

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK



ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024

CANDIDATES GUIDE

Congratulations! You have taken a courageous step by taking out nomination papers for elected office. Any government, especially local Town Government, relies on the active participation of its citizens. The Office of the Town Clerk thanks you for your active participation and wishes you the best of luck in your campaign.

I promise to keep all candidates and the voters of Westport up to date with any regulations that will be implemented as they are received. I will be emailing candidates throughout the coming months with reminders and election deadlines.

The information in this packet will give a brief overview of the many aspects of running for, and holding, local elected office. You will find descriptions of each office available, laws relating to campaign finance, and rules regarding Election Day activities. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have further questions.

Kristin Stinson
Westport Town Clerk

Nomination Papers for the following town offices will be available January 2, 2024.

Elected Body	Term
Selectmen (2 positions)	3 yrs
Assessors (1 position)	3 yrs
Board of Health (1 position)	3 yrs
Planning Board (1 position)	5 yrs
School Committee (2 positions)	3 yrs
Fish Commissioner (1 position)	3 yrs
Library Trustee (2 positions)	3 yrs
Landing Commissioner (2 positions)	3 yrs
Landing Commissioner (1 Unexpired Term)	1 yr
Housing Authority (1 position)	5 yrs
Housing Authority (1 Unexpired Term)	1 yr
Commissioner of Trust Funds (1 position)	3 yrs

Town Election

Last Day to Obtain Nomination Papers	Thursday, February 15, 2024	5 pm MGL c53, Sec9A
Last Day and hour to submit nomination papers to Registrars of Voters for certification	Tuesday, February 20, 2024	5pm
Last Day to Object or Withdraw Nomination Papers	Thursday, March 7, 2024	5 pm MGL c53, Sec 11
Last Day to Register to Vote	Friday, March 29, 2024 9AM-1PM at Town Hall 1PM-5PM at Police Station 86 Fagan Dr.	8 pm MGL c51, Sec 26, 28
Last Day to Post Warrant	Tuesday, April 2, 2024	MGL c39, Sec 10
Last day and hour to request a ballot by mail	Tuesday, April 2, 2024	5 pm
Last day and hour to request an absentee ballot in person	Monday, April 8, 2024	12 pm MGL c54, Sec 89
ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION	Tuesday, April 9, 2024	

Town Meeting

Last Day to Register to Vote	Friday, March 29, 2024	8 pm MGL c51, Sec 26, 28
Last Day to Post Warrant	Tuesday, April 30, 2024	MGL c39, Sec 10
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING	Tuesday, May 7, 2024	

Elected Officials - 2023	Position	Term Expires
Richard W. Brewer	Select Board-Chair	2024
Ann M. Boxler	Select Board	2024
Shana M. Shufelt	Select Board	2025
Steven J. Ouellette	Select Board - Vice Chair	2026
Manuel Soares Jr.	Select Board - Clerk	2026
Kristin M. Stinson	Town Clerk	2026
Steven W. Fors	Moderator	2025
Peter McGarr	Board of Assessors	2026
Sue Ann McDermott	Board of Assessors	2024
Stephen J. Medeiros	Board of Assessors - Chair	2025
Philip Weinberg	Board of Health - Vice Chair	2024
Tanja E. Ryden	Board of Health - Chair	2025
Donna Amaral	Board of Health	2026
Antonio Viveiros	School Committee	2024
Nancy C. Stanton-Cross	School Committee - Chair	2024
Melissa M. Pacheco	School Committee	2025
Gloria Cabral	School Committee	2025
Evan Gendreau	School Committee	2026
Paul Jennings	Regional School Committee	2026
Everett Mills	Fish Commissioner	2024
Christopher Dunn	Fish Commissioner	2025
Sean Leach	Fish Commissioner	2026
Marshall Ronco	Constable	2026
Arthur G. Caesar	Constable	2026
Donald Davidson	Library Trustees -Chair	2024
Laura B. Bennett	Library Trustees	2024
Susan Czernicka	Library Trustees	2025
Susan Costa	Library Trustees	2025
Paula A. Feitelberg	Library Trustees	2026
Pauline B. Dooley	Library Trustees	2026
Jefferson L. Bull	Landing Commissioner	2024
Richard Earle	Landing Commissioner	2024
Wendy Henderson	Landing Commissioner	2026
One Vacancy	Landing Commissioner	2025
Judith Menard	Housing Authority	2024
Veronica F. Beaulieu	Housing Authority – Vice Chair	2026
Lois Spirlet (State Appointed)	Housing Authority	State Appointed
Pauline Brodeur	Housing Authority	Tenant Member
One Vacancy	Housing Authority	2025
Robert F. Daylor	Planning Board – Vice Chair	2024
John Bullard	Planning Board	2028
Manuel Soares	Planning Board	2025
James T. Whitin	Planning Board - Chair	2025
Mark L. Schmid	Planning Board	2026
Christopher Thrasher	Commissioner of Trust Funds	2025
Leone Farias	Commissioner of Trust Funds	2024
Gerald Coutinho	Commissioner of Trust Funds	2026

THE TOWN OF WESTPORT ANNUAL ELECTION 2024

DESCRIPTIONS OF ELECTED OFFICES

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

Board of Selectmen:

Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities:

- Holds regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings to conduct Town business; oversees implementation of decisions made; conducts regular and special meetings with department heads, various commissions, committees and boards to address Town concerns.
- Submits warrant to Town Meeting; oversees implementation of decisions passed at Town Meeting.
- Attends to personnel matters; supervises the bargaining process with employee unions; conducts hearings regarding licenses and budgetary reviews.
- Answers public inquiries and concerns; represents the Town at various state, local and regular functions.
- Conducts on-site inspections for licensing procedures; manages real estate assets of the Town; oversees bidding procedures.

Board of Assessors:

Powers and Duties:

- Please note that most of the following duties are performed by the Principal Assessors Office and are overseen/approved by the board.
- Views commercial, personal, and real property, performing field measurements and inspections and places values thereon; evaluates land and land changes.
- Confers with associates on the Board of Assessors to arrive at agreed valuations of properties for assessing purposes.
- Confers with property owners, bank officials and professional appraisers regarding property valuations.
- Prepares reports, budgets and warrant articles for Town Meeting.
- Maintains a variety of office records, charts, maps and assessing laws and regulatory matter.
- Administers general business activities of Assessor's office.
- Reviews and approves or denies applications for abatements and exemptions.
- Assessors may be called upon to testify before the Appellate Tax Board.
- Attends professional development workshops and meetings.
- Prepares the tax rate documentation for state certification.

Landing Commissioner:

Powers and Duties:

- Oversees the maintenance and operation of public landings in Westport.

- Advises, coordinates and assists the Select Board and Marine Services Director regarding other landings in Westport.
- Responsible for all monies appropriated by the Town for the landings and all monies in related trusts.

Board of Health:

Powers and Duties:

- Holds weekly or bi-weekly meetings to conduct regular board business; attends meetings of various commissions and committees dealing with public health issues.
- Responds to citizen complaints regarding health violations; answers inquiries and makes appropriate referrals; conducts inspections of the landfill/transfer station, restaurants and campgrounds to ensure compliance with health regulations; approves water tests and septic plans that meet state codes.
- Establishes local health regulations to promote safe and healthy conditions.
- Monitors local establishments for compliance with state, local and federal health regulations; coordinates activities, policies and programs with state health agencies.

Planning Board:

Powers and Duties:

- Please note The Planning Board is supported by a professional full time Planning Department staff.
- Formulates and administers Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land in accordance with the Subdivision Control Law
- Advises on and reviews plans for proposed subdivisions
- Monitors the installation of subdivision infrastructure and new road construction
- Conducts public hearings for applications for development
- Conducts public hearings for the introduction of, and amendments to, Planning Board Rules and Regulations and Town of Westport By-Laws
- Advises on, reviews and grants Special Permits and Site Plan Approvals for commercial development
- Develops the Master Plan Update
- Implements the guidelines suggested by the Town of Westport Master Plan for sustainable development and redevelopment practices.
- Advises the Town on land use decisions, projects and policies affecting Westport, and tracks current development trends.

School Committee:

Powers and Duties:

The Committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

- Legislative or policymaking. The Committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
- Appraisal. The Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
- Provision of financial resources. The Committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the Committee's policies.

- Public relations. The Committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
- Educational planning and evaluation. The Committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School District.

Fish Commissioner:

Powers and Duties:

- Note: The Town Fish Commission in colonial days, also called fish-weighers, now only applies to anadromous fish (Fish that are hatched in fresh water and live their lives in the sea), the alewife, and the blueback herring.
- Reports to the Town the condition of the spawning population in the town waters.
- Works with the MA Division of Marine Fisheries to keep them viable.
- Maintains periodic inspections, clearings and maintenance of Adamsville Dam, Cockeast Pond, Forge Road Dam, Kirby Brook and Sam Tripp Brook.

Library Trustee:

Powers and Duties:

- Maintains custody and management of the Library and all property owned by the Town pertaining to the Library or used for library purposes.
- Responsible for all monies appropriated by the Town for the Library and all monies or property received by the Town by gift or bequest for the Library.
- Appoints, contracts, and evaluates a qualified Library Director.
- Establishes written policies governing library activities and services.

Housing Authority Board of Commissioners:

Powers and Duties:

- Approves: Long Term Goals of the Authority, Budget, Capital purchases, Major repairs (Renovation Projects)
- Adopts Policy: Purchasing and Personnel
- The Board usually meets once per month depending on needs.

Commissioner of Trust Funds:

Powers and Duties:

- Administration and management of all perpetual gifts donated to the town
- Provides interpretation of each fund's guiding instrument for its terms as to management and income distribution
- Reviews and approves or denies requests for distributions from the funds
- Serves as resources for inquiries about individual funds and their purposes
- Prepares annual reports for the town's fiscal year annual report

NOMINATION PAPERS- 50 CERTIFIED SIGNATURES REQUIRED

Please visit our office to obtain Nomination Papers. You will then circulate the papers for signatures. Be sure to submit more than the required number (50) for certification so you do not fall short in the event of signatures not certified.

Section 9a of Chapter 53 of the General Laws provides a process for obtaining nomination papers and limiting the number of nomination papers to be issued. The Act was accepted by the Town of Westport on March 16, 1971.

The Section states in part that "Each candidate shall file with the city or town clerk, prior to obtaining blank nomination papers, a statement containing his name and address, and the city or town office for which he intends to be a candidate." The Office of the Town Clerk has a form for use by candidates in order to comply with the State law.

All signatures must be legible and written substantially as registered. The law allows a voter to insert or omit a middle name or initial and still have the signature deemed valid. Do not use nicknames or initials in place of full names. Married women should sign "Helen Smith" not "Mrs. John Smith." It is wise to have a street listing with you to verify the exact form of registration. As a candidate, you are entitled to one free copy of a list of registered voters (this is NOT the street list book).

The Board of Registrars are not required to certify signatures greater than the amount needed to make a nomination increased by one-fifth. Therefore, the Board of Registrars are not required to certify more than 60 signatures for a candidate. The Board of Registrars will not accept any additional nomination papers once the required number of signatures have been filed and certified.

Campaign Finance

These instructions are meant to be an introductory guide to the campaign finance law and its filing requirements for candidates to elected municipal office and the treasurers of their political committees, not a substitute for it. It is the responsibility of all those participating in political campaign financing in Massachusetts to become knowledgeable with the provisions of the campaign finance law and its regulations. Violations of the law carry serious penalties of fines, imprisonment or both.

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF)

http://files.ocpf.us/pdf/guides/guide_muni_cand.pdf is responsible for administering and enforcing Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55, the comprehensive statute concerning the financing of political campaigns in the Commonwealth.

The statute requires that candidates and political committees disclose all contributions received and expenditures made. The campaign finance law also provides for limitations and in some cases absolute prohibitions, on certain sources of campaign contribution. Additionally, the way in which campaign funds may be spent is regulated by the statute.

State law requires an accounting of all money received or spent in the course of a political campaign. Candidates are required to submit regular campaign finance reports and to comply with the campaign finance laws and procedures. The financial disclosure statements must be on forms prescribed by the

Office of Campaign and Political Finance and include the name of the candidate or committee; the address of the committee; the committee’s chairman and treasurer; an accounting of all contributions received; a listing of all individuals who contributed over a prescribed amount; and an accounting of all campaign expenditures.

Candidates for municipal office should review the *Campaign Finance Guide: Candidates for Municipal Office*, located in the campaign finance law, campaign organization, reporting requirements, and campaign contribution limits.

The Town Clerk serves as the Town’s Campaign and Political Finance Director for all local campaigns. As a result, the financial disclosure statements of candidates and committees must be filed with the Town Clerk and maintained for public inspection. Reports will be posted on the town website.

Candidates and their committees, if any, are required by statute to file periodic campaign finance reports and are also responsible for the legality, validity, completeness and accuracy of their reports. The following is a schedule for filing reports. These reports must be filed whether or not money has been raised or expended during the reporting period and whether or not the candidate is nominated or elected. Reports are due to the local election official by the close of business on the day the report is due. All forms, as well as filing software, are available on the OCPF website.

2024 Campaign Finance Filing Schedule

Report	Due	Date	Activity Time Frame
Pre-Election	8 days prior to election	Monday, April 1, 2024 by the close of business	January 1- March 22
Post-Election	30 days after election	Thursday, May 9, 2024 by the close of business	March 23- April 29
Year End		January 21, 2025	April 30- Dec 31

Rules Governing Election Day Activities

On Election Day, at the polling place, political signs must be held by a person. No signs may be put into the ground, hung on fences or put on public property. No poster, card, handbill, placard, picture or circular intended to influence the action of the voter shall be posted, exhibited, circulated or distributed in the polling place, in the building where the polling place is located, on the walls thereof, on the premises on which the building stands, or within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the building entrance door to such polling place. No posters or stickers may be posted, circulated, or distributed within the 150-foot distance.

Other Useful Resources

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/elections-and-voting.htm>

<https://www.chelmsfordlibrary.org/about-us/policies/solicitation-of-signatures-in-public-places/>

<https://www.westport-ma.com/departments>

<https://www.westport-ma.com/town-clerk/pages/elections-and-voter-information>

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