

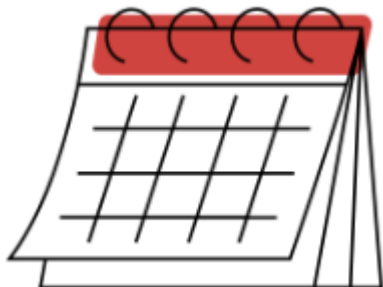
# NORTHFIELD TOWN HALL NEWSLETTER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024



## Calendar

The **Northfield Town Calendar** lists upcoming public meetings and events. View the calendar on the Town of Northfield website, where updates are made on a regular basis. Upcoming public meetings are also posted on the boards inside the lower-level entrance to Town Hall.



## Contact Town Hall

Residents can contact town staff by:

- Submitting a message through the **Online Contact Form**
- Calling the main Town Phone line at **413-498-2901**
- Contacting staff directly through the **Staff Directory**
- Visiting Town Hall Monday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Departments have differing times of availability, and we recommend calling before you arrive to ensure the office you need is open.

## Newsletter Sign-up

To receive the newsletter in your email inbox when a new issue is published, visit [www.northfieldma.gov/subscribe](http://www.northfieldma.gov/subscribe) or scan the QR code using your phone. Input your email address, check off the “Town News & Announcement” box, and click on the “Subscribe Me” button at the bottom of the page. You’ll receive all future Town Hall e-newsletters unless you unsubscribe.



## Happy New Year!

Happy New Year to all! As we turn the page from one year to the next, we are reminded of all that is possible. Over the past few years, residents involved with the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee have dedicated their time and energy to creating a calendar full of events to celebrate this monumental year, which were well-attended by people from near and far. So as we leave 2023 behind just a quick and heartfelt THANK YOU to all who worked, in any capacity, on this tremendous year – there are lots of you, and you know who you are! If you're inspired by their dedication and feel called to get involved, consider joining a town committee, attending a public meeting to learn more about what's happening, or simply sharing this newsletter with your neighbors this year.

In this edition of Northfield Town Hall's newsletter, we share practical reminders and exciting opportunities to look forward to. If you or someone you know would like to get the newsletter in your inbox, be sure to subscribe to this and other town updates at [www.northfieldma.gov/subscribe](http://www.northfieldma.gov/subscribe).

Here's to building on the momentum of Northfield's 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to a bright and purposeful 351<sup>st</sup> year!

-Andrea Llamas  
Town Administrator

## Take the Economic Development Community Survey

The Town of Northfield is issuing an economic development community survey to gather perspectives on economic opportunity in town that will help shape future goals and projects. The survey is open to all and is available online and on paper.

[The online survey can be completed using this form](#), and paper copies can be found at Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Dickinson Memorial Library. Share your thoughts and hopes today!

The Economic Development Community Survey is open until January 31<sup>st</sup>.

The graphic features a dark teal circle on the left with the text "What are your perspectives on and hopes for economic opportunity in Northfield?". Below this is a list of instructions: "To take the survey: • scan the QR code; • visit northfieldma.gov; or • find printed surveys at Town Hall, Northfield Senior Center, or the Library." A red arrow points from the instructions to a large QR code. To the right of the QR code is a dark red box with the text "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY" in white. Below the QR code is a light blue box with the text "SURVEY OPEN NOV. 27 TO JAN. 31". At the top right of the graphic is a small illustration of houses.

## Northfield Council on Aging Launches Memory Café – January 24<sup>th</sup>

Northfield's Council on Aging is launching a Memory Café for seniors and their caregivers. This program will provide support and socialization for adults 60 years and older affected by memory-related issues and their caregivers. The café is designed to create a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for all.

Meeting on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the hearing-enhanced Senior Center, an activity or entertainment and light lunch will be provided. Participants can socialize, listen to music, enjoy entertainment, and attend art classes and other activities both indoors and outside when weather permits. Care partners will benefit from a sense of respite through entertainment, education on coping skills, and companionship with others with similar experiences. Care partners and care recipients from any Town are welcome to attend.

The next Memory Café takes place on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>. To register or for more information, call the Senior Center 413 498-2901 x 114.

Programming is supported in part through the Massachusetts Councils on Aging. Northfield COA was one of 59 Councils on Aging across Massachusetts awarded a competitive FY24 Service Incentive Grant. This was a highly competitive process with over \$2.1 million requested by Councils. Congratulations to Colleen and the COA!

## EMS Regionalization Underway

In 2023, the Town of Northfield engaged the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center through a grant from the Massachusetts Community Compact to study the feasibility of regional expansion of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) department and make recommendations to develop the necessary framework for an enterprise-level service. Northfield EMS is providing paramedic-level service at a high level, with high satisfaction expressed by residents, partner towns (Bernardston, Erving, and Gill), and other public safety agencies.

With initial findings indicating that formal regionalization is a viable option, the Collins Center is supporting Northfield EMS and partner communities in developing an organizational, financial, and administrative structure for long-term sustainability. We are now working on applying for the next (implementation) grant in January to continue to explore the potential next steps. Interested in learning more? [Visit the EMS page on the Town website.](#)

## Winter Parking Ban/Snow on Town Streets/ Snow & Ice Removal

With winter upon us, here are [reminders of Town bylaws](#) related to snow and snow removal.

### **Snow On Town Streets**

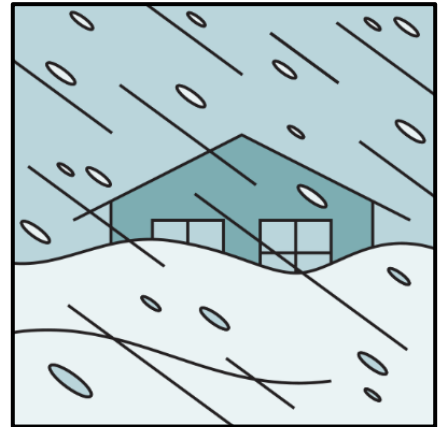
No person shall throw, or cause to be thrown, or put, any snow or ice from any privately owned property onto any street, land, alley, or other person's property in the Town. Penalty for violation of this regulation will be \$25.00 for each offense.

### **All Night Parking Ban in Winter**

Any vehicles left unattended, beginning December 1<sup>st</sup> and ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 11:00 pm and 7:00 am on Town highways will be towed at the owner's expense.

### **Snow/Ice Removal On Sidewalks**

Snow and ice shall be removed from sidewalks within the boundaries of the Town of Northfield on the streets named as follows: Main Street, Holton Street, Parker Avenue, Highland Avenue, and Mt. Hermon Station Road, from West Northfield Road north to the Vermont line; by the owner of land abutting upon said named streets within forty-eight (48) hours following the cessation of a snow/ice storm, by mechanical or other means.



## Town Receives Grant for Radar Speen Signage and Traffic Enforcement

The Town of Northfield was recently awarded a Municipal Road Safety grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The \$20,000 grant will help Northfield Police Department purchase two pole-mounted electronic speed radar signs and support speed limit enforcement. The signs will be positioned in high-traffic locations on Main Street in early 2024. Of the selected sites, Police Chief Jon Hall says "the locations were determined based on speed data collected by NPD and observational data by both officers and concerned residents. These new signs will encourage drivers exceeding the speed limit to observe the posted limit." Unlike the temporary speed radar trailer stationed on Main Street near Maple Street, these signs will be permanently installed.



## Northfield Recreation Commission Information

Northfield Recreation Commission (NRC) offers recreational activities to the residents of Northfield and surrounding towns. Most of our activities take place at Northfield Elementary School (NES) at 104 Main St.

We are a committee of five volunteers with a paid Director plus a year-round Recreational Attendant, and we offer Spring, Fall and Winter organized sports for kids ranging from Pre-Kindergarten to about 6<sup>th</sup> grade as well as many adult activities. In addition, we offer a Summer Program for kids going into kindergarten up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade for the month of July that is also held at NES.



NRC is part of the Tri-County League based out of Vernon, VT for organized travel games in baseball (up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade), soccer and basketball. A second league, also named the Tri-County League, is for the girls' travel softball team which plays in the spring (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade). Recently the NRC added Cheerleading to the winter lineup and did a summer session of Track. In addition, some of our adult activities include: Pickleball, Free pick-up sports that alternate during the seasons, Yoga/Pilates, Weight Room use at Pioneer, Dance Aerobics and more! We're always looking for new ideas to bring into the mix!

We also offer many special events that we alternate around such as trips to sporting events, free pool passes to the Vernon pool in the summer, tubing at Berkshire East, free XC skiing passes, and more.

Best way to keep updated on our offerings is to: *create an account on our website so that we can send you informational email blasts with news and information.*

**NRC MAIN website:** [www.northfieldrec.com](http://www.northfieldrec.com)

**NRC email:** [reccom@northfieldma.gov](mailto:reccom@northfieldma.gov) (Best way to contact NRC/the Director)

**"Like" our Facebook page:** "NORTHFIELD RECREATION COMMISSION"

**Town of Northfield phone#:** 1-413-498-2901 Extension 126

## We Want to Hear from You about Digital Equity!

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments is working with 8 communities on a Regional Digital Equity Plan to ensure that all residents have fair and equal access to digital technologies—including access to the internet and computers—as well as the skills and knowledge to effectively use them. The 8 communities are Charlemont, Colrain, Leyden, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Warwick, and Wendell.

**Join us for a community meeting Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00 p.m.** at Northfield Senior Center, 69 Main St, Northfield, MA. This meeting will be hybrid and is open to all residents of the towns listed above. We will be holding two other community meetings during the early evening, dates and locations TBD.

If you are planning on attending by Zoom, [please register in advance](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

This project has been funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program, with assistance from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. For more information, see <https://frcog.org/project/municipal-digital-equity-planning-services/>. Contact: Ted Harvey at [tharvey@frcog.org](mailto:tharvey@frcog.org), or 413-774-3167 x165

## Tax Collector Updates

Real Estate and Personal Property taxes were mailed at the end of December and will be due April 1st. Payments can be made anytime online at <https://unipaygold.unibank.com>. Just choose Town of Northfield and select the tax payment type. You can also pay by cash or check, in person at the Tax Collector's office, Town Hall (M and W - 9 to 3) or checks may be left in the drop box which is checked daily during the week. If you drop off your payment or send it in the mail and would like to have a receipt you must include your portion with the remittance portion and a self-addressed stamped envelope.



## Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process Overview

Although Fiscal Year 2025 won't begin until July 1, 2024, the budget process is already underway. To learn more about how the Town creates and authorizes a budget – and your role in the process – keep reading.

The budget process begins in November with submissions of capital budget and special article requests from department heads and board and committee chairs to the Town Administrator. As budget officer, the Town Administrator is charged with beginning the preparation of the annual budget. In December, operating budget requests are due.

During the months of January, February and March, the Finance Committees holds public meetings with Town Departments and Committees to discuss the compiled budget document, ask the departments any questions about their budget, propose changes and answer questions from the public. All meetings are posted at least 48 hours prior to their scheduled time and are open to the public.

The Finance Committee then recommends their budget to the Select Board. The Select Board reviews the budget and later moves articles to a warrant for Town Meeting. This budget is a tool to assist taxpayers with their decision-making process, and it is compiled in a Town Meeting booklet and posted on the Town's website. The booklet includes the recommendations of the Finance Committee and the Select Board and other budget information.

Northfield has an Open Town Meeting form of government, with Annual Town Meeting held on the first Monday in May. Registered voters are encouraged to attend, as Town meeting participants appropriate funds for the operating budget. Stay tuned for more information about the town budget and town meeting.

## Senior Center Updates

### Memory Café

You can learn all about the new program that will benefit care partners and care recipients on page 2.

### Hearing Loops installed in Senior Center

Our Senior Center is now equipped with a hearing loop, with amplifying devices, headsets and surround sound for those with hearing aids adapted with a T-coil or who are hard of hearing. This high tech system enables a person to hear with ease. We have named that project "*Hear Here Northfield*" which is in keeping with the goals we are setting to make Northfield a special place to age in. These hearing enhancements are also located in the Select Board room in Town Hall and the basement level meeting room at the Dickinson Memorial Library.

### Northfield becomes 601<sup>st</sup> Age and Dementia Friendly Community

Northfield is the 601<sup>st</sup> Town to join this Age and Dementia Friendly communities initiative along with Franklin Regional Council of Governments / LifePath /and AARP. Read more in the [Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Regional Action Plan](#).

## Reminders, deadlines and more from the Board of Assessors

- If you own a business in Northfield, you are responsible for filling out a FORM OF LIST with the Board of Assessors. These forms are due March 1, 2024. If you need more information on this, please contact Beth Walker in the Assessor's Office
- Senior and Veteran Exemptions are due April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- Real Estate and Personal Property Abatements are due April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- If you pulled a building permit during the calendar year of 2023 OR if you have a permit from a previous year that wasn't finished, you will be getting a letter from our office to inspect the work done. This is for assessment purposes only and separate from the inspection that the Building Inspector will conduct.
- If you would like to have a current copy of your property record card, please call, email, or stop by the office and Beth will be happy to print one off for you.

## Electric Service Options for 2024

### Electric Service Options for 2024

To join Northfield's Program, you can do one of two things:

1. Visit [colonialpowergroup.com/northfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/northfield) and click the OPT-IN button, then fill out and submit the Opt-In Form.
2. Call Dynegy at (866) 220-5696 and ask to join the Town of Northfield's Program.

For both of the above options, you should have your Eversource bill handy in order to provide some required information. Enrollments can only be processed on meter reads so it may take one or two billing cycles before taking effect. If you are currently contracted with your own competitive supplier, you should confirm with them that you will not incur any early termination fees or penalties for leaving their supply.

## Community Access Television BNCTV Now on Channel 1075

Looking for your local station on Comcast? Comcast has made upgrades to HD that resulted in the change, and BNCTV can now be found on [Channel 1075](#). Tune in to BNCTV to view Select Board, School Board, and other meetings. You can also livestream meetings or watch them after they take place online, at [BNCTV.net](http://BNCTV.net).



## Series: Tips On Navigating the Town Website

At the request of a reader, we'll be sharing tips on how to navigate the town website in each edition of the newsletter. When you browse [www.NorthfieldMA.gov](http://www.NorthfieldMA.gov), you'll find plenty of important information and resources.

This issue, learn how to register to find meeting agendas and minutes on the Town website. [Review the visual guide and instructions to learn how to find meeting agendas and minutes.](#)

Last month, we shared [a visual guide so you can learn how to register for updates from Town Hall and Town committees.](#)

## Grants and Loans, Training Programs, and Fellowship Opportunities for Farmers and Business Owners

### Rural Energy for America Program Loans & Grants

The program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing. The program is currently accepting applications on a quarterly basis, with the next deadline coming up on 12/31/23. Funds may be used for the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems, and for the purchase, installation and construction of energy efficiency improvements. Grants of \$1,500 to \$1 million can be used to cover up to 50% of a project and loans can cover up to 75 percent of a project. [To learn more about eligibility and the application process, visit the program webpage.](#)

### Workforce Training Fund Program

If your business has fewer than 100 employees, pays into the Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance system, and has a need for workforce training, the Commonwealth Corporation Workforce Training Fund is for you! The Workforce Training Fund Program helps address business productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees. Learn more about these opportunities by visiting [mass.gov/futureskills](http://mass.gov/futureskills) or by contacting the local office, [Mass Hire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board](#). Many programs are offered in collaboration with Greenfield Community College.

## Holiday Recycling Reminders

The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District is sharing ways to reduce waste this holiday season. For tips, view their guide: [Reduce Trash this Holiday Season: What to recycle, creatively reuse, and compost.](#)

### **HOLIDAY RECYCLING REMINDER**

**Happy Holidays!** Thank you for your recycling efforts over the past year. Following are some guidelines for recycling during the holiday months and all year long:

Please **DO** include the following items in your paper recycling mix:

# YES

- ✓ wrapping paper, gift bags, tissue paper (except those with metallic inks, glitter, or foil)
- ✓ corrugated cardboard boxes, paperboard gift boxes
- ✓ paper shopping bags (any type of handle is okay)
- ✓ paper greeting cards (not with metallic inks, glitter, or foil; remove batteries)
- ✓ catalogs, calendars and magazines



TIP: Keep a recycle bin or paper bag handy near gift unwrapping.

Please **DO NOT** include the following items in your household recycling:

# NO

- ☒ ribbons, bows, and tinsel (reusable from year to year)
- ☒ holiday light strings (accepted in scrap metal recycling & WtE scrap metal, Greenfield)
- ☒ packing peanuts, Styrofoam™, bubble wrap, inflatable "air pillow" packaging (clean, dry packing materials accepted for reuse at The UPS Store in Greenfield.)
- ☒ plastic bags, plastic shipping envelopes, bubble wrap, air pillows (Grocery and retail stores accept, plus clean, dry plastic bags marked #2 or #4 <https://nextrex.com/view/educate#materials1>)
- ☒ formed plastic packaging from items like toys and electronics
- ☒ glossy photographs, paper envelopes with bubble wrap inside, ornaments, decorations

Questions? Franklin County Solid Waste Management District: [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org), (413) 772-2438  
More info: [franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org), [springfieldmrf.org](http://springfieldmrf.org).  
MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD).

## Senior Center January Newsletter

Read the next [edition of the Northfield Senior Center Newsletter](#) or pick up a paper copy at the Senior Center.

## Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

[Visit the town calendar](#) or review the bulletin board in the lower-level entry to Town Hall to stay up to date on all future board and committee meetings.

## Opportunities to Get Involved

The Select Board seek residents to fill a vacancy or opening on the following committees:

- Agricultural Commission (1 active, 3 alternate)
- Emergency Services Facility Committee (3)
- Energy Committee (1)
- Open Space Committee (2)
- ZBA (2 alternates)



To express interest or apply, download and send a [Citizens Interest Form](#) to the Town Secretary; 69 Main St.; Northfield, MA 01360. Forms are also available in the main hallway at the Town Hall.

## Community Events and More

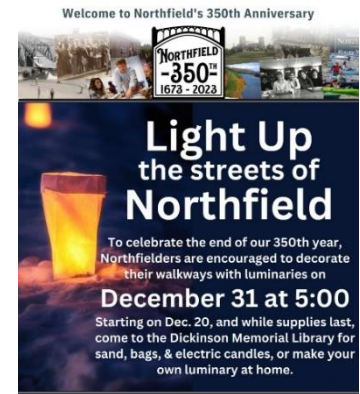
### Northfield 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events

- [Luminaria Along Main Street](#) - Sunday, Dec.31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.  
The final event of Northfield 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is coming up! Don't miss out on this festive and bright celebration.

### Library Events

- [Tech Help](#) – Wednesdays in January at 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- [Coffee & Tea Social](#) – Friday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.
- [Puzzle Swap](#) – Saturday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00-11:00 a.m.
- [Trivia Night at the Brewery](#) – Thursday, Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.
- [Woodpeckers](#) – Thursday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

For the full listing of upcoming library events, [visit the Dickinson Memorial Library calendar](#).



### Northfield Senior Center

The Northfield Senior Center holds events all year long. See this month's events in the [Senior Center Newsletter](#)

### Northfield Bird Club Bird - Nature walks, Programs, and Adventures

- [Woodpeckers - Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 6:00pm](#) - Dickinson Memorial Library meeting room.  
Come and hear Dana and Bob Fox tell the fascinating story about Woodpeckers, who are with us all winter in Northfield. They are the super craftsmen of the bird world. You will hear some stories about the species that might surprise you. Presenters Bob and Dana Fox have birded throughout the United States and the world. They have given numerous talks about birds they have studied, including crows, loons and hummingbirds. This program is supported by a grant from New Salem Academy.
- [Winter Animal Tracking Walk - Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 9:30am – Meet at Library parking lot](#)  
Join the Northfield Bird Club for a 2-3 hour walk, searching for the tracks and sign of winter-active animals. Meet at the library parking lot from where we may walk part of the Mill Brook system or drive around to the Birnam Road parking lot, depending on which promises the better wildlife activity. This program is weather-dependent so check with the club website before setting off. The walk is suitable for adults and teens. Wear snow-proof boots and dress warmly since tracking does not provide a lot of warming exertion. Leader: David Brown <https://dbwildlife.com>

## Share Your Seasonal Photos!

Whether you're an avid photographer, and iPhone amateur, or are just proud of a great photo you took, we'd love to see it. Send your seasonal photos from around Northfield and we may share them in our next newsletter. Please include photographer's full name. Open to Northfield residents of all ages. Submit photos by January 19<sup>th</sup> to [grantdevelopmentdirector@northfieldma.gov](mailto:grantdevelopmentdirector@northfieldma.gov) for a chance to have your seasonal photo included in the next issue.

**Thank you for reading the Northfield Town Hall e-newsletter!**

**Stay tuned for the next edition, coming in March 2024.**

