The Budget and the CCW Housing Proposal

The Board of Selectmen met recently to review budget requests for the next fiscal year. If all requests are granted, our mil rate will be close to 50, which is not acceptable. To add historical perspective, from 2016 to 2022 (6 years), the Town portion of the budget increased by 3.04% while the Amity Regional Board of Education budget increased by 20.5%, and the Woodbridge Board of Education budget by 15.32%. Clearly, Woodbridge supports our schools and education. Education makes up two-thirds of the Town budget.

Next, the Board of Finance will review the Board of Selectmen recommendations, and then the Board of Finance will propose a budget at the April Preliminary Budget Hearing.

The grand list in Woodbridge, our main source of revenue, grew by only 1.7% over the past year. This is the first time in 10 years that it has grown by more than 0.8%. This year’s growth is primarily due to the increase in the value of motor vehicles. This lack of meaningful growth does not even keep up with inflation. New revenue is critical to fund our high-quality education and other important Town services. The Town could grow its grand list by expanding the commercial district and also offering new and diverse housing.

The State has established a benchmark which requires 10% of all housing in each municipality be affordable. Currently, only 1.18 percent of Woodbridge homes qualify. It is our Town’s legal obligation to provide housing which is not exclusionary and is affordable.

Last year, the Town’s zoning laws were challenged. The application implied that our regulations were exclusionary, resulting in a lack of diversity in our population. Our Town Plan and Zoning commissioners did a thoughtful and excellent job balancing the need to provide multi-family and affordable housing with environmental concerns. Woodbridge Zoning Regulations now allow multiple housing units in residential areas, and more density is allowed in areas with sewer and public water.

The former Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW) property is the largest tract of developable land owned by the Town that meets the above criteria, and it would be wrong to dismiss out of hand a proposal that includes affordable housing. It is important to recognize that Woodbridge, along with most municipalities in Connecticut, face legal obligations to encourage this type of housing in residential areas. We cannot ignore this issue. We must act.

I remain committed to controlling the development of the property and let voters decide this issue. We MUST act on our own, and avoid having development forced upon us through legal action.

The Board of Selectmen are considering a proposal from Arbor Haven to purchase approximately 100 of the 150 CCW acres for $9 million. The proposal includes building a mixture of housing, some affordable, some over 55, and some single-family homes. All will be for sale, with no rental properties. We currently owe approximately $3.7 million on the 2008 original purchase price of almost $7 million. The Town has 10 more years of debt payments. The $9 million purchase price will fully pay off the remaining debt, and leave over $5 million for Town services, including education. We are also contemplating a solar farm on part of the property.

Some claim that more housing will attract more school-age children. Smaller “starter” homes, typically, do not bring in many children. There may be some increase in school children, but that is good—more families and more growth! These homes will also be attractive to empty nesters. Our Town’s residents are older than the State average, and we should provide appropriate housing opportunities for our older population, and also create housing options to attract younger residents. Most importantly, THE TOWN will control development. I believe the Board of Selectmen has an obligation to let voters decide this issue at a referendum.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions or comments. You can reach me at bheller@woodbridgect.org or at 203-389-3401.

—First Selectman Beth Heller

Save the Dates! Earth Day & Bike Ride

Save the Dates! The Ad Hoc Community Council invites Woodbridge residents to two spring events.

On Saturday April 23 the Community Council hosts a Spring Clean Earth Day event which will include a tag sale (interested vendors may sign up on the Town website), Friends of the Library book sale, electric vehicle car show, compost and rain barrel sale, and more.

On Saturday May 14 the Community Council will host a Community Bike Fun Ride to celebrate the Town’s new bike route. Bike helmets are required and decorations and costumes are encouraged. Ride details to be announced.

Daylight Savings begins March 13—remember to set clocks & change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
Town residents are encouraged to check out employment opportunities listed on the Town’s website. There are a variety of part-time, seasonal, and full-time positions that Town departments are looking to fill. Some of the positions currently available include:

- **Parks Dept:** seasonal, full-time labor positions

**Bulk Pickup**

Call the Department of Public Works at 203-389-3420 to schedule an appointment for spring bulk pickup. There is a $50 fee per appointment to be paid upfront prior to pickup.

Spring bulk pickup will take place by appointment only each Tuesday in March through May between 7:30 am - 3:30 pm. Bulk pickup will be offered again during the months of October and November. Residents are asked to limit use of this service to one time per year to allow everyone to take advantage of this program.

A list of items to be placed curbside will need to be provided. Items should be large household items that cannot fit in a car trunk such as: large furniture, washing machines, dryers, gas grills, lawn mowers, carpeting, bed frames and the like. The disposal fee for freon based appliances (air conditioners, refrigerators, dehumidifiers) is included in the $50 pickup charge.

Call the Department of Public Work’s office with any questions.

**Glass Recycling**

The Town now has a bin for residents to recycle glass separately at the Transfer Station.

Separating glass from other recyclable items will help to make the Town’s recycling more marketable and reduce the amount the Town pays to recycle by reducing the weight.

Please be certain all recycled glass containers are thoroughly cleaned with labels, lids, and plastic rings removed.

Broken glass is a main source of contamination in recycling. Broken glass particles attach themselves to other recyclables, and non-broken glass is contaminated with bits and pieces of other trash items. For that reason most glass sent to landfills is never recycled into a new bottle or jar.

**Catalytic Converter Thefts**

Like many other communities throughout the state, vehicles are being targeted for the theft of their catalytic converters. A catalytic converter is a critical component of your car’s exhaust system and can cost up to $4,000 to replace. Thieves target it because it contains expensive metals, has a high street value and removal can take less than one minute!

Please remember to park in a garage or a well-lit area and as always, immediately report any suspicious activity to the Police Department to potentially protect yourself from being the victim of one of these crimes.
Visit the Library website 24/7 to access digital resources - woodbridgetownlibrary.org

Library hours: Monday through Thursday: 10 am to 8 pm; Friday & Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm

Writing Group Launches at the Library

Seeking Woodbridge People of the Letter! The fourth Tuesday of the month from 3 to 5 pm, the library will host a workshop for writers seeking helpful criticism of their work, inspiration, or if nothing else, commiseration. Whether you labor in obscurity or have “made it” (whatever the “it” you have made it to may be), come and join your kindred souls as we read each other’s fiction, poetry, memoirs, to-do lists, etc.

We can also help you find the resources to make your writing journey easier. All genres welcome—poetry, stories, memoirs, fiction, journalism, etc. Please register at the Reference Desk or via email: warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org

All CT Reads Discussion of Transcendent Kingdom

Join your neighbors for the statewide reading event! An open discussion of the book written by Yaa Gyasi will be held at the library on Tue., March 15 at 6 pm. Transcendent Kingdom is a deeply moving portrait of a family of Ghanaian immigrants ravaged by depression and addiction and grief—a novel about faith, science, religion, love. Exquisitely written, emotionally searing, this is an exceptionally powerful book.

Copies are available at the library. Ask at the Reference Desk for more information, or contact Bill: warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org

Art Exhibits Return

2022 welcomed the return of art exhibits to the Library’s meeting room for the first time since March 2020. In January, we were honored to host photographer Glen Kapostas, and February’s exhibit featured photographs of the treasures of the Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society. March brings perennial exhibitor Palette Art Studio (who was the exhibitor in March 2020), showcasing their students’ paintings.

Stop by the meeting room during open hours to see the creativity and to support local artists. For more information on each month’s artist, please visit our website, and search “art exhibits.”

Interested in having your artwork displayed? All you need to do is fill out a form by visiting our website at: woodbridge.lioninc.org/events/art-exhibits/

Contact Kira Edic at kedic@woodbridgetownlibrary.org for more information.

March Events

NEW DATE! Mindless to Mindful Eating Makeover – March 10 at 7 pm. Learn healthier behaviors and how to create goals for improved personal habits in relation to food. Held in the Meeting Room. Registration required—visit our website or call the reference desk. (Originally scheduled for Jan. 20.)

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art Virtual Tour: Women Artists – March 16 at 1 pm. Co-hosted with The Woodbridge Center; held at the Library Meeting Room. For more information, please see our website.

Plant Swap! March 26, 10 am to 1 pm. Have plants that don’t spark joy anymore? Extra pots laying around the house? Seeds you don’t plan on planting? Drop them off at the library on March 24 or 25. Return on Saturday to find new (to you) items! There will also be a potting and pot-decorating station. All ages welcome! Register yourself and your plants on our website, or by calling 203-389-3434.

Wanted by The Friends of the Library: Your Donations!

Doing some late New Years/pre-spring cleaning? No matter if you KonMari, Swedish Death Clean, or are throwing everything into a trash bag, think of the Friends! The Friends will re-open their donation collections throughout the month of March.

Please bring your clean, gently used items to the Library. Items that are accepted: books, music CDs, audiobooks, puzzles, and DVDs—but PLEASE no items that have been stored in a basement or garage as mold and dampness can spread! Thank you for thinking of the Friends—your support helps the Friends support the Library.

No items to donate? You can support the Friends by shopping Bookstore Alley, shopping Amazon via Amazon Smile, or making a donation to the Friends via PayPal.
Woodbridge Happenings
Registration may be required & space may be limited. For event details go to: woodbridgect.org

*** Please check the website for all in-person events. Events may be rescheduled or held virtually based on Covid-19 positivity rates.***

3/6 American Red Cross Blood Drive, 11 am
Center Building gymnasium
3/10 Mindless to Mindful Eating Makeover, 7 pm
Library Meeting Room
3/11 The American Armchair Adventure, 11 am
for 55+, National Park Series, Library Meeting Rm.
3/14 Pi Day Pizza Party, 2:30 pm
for AMS-Bethany students, East Cafeteria
3/16 Job Fair, 12-2 pm & 4-7 pm
hosted by the JCC of GNH, 360 Amity Road
3/16 In-person Virtual Art Tour, 1 pm
Library Meeting Room
3/17 St. Patrick’s Day Drive-Thru Lunch, 12 pm
for 55+, The Woodbridge Center
3/26 Plant Swap at the Library! 10 am
drop off unwanted seeds & pots on 3/24 & 25

Town Calendar events will be highlighted here. Woodbridge businesses and organizations are encouraged to add events to: woodbridgect.org/calendar.

Interested in placing an ad in this newsletter? Call 203-389-3489 or email tbelenskiwoodbridgect.org.

From the Children’s Room

National Read Across America Day, all day, Saturday, March 5!
People around the country will gather to celebrate the joy of reading; celebrate here at the library with the children’s staff! Join us for story time and “make and take” crafts. Festivities from 10 am to 5 pm; story times offered at 11 am or 3 pm.
Register online for ONE session only; each session is limited to 12 children total.

Winter Craft Kits! Available every two weeks now though the end of March. Participants must sign up online for each date they wish to receive a craft kit; registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Kits will be held for one week for pick up in the children's department.

Eager Readers K-2 at home book discussion group continues. Our popular reading program moves home. Pick up the book, discussion questions, and a simple craft to do together at home with parents or caregivers. This program is for students in K-2 only. Register online monthly.

Celebrate March with the Children’s Department

March is Women’s History Month. Browse our displays to discover new books about awe-inspiring women of past and present. Take home activities will be offered all month as well.

St. Patrick’s Day is March 17. Keep an eye out for leprechauns and a St. Patrick’s Day craft!

Say YES to you. Say YES to tomorrow. Say YES to the JCC

Become a Member TODAY! No commitment or enrollment fee.
The time to join our family is NOW.
Take advantage of all the J has to offer. Contact membership today at membership@jccnh.org or call (203) 387-2424.
Blood Drive

An American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held Sunday, March 6 from 11 am to 4 pm at the Center Building gymnasium. Appointments are required; visit redcrossblood.org and use sponsor code NDF, call 1-800-733-2767, or use the QR code above to schedule your appointment.

According to the American Red Cross, Connecticut has a critically low blood supply. Prior to the pandemic, a national surplus of blood products would be used to mitigate regional shortages. Currently, there is no national surplus. This event is sponsored by American Red Cross and co-hosted by the Nicole Donzello Foundation and Woodbridge Human Services. Every donation helps!

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA): In partnership with the IRS and the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS), the Senior Center offers free tax preparation through VITA. Taxpayers with low to moderate income, senior citizens, and people with disabilities or limited English have four options to safely and accurately complete 2021 tax returns.

If you have access to a computer and internet, you can complete your own tax return through MyFreeTaxes.com. Preparers can complete your return either virtually or in person. If you have a camera phone, you can virtually access Woodbridge VITA tax preparers through GetYourRefund.org/WBSC-CT without leaving home. If you don’t have access to technology, call Woodbridge Human Services for a drive-through or in-person appointment.

Energy Assistance Program: Human Services accepts appointments for residents applying for the 2021-2022 CT Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, INC. Income eligibility requirements must be met. For information, or to schedule an appointment, call Human Services.

Emergency Preparedness: In the event of a weather emergency or power outage, elderly residents and those with disabilities are encouraged to register for the Emergency Call List by calling the Human Services Department.

Local Masks and Test Kits: Woodbridge residents who are elderly, vulnerable, or disabled and those with non-licensed childcare (a child taken care of by a family member or nanny, but not at a licensed daycare center) may call to request a COVID-19 home test kit through Human Services. No walk-ins; residents must call ahead to schedule a curbside-pickup only appointment. N-95 masks are also available to residents who call ahead for curbside pick-up—limits apply.

Woodbridge Center News

The Center is for everyone 55+!
Please call 203-389-3430 or email kmoriarty@woodbridgect.org with any questions or to register for programs.

Spring Drive-thru: Save the date for the Spring Drive-thru sponsored by Resnik and Resnik and The Linden at Woodbridge, on April 14, 12-1 pm.

Services:
Tech Tue. and Thu., 2:45-4:15 pm: Need some help navigating your computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone? Call to sign-up for a 1:1 session in The Center’s computer lab with patient, knowledgeable, Amity High School student volunteers. No fee.

Transportation for medical appointments is available for those age 60+ or with a long-term or short-term disability. Mon. - Fri. from 9 am - 4 pm. Transportation for local grocery shopping, banking, and pharmacy pick-up is also available. Call to arrange car or wheelchair accessible van transportation. Vehicles are cleaned between each use.

Meals: Healthy, well balanced, flash frozen meals are available for $5.25/meal. Order by noon on Mon. for delivery to your home on Tue. Choose from a wide variety of options including chicken parmesan, lemon dill cod, eggplant rollatini, beef pot roast, vegetable frittata, and fresh Cobb salad with grilled chicken breast. Meals include a roll, fresh fruit, and dessert. Two meal minimum. Frozen soups are available for $1.50 per 10 oz. container. Varieties include: Italian wedding, beef orzo, minestrone, harvest vegetable, chicken noodle and many more. Call 203-389-3430 to place your order.

Friendly Visitor Program: Call Judi Young, Human Services Social Worker, at 203-389-3429 to arrange for a friendly visitor.

Medical Loan Closet: Medical equipment is available for lending, including walkers, wheelchairs, knee rollers, shower chairs and more. Call for details.

Job Bank: Residents may call Nancy Pfund, Youth Services, 203-389-3429, to hire a student worker. Schedule helpers now for spring clean-up, and more.

Updates:
Facebook/e-blasts: Follow us on Facebook (The Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge CT) and call to sign-up for email blasts for The Center updates.

Emergency Preparedness:

Carol Davino of Coachman Square assists at the Soup-er Sweet New Year drive-thru. Many thanks to Coachman Square and Opal Stork Home Care for co-sponsoring this event!

Drive-thru Lunches:

St. Patrick’s Day Drive-thru Lunch: You don’t have to be Irish to celebrate at the St. Patrick’s Day Drive-thru, sponsored by Coachman Square at Woodbridge and the Holli Shanbrom Team - Coldwell Banker Real Estate, on Thu., March 17 from 12-1 pm. Pick-up a delicious, traditional lunch of corned beef and cabbage, roasted potatoes, carrots, Irish soda bread, and a festive dessert. Special holiday treat provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Please RSVP by March 10 as space is limited. No charge.
Wear Red Day

First Selectman Beth Heller and town staff members gathered to raise awareness and funds for the annual Wear Red Day event at Town Hall.

American Heart Health Month helps to bring awareness to women’s heart health and health equity. Nearly 80% of cardiovascular disease can be prevented by healthy living steps.

For local healthy living activities offered through The Center, check out the Ongoing Activities section below.

Special Activities

Free In-person Virtual Art Tour Series viewing co-hosted with the Woodbridge Town Library: Experience art history via the oldest public art museum in the US. Come view the Wadsworth Virtual Art Tour series. Each tour will feature a different docent lead theme. Call 203-389-3430 to register. The series includes:

- 3/16/2022 @ 1 pm: Women Artists: A Women’s History Month Spotlight (in the library’s meeting room).
- 4/6/2022 @ 7 pm: Milton Avery: A Special Exhibit (Center Building, Room 16).
- 5/11/2022 @ 1 pm: Impressionists (in the library’s meeting room).

AARP Driver Safety Class to be held Mar. 21, 9 am - 1 pm: Completing this four-hour class may reduce your auto insurance. Fee is $20 AARP members, $25 non-members. Please call to register.

Armchair Adventure Series: National Parks of the West

Mark your calendars! This in-person monthly series sponsored by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, will take you to six National Parks in six months. Each month you will travel to one of the most breathtaking parks in the United States. Enjoy simulated tours, interactive discussions, trivia, local cuisine, and more. Preregistration is required for this adventure that will meet the 2nd Friday of each month beginning March 11, with a “trip” to Yellowstone National Park, from 11 am – 12 pm in the Woodbridge Library’s meeting room. RSVP required.

Other adventures include: Yosemite - April 8, Glacier National Park - May 13, Grand Canyon - June 10, Zion - July 8, and Grand Teton - August 12.

Ongoing Activities

Hobbies/Social:

Bridge: Wed., 1-4 pm in The Center café.
Computer lab is open Mon.-Fri., 10 am - 2 pm. Two-person limit in computer lab. Printing is available (first 5 pages free). Preregistration is required.
Craft Group: Tue. and Thu., 10 am - 12 pm, in The Center café. Bring your current knitting, crocheting, or needlepoint project to work on while enjoying a lovely time socializing.
Pinochle: Mon., Wed. & Thu., 1:30-4 pm, The Center lounge.

Exercise: Not sure if an exercise class is a good fit? Try a complimentary class first.
Aerobics Class with Laura Richling: Tue. and Thu., 10-11 am, Center Building gym. Enjoy a complete aerobic, cardio and strength training workout to a variety of music. Bring your own 1 or 2 pound hand weights, if you have them, to use during the class. There is a $3 fee payable at the start of class.

Pickleball: Mon. through Fri., 12:30-3:30 pm, in the Center Building gym. New players please call to register. All levels are welcome. Call for more information.

Targeted Strength Training with Michele Tenney: Mon., 9-10 am, Center Building gym. This exercise class uses exercise bands to focus on strengthening specific muscle groups to help increase balance, stability, and flexibility. Bands are available for purchase through the instructor. The class fee is $40 for an 8-week session (currently midsession) and will be prorated.

Zumba Gold with Amanda Aranzullo: Fri., 9:45 am, in the Center Building gym. Who says exercise can’t be fun? This fun “dance party” focuses on all elements of cardiovascular health, muscular conditioning, flexibility and balance. No prior Zumba experience required. The fee is $30 for a 6-week session and will be prorated. (Start date was Feb. 18.)
First Selectman’s Youth Award

If you know a Woodbridge youth (18 or under) who has worked to improve the Town of Woodbridge or has assisted its residents, consider nominating that deserving youth. Principals, teachers, fellow students, neighbors, group leaders, etc. are encouraged to make nominations. Parents or family members may not nominate a relative. Nominations are due by April 4. Find the nomination form at the Town’s website.

Pi (π) Day Pizza

Youth Services will celebrate Pi (π) Day on March 14 at an after school pizza pie making program at Amity Middle School-Bethany in the East Cafeteria from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.

Community Pays It Forward

Youth Services wishes to thank all of the students and community members who contributed valentines for senior citizens. The messages were touching and the creativity was amazing. These cards offered some heartwarming moments to many older adults in our town.

Kudos also to the Amity Middle School–Bethany students and families for their contributions for the homeless. Much appreciation goes to the student council who organized bags of items for the New Reach Shelter in New Haven.

6th Graders-Save the Date: April 1, 2022

Youth Services is planning an event for 6th graders of Woodbridge and Bethany to meet at Amity Middle School-Bethany on 4/1 from 7-9 pm for a fun party with music, games, and raffle prizes. Check out our website and Facebook for details!

Recreation News

Call Recreation at 203-389-3446 or email Recreation@woodbridgect.org. Register at woodbridgect.org. Select Recreation Registration at the homepage on the Town website to register and view the lineup of program options.

Adult Badminton & More!

Adult badminton for all skill levels, ages 16 and above, takes place every Wed., 7-9 pm, at Beecher Road School, South. Players should bring a racket; nets and feathered birdies are supplied. Winter session is in progress—prorated memberships are available or pay a $10 drop in fee.

Spring Cooking Camp

Join Food Explorers for a half-day tasty cooking camp! You’ll make two delicious snacks with Miss Lara, and learn all about food and cooking. You’ll be making pancake skewers and 7-layer dip! Each child will make their own portion, all recipes are nut free, but will contain dairy and eggs. For more details, please call the Recreation Dept. Office at 203-389-3446 or register online at woodbridgect.org.

Spring Program Registration

There is still time to register for spring programs including: bowling, basketball, Build with Ricky (a Lego program), Clay Date, Hip Hop Dance, gymnastics, Kumon, Kids Dig Farms located at Massaro Farm, Little Scientists, Coding Club, Running Club, tennis, Taekwondo, and Ultimate Team Sports. Most programs begin the week of March 28. Call 203-389-3446, or use the registration link on the Town website, WoodbridgeCT.org.

Summer Camp Registration

Summer Camp registration begins April 18. Camp will run June 27 - Aug. 5, 9 am to noon for grades 1 through 8. Camp is offered to Woodbridge residents only; the camp fee is $600 for all six weeks. Call 203-389-3446 for details.