

Town of Charlemont February 2026 Newsletter



Election News Reminder

We are already preparing for our June 2, 2026 local election. Nomination papers for open seats will be made available starting January 27, 2026 and are due back at the town clerk's office by April 28, 2026 at 5:00pm.

The seats up for election are:

Select Board (3 year term)

Moderator (1 year term)

Constable (3 year term)

Board of Health (3 year term)

Board of Assessors (3 year term)

Charlemont School Committee (3 year term)

Local Education Council (2 year term)

Library Trustees (3 year term)

Parks and Recreation Commission (5 year term)

Planning Board (3 seats, two 5 year terms and one 5 year term that has only 1 year left in the current term.)

Mohawk Trail Regional School Committee (3 year term, this seat will be up for re-election in 2027)

Please contact the town clerk if you're interested in pulling nomination papers and running for office! Phone: 413-339-4335 Ext7 Email: townclerk@townofcharlemont.org

Town Bylaws Available online

We're happy to let residents know that the Town has posted **updated versions of the Zoning Bylaws and General Bylaws on the front page of Town's website**. These updates are intended to make it easier for everyone to access the rules and standards that guide how our community functions and grows.

Zoning Bylaws help determine how land can be used throughout town. They set guidelines for things like what types of buildings can be constructed, how large they can be, and where certain uses belong. By keeping incompatible uses apart—such as industrial and residential areas—zoning helps protect neighborhoods, property values, and public safety. These bylaws also support thoughtful growth, environmental protection, and provide the legal framework for permits and variances.

General Bylaws focus on how the Town operates day to day. They outline the roles of Town officials and staff, establish procedures for Town meetings and finances, and address local issues such as noise, safety, and environmental concerns. These bylaws help ensure that Town government runs smoothly and consistently.

Together, these bylaws play an important role in maintaining the character of our community while supporting responsible growth and development.

Residents are encouraged to visit the Town's website to review the updated bylaws and stay informed.

Town Meeting Warrant Item Information

Have you ever wondered if you could place an article for consideration on the Town Meeting Warrant? If so this excerpt from the citizens' guide to town meeting explains the process:

Yes, voters may "insert" articles in the warrant. They have to do it before selectmen "close" the warrant. To insert an article in the warrant for an annual Town Meeting, at least 10 registered voters of the town must sign a written request. The written request of registered voters for the insertion of subjects in town meeting warrants shall not be valid unless the required number of registered voters not only sign their names but also state their residence, with street and number, if any. Voters do not have to include their addresses after their signatures, but it is a good idea. If you want a sample of an article to use to draft your article, go to town hall and ask for a copy of the annual report, or check if your town has a website and publishes the annual report there. The annual report will have warrants from the previous year's Town Meeting, which you can use as samples. For further assistance, contact the town clerk.

Citizens may insert an article in the warrant for a special Town Meeting. Selectmen shall insert in the warrant for every special town meeting all subjects which shall be requested by 100 registered voters or 10% of the total number of voters, whichever is lesser.

HOW PROPERTY VALUES AND TAXES ARE DETERMINED

How Assessors Determine Value

Property Valuation in Massachusetts is assessed on an "ad valorem" basis each year, which means that all property is taxed "according to value". Assessed values are based on "full and fair cash value" or 100% of the fair market value; the amount a willing buyer would pay a willing seller on the open market. The average residential property in Town gets its new assessment each year from the Assessing Department's analysis of the property sales market. Essentially, the amount your new neighbors paid your old neighbors for the houses in your area provided the Assessors with the basis for your new property value.

The Assessing office must collect, input and analyze a great deal of information about property and market conditions in order to determine the fair market value of all taxable properties in their communities. The state of Massachusetts requires that Assessors submit the values to the Department of Revenue for review and approval to ensure they reflect the property's full and fair cash value. This is so that each property taxpayer in the community pays their fair share of the cost of local government in proportion to the amount their property is worth.

Why Assessments Go Up When a Property Hasn't Changed?

Since assessments must reflect market value, rising or falling sales prices in the community will in turn result in higher or lower assessments. The property sales submitted to the DOR for review each year must fall within a median ASR (Assessment to Sales Ratio) of between 90-110%. Sales outside of the ASR must be analyzed and the values adjusted accordingly by the assessing staff in order to pass DOR approval. When relevant sales information is entered into the Assessor's computer assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) system, it generates new values for similar properties that did not sell.

Several factors influence market value, so the changes to values may not be uniform. Building style is one example; ranch style homes have been in increasing demand the last several years and buyers are willing to pay more for them, thus raising their market value more than other styles. The resulting higher prices paid for certain building styles raises the price for all homes in this building style (with some exceptions).

Another factor is location, for various reasons, certain neighborhoods are more attractive to buyers than others and the resulting demand raises the price for homes in the preferred neighborhood. In addition, condition affects property value. For two homes comparable in style, grade, and location, the better-maintained home will have a higher value.

This year's analysis period (7/1/2023-6/30/2025) continues to see property sales trending significantly higher than assessed values, causing values to increase and the tax rate in turn, to decrease. The tax rate for Fiscal Year 2025 was \$18.30 per thousand dollars of value and for the current Fiscal Year 2026 is \$16.81.

How Property Taxes Are Assessed

The Proposition 2 1/2 tax limitation law sets the maximum amount a community may collect, or levy, from the property tax to 2.5 percent of the total full and fair cash value of all real and personal property in the community. Note that this refers to the total amount that the Town collects from the community and not the amount it collects from an individual taxpayer. Budgets must be made to fit within that limit (with the exception of any override(s) passed by the voters). The Town's operating budget is adopted at the Annual Town Meeting, including any capital requests and/or overrides. Then annually, the Assessors with the assistance of the Town's financial team (Town Accountant, Treasurer, Town Clerk, etc.) determine the amount that must be raised, less receipts and revenues, through property taxation. This figure, divided into the total assessed value of the Town's taxable property, determines the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Determining the Tax Rate

Before the tax rate can be set, the Town must decide if they want all property to be taxed at the same rate, or if they prefer separate rates for a certain class of property, such as commercial/industrial. So, the Assessors prepare tax rate shift worksheets showing various tax rate shift options and the effect on the tax rate to each property class. The Selectboard holds a Classification Hearing, whereby the Assessors present their information and make their recommendation for the Select Board to decide if there will be a single or multiple tax rate. Property values for each parcel are then multiplied by this tax rate, per \$1,000 of assessed value to generate the tax bills.

What If You Disagree with the Assessed Value of Your Property?

Once the tax bills have been mailed, an aggrieved taxpayer may file for an abatement for any of the following reasons: overvaluation, disproportionate assessment, misclassification of real property or the taxpayer believes a statutory exemption should have applied. Abatement applications may be picked up at the Assessors' Office or printed from the website: [Board of Assessors - Town of Charlemont \(charlemont-ma.us\)](http://Board of Assessors - Town of Charlemont (charlemont-ma.us)) They must be filed with the Assessors within thirty days from the date the tax bills were mailed and should include information to support the claim, sufficient for the Assessors to make a determination on the application. In some cases, you may also need to allow a property inspection. If the Assessors do not grant the desired abatement, the taxpayer has the right to appeal to the State's Appellate Tax Board (ATB). The appeal must be filed within three months of the denial. Information and applications are available on the ATB website: Appellate Tax Board | Mass.gov.

For more specific questions or information, you can contact the Assessor's office at 413-339-8586, x2 or via email: assessor@charlemont-ma.us.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING WITH MARY ANN

**Saturday, February 7th
from 12 - 2pm
Tyler Memorial Library**

Learn the basics of watercolor painting.
Mary Ann will guide you through the steps of
painting a forest scene. Use dark to light colors and
washes, add accents and use salt to make snow!
All materials provided for this free class.

CALL TO SIGN UP, OR JUST COME!



413-339-4335

charlemont.hawley.library@gmail.com
charlemontlibrary.org



Mass
Cultural
Council





**GREENFIELD
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**



Canva

Making Eye-Catching Flyers with Canva

Have you ever wanted to create eye-catching flyers for your local club, community event, or organization?

Learn how to design simple, professional-looking flyers using Canva, a free and easy online design tool. We'll learn how to choose layouts and colors, add text and images, and prepare your flyer for printing or sharing online. Bring your tablet or laptop and a "can-do" attitude—we'll move at a comfortable pace so everyone leaves with a flyer they're proud to share!



Rich Vaden

United Way of Franklin
& Hampshire Region



Date
Tuesday February 24, 2026

Time
4:30 p.m.

Address
Tyler Memorial Library
157 Main St. Charlemont, MA

This program is a partnership with the towns of Northfield, Charlemont, Colrain, Leyden, Wendell, and New Salem, and is funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at the MassTech Collaborative under the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program. Funding was provided by Massachusetts ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds.

