

# Spring Town Meeting 2020

Report from Winchester Town Manager, Lisa Wong



## STAND AGAINST RACISM

The Select Board, School Committee, Town Manager and School Superintendent united against systematic racism in a joint statement. “We condemn hate crimes, police brutality, and the systemic and pervasive institutional factors that have led to the recent violence and trauma impacting communities of color across the country.”

## NEW FACES

Last Fall’s Town Meeting kicked off the tenure of our new Fire Chief Rick Tustin, who is doing a great job, especially as our emergency management director. The Town has since hired a new Recreation Director and head of the Transfer Station. Both are giving two great institutions a fresh perspective!

## Partnerships Saved Lives

Front line workers, town officials and the public came together to “flatten the curve” and save lives in Winchester and beyond.

Communication with each other, cooperation by the public in adhering to a sense of common purpose, and quick action were all major factors in keeping us safe. The Health Department worked with the Select Board to pass early and meaningful measures, and assisted Long Term Care facilities.

### SAFE HARBOR

The Town achieved the designation from the state’s DHCD to provide 2 years of relief from 40B projects circumventing local zoning rules.

### BOND RATING

Moody’s reaffirmed the Town’s Aaa bond rating in early June citing “manageable pension and OPEB liabilities” & “ability to implement tax override”.

### BUDGET BONUS

Health care savings and negotiations means we will only see a modest 6.4% increase in health insurance. Also, energy costs next year will be lower than this year!

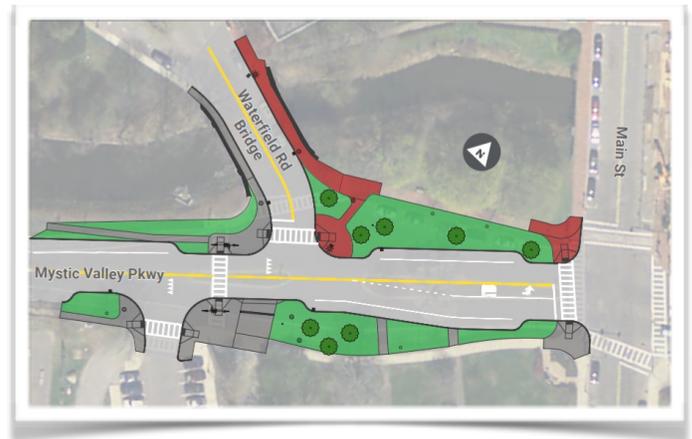
## Projects Move Forward

Expect improvements to roadways, sidewalks, bridges, schools and the completion of the Saltmarsh Pavilion!

The number of capital projects in the current and future pipeline has increased to help tackle the backlog identified as part of the Capital Planning Committee's long term planning.

The Waterfield Bridge project recently started, and the McCall Middle School Traffic Improvement project will start this week. New generators are being installed at Town Hall and the Public Safety Building. The Manchester Track will get a facelift and the town is preparing a new three year contract for Lead Line replacements throughout the Town.

The Aberjona Tree Planting Project has also started, thanks to an earmark from Senator Jason Lewis. It will help beautify the Judkins Pond area and is part of a larger strategy to improve the ecology and connectivity of the Town's many wonderful waterways. This will also help attract private investment to our core.



The Wildwood Drainage Project, funded by previous Town Meetings, has finished work in the field, but work in the street is still ongoing.

The Parkhurst elevator installation will give the Town options as class size increases. Two articles at this Town Meeting, \$30k for a study of improvements to Muraco and \$1.5m for a feasibility study for a new Lynch School, will have longer term impacts.

Many projects are being engineered right now including work at the Waterfield and Church intersection, Lake Street Bridge, Swanton Street Culvert, North Reservoir Dam, North Reservoir Spillway and Phase II Sewer Improvements.

### GREEN, GRANTS, GIVE



A committee of 18 diverse volunteers created an updated Climate Action Plan calling for a reduction of fossil fuel use in homes and transport. In addition, the town completed the Municipal Vulnerabilities Planning Process and is now eligible and applying for grants related to green infrastructure.

The Cummings Foundation awarded a grant to the Jenks Center to provide ESL and citizenship classes to Chinese speaking older adults. Also, we bought the new van to help seniors get to medical appointments and deliver food.

Last but not least, the Town launched the "Give Where You Live" campaign with the United Way and area non profits to raise money to help our residents who face food insecurity because of COVID-19. Give at [www.winchester.us/600/Winchester-COVID-19-Community-Care-Fund](http://www.winchester.us/600/Winchester-COVID-19-Community-Care-Fund)