

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

# SEEKONK



April is here, and with it comes the promise of brighter days and blooming flowers! Did you know that April was named after the Latin word aperire, meaning "to open," symbolizing the opening of flowers and new beginnings?

With Earth Day on the 22nd, April also encourages us to reflect on how we can better care for our planet. Whether it's planting a tree, reducing waste, or simply appreciating nature, it's a great month to get involved and make a positive impact.

This new facility is necessary to replace the existing building, which was constructed in 1977 and no longer meets modern technical education standards or current accessibility requirements.

Seekonk is one of 11 sending communities in the Tri-County school district, with 83 students currently enrolled. Based on this enrollment, Seekonk is responsible for **8.8%** of the project's debt, amounting to approximately **\$28.8 million** over the duration of the bond repayment.

[Click here](#) to see the estimated debt payment schedule.



## Tri-County Building Project Moves Forward: Seekonk Voters Asked to Reconsider Debt Exclusion

As part of our ongoing efforts to keep the community informed ahead of the **Annual Town Election on April 7**, the Town of Seekonk is providing the following details regarding a **Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion question** on the ballot. This measure pertains to the Town's share of the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District's \$183 million bond issuance.

On October 24, 2023, voters in the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District approved a \$286 million project to construct a new high school, with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) reimbursing approximately 36% of the total project costs.





## HEADING INTO FISCAL YEAR 2026: NAVIGATING THE BUDGET CHALLENGES AHEAD

As we approach the May Town Meeting, the final stages of preparing the Fiscal Year 2026 budget are underway. Over the past six months, I've been working closely with department heads and key committees—including the Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee—to finalize the town's financial plans. This process began with the October 9th Quad Board meeting, where we officially kicked off the budget season, and has been a collaborative effort to ensure that all departments have the resources they need to operate effectively.

This year's budget, however, has posed significant challenges. We are facing considerable gaps, driven by sharp increases in fixed costs such as debt service, health insurance, and other essential services. At the same time, our revenue projections have not kept pace with these rising costs. Balancing these competing demands has made crafting this budget more stressful than ever. As a result, we are faced with the reality that both the School Department and Town operations will need to make sacrifices to keep the budget balanced.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT



**Shawn Cadime**  
Town Administrator

As we move toward the final discussions, we'll be holding public budget meetings where you will hear more about the difficult choices we've had to make. It is essential that these cuts are made in a fair and transparent manner, ensuring that efficiencies are found and services are streamlined without sacrificing the quality of what we offer. Our goal is to continue providing the essential services you rely on while keeping the town financially sustainable for years to come.

Beyond the operational budget, we are also dealing with significant capital projects that will impact our future financial outlook. These projects are necessary for maintaining and improving our town's infrastructure, but they come at a cost. I've worked to identify and prioritize these capital needs, dating back to 2021, so we can focus on the most pressing projects. Recently, at the Select Board's March 12th meeting, discussions have centered around key projects, including the DPW Building, South End Fire Station, Library

Renovations, and the Hurley Middle School MSBA feasibility study. Each of these projects will have long-term implications for our debt service, and careful prioritization is crucial.

As we continue to navigate the challenges of this year's budget process, it's clear that we need to balance the town's long-term infrastructure needs with the immediate demands of operating the town's departments. This balancing act requires making difficult decisions now to ensure we can meet the needs of future generations. While these decisions may be tough, they represent an opportunity to make thoughtful, strategic choices that will help us build a stronger, more sustainable community.





## THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE INFO TECH LEGEND: JEREMY “CHIEF OF IT” THIBOUTOT

If you've spent any time in Town Hall recently, you've probably spotted Jeremy Thiboutot, our one-man IT department, zipping from office to office – and building to building – solving tech issues with his signature smile. Or perhaps you've caught a glimpse of him emerging from his dimly lit office—don't worry, the lights are on, just kept low to conserve energy. Maybe you've even seen him exiting the server room, where he works his magic keeping the town's critical systems running.

Since joining us in July 2024, Jeremy has taken on the monumental task of managing all of Town's IT needs. Whether it's troubleshooting daily tech hiccups, ensuring cybersecurity measures are in place, or working closely with our contracted data network vendor, Jeremy does it all—and does it well.



### Employee Spotlight

#### JEREMY THIBOUTOT

##### IT Specialist

**What's your favorite local spot in Seekonk? My desk where I always look busy but am secretly googling all the IT problems people are asking me about.**

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Teleportation so I can instantly disappear when some one asks me how to fix a fax machine.**

**If you could swap jobs with anyone for a day, who would it be and why? Any supermarket owner so I can charge people \$28 for guacamole.**

His dedication and quick problem-solving have made him a fan favorite in Town offices, earning him the well-deserved title of **“Chief of IT.”** While he may not be well-versed in the ancient technology of **fax machines**, rest assured, if it involves IT, Jeremy has it covered!

So, next time you see Jeremy—whether he's stepping out of his office or emerging from the depths of the server room—be sure to yell out “Hi, Chief!” He'll answer with his signature big smile, ready to tackle whatever tech challenge comes next.

## Get Ready to Vote: Seekonk's Annual Town Election on April 7th

Mark your calendars for **April 7th**, Seekonk's Annual Town Election is just around the corner! The ballot will feature a variety of important races, including candidates for **School Committee, Board of Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen, Water Commissioner, Planning Board, and Board of Assessors.**

In addition to the candidate races, there will be a binding ballot question concerning the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School **debt exclusion.** This vote will have a direct impact on funding for the school, so your participation is crucial.

Your vote matters in shaping the future of our community. Make sure you're informed about the candidates and the ballot question, and don't forget to head to the polls on April 7th!

#### Early Voting - Town Hall

Monday, March 31: 8:30AM-4:30PM

Tuesday, April 1: 8:30AM-4:30PM

Wednesday, April 2: 8:30AM-7:00PM

Thursday, April 3: 8:30AM-4:30PM

Friday, April 4: 8:30AM-12:00PM





## SOUND THE SIRENS: FIRE DEPARTMENT EXPANDS WITH NEW RECRUITS

The Seekonk Fire Department is excited to announce the latest group of recruits who have been sworn in, bringing the department closer to its goal of a fully staffed force with 45 full-time equivalents (FTEs). The new firefighters—**David McGovern, Samuel Dejong-Ewing, Jonathan McNamara, Joshua Helton, Alex Bak, and Brandon Botelho**—have successfully completed rigorous training and are now ready to serve our community.

These recruits have undergone comprehensive training at the fire academy, equipping them with the necessary skills to respond effectively to fires, medical emergencies, and other critical situations. Their addition is vital to enhancing the department's ability to respond quickly and efficiently, ultimately ensuring the safety and well-being of Seekonk residents.

As the fire department continues to grow, so too does its capacity to provide exceptional service. Each of these new firefighters brings a strong commitment to public safety, a dedication to teamwork, and a passion for serving our community. Their contributions will help ensure that Seekonk remains prepared to handle emergencies and provide timely, high-quality services.



### DO YOU HAVE UNCLAIMED PROPERTY?

The Unclaimed Property division of the State Treasurer's Office receives abandoned property from banks and other holding companies after they've been unable to reach the owners for 3 years.

Then the Unclaimed Property division provides searching tools to citizens so they can find and claim the property and prove it is rightfully theirs. See if you have unclaimed property!

<https://www.findmassmoney.gov>



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: TOWN MEETING IS ALMOST HERE!

As we approach **May 12th**, it's time to get ready for Seekonk's Annual Town Meeting, a cornerstone of our local democracy and a chance for you to make a real impact on our community's future. Town Meeting is your opportunity to bring forward ideas, vote on important matters, and engage directly in decisions that will shape our town for years to come.

This year's meeting will be held at **Seekonk High School at 7:00 p.m.**, and it's an event you won't want to miss.

Attending Town Meeting is not just about voting, it's about joining the conversation. It's about having your voice heard alongside your neighbors, debating the issues that matter most, and helping steer Seekonk toward a bright future.

Mark your calendar for May 12th, review the warrant, and get involved. Let's come together to make Seekonk an even better place to live, work, and grow.





## HARVEST THE RAIN, COMPOST THE WASTE: EARTH DAY STARTS IN YOUR BACKYARD!

Earth Day is upon us, and it's time to take a moment, look around, and ask ourselves—what are we doing to give back to this incredible planet we call home? The truth is, every little action we take to care for the environment adds up. So, why not celebrate Earth Day this year with some simple, effective tools to reduce waste and conserve resources? We're talking about rain barrels and compost bins—because yes, saving the Earth can be a lot easier (and more rewarding) than you might think.

### Rain Barrels: A Smart Solution to Stormwater and Droughts:

Let's start with the rain barrel. We've all seen those big puddles that form after a heavy rainstorm, right? The kind that cause flash flooding and turn streets into rivers. But imagine if that rainwater didn't just pour away, but instead, got captured and put to good use. That's exactly what a rain barrel allows you to do. By diverting water from your roof, you can reduce the strain on public water supplies, especially during times of drought. And on top of that, you're saving yourself a few bucks by watering your garden with free, rain-caught water.



### Saturday, April 5th SEEKONK LITTER PATROL

Saturday April 5 8AM - 4PM

The Seekonk Litter Patrol has been cleaning up our roads year after year, and this year we hope to make it bigger and better than ever!

Register your group here: [Litter Patrol Signup](#)

Rain Date: April 12th

In a world where we often feel powerless against the forces of nature, a rain barrel is a small, empowering way to do our part. Plus, it's a pretty satisfying feeling to know that the rainwater that once caused chaos is now nurturing your flowers or veggies.

[www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community](http://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community)

### Composting: Turning Waste Into Gold (Or At Least Rich Soil)

Next up, the compost bin—one of the best (and most satisfying) tools you can have in your eco-friendly arsenal. How many times a day do we throw food scraps away? Apple cores, coffee grounds, eggshells—off to the trash they go, destined for a landfill. But what if we told you those scraps could be transformed into nutrient-rich soil that makes your garden thrive? That's what a compost bin does.

Turning waste into compost is like giving back to the Earth in a big way. And it doesn't take much effort. A little daily effort to toss your kitchen scraps into a compost bin can make a huge difference in reducing landfill waste. Plus, the reward is rich, dark, fertile soil that's perfect for growing your own flowers, herbs, or veggies. It's a win-win.

[Click here](#) learn more about free compost bins and scrap buckets.





## SEEKONK'S AA+ BOND RATING: PROOF THAT STRONG STABLE LEADERSHIP PAYS OFF

Let's talk about what *really* makes a town financially strong. It's not just luck, and it's certainly not just about collecting taxes. It's about **smart management, strategic planning, and leadership that knows how to balance growth with fiscal responsibility**. And once again, S&P Global Ratings has recognized Seekonk's leadership, reaffirming our impressive **AA+ bond rating** in March.

Now, if you're not someone who follows municipal bond ratings closely (and let's be honest, most people don't), here's why this matters: The better a town's credit rating, the lower the interest rates it pays when borrowing money for things like road repairs, public safety improvements, or new infrastructure. Simply put, **a strong bond rating means Seekonk can invest in its future while saving taxpayers money**.

### What S&P's Rating Really Says About Seekonk

S&P Global Ratings isn't just handing out AA+ scores for fun. This is a rigorous process where financial experts dissect everything from our town's budgeting discipline to our long-term economic outlook. Their findings? Seekonk has:

- ✓ **A solid economy** - Our local income levels outpace both Bristol County and the U.S. average—a key indicator of a strong, resilient community.
- ✓ **Healthy reserves** - Unlike many towns struggling to stay afloat, Seekonk maintains healthy financial reserves, giving us stability in uncertain times.
- ✓ **Smart Investments** - Our debt and liability levels are manageable, meaning we're balancing growth without overextending.
- ✓ **Strong financial management & leadership** - Year after year, Seekonk's decision-makers prove they know how to plan for the future while keeping today's finances in check.



In a world where many municipalities struggle with rising costs and financial instability, **Seekonk is a town that gets it right**.

### Leadership Matters – And It Shows

Strong financial leadership doesn't happen by accident. It takes vision, planning, and a commitment to **making decisions that serve both today's residents and future generations**. An AA+ rating isn't just a number—it's proof that Seekonk's leadership team is doing its job exceptionally well.

At the end of the day, this rating isn't just about bond investors or interest rates. It's about **fiscal responsibility, financial stability, and making sure Seekonk is well-positioned for the future**. And thanks to strong financial management and leadership, that's exactly where we are.





## RETHINKING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE PUSH FOR CHARTER REFORM

As the Select Board explores the potential formation of a charter commission, the conversation is more timely than ever. Over the past few years, municipalities across Massachusetts have reexamined their governance structures, seeking ways to address new challenges, improve efficiency, and respond to growing demands for transparency. Between 2018 and 2020, nearly 50 communities revised their charters, signaling a shift in local government dynamics. But with 351 cities and towns across the Commonwealth, a "one-size-fits-all" solution simply doesn't exist.

Municipal governance in Massachusetts is diverse, with each community choosing a structure that best serves its needs. The three primary forms are the Selectmen-Town Meeting, Mayor-Council, and Council-Manager models—each balancing executive power, legislative authority, and citizen involvement in different ways.

**The Selectmen-Town Meeting** model has been the foundation of governance in smaller towns, offering direct democracy where residents vote on key legislative issues. However, as towns grow and face more complex challenges, the model becomes inefficient—particularly when frequent town meetings are no longer practical. It's no surprise that many municipalities are questioning its continued effectiveness.

**The Mayor-Council** model, now increasingly adopted by larger cities, clearly separates executive and legislative powers. The elected mayor manages day-to-day operations, while the city council legislates. This model streamlines decision-making but can lead to friction between the mayor and council, particularly when political divisions arise.

**The Council-Manager** system, gaining popularity in several municipalities, places governance in the hands of an elected council while hiring a professional city manager to oversee daily



operations. This structure offers efficiency and expertise, with the added benefit of minimizing political influence in day-to-day management. However, it can also create a disconnect between the public and the government, as the city manager is appointed rather than elected.

With nearly 50 municipalities revising their charters in just two years, local governance is clearly under scrutiny. The question is no longer whether change is needed but how to adapt governance to meet modern demands. Whether through stronger leadership or more professional management, municipalities are looking for ways to be more responsive, accountable, and efficient. As the debate on charter reform continues, one thing is clear: governance must evolve to meet the needs of today's communities.





## A SEAT AT THE TABLE: TOWN LEADERS ENGAGE IN LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST TALKS

Town leaders recently had the opportunity to attend the legislative breakfast in Fall River, hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). This event brought together municipal leaders, state legislators, and MMA staff to discuss critical issues affecting towns like ours. With the FY26 state budget on the horizon and key legislation in play, this is a pivotal moment for municipal governance. Our town must be ready to navigate these changes effectively.

The event provided valuable insights into upcoming legislative bills, including FY26 state budget revenues, state aid, funding, and potential grant opportunities. It also created an informal setting for networking with local leaders and legislators, fostering important discussions about the future of municipalities across the Commonwealth.

One of the highlights was the Governor's Municipal Empowerment Act, which proposes expanding local revenue options—such as increasing meals and hotel taxes or applying a surcharge on motor vehicle excise bills. These measures aim to provide municipalities like ours with greater financial



stability as rising costs continue to outpace revenue growth. The Act also includes provisions to streamline procurement, enforce double-pole violations, and simplify school borrowing processes, all designed to reduce administrative burdens and improve operational efficiency.

Beyond financial reforms, another key legislative update was the Municipal and Public Safety Building Authority, modeled after the MSBA. This new authority will assist municipalities in constructing and improving public safety and municipal buildings—critical support as we look toward future capital projects. Additionally, the proposal to make remote public meetings permanent will enhance

accessibility, transparency, and public engagement, which has proven invaluable in recent years.

Workforce shortages also remain a pressing issue. The Act provides tools to help municipalities recruit and retain essential employees, a challenge that has increasingly impacted service delivery and operational efficiency in towns like ours.

As we continue preparing for the FY26 budget discussions, these legislative updates give us a clearer picture of the financial tools and operational improvements we could have at our disposal. Staying engaged with state legislators and advocating for our town's needs is key to ensuring we can continue providing essential services while navigating tight budgets.

I encourage everyone to stay informed as we approach Town Meeting in May. These updates are just a glimpse into the opportunities and challenges ahead as we work toward a sustainable future for our community.

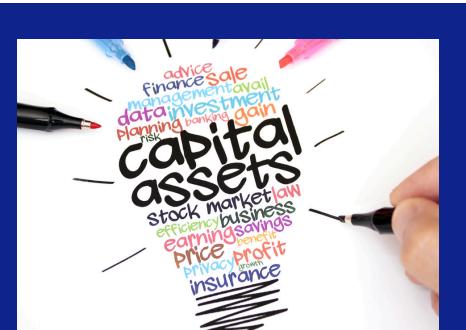




## FROM VISION TO REALITY: HOW THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE SHAPES SEEKONK

The Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) is an advisory committee that plays a key role in planning for Seekonk's long-term capital needs. Tasked with reviewing and prioritizing capital projects, the committee makes recommendations to the Town Administrator and Select Board on how to invest in facilities, equipment, and major improvements while keeping the town's finances stable.

By evaluating capital needs and available funding sources, the CIC helps ensure that Seekonk can maintain essential services without overburdening taxpayers. The committee focuses on balancing debt service, stabilizing tax rates, and maximizing grants and state aid to make the most of every dollar. Their recommendations help guide responsible, forward-thinking decisions that benefit residents today and in the future.



### Board Spotlight

#### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

**Members:** 7

**Term:** 3 year terms

**Vacancies:** 5

The CIC's primary function is to evaluate proposed capital projects (like building new infrastructure or renovating existing facilities) and make recommendations to the Town Administrator and Select Board.

We're looking for dedicated volunteers to join the committee and contribute their insight. Whether you have experience in finance, construction, public policy, or just a strong interest in helping Seekonk grow, your voice matters. This is a great opportunity to get involved in local government and make a meaningful impact.

If you want to help shape Seekonk's future, consider joining the Capital Improvement Committee!

## 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 HISTORICAL SEEKONK LANDMARK WAS ONCE A STAGECOACH STOP FOR TRAVELERS HEADING TO BOSTON?

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

**March's Answer:**

**Which major U.S. event delayed the official incorporation of Seekonk in the early 19th century?**

The War of 1812 delayed the official incorporation of Seekonk. The town's incorporation process was put on hold due to the disruptions caused by the war, and it was eventually incorporated in 1812, after hostilities had begun.

**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!

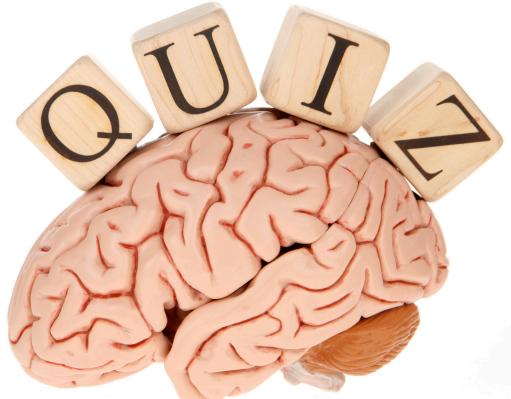


Seekonk's

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **April 7th - Town Election**  
Seekonk High School
- **April 21st - Patriot's Day**  
Town Buildings Closed
- **May 12th - 7pm**  
Spring Town Meeting
- **May 24th - 10AM**  
Memorial Day Parade

**Read More on our website**



## STAY CONNECTED



Town of Seekonk



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



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townofseekonk



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