

**Section 5:
Health & Human
Services**



REPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

In 2020, the Affordable Housing Trust continued working to fulfill its purpose and meet its responsibilities to preserve and increase moderate and low-income housing in Weston, as well as working toward implementing the Town's Housing Production Plan. The primary areas of focus were:

- ongoing management of the Warren Avenue project
- evaluating 40B projects
- securing Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding to initiate the Emergency Rental Assistance Program in response to the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic
- selecting Habitat for Humanity to develop affordable housing on 0 Wellesley Street, a municipally-owned parcel
- securing CPA funding for updating the current Housing Production Plan that expires in 2021

Warren Avenue

The Trust continued to be active stewards of the Warren Avenue project by providing long-term planning and oversight for the property and continuing rental operations for the seven units. The project is now fully occupied, and property management is provided by the Brook School Apartments property manager.

Evaluating 40B Projects

The Housing Trust is charged with reviewing affordable housing projects that are proposed under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Birch Lane - The Weston Affordable Housing Foundation, Inc. (WAHFI) presented plans for the development of two units of affordable housing on 8-10 Birch Lane sites. The Trust anticipates supporting the project and WAHFI's request for CPA funds for the project in 2021.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The September Annual Town Meeting approved \$100,000 of CPA funds to establish an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for households that have experienced a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, administered by the Regional Housing Services Office, provides eligible households with temporary monthly rental assistance. Two households were assisted in 2020 through this program, which will remain open as long as funding is available and deemed necessary by the Trust.

Home Repair Grant

In 2019, the Trust implemented a second round of the Home Repair Grant for income-eligible homeowners of deed-restricted properties in Weston. The small grant provides financial assistance of up to \$5,000 per household, to complete necessary health and safety repairs. The second round of funding was awarded to four homeowners in the summer of 2019. One homeowner was able to complete the work and accept grant funds in 2019, and the remaining three completed work and accepted grant funds in 2020.

Homeownership Opportunity Fund / 0 Wellesley Street

In 2020, the Trust issued a Request for Proposal to transfer the municipally-owned parcel located at 0 Wellesley Street (corner of Boston Post Road) to a developer to build affordable housing. The parcel was transferred to the Trust after approval by the 2018 Annual Town Meeting. Through the request process, Greater Boston Habitat for Humanity was selected to develop the property. It is anticipated that the project will move forward as a Local Initiative Project under MGL 40B in 2021. The Trust will



continue to work with Habitat for Humanity as it seeks input from the community while developing the project. The Trust will support this project with a grant of \$450,000 to Habitat for Humanity, utilizing CPA funds that were allocated to the Homeownership Opportunity Fund.

Housing Production Plan

The Trust worked in coordination with the Select Board and Town Planner to secure CPA funds to hire a consultant to aid in the update of the Housing Production Plan. The Community Preservation Committee approved an allocation of administrative funds for this request. The Select Board appointed five residents to serve on the Housing Production Plan Steering Committee. Trustee Sarah Rhatigan serves as chair on the steering committee, as well.

2020 Affordable Housing Trust Members:

Appointed by the Select Board

Sarah Like Rhatigan, Chair	2022	Harvey Boshart	2022, Select Board Representative
Susananne Haber	2022	Kenneth Newberg	2021, Community Preservation Committee Liaison
Michael Price	2021		
Thalia Price	2022	Thomas Timko	2021, Elderly Housing Committee Liaison

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health, assisted by the Health Department, is responsible for the promotion and protection of public health. This is done through the education and enforcement of environmental, public, medical, and mental health laws and regulations, and emergency preparedness planning. The Board of Health provides enforcement of the State Sanitary Code under the Department of Public Health and the State Environmental Code under the Department of Environmental Protection.

The State Sanitary Code includes permitting, regulating, and inspecting housing, food sales and service, pools, camps, lead, asbestos, and lead abatement, solid waste, surveillance and reporting of communicable disease, and animal health.

The State Environmental Code includes permitting and regulating wells, septic systems, groundwater, and air protection. The Board is committed to providing the highest protection of public health possible with available resources.

Communicable Disease

The Board of Health is required to investigate communicable diseases to determine how an individual came to be infected and who may be at risk from exposure to the infected individual. This information is then shared with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The infected individual and contacts are observed by the Board of Health to be certain all are treated with the proper medication for the disease. Department staff is



responsible for ensuring individuals diagnosed with a communicable disease are educated on the requirements and procedures for isolation or quarantine.

This year, the novel coronavirus was identified and added to the list of reportable communicable diseases. A total of 751 cases of COVID-19 resulting in 30 deaths were recorded up to December 31, 2020. Further, 92 cases of other communicable diseases were investigated by staff in 2020.

COVID-19	751		
Campylobacteriosis	4	Tick-borne Diseases	
Ehrlichiosis	1	Lyme Disease	28
Hepatitis B	3	Babesiosis	1
Hepatitis C	1	Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis	1
Influenza	40	Borrelia Miyamotoi Infection	1
Tuberculosis	1	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	1
Salmonellosis	1		
Varicella	2		

At the end of February, the local biotechnology company Biogen held an international conference in Boston. By March 7th, six cases of COVID-19 were identified in Weston along with 49 contacts. All individuals were contacted and educated on the requirements and procedures for isolation or quarantine. By the end of March, Weston had 44 cases and 49 contacts either isolated or quarantined.

During this time, it was clear that additional personnel would be required to stay abreast of the demand for contact tracing. The School Department offered the services of the school nurses making it possible to maintain the pace of newly identified infections. Laurie Melchionda, M.Ed., BSN, RN, School Health Director, led her team of Weston Public School nurses along with Janet Guertin-Moruzzi, BSN, RN, NCSN, the Regional School Nurse Consultant for Central Massachusetts, joined the Board of Health COVID Response Team.



This group of nurses worked tirelessly for three months to contact and offer guidance and emotional support to the more than 235 individuals impacted by the rapid spread of the virus. In June, the Board of Health, School Department, and the Weston Emergency Management team suffered a devastating loss when Laurie Melchionda was murdered. She will be remembered for her commitment to public health and her brilliant, energetic, compassionate, and tireless efforts to educate and plan effective strategies for the safety of the Weston community.

Following the loss of Ms. Melchionda, the Board of Health hired Michele Fronk-Schuckel, MBA, BSN, RN as the COVID-19 Response Manager. The Board of Health is appreciative to all of the citizens in the community who cooperated with their isolation and quarantine requirements. These measures helped prevent the community spread of the COVID-19 disease.

Food Safety

The Department inspects all food establishments routinely. A total of 13 foodservice reviews and inspections were conducted during 2020 for 49 food permits. During the inspection process, all minor violations cited were corrected promptly.

Camp Safety

Staff inspects all recreational camps for children routinely. A total of seven camp reviews and inspections were conducted during the 2020 season for six licensed camps. Education and materials were provided about sun safety, heat exhaustion, and protection from mosquitoes and ticks.

Pool/Beach Safety

Department staff inspects all public, semi-public, and special purpose pools routinely. A total of 33 pool and beach reviews and inspections were conducted for 32 pool permits during the 2020 season. All facilities are maintaining compliance with The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. Public and semi-public beaches were inspected and permitted following Mass. Department of Public Health's Beach Regulations 105 CMR 445.000 Minimum Standards for Bathing Beaches. Water testing results are monitored weekly throughout the bathing season.

Emergency Preparedness

The Board of Health conducted a successful Seasonal Flu Vaccine Clinic in 2020 administering 200 doses of vaccine purchased with funds from insurance claims for the administration of flu vaccine. The clinics were made possible with the strong support and careful planning by the Weston Emergency Reserve Corps, a branch of the Massachusetts Region 4A Medical Reserve Corps. The plans included space for adequate physical distancing, sanitizing the building and equipment, managing patient flow, and proper donning and doffing of personal protective equipment. The Board of Health is appreciative of the Emergency Reserve Corps Executive Committee and its Chairman Rudy Ruggles for providing volunteer service to the Weston community throughout the year. The Board would also like to thank Elisabeth DiPietro, MD who was appointed as the Medical Health Director.

Environmental Health

All residential properties in Weston are served by individual septic systems. Title V of the State Environmental Code is a set of regulations established by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection that sets standards for the design and construction of septic systems. The Board of Health is responsible for the enforcement of this code and invests approximately 80 percent of the Department's time enforcing Title V regulations.

Enforcement of Title V consists of the witnessing of percolation and deep test holes, review of septic system plans, and installation inspections of the new systems and wells. Inspections of existing septic systems and renovation projects require research of existing files to establish abutting lot and site conditions. Building renovation projects are all reviewed to ensure that the proposed work is following Title V regulations.

Several large complexes require sewage treatment plants that have groundwater discharge permits issued through the Department of Environmental Protection. Reports are forwarded to the Board of Health and are reviewed to establish that the treatment plants are operating within the parameters of the permit.

Staff also works to ensure that the air quality is protected during construction and renovation projects by reviewing projects for asbestos, lead, and all hazardous materials and monitoring projects to determine compliance with all relevant regulations.

Administrative Training Meetings	63	30	70
Housing/Nuisance Complaint Investigations/Meetings	10	24	24
Communicable Disease Investigation	123	98	1,026
Emergency Preparedness Meeting	31	38	288
Community Health and Wellness Meetings/Training	21	33	221
Inspections/Reviews/Meetings - Total	2,986	3,807	4,217
Administrative			
Phone Calls	4,243	4,615	18,809
Research	2,864	2,981	5170
Emails	20,604	18,124	45,078
Letters	450	447	429
Faxes	583	865	683
Administrative Totals	28,744	27,032	70,169
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Total Revenue	\$151,412.23	\$135,889.00	\$149,620.00

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING

The Council on Aging (COA) is a community resource and knowledge center for the entire town. The COA provides community programming, social services, transportation, volunteer opportunities, and resources for older adults and their friends, as well as families and supporters. The Board of the Council on Aging is comprised of nine to 13 Weston residents appointed by the Select Board. Board members dedicate their efforts to the achievement of the COA mission and serve on subcommittees and working groups that are focused on awareness, transportation, needs assessment, governance, community connections, and housing.



COA Funding

The COA budget is supplemented by a variety of other sources, including the Friends of Weston's Council on Aging, grants, a formula grant from the state's Executive Office of Elder Affairs, user fees, individual donations from residents, and donor-advised funds to cover the operating and capital expenses of the Department. The formula grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs was only \$12 per older adult in Weston based on the 2010 federal census, which totaled \$32,952 and is subject to change every year.

Services

The COA social workers provide information and referrals, application assistance, family meetings, support towards aging at home, resources for caregivers, guidance around housing, and many other supports.

The COA also offers durable medical equipment loans, food pantry, file of life, Weston Service Program, fuel assistance applications, free tax preparation from AARP volunteers, friendly call program, SHINE

counselors, and various support groups. During 2020, the COA experienced a 25 percent increase in the demand for services.

Events and Community Programs

Pre-pandemic, the COA was providing high-quality on-site programs for older adults at the Community Center. These included fitness programs, social service programs, educational opportunities, card games, and drop-in social gatherings.

Highlights pre-pandemic included a robust Chinese New Year celebration and a new partnership with the Cambridge School of Weston for use of their walking track. Once the coronavirus public health emergency set in, town buildings were closed to residents and staff. The COA staff continued to work from home to provide support for Weston's older adults. Within two weeks of the Community Center closing to the public, fitness programs were held via an online meeting platform. Other programs were also held online when possible and some programs were suspended during the building closure. As public health restrictions were slowly lifted, COA staff return on-site at a limited capacity. To address concerns of isolation and technology disparity, residents were allowed to make an appointment to visit the Community Center to attend online programs. Public health guidelines were followed to allow only a few people, or a family, to participate while maintaining a proper physical distance. As a result, residents who are not comfortable with technology could continue to participate in the COA programs while also providing in-person interaction with the COA staff. This on-site availability helped to remediate feelings of isolation and loneliness for residents separated from family and friends during this challenging time.

COA Response to COVID-19



Food Insecurity - The COA delivered 55 boxes of produce and food staples to residents in May of 2020. At this time people were being told to stay at home if possible, and resources were scarce. During the summer months, Land's Sake Farm provided 30 boxes of local produce to residents in need, which supplied 60 residents with food every other week. The COA is forever thankful to Land's Sake for making this commitment during such a difficult year.

Supplies - The COA sourced public health emergency-related supplies such as masks, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towels, thermometers, and antibacterial wipes and provided them to residents at cost.

Intergenerational Community Programs - COA Board members planned and executed two intergenerational outdoor programs to safely bring the community together. In October, a tai chi class was offered on the field next to the Community Center and in November a trail walk on the new Legacy Trail was organized. Residents of all ages took part and were able to enjoy a safe outdoor community activity.

Veterans Day Give-Away - Despite not being able to provide an in-person meal this year, we could not let the opportunity go by without thanking our veterans for their service to the country. Veterans were invited to pick up a meal with acknowledgment and appreciation for their service.

Thanksgiving Meals - The holidays were different this year with so many not traveling due to another surge in COVID-19 infections. The COA provided 200 free complete turkey dinners that were delivered by volunteers on Thanksgiving Day.

Holiday Happiness - The Women’s Community League provided robust bags of cheer for residents. The volunteers from the League set up shop at the Community Center to pass out presents to residents at a festive drive-through event.

Transportation

Pre-pandemic, the COA purchased an MV-1 with the financial assistance of the Friends of the Weston Council on Aging. The vehicle is wheelchair accessible and allows the transport of a smaller number of people without having to use the Weston Shuttle 14-passenger van.

During the pandemic, the COA received a \$5,000 grant from Metropolitan Area Planning Council to provide residents with taxi rides to medical appointments. The rides were free to residents and included rides into Boston medical facilities.

Website Redesign

During the summer of 2020, the COA website underwent a dramatic redesign with a specific department header that allows for information about older adults to be more easily obtained by residents and caregivers. The new site went live in November.

COA Gives Back

The COA collects for a nonprofit every year during the holidays. This year, three holiday drives were organized:

- Hundreds of books were collected for Operation Paperback and sent to active military and veterans
- Suits and business attire were collected for Suits for Smiles to provide low-income men with job interview-appropriate clothing
- Supply kits were donated for the women at Rosie’s Place

We are always overwhelmed with the generosity of the Weston community and thank them for their donations to these worthy organizations. The drives also allowed residents the opportunity to do some cleaning of books and clothing and to visit with staff members.



Staff Changes

This year, we said goodbye to social workers Ireta Metchik and Michelle Gucciardi. Michelle has moved on to a different position and Ireta decided to retire. A car parade was organized so that residents could say goodbye to Ireta who has worked with Weston residents for many years.



The COA welcomed a new social worker Joyce McSweeney.

2020 Council on Aging Board

Appointed by the Select Board

Margaret Ackerman	2022	Linda Johnson	2024	<i>Associate Members</i>
Sue Ruskin Friend	2023	Wayne Johnson	2023	Alice Benson
Betsey Brew Boyd	2023	Jean MacQuiddy	2021	Melissa Galton
Jane Donnelly	2023	Thomas Nicholson	2021	Vida Goldstein
Leslye Fligor	2022	Carol Ott	2024	Teresa Young
Robert Froh	2023	Prather Palmer	2021	

REPORT OF THE EAST MIDDLESEX MOSQUITO CONTROL PROJECT

The East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project conducts a program in Weston consisting of mosquito surveillance, adult and larval mosquito control, ditch maintenance, and public education.

This year was the second warmest year recorded for Middlesex County according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration since records began in 1895. Precipitation over the entire year was 2 inches less than the average recorded between 1895-1983. The below-average precipitation for each month from May through September led to drought conditions in Middlesex County.

The total mosquito population was below average in spring due to a dry winter (2019/2020) and cooler spring temperatures that came close to normal by the late spring/early summer. From mid-summer on the mosquito populations plummeted due to low precipitation and high heat. The summer floodwater mosquitoes were at their second-lowest levels since 2000 (only 2017 was lower). In contrast, the high heat and dry conditions of 2020 led to high *Culex pipiens/restuans* populations. They were almost as high as the record high from 2017. *Culiseta melanura* populations were at their 6th lowest since 2000, which is 52 percent of normal.



The adult mosquito surveillance program monitored mosquitoes from 12 trap collections in Weston. Mosquito samples from those trap collections were sent to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to be tested for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile virus (WNV). All pools tested negative for EEE and WNV.

The larval mosquito control program relied on the larvicides *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis* (Bti) and methoprene. Bti is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as relatively non-toxic. Methoprene is classified as relatively non-toxic when ingested or inhaled and slightly toxic through dermal absorption. In early May, a helicopter was used to apply Bti granules to 136.5 wetland acres to control spring floodwater mosquitoes. Field crews using portable sprayers applied Bti in the spring and summer to 6.25 wetland acres when high densities of mosquito larvae were found in stagnant water. Methoprene was applied to 1,200 catch basins to control *Culex pipiens/restuans* mosquito larvae. In Massachusetts, *Culex pipiens/restuans* mosquitoes are considered to be the primary vectors for WNV.

For adult mosquito control, crews sprayed one time using a truck-mounted aerosol sprayer after survey traps collected high mosquito populations. The East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project uses a pesticide product called Anvil 10+10 with the active ingredient, Sumithrin, which is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as slightly toxic. Advance notification of spraying was done through notices on the town's website and the Weston Town Crier.

An excavator was used to maintain drainage for 603 feet of ditch in Weston. Hand tools were used to clear obstructions from 5,120 feet of ditch. Ditch maintenance reduces the amount of mosquito breeding habitat.

The Project's public education program is designed to develop awareness within the public and the private sectors as to their roles in mosquito control. It serves as a resource to residents, municipal

officials, and the local media on mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases. A web page located at sudbury.ma.us/emmcp provides residents with information on mosquitoes, control programs, and related topics.

REPORT OF THE ELDERLY HOUSING COMMITTEE

Even under the restrictions of an unprecedented global pandemic, the residents of the Brook School Apartments managed to maintain their independence and find outlets for their interests. Many joined the monthly online Committee meetings and others engaged in online activities and informative lectures offered by the Council on Aging. Social events ceased and common areas were closed due to coronavirus concerns, yet residents persevered and remained positive.

The efforts of Monyette Vickers, property manager, Ed Jarobski, maintenance specialist, and Karin Ott, housing certification specialist, to ensure a sterile environment cannot be overemphasized. All surfaces were regularly and rigorously disinfected and essential supplies such as face masks and hand sanitizer stations were readily available. The safety of the residents was paramount. The fact that there were no reported cases of the virus testifies to the vigilance of the staff as well as to the compliance with protocols on the part of the residents. The apartment community is indeed proud of this enviable record.

Despite the restrictions imposed within the buildings, there was a record of considerable accomplishments. A plaque honoring former Committee Chair Jack Heine's 23 years of service to the community was unveiled on Building D, which was built due to his efforts. The patio in Building D was converted to a beautiful seasonal greenhouse for all residents to enjoy, no matter the weather. Residents Paul and Rachel Bau spearheaded the task force, which executed the tranquil space.

Brook School Apartments continues to attract newcomers and the waitlist grew during this past year. The popularity of the complex attests to the fact that Weston needs more affordable senior housing, which remains a goal of the Committee. Ten vacancies occurred in 2020, which, despite the virus, have been filled.

Residents said fond goodbyes to Housing Certification Specialist Karin Ott and Social Worker Ireta Metchik as they moved on to other professional opportunities and retirement, respectively. Both Karin and Ireta formed close relationships with many tenants during their time here and they will be missed.

Everyone connected with the Brook School Apartments, residents, staff, and the Committee, looks forward to the time when robust activities and social gatherings can resume. In the interim, everyone is grateful for the safe, expertly managed facility at 44 School Street.

2020 Members of the Elderly Housing Committee

Appointed by the Moderator

Tom Timko, Chair	2023
Melissa Brokalakis	2021
James F. Chace	2022
John Hennessey	2021
Carol Ott	2022

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL HOUSING SERVICES OFFICE

The Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) is a collaboration between the towns of Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston with Concord as the Host Community. The Office has been operating since 2012, providing technical support for the administration of 5,118 housing units included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory in this regional service area, 331 units in Weston. Town Planner Imaikalani Aiu serves as Weston's representative on the RHSO Advisory Board.

The RHSO helps municipalities plan, permit, monitor, maintain, and increase their affordable housing inventory and was modeled upon the following three premises:

- Develop a regional approach for finding common solutions for common challenges, looking at housing through a municipal lens
- Make efficient use of resources, both leveraging knowledgeable staff and providing shared access to affordable housing opportunities for residents
- Proactively monitor the community's affordable housing inventory to ensure the preservation of the units

The municipalities served by the RHSO pay an annual membership fee to the Town of Concord, which covers the staffing and administrative expenses of the Office. The member communities are annually allocated hours for housing specialists to provide core services and technical expertise, in a staff augmentation approach, with no requirement for hiring, contracting, training, or supporting such personnel. Each year, municipalities served by the RHSO approve a commitment of hours based on the prior year's actual hours expended by Office staff and the anticipated local need in the coming year.

Weston's Cost

Weston's agreement includes a total of 370 hours per fiscal year exclusively for access to four part-time affordable housing consultants and staff support for the Affordable Housing Trust. Weston's share of the project cost in fiscal year 2020 was \$32,498 for 391 hours. For fiscal 2021, Weston's share of the project cost was proposed at \$28,854 for 370 hours; however, this projection did not include some additional support for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program or work to update the Housing Production Plan. The hours are now projected to be 543 for a cost of \$42,698 for fiscal 2021. This program is primarily funded through the use of Community Preservation Act Funds.

RHSO Activities for Weston

The past year, RHSO staff:

- Assisted the Affordable Housing Trust in carrying out its mission of providing and preserving affordable housing and review affordable housing projects being carried out under MGL Chapter 40B
- Provided staff support to the Affordable Housing Trust including the preparation of meeting agendas and packets
- Assisted in drafting and issuing a Request for Proposal to identify a developer to convey 0 Wellesley Street, a municipally-owned parcel, for affordable housing purposes. Habitat for Humanity was selected as the developer.
- Assisted in ongoing owner management of the Trust-owned, seven-unit Warren Avenue housing development. This included ongoing asset management and annual budget review.
- Administered the second round of funding for the Home Repair Grant Program with four grants awarded in 2019 and projects closed out in 2020.
- Assisted the Elderly Housing Committee by compiling and submitting the application to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to have the units in Building D at the Brook School Apartments added to Weston's Subsidized Housing Inventory

through the Local Initiative Project/Local Action Units application process. DHCD reviewed the application in late December.

- Began assisting the Council on Aging's Senior Housing Sub-committee on a special project to coordinate a Housing Roundtable, which was planned for March but put on hold due to the public health emergency.
- Worked with Town Planner to submit a request to DHCD to certify the Housing Production Plan with the issuance of a Comprehensive Permit for the development of 751-761 Boston Post Road. DHCD approved the request and the Town's Housing Production Plan is certified through November 2022, putting Weston in a Safe Harbor status under MGL 40B
- Provided values of restricted properties to Assessors' Office
- Monitored both affordable rental and homeownership units in town
- Provided support to the Affordable Housing Trust to request Community Preservation Act funds for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program and began the administration of the program in November 2020.
- Assisted the Affordable Housing Trust and the Select Board with securing a consultant to help update Weston's Housing Production Plan, drafted the Priority Housing Needs Assessment and provided the administrative and technical support for the Housing Production Plan Steering Committee.

REPORT OF THE WEST SUBURBAN VETERANS' SERVICES DISTRICT

The West Suburban Veterans' Services District includes the towns of Weston, Wayland, Wellesley, and Needham. The district board is comprised of four members each designated by the Select Board from each community. The district office assists and facilitates the needs of veterans and their families with financial benefits from both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Veteran Affairs. The central office is located in the Wellesley Town Hall with satellite offices in each member town to provide services more conveniently for veterans and their families.

Sgt. 1st Class Sarada Kalpee is the Director of Veterans' Services for the district towns. In August 2020, Ms. Kalpee was called upon Active duty to deploy in Africa. Nancy Blanchard was hired as the District's new Deputy Director of the district, to continue to assist all veteran matters until Ms. Kalpee's return in summer 2021.

In Ms. Kalpee's absence, Ms. Blanchard will carry out the functions assigned to the Veterans' Office by Chapter 115 of the General Laws of Massachusetts by assisting in applying for U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs benefits, maintaining a depository of discharges and records of veterans, and overseeing the disbursements of veterans' benefits.



*Weston Veterans Day Grab-n-Go Luncheon
at the Council on Aging*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town Hall and Council on Aging were closed to the public but office hours were held by appointment only or virtually. The office hours will remain in effect until further notice. A full range of benefits and services are still available to veterans and their families based on certain qualifications and

eligibility requirements. Veterans and family members may contact the department with any questions or to schedule appointments.

Despite the pandemic, the Department continued to speak with many Weston veterans, spouses, widows of veterans, and dependents. Many inquiries included assistance during the public health crisis, picking up grave flags and markers, and obtaining a copy of discharge papers to file for veteran benefits, burial benefits, and other various available benefits.

2020 Highlights

- Provided \$2,424.90 in Chapter 115 benefits to Weston Veteran residents
- Welcome letters were sent to over 350 Veterans introducing Nancy Blanchard and sharing benefit and updated COVID-19 information
- Perishable food kits were delivered to eligible Veteran families from the Food for Vets program
- Partnered with Weston Fire Department in September 11th ceremony and placing of flags in front of the Town Hall
- The Veterans Day Ceremony spearheaded by Graves Officer, Richard Turner in November honoring all Veterans received tremendous feedback
- Collaborated with the Council on Aging is hosting the Veterans Day Grab-n-Go Luncheon
- Attended the Women's Veterans Network 12th Annual Conference (held virtually)

West Suburban Veterans' Services District Board Representative

Appointed by the Select Board: Leon A. Gaumont, Jr., Town Manager

