



A Citizen's Guide to Bedford

An introduction to the government, services and resources

This booklet has been prepared by the League of Women Voters of Bedford to serve as a guide to the government, services and resources of Bedford, Massachusetts.

The League would like to thank the many individuals and Town Officials who gave of their valuable time to provide text and information for this booklet.

Originally written and compiled by the 1979 Know Your Town Committee of the LWV of Bedford, Janice Hale Chairperson. It was updated in 2004, coordinated by BJ Lanoux and Sarah Dorer, edited by Maureen Warner, Janice Hale and Joan Bowen. The 2014 edition was edited by Pat Hurd and Sue Baldauf, and produced by Jean Hammond.

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Chapter 1

HISTORY

The first settlers in the Bedford area were traders who arrived in the early 17th century and established trading posts on the Shawsheen River to barter with the Indians. Soon grain and saw mills were built on the banks of the Shawsheen, the Concord, and their tributaries. The earliest settlement was called "Shawshine." Concord and Billerica were already established towns in the 17th century, and their borders included most of what is now Bedford. Early in the 18th century, settlers from the southern part of Billerica and the eastern part of Concord petitioned the two towns for permission to break away and form a new town. Although Billerica objected, Concord agreed, and, with the permission of the General Court, the Town of Bedford was incorporated on September 23, 1729. It is assumed that the name Bedford was given to the town in memory of the first minister to Concord, who came from Bedfordshire, England. In 1738, a small section of Lexington was added to Bedford, and in 1776, a small parcel on the Billerica border was acquired. These two additions formed the town's boundaries approximately as they are today.

One of the requirements of incorporation was the building of a meeting house in which to hold town meetings and church services. Bedford's first meeting house was built at the northwest corner of the Common where Elm Street and The Great Road meet. The original meeting house was partially destroyed in a storm and was replaced in 1817 by a new structure, the present First Parish of Bedford on the Common.

At the first Town Meeting, held on October 6, 1729, the original officers of the town were elected. A Moderator, five Selectmen, and a Town Clerk were elected, as well as two Constables, a Town Treasurer, two Surveyors, two Tithingmen, two Fence Viewers, two Hog Reeves, a Sealer of Weights, and two Field Drivers. Today's administration still includes many of the first-elected positions.

As a neighbor of Lexington and Concord, Bedford was deeply involved in the early events of the American Revolution. On April 19, 1775, the town sent a company of 77 militia and minutemen to the battle in Concord. Cornet Nathaniel Page, Jr., of the minutemen carried the Bedford Flag which today is the town's most prized possession. This flag, which is believed to have been the pennant for a three-county cavalry troop for nearly a century before the American Revolution, was the flag immortalized by Emerson when he wrote "By the rude bridge that arched the flood, Their flag to April's breeze unfurled..."¹

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Bedford was predominantly a quiet farming village. A few small industries such as shoemaking, the manufacture of sturdy boxes (especially hat boxes), pickle factories, and grain and lumber mills gave employment to area residents. Several taverns served travelers. A large, fashionable inn, The Bedford Springs Hotel, flourished in the late 19th century near the present Fawn Lake and attracted wealthy vacationers. The coming of the railroad in 1874 and trolley cars in 1900 fostered commuting between country and city. Bedford was becoming less isolated.

In the first half of the 20th century, two government facilities were constructed in Bedford which greatly contributed to changing the town from a peaceful, self-contained, farming and residential community to a modern suburb. First, following World War I, a federally funded and administered Veterans Hospital (currently named the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital) was erected in 1928. The personnel and patients of this facility nearly doubled the population of the town. Then, World War II brought another drastic change with the building of Bedford Air Base (now Laurence G. Hanscom Field). Again the population doubled. In 1970, Bedford became a college town with the establishment of Middlesex Community College within its borders.

Despite the changes that have occurred, Bedford has retained some of the flavor of a small rural town through the preservation of its history and the conservation of large areas of open space. The town charter, which was enacted in 1974, perpetuated much of the original town government format.

The Town Historian, Historical Society, Historic Preservation Commission, and Historic District Commission may be consulted for more information on Bedford's history.

1. Allen Gay Wilson, Walter B. Rideout, James K. Robinson, *American Poetry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 142.

Suggestions for further reading include:

Brown, Abram English. History of the Town of Bedford. 1891 Reprint. Bedford, MA: Bedford Free Public Library 1976.

Brown, Louise K. A Revolutionary Town. New Canaan, NH: Phoenix, 1975.

Brown, Louise K. Wilderness Town. Bedford, MA by the author, 1978.

Friends of the Bedford Free Public Library. The Bedford Sampler. Bicentennial Edition. Bedford, MA: 1974.

Mansur, Ina. A New England Church, 1730–1834. Freeport, ME: Bond Wheelright, 1974.

Mansur, Ina and Lawrence. A Pictorial History of Bedford, Massachusetts, 1729 to Modern Times. Barre, VT: Modern Printing Co.,1992.

SPECIAL EVENTS UNIQUE TO BEDFORD

Bedford Day: Each year on a Saturday in September, Bedford celebrates its original incorporation. The annual, festive, town-wide event includes a parade and outdoor fair.

Bedford Community Santa Claus Program: Begun in 1945, this annual Christmas Eve event involves hundreds of volunteers who deliver gifts to Bedford children.

Pole Capping: On the Saturday preceding April 19, the Bedford Minutemen reenact a colonial “act of defiance” which predates the Revolution. Joined by costumed minutemen from surrounding historical towns, Bedford Minutemen march to Wilson Park where a special liberty pole is topped with a red stocking cap.

Chapter 2

A PROFILE OF BEDFORD TODAY

Most of Bedford lies in a trough between two roughly parallel rivers, the Concord and the Shawsheen, which flow in a northerly direction draining into the Merrimack River at Lowell and North Andover. Several small brooks flow through the town, the most important of which are Elm, Vine, Beaver, and Spring. Much of Bedford's land is low and swampy with gently rolling forested hills forming a divide between the two rivers. The land is 38 feet above sea level.

Bedford is located 14 miles northwest of Boston. It is principally residential with a population of approximately 14,503. Most housing consists of single-family dwellings augmented by a limited number of apartments, duplexes, planned residential developments, condominiums, a private life-care facility, and government-sponsored housing for the elderly. Hotel and motel facilities are also available.

Bedford is home to a substantial number of small businesses, research-and-development companies, and divisions of large corporations. Most are confined to areas specifically zoned for such uses, primarily on the periphery of town boundaries.

Public transportation is available by taxi, Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority that provides direct access to a wide-ranging network of buses and subways throughout Greater Boston. The Bedford Local Transit system offers limited routings in town but provides direct service to the Burlington Mall. Logan International Airport in East Boston is the primary commercial carrier serving this area.

A wide variety of excellent shopping and dining facilities operated by local merchants or national chains are located within the Town or readily available within a five mile radius of Bedford.

Within the Town are diverse public and privately-funded recreational facilities: Springs Brook Park, Fawn Lake, swimming and tennis clubs, public garden plots, a town Recreation Commission which sponsors year-round programs, and an Adult Education program. The Town Forest and abundant conservation acreage are available for hiking and cross-country skiing. An inter-town bikeway has been constructed along the old railway bed connecting Bedford to Cambridge. There is also a boat launching ramp on the Concord River.

The Town abounds in historic sites and buildings, including the Old Burying Ground where Revolutionary War casualties and early settlers are interred. The town-owned Job Lane House has been restored as a living museum which is open to the public.

Many clubs and organizations exist in Bedford that serve the diverse interests of the townspeople. Most of these organizations and clubs promote their purposes on Bedford Day. A wide variety of religious institutions and communities are represented in the town.

Town services include water and sewer, public library, local cable TV, fire, police, ambulance service, road maintenance, and weekly curbside trash and recycling pickup.

The public educational system and facilities are very highly rated with private day-care and pre-school facilities also available. Middlesex Community College, part of the state program of regional two-year colleges, is located in Bedford and offers residents multiple educational resources.

As previously mentioned, Hanscom Field and a Veterans Administration Hospital are located in Bedford. Laurence G. Hanscom Field was carved out of land parcels from the Towns of Bedford, Concord, Lexington, and Lincoln in 1940 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a general aviation airport. After use by the military during WWII, Hanscom became a facility used jointly for general aviation and military activity. In 1974, Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) assumed ownership and operation of the entire airfield. Currently it continues to be used primarily by private individuals and businesses while also serving the reduced needs of the military.

The Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital is an extensive hospital complex situated on 276 acres of land off Springs Road just outside the center of Town. Since 1929, it has offered a wide variety of services to its patients, and reaches out to the Bedford community in many ways. It is supportive of community events and regularly uses residents as staff and volunteers.

Chapter 3

VOTING

To be eligible to vote in Bedford, one must qualify by being:

- a United States citizen
- a resident of Massachusetts
- a resident of Bedford
- at least 18 years of age by election day.

Registration in person can take place at the Town Clerk's office in the Town Hall during regular office hours or at alternative in-town locations and hours, as established by the Registrars of Voters. Persons can also register to vote at any city or town hall office in Massachusetts but must request a special "Registration by Out-Of-Town Residents" form. Once completed, registration is permanent and valid for any type of election in Bedford, but the Town Clerk should be notified of any in-town change of address to keep precinct voting records updated.

To arrange for special in-residence registrations for those temporarily or permanently disabled, such persons should forward a written request to the Bedford Board of Registrars no later than three days before the close of the registration period.

The Town uses the Accu-vote System for all elections. On election day, assistance is available from election wardens at the voting site. Usage instructions:

- Give your address and name to the check-in clerk at the proper precinct. Check the list or map outside the gym for your precinct.
- At the check-in table, you will be handed a paper ballot. You may also request a privacy sleeve for your ballot. Enter one of the voting booths in your precinct. Vote by filling in the oval to the right of the candidate's name. For write-ins, print the name and address of the candidate under the appropriate position. Fill in the oval to the right of their name.
- Give your address and name to the clerk at the checkout table. Insert your ballot into the ballot box. The machine will read the ballot.

POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

While not required to do so, voters may also enroll in a political party at registration. Such enrollment entitles the person to vote in the national or state primary election of the party of choice. Such enrollment is permanent, unless the voter notifies the Town Clerk to change or alter the party affiliation no later than 28 days before a primary election.

However, on any primary election day, unenrolled voters may still vote by declaring their party of choice prior to voting at the polls and, if desired, may request cancellation of this enrollment immediately after voting is completed.

Local town elections are nonpartisan and candidates are not identified by political party.

ABSENTEE BALLOTING

Absentee ballots may be used by those who cannot personally appear at the voting site. Applications for absentee ballots must be made to the Town Clerk no later than noon of the day prior to the election. The voter may either vote at the Town Clerk's office and return the ballot immediately or be mailed the absentee ballot, in which case it must be returned by mail on or before election day. While absentee balloting is secret, it must be completed in the presence of a witness eighteen years of age or older.

Federal service personnel need not be registered in Bedford to apply for absentee ballots, but the Bedford Town Clerk should be contacted for an explanation of any special procedures that may apply.

The Town Clerk's office should be contacted for further information or clarification on registration and voting procedures.

BOARD OF REGISTRARS

4 members, Town Clerk plus three residents, appointed, nonsalaried.

Registration of voters, maintenance of updated voting lists, certification of voter signatures on candidate nomination papers or other petitions which require such signatures, ballot recounts, administration of absentee voting regulations, and an annual town census all come within the purview of the Board of Registrars.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Town elections are held the second Saturday in March. Candidates for local office must either circulate nomination papers to get the required number of signatures of registered voters and return them by the specified deadline or become one of the "Caucus Nominees" for the desired office in order to have his/her name appear on the ballot.

While nomination papers are available from the Town Clerk's office in late December, the initial voter event is the Citizens' Caucus held early in January. The purposes of the caucus, which was revitalized in 1992 after some years of disuse are: to focus attention on the coming election; to encourage prospective candidates to declare themselves and incumbents to decide early whether they are going to run again; and to identify town positions which remain open with no candidate after the caucus. Only registered voters may attend the caucus. Nominations are made for each vacant position appearing on the ballot. The two persons receiving the highest number of votes for each vacant position and a minimum of 8% of the number voting at the caucus become the "Caucus Nominees." Caucus nominees are so designated on the ballot and do not need to circulate nomination papers.

Candidates are given the opportunity to address voters publicly at events sponsored by individuals, candidate forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters, and through the local newspaper and cable in the weeks prior to the election.

YOUR POLITICAL ADDRESS

Town Elections Voter's residence dictates voting precinct.

Currently all Bedford voters go to one location to vote.

State Representative 21st Middlesex District*

(Bedford, Burlington, 1% of Wilmington)

State Senatorial 3rd District Middlesex County*

(Bedford, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, part of Lexington, Lincoln, part of Sudbury, part of Waltham, Wayland, Weston)

U.S. Congressional 6th Congressional District*

(Amesbury, Andover, Bedford, Beverly, Billerica, Boxford, Burlington, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Groveland, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynn, Lynnfield, Marblehead, Manchester-By-the-Sea, Merrimac, Middleton, Nahant, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, North Reading, Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Rowley, Salem, Salisbury, Saugus, Swampscott, Tewksbury, Topsfield, Wakefield, Wenham, West Newbury, Wilmington)

* Periodically, district lines may be redrawn and communities added or subtracted. For current information on communities within a district, contact the Town Clerk's Office.)

VOTER'S CALENDAR

Town Election	Second Saturday in March
Annual Town Meeting	Fourth Monday in March (continues to completion of agenda)
Special Town Meeting	As called by Selectmen
State Primary	Seventh Tuesday preceding State & National Election
National Primary	First Tuesday in March in Presidential years
State & National Elections	First Tuesday after the first Monday in November

Last day to register to vote for:

Town Election	20 days before election
Annual Town Meeting	20 days before meeting
Special Town Meeting	10 days before meeting
State & National Primaries and Elections	28 days before elections

Chapter 4

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Bedford is governed by the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Special Acts of the state legislature, the Charter of the Town of Bedford, Bedford General and Zoning Bylaws, and the rules and regulations of various Town Boards and Committees. Like other New England towns, Bedford relies heavily on citizen participation in running its government. All boards, both elective and appointive, are filled by interested citizens who take these positions in a voluntary capacity.

THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF BEDFORD

Spearheaded by efforts of the League of Women Voters of Bedford, and after much study and debate, citizens of Bedford adopted a Town Charter in 1974 that, under a Home Rule Amendment to the state constitution, transferred the power to revise or amend its form of government or bylaws from the state legislature to local control. In essence, the Town Charter outlines the town's form of government and consolidates its various bylaws.

Sections of importance include: the concept that every citizen registered to vote can directly participate in issues affecting town government and operation by attendance at Town Meetings; the process of making amendments to the Charter; and the mandate to have a periodic official review of the document to insure its timeliness.

Official copies of the charter are available in the Town Clerk's office. The Charter may also be accessed at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/files> in the Town Manager section.

TOWN MEETING

Bedford was incorporated in 1729 when the General Court in Boston requested one of the leading citizens, Jonathan Bacon, to organize the town and call a town meeting. (Bacon became the first moderator of the town and was also elected as one of the first five selectmen.)

In 1729, the citizens wanted to meet, govern themselves, question the issues, and appropriate the means of paying for what they wanted. This is as true today as then.

Today, in accordance with town bylaws and the Town Charter, the Selectmen call the Annual Town Meeting to accomplish the same ends. Attendance is restricted to registered voters, but visitors are seated in a designated section.

The agenda for the meeting, called the warrant, is drawn up by the Selectmen. Articles for the warrant are submitted to the Selectmen by the town boards and departments or by citizen

petitions signed by 10 or more voters. Only those items, termed articles, included in the warrant may be considered at the meeting. For Annual Town Meeting, the deadline for warrant articles is the second Monday in January.

At least seven days prior to Annual Town Meeting (or any Special Town Meeting) the Selectmen send a copy of the warrant to each household.

Annual Town Meeting begins on the fourth Monday of March. If all the articles on the warrant are not disposed of at the first meeting, adjourned sessions are held until all articles have been considered.

Selectmen may call Special Town Meetings for the purpose of conducting business that urgently requires the townspeople's attention between Annual Town Meetings. Such meetings may also be called by a group of citizens if they present the Town Clerk with a petition signed by 200 or more registered voters. After approval of the signatures by the Board of Registrars, the Selectmen must then hold a public hearing and a Special Town Meeting.

Town Meeting procedure is determined by State statutes, the Town Charter, the General Bylaws of the Town of Bedford, *Town Meeting Time, A Handbook of Parliamentary Law*, and any rules of procedure voted by the assembly itself. The procedure is delineated in an Appendix of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Report and may also be obtained from the Town Manager's office.

In 2012 the Bedford League of Women Voters updated *A Citizens Guide to Bedford's Open Town Meeting*. Copies are available on the Town website in the Services / Resources section of the home page: <http://www.bedfordma.gov/>.

TOWN MODERATOR

Elected, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Town Moderator presides at all Town Meetings and is responsible for conducting them in an orderly and impartial manner. The Moderator judges questions of order, interprets the town bylaws governing procedure, and publicly declares the vote. Duties and procedures not provided for by state law or town bylaw are determined by *Town Meeting Time, A Handbook of Parliamentary Law*, and, occasionally, by town custom. In the absence of the Moderator, the Town Meeting elects a temporary Moderator. The Town Moderator also participates in appointments to the Finance Committee.

Chapter 5

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Essentially, the executive authority and the administration of the Town of Bedford are the responsibility of three interlocking governmental bodies—the elected Selectmen, the appointed Town Manager, and, to a limited extent, the Finance Committee—in accordance with the Laws of the Commonwealth, the Town Charter, and the Town Bylaws.

SELECTMEN

5 selectmen, elected, 3-year term, small annual stipend.

The office of Selectmen is one of the oldest forms of representative government in America, dating back to 1634 when the citizens of Cambridge decided that a delegation of authority was needed to reduce the burdensome frequency of monthly town meetings. They elected a group of “selectmen” from the community to administer town affairs between town meetings.

The Selectmen are Bedford's principal executive body and, as such, exercise general supervision over all matters affecting the interests or welfare of the town, except those concerns specifically assigned to another office, board, commission, committee or governmental body by the Town Charter or state or federal law. Certain specific separate authority is vested in the School Committee, the Board of Assessors, Planning Board, and Board of Health.

Powers and responsibilities of the Selectmen include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To approve all payments made by the town.
2. To set broad policy for and to supervise the Department of Public Works through the Town Manager.
3. To provide the town with police, fire, and civil defense protection.
4. To call Annual and Special Town Meetings and the Citizen's Caucus, and to publish the Annual Town Report.
5. To make appointments to offices specified in the Town Charter and to temporary posts and committees created for special purposes.
6. To legally commit the town relative to most contractual agreements and legal documents.

Meetings of the Selectmen are open to the public unless “executive sessions” are called.

TOWN MANAGER

Appointed by Selectmen, salaried employee.

The position of Town Manager was created by the Town Charter (1974) to relieve the Selectmen from the direct supervision of department heads and nonelected groups and to provide a full-time administrative officer to conduct daily town business.

To be considered for the post, the person must be qualified by education, training, and/or previous experience in public administration and not have served in any elected office in the town during the 12 months prior to appointment. The Town Manager serves at the pleasure of the Selectmen; however, at least four Selectmen must vote for dismissal before the Town Manager can be removed from office.

The specific responsibilities of this office are:

1. To recommend to the Selectmen, for consideration and approval, long-range goals and policies to guide the plans and programs of the several offices and departments of the town.
2. To appoint, remove (subject to approval of the Selectmen), and supervise the heads of departments for which the Selectmen are responsible and all other appointed town officers whose appointments are required to perform a necessary town function, but are not listed in the charter.
3. To prepare and administer, after approval, the wage and salary administration bylaw.
4. To keep complete records of the office and render a report.
5. To provide staff support to ongoing town committees and commissions.
6. To keep the Selectmen informed as to the financial condition and needs of the town.
7. To take an inventory of all town property.
8. To be responsible for the negotiation of all contracts within the office's jurisdiction, including collective bargaining where the Town Manager acts as the designated collective bargainer for the town. (Such contracts are subject to final approval by the Selectmen.)
9. To search for economies that may accrue to the town through joint purchasing of materials, property, or services.
10. To be responsible for the preparation of the annual departmental budgets under the authority of the Selectmen and to submit these budgets to the Selectmen for their approval. To submit a budget message to the Selectmen which addresses issues that

affect the individual budgets and gives an overview of budgetary trends and issues for town government as a whole.

11. Under supervision of the Selectmen, to prepare a warrant report and distribute it to all registered voters in the town a minimum of seven days before each Annual Town Meeting and 14 days before each Special Town Meeting.

12. To perform any other duties required by the bylaws, Town Meeting, or the Selectmen.

TOWN CLERK

Appointed, salaried employee.

Besides supervising election procedures, the Town Clerk is keeper of all town documents, such as contracts, agreements, deeds, bonds, and other original documents relating to town affairs.

The Town Clerk records vital statistics and issues marriage and other required licenses. It is the duty of the Town Clerk to record votes and take minutes of the Town Meeting, furnish Selectmen with abstracts of these minutes, and give other town officers and committees copies of any action or vote of the town that affects them.

TOWN COUNSEL

Appointed annually, fee for service.

The Town Counsel is Bedford's legal advisor, representing the town in claims by and against the town, in actions at law and suits in equity, and other legal matters. Other important duties of Town Counsel are related to titles to property in which the town may have an interest. The Town Counsel reviews and/or drafts deeds, obligations, contracts, bonds, leases, conveyances, agreements, and other legal instruments involving the Town. The Town Counsel also advises any town official, department, board, or committee in need of legal guidance concerning town matters, approves the wording of all warrant articles, and is present at Town Meeting, board, and committee meetings (as necessary) to resolve any legal matters.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

3 members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Volunteer Coordinating Committee identifies and recruits qualified candidates for appointive positions and presents the appointing authority with a list of names from which to select.

Chapter 6

FINANCING TOWN GOVERNMENT

INCOME

The principal source of local revenue is from property taxes levied on both real estate and personal property. Rates are set by the local Board of Assessors using established formulas of valuation. Other local income is received from receipts from various taxes (vehicle excise taxes, transient room taxes, etc.) and a variety of fees for licenses and permits and water/sewer assessments.

State financial aid is received for: education (Chapter 70), food programs for public schools, METCO, school transportation, loss of local taxes on state-owned property, and public libraries. Funds from the state lottery and the Highway Fund are also allocated.

Federal aid to the Town is in the form of aid to education (P.L. 874).

EXPENDITURES AND BUDGET

Town expenditures are determined by the budget adopted at the Annual Meeting and any funding required for all other articles passed at this meeting or any Special Town Meeting held before the tax rate is determined. The town budget contains the operating budgets and salaries for all town departments and boards. Of this group, the School Department expends the largest proportion of the annual budget. Other budget items include veteran's benefits and services, employee's benefits, an amount for payment of unemployment benefits, the cost of indebtedness, and the Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund is an amount of money set aside annually, which, by law, may only be transferred to other accounts for "extraordinary and unforeseen expenses."

Special articles may appear in the warrant for capital expenditures, such as purchase of equipment or construction of water and sewer lines, and other items traditionally not in the operating budget, such as land purchases.

The Town is also assessed by the state for certain charges, such as public transportation costs, Water Resource Authority costs, etc.

An additional expenditure, called the "overlay," is added to total expenditures by the Assessors before the tax rate is set. This amount compensates for any real estate tax abatements which are granted but whose total was included in the estimate of income.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

9 members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

Members of the Finance Committee are appointed by unanimous vote of the chair of the Selectmen, the chair of the Finance Committee, and the Moderator. Three members are appointed annually. No member may be a member of any other town board or hold an elective or appointive position in the town unless specifically provided for by Town Meeting action.

As the town's financial advisor, the Finance Committee has two major duties: (a) to prepare the annual Town budget showing in detail the anticipated income and expenditures of the Town; (b) to review and make recommendations on warrant articles with a financial impact.

The Finance Committee also has the power to transfer money from the Reserve Fund to meet extraordinary or unforeseen town expenses up to an amount not exceeding 5% of the current tax levy.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE COMMITTEE

6 members + 3 ex-officio, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

Members of the Capital Expenditure Committee are chosen under the following formula: the Selectmen, School Committee, and Finance Committee each designate a person from their membership to serve on the committee. The remaining six members are appointed by unanimous vote of the chair of the Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the School Committee. The chair of the Capital Expenditures Committee is chosen by the members.

The purpose of this committee is to prepare and annually update a six-year plan for expenditures for town capital projects, to review and comment upon all studies concerning capital expenditure requirements, and to review and comment upon all warrant articles for capital expenditures. The six-year plan includes expenditures: for new construction; for major improvements to existing town property; and for major purchases of equipment for town departments, offices, boards, commissions, and committees.

The Capital Expenditures Committee works with the Public Works and Facilities departments in defining the scope of projects, designer selection and management, design document reviews, project bidding, construction contract management, project management and project budget management.

FISCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE

11 members, appointed, nonsalaried.

Due to the fiscal constraints imposed by the state-mandated Proposition 2½, passed in 1980, the Selectmen created an Ad Hoc Fiscal Planning and Coordinating Committee to “review and advise the Selectmen on the Town's fiscal condition and to forecast and identify the steps necessary to provide municipal services while preserving a sound fiscal condition.” Members, appointed by the Selectmen, include two Selectmen, two Finance Committee members, two School Committee members, and one Capital Expenditure member. Also included in an ex-officio capacity are the Town Manager, Finance Officer, Superintendent of Schools, and School Department Business Manager. In addition, representatives of all Town boards, committees, and departments may attend meetings.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

9 Members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

Bedford was the first community in Massachusetts to pass the Community Preservation Act under MGL Chapter 44 B § 5. Through a surcharge on property taxes (3%) plus matching state funds, the Town funds projects having to do with open space, affordable housing and historic preservation. Town Meeting determines the amount of surcharge and votes on allocation of funds.

Members of the Community Preservation Committee are appointed by the Selectmen. The appointees must include one member each from the Conservation Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Board, Selectmen, Housing Partnership and Housing Authority.

The purpose of this committee is to prepare and present to Town Meeting the Annual Community Preservation budget. State law requires that at least 10% of the available funds must be spent on each of the allowable project areas (open space, affordable housing and historic preservation) with the balance to be allocated to allowable projects per the determination of the CPA and by vote of Town Meeting.

FINANCE DIRECTOR/TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR

Appointed, salaried.

The Town Finance Director/Treasurer/Tax Collector is responsible for effectively managing all town financial functions, including overseeing the town's accounting, treasuries, and collections. The Finance Director assists in town budget preparation and automation and also monitors and forecasts revenues and expenses. In addition, the Finance Director assists all town boards, committees, and departments in all financial matters. The Finance Director also has responsibility

for the Central Supply department, ordering and distributing office supplies for all non-school departments.

In addition, all town bills and payrolls approved by the Selectmen must be paid. The Finance Director is also responsible for billing and collecting all real and personal property taxes, excise taxes, and betterment assessments and is custodian of all trust fund revenues. The Town Finance Director is also in charge of investing all funds, negotiating short- and long-term borrowing, and processing tax titles and foreclosures.

TOWN ACCOUNTANT

Appointed, salaried

The Town Accountant keeps a complete record of all the town's financial transactions, showing appropriations approved at Town Meetings, receipts from all sources, expenditures, and details of all debts incurred by the town. A statement of the town's financial condition is included in the annual report.

An important function of the Town Accountant is to examine all bills and payroll vouchers submitted to the town for payment and to present those verified for the Selectmen's approval.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

3 members, elected, 3-year term, salaried.

The Board of Assessors is charged with the responsibility of assessing all property within the town and computing the general tax rate. Work of the Board of Assessors is governed primarily by Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Board is obligated to annually assess all real and personal property within the town at its full and fair value as of January 1, for the purpose of *ad valorem* taxation.

To assess property, the Board hires an Associate Assessor to oversee the necessary fieldwork and related projects. Assessments are regulated by state law that currently requires all property to be assessed at 100% valuation based on the current fair market value (the price a willing seller would accept from a willing buyer, etc.). Land and buildings are valued separately, but only the total value appears on the tax bill. Assessments are required to be revised and updated at reasonable intervals. Property is not revalued when sold. Assessment records contain both aerial and still photographs of properties, as well as a narrative description based on a personal inspection to the property. The Code Enforcement Department sends to the Board a copy of each building permit issued. In this manner, a continuing record of new construction is maintained and updated.

Anyone who feels that his/her property is overvalued may file for an abatement with the Board of Assessors. If not satisfied with the decision, the owner may appeal to the state Appellate Tax Board. Every tax bill outlines the process and deadlines for filing applications for abatements and for partial or complete exemptions. Exemptions are granted to the following who qualify: disabled veterans, widows, widowers, the blind, the needy, and those 70 years old and older. For persons over 65, a deferral is available.

The assessors begin work on the tax rate following each Annual Town Meeting and upon receiving state lists which estimate what monies will be received from the state and what payments will be due to cover state services.

To determine the levy limit for the town's property tax rates for a given fiscal year, the assessors take the total tax revenue raised in the preceding fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) plus 2.5%. The preceding year's tax value of new and expanded properties in the town is then added to this number. This number is the total amount of property tax that may, by state law, be raised in the town for any given fiscal year. The assessors then recommend residential, commercial, and industrial classification rates to the selectman. The resulting percentages are used by the assessors to develop tax rates on each class of property in order to raise the amount of money necessary to meet the budget. The recommended limits cannot be in excess of the established legal limit. The residential rate, multiplied by each \$1000 valuation placed on the property, determines the owner's tax bill for the year.

The excise tax on motor vehicles is set by the state.

Chapter 7

TOWN PLANNING

PLANNING BOARD

5 members, elected, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Planning Board plays an important role in the development of the town. The duties of the Board include review of proposed residential developments (subdivisions, planned residential and cluster developments) and commercial developments. It recommends zoning bylaw changes for consideration at Annual Town Meeting.

All requests for the subdivision of residential land into building lots are brought before the board for approval. State law stipulates the procedures that prospective subdivision contractors must follow as well as specifying the areas that the Planning Board's local rules and regulations can cover. The Planning Board accepts or rejects any proposed subdivision based on whether it complies with these various rules and regulations. These cover such items as the proposed contour and width of streets, curbs, sidewalks, storm drains, water, sewer lines, and roadside tree plantings. Once the subdivision is approved, the contractor is required to post a bond to insure the proper completion of all street and utility work.

For commercial developments the Board conducts site-plan reviews and recommends approval or disapproval to the Code Enforcement Department. The Board is charged with considering present and future impacts on the town in relation to proposed developments. Issues such as traffic, drinking water, sewer, drainage, and visual and noise pollution are all considered.

The Board employs a full-time planning director, a full-time assistant planner and an administrative assistant. Board meetings are open to the public. Public hearings are held by the board on certain proposals. Notices of public hearings appear in local newspapers and are posted in Town Hall.

THE MASTER PLAN

The Board is responsible for maintaining a Master Plan to indicate the most desirable future growth patterns for the town. This plan is not binding but merely a guide and is periodically updated by the board. The plan suggests areas for open space, various types of housing, business, and industry and also presents recommendations for planning and development policies and programs.

A copy of the Bedford Comprehensive Plan 2013 is available at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/planning> and at <https://www.facebook.com/BedfordMAPlan>.

The Planning Board also conducts specialized studies such as those related to town traffic flow.

ZONING BYLAWS

Land and building uses in residential, business, and industrial sections in Bedford are controlled by the zoning bylaws of the town. Bylaws are updated by Town Meeting as the needs of the town change.

The Planning Board may at any time make recommendations for specific changes, additions, or revisions to the zoning bylaws by inserting articles in the Town Meeting warrant. Residents of the town, as petitioners, may also initiate changes by following established procedures for placing an article in the warrant. The Board is required to hold a public hearing on all zoning articles prior to Town Meeting or on the town website.

The location of the zoning districts is shown on a zoning map that may be obtained at the Town Hall. Copies of the zoning bylaws are also available at Town Hall.

Land use in Bedford is also regulated by the General Bylaws of the Town of Bedford, the sign bylaw, state building codes, state environmental codes, sewage disposal system regulations, Historic District regulations, Conservation Commission regulations, and the state Wetlands Protection Act.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Code Enforcement Department's primary function is the enforcement of the Massachusetts State Building Code 780CMR, the Architectural Access Board Regulations 521CMR, the Massachusetts Electrical, Plumbing and Gas Codes and any other applicable rules, regulations and laws related to building construction and safety. Also under the jurisdiction of the Code Enforcement Department are the Town of Bedford Zoning Bylaws, the Sign Bylaw, the General Bylaw, the Conservation/Wetland Bylaw, Weights and Measures, administrative support for the Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and Historic Preservation Commission. Code Enforcement staff includes a director, local building inspector, electrical inspector, plumbing/gas inspector, conservation administrator and three support staff.

Building permits are issued through this office to construct, reconstruct, alter, repair, change occupancy, to demolish or move residential and commercial buildings and structures within the Town of Bedford. The department also issues permits for swimming pools, fences, accessory

sheds, and temporary structures such as tents, solid fuel burning stoves and signs. These permits are issued only when plans, specifications, and intended use conform to the State Building Code and the applicable zoning and/or conservation/wetland bylaws. The office also accepts, reviews and schedules hearings for the Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission and Historic Preservation Commission.

One of the other main functions of the department is the enforcement of the Town's zoning bylaws. These bylaws are used to control, among other things, density, parking, height and location of buildings and structures, uses of buildings and structures, requirements for buildable lots, signs, earth removal and overlay districts. Another responsibility of the zoning officer is to make sure the proper uses are maintained in the proper zoning district. If a new business comes into the Town or a homeowner wants to start a home-occupation business, they would first consult with the Code Enforcement Department so that the zoning officer can determine if the use is allowed within that zoning district. Violations of the zoning bylaws are subject to fines until corrected. Aggrieved persons may appeal decisions of the code enforcement officer to the Zoning Board of Appeals or to the appropriate state board.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

5 members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried; 3 associates, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Zoning Board of Appeals is a quasi-judicial board that acts on behalf of the Town of Bedford. The Board hears:

- Petitions for appeals to either affirm or reverse the actions of those acting as the zoning enforcement officer.
- Petitions for variances from established law or Special Permits that are required under the Town of Bedford Zoning Bylaw.
- Petitions for special permits required under the Town of Bedford Sign Bylaw.
- Petitions for Ch.40B developments

The Board publishes notices of public hearings in the local newspaper and notifies abutters and interested parties. After the public hearing, the Board would vote to either grant or deny the petition. Appeal of decisions made by the Board may be filed in Superior Court within 20 days after the decision has been filed with the Town Clerk.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

7 members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The primary function of the Conservation Commission is the protection of the Town's wetland resource areas through the administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (Chapter 131, section 40) and the Town of Bedford Wetland Protection Bylaw. Under the provisions of these laws and their regulations, the commission reviews applications for projects near wetlands and flood plains, establishes conditions that govern construction, and monitors work in progress. The Commission has the power to issue enforcement orders for any violations of either the state act or the town bylaw and may take offenders to court if necessary to ensure compliance.

In addition, the commission protects and maintains the conservation lands of the Town, makes recommendations to the town for acquisition of desirable conservation properties, and publishes a map of conservation areas. The Commission organizes occasional walks, cleanup, and trail creation projects on these lands. It encourages the use and protection of open space. Within this land stewardship function, the commission advocates for preservation and wise use of Bedford's natural resources. Conservation areas comprise over 500 acres of land scattered throughout the town.

The Commission is assisted in its work by the Conservation Administrator, a full-time employee of the Town.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

5 members and 2 alternates, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Historic District Commission was established in 1964 by Town Meeting vote and State Legislature approval to preserve and protect buildings and sites within the Historic District. A description and map of the District's boundaries are available from the Town Clerk's office. Structures within the District are recorded in the National Register of Historic Places. In general, the District encompasses much of the old center of Bedford.

If the exterior characteristic of a structure or site within the District is to be altered in any way (ordinary maintenance excepted), application must be made to the commission. A public hearing must then be held and a determination of appropriateness must be made prior to the start of any alteration.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

7 members, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Historic Preservation Commission's mission is to preserve, promote and develop Bedford's historical assets. The duties of the commission include categorizing structures and sites of historic value within the town and maintaining an inventory of historic assets. The commission recommends to the Selectmen actions to preserve and protect such assets and/or to gain State or Federal Historic Landmark certification or registration.

The Commission is also charged with coordination of the efforts of public or private local groups involved in historic preservation. It may publish and distribute materials concerning town history or historic preservation.

The Commission may accept or acquire real or personal property of historical significance in the name of the Town and may manage same. In 1973, the commission assumed responsibility for the restoration, preservation, and maintenance of the Job Lane House at 295 North Road as an example of an early rural New England farm.

BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY

5 members, 5-year term, nonsalaried.

Of the Bedford Housing Authority's five members, four are elected, and one is appointed by the state. The Board of Commissioners of the Authority is the policy-making body of the agency and is legally responsible for the overall operation of the Authority. The day-to-day activities are administered by an Executive Director who is hired by the Board and salaried.

The Housing Authority provides, administers, and maintains low-income public housing. The Authority administers, maintains and manages 80 units of Chapter 667 Elderly/Handicapped housing at Ashby Place and 12 units of Chapter 200 Veterans/Family housing on Elm Street. The Authority oversees a property on Railroad Avenue, which is run by the Department of Mental Health. In addition, the Authority also subsidizes 19 units for low-income voucher holders at Bedford Village and administers a contract for 6 rental assistance vouchers within the community.

BEDFORD HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

9 members, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Bedford Housing Partnership shall consist of nine voting members. Seven shall be appointed by the Selectmen for staggered three-year terms from those within the community that affect or are affected by housing practices such as tenants' associations, real estate concerns, banks, apartment managers, attorneys, veterans, civil rights and other special interest organizations, and local

residents. One member shall be designated by the Bedford Housing Authority and one member shall be designated by the Planning Board.

The purpose of the Partnership is to implement fair and affordable housing programs and encourage the growth and maintenance of the supply of affordable housing within the Town of Bedford.

Responsibilities of The Housing Partnership include:

- Develop criteria for eligibility and assist in the determination of eligible applicants for affordable housing.
- Investigate methods of land acquisition and affordable housing development.
- Investigate sources of funding for land acquisition and affordable housing development.
- Review all affordable housing proposals and make recommendations.
- Recommend policy position statements, bylaw changes, and changes or additions to the Town's Fair housing Program and Plan to the Selectmen, Planning Board and Housing Authority.
- Identify problem areas and potential barriers to implementing the Town's fair housing goals, and recommend solutions.
- Assist in the dissemination of fair housing and affordable housing literature.
- Work to increase public awareness of the Town's responsibility to take affirmative action with respect to meeting the region's diverse housing needs, especially the needs of minorities, handicapped and female heads-of-households.

MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

7 members, 2-year term, nonsalaried

The Municipal Affordable Housing Trust consists of two Selectmen, the Town Manager, two members of the Housing Partnership and two at large members.

The purpose of the Trust shall work towards the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Bedford for the benefit of low and moderate income householders under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 44, Section 55C.

Chapter 8

TOWN SERVICES

BEDFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Bedford first established a fire department in 1828, when the Annual Town Meeting voted funds to organize the Bedford Fire Establishment and to equip it with a fire engine (pumper), 20 pairs of fire buckets, hose, fire hook and rope, and an engine house.¹

Today the mission of the Bedford Fire Department is to improve the quality of life within the town by providing a high quality emergency fire/rescue service, an excellent fire prevention program, including public education and fire investigation, and a firefighting/rescue force capable of handling any type of emergency. To accomplish this mission, the department maintains a high standard of training and education, maintains fire department facilities and apparatus, and interacts professionally with other town departments and the citizens of Bedford.

The Bedford Fire Department is currently staffed by twenty firefighters, four shift lieutenants, one captain assigned to operations and training and one captain assigned to fire prevention, and two auxiliary on call firefighters under the direction of the chief. The permanent members are civil service certified. The department requires advanced training in all areas of firefighting. All members of the department are EMT/defibrillator certified. The department is equipped with two engine companies, ladder/quint truck, rescue/squad truck, two BLS ambulances, forestry vehicle, two command vehicles and chief's car.

A system of fire and medical mutual aid is established with area communities and hospitals which bring additional engines, ladders, ambulances, and advanced life support paramedics in time of need.

Members of the Fire Department regularly inspect all of the town's multi-family residential buildings, commercial buildings and schools for compliance with fire codes and hazardous material storage and handling codes.

The Fire Prevention Division regulates permits for a variety of items including fire alarm and fire sprinkler installations, flammable material storage, oil burner installations, underground tank storage, blasting, and outdoor burning etc.

¹ Louise K. Brown, Wilderness Town (Bedford, Mass.: by the author, 1968), p. 159.

BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Bedford Police Department is an organization consisting of Lieutenants, Sergeants, Patrol Officers, Emergency Communications Officers, Animal Control Officer, Administrative Staff and Traffic Supervisors. The police department falls under the supervision of the Chief of Police, who is appointed by the Town Manager with concurrence of the Selectmen.

The Bedford Police Department's facilities and vehicles are equipped with the most current communication, computers and law enforcement equipment. The Communication Center receives all 911 emergency calls as well as non-emergency requests for assistance for all public safety needs for police, fire or emergency medical needs.

The department is organized into an Investigative Division, Patrol Division, Communication Division and Administrative. The Bedford Police Department provides a School Resource Officer and a TRIAD Officer assigned as liaison to the Council on Aging. These officers, as well as the Safety Officer, lecture and support the school system and the seniors of the community. The Bedford Police Department prosecutes all crimes and charges through the Concord District Court and/or the Middlesex County Superior Court in Woburn as well as the Middlesex Juvenile Court in Framingham.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works is charged with maintaining and improving the physical plant of the Town of Bedford. The work of the department includes the following:

The Grounds Division maintains 130 acres of playgrounds, parks and athletic fields, which are utilized by the School Department, the Recreation Department and various other Town-sponsored programs. The Division maintains all public trees along the Town's roadway and publicly owned areas. Another primary function of the division is to maintain the operations at the Shawsheen Cemetery and the Old Burial Ground by performing interments, and maintaining twenty-one acres of landscaping within the Shawsheen Cemetery.

The Highway Division is responsible for the maintenance and improvements to the Town's infrastructure of eighty miles of roads and thirty-one miles of sidewalks and bikeways. Other important functions include snow and ice removal, pavement management, storm water and drainage management and traffic signal maintenance.

The Water Division maintains and operates the Town's water distribution and treatment system, which includes three town wells, four water storage tanks, eight hundred fire hydrants, and

approximately 4500 meters. Other primary functions of the Water Division include ensuring water quality by routine testing and performing emergency repairs to the distribution system.

The Sewer Division maintains the sewerage system that encompasses thirty pump stations and 85 miles of collection infrastructure. The division provides routine maintenance to ensure a free-flowing system and responds to emergencies to correct clogged or surcharged sewers.

The Engineering Division is responsible for developing, upgrading and maintaining the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS). The division provides valuable engineering assistance to all Town departments and other divisions within the DPW. The planning, design and construction oversight on Chapter 90 projects such as the reconstruction of Hartwell Road and Brooksbie Road are important Engineering Division efforts.

The Mechanical Division makes certain that all Public Works vehicles and equipment, police cars, administration cars, animal van, and Bedford Local Transit (BLT) are operational at all times.

In addition, Capital Project Management functions include defining the scope of a project, designer selection and management, design document reviews, project bidding, construction contract management, project management and project budget management.

Other areas of responsibility are refuse collection and disposal; recycling; street lighting; subdivision inspection; water and sewer billing; sale of cemetery lots; and reports to the state concerning water, sewers, and highways.

The Department is headed by a Director who is appointed by the Town Manager.

Refuse Collection And Recycling

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, the Department of Public Works administers the contract for curbside weekly refuse and recyclable collection.

Bedford's landfill has been closed for many years except for composting activities. The Town is a member of the Northeast Solid Waste Committee (NESWC), and refuse is trucked to the regional incinerator in North Andover. This incinerator produces electricity as a by-product of combustion.

Rules and regulations on refuse collection and recycling are always changing due to changes in state laws. Announcements of changes are made through the newspaper and are mailed to residents on a routine basis.

Information on collection days and recyclable guidelines are available by calling the DPW or through the Town's website www.bedfordma.gov.

FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

The Facilities Department is responsible for maintaining a safe, comfortable and functional environment in all town buildings in a cost-effective customer oriented manner that helps the town fulfill its mission of service to its residents and to protect the town's capital investment in its facilities. Created in 1997 and formalized by Town Meeting in 2003, the department reports jointly to the School Committee and the Selectmen.

The Facilities Department is organized into four functional areas:

- *Administration* functions include all accounting and clerical support duties related to the management of the operating budget and capital projects, work request processing, energy consumption and environmental and regulatory compliance.
- *Maintenance* functions include routine and emergency repairs and scheduled preventive services for all building systems, weekend building checks, on call services and programming of HVAC controls.
- *Custodial Services* include the daily and periodic cleaning of buildings, integrated pest management, non-hazardous waste disposal, recycling, general safety, and coordination of custodial coverage for building use.
- *Capital Project Management* functions include defining the scope of a project, designer selection and management, design document reviews, project bidding, construction contract management, project management and project budget management.

As of 2012, the Facilities Department is responsible for 17 town buildings (194,127 sq. ft.) and four school buildings (510,907 sq. ft.). The projects completed during past years are:

- Installed security upgrades at the Davis and Lane Schools and Fire Station
- Space modifications at Lane, John Glenn and High School
- Interior painting at all Town and School Buildings
- Modification to the ambulance entrance at the Fire Station
- Re-roofed the Town Hall, Public Library, Job Lane House and Lane School
- Converted the fuel source at the Lane School from oil to gas
- Exterior painting at the Town Center and Depot Station
- Completion of several energy efficiency projects, such as installation of a new condensing boiler at the John Glenn Middle School; and variable frequency drives at John Glenn and Lane Schools.

BOARD OF HEALTH

5 members, elected, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

It is the mission of the Board of Health to promote public health and to prevent disease, to respond in the event of disease outbreak or environmental threat, to perform statutory and regulatory obligations (issue licenses, permits, approvals), and to provide services to residents in matters relating to public health. The Board operates under the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to enforce the state sanitary code. It may also make other rules and regulations as appropriate.

The Board of Health employs the following staff: a Health Director, a Health Agent/Inspector, an Administrative Assistant, a Community Nurse and 4 full time and 1 part time School Nurses.

Public Health Nursing services are available to all residents. These services include prenatal care for expectant mothers and assistance with new babies and pre-school children. Health guidance is given for disease prevention. Disease control is achieved through high blood pressure testing, immunization, tuberculin testing, and epidemiological investigations. Home visits can be scheduled to assess the physical, social, and mental status of “at-risk” residents. Community nursing services are intended to coordinate, support, and augment primary health care provider (private physician) services.

Licenses, permits, and/or approvals are issued for, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Animals (barn inspections, annual rabies clinic, etc.)
- Burials
- Food service establishments
- Funeral directors
- Hazardous material (Industrial) handlers
- Housing facility standards; mediate disputes, lead paint
- Manufacturers of ice cream and frozen desserts
- Motels/hotels
- Milk vendors, retail and wholesale
- Swimming pools, public and semi-public
- Recombinant DNA molecule technology
- Septic systems
- Septic system installers

- Septage, rubbish, and garbage haulers
- Subdivisions
- Tanning facilities
- Wells (private wells: irrigation water and drinking water)

Staff will investigate and respond to all complaints or inquiries received. If violations are observed, or a situation is deemed to be a health hazard, a notice to correct/abate is issued. As necessary, enforceable ORDERS TO CORRECT/ABATE are issued. Legal remedies may be sought and/or fines may be assessed.

Environmental issues represent a new and emerging public health concern for the Board of Health. Prevention of release(s) of industrial hazardous materials or hazardous wastes to the environment is one specific goal. The board is responsible for required contingency plans and personnel training requirements.

Residential hazardous waste collection is sponsored by the Board and administered by the staff. A schedule of collection days is posted on the Town's website within the Board of Health link.

The Board of Health monitors and evaluates its programming and prioritizes its efforts to meet public health needs. Efforts to educate the community about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) including HIV/AIDS will continue to receive Board of Health support.

BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Bedford Free Public Library serves the whole community as an idea center, a resource for information, lifelong learning, and creative use of leisure time to all members of the community in a period of accelerating knowledge and change. This objective is met by providing a collection of print and non-print materials, programs for adults and children, and a trained staff to assist Library users. The Library aims to be a common meeting ground for the community by offering programs, displays, meeting space and cooperative efforts with other Town groups.

The Bedford Library is a member of the Minuteman Library Network, a Library consortium of public and academic libraries that provides an electronic catalog of over 1,526,180 titles. The Library catalog and many of the electronic databases can be accessed from a home computer through the Library website <http://www.bedfordlibrary.net>.

In addition to books and magazines, collections of DVD's, music compact discs, and recorded books are available for loan to adults and children. Downloadable ebooks and audiobooks are available from the Library's website. Books and other materials not available at the Bedford Library can be readily obtained from the Minuteman Library Network and other libraries in

Massachusetts and beyond. The reference department provides print and electronic sources of information, and a professional reference librarian is available every hour the Library is open to help patrons. Patrons may also contact the reference librarians by telephone or email.

Children's services include a collection of books, periodicals, recordings, and learning games for children from birth to sixth grade. The children's librarians provide a variety of programs and serve as a resource for parents and community groups. A special collection of paperback and hardcover books is chosen specifically for young people from seventh grade through high school.

The Bedford Free Public Library had its inception in 1876 when the Annual Town Meeting voted to establish a town Library. During the early years, the Library occupied parts of various buildings in town. In 1935 funds were willed to the Town to construct a Library building. It was built on the corner of the Great Road and Mudge Way and in appreciation was named the Stearns Memorial Library. By 1968, this building had become much too small to contain the collection, and a new Library was built on Mudge Way next to the High School. A major addition was completed in 1999. The expanded Library houses a collection of 134,452 print and non-print items, a large meeting room, study rooms, and a small conference room. The Library is the repository of the historic Bedford Flag, housed on the Library's History Mezzanine.

The Library Trustees establish policies with respect to the programs and services of the Library. They prepare the annual budget requests and work with the Finance Committee and the Capital Expenditures Committee to determine the amount to be recommended at Annual Town Meeting. Seven Trustees are elected for terms of three years on a rotating basis. The Library Director manages the Library under the direction of the Trustees.

The programs of the Library are supported by The Friends of the Library, Library Volunteers and by the Arts Steering Committee that organizes art exhibits in the gallery.

Friends of the Bedford Free Public Library

Chartered in 1961, The Friends of the Library mission is to "maintain an association of persons interested in books and libraries, to focus public attention on the library's services, facilities and needs, [and to] stimulate gifts to the library of books, magazines, endowments and bequests." Membership is open to anyone upon payment of nominal dues. Funds are raised through book sales, dues, and special events. A major contribution of The Friends is the purchase of library museum passes which provide free admission for families to major museums in the Greater Boston area. Passes circulate with a library card and should be booked in advance. The Friends also sponsor special events for children and adults.

BEDFORD RECREATION COMMISSION

5 members, appointed, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The Commission is responsible for the development and operation of a comprehensive and diverse recreational program for all ages. It employs a Recreation Director, Program Coordinator and a part-time Clerk. Administrative costs are covered by funds appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting.

Recreation programs are generally self-supporting, and costs are kept to a minimum by volunteer effort of many dedicated residents. Programs are initiated in response to community demand. Recreation programs for children include dancing, gymnastics, art, music, soccer, basketball, baton, tennis, skiing, lacrosse, science programs, nature programs, Summer Adventures, and swimming lessons. Programs for adults include basketball, volleyball, golf, tennis, aerobics, and swimming. In addition, special events and trips to shows and places of interest are offered to residents of all ages.

One of the services provided by the Recreation Department is Kids Club that provides school-age children with organized activities before and after school. The program is open all year including vacation weeks.

The Recreation Department operates Springs Brook Park from mid-June through Labor Day weekend. This recreational facility is located adjacent to the VA Hospital on Springs Road and features a swimming pond with beach, playground equipment, and picnic area with provision for barbecues. The director oversees a full-time staff of qualified Lifeguard and/or Water Safety Instructors.

The Recreation Commission meets monthly in the Recreation Office in Town Center and welcomes ideas from townspeople for improving recreation programs. Recreation brochures are mailed to all residents several times a year. Further information about programs is available in the Recreation Department office or at <http://www.bedfordrecreation.org>.

BEDFORD LOCAL TRANSIT

The Bedford Local Transit (BLT) was initiated in 1976 to meet the need for an in-town bus service as an alternative to the automobile and to provide transportation for non-drivers. Supervision of the BLT is under the Selectmen. Funding is provided by town subsidy, Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority funds, and fares.

The BLT currently provides limited transportation to and from the Burlington Mall and the Billerica Mall in addition to its in-town service. The complete schedule and fare information is located in the foyer of both the Town Hall and the Bedford Free Public Library or at <http://www.bedfordma.gov>.

COUNCIL ON AGING

9 members, appointed, 3 year term, nonsalaried.

The function of the Council on Aging (COA) is to assist Bedford residents 60 and older to maintain independence and to transition into later life, to serve as a focal point for intergenerational activities in our town, and to coordinate elder services in Bedford. The Council on Aging is funded by the Town, grants from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, private foundations and individual donations.

The COA Senior Center is located in the Town Center building. It is open from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Fridays and Saturdays from noon until 4 PM. Activities at the Council on Aging include fitness classes, trips, recreational and social activities, health benefits and tax counseling, informational programs on legal, financial, and health issues, art and craft classes, performances, interest groups, support groups, intergenerational programs, and many other programs. Services that assist frail elders so that they may remain safely in their homes include service coordination, housing consultation, counseling on elder issues, medical transportation, home safety services in coordination with other departments, wellbeing checks, and information and referral, among other. The COA also offers job matching, caregiver training, an array of volunteer opportunities, and initiative to raise awareness of the needs of Bedford's seniors. The COA Connections newsletter is sent out monthly to every home in town where a resident is 60+ years of age.

TOWN CENTER

Town Center, opened in 1985 as Bedford's community center, is located on Mudge Way. It is managed by Town Center of Bedford, Inc. a non-profit organization. The Center consists of connected buildings – the former Union School that was constructed in 1891, two brick wings added in the 1950's, plus an addition/renovations. It leases space to nonprofit/educational organizations including the Bedford Chamber of Commerce, Minuteman Senior Services, and Iskwelahang Pilipino. The Center houses the Council on Aging/Senior Center, the Board of Health, the Recreation Department, Youth and Family Services, and the Bedford Veterans' Agent. Bedford Local Transit also maintains an office there. Located in its wing building, Kids' Club and The Corner are sponsored by the Recreation Department.

Four rooms in the Town Center are rented on an hourly basis including a dance and exercise space, two conference rooms, and a function room with a fully equipped kitchen for day or evening programs or parties.

OLD TOWN HALL

Built in 1856, Old Town Hall is one of the finest examples of mid-19th century municipal construction in the area. It was renovated in 2004, keeping the historic character of the structure while at the same time providing an elevator for barrier-free accessibility and a fully equipped catering kitchen. The first and second floors have been leased to Bedford Center for the Arts and Bedford T.V. The third floor Great Room has been designated for party and meeting rentals.

RAIL DIESEL CAR #6211

A unique setting for small parties and meetings, the RDC #6211 is on display in Bedford Depot Park and adjacent to the Freight House which is available for renters.

BEDFORD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

9 members, appointed, 3 year term, nonsalaried.

A Town Department since 1987, Bedford Youth & Family Services envisions its role as a force in supporting and nurturing the social, emotional, and developmental needs of children, youth, adults and families in Bedford and in fostering a healthy community. Veterans Services were incorporated into the Department in July 1999.

Bedford Youth and Family Services serves as a resource for Bedford residents around family developmental issues offering assistance through counseling, community education, resource and referral, and youth empowerment and support. Counseling services are confidential and available to high school, middle school, and elementary students and their families. Individual, family, and group sessions are available as well as a pamphlet library and information and referral about other area resources and services. Specific offerings for middle school youth include an after school program and peer mentoring opportunities at the Corner, the youth center run by Recreation.

The offices of Bedford Youth and Family Services are located on the second floor of Town Center, 12 Mudge Way. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with evening appointments available as schedules permit. Appointments can also be arranged for other school or town locations or at the Community Agencies Building in Concord, MA next to Emerson Hospital. Please call 781-275-7727 for more information or to make an appointment.

Staff includes a director, prevention services coordinator, veterans' agent, and administrative assistant. BYFS is served by a nine member citizen advisory board known as the Youth and Family Services Committee.

BEDFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Bedford Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1962, represents the business community as well as the community at large. It is an "open chamber"—one does not have to be in business to be a member. Through the collective efforts of its members, the Chamber works to improve the economic climate and quality of life in the community. It actively represents the diverse interests of its members with local, state, and federal government officials. The Chamber continually monitors issues, such as traffic improvement, economic development, and long-term projects to enhance the aesthetics of Bedford. Each year the Chamber answers hundreds of inquiries for information about historic sites, local events, and community demographics.

The Chamber sponsors frequent business lectures and other social and community-oriented activities, such as Bedford Day. Chamber members, organized as the Business-Education Alliance and working with the Bedford schools, offer their resources to provide hands-on real-time learning experiences for teachers and students. The Chamber awards an annual scholarship, the Charles Hume Memorial Award, to a graduating Bedford High School student. It also authorizes Certificates of Origin and other documents for businesses involved in exporting. The Chamber of Commerce is currently located at Town Center. Further information is available by contacting the office or going to <http://www.bedfordchamber.org>.

Chapter 9

EDUCATION

The public school system of the town of Bedford is comprised of two elementary schools (one for grades K–2 and the other for grades 3–5) a grade 6–8 middle school, and a grade 9–12 high school. This configuration is subject to change in response to shifts in the student population.

Extracurricular programs include intramural and interscholastic athletics, performance groups in music and drama, and numerous clubs and activities.

Bedford High School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. MCAS, the Scholastic Aptitude Tests and Advanced Placement Exams are some of the measures used to assess student performance. Test results consistently indicate that achievement is higher than national, state, and regional norms. Almost ninety-six percent of the students continue their education after high school.

Traditionally, Bedford has provided a high level of financial support for its schools. Buildings are maintained in good repair, instructional materials are up-to-date, and teacher salaries are competitive.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

5 members, elected, 3-year term, nonsalaried.

The School Committee has the responsibility and authority under state law to provide a complete educational system designed to meet the needs of the students served. The Committee works within a framework of state laws that set forth its powers and limitations. It is also subject to standards established by the State Department of Education.

The School Committee is responsible for the establishment of educational goals and policies for the schools, consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education sets the minimum number of school days and hours per year and requires certain courses of study. The School Committee may authorize additional courses as it considers appropriate.

The School Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the school budget that represents the amount of money needed to operate the schools for the fiscal year. School administrators present their budget proposals to the Superintendent of Schools who appraises the various programs recommended. The Superintendent presents a proposed school department

budget to the School Committee. The School Committee revises and approves the final budget that will be submitted to Town Meeting.

A public hearing on the school budget is held prior to the Annual Town Meeting. The budget is then included in the warrant and the designated amount (less funds received from state aid to education, federal funds [P.L. 874 and 94-142], and grant monies) is presented to the Annual Town Meeting for consideration.

Administration and Teaching Staff

The Superintendent of Schools is the chief executive officer for the Bedford school system. The superintendent works under the direction of the School Committee and oversees the operations of the schools. The superintendent makes recommendations on all matters under consideration by the School Committee, such as those pertaining to the budget, curriculum and policy. The superintendent is aided by an Assistant Superintendent, a Director of Finance, and by the principal of each school. In addition, there are program administrators and coordinators who have responsibility to oversee the instructional programs.

Teachers employed in the Bedford Schools must earn at least a bachelor's degree and hold appropriate teaching license from the Massachusetts Department of Education. Many Bedford teachers hold Master's degrees and a number have advanced degrees and credits. Teachers participate in numerous professional development activities to improve their proficiency.

Schools

The *Lt. Eleazar Davis School* provides education for students in kindergarten through grade two. The school opened in September of 1960. An addition was constructed in the early 1970's, and three modular classrooms were added in 1989 and 1990. In the late '90's the original building was replaced with a new structure.

Davis School supports a developmental approach to educating students, in the belief that a child's readiness for learning is primary to success. Classroom teachers who focus on basic skills of literacy and mathematics are supported by regular education specialists in art, computer, music, and physical education, as well as by special education and remedial programs. There is a full-time librarian assisted by an aide and complemented by a half-time instructional technology specialist.

The *Lt. Job Lane School* provides education for students in grades 3, 4, and 5. The school opened in September of 1964. It is situated in a wooded location. Two classrooms were added in the early 1970's. A major renovation took place during the 1990's. The facility also includes a cafeteria-auditorium, a gymnasium, library, and music room.

In addition to the academic subjects taught by classroom teachers, specialists teach foreign languages, art, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, and computer. There is a full-time librarian as well as a full-time instructional technology specialist. The library and computer lab remain open to all students every day, staffed by an assistant librarian and parent volunteers. Remedial reading and special education programs are provided to assist students who require support for their learning.

The *John Glenn Middle School*, which opened in the fall of 1965, shares a large and attractive campus with the high school. The athletic fields, baseball and softball diamonds, the soccer pitch, and the natural setting of woodlands and hills combine to make a spacious view from almost all perspectives. A major renovation was completed in 2003.

The school contains grades 6, 7, and 8 and has 25 academic classrooms, science laboratories, and six special areas. The auditorium, with a seating capacity of 460, is acoustically designed. The library is large and well equipped with an adjacent computer lab and easy access to an attractive courtyard. The building layout separates the academic classrooms from the gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and music areas.

The Middle School is organized around grade level teams. In addition to the academic subjects, students take courses in foreign languages, art, computer, music, and physical education. As an alternative to study periods, enrichment courses are offered. Special education, a 504 accommodation program and Skills Center are available to meet student needs.

Bedford High School is surrounded by woods and grassy areas and is situated on a 50-acre site that provides space for athletic fields, recreational events, and parking. Its central location makes it accessible from every part of Bedford. A variety of instructional, co-curricular, extracurricular, and community activities are provided to students. There is a large auditorium (where Town Meetings are held), two cafeterias, and a large gymnasium. The original building was constructed in 1955 with additions erected in 1960 and 1968. In many respects Bedford High School functions as a community center, housing many community activities. The Bedford High School addition/renovation project was completed in 2008.

A comprehensive program of studies is offered to both Bedford and Hanscom Air Force Base students in grades 9–12. In addition to a wide selection of academic courses, students select courses from the Occupational Education Department and pursue creative interests in the Art and Music Departments to fulfill graduation requirements.

Additional information about curriculum and programs at all levels is available in the Superintendent's office or at <http://www.bedford.K12.ma.us>.

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School

Shawsheen Tech serves the towns of Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Tewksbury and Wilmington. The School Committee for the Regional Vocational Technical School District is composed of representatives from the member towns. Bedford has two elected representatives who serve for three-year terms.

The school offers a variety of programs designed to meet the interests of the students. Technical and academic training are offered on an alternate-week basis. Students attend technical classes one week and academic and shop-related classes the following week. Provisions are made for special education students.

A Senior Skills Training Program is offered to provide job-entry skills through intensive training in one particular phase of a shop. Project Explore provides short-term career exploration for students who are considering entry into the vocational technical domain. Project Score is an after-school intensive vocational training program for handicapped students. Adult vocational training programs are offered in specific areas.

A Summer School program provides the opportunity for area high school students to make up courses. Students in grades 6-8 may attend Summer Computer Camp. In addition to the development of computer literacy, participants in the Camp have the use of the pool and other recreational facilities. The pool is available to all five communities for recreational use when not used by the regular school programs.

Additional information about curriculum and programs is available at <http://www.shawsheentech.org>.

Special Programs and Services

Chapter 766

The Massachusetts General Court passed the Comprehensive Special Education Law (Chapter 766) in 1972. The purpose of this law is to “provide for a flexible and uniform system of special education opportunities for all children requiring special education.” This law is only partially funded by the state; the rest of the money needed for implementation is raised by the local tax levy.

Special needs are determined through a uniform evaluative procedure, defined in the regulations established by the Massachusetts Department of Education and administered locally through the office of Bedford's Special Education Department. This procedure may be initiated by

school personnel, parents, child, or one of several other persons defined in the regulations, but may not be carried out without written parental consent. Preschoolers are voluntarily screened and services are provided as needed. Appeal procedures are also defined for parents who are not satisfied with the disposition of their case.

Several program prototypes are considered for special needs students. Local options consist of remediation, tutorial help, and speech therapy, performed in part within the bounds of the student's classroom or district school. Learning centers and some special education classes are also offered in Bedford. When a student's needs cannot be met in Bedford, suitable out-of-district placement is offered.

Bedford employs many specialists to supplement the classroom teacher in providing a suitable educational prototype for the special needs student. Each school has a guidance counselor available to the entire school population. Speech therapists, learning disabilities teachers, tutors, resource room teachers, and reading teachers are among the additional personnel used to enrich the educational offerings.

Any questions regarding the educational needs of a child may be directed to Bedford's Department of Special Education. Additional information concerning Chapter 766 or the special education programs offered in Bedford may be obtained through this same source.

Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity

METCO is a voluntary busing program that began in 1966 under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This program transports inner city students in grades k-12 to 34 suburban communities and Springfield. Bedford joined the METCO program in September 1974, with 21 first grade students. The program presently has an enrollment of 72 with students at all grades. The METCO Program has provided appreciation, better understanding, and respect for differences between urban and suburban students and parents.

Public Health Nursing

4 full time and 1 part time school nurses are employed by the Board of Health.

In compliance with Massachusetts law, a comprehensive program of services is provided. These services include screening programs to evaluate student vision, hearing, height, weight, and spinal development.

School nurses are part of the kindergarten screening team and are members of the CORE evaluation team, which determines a student's eligibility for special education services.

Each child's health record is maintained and reviewed yearly by the school nurse. Working as a team with the school physician, nurses offer various services for students needing physical examinations, immunizations, health counseling or health evaluations.

NURSERY SCHOOLS/DAY CARE CENTERS

Several private day care providers and nursery schools exist in Bedford for pre-school children. A list of these programs can be found through Mass211 Child Care at <http://www.mass211.org/childcare.html>.

Bedford Youth and Family Services is another source of information. A list of services is included as part of the BYFS Community Social Services Reference Guide available at <http://www.bedfordma.gov>.

KIDS CLUB

Managed by the Recreation Department, Kids Club provides before and after school care for children grades K-5 (6th grade if space available). It is open all year, including school vacation weeks.

Licensed by the Office of Child Care Services, the Kids Club is a nationally recognized program having earned accreditation from The National School Age Care Alliance in February 2002. Kids' Club was one of the first programs in the nation to be recognized for quality of programs. Information about Kids Club can be obtained from the Recreation Department or at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/kids-club>.

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Established in 1969, Middlesex Community College began with 573 students in rented space at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital on Springs Road. By 1990, more than 11,000 individuals had graduated with associate degrees and certificates that enabled them to transfer to baccalaureate level study or enter directly into career fields.

The college has provided high-quality, moderate-cost educational opportunities to high school graduates and adults of the area since its founding and has tried to match community and regional needs with expanded facilities and services. In 1974, the Commonwealth appropriated funds to purchase the Marist Seminary on Springs Road with the intention of developing a permanent Bedford Campus at that site. In the fall of 1992, after nearly 20 years, the permanent campus on Springs Road was dedicated. The consolidation of college activities on two main campuses—the Bedford Campus on Springs Road and the downtown Lowell Campus enabled the college to offer broader student services.

The academic year for the Day Division consists of a fall and a spring semester. Programs of study include Business Administration, Health Careers, Human Services, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Office Administration, and Technology. The college's Open Campus (Division of Continuing Education and Community Services) operates year round. Hundreds of credit and non-credit courses, workshops, and seminars are offered. Specialized programs that prepare students for career change, work force reentry and retraining, and professional/technical accreditation are available.

Further information about Middlesex Community College is available at <http://www.middlesex.mass.edu>.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Assessor's office	781-275-0046
Bedford Chamber of Commerce	781-275-8503
Code Enforcement	781-275-7446
Conservation Commission	781-275-6211
Council on Aging	781-275-6825
Facilities Department	781-275-5290
Finance Department	781-275-2218
Fire Department	
• emergency	911
• non-emergency	781-275-7262
Health Department	781-275-6507
Housing Authority	781-275-2428
Kids Club	781-275-5427
Library	781-275-9440
Middlesex Community College	800-818-3434
Planning Department	781-275-1548
Police Department	
• emergency	911
• non-emergency	781-275-1212
Public Works Department	781-275-7605
Recreation Department	781-275-1392
School Department	781-275-7588
Tax Collector	781-275-1517
Town Manager	781-275-1111
Town Center	781-275-4880
Town Clerk	781-275-0083
Youth and Family Services	781-275-7727
Veterans Agent	781-275-1328