

WINTER 2020

SIGN UP TODAY: CODERED EMERGENCY E-ALERTS

Wakefield's [CodeRED platform](#) gives public safety leaders the ability to deliver timely information via phone, email, or text. This system can be used in emergency situations like drinking water contamination, evacuation notices, and parking bans. All residents and business owners should register.

Sign up today. Visit www.wakefield.ma.us and select "Subscribe to CodeRED E-Alerts" from the "Get Town News" drop-down menu. Be sure to choose the "[create a managed account](#)" option when you register so that you can update your contact information or remove yourself if you move out of town.

The CodeRED system is a geographical-based notification system, so a street address is required even if your cell phone is your preferred contact method. Those who move, even within the Town of Wakefield, should update their accounts with their new addresses.

Residents and businesses without Internet access are encouraged to contact a friend or family member for assistance or connect with the Wakefield Fire Department at 781-246-6435 to sign up.



Wakefield residents vote centrally at the Galvin Middle School located at 525 Main Street.

UPCOMING ELECTION DATES

A Special State Election will take place to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of State Representative Paul Brodeur. Mr. Brodeur represented three precincts in Wakefield: precincts four, five, and six.

While the Special Election will include only registered voters in precincts four, five, and six, the Presidential Primary Election includes voters from all of the seven Wakefield precincts. Residents can easily look up their precincts at the Secretary of State's website www.sec.state.ma.us.

January 15, 2020: Last day to register to vote for the State Primary

February 4, 2020: State Primary; polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

February 12, 2020: Last day to register to vote for the State Election and Presidential Primary

March 3, 2020: State Election and Presidential Primary; polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 TAX RATES APPROVED

Wakefield's annual classification hearing with the Town Council was held on October 28, 2019. This public hearing is a requirement of Massachusetts General Law and necessary in order to establish tax rates and send tax bills in a timely manner. Classification was adopted by the Councilors and subsequently approved by the state's Department of Revenue.

Our fiscal year (FY) 2020 tax rates are:

- \$12.77 per thousand for residential properties
- \$24.92 per thousand for commercial / industrial / personal (CIP) properties

How the Rate Was Determined

The Assessing Office engaged in a state-mandated interim revaluation of the Town for fiscal year 2020 using calendar year 2018 sales as a basis for most residential sales and 2017-2018 for other classes where there were too few sales to analyze. The average single-family home valuation increased from \$528,200 to \$555,900, or 5.24 percent. Commercial and industrial properties rose 3.2 percent for the same period.

Data obtained from MLS Property Information Network, Inc. indicated that the average sale price for a single family home in Wakefield increased from \$534,976 to \$580,530 from 2017 to 2018 while days on market went from 35 to 39 days.

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\$555,900

The average value of a single-family home for fiscal year 2020.

For the past several years, the Town Council requested an excess levy capacity that corresponds to a roughly 2 percent tax levy increase rather than the usual 2.5 percent to mitigate some of the tax impact to residents. This year, the Council requested an excess levy capacity of almost \$400,000, which is a 2 percent tax levy increase.

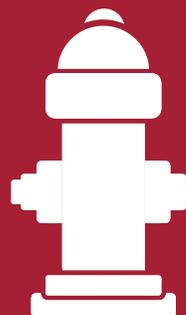
This action saves taxpayers \$0.06 on the residential rate and \$0.13 on the CIP rate. It translates into an average savings of \$33 for residential taxpayers and \$175 for commercial properties. Moreover, the Councilors chose the maximum allowable shift factor, thereby affording residential taxpayers the lowest possible share of the tax burden allowed under state law.

Fiscal year 2020 also represents the sixth year of the full Debt Exclusion for the new Galvin Middle School. This added \$2,484,858 to our total tax levy and conforms to the restrictions of Proposition 2 ½. It adds \$0.41 to the residential tax rate, or \$228 on the average single-family tax bill; \$0.81 is added to the CIP tax rate, or \$1,096 to those bills.

What This Means For You

The average single-family value for fiscal year 2020 is \$555,900 and the tax bill is expected to increase approximately \$320 to \$7,099. The commercial tax bill is expected to average \$33,732. Since 2006, the average single-family tax bill increase has been 4.46 percent.

Property owners must be mindful that the assessments they see on their tax bills due February 2020 are reflective of real estate market activity during 2018. Assessments are one year behind today's market and sales activity from 2019 will be used for assessments next year.



The DPW and Fire Department appreciate your assistance clearing catch basins and hydrants near your home after snow events. Keeping catch basins clear of snow and ice will reduce the possibility of street flooding during heavy rains, and accessing hydrants is critical during a fire.

MSBA INVITES WAKEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL INTO ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

On December 13, 2019, the [Massachusetts School Building Authority](#) (MSBA) Board voted unanimously to invite Wakefield into their 2019-2020 Eligibility Period, which allows Wakefield to begin collaborating with the MSBA to renovate or rebuild Wakefield Memorial High School. The school's deficiencies, which include outdated science facilities; the HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems; roof; and accessibility, were outlined in a statement of interest presented in April 2019.

The MSBA was created in 2004 as an independent public authority charged with reforming the former school building program. The MSBA has a dedicated revenue stream of one penny of the state's 6.25-percent sales tax and has made over \$14.1 billion in payments to cities, towns, and regional school districts.

According to the MSBA, "The next step is for the District to complete preliminary requirements pertaining to local approval and formation of a local school building

committee. Upon timely and successful completion of the Eligibility Period requirements, the District becomes eligible for an invitation into the Feasibility Study phase of the MSBA Capital Pipeline, subject to a vote of the Board of Directors."

Also joining Wakefield in the Eligibility Period are the Town of Amherst, the Town of Hingham, the Town of East Longmeadow, the Town of Maynard, the Nashoba Regional School District, the City of North Adams, the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District, the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School District, and the Town of Winchester.

Wakefield's Eligibility Period will commence on April 1, 2020 and conclude on December 28, 2020. During the 270-day Eligibility Period, the MSBA will work with Wakefield to determine the district's financial and community readiness to enter the MSBA Capital Pipeline.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



Woodville students learn about composting, food rescue, and recycling.

The Town's [Environmental Sustainability Committee](#) is working with volunteers to bring food rescue, composting, and recycling improvements to Wakefield's elementary schools. One way they are making an impact is by sharing best practices already underway.

When the Committee discovered the work of some dedicated Greenwood Elementary School parents, members were fascinated. At lunch, Greenwood students compost food scraps or place unopened food in a separate area where it is properly stored and sent to [Food Link](#). Based in Arlington, MA, Food Link collects food that would otherwise be wasted and delivers it to over 40 local social service agencies serving people in need.

Efforts started with Greenwood parents Sara Colvin and Shyan Ong, who worked to build support from the school administration, PTO, and the students themselves. They now reduce waste by "rescuing" and composting food. Thanks to a Wakefield Educational Foundation grant, plans are underway to introduce food rescue and composting at Woodville, Dolbeare, and Walton.

The grant is funding compost pickup from [Black Earth Compost](#), food rescue supplies for refrigeration and collection, and an educational component to make it relevant to the classroom.

The Committee also learned of an effort underway to improve recycling across Wakefield schools. Resident Andy Bray from the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association partnered with the school district to successfully apply for funding from the EPA to improve recycling. The assessment is complete and improvements are underway. Students play a big role in recycling and are interested in the expansion.

These initiatives will teach elementary students about responsible trash disposal while keeping hundreds of pounds of waste out of the municipal trash stream, translating into significant cost and climate benefits. With everyone's cooperation and dedication, these initiatives will begin in 2020 at all elementary schools.



Over two thousand pounds of pumpkins were collected at a post-Halloween event that encouraged Wakefield elementary students to compost their jack-o'-lanterns.

PUTTING HEALTH FIRST IN 2020: RESIDENT RESOURCES

Many people make a resolution to prioritize their health in the New Year, and that includes mental health and self-care.

Wakefield provides a free referral service so residents can confidentially connect with mental health and wellness resources. You can call to obtain the names of providers that meet your specific needs, accept your insurance, and have available appointments. To start the referral process, call the [INTERFACE hotline](tel:888-244-6843) at 888-244-6843. If you or a loved one is in a crisis situation, you can engage [Eliot Community Services](tel:800-988-1111) at 800-988-1111 for 24-hour assistance.

In addition, the Wakefield Police Department is proud to have a Crisis Intervention Team composed of officers and civilian clinicians with training in mental-health treatment, substance-use recovery, de-escalation techniques, developmental disabilities, dementia, and trauma. Learn about their team at www.wakefieldpd.org/mental-health-services.

NEWS, EVENTS, AND UPDATES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

You can stay up to date on Wakefield news via email, social media, and the Town's website.

Web

Visit anytime for news and information at www.wakefield.ma.us.

Email

Never miss a message--all news and urgent alerts posted to our website can be sent right to your inbox. Visit wakefield.ma.us and click "[Get Town News](#)" in the upper right corner of the screen. You can also opt to receive agendas for upcoming meetings that interest you.

Facebook

Town of Wakefield: [@townofwakefieldma](https://www.facebook.com/townofwakefieldma)

Wakefield Police Department: [@wakefieldpd](https://www.facebook.com/wakefieldpd)

Wakefield Fire Department: [Wakefield Firefighters Local 1478](https://www.facebook.com/WakefieldFirefightersLocal1478)

Twitter

Wakefield Police Department: [@WakefieldPD](https://twitter.com/WakefieldPD)



WHAT IS A PARKING BAN?

In 2015, Wakefield lifted its December-to-April on-street parking ban and now enforces parking limitations on an emergency basis. When preparing for a snow event, the Town often initiates a temporary restriction of on-street parking. This allows plowing crews and public safety vehicles to safely access the roads and perform curb-to-curb cleanup. Parking ban announcements and other emergency notifications are made via our [CodeRED e-alert system](#).

All parked cars must be removed from the roadways during a parking ban. If your residence does not have a driveway, connect with your landlord for parking options or coordinate with a neighbor who has extra driveway space.

Vehicles that interfere with snow operations or emergency-vehicle access may be towed. Should you need to retrieve a towed vehicle, contact Howe's Towing at 781.245.2468.