



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD



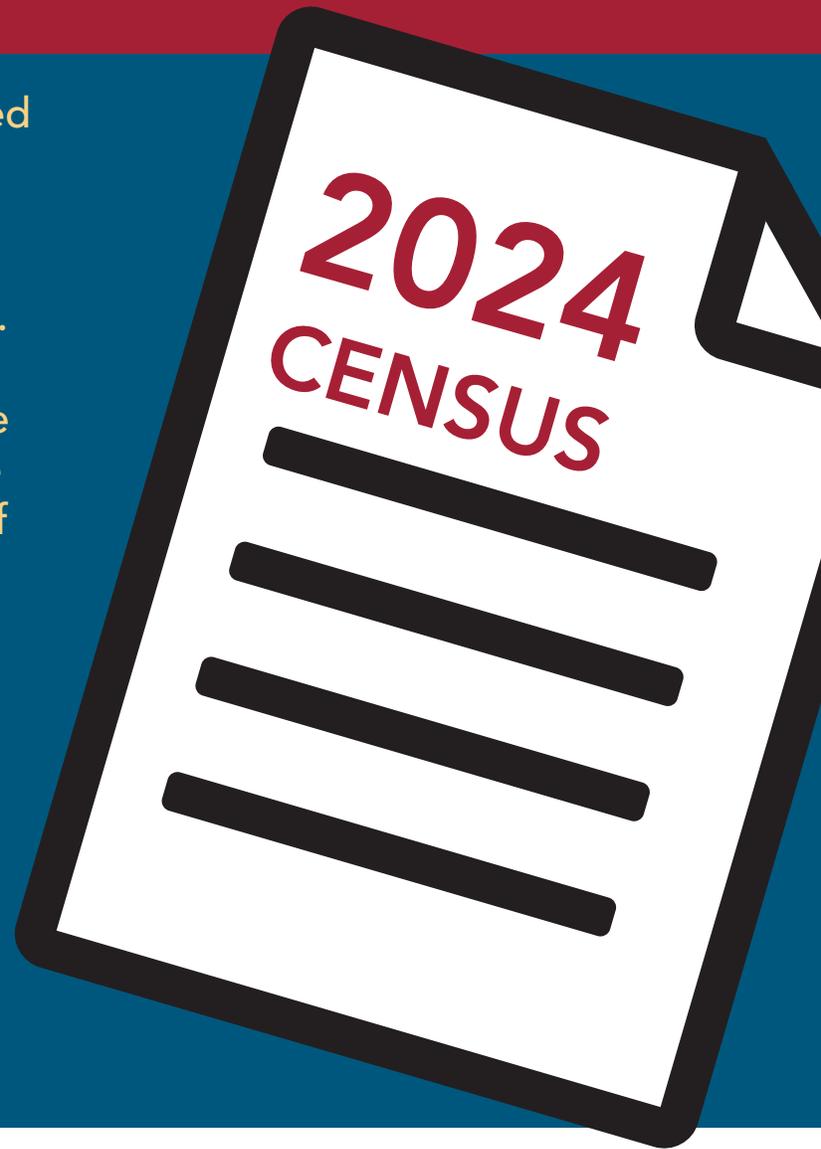
## WINTER 2024

The 2024 census form has been mailed to every household in Wakefield. Residents are encouraged to return the census as soon as possible to the Office of the Town Clerk in Town Hall. It can be mailed to 1 Lafayette St. Wakefield, MA 01880 or placed in the Town Clerk's drop box, located in the parking lot of Town Hall, to the left of the main entrance.

According to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 51, Section 4, "failure to return the census for two consecutive years shall result in removal from the voting list and may result in removal from the voter registration rolls."

A voter cannot use the census form to change political party affiliation nor can a resident use it to register to vote. However, [changing party affiliation and registering to vote](#) can be done in person at the Office of the Town Clerk and [online](#).

If you have any questions about the census, you can contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 781-246-6383.



## NAHANT STREET YARD WASTE SITE OPENS APRIL 6

The Nahant Street Yard Waste Site will open for the season on April 6. The site is available for the disposal of leaves, grass, clippings, shrubs, and brush on scheduled dates throughout the season. An annual \$25 permit is required to obtain access and is available to Wakefield residents only. You can get your permit at the DPW office in Town Hall or [purchase one online](#).

View the full [2024 Public Works calendar](#) (2 pages) for the Nahant Street site schedule, refuse and recycling holidays, mercury drop-off opportunities, and more.

# FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

In Shakespeare's Richard III, soon-to-be King Richard opens the play with, "Now is the winter of our discontent." I've always wanted to somehow utilize those lines at either Town Meeting or in a writing, so here it goes. As we trudge through these dreary days of January (as it seems that more than half of the days have been void of sunshine), let's take a step back to review what has been accomplished this past winter and what we have to look forward to as the days get brighter and warmer.

After much public input, the building of permanent [bathroom facilities and the refurbishment of the Veteran's Field parking lot](#) will soon begin. The new facility will be on the Hall Park side of the Veterans Field parking area and will include storage for our very popular Farmer's Market. We will upgrade the lighting in the area and the lot will be spruced up with new pavement, striping, and increased green space, all the while increasing the number of parking spaces. In our continued partnership with the Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department (WMGLD), we hope to add a solar component to the facility. The bathrooms are a long time coming and will be a great asset for the guests shopping at the Farmer's Market, taking in a softball game, playing pickleball, and enjoying the spectacular wildflowers along the Floral Way.

Another exciting [project on the near horizon is Wakefield Memorial High School](#). This fall and winter, approvals have been obtained from the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Conservation Commission. The groundbreaking is just a few months away. The new High School is expected to be heated and cooled electrically and the State Legislature has recently authorized the construction of the [solar energy park](#) across Hemlock

Road, which will provide energy for the operation of the school. Electrifying stuff, indeed.

While the energy park will be funded by the WMGLD, the overall cost of the new school is funded by the taxpayers via a debt exclusion passed overwhelmingly by the voters. We certainly don't take voter participation in this process lightly. I am pleased to announce that through the efforts of our State delegation, the State has agreed to fund close to \$15 million dollars more to the cost of the project than originally anticipated.

This extra State funding, along with our AAA bond rating (the highest available), will result in lower costs to our tax payers. Since we don't yet know where the rate market will be when we borrow, I can't quantify the savings, but I think it will exceed \$100 a year in savings on the average tax bill. Kudos to our Town Council, Finance Committee, and School Committee, whose prudent budgeting and forecasting have consistently resulted in a healthy balance sheet and excellent credit ratings.

On a more social note, I hope that many of you enjoyed the events in Town this winter. From the annual lighting of the Upper Common and tree to the Santa Parade to the very well-attended Menorah lighting, all events exemplified the wonderful character of our community. And when the tree blew over in a storm, our intrepid Public Works crew righted it so we could enjoy it a little longer.

So, the question remains as to how to complete the circle regarding King Richard's quote, "Now is the winter of our discontent / made glorious summer by the sun (son) of York," as stated in the opening paragraph. In my opinion (and others) Richard is stating that the misery of winter will be over when he ascends to the throne. For Wakefield, I believe that when the actual celestial sun shines and we are able to see these projects take fruition, we will all feel great joy and contentment.

We appreciate all of the support from our community members and wish you all a happy and healthy winter surrounded by friends and family.

*Steve Maio, Town Administrator*

Massachusetts recently passed a state law that requires MBTA communities to have a zoning district where multi-family housing is permitted "as of right." Under the law, Wakefield is classified as an MBTA Commuter Rail Community and required to create a compliant district within a half mile from our Commuter Rail stations.

[Learn more about this initiative.](#)

If you'd like to discuss the project or ask questions in an informal setting, join Wakefield's Community and Economic Director Erin Kokinda at her upcoming Coffee Hours:

**Friday, February 16, 2024**  
9 to 11 a.m. at Town Hall  
First-Floor Conference Room

**Friday, March 15, 2024**  
9 to 11 a.m. at the Americal Civic Center  
Heritage Room

**Friday, April 12, 2024**  
9 to 11 a.m. at Town Hall  
First-Floor Conference Room



## MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS EQUIPPED WITH NEW AED DEVICES

Wakefield's municipal buildings now feature new automated external defibrillators (AEDs) thanks to the efforts of our Emergency Manager and our Health and Human Services Department. An AED is used when someone is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The AEDs use voice prompts, lights, and text to tell the rescuer the steps to take.

According to the American Heart Association, 16 percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in a public location, and 9 in 10 cardiac arrest victims who receive a shock from an AED in the first minute survive.

If you are in one of our buildings and need to access an AED, make note of their locations:

**Americal Civic Center**  
Drill Hall (gym), right side

**Beebe Library**  
Avon Street entrance, left side

**Senior Center**  
Office area

**Public Safety Building**  
Lobby

**Town Hall**  
Next to the Tax Collector's office

**5 Common Street**  
Lobby



Lt. Gary Hill from Wakefield's Fire Department recently trained municipal staff on how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED).

## VETERANS COFFEE SOCIAL FEB. 17

The Wakefield Veteran Advisory Board and Veteran Service Officer will host their next coffee social on Feb. 17 at 10 a.m. in the Senior Center at 30 Converse Street.



Join them to learn about programs, benefits, and hear from a special guest speaker who will be discussing the Hero Act. All Vets are welcome. For more information, contact VSO David Mangan at 781-246-6377.

## LUCIUS BEEBE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

### No Library Card? No Problem!

Not a frequent library user? You might want an e-card. Beebe's electronic materials and services are now available from home with an e-card obtained right online. Rather than come to the Main Street building, [apply for an e-card on Beebe's website](#), giving you immediate free access to online services and materials.

The [Library's website](#) gives you access to e-books, newspapers (including The Boston Globe, New York Times and NYT Food and Games), magazines, comics, and audiobooks; streaming music, movies, and tv; Headspace meditation app; and learning and reference tools like Pronunciator, ScienceFlix, Creativebug, Niche Academy, Consumer Reports, Morningstar, and ValueLine.

There are so many valuable benefits to having a library card. Now many of those benefits can be enjoyed remotely. In the event you find you might like to borrow a pickleball set or induction cooktop, your e-card can be converted to a full-service card that allows both remote access and onsite borrowing. Check it out.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WINS INNOVATION AWARD



Accepting the Municipal Innovation Award from the Massachusetts Municipal Association are (left to right): Jen Grigoraitis, Melrose Mayor; Julie Smith-Galvin, Wakefield Town Councilor; Maureen Buzby, Regional Tobacco Control; Steve Maio, Wakefield Town Administrator; Mehreen Butt, Wakefield Town Councilor; Jonathan Chines, Wakefield Town Council Chair; Anthony Chui, Director of Health and Human Services; Dennis Sheehan, Stoneham Town Administrator; and Paul Brodeur, former Melrose Mayor.

The Massachusetts Municipal Association presented our Health and Human Services Department with the 2024 Kenneth Pickard Municipal Innovation Award at its Annual Meeting in January. The award recognizes new and successful approaches to municipal challenges and/or services that could serve as a model for other communities.

After 15 years of collaborating on public health initiatives, the Town of Wakefield and the City of Melrose expanded their partnership to include the Town of Stoneham. This regional approach has resulted in the delivery of more uniform and cost-effective services, allows our municipalities to assist each other more easily during emergencies, and enables us to submit more competitive funding applications. Under the agreement, the three communities share a health director, a senior environmental health specialist, and a senior public health nurse.

Thus far, Wakefield, Melrose, and Stoneham have collaborated on several community health-related grants and have received a \$1 million STOP School Violence grant to further its public outreach and allow for more counselors in the schools. The regionalization has also allowed our communities to increase education and outreach, host coordinated vaccination clinics, and create efficiencies in staffing and training.

## HAVE YOU REGISTERED YOUR DOG?

Did you know that annual dog licensing is required under Massachusetts General Law? You can easily register your dog using the bottom portion of your Town Census form. You can also access the [dog registration form on our website](#). In order to avoid a fine, dog owners are encouraged to register their dogs on or before February 29, 2024.

Feel free to call the Office of the Town Clerk at 781-246-6383 if you have any questions.



Snow Angels Devyn Duratti (left) and Josh Hubert (right) were hard at work clearing out for local Seniors after a recent storm.

## WAKEFIELD SNOW ANGELS OFF TO A GREAT START

The Wakefield Youth Council's Snow Angels Shoveling Program is off to a great start. Nearly fifty senior-citizen households have enrolled in the program through the Council on Aging, and the Youth Council has paired them with over 30 youth volunteers who will shovel their stairs and walkways after a storm.

The number of senior households has reached capacity this year, and the Council is still looking for a few more youth volunteers with whom to match them. Those interested in volunteering can fill out [their online form](#) or email [YouthCouncil@wakefield.ma.us](mailto:YouthCouncil@wakefield.ma.us). All youth volunteers can receive community service hours and documentation of their volunteer efforts.