, especially water pipes and meters. Failure to properly prepare for the winter months can lead to freeze-ups, which leave residents without water. Since freeze-ups typically occur in the basement, it is important to eliminate cold drafts by securely closing windows and doors along with filling gaps with expandable foam insulation. Wrapping vulnerable pipes with pipe insulation is another step that helps to prevent freeze-ups. These maintenance items are inexpensive and may be purchased at any home improvement store. A few minutes of prevention this fall can save you from real troubles when the snow flies. Please take a moment to check these items in addition to winterizing your sill cocks, garden hoses and sprinkler systems before the holiday season.

## SNOWPLOW CONTRACTORS FOR DPW

The DPW is hiring snowplow contractors. Work includes plowing roadways and municipal parking lots. Contractors must meet minimum insurance and equipment requirements. Applications and information are available at the DPW Administration Office, 115 Andover Street, Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call the DPW at 978-658-4481 for more information.

## FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

November 1st is the date to set clocks back one hour. The Fire Department recommends replacing the batteries in all Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors including plug-in and hard-wired types, which usually have battery back up in case of power loss. Massachusetts Law requires replacement of smoke detectors after 10 years.



These are crazy times, aren't they? The **Recreation Department** is working hard to be flexible while offering as many quality programs as we can. Sometimes that means we will have offerings that will be "between newsletters". You will hear about our programs from our email blasts and Facebook posts, so be sure to register on the Town website for E-Alerts. Go to [www.wilmingtonma.gov/Recreation](http://www.wilmingtonma.gov/Recreation) and click on "Subscribe to E-Alerts" for Recreation news or to visit our list of evolving programs. Call the Recreation Office at 978-658-4270 for assistance or visit our window at the "field side" of Town Hall. We are ready to "recreate"!!!

The **Department of Elderly Services** continues to explore ways of safely offering alternative programming at the center. There are some services that have continued uninterrupted throughout this time of COVID-19. Case Management services through the Department of Elderly Services continues to be available. Case management can assist with ensuring that elders have the help they need to remain in their home safe and independent. These services may include home delivered meals, lifeline, helping with fuel assistance applications, SNAP applications and transportation. Also, referrals to in-home services that can assist with personal care, food shopping, and light housekeeping. Please contact Case Manager Laura Pickett, 978-657-7595 for further information.

## DEPARTMENT



## TELEPHONE #

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Accountant         | 694-2029            |
| Animal Control     | 658-5071            |
| Appeals Board      | 658-4531            |
| Arts Center        | 657-3887            |
| Assessor           | 658-3675            |
| Building Inspector | 658-4531            |
| Cemetery           | 658-3901            |
| Collector of Taxes | 658-3531            |
| Elderly Services   | 657-7595            |
| Engineer           | 658-4499            |
| Fire               | (Business) 658-3346 |

**(Emergency) 9-1-1**

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Fire Prevention       | 694-2006            |
| Harnden Tavern Museum | 658-5475            |
| Health                | 658-4298            |
| Housing Authority     | 658-8531            |
| Library               | 658-2967            |
| Nurse                 | 658-4298            |
| Planning/Conservation | 658-8238            |
| Plumbing Inspector    | 658-4531            |
| Police                | (Business) 658-5071 |

**(Emergency) 9-1-1**  
(TDD) 657-8368

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| Public Buildings | 658-3017 |
| Public Works     | 658-4481 |
| Recreation       | 658-4270 |
| School           | 694-6000 |
| Selectmen        | 658-3311 |
| Town Clerk       | 658-2030 |
| Town Manager     | 658-3311 |

(TDD) 694-1417

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Treasurer       | 658-3531 |
| Veteran's Agent | 694-2040 |
| Water & Sewer   | 658-4711 |

(Billing) 658-3116



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*This newsletter can be made available in an alternative format. Contact {978} 658-3311 or TTY {978} 694-1417*