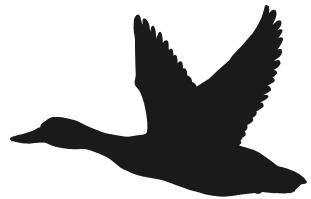


## W H A T ' S H A P P E N I N G I N

# SEEKONK

**Administrator's Message**

Hello Seekonk,

Welcome to the very first edition of our monthly newsletter! We're excited to share town updates, events, and initiatives all in one spot to keep everyone in the loop.

Whether you're looking to get involved, stay informed, or simply feel more connected, this newsletter is here to help.

Let's keep building a thriving Seekonk together—an awesome place to live, work, and grow!

Stay tuned and stay connected!

In Seekonk's case, the town is facing significant increases in fixed costs, including the Tri-County School Building Assessment, rising health care costs, and long-term debt, all of which are putting added pressure on the budgeting process. Despite these challenges, we are committed to developing a budget that strikes a balance between fiscal responsibility and addressing the town's needs.

The proposed budget and annual fees will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on **March 26th**.

## **Budget Season in Full Swing: Town Works to Finalize Fiscal Year Plan**

Budget season is underway in Seekonk, with the Finance Director and Town Administrator working closely with department heads to finalize the town's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This year's process has proven to be especially challenging, as municipalities across the state are grappling with the ongoing issue of revenue streams not keeping pace with rising expenditures. As we navigate these financial hurdles, the town remains committed to creating a balanced and sustainable budget that meets the needs of the community.



## RING, RING... IT'S SANDRA SMITH!

If you've called the Town Administrator's office, you've probably already heard that warm, inviting voice on the other end of the phone. That voice belongs to Sandra Smith, our Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen. She joined our team on July 10th, stepping into the role after Kristen L'Heureux was elected Town Clerk.

Sandra is the first person you'll speak to when you call or visit the office, and right from the start, it's clear she has a remarkable ability to connect with people. Whether it's answering a constituent's inquiry, solving a problem, or offering assistance, Sandra's personality truly shines through every interaction. She's always ready to go the extra mile to help, and it's this genuine willingness to lend a hand that makes her an invaluable member of our team.



### Employee Spotlight

#### **SANDRA SMITH** Administrative Assistant

**What's your favorite local spot in Seekonk? The pond at the Old Grist Mill. The pond is beautiful at every time of the year.**

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be? The power of teleportation. Being able to disappear from one location, and reappear wherever I need to be, would mean that I could practically be everywhere at once.**

**If you could swap jobs with anyone for a day, who would it be and why? I would want to be a Zookeeper in Australia. I love animals! Working at a facility in Australia, would give me the highest probability that a koala bear would choose to hug me.**

Beyond being the friendly face (or voice) you encounter, Sandra's role also involves providing administrative and technical support to the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, and Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director. She handles a wide variety of tasks, using her independent judgment to ensure that everything complies with laws, regulations, and town policies, all while maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive matters.

So, next time you're in Town Hall, come by and say hi to Sandra! Her friendly demeanor and helpful nature make her a true asset to our community.

## Seekonk Police Swear In New Academy Graduates and Promote Officer to Sergeant

The Seekonk Police Department is proud to announce the swearing-in of its newest academy graduates and the promotion of a dedicated officer to the rank of sergeant.

Officers Christian Ortiz, Nicholas Viveiros, Emilson Abotsi, William Dillingham, and Theodore Santos were officially sworn in, joining the force with enthusiasm and a commitment to serve the Seekonk community.

Additionally, Officer Christopher Platt-Hanoian, who has served with the department since September 21, 2015, has been promoted to the rank of sergeant. This well-deserved promotion reflects his dedication, leadership, and commitment to public safety.

Congratulations to all the new officers and Sergeant Platt-Hanoian on these significant milestones. We thank you for your continued service and dedication to keeping Seekonk safe!



## ✓ WINTER'S FRONTLINE: A HEARTFELT THANKS TO SEEKONK'S DPW CREW

With winter storms bringing snow and ice to our streets, Seekonk's Department of Public Works (DPW) has been hard at work ensuring the safety of our community. Their dedication to keeping roads clear and passable—often working long hours in freezing temperatures—is a vital part of keeping Seekonk safe.

From plowing roads and sanding icy intersections to responding quickly to changing conditions, the DPW team has gone above and beyond to make sure we can travel safely, even in the worst of weather.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Seekonk DPW for their tireless efforts. Your hard work and dedication don't go unnoticed, and we appreciate all that you do to keep our town moving through every storm. Thank you for keeping Seekonk safe this winter!



### Grant Funding FIRE DEPT.

Fire Department proudly announces the acquisition of five (5) new sets of PFAS-free turnout gear, marking a significant step forward in protecting the health and safety of its firefighters.

The turnout gear was funded through the Fire Department's award of the [FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant](#) in the amount of \$17,668.00.

**Read more on our website  
under Latest News**



## TOWN MEETING: YOUR VOICE, YOUR COMMUNITY

Town Meeting is often celebrated as the purest form of democratic governing, and it plays a vital role right here in Seekonk. It's a time-honored tradition that empowers residents to make their voices heard and directly influence local decisions that shape our community.

Seekonk holds two Town Meetings annually: the Annual Spring Town Meeting, typically held on the second Monday in May, and the Fall Town Meeting, usually held on the second Monday in November.

This year's Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for **May 12th at 7:00 p.m. at Seekonk High School**.

If you have an article or issue to bring forward, the warrant is currently open and will close on March 7th. Residents are encouraged to get involved by reviewing the warrant, attending the meeting, and participating in discussions and voting.

Your participation helps shape Seekonk's future, so mark your calendar and make your voice heard at Seekonk High School!



## ✓ **TRI-COUNTY BUILDING PROJECT MOVES FORWARD: SEEKONK VOTERS ASKED TO RECONSIDER DEBT EXCLUSION**

The aging Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, originally built in 1977, serves students from 11 Commonwealth communities, including Seekonk. After surpassing its 50-year life expectancy, voters across the district approved a \$285,992,692 project to construct a new 280,000-square-foot facility, and construction is already underway.

The new building, expected to open in the summer of 2027, will house 16 vocational programs with a capacity of 1,000 students. Designed for energy efficiency and sustainability, the facility will feature net-zero energy, solar arrays, and modern layouts. Shared core spaces like a multi-story Student Commons, cafeteria, and large courtyard are being built to enhance the learning environment, while the school's dynamic design will meet 21st-century educational needs.

Seekonk's share of the project is based on its enrollment numbers, making the town responsible for 8.8% of the cost. This translates to an anticipated \$1 million annual debt assessment for the next 30 years. Without dedicated funding, this assessment would place a significant strain on the town's operational budget, limiting the ability to fund vital services for both the town and its school district.



Although Seekonk voters rejected the debt exclusion for this project in April 2024, the town is still legally obligated to pay its portion of the assessment. To alleviate this financial burden and ensure essential services remain intact, the Board of Selectmen will ask voters to reconsider the debt exclusion in an upcoming vote.

Approving the debt exclusion would allow Seekonk to fund its share of the project without compromising the town's operational budget. As this issue directly impacts the town's finances and services, residents are encouraged to stay informed and participate in the upcoming vote. For any questions, please contact the Town Administrator's Office or the Finance Director.



## THE LIBRARY'S NEXT CHAPTER: FEASIBILITY STUDY PRESENTATION AHEAD

At the Spring Town Meeting on May 8, 2023, Seekonk residents demonstrated their dedication to the future of our public library by approving \$100,000 for a comprehensive feasibility study of the existing library building. This investment highlights our collective commitment to ensuring the library remains a safe, functional, and welcoming space for all residents.

The Library Board of Trustees will present the completed study to the Board of Selectmen on **March 12th at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall**. The presentation will include a discussion on potential next steps, including whether a warrant article for the upcoming Spring Town Meeting is necessary and supported.

We encourage all residents to stay informed and engaged as we work together to build a stronger future for our community's library.



## MEDEIROS FARM TAKES SHAPE: COMMUNITY VISION DRIVES FINAL STAGES OF MASTER PLAN



The Medeiros Farm Committee is nearing a major milestone in its efforts to transform the 40.12-acre property into a vibrant recreational, historical and educational hub. The town has retained CHA, Brewster Thornton, and Landscape Elements to craft a comprehensive recreational master plan, blending passive and active recreational features with historical preservation of the farm's existing buildings for future community use and learning.

To ensure the community's voice is at the forefront, the committee has held two public hearings and conducted a community survey to gather ideas and opinions. Now in the final stages, the committee is narrowing down conceptual designs to one unified vision.

With plans to present the final design at Town Meeting this May, the committee will seek funding to begin the first phase of development. Stay tuned as the vision for Medeiros Farm moves closer to reality!



## BEHIND THE BALLOT: BOARD OF REGISTRARS KEEPING ELECTIONS FAIR AND TRANSPARENT

In Massachusetts, the Board of Registrars plays a vital role in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections. This board oversees voter registration, verifies voter eligibility, and manages critical election processes to protect the integrity of each vote. In many towns, the Board of Registrars also reviews nomination papers, handles changes to voter records, and ensures compliance with state election laws.

One of the board's most essential functions is maintaining an accurate and up-to-date voter list. This responsibility ensures that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate while preventing errors that could impact election outcomes. The registrars also play a key role in hearing and resolving challenges to voter eligibility, ensuring all disputes are handled fairly and in accordance with the law.



### Board Spotlight

## BOARD OF REGISTRARS

**Members:** 3

**Term:** 3 year terms

**Vacancies:** 3

**Stipend:** \$1,000

Per MGL, members of the board shall represent the two leading political parties.

Board cannot consist of more than two members, including the town clerk, of the same political party.

The Board of Registrars' work happens behind the scenes, but their dedication is critical to preserving trust in our democratic process. Without their diligent efforts, the seamless voting experience we often take for granted would not be possible.

If you're passionate about civic engagement and want to contribute to the electoral process, consider joining the Board of Registrars. To express your interest, fill out a **Talent Bank Form** available online. Your involvement could help keep elections fair and accessible for all!

## CALL for VOLUNTEERS

 **Help Shape the Future –  
Volunteer for a Board or  
Committee**

**Volunteer Opportunities** - volunteers are needed for the following boards and committees:

**Board of Registrars, Capital Improvement, Commission on Disability, Cultural Council, Energy Committee, Finance Committee, Historical Commission, Parks & Recreation, Recycling Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals.**

[Click here to fill out your Talent Bank Form!](#)



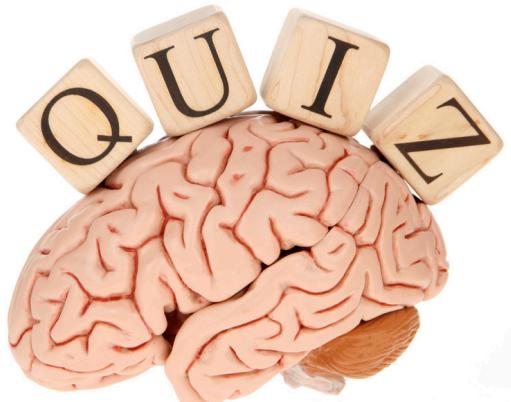


## THINK YOU KNOW SEEKONK? PROVE IT!

WHAT YEAR WAS THE TOWN'S OLDEST BUILDING CONSTRUCTED?

Think you know the answer? Find out if you're right in next month's newsletter!

**Think you can stump Seekonk?** We're looking for fun and challenging trivia questions to feature in our monthly newsletter! Send your best Seekonk-themed questions and answers to Sandra Smith at [SaSmith@seekonk-ma.gov](mailto:SaSmith@seekonk-ma.gov) and see if you can leave the town guessing!



Seekonk's

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 1 - March 15th**  
18th Annual Boston Bruins PJ DRIVE
- **March 15th 9am - 12pm**  
Annual Rabies Clinic
- **March 29th 9am - 12pm**  
Household Hazardous Waste Day (Registration Required)

[Read More on our website](#)



### STAY CONNECTED



Town of Seekonk



[www.seekonk-ma.gov](http://www.seekonk-ma.gov)



@townofseekonk7712



townofseekonk



Town of Seekonk, Massachusetts

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