WHAT'S GOING ON IN

Dunstable?

FALL EDITION | OCTOBER 2024

It's the beginning of FY25, but the FY26 budget process has begun

Joint meeting between the Towns of Dunstable and Groton, and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District planned for October 23

The budget process for next fiscal year, FY26, has begun and while it is early in the process, a lot has been accomplished.

The Town's Advisory and Select Boards adopted formal financial policies earlier in the year which will help guide and shape FY26 and future budget decisions. To view the policies visit: www.dunstable-ma.gov/advisory-board/pages/town-dunstable-financial-policies.

The Town's financial forecast has been completed for FY26-FY30, which projects a deficit of $539,836 in FY26. The forecast is based on historic and anticipated trends in revenue and spending. To view the full 5-year financial forecast visit: www.dunstable-ma.gov/budget.

An initial meeting of the Dunstable-Groton Town Administrator/Town Manager Budget Working Group took place, allowing all involved to discuss their respective financial outlooks for next fiscal year.

In September, departmental capital improvement and project requests were submitted and will be reviewed this month to prioritize capital needs and begin to develop a funding strategy to address them.

Departmental budget worksheets were also distributed in early October and are due later in the month. Given the FY26 financial outlook and anticipated revenue growth all departments were asked to submit a budget with no more than a 2.5% increase.

Later this month, on Wednesday, October 23, a joint meeting of the Town of Dunstable's Advisory Board and Select Board, Town of Groton's Finance Committee and Select Board, and the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee is planned to review our financial outlooks and discuss the FY26 budget. The meeting will be held at the Groton Dunstable Regional Middle School Performing Arts Center at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Town of Dunstable

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Select Board calls Special Town Meeting

Special Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, November 18 at 7 PM at Swallow Union Elementary School

The Select Board has called a Special Town Meeting on Monday, November 18, 2024 at 7 PM at the Swallow Union Elementary School. The Warrant for the Special Town Meeting is open and will close on Monday, October 21 at 4 PM.

For information on Town Meetings, you can visit www.dunstable-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/town-meeting-information, where you'll find information on citizen petition articles and the petition residents should use to submit citizen articles. Citizen petition articles are due by Monday, October 21, 2024 by 4pm.

To register to vote, check your voter status, and for other voter information, please visit the Town of Dunstable's Elections Landing Page here: www.dunstable-ma.gov/elections.

Until the warrant is closed later this month, it won't be finalized but the draft warrant currently includes the following, which is subject to change:

- Cell Tower on Town Water Tank
- High Street Property Conservation Restriction
- Creation of a Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Fund
- Acceptance of Land Donation - 19 Lowell Street
- Amendment to the Recreation Revolving Fund

As the Special Town Meeting gets closer, more detailed information will be made available describing the articles on the warrant. In the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to call the Select Board's office at (978) 649-4514 Ext. 224.

Bandstand Railing gets facelift thanks to generous local contractor

The railing is being replaced on the Town Common bandstand thanks to a state budget earmark.

The Town issued an Invitation for Bids to replace the railing on the bandstand which was in need of repair. Due to building code requirements, the dimensions and design of the railing was changed to ensure compliance with the code.

The low-bidder on the project was a generous local contractor, Vanguard Construction, coming in at only $100 to complete the project. Vanguard is generously donating the improvement to the Town which will allow the Town to make additional improvements to the bandstand.

The Town can access the state earmark funds through FY26, so expect additional improvements in the months to come. A big thanks to resident Jon Mousseau and Vanguard Construction for their generosity!

Municipal Citizens Academy offers residents opportunity to learn more about local government

Starting mid-September, a group of 13 residents have participated in the Town's Municipal Citizens Academy offering a chance to learn more about local government in Dunstable. Sessions include presentations on public safety, library functions, general government, municipal finance, schools, and the state legislature. Not only has the program provided opportunities for residents to learn more about town government but it's also allowed department leaders to interact directly with residents building stronger relationships with the community.

We'd like to thank attendees for faithfully attending all sessions and actively participating throughout the program. We hope the resident participants got as much out of the program as the Town officials!



Town opens public comment period for municipal aggregation program

The Town is developing a consumer-friendly electricity program called Dunstable Community Power. The program is an electricity aggregation, which is a group electricity purchasing program for Dunstable residents and businesses. Through Dunstable Community Power, the Town will use its collective buying power to give residents and businesses greater control over the cost and environmental impact of their electricity supply. National Grid will continue to deliver electricity to Dunstable without interruption and handle billing. While Dunstable Community Power will not be able to guarantee lower prices compared with National Grid's electricity supply prices, the Town will work toward providing prices that are competitive and stable. Before launching the program, the Town must develop an Aggregation Plan and submit it to state regulators for review and approval. To ensure the public has an opportunity to be a part of developing this program, the Town is making its draft Aggregation Plan available for review and comment before beginning that regulatory review process. The draft Aggregation Plan for Dunstable Community Power will be available for public review and comment from September 24, 2024 until October 25, 2024. Those interested in reviewing the Plan can download it from the Town of Dunstable website at www.dunstablema.gov or obtain hard copies at the Select Board's Office at Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, Dunstable, MA. Dunstable residents and business owners are encouraged to review the draft Plan and submit written comments via email to jsilva@dunstable-ma.gov or via US Mail to: Jason Silva, Town Administrator, Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, Dunstable, MA 01827. Comments sent by mail must be received (not postmarked) by the end of the comment period in order to be addressed. An overview of the draft Dunstable Community Power Aggregation Plan was provided at the Select Board meeting on September 24 to kick off the public comment period. Information about participating can be found on the Town website. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. For additional information about Dunstable Community Power, please visit the program website at DunstableCommunityPower.com or call customer support with the Town's program consultants at 1-800-818-9409.

Dunstable Community POWER

Stay updated on what's happening in Town

Stay updated on what's happening in the Town of Dunstable and the work of your local government! There are many ways to stay informed:

- Sign-up to receive email notification on our website, www.dunstable-ma.gov/subscribe, provide your email in the appropriate fields, and check off any notices you would like to receive.
- Follow us on Facebook: @dunstablema and Instagram: @townofdunstable
- Subscribe to our Youtube Channel: @townofdunstable3179
- Follow us on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/town-of-dunstable/
- Follow us on NextDoor at Town of Dunstable

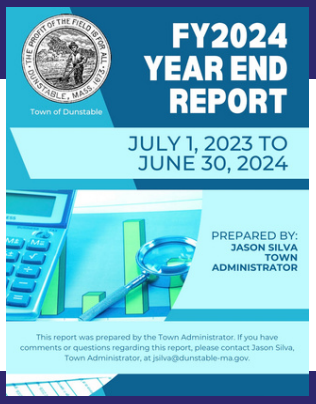
Tennis Courts at Larter Field taking shape

Construction being performed by Longo General Contractors on the new tennis and pickleball courts at Larter Field is progressing. Parks and Recreation Commissions are managing the over $300,000 project being paid for by Community Preservation Act funds. The project is anticipated to be complete by the end of the calendar year.

FY24 Year End Financial Report Available

In an effort to keep the community and oversight boards informed, the Town created both a mid-year and year-end financial report for FY24 evaluating revenue and expenditure trends. You can view the full report by visiting www.dunstable-ma.gov/town-administrator/pages/financial-reporting.

Overall,FY24 ended with positive variances in both revenue and expenses. Revenues were higher than originally anticipated by $196,079.54 or 1.57%. There was a balance of $510,029.51 of unexpended, budgeted expenses at the end of FY24. Most departmental budgets were spent between 80% and 95% with some smaller budgets spending less than that.



It's official: the Board of Selectmen's name has been changed to Select Board

On September 20, House Bill 4244, An Act changing the name of the board of selectmen in the town of Dunstable to select board, was signed into law by Governor Maura Healey.

As you may remember, at a Special Town Meeting on November 13, 2023, under Article 3, the Town authorized the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court to enact special legislation to change the name of the Board of Selectmen to Select Board.

In the coming months, the Town website and other Town documents will be updated to reflect this change.

Cell Tower on Town Water Tank update

Town's Board of Water Commissioners begins review of cell tower proposal

In an effort to raise additional local revenues and improve cell service, the Town, through its Board of Water Commissioners, sought out proposals to install a cell tower on the Town's water tank located on Pleasant Street through the issuance of a Request for Proposals.

As a result of the Request for Proposals being issued, the Town received a proposal. The Town Administrator and Board of Water Commissioners are currently working together to negotiate a lease based on the response received and the requirements of the Request for Proposals.

The Town anticipates an article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant requesting approval of authorizing the Board of Water Commissioners to enter a lease agreement to allow for a cell tower on the water tank. If approved by Special Town Meeting, the Board of Water Commissioners will then work to finalize the terms and execute the lease.

The cell tower is also subject to the requirements of the Town's Commercial Telecommunication Towers Bylaw.

Election Information

State Election will take place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. The Town's polling location, the Public Library, will be open from 7 AM to 8 PM.

Vote by mail ballots have been mailed to Dunstable voters. All ballots being returned by mail must be postmarked by November 5, 2024 and must reach the Town Clerk's office by November 8, 2024 in order to be counted.

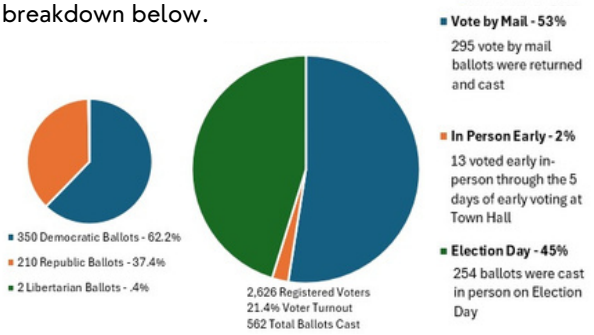
In-person early voting begins Saturday, October 19 and runs until Thursday October 31. You can find the schedule for early voting here →

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the Town Clerk's office at (978) 649-4514 ext.222 or by email at townclerk@dunstable-ma.gov.

Saturday, October 19	8 AM to 12 PM
Monday, October 21	9 AM to 1 PM
Tuesday, October 22	9 AM to 1 PM
Wednesday, October 23	9 AM to 1 PM
Thursday, October 24	9 AM to 1 PM
Saturday, October 26	9 AM to 5 PM
Monday, October 28	9 AM to 1 PM
Tuesday, October 29	9 AM to 1 PM
Wednesday, October 30	9 AM to 1 PM
Thursday, October 31	9 AM to 1 PM

Voter Turnout Data for State Primary

Overall, out of 2,626 registered voters, the Town of Dunstable cast 562 ballots in the State Primary Election on September 3, 2024, which translates to a 21.4% voter turnout. Check out the voting data breakdown below.



Vote by Mail - 53%
295 vote by mail ballots were returned and cast

In Person Early - 2%
13 voted early in-person through the 5 days of early voting at Town Hall

Election Day - 45%
254 ballots were cast in person on Election Day

Town receives MIIA Wellness Grants

The Town received approval from MIIA on a wellness grant which has allowed the Town to extend wifi throughout the back of the building and purchase two outdoor workstations. The Police Department also was granted funds to purchase healthy snacks for officers for a portion of this fiscal year.

The Police Department also secured a $2,500 grant through MIIA to support a public safety wellness screening initiative managed by Sigma Tactical Wellness. The HeartStart program offers an advanced lipid and biomarker analysis via blood draw. Each participant is guided through their results by a licensed medical practitioner via a twenty-minute interactive telehealth visit as well as a phone consultation with a dietician.

MIIA
Nonprofit
Locally based
Member driven
Serving Massachusetts communities since 1982

Town receives Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices Grants

The Town was recently awarded two community compact best practices grants by the Division of Local Services.

The first is a $20,000 grant for costs associated with updating the Town's formal Wage and Classification Plan that details, at a minimum, job descriptions, employee grades, and salary ranges.

The second grant is a $30,000 award for the costs associated with the review of our existing regional agreement between the Town of Dunstable and the Town of Pepperell for our shared Treasurer/Collector offices.

The Town will be working with the Collins Center at UMASS Boston on both of these projects which will be beginning soon.

Community Compact Cabinet

Recognizing our dedicated volunteers and employees

Making a Difference is a peer-to-peer employee and volunteer recognition program

The Town has created a program, Making a Difference, a peer-to-peer recognition program each month to recognize and acknowledge the amazing work taking place within the walls of Town Hall, and outside of Town Hall, to make a difference in our community.

Many volunteers and employees have been recognized through this program, nominated by a colleague, a volunteer member of a board or committee, or a supervisor to recognize the difference they are making in the community.

For the months of July, August, and September, the following employees have been celebrated through this program:

July
David Tully
Jean Phelan
Mark Cullen
John Callahan
Brynn Durno
Tully Farm

August
Maureen Strauss
Tiffany Naughton
Dawn Theberge

September
Judy Thompson
Susan Bresnick
Jeff Rosen
Sue Fayne

Effort to restore Union Building continues to advance

Following a successful effort to develop a re-use feasibility study, Annual Town Meeting approved the use of $1,132,750 of Community Preservation Act funds to advance the restoration of the exterior of the Union Building.

The Union Building Rehabilitation Committee, the group overseeing the process for the Town, has assisted in issuing a Request for Qualifications for designer services, which is the necessary next step in the restoration process. As a result, the Town has received 4 proposals from architectural firms, which are now being reviewed and will be evaluated by the Committee. The top 3 recommendations will be then passed on to the Select Board for their consideration and selection.

The selected architect will then work with the Town to develop specifications and construction documents to bid for the exterior restoration work. The Town is targeting next summer for construction to begin.

More information on the work to-date can be found at www.dunstable-ma.gov/union-building-rehabilitation-committee.



Town sets Goals and Objectives for FY25; looks back at FY24 accomplishments

Again this year, the Town of Dunstable, through its Select Board, and by working with the Town Administrator, has created goals, objectives, and priorities for the FY25 budget year, aimed at:

- Clarifying direction and purpose;
- Setting benchmarks for measuring progress;
- Providing motivation and sense of accomplishment;
- Ensuring alignment on vision and direction;
- Helping to guide decision-making; and
- Allowing for ongoing evaluation of progress and performance.

There are 6 goal categories which include citizen engagement, communication, and transparency; employee engagement and team building; long-term financial stability; infrastructure and capital planning; service delivery and operational improvements; and planning initiatives.

You can learn more and review the the full listing of goals and objectives for FY25 and accomplishments in FY24 by visiting www.dunstable-ma.gov/fy25goals-fy24accomplishments.

Join the Town Administrator for coffee and conversation!

Join Jason Silva, Dunstable's Town Administrator for coffee at Farmhouse Cafe on Pleasant Street! He'll be there on Thursday, October 24 at 10 AM available to discuss any issues on your mind. He hopes to see you there and, don't forget, he's buying!

News about Camp Massapoag

Over the last couple of months, the Town has communicated with officials from the Greater Lowell YMCA about potential use of Camp Massapoag for recreational programming and other purposes. The Town is developing a plan to work with the YMCA on providing public access to the property, and beach at the lake. We are very excited about the opportunities that exist and look forward to future progress and development of programs, activities, and events that utilize this beautiful property. Stay tuned for more information and announcements soon!

Town receives a Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant

Town awarded $2,500 for Block Party event

The Town has received a Massachusetts Cultural Council Festivals and Projects grant in the amount of $2,500 for a block party that will bring residents together in Town Center. Following the great success of celebrating the Town's 350th Anniversary, this event is meant to build upon the enthusiasm and excitement created through the numerous events and activities organized by the 350th Anniversary Committee.

The Town is hopeful that this event will provide residents an opportunity to come together, celebrate the history of the Town, showcase the Town and its businesses, artistic, cultural, and other assets, and allow for young and older to display their talents via music and art.

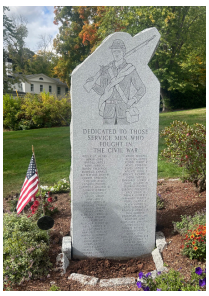
The Town's tentative plan is to take successful components of the old Grange Fair and incorporate updated activities with local vendors, food trucks, and a musical concert to wrap up the day. Stay tuned for more information as planning efforts begin!

Mass Cultural Council

Veterans Monuments and Memorials at Town Hall

The Veterans Memorials and Monuments at Town Hall were cleaned this month and they look terrific. Next time you're in the neighborhood, please stop by and view them yourself! Check out the before and after pictures below!








New Curbside Collection of Leaf and Yard Waste Program Available

Town has partnered with Black Earth Compost for pickup during the week of November 11

Black Earth Compost will be offering a Leaf and Yard Waste Collection this fall to Dunstable residents. If you're interested in this service, here are the details:

- Residents purchase their own 30 Gallon Paper Leaf Bags (no plastic bags)
- Leaf and Yard Waste is defined as leaves, weeds, small plants, brush, and sticks smaller than half an inch in diameter. Grass clippings are also accepted, but only if pesticides/herbicides have not been used.
- Sign up directly with Black Earth Compost through their website here: www.blackearthcompost.com/bulk-orders. Simply add your address, chose Yard Waste Removal, and complete your order.
- Leaf and yard waste should be placed in the standard paper leaf bags and on the curb by 6am of pickup date.
- Pickup will be the week of November 11, 2024. There will be more information on your pickup date when you sign up.
- Pricing:
  - First 3 Bag Pickup =$18.
  - Each additional set of 3 bags = $12

Residents who are interested in curbside collection of food waste can preregister at www.blackearthcompost.com/create-account/?city=Dunstable&zip=01827&state=Massachusetts. They accept meat, dairy, bones and BPI compostable serviceware. Once there is enough interest, Black Earth can start a route. At this time residents would also have access to year round leaf and yard waste collections.

BLACK EARTH COMPOST

41 Lowell Street affordable housing development to move forward

For close to a year, the Town has held public meetings and spent considerable time reviewing a proposal from Brattle Development LLC to develop an affordable housing development at 41 Lowell Street. This month, it gained approval to move forward.

The project consists of 156 age-restricted condominium dwelling units with 24 units in 12 two-unit duplex townhouse buildings, eight units in detached single-family style buildings, 124 units in three garden-style multifamily buildings, and a clubhouse building with common amenities spaces. Twenty-five per cent of the units in the project will be restricted as affordable and available for purchase by eligible households earning at or less than 80% of the local Area Median Income (AMI).

The project also dedicates approximately 33.8 acres of the site as conservation land and an additional portion of the site will be left in an undeveloped state, subject to agreed-to exceptions. The existing garage will be renovated by the Developer for use in connection with project construction, and then eventually will be donated to the Town. Lastly, residents aged 55+ will have access to the common clubhouse for not less than 10 hours per week for Town-organized senior and recreational programming.

The next step is for the project developer and the Town to jointly file a Local Initiative Program application under Chapter 40B with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

Fall Roadside Clean Up - Bags are Now Available at Town Hall and Tully Farm Store!

Sponsored by Dunstable Grange #31 from October 19 to October 26

Dunstable Grange #31 is sponsoring a Fall roadside clean up from October 19 to October 26. If we pick up the road around our homes, the town will be in great shape as we head towards winter.

As you fill your bags during this time, please leave them on the side of the road. Our Highway Department crew will be picking them up. We appreciate your continued support in keeping Dunstable beautiful.

Bags are currently available at Dunstable Town Hall or Tully Farm Store, so swing by to pick them up at your convenience.

Thank you to the Grange #31 for spearheading this important effort!

Town of Dunstable
511 Main Street
Dunstable, MA 01827

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Vote for the 2025 Dog Tag: Open to residents of ALL ages

"One of my favorite memories of my daughter in elementary school was when she came home one day, very excited, and told me she voted. After asking what she was voting for she told me for dog tags, mom, very matter-of-factly. So it has become something important for me to do within the community so parents can have those conversations about voting with their children. As we prepare for early voting and Election Day I wanted to be sure that the younger residents of Dunstable also have that same opportunity." Brynn Durno, Dunstable Town Clerk



Here is the official "Vote for Dunstable's 2025 Dog Tag" ballot"! Don't miss a chance to vote for your favorite. The Town has blank ballots by the Dog Tag Ballot Box - so either print it out and mail it or swing by and cast your vote.

You can find the ballot by visiting: www.dunstable-ma.gov/dogtagelection2025.

Don't miss out this voting season!

Interested in serving on a board or committee? Let us know.

If you're interested in serving on a Town board or committee, let us know! Please email the Select Board at bos@dunstable-ma.gov. Currently, there are openings on the Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees, and Cultural Council.

Tax Aid Committee appointed by Select Board

At Annual Town Meeting this year, the Town adopted the provisions of Mass General Law Part I, Title IX, Chapter 60, Section 3D allowing the Town to establish a elderly and disabled taxation fund for the purpose of defraying the real estate taxes of elderly and disabled persons of low income. The provision also requires the creation of a taxation aid committee to adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of the law and purpose of the fund, and to identify recipients of such aid.

Thank you to the newly appointed members of the committee:

Ann Farina
Lori Brooks
Nikole Roth
Andrew Wall, Town Treasurer/Collector
Brett Rock, Chair, Board of Assessors