

INFLOWMATION

Westford Water Department Newsletter

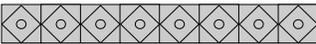
Water Commissioners:

- Robert J. Carter, Chairperson
- Hugh C. Maguire, Secretary
- Leslie A. Thomas, Member
- Elizabeth Denly, Alternate Member



Department Contacts:

- Warren Sweetser, Superintendent
- Robert Worthley, Water Treatment Manager
- Robin Fullford, Business Manager
- Jessica Cajigas, Environmental Compliance Manager



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Water Department Wins Drinking Water Awards

The Westford Water Department was honored in a ceremony at the Bristol County Agricultural High School in Dighton as part of Drinking Water Awards Day on June 25th. Westford took home two awards during the festivities including a Water Conservation Award and a Public Water System Award.



MassDEP uses the event to recognize public water suppliers for the important work they do in providing safe and sufficient supplies of drinking water to their communities. MassDEP Deputy Commissioner Gary Moran presented systems with their awards. Westford Water Department was the only system to win two awards and is very proud of these accomplishments.



Superintendent Warren Sweetser Retiring after 36 Years

On December 31, 1955, Town Meeting voted to purchase the Westford Water Company and form the Town of Westford Water Department. Since then only three people have held the position of Superintendent: Albert E. Mountain from 1955 to 1969; Harold A. Fletcher, Sr. from 1969 to 1991; and Warren E. Sweetser from 1991 to 2009.



Harold Fletcher first hired Warren as a laborer in 1973. That year the Town's population was 10,700 and 290 million gallons (MG) of water were pumped. In his 36 years, Warren has seen the Water Department through a lot of changes and improvements including: the construction of the garage and office at 63 Forge Village Road; and installation of 3 of our 8 wells and 2 of our 5 water storage tanks.

Since Warren was named Superintendent in July 1991 (when Harold Fletcher retired), many significant advancements were made. In July 1992, Town Meeting voted to create the Water Enterprise Fund, making the Water Department self-sufficient; in 1999, Westford Water implemented the first ultra-violet disinfection system in the state; and in 2003, two new state-of-the-art Water Treatment Facilities went on-line, and the new Water Department Office opened at 60 Forge Village Road. Combined, these treatment facilities can treat about 5.5 MG per day.

On October 16, 2009, Warren will retire. To compare with his first year of 1973, the town's current population is about 21,000 and in 2008, 526 MG of water were pumped. In addition, the water system currently consists of 132 miles of water main and about 5,229 service connections.

Warren has served the Water Department as Laborer, Station Operator, Acting Foreman, and Superintendent. He holds Grade 3 Treatment and Distribution Water Operator's Licenses and has been an active member in the water industry.



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RAIN GARDEN COMPLETED AT THE DAY SCHOOL

Over the last year, volunteers from the Town of Westford Water, School, Engineering, Conservation, and Highway Departments worked with local company Stantec to design and construct a rain garden at the Day School.

The design integrated specific stormwater management calculations and site-specific soil information in order to treat runoff from the school's parking lot before it infiltrates into the ground or flows into Reed Brook. The rain garden was designed to integrate sound principals of landscape architecture and civil engineering to create an aesthetically pleasing design with compatible vegetation. The bioretention scheme was modeled on a grassland community rather than a wetland environment to better survive the varying dry and wet conditions of the rain garden as the seasons change.



The 150- by 25-foot rain garden is a demonstration project for both the Town and the Day School's Living Lab Program. All students from Westford's kindergarten through 5th grade classes will be able to walk through the garden, learning about the native plant species it contains and their role in stormwater treatment. The garden will also provide habitat for butterflies and other insects for students to observe.



During construction, volunteers worked with Day School 5th graders to complete the final planting and watering. The opportunity was taken to educate the students on stormwater management. Construction was completed in Spring 2009.



In addition to Stantec and Town Departments, we'd also like to thank all those that donated their time, services, and/or plants, including residents Anna Fiore, Valerie Trantabella, Karen Basinas, Nicole Charlton, Carol Earl, Pam Ricard, Sumana Ramachandrappa, Sara Clay, and Kim Doherty for their plant donations; All-State Paving for the curb installation; R.E. Legacy and Sons for site excavation work; and the Lowell Sun and Boston Globe for newspaper coverage.

InFLOWmation is published twice a year for all residents and businesses of Westford. Our goal is to keep you informed of events, our challenges and our accomplishments. We also strive to educate and encourage good stewardship of our water resources.

Information on Disinfection Treatment Processes and Testing for Bacteria

Recently in the news, there have been many towns that have had to implement "Boil Orders" as a result of E-coli or coliform bacteria detections in their water system. The Westford Water Department tests 20 sites monthly throughout the water system and has not had any test results indicate the presence of bacteria.

Bacteria detection in water systems can sometimes be the result of high ground water, excessive rain, poor system flushing, drought, ground freezing, or water main breaks. Detections due to high groundwater and excessive rain are usually more prevalent with surface water systems. Westford Water is a groundwater system; however, two of our wells have been shown to be "under the influence of surface water." This means that Westford Water must treat its water in compliance with the rules that govern surface water supplies.

These rules require filtration and a specified level of disinfection at our Water Treatment Facilities and in the distribution system to protect you from organisms that may be present in water. Filtration alone will remove 99.9% of all bacteria. To provide the required level of disinfection we use MIOX (mixed oxidant) and calcium hypochlorite. Disinfectant in the distribution system provides a level of protection against the re-growth of bacteria within the pipelines. Again, we regularly test chlorine levels leaving our treatment facilities and within the distribution system to monitor the quality of your drinking water.

For added protection, we use ultra violet light as a final disinfectant before the water is sent into the system, and we flush the entire distribution system annually. Westford Water is also committed to continuing necessary system improvements including replacing aged water mains and service lines, and cleaning and maintaining our wells and storage tanks.

Goodbye and Good Luck, Warren! You will be Missed!!

Rather than continuing to list a resume of Warren's accomplishments, here are some words from those that have had the honor of working with him during the past 36 years...

"Warren Sweetser has been a great supporter of Massachusetts Water Works Association throughout his career. For the past 15 years, he has served as co-chair of our annual June golf tournament which raises funds toward our scholarship program. He has dedicated his career to providing safe clean drinking water to the residents of Westford and we wish him the best of luck in his retirement." Jennifer A. Pederson, Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Works Association

"Warren has been my boss for the past 11 years. He hired me for summer help, meter reader, and then full time employee. He gave me a chance even with little knowledge I had of the water distribution system and the town of Westford. The opportunity Warren gave me allowed me to learn, appreciate, and excel at being an employee of the WWD. It's the best job I've ever had. I like the work, my fellow employees, and the town of Westford, and owe it to my boss Warren Sweetser. Thank you and enjoy your retirement." Joe Emerson, Well Specialist, Westford Water Department

"Warren, Never again will you have to discuss those direct and indirect costs. It has been fun to work with you. I will truly miss your sense of humor. The very best to you in your retirement!" Suzanne C. Marchand, Westford Finance Director/Treasurer

"I always joke with Warren that he has worked for the Water Department longer than I've been alive. It amazed me that someone could work in one place for so long, but I have come to understand why. The Westford Water Department is a great place to work and I thank Warren for making this one of the best jobs I've ever had." Jessica Cajigas, Environmental Compliance Manager, Water Department.

"For the last 36 years, Warren Sweetser has been a fixture at the Westford Water Department. His hard work, dedication and commitment to the job have distinguished his career. Years ago, when Westford was facing a crisis with an E. coli outbreak and then again when the water supply was threatened by perchlorate contamination, Warren's leadership proved invaluable in dealing with these dangerous situations. I know that his deep understanding of water-related issues and his concern for the quality of the water and the public's safety have been the hallmarks of his distinguished career. He was always available to discuss these matters and worked very closely with us in the Legislature on behalf of the town. Warren will be greatly missed and I thank him for his service to our Town of Westford." Representative James Arciero

"I have been honored to know Warren over the past twenty years on both a personal and professional level. He has been a great client and friend. He is truly dedicated to the waterworks industry and to providing the residents of Westford with safe, high quality drinking water. This was evident while we were planning for the new treatment plants. Warren and I spent almost four years together working out all of the details to ensure that the Town of Westford would get the best state-of-the-art facility that the project budget could afford. We made sure all of the treatment equipment was the latest technology and that the facilities would provide enough space for the operations staff. Warren also requested that the Forge Village facility be equipped with a central vacuum for cleaning of the office area. As it turned out, I forgot to include this in the project bid. Even though these award winning facilities for the past six years have provided the Town with clean, safe drinking water, the fact that I forgot a central vacuum system will be an oversight he will never let me live down. Congratulations to Warren on your retirement. We will all miss your good nature, laughter, and your dedication to the Town and the waterworks industry as a whole." Tom Mahanna Senior Associate, Stantec

"I was Warren's first hire after he was made Superintendent in 1991; now I'm having a hard time imagining the department without him. Warren has always embraced new technology and has kept us on the cutting edge of the water industry. A stroll through our office reveals the many awards we have earned for innovation and achievement. Warren encourages excellent customer service and public relations and we are all proud to be part of 'Team Water.' Thank you, Warren, for your leadership and for making me part of the team." Robin Fullford, Business Manager, Westford Water Department

"I first met Warren in 2001 when I was teaching an operator review class. The Water Department was facing the challenge of building and running two new treatment facilities. The plants were going to utilize more complex equipment that would require a higher level of professional license than they had. In the middle of one of the classes Warren was particularly boisterous. I said something to the effect of, 'Will you be quiet?!' A hush fell over the room, everyone stiffened, until Warren let out his most contagious laugh. Less than a year later, I was working for him. It was the best move I ever made." Bob Worthley, Water Treatment Manager, Westford Water Department



Westford Water Department
INFORMATION October 2009
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7am to 4pm Monday-Friday
(except Holidays)

How to Reach Us

Main Phone Line (978) 692-5529
Superintendent (978) 399-2454
Water Treatment Manager
(978) 399-2456
Business Manager (978) 399-2453
Environmental Compliance Manager
(978)399-2457
Billing and Property Transfers
(978) 692-5529
Accounts Payable (978) 692-5529

After Hours

In the event of a water emergency outside of the work day, call the Police Department at 978-692-2161. The police dispatcher will contact our on-call personnel for quick response.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Westford's Special Town Meeting will be held on Monday, October 19th at 7:30pm in the Abbot School Gym. The following article pertaining to Water Department activities are to be acted upon:

Article 11: Water Resource Protection Overlay District

The location of the Country Road Replacement Well has led to an expansion of the Zone II protection area. MassDEP has required that the Town's Water Resource Protection Overlay District (WRPOD) Map be updated to reflect the new Zone II before approval will be granted to use the new well. Westford's GIS Department has updated the Town's WRPOD Map based on MassDEP's updated map. Article 11 essentially asks the residents of Westford to accept the updated WRPOD map as referenced in the Town Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 173, Section 8.1).

Article 12: Country Road Easement

This article also pertains to the construction of the Country Road Replacement Well. The article essentially asks residents to allow the Selectmen to grant Mass Electric an easement for the installation of a utility pole on Town property. The pole would be located at the entrance to the well site at 16 Country Road.

