

# 2019-2020

# BROOKLINE



**A CITIZENS GUIDE TO TOWN GOVERNMENT**



**Published by the League of Women Voters of Brookline  
Sara K. Wallace Fund**

## **Dedication**

This booklet is dedicated to the memory of **Sanford (Sandy) Ostroy**, whose service and leadership guided many Brookline League of Women Voters activities from his 2005 arrival in Brookline until his death from leukemia in April, 2017. Sandy served on the Board of Directors beginning in 2012 and was vice president from 2013 to 2016. Sandy's commitment, thoughtful work and friendship will be long remembered and sorely missed.

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# Voting

Any US citizen, aged 18 or older, may register to become a voter in person at the Town Clerk's office, by mail or on-line at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr>. Citizens aged 16 or 17 years old may pre-register and will receive a registration confirmation after their 18th birthday. The deadline to register is 20 days prior to the scheduled election. For more information online:

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howreg.htm>

To vote in the Brookline Town election, a registered voter must be 18 years old and a Brookline resident. Brookline elects town officials annually, usually in early May. As their terms expire, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Select Board Members, Library Trustees, School Committee Members, Town Meeting Members, Housing Authority Trustees and Constables are selected in the Annual Town Election. <http://www.brooklinema.gov/138/Election-Information>.

In even numbered years, there are primaries and elections for state and federal offices. Ballot questions may also be voted at state and local elections.

Each of the 16 precincts in Brookline has a designated voting location, open 7:00am to 8:00pm on Election Day. Your voting location is determined by your address. Go to the link at:

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch>.

Absentee ballots for those unable to be present at their voting locations on election day are available at the Town Clerk's office, or may be applied for at <http://www.brooklinema.gov/136/Voting-Absentee>.

To maintain an active voting status, a voter must return the Annual Town Census sent by the Town Clerk's office to all residents each spring. The Census is the basis for the Town Street List that confirms current resident status and address. It is used to check-in voters at the polling place. If you do not respond, you may be classified as "inactive". Inactive voters may still vote but will be asked to show proof of current address. For further information about the voting process, please see: [www.brooklinema.gov/134/Voting-Procedures](http://www.brooklinema.gov/134/Voting-Procedures).

The League of Women Voters welcomes new voters to this process. Refer to <http://lwvbrookline.org> or call 617-566-3238.

# **Brookline Town Government**

The Town of Brookline Organizational Chart (see page 7) places the most important individuals in our government at the top: the Brookline CITIZENS. They vote for all of the individuals on the next row of the chart:

Town Moderator	Town Clerk
Select Board	Town Meeting Members
School Committee	Library Trustees
Housing Authority	Constables

These individuals direct the workings of the Town through all of the rest of the Departments and Functions on the chart.

Brookline has a Representative Town Meeting, where the Town is divided geographically into sixteen precincts. Each precinct elects fifteen of their residents to represent their interests. The representatives serve three year terms with five being elected each year. These 240 individuals meet as a Town Meeting, generally twice yearly, with the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Select Board Members and state senators and representatives of the Commonwealth who are Brookline residents, to review and approve the Town budget and to discuss and enact legislation of interest to Brookline citizens.

**Town Moderator** – 3 year term. Responsibilities include:

- Presiding Officer of Town Meeting, encouraging presentation of all sides of issues
- Appoints Advisory Committee and Committee on Town Organization and Structure
- Appoints some members of Audit Committee and Committee on Campaigns
- Appoints members to temporary Moderator's committees as voted by Town Meeting

**Town Clerk** – 3 year term. Responsibilities include:

- Administration of fair and accurate elections
- Maintenance of public records – Births, Deaths & Marriages
- Recording and preservation of the actions and directives of Town Meeting
- Registration of voters and circulation of the Annual Town Census

**Select Board** – 3-year terms, 2/2/1 elected each year. Five Members  
([www.brooklinema.gov/343/Select-Board](http://www.brooklinema.gov/343/Select-Board))

Collectively, the Executive Officers of the Town

- Holds open meetings weekly broadcast on local television network: Brookline Interactive Group
- Appoints Town Administrator who is responsible for daily management of the Town
- Appoints Department Heads and members of most official Boards and Commissions
- Reviews and sets fiscal guidelines for Town's Annual Budget and Capital Improvements Program
- Adopts Town Administrative Policy and enforces Town By-Laws and regulations
- Approves food vendor, liquor, open-air parking, lodging house and many other licenses
- Holds hearings on violations of licenses and of other By-Laws and regulations
- Appoints and oversees Committees directed by Town Meeting

**Town Meeting Members** – 3-year terms, 5 elected from each of 16 precincts each year  
([www.brooklinema.gov/264/Town-Meeting](http://www.brooklinema.gov/264/Town-Meeting))

- Legislative arm of town government, meeting generally twice yearly as a Town Meeting. Additional meetings may be scheduled.
- Reviews and passes balanced Annual Town Budget
- Enacts all town and zoning by-laws and all other articles presented at Town Meeting

Select Board meetings and Town Meetings are broadcast live and recorded by Brookline Interactive Group (BIG)

**School Committee** – 3-year terms, 3 elected each year. Nine Members  
([www.brookline.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=130](http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=130))

- Meets bi-weekly in open session
- Appoints and evaluates the Superintendent of Schools
- Develops School Budget for review and approval by Town Meeting
- Establishes educational goals and policies

**Library Trustees** – 3-year terms, 4 elected each year.

Twelve Members

**([www.brooklinelibrary.org/community/trustees/](http://www.brooklinelibrary.org/community/trustees/))**

- Meet monthly, usually at the Brookline Village Main Library
- Select the Library Director
- Manage library branches at Brookline Village, Coolidge Corner and Putterham
- Provide oversight of library budget, services and policies
- Provide meeting rooms, services, materials and programs to entire Brookline community
- Offer museum passes, multi-lingual education and many other programs

**Housing Authority** – 5-year staggered terms. 5 members.

**([www.brooklinehousing.org](http://www.brooklinehousing.org))**

- One member appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth
- Owns and manages more than 1,500 units of affordable housing in Town
- Hires Executive Director who is in charge of programs and operations, hires/supervises staff, and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations

**Constables** – 3-year terms, 2/2/1 elected each year. 5 constables.

- Serve Brookline citizens with summons, complaints, arrest warrants, subpoenas and writs, restraining orders, small claims notices and many other court documents
- Post notices of Town Meeting and Warrant Articles

# **Town Meeting and Warrant Article Processes**

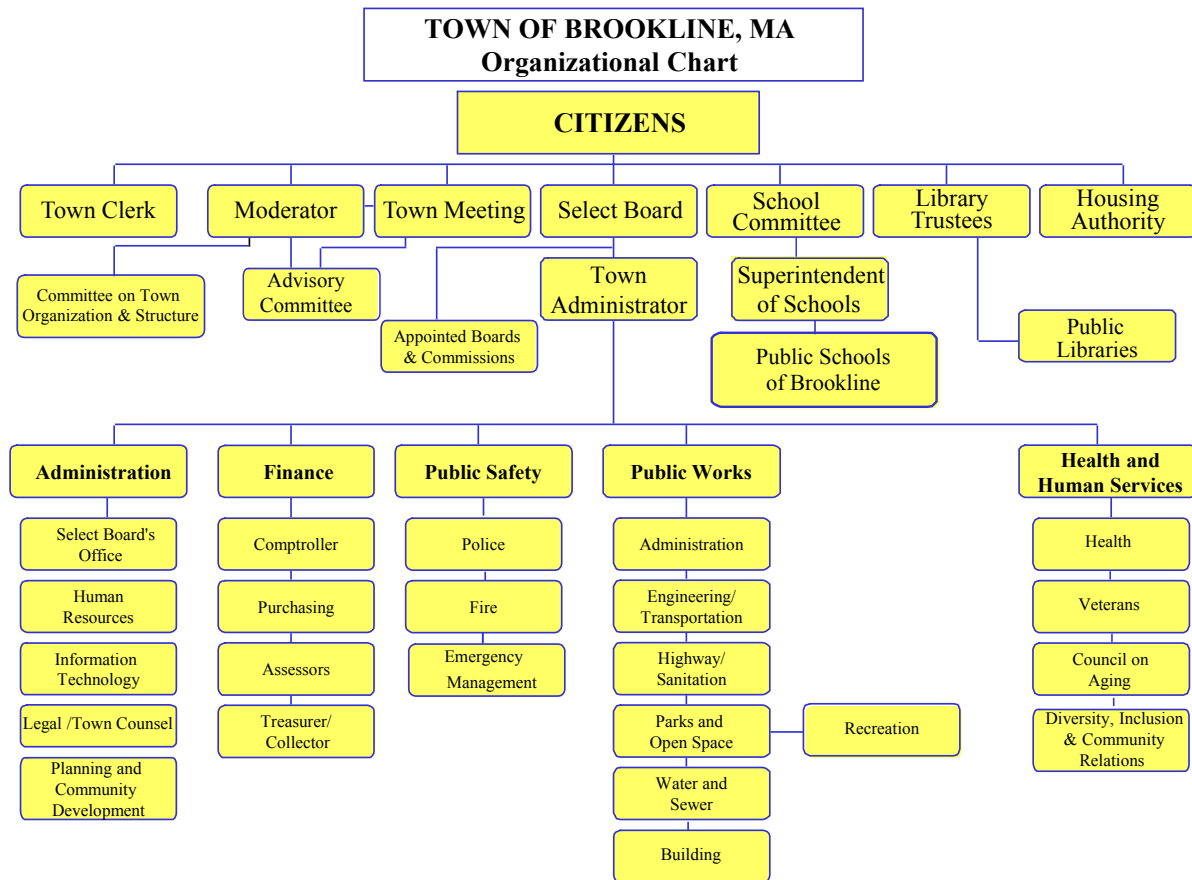
Town Meeting is usually a twice yearly meeting of the elected Town Meeting Members (TMM) with the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Select Board, and Advisory Committee. The Warrant, the official notice issued to call Town Meeting, on order by the Select Board, specifies the date each Town Meeting starts, and specifies the opening and closing dates for Articles. Warrant Articles constitute the agenda of items to be voted by Town Meeting and are created by citizen petition, or by units of Town government, such as the Select Board or town departments. Citizen petitions must be signed by at least ten citizens, and submitted to the Select Board's office by the date specified as the closing of the Warrant.

The Advisory Committee has up to 30 members, at least one from each precinct. It is charged under bylaw with reviewing Warrant Articles and making recommendations. Each Article is reviewed by subcommittees of the Advisory Committee and the Select Board in open hearings, meaning that public comment is welcome. The full Advisory Committee also reviews each article in open meetings, at which public comment is not usually accepted. Individual Warrant Articles may also be reviewed by other Town boards and committees in either open meetings or open hearings.

## **Boards and Commissions**

Much of the work of the Town is carried out by almost 100 Boards and Commissions. Some Boards and Commissions are on-going, providing oversight or guidance to particular elements of Town governance. Others are created to study a singular issue for the Select Board or the Moderator, usually by direction of Town Meeting. Citizens desiring a greater role or understanding of Town functions without actually running for elective office, are urged to go to **<http://www.brooklinema.gov/165/Boards-Commissions>** to review the opportunities.





## Schools

Web site: **[www.brookline.k12.ma.us](http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us)**

Superintendent

- 617-730-2401

Summer School

- 617-730-2718

Early Childhood Program

- 617-264-6408

Pre-Kindergarten Groups (B.E.C)

- 617-730-2700

## Libraries

Brookline Libraries: **[www.brooklinelibrary.org](http://www.brooklinelibrary.org)**

Main/Brookline Village - 361 Washington St.

- 617-730-2370

Coolidge Corner - 31 Pleasant St

- 617-730-2380

Putterham - 59 West Roxbury Pkwy

- 617-730-2385

## **Other Brookline Resources**

**Brookline Senior Center**, 93 Winchester St., 617-730-2770  
([www.brooklineseniorcenter.org](http://www.brooklineseniorcenter.org)) Offers multiple programs for seniors including public educational programs, a fitness center, classes in painting, a senior chorus, etc.

**Brookline Teen Center**, 40 Aspinwall Ave, 617-396-8349  
([www.brooklineteencenter.org](http://www.brooklineteencenter.org)) Provides programs and facilities for youth in grades 6 through 12. Facilities are available for rental.

**Brookline Community Arts Center**, 86 Monmouth St., 617-566-5715  
([www.brooklineartscenter.com](http://www.brooklineartscenter.com)) Visual arts center offering classes, workshops and gallery space.

**Brookline Center for Community Mental Health**, 41 Garrison Rd,  
617-277-8107 ([www.brooklinecenter.org](http://www.brooklinecenter.org)) Provides affordable mental health care and social services.

**Brookline Community Aging Network**  
([www.brooklinecan.org](http://www.brooklinecan.org)) Offers services and programs for senior citizens in conjunction with the Council on Aging and the Senior Center.

**Brookline Community Foundation**, 40 Webster Place, 617-566-4442  
([www.brooklinecommunity.org](http://www.brooklinecommunity.org)) Highlights community needs and awards grants to non-profits addressing needs of Brookline residents.

**Brookline Greenspace Alliance**, P.O. Box 47015, Brookline, 617-277-4777  
([www.brooklinegreenspace.org](http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org)) A nonprofit membership organization dedicated to maintaining and improving open spaces.

**Brookline Historical Society**, 347 Harvard St, 617-566-5747  
([www.brooklinehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.brooklinehistoricalsociety.org)) Highlights local history, featuring walking tours.

**Brookline Interactive Group**, 46 Tappan St, top floor, 617-731-8566,  
([www.brooklineinteractive.org](http://www.brooklineinteractive.org)) Provides community access TV and community events, such as movie viewings.

# **Brookline Yesterday**

In New England, we often start our history with the arrival of the Pilgrims and Puritans. In doing so, we forget that people had been living here for centuries. The area that became Brookline was inhabited by several Native American tribes, including the Massachusett, with the more commonly remembered Wampanoag nearby. In early colonial writings, there is mention of an Indian settlement near the present-day Brookline Reservoir, as well as an Indian fort located at what is now the corner of Beacon and Powell Streets.

In the early 17th century, the British government conferred royal grants by charter to the Massachusetts Bay Company. These charters gave the right to negotiate with the indigenous peoples for the purchase of land. However, for the most part, the lands were expropriated by the colonial settlers. In the early days of colonial expansion, the area was largely rural, with allotments of lands for farming granted to Boston residents. These farms gradually expanded to form the Muddy River Hamlet, a part of Boston. Farmers began settling in Muddy River so that they could live nearer to their crops and animals. By the beginning of the 18th century, the inhabitants of Muddy River had built a school-house, laid out three major roads and no longer needed to pay taxes to Boston.

In 1705, after many petitions for independence, the General Court finally granted the request and the independent Town of Brookline was incorporated. Brookline had an open Town Meeting form of government with all male citizens eligible to participate. The early issues that the town faced were the setting up of schools, laying out of roads, building a meeting house, which served as the center of religious life as well as the seat of government, and providing the needed funds for them.

Slavery was legal in all thirteen colonies by the end of the 18th century. There were at least 6 known slave traders and many slave-holders living in Brookline. By the mid-18th century, fully one quarter of the households in Brookline contained enslaved persons, comprising at least 80 people. Most of those sold into slavery were from Africa or of African descent. Although there are records of indigenous people who were enslaved, they were mainly sent to the Caribbean for work on plantations there. Brookline also had its share of indentured servants, many of whom were Irish.

## **Brookline Yesterday (cont.)**

Brookline was an early supporter of independence from Great Britain, engaging in preliminary talks with the surrounding communities for several decades before mustering three companies of volunteers at the Meeting House (now the site of First Parish Church), at the corner of Walnut and Warren Streets, in April 1775, and assisting in the rout of the British. After the Revolutionary War, Brookline became a prime location for country estates built by wealthy residents of Boston.

In the period before the Civil War, Brookline abolitionist families provided safe hiding places and helped slaves escaping to freedom along the Underground Railroad. They also helped finance William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*.

From its inception, Brookline has regarded the education of its citizens as an important undertaking. The first school was built on the triangle of land at Walnut and Warren Streets. The southern portion of the town petitioned for a school as well, and the second school, the Putterham School, was built in 1768 at the intersection of Newton and Grove Streets. By 1834, Brookline had constructed four schools. By-laws about truancy and absenteeism from schools were put into effect in 1872, requiring all children seven to sixteen years old to attend school for six- week sessions in the summer and winter. The Putterham School building has been preserved and moved to Larz Anderson Park.

In the 1870s Brookline successfully resisted three attempted annexations by Boston, in part because it developed its own water supply. The price of independence was loss of Brookline's Charles River frontage. In 1915, it became clear that the town had grown too large for an open town meeting, and Brookline adopted the first representative Town Meeting in Massachusetts. Representatives were elected from the male citizens of the town. At that time, as it is again today, Brookline was the largest town in Massachusetts. A Board of Selectmen headed town government until 1960, when Louise Castle (former Chair of the Brookline League of Women Voters) was the first Selectwoman to be elected, forty years after women got the right to vote in 1920. In 2007 for the first time, women became a majority of the Board. In 2017, Town Meeting voted to rename the Board of Selectmen the Select Board.

# **Brookline Today**

Brookline is located in Norfolk County, with a population of 58,732 (2010 U.S. Census), covering 6.8 square miles. Brookline citizens live in a variety of homes, from apartments/condominiums to single family homes and multi-family dwellings. A majority are apartment dwellers.

Allandale Farm, in South Brookline, is both a working farm and the only remnant of 19<sup>th</sup> century Brookline's landscape of wealthy Bostonians' agricultural country retreats. Immigration, urbanization and sub-urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries shaped Brookline. Many ethnic backgrounds add to the richness and diversity of the town, with a great range of incomes. 13% of the population is considered to be low-income.

In the 1890's the West End Railway and the town hired Brookline's Olmsted landscape firm to design Beacon Street, beginning Brookline's residential development as a streetcar suburb. Today, Brookline is served by the MBTA's Green Lines, the B-Line along Commonwealth Avenue, the C-Line along Beacon Street, and the D-Line along a former commuter rail line. Many parts of the Chestnut Hill and South Brookline area are not as close to the subways lines but do have a bus line.

In addition to excellent public schools, private elementary and secondary schools are located here. The town's schools continue to be an important part of Brookline, with the majority of the town's expenditures allocated to their operation and buildings. The Brookline schools were original partners in the METCO program and have welcomed students from Boston since the 1960's. A burgeoning school-age population is one of many challenges facing the town, as are the issues of balancing quality of life and development.

Brookline's citizens have a long history of volunteerism. Over the years, we have seen the growth of organizations championing the cause of minorities and women, some through governmental efforts and others through the private sector. Other groups have come together to help address the issue of climate change, both through local actions and legislative work. A sister city relationship with a rural community in Nicaragua is now in its 32nd year. The volunteer staffed Food Pantry, has 800 clients. This is but a small sampling of our residents' activities.

# Did You Know ...

**Muddy River Hamlet.** The area that is Brookline today was once known as Muddy River, a part of Boston. In the 1600s it was used primarily as a place for Boston residents to graze their cattle. Brookline became a separate town in 1705, taking its name from the farm of Judge Samuel Sewall whose property boundary was marked, in part, by Smelt Brook.

**Brookline in the Revolution.** Both William Dawes and the British relief column led by Lord Percy passed through Brookline on their way to Lexington on April 18, 1775. Brookline men, including three enslaved African-Americans, took part in the fight against the British as they retreated through Cambridge later that day.

**Resisting Annexation.** In elections in October 1873, the city of Charlestown and the towns of Brighton and West Roxbury voted to accept annexation to Boston. Only Brookline resisted, after vigorous debate in town, with 70% of voters casting No ballots. Several later attempts at annexation were also defeated.

**Library.** While not the first public library in Massachusetts, it was the first to be organized under May 1851 state legislation allowing communities to tax themselves for such purposes. In a vote at the March 30, 1857 Town Meeting, the citizens of Brookline established a free library. Among the prominent patrons and advocates of this institution at the time were William I. Bowditch, an abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor; Frederick Hedge, a Unitarian minister; Edward Atkinson, businessman, abolitionist and inventor of the Aladdin oven; James S. Whitney, president of Metro Steamship Company; and Amos A. Lawrence, abolitionist and industrialist. In honor of benefactor John L. Gardner, the Art and Music Room was named Gardner Hall.

One of its most momentous legacies is the establishment of a separate reading room exclusively for children in April 1890. The Brookline model was influential in sparking the expansion of library services to children across the country.

**Representative Town Meeting.** In 1916 Brookline became the first town in Massachusetts to change from an open town meeting in which any registered voter in attendance can participate in decisions to a representative town meeting in which voters elect Town Meeting Members to represent them in the town's legislative body.

# League of Women Voters of Brookline

## Who We Are and What We Do

After the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote was ratified in August 1920, local suffrage organizations began to redefine themselves. Following the formation of the national League of Women Voters in February 1920, the Brookline Equal Suffrage League legally changed its name to Brookline League of Women Voters on September 20, 1920. "The League has been formed to help us to take part intellectually in both the local and National Government. It is non-partisan and aims to unite women in a group of citizens whose purpose will be to promote education in citizenship and to support improved legislation."

In 1922, then president, Mrs. Parker H. Whittington, was the first woman to run for Selectman, but did not succeed. Over the next several years the Brookline LWV held educational lectures and events. They produced the *Brookline Primer* (predecessor to this booklet) with "the A, B, C's of the government of Brookline;" said to be the first time a local league had undertaken the publication of a political or government primer.

Then, in 1924, the Brookline LWV voted to dissolve. Twenty years later, in 1944, the Brookline LWV was reconstituted as a local affiliate of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters and the League of Women Voters of the United States. It has continued to be a nonpartisan organization now composed of women and men age 16 and older, providing services and information to the community. Persons who join at the local level have membership at all levels. Through its long history officers and members of the Brookline League have also provided leadership and service to the state and national organizations.

The League's fundamental purpose is encouraging the active and informed participation of citizens in government. As stated on the national LWV website, "The League is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters have the opportunity and the information to exercise their right to vote." While the League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate, it does take positions on issues after careful study and consensus. In recent years national and state issues have included addressing income inequality, charter schools, climate change, fair criminal code enforcement, money in politics, and the referendum ballot process. In Brookline, local issues have included affordable housing, land use planning and expansion of our public schools.

# League of Women Voters Brookline

## Who We Are and What We Do (cont.)

Brookline LWV has a strong focus on the voting process. Voter registration is conducted at various sites several times a year including at the high school. An annual workshop encourages people to become candidates for office and explains Brookline's Town Meeting form of government. Practical information about the logistics of running for office is shared. For the latest version, look at the following link: <http://www.lwvbrookline.org/HowToRun.html>

Each year before the municipal election, a public forum introduces candidates for town-wide offices. A review of warrant articles (items to be voted, including the Town budget) is presented prior to each Town Meeting. Public forums are broadcast live on local television (Brookline Interactive Group) and taped for later view on-line. Forums are often co-sponsored with other local organizations, Town Meeting Members Association (TMMA), and the Brookline Neighborhood Alliance (BNA).

The League sponsors occasional public programs on current concerns and co-sponsors others with local organizations. Information tables are presented at local events. For several years the League has hosted a 2nd Friday monthly morning coffee session at a local restaurant, inviting members and anyone interested to join in conversation on a current issue.

The League has a regular column, the *Engaged Citizen Corner*, in the Brookline TAB, our local newspaper. Prior to each annual town election, the Brookline League publishes a **Voters Guide** featuring all candidates running for local office. The **Guide** is widely distributed and included as a TAB insert.

In 1977 long-time Brookline activist and League leader Sarah K. Wallace established a trust fund that today continues to support the League's voter education activities, including programs, publications, information materials, and an annual leadership award to a high school student. Contributions are always welcome.

Please visit our web site: <http://www.lwvbrookline.org/>



# **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKLINE**

The League is a grassroots, volunteer organization on the national, state and local levels. The League is non-partisan and does not support or oppose any political party or any candidates. After a study of issues, the League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest.

Membership in the League is open to all men and women over the age of 16. Household membership is available for two persons sharing a common household.

For more information about the League of Women Voters, return the form below or visit our web link:

<http://www.lwvbrookline.org/>

-----  
Mail to: League of Women Voters of Brookline  
P.O. Box 32  
Brookline, MA 02446

\_\_\_\_ I/We would like to join

\_\_\_\_ Please send more information

I/We would like to make a contribution to the League \$\_\_\_\_\_

or to the Sara K. Wallace Fund (tax exempt) \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: Home \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Acknowledgements**

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# Brookline Town Directory

## Fire Department

Fire and Emergencies **911**  
Headquarters 617-730-2272

## Police Department

Emergencies **911**  
For other purposes 617-730-2222

## Town Departments

**INFORMATION 617-730-2000**  
Assessors Office 617-730-2060  
Building Department 617-730-2100  
Comptroller's Office 617-730-2022  
Health Department 617-730-2300  
Human Resources Office 617-730-2120  
Information Technology Department 617-730-2003  
Planning and Community Development Department 617-730-2130  
Public Works 617-730-2156  
    Engineering 617-730-2139  
    Hazardous Waste Recycling Drop-off Center 617-879-4908  
    Highway 617-879-4900  
    Parks and Open Space (and Conservation) 617-730-2088  
    Sanitation 617-730-2156  
    Transportation Division 617-730-2177  
    Water and Sewer 617-730-2170  
    Walnut Hill Cemetery 617-730-2179  
Purchasing Division 617-730-2195  
Recreation Department 617-730-2069  
    Robert T. Lynch Municipal Golf Course 617-730-2078  
    Evelyn Kirrane Aquatics Center 617-713-5435  
    Soule Childhood Center 617-739-7598  
School Department 617-730-2401  
Town Administrator 617-730-2200  
Town Clerk 617-730-2010  
Town Counsel 617-730-2190  
Treasurer-Collector 617-730-2020

## Other Services

Brookline Housing Authority 617-730-2022  
Council on Aging 617-730-2777  
Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations 617-730-2326  
Library - Brookline Village (Main) 617-730-2370  
    Coolidge Corner 617-730-2380  
    Putterham 617-730-2385  
Veteran's Services 617-730-2112

Full Telephone Directory: [www.brooklinema.gov/Directory.aspx](http://www.brooklinema.gov/Directory.aspx)

Town Internet Address: [www.brooklinema.gov](http://www.brooklinema.gov)

Town Hall, 333 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02445

League of Women Voters of Brookline: [www.lwvbrookline.org](http://www.lwvbrookline.org)