PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Reader,

Thank you!

In many ways, it feels like I could end the president’s letter there with a huge thank you to our readers, sponsors, advertisers, and contributors. The truth is that stopping there wouldn’t cover all you have done to help The Bedford Citizen grow and thrive, especially through a year of change and transition like 2022.

This was the year we saw the retirement of Founder and Managing Editor, Julie Turner. Julie was integral to The Citizen for so many years that it seemed like a daunting task to find someone to take her place. In fact, it took two people. Our new Managing Editor Wayne Braverman and our Content Manager Jenny Stewart are both wonderful, talented, and dedicated additions to The Citizen staff. With them on board, The Citizen has not just kept going, it is thriving.

Our Operations Manager had to leave unexpectedly toward the end of 2022 and her presence was sorely missed.

It is thanks to every one of you who has supported The Bedford Citizen that we were able to create these positions and attract the right talent. We now have four permanent staff on board, at least part-time, in addition to our freelancers to keep up with coverage of Bedford.

Your support allows us to continue covering Town Meeting, board and committee meetings, elections and more. We reported on the lighter side of Bedford this year, too, with a classic car series; cultural reporting by Doris Smith, funded by a grant from the Bedford Cultural Council; the Bedford Explained series; Baker’s Best, Jane’s Favorite Recipe; and Ask Aunt Laura - all popular on The Citizen.

We started with a simple, yet ambitious mission to make sure people in town understood how their government worked, what was going on, and how they could become involved. Our core mission is still for an informed and involved citizenry and yet, there is so much more to Bedford than what is happening at Town Hall. Your funding and support make that all possible. It is due to support like yours that we can present the full tapestry of life in Bedford.

Looking ahead, we will continue to keep you updated on the proposed new fire station, town manager search, special and annual town meetings and much more. Thank you for all that your support has made possible so far. We look forward to your continued support for local, independent, non-profit coverage of news in Bedford.

In Gratitude,

Elizabeth Hacala
President, The Bedford Citizen
The Bedford Citizen ended its 2022 fiscal year with a net loss of $6,259. Revenue from all sources totaled $145,596, while expenses were $151,855. As shown below, our primary expenses are content related followed by administration, then fundraising and marketing.

The Citizen is supported primarily by donations from our readers, who covered 57% of our expenses in 2022. We are grateful for every gift! Ads in this year’s Bedford Guide provided the next largest source of revenue. Grant revenue, particularly from NewsMatch, was received in recognition of the financial support of our donors and local matches from Suzanne and Company and Werfen in 2021, along with The Citizen’s Board of Directors and staff. In addition, several local businesses support The Citizen with sponsorships on our website. You’ll find them listed on page 11.

Journalism Fund
The Citizen Journalism Fund provides steady support for The Bedford Citizen’s work. Donors who give monthly gave a total of $12,713 over the course of 2022, a 34% increase over 2021.

NewsMatch
Our 2022 NewsMatch campaign was another resounding success. Donations from individual donors totaled $31,302. Local matches totaled $21,675 in 2022, up from $13,000 in 2021. Local matches are vital to our ability to make the most of the NewsMatch program and they added an additional $4,000 to the matching funds we received in March 2023. Our total NewsMatch grant for 2023, based on our 2022 activities, was $23,000.

The Bedford Citizen is a member of two professional news associations, Local Independent Online News (LION) and Institute for Nonprofit News (INN). This year, The Citizen was supported by a LION/Google News Initiative with a Sustainability Audit, resulting in recommendations to ensure we are able to sustain ourselves over the long-term.
COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS

In all, The Bedford Citizen posted more than 1,850 stories and Letters to the Editor in 2022.

The top stories from each month in 2022:

January – Woburn Mall transforms into Woburn Village
February – Bedford’s Doubletree Hotel to close
March – After 51 years, arrest made in Bedford murder
April – Aunt Laura: Packing cubes for travel
May – The Sixties Ball
June – Aunt Laura: Car’s recirculation button
July – Get to know Science from Scientists
August – Phil Blaisdell feature
September – Bedford Classic Cars: Chevy Malibu
October – Tales of Old Billerica Road – Part 1
November – Christine Portlock obituary
December – Baker’s Best Snowball Cookies

In addition to extensive coverage of the 2022 local Town Election and Annual, as well as Fall Town Meeting, The Citizen published more than 47 Letters to the Editor in support of various candidates. This is in close alignment with our mission to inform and engage the people of Bedford.

However, the topic most discussed in Letters to the Editor was the expansion of the Minuteman Bikeway, which would have taken land by eminent domain from property owners along the Reformatory Branch Trail and Railroad Avenue. The plan also included paving the RBT from Railroad Ave to Concord Road. The Citizen published 75 letters (a whopping 37.5 percent of all letters published in 2022) from residents and business owners in favor of or opposed to the project.

The Bedford Citizen continued expanded coverage of local sports and also expanded its scope of coverage, including more cultural stories thanks to a grant from the Bedford Cultural Council.

A hallmark of The Citizen is the variety of ways readers access news and information. There were more than 1.3 million story views in 2022 despite a small increase in the number of stories posted. While social media growth is consistently slow but steady, readers are increasingly taking advantage of daily and weekly emails, with 12% growth in the number of subscribers from 2021 to 2022.
The 2023 Bedford Guide was published and mailed to every mailbox in Bedford in November. It highlighted everything from a quick review of town government in 2022, to sports, music, and Bedford’s senior scene, to biotech, dogs and cats, and businesses you might not know, plus the new favorite, “Citizens Among Us,” and much, much more! Look for the next edition in your mailbox in November 2023!

We hope you enjoyed our coverage and look forward to 2023 and what it will bring for The Bedford Citizen and you.

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thank you to our generous donors who provide more than half of all the funds that keep The Bedford Citizen running. You are the bedrock that supports all that we do to bring local, non-profit news about Bedford to all our readers. We could not do it without your support. Thank you.

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In memory of Constance Dodge

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Amelia Bowen
Joan Bowen

Esther K Braun
In appreciation of all you do and especially in the new booklet about Bedford.

Beatrice Brunkhorst
In memory of my Dad, Paul Brunkhorst, who taught me the importance of news in democracy.

Meghan Gardner
Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Terry Gleason
Jim Shea and Bob Sawyer

David Goodman
For my late wife.

Sara Mattes
In honor of Mike Rosenberg

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To all The Citizen crew!

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To the talented staff and volunteers who create The Citizen

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Michelle Puntillo
To those who have lost someone they love from Covid.

Becky Ricci
In honor of Jerry Wolf’s birthday

Ellen Ryan
To all those who work tirelessly to keep us informed.

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Thanks to Julie Turner

At the home of Suzanne Koller, one of the organizers of the Bedford Holiday House Tour, people could take a horse-drawn carriage ride. Courtesy photo/Bob Batt

The Bedford Citizen is grateful for the Bedford Cultural Council’s support of its arts and culture reporting.