

DEERFIELD CURRENTS

The Engage: Deerfield Newsletter



ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION 2025

May 5, Monday, Town Hall
10 a.m.–8 p.m. See Ballot, Page 3.

ENGAGE: DEERFIELD

CHANNELING COMMUNITY INTERESTS INTO ACTION

PHOTOS! Engage Conversation: “Your Voice, Your Choice,” April 24



Thank you to **Tim Hilchey, Frank Leone, Sharyn Paciorek, Anne Curtis, Carey Etchells, Jason Heffner and Emily Gaylord** for listening to questions and ideas from Deerfield residents. *David Wolfram, Kathleen Watroba, Damian Fosnot and Kathleen O'Rourke not in attendance.*

Why Our Election and Annual Meeting Are Always, Always on a Monday (Never, Never on a Tuesday)

By Lili Dwight

Have you ever wondered why Deerfield holds Town Meeting and elections on Mondays, while state and national elections are on Tuesdays? Here's a quick look at how this tradition, rooted in the rhythms of an agrarian society, continues.

A Brief History of Town Meeting

Town meetings in New England date back to the 1600s, inspired by the Mayflower Compact and the need for settlers to divvy up land, settle disputes over escaped livestock and decide who would keep the town's swine under control. These gatherings were perfectly timed for farmers: held in March, just before the planting season began, when people weren't too busy with their fields.

Originally, Town Meeting included both voting on warrant articles and electing officers. The “warrant” was (and still is) a formal notice listing the business to be discussed, ensuring that everyone knew what was on the agenda and preventing any surprise topics. This system, formalized by the early 1700s, was designed for transparency and order, not for speed.

Why Separate Warrant Vote and Elections?

As town business grew more complex, Deerfield split the meeting in 1986: Warrant business on the last Monday in April, elections on the first Monday in May. This was done to keep meetings focused and avoids marathon sessions that would test even the hardest farmer's patience. As those who have attended meetings know, even this separation doesn't always prevent late nights, and Town Meeting can be extended if the Moderator and attendees agree that everyone's endurance has been stretched to its limit.

So, Why Mondays?

State and national elections are on Tuesdays, a day chosen in the 1800s to fit the farming and church schedules of the time. Deerfield's Monday meetings are a holdover from a time when the calendar revolved around plowing and planting, and (by bylaw) still avoid conflicts with bigger elections.

So next time you're at Town Meeting, just remember: We're still running local government on a schedule set by people who worried more about loose pigs and planting corn than about Zoom calls or soccer.

Or to quote the author Eliot Schrefer, “Tradition is just peer pressure from dead people.”

(If you are interested in reading more Eliot Schrefer, check him out on [Bookwurm](#) or through [Tilton Library](#).)



Alex hiking with daughter, Hazel

Meet Your Town Planner: Alex Galloway

Questions by Currents Staff

Q. Please give us a brief description of your job:

I am the Town Planner and Economic Development Coordinator. My job is to engage residents and business owners across town to garner input/ideas on any town planning initiatives and help see those to fruition. I work across all departments and committees at the Town and assist in the coordination of several projects, including the Elm Street Improvements Project, Town Campus and our Water/Wastewater Infrastructure Assessments, just to name a few.

Q. How do you start each day?

First thing in the morning, I enjoy a little quiet time and some incredible snuggles from my almost 1-year-old. At the office, I try to start each day by completing a few tasks on a list I created at the end of the previous day. I enjoy beginning the day with a few items completed.

Q. What are your favorite parts of your job?

Talking with people and problem solving. I love discussing projects/ideas with people and hearing multiple perspectives on the same topic. After these conversations and some additional research on policies/guiding documents, I enjoy continuing the conversation with a range of alternatives and considerations to create a feasible path forward.

Q. What's on your Town "To-Do" list?

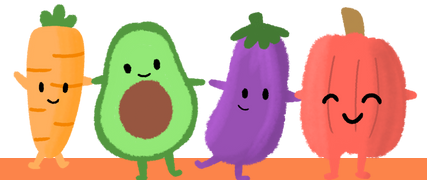
Connect with residents, project partners and regional partners to learn specifics on community development initiatives in Deerfield and regionally. As the planner, I'm also reading through our Town Bylaws, planning documents and feasibility studies. On a personal note, hiking the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail.

Q. What do you do for fun/laughs?

Spending time with my family is everything. My daughter is learning to navigate the world, and her curiosity with a small noise, cheering for each bite of food she eats or crawling inside a cardboard box (despite all her nearby toys) is the best part of each day. Our family loves to spend time outdoors — hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking and skiing (anything outside).

Q. What's the best way to contact you?

Email: planner@town.deerfield.ma.us; phone: (413) 665-1400, ext. 117; or stop in Town Hall. I am in several meetings every day, so if I am unavailable when you stop in, please feel free to email or call me to set up a time to connect.



Deerfield Inclusion Group GARDENING PROJECT

From Deerfield Inclusion Group (DIG): We have been plotting, planning and getting busy on a gardening project. In these stressful times, food resources are vital to so many. Our community is rich in land and in love. We hope our humble beginnings grow and provide some nourishment.

We are seeking donations to seed this endeavor. [Check out the list and sign up for what you can.](#) If you are growing food already at your home, please consider growing a little extra for a community harvest sharing.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING APRIL 28, 2025

All but one of the articles on the warrant were approved by the 322 residents present, which was the highest turnout for an Annual Town Meeting in at least 10 years. Here are some results:

✓ **The \$19.68 million fiscal year 2026 budget request was approved by a majority vote, without discussion.**

✓ **The Community Preservation Act Appropriation Requests were all passed.**
(These have no impact on taxes)

🛠️ **DES Playground request:** \$200,000 to replace the aging Deerfield Elementary playground. The School Department will cover the rest. New equipment will meet modern safety and accessibility standards.

🚤 **Tri-Town Beach District request:** \$16,000 for 100 more feet of floating dock at the Tri-Town Beach. Whately will match Deerfield's contribution.

🌲 **The Open Space Committee: Cost Share for MassTrails Grant:** \$18,000 to match a MassTrails grant for trail improvements near Pocumtuck Ridge. Phase 1 will enhance the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail and design a riverfront walking loop, expanding trail access and connectivity. The state will contribute \$52,000 toward the project.

🌿 **The Open Space Committee: Cost Share for Land Conservation Grant:** \$4,000 to match a \$35,730 state grant. The survey will help Deerfield identify areas of the parcel for future open-space protection.

🌾 **Agricultural Preservation Restriction Request:** \$19,000 contribution to protect approximately 21 acres of Melnik farmland. The state requires up to a 20 percent match from towns to demonstrate community support for the protection of farmland.

✓ **Changing the constable role from an elected position into a Selectboard-appointed role in 2026 was passed by a majority vote.**

✗ **A citizen's petition that would have asked the state Legislature to lower the municipal voting age to 16 was rejected.**

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

Monday, May 5, 2025
Town Hall | 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

SELECTBOARD

(3-year term, vote for 1)

- Timothy John Hilchey, Candidate for Re-election
- David William Wolfram

ASSESSOR

(3-year term, vote for 1)

- Frank E. Leone Jr., Candidate for Re-election

CONSTABLE

(3-year term, vote for 1)

- Sharyn A. Paciorek, Candidate for Re-election

DEERFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(3-year term, vote for 2)

- Anne Curtis, Candidate for Re-election
- Carey B. Etchells, Candidate for Re-election

ELECTOR UNDER OLIVER SMITH WILL

(1-year term, vote for 1)

- Jason P. Heffner

FRONTIER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(3-year term, vote for 1)

- Damian Fosnot, Candidate for Re-election

PLANNING BOARD

(3-year term, vote for 2)

- Emily Susan Gaylord, Candidate for Re-election
- Kathleen J. Watroba, Candidate for Re-election

TILTON LIBRARY TRUSTEE

(3-year term, vote for 1)

- Kathleen Susan O'Rourke, Candidate for Re-election

Around Town

HISTORIC DEERFIELD

Juneteenth Celebration Concert with Jake Blount

June 13, 7-8:30 p.m.

Deerfield Community Center

[Get Tickets Here](#)

Body by Design Exhibit

May 3, 2025 through Jan. 4, 2026

Flynt Center, 37 Old Main St.



Tilton Spring Story Time

All ages & abilities welcome. Drop in the children's room for a relaxed story hour, listen to books, play, make crafts and visit our bearded dragon! Story time takes place while the library is closed to the public.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

A friend sent me your newsletter knowing that I once lived in Deerfield and it holds a special place in my heart (my family lived there in the 1690s).

I appreciated the review of the Lucy Prince book, which I had read and from which I learned that Abijah's freedom was bought by Aaron Burt of Northfield, who was a very early abolitionist. I live on Burt Hill in Winchester, NH, which was part of Northfield at that time.

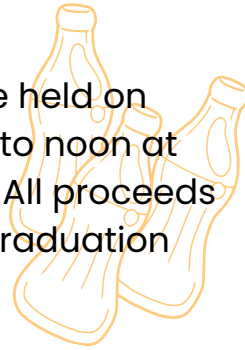
Last summer I met a Winchester Burt who knew nothing of his family's history but was proud to learn it, and I passed the book on to him.

It's important that we know about the slave trade in New England. We were brought up to believe that we New Englanders were the ones who fought to free the slaves, but that's only partially true. It really opened my eyes that even the ministers owned slaves.

Thanks, **Engage: Deerfield!** You are an inspiration.

-PJP, Winchester, NH

A **can and bottle drive** will be held on Saturday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to noon at Deerfield Elementary School. All proceeds will support the sixth grade graduation celebration and class gift.



The Flying Jackrabbits Fiddle Concert

May 24
11 a.m.

Tilton Library



Engage: Deerfield is a fiscally sponsored project of the Peace Development Fund. Make a tax-deductible donation by mail or online at: peacefund.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1660. By mail: The Peace Development Fund, PO Box 1280, Amherst, MA 01004-1280. Memo line: "Engage: Deerfield"