

Town of Wenham Citizens' Leadership Academy

Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator
Jackie Bresnahan, Special Projects Assistant
MMA Conference
January 19, 2018



About Wenham

- 5,035 residents
- BOS/TA/Open Town Meeting
- Full-time employees: 45
- Elected officials: 36
- Appointed officials: 115+
- FY 2018 Operating Budget
 - \$17.9 million Total General Fund
 - \$9.3 million of which is apportioned to regional school district



Citizen Engagement Efforts

2015-2017 / Ongoing

- *Wenham at Work* department profiles
- *Welcome to Wenham* packet for new residents
- Website content update
- GFOA Budget Document
- Community Compact: Citizen Engagement Best Practice
 - SeeClickFix App
- Expanded senior volunteer program
- Annual workshop on local government for graduating seniors
- Citizens Leadership Academy



Citizen Engagement Efforts

2018

- Website re-design
- Community Compact: Citizen Engagement Best Practice
 - Visual Budget
 - Resident Survey
- Community Compact: IT grant
 - Accela Civic Platform upgrade (e-permitting)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan – survey & forums
- Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan – survey & forum
- Age Friendly Community Initiative – survey & forums
- Wenham's 375th Anniversary celebrations



Why Run a Citizens Academy?

- Opportunity for residents to learn about services and functions of each department or board/committee
- Familiarize new residents with Town personnel and services
- Provide long-time residents with fresh perspective and chance to learn about different areas of town government than what they've previously experienced
- Teaches residents about volunteer and leadership opportunities



Goals of our Academy

- Increase participation of residents in elections, Annual Town Meeting, and public hearings
- Recruit volunteers to serve on Town boards and committees (elected and appointed) as active policy/decision makers
- Create social connections between citizens and staff that foster positive working relationships and interest in town government
- Enhance understanding of services, physical assets, and benefits offered by each department, especially in the context of the Town's current financial situation and upcoming budget process



Wenham's Academy

- 10 weekly sessions
- September (last week) through December (first week)
- 15-18 residents
- Wednesdays
- 6:30 – 8:00 pm
- Various locations



Town of Wenham Citizens Leadership Academy 2017

Wednesdays 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Sessions and Locations

- **Day 1: Getting to know Town Government** (*Selectmen's Meeting Room*)
September 27th – Peter Lombardi, Catherine Harrison, Jackie Bresnahan
- **Day 2: Fire Department** (*Begin at Town Hall, Continue at Fire Station*)
October 4th – Chief Blanchard and Fire Dept.
- **Day 3: Budget / Financials & Permitting** (*Selectmen's Meeting Room*)
October 11th – Leslie Davidson, Christopher Holak, Jackie Bresnahan
- **Day 4: Water Dept., Cemetery, & Land Use** (*Selectmen's Meeting Room*)
October 18th – Erik Mansfield, Gary Cheeseman, Margaret Hoffman
- **Day 5: Council on Aging & Board of Health** (*Council on Aging*)
October 25th – Jim Reynolds, Lucy Sprague Frederiksen, Jackie Bresnahan
- **Day 6: Public Works, Assessing, and Veterans Services** (*Council on Aging*)
November 1st – Bill Tyack, Steve Ozahowski, Karen Tyler
- **Day 7: Police Department** (*Begin at Town Hall, Continue at Police Station*)
November 8th – Chief Perkins and Police Dept.
- **Day 8: Recreation & Library** (*HW Public Library*)
November 15th - Sean Timmons, Jan Dempsey
- **Day 9: Boards & Committees** (*Selectmen's Meeting Room*)
November 29th – Various Boards & Committees
- **Day 10: Town Meeting & Town Clerk** (*Selectmen's Meeting Room*)
December 6th – Dianne Bucco, Trudy Reid, Jackie Bresnahan

Where does a Community Start?

- Select point person
- Set aside small budget for snacks and folders
- Build buy-in with Town staff and officials
- Identify and communicate goals



Resources for Building Your Academy

- Citizens Academies Project – UNC School of Gvt
 - Database of existing academies
 - <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/citizens-academies#!/>
- TED Talk: “The Secret Structure of Great Talks”
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks/transcript
- Lexington, MA
 - <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2020-vision-committee/pages/development-lexington-citizens-academy>



Developing Session Content

- Point person should schedule 1:1 meeting with Department Head or Committee person making presentation
- Three items needed from each presenter
 - **Goals of the presentation**
 - **Activity or tour**
 - **Media or materials**
- Develop handouts and have them ready for the point person to reference as they provide support during the sessions




Scheduling Sessions

- Schedule the sessions early – fall sessions should be scheduled with committee members and Department Heads in July for a late September start
- Align some sessions by topic area – such as Treasurer/Collector and Finance Director, so participants understand how they interconnect
- Plan others with dissimilar topics – such as Assessing and Public Works, to provide content variety and allow back-end departments to be balanced by more easily relatable departments



Marketing


- BOS meetings & Town website
- Local newspaper & local cable access
- Flyers in post office/local businesses; with staff who interact with the public regularly (Permitting, Town Clerk, COA, Veterans, Library, etc); and at community events
- Last year's graduates can be your best advocates
- Encourage elected officials to invite people they know... and people they don't
- Have a resident you've worked on an issue with you would love to see get more involved?
Send a personal note or email of encouragement!



Register at the Town Clerk's Office or by emailing jbresnahan@wenhamma.gov
Questions: Call the Town Administrator's Office 978-468-5520 ext. 2

**Second Annual
Town of Wenham
Citizens' Leadership Academy
Fall 2017**

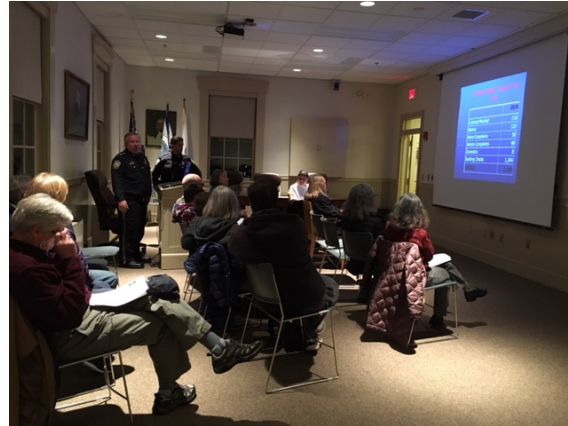
Register now for the second annual Wenham Citizens' Leadership Academy!
*Learn about department functions and services • Tour facilities
Meet town staff and ask questions • Find new ways to get involved*



- Begins September 27th
- 10 weekly sessions
- Wednesdays 6:30-8:00 pm
- Sessions led by department heads
- Academy is no cost for participants
- All residents 18+ encouraged to attend
- Registration open!

Engaging Presentations

- Same MC for every session
- Videos and tours
- Keep it interactive!
- Anonymous question box
- Be the jargon police
 - Avoid acronyms without explanations, common phrases or shorthand that residents who don't read the budget, attend land use meetings, or aren't regular volunteers don't understand.
- Get back to the basics
 - How does the municipal water system work? What's the difference between the Assessor and the Treasurer? What is the general ledger? When you start a project, who permits you first (ZBA? Building Inspector? Planning Board?)?



Quick Tips and Tricks

- Offer snacks
- Utilize videos & photos
- Take tours
- Change locations every few weeks
- Employ activities such as mind maps, mock town meetings, and equipment demonstrations
- Provide handouts of all presentations for residents who want to follow along or who miss the session
- Take attendance
- Have electronic and hard copy evaluation forms available

FY 1643
Annual Town Report
Part II
Warrant for the Mock Town Meeting
With Reports and Recommendations
Of the Finance & Advisory Committee

Hearing on the Whimsical Warrant
Wednesday, October 5, 2016
BOS Meeting Room at 6:30 pm
Presented by Michael Lucy
Chair, Finance & Advisory Committee

Annual Mock Town Meeting
Citizens Academy
Wednesday, December 7, 2016
BOS Meeting Room at 6:30 pm
Presented by Dianne Bucco, Town Clerk
Trudy Reid, Town Moderator
Jackie Bresnahan, Special Projects Assistant

Please bring this Part II with you to the Hearing and Town meeting.
Matters to be voted on are false, whimsical, and educational and do not
appear in Part I of the Town Report



Importance of Feedback

- Multiple stages of feedback
- Beginning: Understand background of each participant
 - Board/Committee member? New resident? Involved in other organizations? Why are they here?
- During: Weekly evaluations on each session
 - Goals of the presentation met? Was the activity/approach engaging?
- End: Final evaluation on logistics and lasting impressions
- Questions to ask:
 - What did residents learn? What were they surprised by? What did they want more time for?
 - Was the day/time feasible? Was the length of the program too short/long? How did they learn about the program?



Feedback on our Academy

- Positive responses:
 - Logistics, including location changes, format of sessions, day/time, scheduling
 - Dedication, knowledge, and enthusiasm of staff and committee members who presented
 - Variety of activities, tours, videos, etc. in each session
- What we're working on:
 - Daytime version for the Council on Aging
 - More time for each presentation
 - Continuing to refine our presentations and helping new staff to develop their presentations



Tangible Results

- 31 residents have completed the Wenham CLA
 - 16 in 2016 and 15 in 2017
- 3 (soon-to-be 4) graduates have filled various board/committee vacancies & 2 graduates have pulled papers for this year's Annual Town Election
- 14 were already on boards or in the senior tax work-off program
- Several residents who used to volunteer have “re-engaged”
- Other value created by engagement
 - Developing local champions
 - Town Meeting attendance and participation
 - Connections between residents, staff, and town officials
 - Building outreach list for other engagement efforts such as forums and surveys

