

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN

## SEEKONK

Administrator's  
Message

Hello Seekonk,

With March here, I'm excited for the warmer weather ahead. As the days get longer, I encourage everyone to take advantage of our beautiful trails and playground. Whether you're walking, running, or just spending time outdoors, it's a great way to stay active and enjoy our community.

I hope you enjoy the second edition of the newsletter and I look forward to your feedback!



## Seekonk Scores Big with Boston Bruins PJ Drive—A Community Win!

The Town of Seekonk is proud to celebrate the success of our recent **Boston Bruins PJ Drive**! Now in its 18th year, this annual drive benefits **Cradles to Crayons** and **Wonderfund MA**, two nonprofits dedicated to providing essential items for children in need.

Since joining the initiative in 2017, **Seekonk Public Library** has led the charge, rallying the community to support local children. This year, the effort expanded town-wide, bringing multiple departments together for even greater impact. The **Seekonk Police Department**, in partnership with **Target and Walmart**, collected donations on-site, helping the drive reach new heights!

The excitement peaked on February 19th when Cradles to Crayons, MBLC, and the Boston Bruins brought a special surprise to the Seekonk Public Library—a visit from Bruins mascot Blades and comfort dog Oliver! Blades delighted children with a fun-filled storytime, while families enjoyed crafts, cupcakes, and goodie bags, making it a truly memorable event.

A **heartfelt thank you** to everyone who donated and helped spread the word! Donations are accepted through March 15th.

**Let's keep the kindness going, Seekonk!**





## THE VOICE BEHIND THE SIGNAL: NICHOLAS RONDEAU KEEPS SEEKONK CONNECTED

When it comes to keeping Seekonk's first responders connected, Nicholas Rondeau is the man behind the mic—literally. As the Town's Dispatch Emergency Specialist, he's the expert ensuring that police, fire, and dispatch communications run smoothly. From managing radio handhelds for emergency personnel to maintaining the town's radio towers and sites, Nicholas plays a critical role in making sure the systems our first responders rely on are always operational. If there's a signal to be sent, Nicholas is the one making it happen.

But his dedication doesn't stop there. Nicholas is also one of the Town's leads on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), a volunteer program that educates residents about disaster preparedness and response. He doesn't just work behind the scenes—he steps up, giving his time to train and support others, ensuring Seekonk is ready when emergencies strike. His commitment to public safety extends far beyond the dispatch center, making a lasting impact on the town he serves.



Employee Spotlight

**NICHOLAS RONDEAU**

**Dispatch Emergency Specialist**

**What's your favorite local spot in Seekonk?** My favorite local spot in Seekonk would have to be Benny's. Since they closed, I would have to say a combination of Ace, Target, and Dollar General. They are equivalent to Benny's with the exception of getting vehicle tires and bicycles. A local food spot would have to be Toti's and Newport Creamery.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be?** A superpower, never really thought about it. It would have to be being able to duplicate myself multiple times and then merging the duplicates back into myself.

Whether he's troubleshooting a radio tower, coordinating emergency communication, or mentoring volunteers, Nicholas is an essential part of Seekonk's emergency response network. The town is incredibly lucky to have someone with his expertise, dedication, and passion for service. Next time you hear a first responder over the radio, remember the man behind the mic—Nicholas Rondeau, keeping Seekonk connected.



## Get Ready to Vote: Seekonk's Annual Town Election on April 7th

Mark your calendars for **April 7th**, Seekonk's Annual Town Election is just around the corner! The ballot will feature a variety of important races, including candidates for **School Committee, Board of Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen, Water Commissioner, Planning Board, and Board of Assessors.**

In addition to the candidate races, there will be a binding ballot question concerning the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School **debt exclusion**. This vote will have a direct impact on funding for the school, so your participation is crucial.

Your vote matters in shaping the future of our community. Make sure you're informed about the candidates and the ballot question, and don't forget to head to the polls on April 7th!

### Early Voting - Town Hall

Monday, March 31: 8:30AM-4:30PM  
Tuesday, April 1: 8:30AM-4:30PM  
Wednesday, April 2: 8:30AM-7:00PM  
Thursday, April 3: 8:30AM-4:30PM  
Friday, April 4: 8:30AM-12:00PM





## A NEW CHAPTER: SWEARING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF SEEKONK'S FINEST

The Seekonk Police Department is taking another significant step toward strengthening its team, as the latest round of academy graduates are sworn in, bringing the department closer to its goal of a fully staffed force. With the addition of **Jacob Cuoco, Sean Feeney, Michaela Healy, Paul Riccio, Nicholas Viveiros, and David White**, the department is now well on its way to reaching the budgeted 44 full-time equivalents (FTEs), enhancing its ability to serve and protect our community.

These new officers have completed rigorous training at the police academy and are now ready to begin their service in Seekonk. Their commitment, dedication, and hard work will play a vital role in maintaining the safety and well-being of our residents. As the department continues to grow, so too does its capacity to respond to emergencies, engage with the community, and ensure that Seekonk remains a safe place for all.

This new round of graduates marks not just a milestone in staffing but also a renewed commitment to the values of law enforcement and public service. Each of these officers brings a fresh perspective and a deep commitment to serving our community, making Seekonk a better and safer place every day.



### Saturday, March 15th ANNUAL RABIES CLINIC

The Rabies clinic is open to Seekonk and non-resident animal owners of dogs, cats, and ferrets.

For MA and RI animal owners, in order to be issued a MA three-year Rabies certificate you must bring your previous rabies certificate from your veterinarian or clinic.

Dr. Truesdale from Central Ave Veterinary Hospital will be administering the vaccinations.



## DON'T MISS OUT: ANNUAL TOWN MEETING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

As we approach **May 12th**, it's time to get ready for Seekonk's Annual Town Meeting, a cornerstone of our local democracy and a chance for you to make a real impact on our community's future. Town Meeting is your opportunity to bring forward ideas, vote on important matters, and engage directly in decisions that will shape our town for years to come.

This year's meeting will be held at **Seekonk High School at 7:00 p.m.**, and it's an event you won't want to miss. Remember, the deadline for submitting articles to the warrant is quickly approaching—**March 7th**. If you have a proposal or issue you'd like to raise, now is the time to act.

Attending Town Meeting is not just about voting, it's about joining the conversation. It's about having your voice heard alongside your neighbors, debating the issues that matter most, and helping steer Seekonk toward a bright future.

Mark your calendar for May 12th, review the warrant, and get involved. Let's come together to make Seekonk an even better place to live, work, and grow.





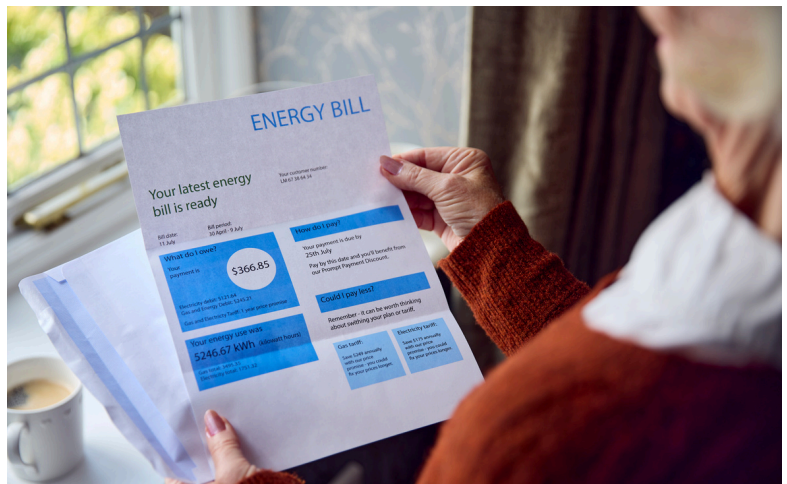
## SOARING ENERGY BILLS IN MASSACHUSETTS: RELIEF EFFORTS UNDERWAY

Source: State House News Service

Massachusetts residents have been hit with unexpectedly high energy bills this winter, prompting Gov. Maura Healey to demand immediate action. In a letter to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), Healey highlighted concerns over steep natural gas rate increases and urged regulators to provide urgent relief. She noted the financial strain on residents and emphasized the importance of protecting customers from service shut-offs during the winter months.

Lawmakers are also stepping in. Led by Sen. Jacob Oliveira, 80 legislators sent a letter to the DPU, calling for a review of rate hikes and increased accountability for Eversource, which has been at the center of many complaints. Lawmakers cited a case where an Eversource customer's January bill reached nearly \$450, with nearly \$300 attributed to supply costs. Customers of National Grid are also facing rate increases of up to 27%.

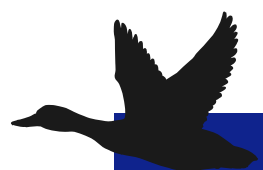
In response, the DPU said it is reviewing both Healey's and lawmakers' letters and is working with gas companies to explore options for immediate rate relief. The agency has also been focused on broader energy affordability efforts, which include tiered discounts and other programs to help low- and moderate-income households manage energy costs. Eversource has defended the rate increases, pointing to colder



temperatures and increased energy usage. The utility explained that even if customers do not change their thermostat settings, more energy is needed to maintain indoor temperatures when it's colder outside. January 2025 was reportedly 15% colder than December 2024 and 10% colder than January 2024. However, the company assured customers that it is committed to making energy more affordable and has scheduled webinars to explain bills and available assistance programs.

Gov. Healey also called on utilities to do a better job promoting cost-saving programs like Mass Save, which provides incentives for energy efficiency improvements and heat pump conversions. She stressed the need for more transparency and predictability in future rate changes to prevent customers from being blindsided by sudden price hikes.

With winter far from over, all eyes are now on the DPU and utility companies to take meaningful action. Residents are hopeful that relief measures will be implemented soon to ease the burden of rising energy bills and stabilize future costs.





## SOCIAL MEDIA VS. CIVIL DISCOURSE: FINDING A BETTER WAY TO ENGAGE

One of the biggest challenges facing local governments today isn't funding, infrastructure, or staffing—more than any budgetary challenge, civility has become one of the greatest obstacles. The way we engage with one another, especially when we disagree, directly impacts how effective our community can be in solving problems. In recent years, social media has changed the way we communicate, making it easier than ever to share opinions, but it has also amplified negativity, turning discussions combative or even personal.

Local government works best when people come together to solve problems, even when they don't always see eye to eye. Disagreements are a natural part of any community, but when those disagreements turn into personal attacks, name-calling, or an "us vs. them" mentality, progress grinds to a halt. Social media, while valuable for spreading information, has made it far too common for discussions to become heated without the accountability that comes from looking someone in the eye and having a real conversation.

The truth is, advocacy is most effective when it's driven by respect, not aggression. The most successful efforts come from those who know how to present their ideas thoughtfully, listen to different perspectives, and find ways to move forward together. We don't have to agree on everything, but we do have to work together. When conversations stay civil, solutions become possible.



As a community, we have a choice in how we engage with one another. Do we want to foster an environment where people feel safe to speak up, contribute ideas, and work toward solutions? Or do we want to create a space where only the loudest or most combative voices are heard? If we truly care about our community, then we must commit to making advocacy about ideas, not insults, and problem-solving, not personal attacks.

One of the greatest strengths of Seekonk is its sense of community. We are neighbors, colleagues, and friends, all invested in making this town the best it can be. That means holding passionate discussions, raising concerns, and advocating for what we believe in, while still treating each other with respect. The way we engage today will shape the kind of community we have tomorrow. If we want a Seekonk built on collaboration, progress, and mutual respect, then it starts with how we speak, listen, and work together.

Seekonk thrives when we advocate with purpose and respect. Let's keep pushing for progress, together, and with positivity.





## REP. HOWITT SECURES \$10,000 FOR SEEKONK PUBLIC LIBRARY'S TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

State Representative Steven Howitt has once again delivered for Seekonk, securing a \$10,000 earmark in the state budget to help the Seekonk Public Library replace outdated computer equipment. This funding will provide much-needed upgrades to ensure residents have access to modern, reliable technology.

Earmarks are specific allocations in the state budget that direct funding to particular projects or initiatives, ensuring that critical local needs are met. These funds allow municipalities to make improvements without solely relying on local budgets or taxpayer increases.

Rep. Howitt has a strong record of advocating for Seekonk's needs at the state level, consistently securing earmarks that fund essential community projects. Past successes include funding for the public safety traffic signal, the senior center elevator, and the removal of the Maple Avenue Dam.

"Ensuring Seekonk receives its fair share of state funding has always been a priority," said Rep. Howitt. "These investments improve public resources and enhance the quality of life for our residents."

With this latest funding, the Seekonk Public Library will be able to provide better digital access and learning opportunities for the community, reinforcing its role as a vital hub for education and technology.

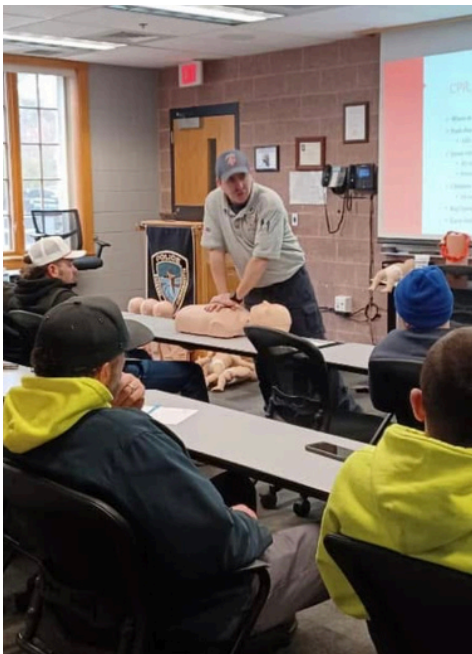


## TEAMWORK IN ACTION: DPW GETS CRITICAL TRAINING

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is receiving critical emergency response training, thanks to the collaboration with **Lieutenant Goodwin** from the Fire Department. This isn't the first time the two departments have worked side by side to ensure that DPW staff is well-prepared for emergency situations.

The training helps equip DPW personnel with the skills they need to not only protect their coworkers but also their family, friends, and the community at large.

By working together, the DPW and Fire Department are reinforcing the importance of preparation in times of crisis, ensuring that Seekonk's frontline workers are always ready for any challenge that comes their way. It's a testament to the dedication and teamwork between departments that keeps our town safe.



## ACCESS FOR ALL: THE VITAL WORK OF SEEKONK'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Municipal Commissions on Disability (CODs) play a crucial role in advocating for accessibility and inclusion within their communities. CODs advise municipal governments on the needs of people with disabilities, ensuring that local programs, services, and facilities remain accessible to all. By providing guidance on compliance with federal and state disability laws, CODs help shape policies that create a more inclusive environment.

Seekonk's Commission on Disability works to amplify the voices of residents with disabilities and address accessibility concerns across town affairs. The commission assists with the town's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, reviews development projects for accessibility considerations, and collaborates with municipal departments to improve compliance with disability regulations. Additionally, CODs serve as a vital link between the town, advocates, and state agencies such as the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to stay updated on evolving laws and best practices.



### Board Spotlight

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

**Members:** 5 to 13

**Term:** 3 year terms

**Vacancies:** 4 to 13

A majority of members must be people with disabilities,

One member must be an elected or appointed municipal official, and

One member must be an immediate family member to a person with a disability.

Beyond policy and planning, the commission is dedicated to fostering awareness and advocating for improvements that benefit the entire community. Whether it's ensuring accessible public spaces, supporting inclusive programming, or advising town leaders, the commission's work is essential in making Seekonk a place where all residents can fully participate.

If you are passionate about accessibility and want to make a difference, consider volunteering for the Commission on Disability. Your voice and expertise can help shape a more inclusive future for Seekonk.

## CALL for VOLUNTEERS

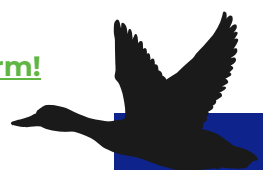


### Help Shape the Future – Volunteer for a Board or Committee

**Volunteer Opportunities** - volunteers are needed for the following boards and committees:

**Board of Registrars, Capital Improvement, Commission on Disability, Cultural Council, Energy Committee, Finance Committee, Historical Commission, Parks & Recreation, Recycling Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals.**

[Click here to fill out your Talent Bank Form!](#)





## THINK YOU KNOW SEEKONK? PROVE IT!

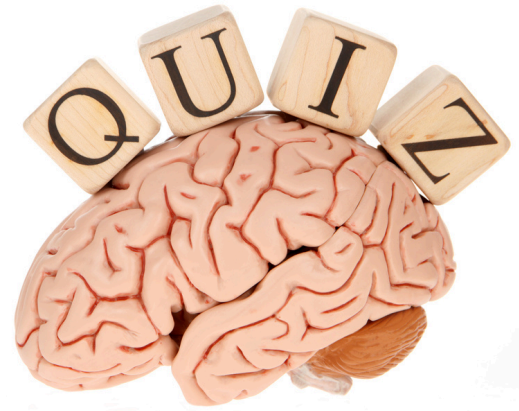
**WHICH MAJOR U.S. EVENT DELAYED THE OFFICIAL INCORPORATION OF SEEKONK IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY?**

Think you know the answer? Find out if you're right in next month's newsletter!

### February's Answer:

**What year was the town's oldest building constructed?** The William H. Hunt House dates back to 1690, which is located at 385 Jacob Street.

**Think you can stump Seekonk?** We're looking for fun and challenging trivia questions to feature in our monthly newsletter! Send your best Seekonk-themed questions and answers to Sandra Smith at [SaSmith@seekonk-ma.gov](mailto:SaSmith@seekonk-ma.gov) and see if you can leave the town guessing!



Seekonk's

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 1 - March 15th**  
18th Annual Boston Bruins PJ DRIVE
- **March 15th 9am - 12pm**  
Annual Rabies Clinic
- **March 29th 9am - 12pm**  
Household Hazardous Waste Day (Registration Required)

[Read More on our website](#)



## STAY CONNECTED



Town of Seekonk



[www.seekonk-ma.gov](http://www.seekonk-ma.gov)



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Town of Seekonk, Massachusetts

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