



# Methuen Community CONNECTION

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February - March 2022

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## MVRTA Now Offering Free Fares for Various Routes

The Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) board voted unanimously on December 1, 2021, to go fare-free for all local fixed route and EZ Trans paratransit services effective March 1, 2022, for at least a 2-year pilot. Fares will still be collected on the Boston Commuter bus.



The MVRTA will be using federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the pilot.

Some of the many advantages of a fare free transit system include winning back riders who stopped riding due to the COVID-19 pandemic, returning dollars back to the local economy, increased access for people having a hard time affording transportation, faster and more efficient trips, and reduced conflicts between drivers and passengers.

In addition, another factor supporting the board’s decision to go fare free is the high cost and inefficiency of collecting fares. “I am really excited about this pilot,” said MVRTA spokesperson Niorka Mendez, adding that “going fare-free will attract new riders, increase patronage of our local businesses, offer economic relief to families that rely on our service, and connect people to jobs and other economic opportunities.” Methuen Mayor Neil Perry added, “The MVRTA Fare Free program will provide a great service to Methuen residents as they commute to their jobs or to do household errands, etc. We hope our residents take advantage of this program.”

## City Clerk’s Office Seeks Election Workers



The Clerk’s office is seeking poll workers for the upcoming elections in September and November. Visit [www.cityofmethuen.net/office-of-the-city-clerk](http://www.cityofmethuen.net/office-of-the-city-clerk) for updated information as it is available.

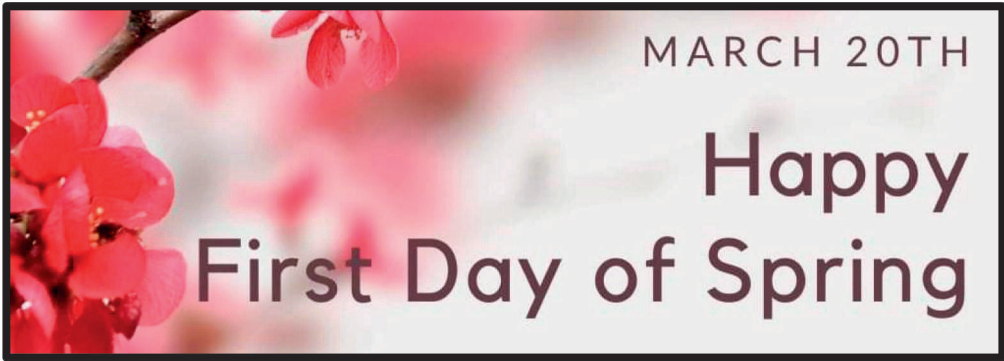
In addition, the 2022 City Census will be arriving soon. It is very important to complete this form every year and return it to the Clerk’s Office - even if you don’t have any information changes from the previous year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Clerk’s Office at 978-983-8515.

## Assessor’s Office Excise Tax Bill Reminder

The Assessors’ office will be sending yearly vehicle excise tax bills the beginning of March. This bill is for Calendar year 2022. If you have sold or traded a vehicle in 2022, please contact Theresa Solomon at 978-983-8530 or email [tmsolomon@ci.methuen.ma.us](mailto:tmsolomon@ci.methuen.ma.us) to apply for an abatement of the bill and receive an adjustment on the amount. Paperwork is required for an abatement.



Visit our website at [www.cityofmethuen.net/assessing-department](http://www.cityofmethuen.net/assessing-department) under Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for more information. Paperwork can be sent via email, regular mail, dropped in the silver box outside City Hall, or in person at City Hall, 41 Pleasant Street, Room 103. As a reminder, Income and Expense forms for commercial properties, and 3ABC forms for Charitable Organizations were due March 1. Your cooperation is appreciated.



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**Methuen City Hall Hours of Operation:**  
Monday - Thursday: 8am to 4:30pm, Friday: 8am to Noon  
Searles Building; Connecting All Departments: (978) 983-8500  
41 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA 01844



## *The Wall That Heals* Coming to Methuen in September

*The Wall That Heals*, a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile Education Center, is coming to Methuen, September 27 to October 2, 2022, at PFC Richard E. Potter Field on Pelham Street. The exhibit will be open 24 hours a day and free to the public beginning Wednesday, September 28 at 2:00pm and ending Sunday, October 2 at 2:00pm.

*The Wall That Heals* honors the more than three million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed forces in the Vietnam War. It bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.



“We are honored to host *The Wall That Heals* here in Methuen,” says Mayor Neil Perry. “Not only does it honor those who served in Southeast Asia during the war, but it also symbolizes our respect for all those veterans in Methuen who served in uniform while affording residents from all walks of life, especially our young people, the opportunity to see in person this truly inspiring display.”

“The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is pleased to bring *The Wall That Heals* mobile exhibit to Methuen to allow local veterans and their family members a chance to experience The Wall,” said Jim Knotts, president and CEO of VVMF. “Hosting *The Wall That Heals* provides an opportunity to honor and remember all those who served and sacrificed in the Vietnam War and educate visitors on the continuing impact of the Vietnam War on America.”

“Nothing is more important to VVMF than the health and well-being of our Vietnam veterans and their families. We will work closely with the host to provide the best visitor experience while keeping the safety of our staff, volunteers, and visitors at top of mind,” said Knotts.

*The Wall That Heals* is transported from community to community in a 53-foot trailer. When parked, the trailer opens with exhibits built into its sides, allowing it to serve as a mobile Education Center telling the story of the Vietnam War, The Wall, and this divisive era in American history.

The three-quarter scale Wall replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. Visitors will experience The Wall rising above them as they walk towards the apex, a key feature of the design of The Wall in D.C. Visitors are able to do name rubbings of individual service members’ names on The Wall.



The mobile Education Center exhibit includes digital photo displays of “Hometown Heroes” - service members whose names are on The Wall with their home of record and digital photo displays of Vietnam veterans from the local area honored through VVMF’s *In Memory* program which honors veterans who returned home from Vietnam and later died as a result of their service.

The presentation also features video displays that teach about the history and impact of The Wall, educational exhibits told through items representative of those left at The Wall in D.C., a replica of the *In*

*Memory* plaque, and a map of Vietnam and a chronological overview of the Vietnam War. The exhibits tell the story of the Vietnam War, The Wall, and the era surrounding the conflict. They are designed to put American experiences in Vietnam in a historical and cultural context.

“A big part of our success in bringing this great exhibit to Methuen will be the participation of volunteers throughout the community,” adds Paul Jensen, Methuen Director of Veterans Services. “We will need volunteers to set up and take down The Wall as well as monitor it 24 hours a day during its stay.

“We will solicit volunteers as the date approaches, but right now we are looking for a Volunteer Coordinator and a Promotion Coordinator. If you have experience in either of these areas or would like to be on the organizing committee, please contact me at City Hall, 978983-8585.”

### About VVMF

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) is the nonprofit organization that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) in Washington, D.C. in 1982. VVMF continues to lead the way in paying tribute to our nation’s Vietnam veterans and their families.

VVMF’s mission is to honor and preserve the legacy of service in America and educate all generations about the impact of the Vietnam War and era through programs, ceremonies, and education materials. To learn more about VVMF, visit [www.vvmf.org](http://www.vvmf.org) or call 202-393-0090.



## Upcoming Methuen Recreation Department Programs



The Methuen Recreation Department is offering some great programs this spring. There are a variety of programs available from including the new Rangers Flag Football program. A great deal of logistics, hiring, and facility rentals go into making these programs happen, so do not wait to sign up for programs that interest you. Classes and programs tend to fill up very quickly. Below, please find information on the dates and times of our upcoming programs. Be sure to visit [www.methuenrec.com](http://www.methuenrec.com) for details, updates, registration, and cancellations.

Program	Dates/Times	Location
Preseason Co-Ed Baseball Clinic	Thursdays through 3/31 Grades K-2: 4:30pm – 5:30pm Grades 3-5: 5:45pm – 6:45pm	Marsh Grammar School - Large Gym
Methuen Youth Volleyball League	3/19 – 5/28 Tuesdays, Thursdays (Practices) 5:30pm – 7:00pm or 7:00pm – 8:30pm Saturdays Mornings (Game/clinic) Grades: 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	MHS Field House
Soccer Shots	Sundays, 4/3 – 5/22 Mini (2 Y.O.) 9:00am – 9:35am Classic Hybrid (3 Y.O) 11:15am - 12pm Classic (4-5 Y.O) 10:25am – 11:05am	Nicholson Stadium – Back Field
Rangers Flag Football	Sundays, 4/10 – 6/12 9am – 12pm Ages 3-15, Divisions: Little Ballers, 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U, 15U	Nicholson Stadium – Pop Warner Field
Tee Ball	4/13 – 6/2 Wednesdays or Thursdays 5:30pm – 6:30pm Ages: 4-6	To Be Announced
After School Fit Club	6 Weeks Starting April 19 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:00pm – 4:00pm Grades: 2-8 Drop In Registration Available	Nicholson Stadium – Outdoor Track
Methuen Rec Tennis	Thursdays, April 28 <sup>th</sup> – May 26 <sup>th</sup> K-2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade: 3:45pm – 4:45pm 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade: 5:00pm – 6:00pm	MHS Tennis Courts



The mission of the Methuen Parks and Recreation department is to provide educational and enjoyable recreational programming for the Methuen community. The department strives to work with the citizens of Methuen to develop programming which will help enhance and encourage the sense of community within our city. Visit the Methuen Parks and Recreation Website at [www.methuenrec.com](http://www.methuenrec.com) to create an account and register for Recreation Programs and Upcoming Events. The data you provide - emergency contacts, medical information, etc. - will help us better serve you. This info will also be automatically placed into your registration forms.





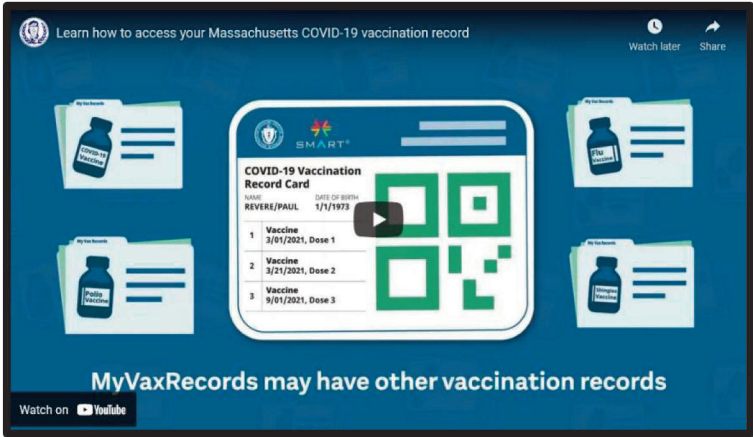
# Access Your Massachusetts Digital Vaccine Card & Record

You can request, view, and print your vaccination records and your COVID-19 SMART Health Card from the official Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS). Visit <https://myvaxrecords.mass.gov/> and follow these steps:

- 1. Click the "Find my vaccine record" button below.
- 2. Enter the information you gave when you got your vaccine.
- 3. If we find a match, we'll send you a link to a copy of your vaccination record.
- 4. Print your record to share it. COVID-19 vaccine records may also be shared with a QR code.

Please allow up to 24 hours for a response. If you need to request records for multiple dependents (e.g., children), you'll need to submit a new request for each.

The myvaxrecords portal will provide you with a digital copy of the record of vaccines which have been reported to MIIS. This system only includes records that your healthcare providers reported to Massachusetts. If you need a record of vaccines you received from the federal government or in another state, you will need to contact whoever administered those vaccines.



## Methuen Police Department News: Student Officers & New Dispatchers

Mayor Neil Perry and Chief Scott J. McNamara are pleased to announce that the Methuen Police Department sent eight student officers to the Northern Essex Community College (NECC) Haverhill Police Academy in preparation for careers with Methuen Police Department.



“I’m excited that these eight great young men and women are up to the challenge of a career in law enforcement,” says Chief McNamara.

“The lessons they learn at the Academy will prepare them for a career of helping others and protecting this community. I wish them all the best as they enter the academy.”

The eight student officers were hired from the Civil Service Police Officers List. The student officers are Madison Adames, Robert Fitzgerald, Angel Mejia Jr., Dannery Serrano, Jason Young, Cameron Fountain, Kayleigh Forgetta, and James Smith.

Following 24 weeks of training at the NECC Haverhill Police Academy — authorized by the Massachusetts Police Training Council — the officers will graduate, become Police Officers, and begin a 14-week Methuen Police Department Field Training Officer Program to train with an experienced officer.

“I congratulate these eight student officers on pursuing a career in public service here in the City of Methuen,” says Mayor Perry. “Public safety is a top priority here; and keeping our Police Department adequately staffed is an essential ingredient to safety.”

## MPD Welcomes Newly Trained Dispatchers

Yenifer Cabreja and Larissa Alves (pictured with Chief Scott J. McNamara) have joined the Methuen Police Department as dispatchers after graduating from the State 911 Department Academy. Both dispatchers speak multiple languages.

Dispatcher Alves speaks Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish and English fluently while Dispatcher Cabreja speaks both Spanish and English fluently.

Cabreja and Alves completed the five-week, 200-hour Public Safety Communications Academy, with an emphasis on, among other things, law enforcement dispatching, radio communications, next-generation 911 equipment training, the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System, communication with the deaf and hard of hearing, fire service dispatch, and active shooter response.

Both dispatchers also received training in ethics, suicide intervention, domestic violence, health, and wellness for dispatchers, and testifying in court.

Dispatcher Alves and Cabreja are now completing department in-house training by working side by side with an experienced dispatcher. This training will last approximately three months. Upon completion, they will be assigned to a patrol shift. The department is excited to have them as part of our professional dispatch team.





*Scanning the City*

Methuen Senior Center Continues to Stress Health & Safety



The Methuen Senior Activity Center suffered a burst water pipe during the extreme cold snap in mid-January. Unfortunately, our main office, lobby, and several other areas in the building were flooded. The Center is currently closed to the public but, repairs are underway.

Staff is still available during regular center hours to address your questions and concerns. You can reach us at 978-983-8825, Monday through Thursday 8:00am-4:00pm and Friday, 8:00am-12:30pm.

On a more encouraging note, COVID numbers do appear to be improving, but continued safety protocols (mask use and physical distancing) are still encouraged.

The city website has an entire section devoted to valuable COVID information and can be accessed at [www.cityofmethuen.net](http://www.cityofmethuen.net). Information about available vaccine clinics in the area for first, second, or booster shots can be found with registration links for easy scheduling. If you have questions or need help looking up information, call us at 978-983-8825. Thank you all for your patience. We are working as quickly as possible to provide a clean and safe senior center for all to enjoy!

Don't Miss the Nevins Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale

The Nevins Memorial Library Spring Book Sale is always one of the most anticipated events every year. We are happy to announce that it is back again this Spring. Friday, March 18 is the Preview Night. This year, if you are a Friends' Member, you can get in free of charge.

Otherwise, there is a \$20 charge for all Non-Members to enter. On Saturday, March 19 at 9:00am, the doors are open to everyone. Come browse the books, DVDs, CDs, and more.

On Sunday, March 20, the Spring Book Sale will be open from Noon to 4:00pm. Monday, March 21 is our always-exciting Bargain Day. Come buy a bag and see how many great deals you can fit into it. All the books and media must go.



Are you an adult who likes to read books marketed towards teens? We have a Book Group for adults 19 and older who love reading Teen/YA novels. It's called Forever Young-ish and meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7pm. Upcoming dates are March 17, April 21, and May 19. The next book for the March meeting is "The Downstairs Girl" by Stacey Lee. Whether you've read it or just want to stop by and see what the club is like, new members are always welcome. Books can be picked up at the Main Desk.

If you're not a Teen/YA novel reader, our WORDS (We Only Read Diverse Stories) Book Group is going strong as well. We just chose the books for March through June. On March 8, the book is "Winter Counts" by David Heska Wanbli Weiden - a thriller about a vigilante on a Native American reservation who sets out to track down where drugs are coming into the reservation. New members are always welcome at this and all our Book Groups – and the books can be picked up at any time at the Main Desk.

Book groups aren't your thing? Well then, have you looked at a really wonderful piece of art that seemed to resonate with how you have felt during these last two trying years? That's not surprising. Art of all types has always helped get us through difficult times. On March 14 at 7pm, join us via Zoom to explore some of the ways artists react to small or large, real, or imagined disasters. Sign up on our website's event calendar at [www.nevinslibrary.org](http://www.nevinslibrary.org) or call 978-686-4080 x12.

What about our Children's Department you ask? Well, we are signing up more kids for our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative. It's a program that encourages families and caregivers to read with their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers before they enter kindergarten. Come by the Children's Department to find out more information and get started.

As always, be the first to know about all that is contained here and more by going to our website, [www.nevinslibrary.org](http://www.nevinslibrary.org), or following us on our social media accounts. Simply search for Nevins Library or Nevins Library and the appropriate age group - adult, teen, or children - and we'll pop right up for you.







Are you interested in hosting a Community Neighborhood Group?

The City of Methuen Police Department in partnership with the Methuen City Council Public Safety Committee is creating a Community Neighborhood Group and needs your involvement.

If you are interested in hosting or participating, visit [www.cityofmethuen.net/communityneighborhoodgroup](http://www.cityofmethuen.net/communityneighborhoodgroup).

## MCS Celebrates 25 Years of Service

Methuen Community Studios turned 25 in 2021. The non-profit organization, which operates Public Channel Comcast 22 / FIOS 33 and Government Channel Comcast 8 / FIOS 32 in Methuen, celebrated in person at Lenzi's on December 2. MCS received honors from Senator Diana DiZoglio, Representative Linda Dean Campbell, Council Chair Steve Saba, and Mayor Neil Perry, pictured with MCS volunteer Gen Marks.



"Methuen Community Studios has seen many changes since its foundation in 1996," said Executive Director Karen L. Hayden. "But in the spirit of our founders, "Community" has always been the most important word in our name." Former President John Molori and Hayden spearheaded the move to 20 Aegean Drive which was completed in April 2017. Current President Tom Grassi has led the effort to keep the technology up to date.

MCS has trained the camera on everything from high school sports, concerts, local and state elections, educational lectures, awards ceremonies, and many other local events, including the creation of our award-winning newsmagazine, "Methuen Now," hosted by Community Services Manager Michelle Houle. Throughout the pandemic, MCS has also put out more LIVE programming, including MHS Ranger Football and Basketball as well as 2020 and 2021 Methuen High School Graduation ceremonies.

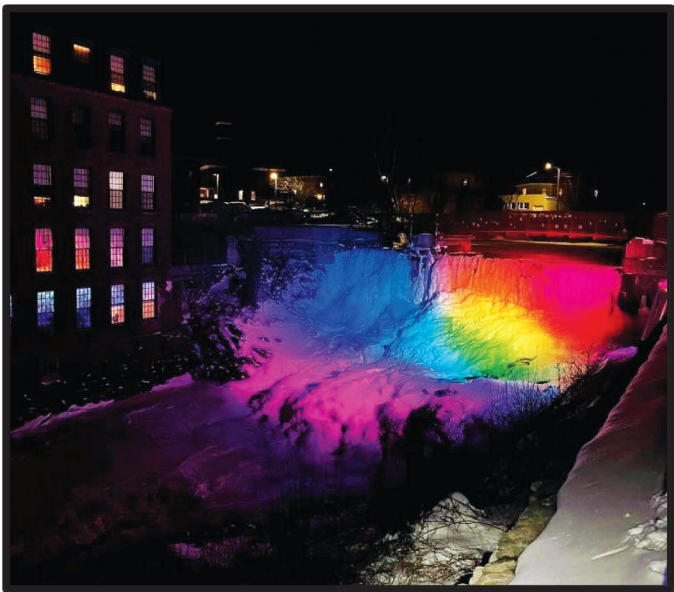
Government Services Coordinator Carol Ann Rousseau stepped up the production of programming from our City Government and has been instrumental in assisting Mayor Perry with his show "Mayor's Minutes" to keep residents informed during the pandemic. Starting with the first President Dave Skelly and Secretary Ray Pilat, hundreds of local residents have stepped behind and in front of the cameras to create local programs which teach, inform, and entertain. The organization hopes to revive in-person training programs in 2022. MCS has created the Dave Skelly Memorial Scholarship to assist students who are studying Communications and other public service majors. Applications for this year's scholarship will be available this spring. Throughout the COVID pandemic, MCS has kept the channels alive with new and archived programming. For a schedule of airtimes and training classes, please visit [methuentv.org](http://methuentv.org) or call 978-689-8627.

## Upcoming Schedule for "Light the Falls" on Osgood Street

"Light the Falls" – headed by the Arts Institute Group of the Merrimack Valley/MethuenArts in partnership with the City of Methuen, Olson Electric, and Lam Partners – is a collaborative public art and creative placemaking project being funded by the Essex County Community Foundation's Creative County Initiative (CCI). Thanks to this partnership, the waterfalls on Osgood Street in Methuen are now home to a dazzling display of vivid colors from hydro-powered lights designed by local artists. The amazing displays bring new life to this Methuen landmark. Mayor Neil Perry and the Office of Economic Development have finalized the upcoming schedule for "Light the Falls." We hope you will check out the dates below and enjoy this brilliant display of water and light.

(Light the Falls times are in the right column in the evening)

St. Patrick's Day - March 17	March 17, 6:00 to 7:30
Holi (Hindu) - March 19	March 18-20, 7:30 to 9:00
Ramadan (Islamic) - April 2	April 1-3 7:30 to 9:00
Passover (Jewish) - April 15	April 15-16, 8:00 to 9:30
Easter - April 17	April 17, 8:00 to 9:30
Patriots Day - April 18	April 18, 8:00 to 9:30
Gathering of Nations - April 21-23	April 21, 8:00 to 9:30
Earth Day - April 22	April 22, 8:00 to 9:30
Easter Orthodox - April 24	April 24, 8:00 to 9:30
Eid al-Fitr - evening May 2 to 3	May 2-3, 8:00 to 9:30
Cinco de Mayo - May 5	May 5, 8:15 to 9:30
Buddha birthday- May 8	May 6-8, 8:15 to 9:30
Pride Boston – June (Date TBD)	June 2-4, 8:30 to 9:30
Puerto Rican Day - June 12	June 10-12, 8:30 to 9:30
Juneteenth - Jun 19	Jun 17-19, 8:30 to 9:30



There are several current job openings within the City of Methuen government across various departments and specialties.

If you would like to come work with us, view job postings and job descriptions at [www.cityofmethuen.net/employment](http://www.cityofmethuen.net/employment).



## Conexión Comunitaria de Methuen

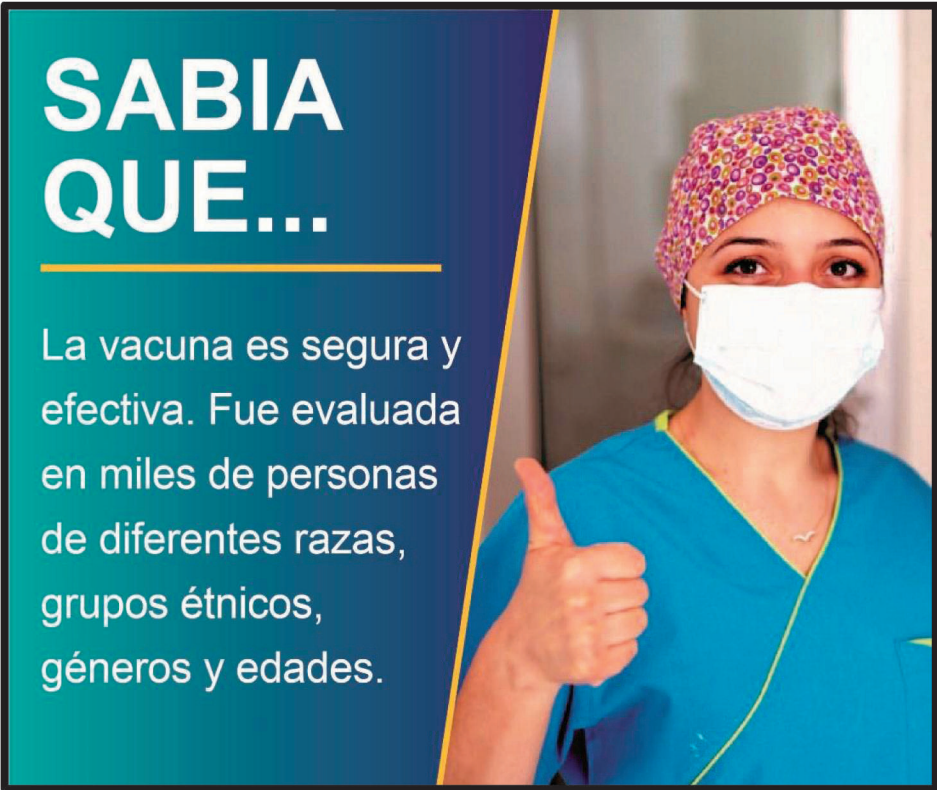
### MVRTA ofrece tarifas gratuitas a partir del 1 de marzo



La junta de la Autoridad de Tránsito Regional de Merrimack Valley (MVRTA) votó unánimemente el 1 de Diciembre del 2021 para que todos los servicios de para tránsito EZ Trans y rutas fijas locales sean gratuitos a partir del 1 de Marzo de 2022 durante al menos un programa piloto de 2 años. Las tarifas aún se cobrarán en el autobús Boston Commuter.

La MVRTA utilizará los fondos federales de la Ley de Ayuda, Alivio y Seguridad Económica del Coronavirus (CARES) y la Ley del Plan de Rescate Estadounidense (ARPA) para el programa piloto. Algunas de las muchas ventajas de un sistema de tránsito gratuito incluyen recuperar a los pasajeros que dejaron de viajar durante la pandemia de COVID-19, devolver dólares a la economía local, mayor acceso para las personas que tienen dificultades para pagar el transporte, viajes más rápidos y eficientes, y reducción de conflictos entre conductores y pasajeros. Además, otro factor que respalda la decisión de la junta, consciente del presupuesto, de no cobrar tarifas es el alto costo y la ineficiencia del cobro de tarifas.

Como señaló el administrador de la MVRTA, Noah Berger, “por cada dólar que recaudamos en tarifas, solo vemos menos de 24 centavos cuando se tienen en cuenta los costos totalmente asignados de la recaudación de tarifas”. “Estoy muy emocionada con este programa piloto”, dijo la vocera de la MVRTA, Niorka Méndez, y agregó que “la tarifa gratuita atraerá a nuevos pasajeros, aumentará el patrocinio de nuestros negocios locales, ofrecerá alivio económico a las familias que dependen de nuestro servicio y conectará a las personas con empleos y otras oportunidades económicas”.



## Noticias y Notas

**THE WALL THAT HEALS:** The Wall That Heals, una réplica a escala de tres cuartos del Monumento a los Veteranos de Vietnam junto con un Centro educativo móvil, llegará a Methuen, MA, del 27 de Septiembre al 2 de Octubre de 2022, en PFC Richard E. Potter Field en Pelham St. y estará abierto las 24 horas del día y gratis para el público a partir del Miércoles 28 de Septiembre a las 2:00 p. m. y finalizará el Domingo 2 de Octubre a las 2:00 p. m. The Wall That Heals honra a los más de tres millones de estadounidenses que sirvieron en las fuerzas armadas de los EE. UU. en la Guerra de Vietnam y lleva los nombres de los 58,281 hombres y mujeres que hicieron el último sacrificio en Vietnam.

**PROGRAMAS DE RECREACIÓN METHUEN:** Methuen Rec ofrece excelentes programas esta primavera. ¡Hay una variedad de programas disponibles desde nuestro próximo programa Skate and Read hasta el nuevo programa Rangers Flag Football esta primavera! Se necesita una tonelada de logística, contratación y alquiler de instalaciones para que estos programas se lleven a cabo, así que no espere para inscribirse en los programas que le interesan, o corre el riesgo de que la clase se llene o se cancele. Consulte la información sobre las fechas y horas de nuestros próximos programas a continuación. ¡Asegúrate de visitar [www.methuenrec.com](http://www.methuenrec.com) para conocer todos los detalles!

**FACTURAS DE IMPUESTOS ESPECIALES DE METHUEN:** La oficina de Tasadores enviará facturas anuales de impuestos especiales sobre vehículos a principios de Marzo. Este proyecto de ley es para el año calendario 2022. Si vendió o intercambió un vehículo en 2022, comuníquese con Theresa Solomon en la oficina al 978-983-8530 o envíe un correo electrónico a [tmsolomon@ci.methuen.ma.us](mailto:tmsolomon@ci.methuen.ma.us) para solicitar una reducción de la factura y recibir un ajuste en el monto.

**TRABAJADORES ELECTORALES NECESARIOS:** La oficina del secretario está buscando trabajadores electorales para las próximas elecciones en Septiembre y Noviembre. La aplicación estará disponible en breve en la página del Secretario. Además, el Censo de la Ciudad de 2022 llegará pronto y es muy importante completarlo todos los años y devolverlo a la Oficina del Secretario incluso si no tiene ningún cambio con respecto al año anterior. Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en comunicarse con la Oficina del Secretario al 978-983-8515.



## Message from the Mayor

### Arrival of Spring Brings Good News to Methuen

There is a lot of good news to share in this edition of Methuen Community Connection. Our COVID numbers continue to decline. Mask guidelines are changed consistent with CDC. Masks are not required in city buildings unless an individual is not vaccinated or has underlying health concerns. Effective March 7, the school committee voted to make mask wearing “parents’ choice.” If a parent desires their child to wear a mask, they can, otherwise masks are not required in MPS classes and buildings. Home COVID test kits have been distributed across the city in multiple events, and we still have some 3000 remaining. If you haven’t already received your free test kits from the city, please contact our Department of Public Health at 978-983-8625. Great thanks to the Methuen Disability Commission, especially Kevin Hatch and Ashley Smallwood, who helped make sure we got the kits out to members of that community first. Stop the Spread testing at Greater Lawrence Family Healthcare will cease effective the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. We are still running vaccination clinics, so stay connected to the City of Methuen on the web at [www.cityofmethuen.net](http://www.cityofmethuen.net) and our social media.



Mayor Neil Perry

The days are getting longer, and we are preparing to make some significant improvements to our parks and fields. Included in that list is the addition of pickleball courts, the renovation of the hockey rink at Veterans Park, playground and infrastructure upgrades at Forest Lake, upgrades at Burnham Road and Lawrence Street, and a separate capital improvement plan upgrade to Gill Avenue, which will provide a complete remodel as well as our first official dog park in the city. Great progress is also being made on numerous business developments across the city. In addition, I am thrilled that City Council passed our camera program. It is a much-needed upgrade to help our police department and one of my initial strategies when I took office. Our initial plan calls for cameras in 47 locations across the city, some of them movable day by day. I know and respect the concern of some regarding civil liberties. We will control those with documented and transparent procedures. I’m committed to holding public discussions in neighborhoods across the city to address any concerns. Revitalizing our neighborhoods is the primary driver. The camera program is an essential element of that strategy.

Finally, let’s talk trash. We are addressing our current trash and recycling status, which is largely unsustainable without significant cost increase. We have made or are making changes that include updating the landfill fees to address revenue loss associated, extending the hours of operation at the landfill to accommodate more residents, and preparing and submitting legal advertising and RFP for both trash and recycling contracts due July 1, 2022. These RFPS include options such as a comparison of “keep the same” trash pickup (unlimited), versus automated options and maintaining existing recycle program versus weekly recycling options and separation and education of recycling types. The education element is extremely important as Methuen is one of the worst recycling communities in the state. These and other options require your involvement, and your buy-in. Trash and recycle fees have risen dramatically in the last five years and are an integral part of the taxes you pay – so please get involved and attend the public discussions before July 1. We will, upon council approval, communicate what changes, if any, have been made.

For me, the winter has been tough physically, and I appreciate the notes of concern from many of you. Know that I am on the mend, ever mindful of my responsibility to you and the City of Methuen, and proud to be your Mayor. Let’s continue to be kind to one another, respect diverse opinions, and continue to move our city forward together.

## Mensaje del Alcalde

### La llegada de la Primavera trae buenas noticias a Methuen

Hay muchas buenas noticias para compartir en esta edición de Methuen Community Connection. Nuestros números de COVID continúan disminuyendo. Las pautas de máscara se cambian de acuerdo con los CDC. No se requieren máscaras en los edificios de la ciudad a menos que una persona no esté vacunada o tenga problemas de salud subyacentes. A partir del 7 de Marzo, el comité escolar votó para hacer que el uso de máscaras sea "elección de los padres". Si un padre desea que su hijo use una máscara, puede hacerlo; de lo contrario, no se requieren máscaras en las clases y edificios de MPS. Los kits de prueba de COVID en el hogar se han distribuido por toda la ciudad en múltiples eventos, y todavía nos quedan unos 3000. Si aún no ha recibido sus kits de prueba gratuitos de la ciudad, comuníquese con nuestro Departamento de Salud Pública al 978-983-8625. Muchas gracias a la Comisión de Discapacidad de Methuen, especialmente a Kevin Hatch y Ashley Smallwood, quienes ayudaron a asegurarse de que enviáramos los kits primero a los miembros de esa comunidad. Las pruebas Stop the Spread en Greater Lawrence Family Healthcare cesarán a partir del 28 de Marzo. Todavía estamos ejecutando clínicas de vacunación, así que manténgase conectado con la Ciudad de Methuen en la web en [www.cityofmethuen.net](http://www.cityofmethuen.net) y nuestras redes sociales.

Los días son cada vez más largos y nos estamos preparando para realizar algunas mejoras significativas en nuestros parques y campos. Incluida en esa lista está la adición de canchas de pickleball, la renovación de la pista de hockey en Veterans Park, mejoras en el área de juegos e infraestructura en Forest Lake, mejoras en Burnham Road y Lawrence Street, y una mejora separada del plan de mejora de capital para Gill Avenue, que proporcionar una remodelación completa, así como nuestro primer parque oficial para perros en la ciudad. También se están logrando grandes avances en numerosos desarrollos comerciales en toda la ciudad. Además, estoy encantado de que el Concejo Municipal haya aprobado nuestro programa de cámaras. Es una actualización muy necesaria para ayudar a nuestro departamento de policía y una de mis estrategias iniciales cuando asumí el cargo. Nuestro plan inicial requiere cámaras en 47 ubicaciones en toda la ciudad, algunas de ellas móviles día a día. Conozco y respeto la preocupación de algunos por las libertades civiles. Controlaremos aquellos con procedimientos documentados y transparentes. Me comprometo a realizar debates públicos en los vecindarios de la ciudad para abordar cualquier inquietud. La revitalización de nuestros vecindarios es el motor principal. El programa de cámara es un elemento esencial de esa estrategia.

Finalmente, hablemos de basura. Estamos abordando nuestro estado actual de basura y reciclaje, que es en gran medida insostenible sin un aumento significativo de los costos. Hemos realizado o estamos realizando cambios que incluyen la actualización de las tarifas de vertedero para abordar la pérdida de ingresos asociada, extendiendo las horas de operación en el vertedero para acomodar a más residentes, se preparó y presentó publicidad legal y RFP para contratos de basura y reciclaje que vencen el 1 de Julio de 2022. Estas RFPS incluyen opciones como una comparación de recolección de basura "mantener lo mismo" (ilimitado), versus opciones automatizadas y mantenimiento del programa de reciclaje existente versus opciones de reciclaje semanales y separación y educación de los tipos de reciclaje. El elemento educativo es extremadamente importante ya que Methuen es una de las peores comunidades de reciclaje en el estado. Estas y otras opciones requieren su participación y su aceptación. Las tarifas de basura y reciclaje han aumentado drásticamente en los últimos cinco años y son una parte integral de los impuestos que paga, así que participe y asista a las discusiones públicas antes del 1 de Julio. Con la aprobación del consejo, comunicaremos qué cambios, si los hay, ha sido hecho.

Para mí, el invierno ha sido duro físicamente y agradezco las notas de preocupación de muchos de ustedes. Sepa que me estoy recuperando, siempre consciente de mi responsabilidad hacia usted y la Ciudad de Methuen, y orgulloso de ser su alcalde. Sigamos siendo amables unos con otros, respetemos las opiniones diversas y sigamos avanzando juntos en la ciudad.