

Duties and Responsibilities of the Elected Boards: A guide to assist voters

Weston's Town Government is supported by many volunteer boards and committees, a number of which are elected by voters. It is this dedicated group of volunteers who make policy and who give of their time and talent to give back to the community to help make Weston the special place it is. All members on Weston's boards, committees and commissions serve without compensation.

Elected candidates are nominated during the Town Caucus, traditionally held annually in early March. At this event, Weston residents express interest in serving in one of the many elected seats that are available. Weston voters in attendance nominate the individual they would like to see run for the office and if enough votes are received, the individual becomes the Caucus Nominee and is placed on the Town Election Ballot. Alternatively if an individual is not nominated at the Caucus, they can take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk and obtain signatures to be placed on the Ballot or they can run a "sticker campaign." The Annual Town Election is traditionally held early in May before Annual Town Meeting in the Town Hall Auditorium for all four precincts.

In an effort to assist voters in selecting Caucus Nominees or in choosing the right candidate, the following is a brief description of the duties and responsibilities of all of the elected offices. Additionally, the League of Women Voters typically hosts an annual Candidates' Night shortly before the election. This is an opportunity for voters to meet the candidates and hear their views.

The **Board of Selectmen** represents the executive branch of Town Government. The Board consists of three members, elected for three-year terms. The Board acts as the Town's primary policy making body for a wide variety of issues affecting service delivery, finance, and development. They provide oversight in matters of litigation, act as the licensing authority, enact rules and regulations regarding traffic control, and are responsible for calling Town Meetings and approving the Town Meeting warrant. Furthermore, the Board of Selectmen is responsible for appointing the Town Manager, as well as several boards and committees that each play a vital part in Town Government, such as the Conservation Commission, the Permanent Building Committee (jointly with the School Committee), the Traffic and Sidewalk Committee, the Historical Commission, and several ad hoc committees for shorter term projects or studies. Day to day oversight of the Selectmen's office is provided by the Town Manager.

The **School Committee** establishes the school budget, develops educational policy, and hires the superintendent for the Weston Public Schools. The Committee consists of five members, elected for three-year terms. It is responsible, along with school administration, for collective bargaining with the unions representing School Department employees and for the operation and maintenance of school facilities.

The **Planning Board** is responsible for the review of land division as well as review of specific development proposals. The Board consists of five members, elected for five-year terms. The Planning Board's duties are largely identified under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81A, 81B, and subsequent sections, and by the Town's Zoning By-law. The ballot candidates for the one seat are: Anthony Flynn and David Mendelsohn.

The **Moderator** is elected for a one-year term to preside at all Town Meetings and is also responsible for making appointments to the following committees: Community Preservation Committee (four at-large members); Elderly Housing Committee; Finance Committee; Josiah Smith Tavern Corporation;

Memorial Day Committee; Minuteman Regional High School Committee Representative; and the Weston Veterans Memorial Education Fund Committee.

The **Board of Assessors** is responsible for estimating the fair market value of all real property in Weston. The Board consists of five members, elected to serve three-year terms. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) mandates that every town fully update its property assessments each year to reflect the current fair market value. The updated property assessments are submitted to the DOR each year for its review and approval before Weston's tax rate can be set by the Board of Selectmen.

The **Recreation Commission** oversees the Recreation Department, which develops and operates a wide variety of recreational programs for residents in the town of all ages. The Commission consists of seven* members, elected for three-year terms. It manages and operates the Town's Community Center building and Memorial Pool. **as of 2016 Nov. Special Town Meeting approval*

The **Board of Library Trustees** is elected to determine library policy, appoint the Director, submit budget requests, and oversee the expenditure of funds. The Board consists of six members, elected to serve three-year terms.

The **Board of Health** is responsible for the promotion and protection of public health, as well as enforcement of the State Sanitary Code in the areas of housing, food sales and service, pools and camps. It is also responsible for the surveillance and reporting of communicable disease and the State Environmental Code for wells, septic systems, lead and asbestos abatement and ground water protection. The Board consists of three members, elected to serve three-year terms.

The **Commissioners of Trust Funds** develop investment philosophy and strategy for the investment of securities held in the Town's various trust funds, including endowed scholarship funds, school and library trust funds, and litigation settlement trust funds. The Commission consists of three members, elected to serve three-year terms.

Measurers of Lumber, in modern terms, inspect and measure firewood and bark brought into the town for sale to insure the correct quantity and grade. The three members are elected to serve a one year term.

For additional information on all of the boards and committees serving Weston's Town Government, please visit the Boards and Committees web page, under "Your Government," on the Town's website at www.weston.org. Board and committee meeting minutes and agendas are online, as well as a list of current Town projects. To volunteer to serve on a non-elected board, please visit the Volunteer Opportunities web page at www.weston.org/Volunteer or subscribe to receive notification of opportunities by clicking on the Stay Informed button on the home page.