



Select Board Edition - October 27, 2025

Town-wide Update to the Community

The Select Board (the “Board”) is implementing a new Town-wide update to strengthen and expand communication with residents about major initiatives, financial forecasts, and upcoming Town Meeting business. Beginning this fiscal year, funds were added to the Board’s budget to support two Town-wide mailings a year. This communications initiative is designed to address residents’ reports that they have not been informed of important information or decisions in a timely manner. These letters, one prior to Special Town Meeting (typically held in the fall) and one prior to Annual Town Meeting (held every spring) will provide all residents with updates on current issues in the Town as well as direct access to the [Town-wide Financial Plan \(TWFP\)](#) and related materials.

This update complements *The W*, the Town’s new monthly e-newsletter highlighting upcoming events, programs, and local news. If you don’t already receive *The W*, we encourage you to [subscribe](#) and share it with friends and neighbors. Together, these communications are designed to keep our community connected and informed. There are many links within this document, and residents are encouraged to click on the highlighted links to access all materials. This information is also [posted on the Town website](#). A printed version of this update has been mailed to all residents.

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

This mailing includes a [Town Communications Survey](#). Please take a few minutes to let us know how you receive information, what works best, and how we can improve our communications.

STAY INFORMED

- [Subscribe](#) to *The W* newsletter
- Visit www.wellesleyma.gov for agendas, projects, and news
- Watch Town government meetings on [Wellesley Media](#) (Comcast 8, Verizon 40, and online)
- Follow the Town on [social media](#) for real-time updates

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 closed June 30, 2025, with very favorable results: revenues exceeded budget by \$8.5 million, and expenditures were \$5.8 million under budget. Reserves remain strong at approximately 16.92% of FY 2025 revenues. At the upcoming Special Town Meeting on November 3, Town Meeting will consider use of approximately \$7.3 million in reserves to fund several projects, including the Hunnewell Track & Field

Team Rooms, demolition of 3 Bacon Street (an abandoned property), supplemental operating budget appropriations to the Advisory Committee, and the purchase of new software for the Board of Assessors. Under the [Select Board Reserves Policy](#), the use of reserves is limited and directed primarily to one-time capital items, not recurring expenses.

Fiscal Year 2026 began on July 1, 2025, with funding approved at Annual Town Meeting in March/April 2025. The Select Board has begun to develop the Fiscal Year 2027 budget for consideration and approval at the next Annual Town Meeting (FY27 commences July 1, 2026). For the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, the Board anticipates the primary cost drivers to be health insurance cost increases of 10-14% consistent with the national average; upcoming union negotiations with all Town and School unions; and several significant capital projects. The Board has established Operating Budget guidelines for departmental increases averaging 3%. The Board is mindful of the potential impacts on the Town's budget from Federal actions including budget cuts and tariffs and does not expect hiring of personnel or advancement of new initiatives in the FY 2027 budget. Careful prioritization will be key to delivering a balanced FY 2027 budget at the Annual Town Meeting which opens on March 30, 2026. For opportunities to follow the budgetary process, please consult the Select Board [Annual Budget Book](#).

Special Town Meeting (STM) – November 3, 2025 - STM will take up several important matters detailed in the [STM Warrant](#), including:

- **Recycling & Disposal Facility (RDF) Administration Building** –\$5.5M: The current RDF administration building, built in 1997, is undersized and deteriorating. Studies have identified structural, systems, and water infiltration issues. A replacement will provide modern office and customer service space, improve energy efficiency, and create a safe work environment for staff.
- **Hunnewell Track & Field Team Rooms** – Estimated \$1.28M: When the new Wellesley High School opened in 2008, locker space was reduced, leaving teams without adequate changing facilities. This project restores that capacity with an enhanced modular building at Hunnewell Field, providing team rooms for football, softball, and girls' lacrosse. The design meets new code requirements, including showers, toilets, and basic infrastructure, and will be used during the fall and spring athletic seasons.
- **Other Articles:** These include budget adjustments, capital-related items, bylaw updates, and a Vote 17 Citizen Petition (which seeks consideration by the Board to place a non-binding question on the upcoming annual Town election ballot. This ballot question would gauge support for authorizing 17-year-old Wellesley residents to vote in Town elections and run for many elected positions. Should the ballot question receive approval from the voters, the Board would have the discretion to file a petition with the General Court to obtain state legislative (and the Governor's) approval). Please note: the proposed MBTA easement for accessibility ramps is not moving forward at this Town Meeting. Consult the [Special Town Meeting webpages](#) for updates.

Preparing for Annual Town Meeting (ATM) – March 30, 2026

As soon as STM closes, preparation begins for the ATM. The ATM Warrant will open on November 18 and close on December 23, 2025. Major articles are expected to include budget appropriations, capital projects, and Zoning and Town Bylaw amendments.

PROJECTS OF INTEREST

MassBay Community College (“MassBay”) Land Disposition: A portion of the [MassBay Community College](#) campus located at 40 Oakland Street has been designated by the Commonwealth as surplus property under the [State Land for Homes program](#), created through the [Affordable Homes Act](#). The 45-acre site has been identified for redevelopment into housing, with sale proceeds reinvested into new College facilities. By law, the

development must include at least four units per acre—meaning a *minimum* of 180 units is expected.

The Town cannot prevent development from moving forward; however, we will have an important opportunity to influence the Request for Proposals (RFP) by identifying local priorities that may shape the design and limit areas of disturbance. There has been some confusion that the acreage designated for sale is part of Centennial Park; that is not the case. Centennial Park is Town-owned protected parkland and cannot be developed, but the MassBay parcel which directly abuts Centennial Park and is sometimes conflated with Centennial Park is owned by the Commonwealth.

At its **September 16, 2025** meeting, the Select Board received an initial briefing from MassBay, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). MassBay, DCAMM, and EOHLC held two additional public information sessions for town residents on September 25 and October 8; the recording of the first meeting is available on [YouTube](#). On October 7, the Select Board voted funds to conduct a town-wide visioning session to allow residents to share their priorities for the development, preferred types and styles of housing, requested amenities and more. This will be the community's opportunity for everyone to work together, evaluate trade-offs and propose site improvements that will benefit the Town. The Select Board intends to leverage the results from this visioning session to inform the RFP that DCAMM releases for developers' responses. The visioning session will be open to all town residents and stakeholders. This is a very important issue for Wellesley, and residents are encouraged to visit the [Town website](#) for updated information, meeting notices, and additional opportunities to provide feedback.

SELECT BOARD FISCAL YEAR 2026 PRIORITIES

This [Select Board's annual work plan](#) details Board priorities in financial management, community development, climate action, mobility, and communications, and is updated regularly throughout the year. This fall, the Board is focused on several initiatives that will shape Wellesley's future:

Strategic Housing Plan (SHP): The Town is finalizing its [Strategic Housing Plan](#), building on the 2018 Housing Production Plan and informed by last year's Town-wide housing survey, focus groups, and forums. We thank the many residents who shared their perspectives—your input has been central to shaping the plan.

The SHP sets strategies to expand housing options, preserve affordability, and align future development with community character. It also recommends zoning updates and the redevelopment of parcels in commercial corridors and districts to address Wellesley's housing needs over the next decade. It is not prescriptive; the Town will determine which strategies it would like to implement. The final presentation is anticipated at a joint meeting of the Select Board and Planning Board on October 28, 2025.

Capital Planning Committee & Facilities Master Plan: The Town's current capital forecast identifies approximately \$400 million in capital projects over the next ten years, including major school building needs, Fire Station improvements, public works facilities, infrastructure upgrades, and recreation projects. To manage these costs responsibly, the Board is considering establishing a [Town-wide Capital Planning Committee](#) and creating a Town-wide Facilities Master Plan to evaluate projects holistically, prioritize investments, and ensure long-term stewardship of our assets. A proposal for the establishment of the Committee is currently being developed and is anticipated to be an article at Annual Town Meeting.

Detailed information on capital projects and financing can always be found in the Town's [Annual Budget Book](#), available on the Town's website.

Presentation of the Town Budgets: Following the discussion and debate at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, the Board has decided to present the Town budget under a new structure. Town Meeting members will have the opportunity to vote on two distinct motions – one for the budgets for non-school departments taken as a whole, and a second motion for the school department budget. The annual Town operating budget exceeds \$200 million, and this change is being implemented to facilitate discussion and debate on the major components of the budget: school-specific budget needs and other municipal department needs.

Citizens Leadership Academy: Launching in 2026, Wellesley's first Citizens' Leadership Academy will give residents and employees a hands-on opportunity to see how Town government works. Over 8-10 weeks, participants will meet with Town officials and staff, tour facilities, and learn about budgeting, public safety, planning, and more. The program is free, open to anyone 17 or older who lives or works in Wellesley and limited to 20-25 participants. Applications will open in Winter 2025, with sessions running from April through June and will be announced in *The W*.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Civil Discourse: The Town invited residents to participate in efforts to strengthen belonging in our community through a facilitated dialogue sponsored by the [DEI Task Force](#), a volunteer group working to advance equity and inclusion across Town government and community life. As part of the [Civil Discourse Initiative](#), "Many Traditions, One Community: A Conversation About Belonging in Wellesley" will be held twice: in-person on Monday, October 27, and virtually on Thursday, October 30. This dialogue will provide an opportunity for residents to discuss how the community comes together to celebrate and observe cultural and religious traditions in Wellesley. Both sessions will feature a presentation of the [Town's Equity Audit](#) findings by consultant Bird Guess, followed by small-group dialogue. Advanced registration was required by October 17, 2025.

WHAT'S CHANGING IN WELLESLEY

Commercial properties: Several properties in Wellesley Square have recently been sold and are under consideration for redevelopment. Updates on proposed developments will be posted on the [Town website](#) as they become available. Current properties recently sold include 40 Grove Street, 592 Washington Street, and 540-568 Washington Street (AKA The Taylor Block). Properties currently on the market include 570-574 Washington Street (AKA The Rotunda Building). In addition, significant parcels of land are on the market in Lower Falls.

49 Walnut Street: is a 28-unit residential project (22 market rate, 6 affordable) currently under permit review. Information on this project can be found on the [Planning Department](#) webpages.

888 Worcester Street: has been sold to Jumbo Capital, which has proposed converting the existing office space along Route 9 into assisted living, independent living, and memory care units pending rezoning. The developer detailed the project concept to the Planning Board on September 29, 2025, and Select Board on October 21, 2025, and noted the project will require Town Meeting authorization before permitting can proceed.

Long-term planning: Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, Section 81D, every Massachusetts municipality must prepare and update a Comprehensive Plan (also referred to as a Master Plan). Wellesley's next update is scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2027. The Planning Board will be seeking \$300,000+ to complete the plan over the next two years.

The plan will establish a framework for the next decade and required elements include land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, services and facilities, transportation and circulation, and implementation strategies. This process will reflect community input and guide decision-making across housing, land use, transportation, and economic development.

CLOSING

This is the first in a series of Town-wide letters from the Select Board. Our aim is to alert you to the key issues in Town being addressed by the Board. By staying connected—and by participating in forums, surveys, and programs like the Communications Survey, Citizens' Leadership Academy, and Comprehensive Plan—you help ensure that Wellesley remains a thriving, forward-looking community. To reach Select Board members directly, please email sel@wellesleyma.gov

We look forward to your feedback and to continuing this dialogue.

Sincerely,

The Wellesley Select Board

Dates to Know

Upcoming Public Meetings

- 2025 Special Town Meeting, November 3, 7:00 p.m. @ Wellesley High School - The public is invited to attend.

All board and committee meetings are regularly posted on the [Public Meeting calendar](#).

Upcoming Community Events

- Veterans' Day Ceremony, November 11, 11:00 a.m. @ Wellesley War Memorial, Town Hall

Check out the complete [Community Calendar](#) on the homepage of the Town website. And submit your events using our [online event submission form](#).



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