Spring/Summer 2023 Edition

ONWARD OXFORD

THE PRIMARY SOURCE FOR EVERYTHING OF OXFORD

MESSAGE FROM MANAGER

Jennifer M. Callahan, Town Manager

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone that attended the Annual Town Meeting and came out to show support for all the Town-sponsored items presented. We cannot do this without the support of the residents and we are extremely grateful for your commitment to positively shaping the future of Oxford.

This newsletter is packed with coverage of past and future events, upcoming projects, and happenings in Town that you do not want to miss! Further, we have departmental updates, tips, and initiatives that are all a reflection of why Oxford is a wonderful place to live, work, and visit!

End of COVID-19 Emergency: Governor Healey announced the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency has ended on May 11, 2023 to align with the end of the federal public health emergency. The pandemic will enter into history books as a worldwide tragic loss of life and a complex multi-year emergency management issue for states across the nation to address.

New Online Permitting: We are officially live with our new online permitting software for our Building Department and Board of Health Offices. We have contracted with OpenGov to provide a modern and seamless solution for residents and businesses for online permitting and licensing. The site may be accessed at oxfordma.viewpointcloud.com and is also accessible through our website. We are hopeful this new technology driven process will provide an improved user experience for all!

OCC Full Day Summer Programming: I am extremely pleased to announce the Oxford Community Center will be offering 7 weeks of Full Day Programming beginning June 26th through August 18th at the Carbuncle Beach this summer. Some of this year's program themes include "Holidays in the Heat" and "Picnic-Palooza" plus daily activities, swimming, splash pad, sports, games, and more! Please register online at oxfordma.myrec.com or contact OCC at (508) 987-6002 for more information. Registration is now open.

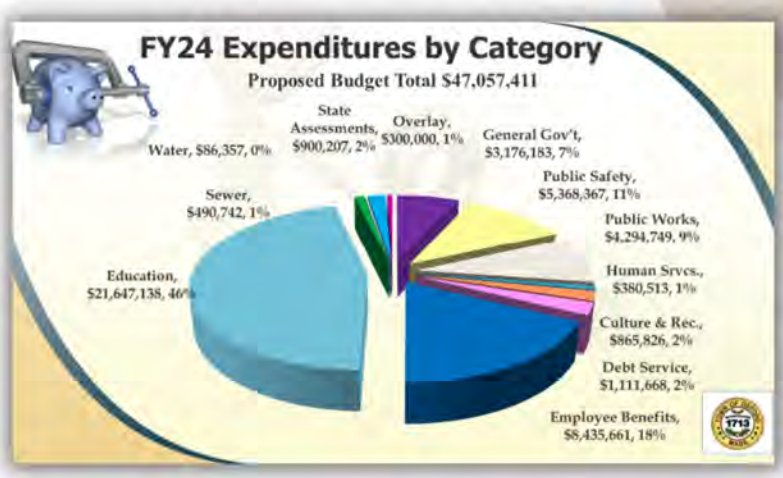
These are just a few of the many announcements and projects we have with many more to read about in this edition. As always, enjoy the read and Onward Oxford!

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WRAP-UP

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, May 24th. Over 200 registered voters attended. The meeting was lengthy, lasting over 5 hours. Oxford residents successfully passed the majority of Town-sponsored articles presented, along with one amendment to increase the FY24 School Department operational budget by $170K. In addition to two citizen petitioned articles, there was a variety of articles presented including the Fiscal Year 2024 Operational and Capital Budgets as well as an article to more expeditiously rescind Civil Service which passed last year.

The meeting began with reports from the Historical Commission, Commission on Disability, the Finance Committee, and the Oxford Community Center. The FY24 Operational Budget had lively debate as some elected officials sought to reduce municipal services by cutting approximately $500K from various municipal budgets, while appropriating an additional $170K to the School Department

In reference to the prioritization of education funding, Town Manager Jennifer Callahan noted, "We are fortunate to be in a position where we can continue to support our schools financially without an operational override or debt exclusion measure. I attribute this to conservative budgeting and adhering to financial best practices, coupled with some increased revenues. Building capacity and flexibility within our operational budgets requires extensive financial review, committee recommendations and ultimately approval from Town residents." She stated further that "A town's budget reflects its values as a community. Oxford continues to value its education system which is evident in the approval for an additional approximately $170K at Town Meeting."



Voters overwhelmingly supported the Finance Committee's recommendation to maintain a balanced budget, while simultaneously accepting the amended increase to education. This resulted in an approved Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget of $47,102,101 representing a net increase of $44,690 over the originally proposed balanced budget total.

Article ten sought to appropriate $2,565,490 for a number of important capital needs. The FY24 Capital Programs included $930K for the Department of Public Works for general roadway, dam, bridge, culvert improvements and engineering. The item that garnered the most attention was the request to utilize free cash in the amount of $500K to fund handicap improvements at the Town Hall. After significant debate regarding the handicap ramp, the total capital program funding overwhelmingly passed with no further discussion. Other FY24 Capital projects included a $500K appropriation to the Building Improvement Fund for various municipal buildings, fleet repairs/replacements, Ruel Field improvements, cemetery/grounds equipment, and the replacement of an ambulance.

Following the financial articles, the land donation of 8 Sutton Avenue was passed unanimously and voters formalized the acceptance of the property. In 2021, the Oxford Business Association (OBA) acquired the formerly blighted property to build a "Gateway Park." The OBA performed extensive site work including grading, landscaping, and the installation of benches, a walking path, and pavilion. The result is a fantastic new park area where residents can picnic, relax, and visit. A formal dedication is being planned for the near future.

The Annual Town Meeting concluded by defeating two articles submitted by Citizen Petition to amend the Town Charter. The first article sought to disqualify individuals from running for elective office if 1) they have active litigation against the Town or employees, and 2) they are delinquent with Town taxes or other fees. The other petition article sought to publicly post municipal invoices on the Town website within five days of payment authorization.

However, the article was overwhelmingly voted down due to concerns over releasing sensitive information, potential cybersecurity risks, and increasing potential exposure to fraud and identity theft. The Town Manager noted the administration will be pursuing a safer and more user-friendly software system similar to "open checkbook" concept to make such data more readily available to the public.

"I would like to thank the staff, boards, commissions, and committees for all their hard work over the past 10 months. More importantly, I would like to thank all of the voters that came out to support the great work that these folks have been doing to shape the Town of Oxford," stated Callahan. "Residents are able to make the best decisions for the Town and we are experiencing extremely positive results."

"CHECK THE SEAL TO SEE IF ITS REAL!"

Michelle Jenkins, Town Clerk

The Town of Oxford has recently experienced an increase in unauthorized use of its' town seal. The town seal has illicitly been used on everything from stationery and petitions to YouTube videos. Further, the unauthorized material(s) assert that the content is issued, sponsored, or endorsed by the Town of Oxford, when in fact, it is not.

The Town Clerk has the official custody and authority of the town seal to be used on legal documents such as birth or marriage certificates or any other official town business. Consequently, an article was sponsored and passed at the most recent Annual Town Meeting to prohibit unauthorized use of the town seal.

Unauthorized Use on YouTube

SERVICE BEFORE SELF

Kevin LeBreton, Police Detective

Little did anyone know that an internship starting on December 17, 1982, would turn into a decades-long career. About whom are we speaking? Well, none other than our current Chief of Police, Anthony M. Saad. Chief Saad has announced he will retire on June 30, 2023, and if you have not already met him, then you have missed out on knowing one of the greats. His forty year devotion to the community is rarely seen today. From the start, "service before self" was his core belief and this belief has only increased over the years.

So how did a young man completing a college internship turn into a Chief of Police? After making such a strong impression during his internship, Tony was offered a dispatcher position on September 1, 1983. Soon after, he began his police career as a part-time, permanent, intermittent police officer and was later promoted to full-time police officer on March 31, 1986. And because working as a police officer was not enough for this ambitious young man, he also served as an official in the Weights & Measures of Vehicles office, and became the department's first D.A.R.E. officer, working in schools with students of all ages. In addition, he was a detective assigned to the D.E.L.T.A. drug task force, which focused on drug sales and manufacturing.

For most officers this would have been the extent of their career, but not so for Officer Saad. On January 31, 2003, he was promoted to Sergeant, where he was able to put all his skills and knowledge from his previous positions to use, helping to mentor the newest officers coming into the department. Sergeant Saad could often be found at roll call (a meeting at the beginning of the shift) going over the latest case law decisions or helping officers with their investigations. He began training classes bi-weekly with the officers on his shifts to focus on recent calls and to see if the situations could have been handled differently. Sergeant Saad soon gained immense respect from his fellow officers as a leader who led "from the front." He would not ask anyone to do something he wouldn't do, or had not done himself previously.

On May 11, 2014, Sergeant Saad was promoted to Lieutenant. The position of Lieutenant had gone unfilled for many years and had last been held by then retired Lieutenant Ronald Gagner. It was a momentous day for not only Lieutenant Saad but for the Oxford Police Department as a whole. This position was sorely needed and what better person to fill it than Lieutenant Saad? He soon began working on getting officers the best possible training to better serve the community.

As Lieutenant, he was respected by everyone with whom he interacted - fellow officers, members of the public, town leaders, and even people he arrested. Tony's selfless character and appreciation for human dignity ensured he treated everyone with the same respect, no matter who they were.

Very few officers obtain the rank of Lieutenant, and retiring as a Lieutenant would have been seen as a highly successful career. However, on June 20, 2017, Lieutenant Saad was promoted to Chief of Police to replace outgoing Chief Michael Hassett. Chief Saad accomplished what very few people have - his career spanned all the way from an unpaid internship to Chief, and it's even possible that he is the only person to have this distinction within our Commonwealth. As Chief, Tony focused on obtaining necessary training and equipment for the department, but his ultimate emphasis was on service to the community, and he was able to bring our department's service to its highest levels.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Chief Saad wrote grants and sought funding at town meetings for tasers, in-cruiser video recording equipment, drones, K9 Officer, School Resource Officers, and new cruisers outfitted with the latest equipment to allow officers to provide the best service possible. But that was only the beginning. He also implemented updated Policies and Procedures and Codes of Conduct to benefit the citizens of Oxford. He was able to obtain funding for video surveillance cameras at the community center, Ruel Field, and many other parts of the town, and these video systems have been instrumental in solving many crimes. He steered the ship during the COVID pandemic and did everything within his ability to keep his officers safe during that time, while not reducing the service to the town.

Some of his best accomplishments are ones very few citizens are even aware of. He sent officers to extensive training on evidence room techniques, and as a result, the evidence room of the Oxford Police Department is among the finest in the area. Other departments have reached out to us to learn how our evidence room is set up and maintained. With the evolution of technology, Tony has been at the forefront in making sure the department benefits from new solutions.

Recently he led an effort to put our Computer Aided Dispatch System into the cloud, something even the software company did not think could be accomplished.

But if you ask Chief Saad what he thinks was his greatest accomplishment, he will say it was the removal of Oxford from the Civil Service program. It is not a secret; Chief Saad has felt Civil Service is outdated and does not always result in the best candidates for police officer. The old civil service program did not allow for a quick fill of a vacant spot. Often, it would take a year or longer to call for a candidate list and get through the archaic hiring processes. In the future, outside of the Civil Service System, Oxford will be able to find the very best candidates and hire them in short order. This will enable the Department to be staffed in a more expedient manner and provide for more seamless transitions for better service to its citizens.

Chief Saad's career has lasted over forty years and he still enjoys coming to work, serving his community, and leading his officers. While he has much less hair than he did forty years ago, he would not change a thing. It has been an honor for those of us who have worked with him and for him, and he will certainly be missed.

More Retirement Announcements !!!

In addition to Chief Saad, both Lieutenant William Marcelonis and Detective Kevin LeBreton have announced their retirements from the Oxford Police Department. These officers have served Oxford for a combined total of over 57 years! We thank them both for their commitment and service to the town and residents of Oxford. We shall miss these fine officers and everything they bring to the Oxford Police Department. We wish them the best for long and happy retirements!

OXFORD ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Debra Lamarche, Commission on Disability Chair

The Commission on Disability formed in 2020 with a commitment to ensure that the Town of Oxford's facilities are safe and accessible to everyone. The Commission currently has six members who actively advocate for those with disabilities, promote education and raise awareness, and serve this town to help make it accessible for all residents to enjoy. The Commission has worked closely with Town Manager, Jen Callahan, who has also made accessibility a priority.

Since forming our Commission, we have been able to secure over $227,000 in grant funding with the help of the Town Manager. This funding assists us in making long overdue but necessary changes to better assist handicapped residents. The most recognized changes have been in and around Joslin Park where a wheelchair ramp has been installed on the Town Gazebo and handicap parking is now available. We are also working on a new walkway, safety lighting, and a handicap accessible bathroom for the park. Additionally, we are working on a new ADA Transition Plan to prioritize the accessibility needs for our Town infrastructure and buildings.

I would like to thank the residents at the Annual Town Meeting for approving a new ADA accessible ramp and entrance to Town Hall. The current ramp is not ADA compliant and is not suitable for those with disabilities or who may be physically challenged. The handrails are not appropriate for those in wheelchairs and the surface is extremely unsafe and unlevel. For some individuals, the uneven surfaces could even send someone flying out of their wheelchair as the ramp's landing has a bump that stops wheelchairs abruptly. Lastly, the slope is too great for someone in a wheelchair to maneuver by themselves. The ramp was originally installed in 1980 and did not meet compliance then and certainly does not meet it now. Finally, the Architectural Access Board could charge the Town up to $1,000 per day going back over four decades to the original date of installation which could result in a very large fine.

Lastly, I would like to thank Representatives Paul Frost and Joseph McKenna for recently securing $50,000 in the State Budget to help fund the new ADA ramp at Town Hall! Every effort should be made to make Oxford accessible for all.

SAVING THINGS THAT MATTER

Laurent MacDonald, Chief of Fire & EMS

The Oxford Fire and Emergency Services has been busy fighting fires, both locally and in surrounding communities. The department recently responded mutual aid to Auburn, Douglas, and Berlin for brush fires. In addition to these incidents, the department has responded to a rash of electrical fires, three residential, one commercial, and one school fire. Deputy Chief Kenneth Sellers, Chief Officer-in-charge of our Community Risk Reduction program reminds residents of the dangers of electrical fires.

Electrical Fires were the leading cause of fire deaths From 2014-2018, Massachusetts fire departments reported 2,760 home fires caused by electrical problems. These fires caused 38 civilian deaths, 93 civilian injuries, 352 fire service injuries and an estimated dollar loss of $197 million. The average loss per fire was $71,477. Electrical fires were the #1 or #2 cause of fire deaths from 2014 to 2018. Regrettably, Oxford suffered one fatal casualty and three severe injuries from an electrical fire in 2022, and one serious injury resulting in hospitalization in 2023.

Some potential warning signs and hazardous conditions you encounter that should prompt you to call 911 right away are: Arcs, sparks or short circuits; Sizzling or buzzing sounds; Odors, vague smell of something burning. If you experience any of these conditions, please call 911. Your Fire and Emergency Services Department has thermal imaging technology to see excessive heat inside the walls and make sure there isn't a hidden fire burning. If there is one, we will be able to extinguish it before it becomes a larger fire and causes greater damage. Remember, we serve to save. **Stay safe Oxford and thank you for your support!**

GROW NATIVE FOR POLLINATORS FORUM

Alysia Turner, Junior Clerk

A Grow Native for Pollinators Campaign Forum was held on Wednesday, March 29th at the Oxford Senior Center and it was a great success! It was standing room only for our guest speaker Ellen Scheid. She discussed the significance of pollinators, what is causing their decline and how we can help by creating native plant gardens and wildflower meadows.

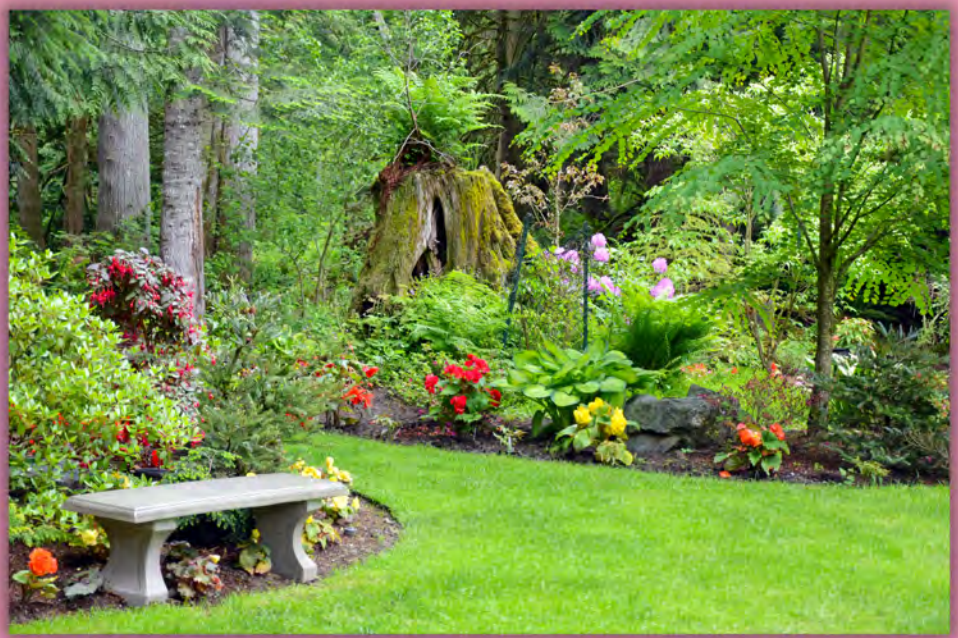
Visitors had a chance to interact with our pollinator members at various stations set up around the meeting room as they learned about the many initiatives and events that are being planned. Handouts full of information about pollinators and native plants were provided as well as ideas you can implement in your own yards to help the bees and butterflies!

The Pollinator Team has exciting events planned for this spring and summer!

Saturday, May 13th, starting at 10 am (Rain date: May 20th) : **Pollinator Garden Planting Day**. Join local Girl Scout troops and other volunteers plant a brand new pollinator garden at 450 Main St. (DPW Headquarters). Bring your gloves and shovels if you have them.

Saturday, June 3rd, 10 am - 2 pm (Rain Date June 4th) : **Celebrate Pollinators Day**. Join us for our first ever pollinator celebration festival where you can learn all about bees, butterflies and native plants. There'll be honey and plants for sale, crafts and games for the kids, vendors to visit, free flower give-aways, tour of the old schoolhouse and an exciting pollinator Art Show!!!! Click here for details.

Coming this summer: Library and Community Center Programs, The Bee Movie, Paint Night, Woodland Walk, Monarch butterfly release and more !!!



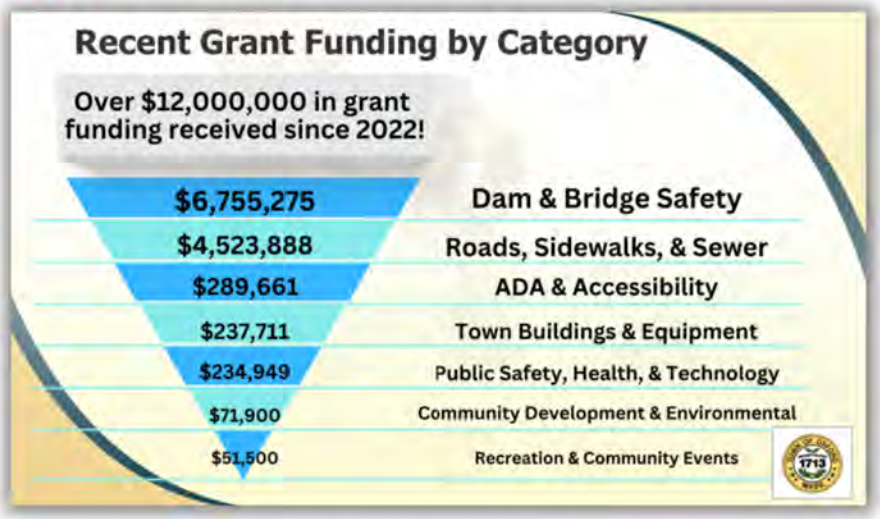
OXFORD'S 2ND ANNUAL "GREAT GARDEN" CONTEST

Nominate yourself, your neighbor, or complete stranger for the Oxford Great Garden Contest. Help us recognize the garden and landscaping talent across the town! Visit www.oxfordma.us for a Nomination Form!

GROWING GRANT FUNDING

Jennifer M. Callahan, Town Manager

Since becoming Town Manager, pursuing alternative funding for important projects, technical assistance and planning initiatives has been an administrative priority. Over the past year, we have been particularly successful in securing grant awards totaling in excess of $12M! These grant funding awards are not only for major infrastructure projects, but also for significant public safety, accessibility and and technology needs. These grants awards are from competitive programs and require the Town to develop solid proposals that establish merit and successfully articulate the details to state and federal entities.



By obtaining this level of grant funding., management has been able to address important capital planning needs without a major borrowing or debt exclusion which would have an impact on the tax rate.

Recent ADA & Accessibility grant awards include:

Mass Office on Disability for Joslin Park Improvements $182,000
Community Compact Best Practices for an ADA Transition Plan $45,120
Smolenski Millette Trust for Joslin Park ADA Improvements $50,541
Mass Department of Public Health Downtown Accessibility Project $12,000

Recent major Infrastructure grants include:

Next Gen Fed MDOT Grant for the Leicester St. Bridge $2,000,000
MA Office of Dam Safety $3,700,000
FY23 Transportation Bond bill to repair dams, culverts, & bridges $1,000,000
MassDOT for Route 20 Sewer Extension $2,800,000
Complete Streets Tier III Prioritization $224,000
Winter Recovery Assistance for Road Improvements $301,888
Green Communities for Elementary School LED Light Conversion $200,000
Shared Streets & Space for Church St. Sidewalks $198,000

Recent Technical Assistance grant awards include:

MA Office of Dam Safety for McKinstry Pond $55,275
Executive Office of Municipal Road Safety $22,265
FEMA Food Defense Preparedness Response Plan $26,500
Dept. of Conservation & Recreation for an Open Space & Rec. Plan $30,000
Community One Stop for Growth for Housing Production Plan $25,000

MEDICARE SAVINGS PLAN NEWS

Laura Wilson, Director of Senior Center

Did you know that the Medicare Savings Plans can help you pay for Medicare premiums and make you eligible for savings on your prescriptions? In January 2023, Massachusetts expanded the income and asset limits for the Medicare Savings Program, so more people are now eligible for this program.

Check to see if you qualify!

Medicare Savings Plans	Gross Monthly Income Limit	Asset Limit*	Benefits
MassHealth Senior Buy-In (QMB)	$2,309 (individual) $3,123 (couple)	$18,180 (individual) $27,260 (couple)	Medicare A, B premiums, deductibles and copays, automatic full extra help w/ prescription costs
MassHealth Buy-In (SLMB,QI-1)	$2,734 (individual) $3,698 (couple)	$18,180 (individual) $27,260 (couple)	Pays Medicare B premium and automatic full extra help w/ prescription costs

2023 SUMMER PROGRAM AT CARBUNCLE PARK

7 weeks of Full-Day Fun!

Children must be entering 1st through 7th grades

Week 1 - 6/26-6/30 - Ready Set Summer
Week 2 - 7/10-7/14 - Dr Suess is on the Loose
Week 3 - 7/17-7/21 - Chaotic Creators
Week 4 - 7/24-7/28 - Holidays in the Heat
Week 5 - 7/31-8/4 - Color Wars
Week 6 - 8/7-8/11 - Mystery Mayhem
Week 7 - 8/15-8/18 - Picnic Palooza

Register online at OXFORDMA.MYREC.COM

Make sure to register early. You do not want to miss out on the Community Center's ever popular Summer Program at Carbuncle Park. Sign up today for your kids can have fun in the sun!

OCC Staff have been busy booking a full season of entertainment at the Bandstand. Mark the dates on Thursdays and Sundays from June through August.
Grab a Lawn Chair, bring a picnic and settle in at beautiful Joslin Park for some great musical acts !!

Summer Bandstand Concert Series

JUNE :
SUNDAY *3-5pm* **6/25 Far From Eden**

JULY :
SUNDAYS *3-5pm* **7/9 Dr. J Acoustic**
7/16 Blue House Between
7/23 Stephen George
7/30 American Vernacular

THURSDAY *5-7pm* **7/13 Holdin' Back Band**

AUGUST:
SUNDAYS *3-5pm* **8/6 Trak Down**
8/13 Hang 5 Band
8/20 DW & The Shakemakers
8/27 East West Trio

Generously sponsored by the **Oxford Cultural Council** and the Mass Cultural

TEDDY BEAR PICNIC JULY 22 11:30 - 1:00 JOSLIN PARK

Crafts & Games

Storytime!

Picnic Lunch

Teddy Bear Clinic!

***PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED - oxfordma.myrec.com**

MOVIES ON MAIN!

COMING SOON

7/12	PUSS IN BOOTS
7/19	LEAGUE OF SUPERPETS
7/26	THE BEE MOVIE
8/2	RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET
8/9	THE MIGHTY MACS
8/16	SCHOOL OF ROCK

Presented by the Oxford Community Center

SUMMER HAPPENINGS AT THE OXFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Brittany McDougal Bialy, Director

It's going to be a busy Summer here at the library! Here's just a glimpse of what's to come…

Be on the lookout – our **Summer Reading Program** begins June 20th and is open to all ages! Details about registering will be available on our website in June. This program runs through August 11th. We have a list of fun events planned for our Summer Reading Program, so be on the lookout!

That time of year is upon us, once again - **Art in the Yard** is coming July 2023 for its 7th year! This year's exhibit is supported by both the Oxford Cultural Council and the Mass Cultural Council. An opening date will be determined soon, so please check our website and Facebook page for updates.

Live Concert on the Library Lawn – **Johnny Cash: Songs & Stories with Matt York**, Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 6pm. Join us as we welcome back New England musician/author Matt York and see him perform the songs of Johnny Cash and tell stories about Cash's career spanning from the 1950s to his passing in 2003. The program is supported by a grant from the Oxford Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

the YMCA

YMCA Family & Community Partnership "Wiggles & Giggles"

Join Ms. Laine for a FREE 5-week music series at the Oxford Library. Children, ages 2-5 with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm and listen to stories. Siblings are welcome. Registration is required. Please note: you are registering for all 5 weeks.

Day & Time: Fridays at 10:00 – 11:00
Dates: May 19, 26 and June 2, 9, 16
Location: Oxford Public Library
Register: Registration opens May 3
visit www.theyfcp.org

Sponsored by the YMCA Family & Community Partnership (YFCP) and hosted by the Oxford Library. YFCP is a Massachusetts Coordinated Family & Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program awarded to the YMCA of Central Massachusetts and funded by the Department of Early Education & Care.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY...

Rike Sterrett, Director of Public Health Services

Avoid Mosquitos

Use EPA approved insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients:

- DEET
- Picaridin
- IR3535
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)
- Para-menthane-diol (PMD)
- 2-underanone

Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants and treat clothing and gear with 0.5% permethrin.

Take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors by using screens on windows and doors.

Stop mosquitoes form laying eggs in or near water by emptying and scrubbing water containing items.

Prevent mosquito bites when traveling overseas.
Overseas travelers should be prepared to prevent mosquito bites because mosquitos spread viruses and parasites not common or not present in the United States.

Tick Prevention

Ticks are most active during warmer months (April-September). Before you go outdoors know how to protect yourself. Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals.

Use EPA approved insect repellents and treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin.

Avoid contact with ticks by avoiding wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter and walk in the center of trails.

After you come indoors check your body for ticks:

- Under the arms
- In and around the ears
- Inside belly button
- Back of the knees
- In and around the hair
- Between the legs
- Around the waist

Check your clothing, gear, and clothes for ticks. Shower soon after being outdoors. Ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kills ticks on dry clothes.

SAVE TIME WITH CHAPTERS!

Kaylee Olson, Media Production Coordinator

OXFORD CABLE ACCESS

The Oxford Cable Access Department is thrilled to announce a new feature on our Video-on-Demand website! Upon uploading each meeting, we now have the ability to add Chapters to help you navigate a meeting recording. Each agenda item is now marked off with a timestamp for easier navigation. Rather than skimming through an entire meeting to find a specific topic, you can simply click on the agenda item and the video will fast forward to the topic discussion. At this time, this feature is only available when watching meetings on your desktop browser.

For a walkthrough on how to use this convenient feature, we have created a video tutorial to help! You can view our Meeting Chapters Tutorial on our website or scan the QR code!

2023 EARTH DAY CLEANUP!

Judy Lochner, Conservation Agent

The Oxford Department of Public Works and the Conservation Commission would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Earth Day 2023 Spring cleanup. We appreciate everyone's dedication to helping keep the Town of Oxford community clean. **This year, over 200 bags of litter were collected and properly disposed.**

Sutton Avenue facing West

We need your help to Keep Oxford Clean!

We need to know areas of Oxford where you would like see litter cleaned up. We will be organizing volunteer cleanup activities and need to know where you think our efforts will have the most impact. For example please provide areas where you see litter accumulating such as "Sutton Ave. across from Market Basket" or "Ruel Field along the fence".

Please do not provide private property or areas where volunteers cannot access. Please email ideas to keepoxfordclean@oxfordma.us.

KEEP OXFORD CLEAN

Thank you for helping Keep Oxford Clean!

BEST PRACTICES RESULT IN CLEAN AUDITS!

Katie McKenna, Director of Finance

Our Town's Fiscal 2022 Audit was recently finished by the independent firm of Roselli, Clark and Associates. The auditors concluded there were no significant findings or need for recommendations to make improvements. The Town's Financial Team continues to adhere to best practices and sound financial policies which are resulting simultaneously in positive audits and budget awards.

The objective of a year-end, external audit is obtaining an independent assurance as to whether a community's year-end financial statements are presented in accordance with provisions established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. By integrating a review of the internal controls associated with financial reporting, the audit also helps to ensure that financial checks and balances are in place to protect public assets. Consequently, regular external audits can provide a powerful tool by which a community can build taxpayer confidence in government operations.

The State's Technical Assistance Bureau (TAB) encourages communities to have independent audits performed by certified public accountants every year. Cities and towns that receive at least $750,000 annually in federal funds (even indirectly through a state agency) are required to complete annual audits that comply with the federal Single Audit Act of 1984.

Financial statement audits provide information that is especially valuable when a credit rating agency reviews and reports on a municipality's fiscal condition as it prepares to enter the bond market. A city's or town's inability to produce accurate financial reports could negatively impact a rating agency's opinion on its financial outlook and therefore affect its bond rating. A credit rate reduction could result in hundreds of thousands, and possibly millions, of dollars in additional interest payments for taxpayers over the life of a borrowing, depending on the size and structure of the debt. As important, a rate increase can create savings. The independent audit can also be a valuable management tool for assessing the fiscal performance of a community.

MORE SENIORS ELIGIBLE FOR TAX EXEMPTIONS

Alex Sendzik, Principal Assessor

The Board of Assessors is pleased to announce that starting July 1 of the coming tax year, the age qualification for Senior Tax Exemptions have been reduced from 70 to 65. Applicants must satisfy certain whole estate or asset, annual income and residency requirements.

Persons 70 or older may, alternatively, qualify for an exemption under Clause 17D which provides reduced benefits but for which the eligibility requirements are less strict.

Lowering this age requirement will help some seniors qualify for an additional $500-$750 of tax relief.

For more information please visit our Assessor's webpage and click on the "Exemption- Seniors, Disabled Veterans and Hardships" link. Please note that Personal exemptions must be filed no later than three months after the mailing of the first actual tax bill (2nd half tax bill), usually by April 1st each year. We mail out the applications to repeat applicants in October each year.

Please contact the Assessor's Office at 508-987-6030 ext. 3 if you have any questions!!!

In honor of Mental Health Awareness month, Oxford is looking to do its part to help end the stigma surrounding Mental Health. We whole-heartedly believe it is crucial for individuals and families to receive the support and treatment they deserve to help them through their toughest times.

By bringing various organizations to this event we can provide the community with local resources for an array of mental health services including but not limited to support groups, trauma-response, substance abuse and recovery, domestic violence, suicide prevention, anti-bullying, ABA, Veteran's relief and eldercare.

Mental Health Awareness Month

SUNDAY, MAY 21ST
2PM-6PM

Joslin Park - Oxford Common

- Yoga Workshop
- Drum Circle
- Flower Therapy
- Self-Esteem Workshop
- Bracelet Station
- Kindness Rocks
- Community Concert
- Poetry Reading

LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

THE FUTURE OF OXFORD OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

COMMUNITY FORUM

JUNE 28, 2023

6:00PM - 7:30PM

CARBUNCLE BEACH HOUSE

This event is organized by the Town of Oxford and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

The Town of Oxford is currently in the process of updating the Oxford Open Space and Recreation Plan

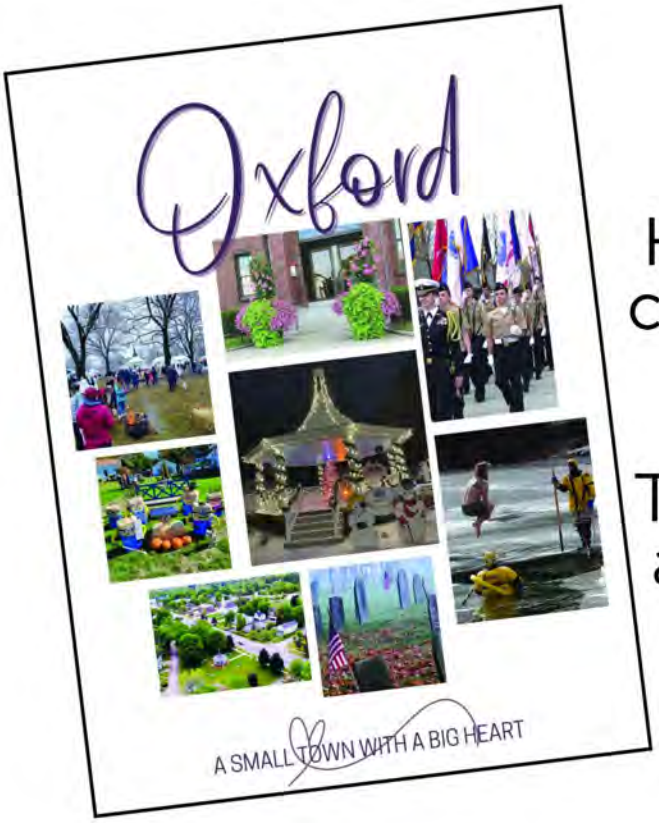
We are actively looking to hear from everyone on open space and recreation issues and opportunities

The forum will be a walk-in and -out format style stop by any station and share your thoughts!

TOWN OF OXFORD INCORPORATED 1713 MASS.

ONWARD OXFORD

OXFORD TOWN MANAGER
325 MAIN STREET
OXFORD, MA 01540



2022 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

Have you had a chance to check out the 2022 Annual Town Report?

The Town Report features a host of information and is available on the town website at **www.oxfordma.us**

Check Out our Website and Give us a Follow on Facebook