

# THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED NEWS FOR BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS



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*2021 Annual Report*

## Co-Presidents' Message

Dear Reader,

Each year we have been able to enhance *The Bedford Citizen* with the loyal support of our donors, sponsors, Bedford Guide advertisers, and grantors - 2021 was no exception. Take a peek at just some of what you have made possible:

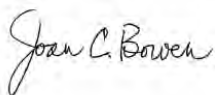
- In-depth coverage of our annual town election and Town Meeting proceedings and up-to-date information on Covid statistics, protocols, testing and vaccination
- A whopping \$31K in matching grants from NewsMatch, Google News Initiative, the Knight Foundation, Suzanne & Company, and Werfen in response to your generous donations
- Sustaining a community reporter (Mike Rosenberg), which means more coverage of key boards and committees
- Increased hours for an operations manager (Christine Speciale), whose organizational, software, and social media skills help us stay efficient and up-to-date
- Upgrade of *The Bedford Citizen* website to ensure that our look is fresh and inviting, the search function is robust, and everything works reliably
- A third year of The Bedford Guide - a yearbook highlighting local residents, events, and businesses
- An entire year of tips and suggestions from Ask Aunt Laura on everything from hanging pictures to determining the life of a battery

*The Bedford Citizen* proudly marks its TENTH year of publication in 2022! We can hardly believe how far we've come, and how quickly. Those who were involved in the very early days can recall the bootstrap nature of it all: no funding, a single volunteer reporter, lots of good ideas but very little practical experience, and a fervid prayer that we could connect with readers in a meaningful and informative way. We've seen a quantum leap from that time to posting nearly two thousand stories (1,814 to be exact) and recording over a million page views in 2021 alone.

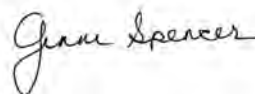
And we look forward to an exciting 2022 which we already know will include the addition of a cultural reporter funded by a recent grant from the Bedford Cultural Council and a celebration of our tenth birthday - which we hope will be festive and in-person. Watch the *Citizen* for details.

A lot has changed since we began, but our mission is still the same: to engage with and inform our community by reporting news of local significance, promoting local events, fostering connectivity, and encouraging participation. As always, we close the year with gratitude and appreciation for our donors, readers, sponsors, advertisers, and all those who contribute written content and photographs. Our second decade begins!

With thanks,



Joan Bowen, Co-President

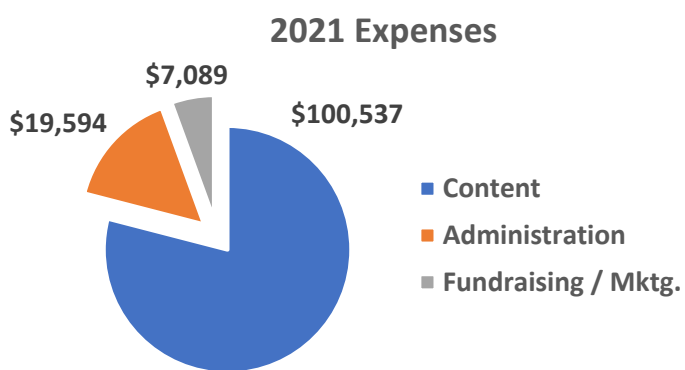
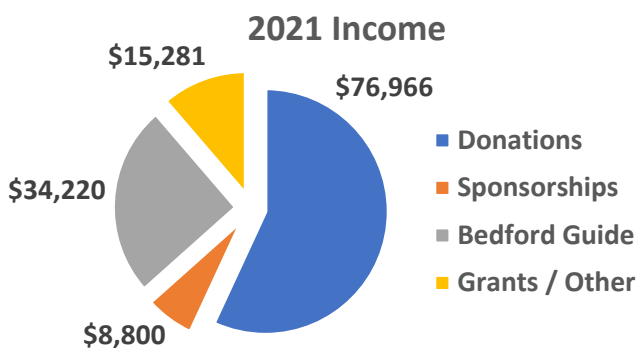


Ginni Spencer, Co-President

# Financial Summary

The Bedford Citizen ended its 2021 fiscal year with \$8,046 in net revenue. Revenue from all sources totaled \$135,266, while expenses were \$127,221. As shown in the charts below, our primary expenses are content related followed by the other operating costs as well as fundraising and marketing.

The Citizen is supported primarily by donations from our readers, who covered more than half of our expenses in 2021. We are grateful for every gift! Ads in this year's Bedford Guide provided the next largest source of revenue, more than covering production and delivery costs. In addition, several local businesses support the Citizen with sponsorships on our website. You'll find them listed on page 6.



## NewsMatch

The Citizen is the recipient of grant funding, primarily from matching gifts in response to NewsMatch, a fundraising program supported by major journalism funders. 2021's grant was received for NewsMatch donations given in our fall 2020 fundraising drive. We are particularly heartened by the success of our 2021 NewsMatch appeal that ran from November 1 to December 31. This is the third year we have taken part in the NewsMatch donation-matching drive. Local matches totaled \$13,000 in 2021, up from \$10,000 in 2020. Thanks to board member Gene Kalb's excellent work connecting with

our local business community for sponsorship in The Bedford Guide, he was able to secure two major local matching donations as well. We also secured a generous donation from a local couple.



With the help of our readers and the support of the NewsMatch program, we reached new heights with the number of new first time and monthly donors. This ongoing support is critical to our year-round financial health. With all the challenges and uncertainties that 2021 brought, one thing that stays sure and steady - the commitment to quality local journalism for our community is as strong as ever among Citizen readers and supporters. Thank you!

# Coverage Highlights

The *Citizen* continues to expand the coverage of issues and events here in Bedford. In all, the *Citizen* posted over 1,800 stories in 2021. They ranged from recognizing retiring long term town employees, to the changing commercial landscape in Bedford, to school sports and happenings at Hanscom Field. Coverage of the return of Bedford Day was terrific from beginning to end!



Here are a few highlights from 2021:

We hosted two community forums with local panelists offering insight into two important topics to the Bedford community. The first one focused on the structure of town meeting and its centrality in Bedford civic life. The second aimed to learn about the impact of the pandemic on learning and how our schools planned to respond.

In addition to extensive coverage of the 2021 local town election and Annual Town Meeting, the *Citizen* published more than 40 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.

Coverage of back-to-school decision-making and Board of Health decisions about masking were among the most heavily read and commented upon stories. We kept pace with the evolving mask mandates, availability of vaccine boosters and at-home tests kits as Bedford worked to reopen schools, Town Hall, the library and a return to indoor seating at restaurants.

More lighthearted topics, like the story about Peterbilt the hitchhiking kitten also had high readership. On a more somber note, appreciations for BHS physical education teacher and basketball coach Ryan Killian, and former math teacher and football coach Armand Sabourin were also among the top stories of the year.



This year's Bedford Guide edition grew to a whopping sixty-six pages! Featuring a new spotlight on "Citizens Among Us", along with articles on Bedford trails, youth

sports, pets, and arts in Bedford, the Guide was sent to every mailbox in Bedford. Look for more amazing Bedford citizens in our regular coverage.

We hope you enjoyed our coverage and look forward to 2022 and what it will bring for *The Bedford Citizen* and you.

## READERSHIP AT A GLANCE

	2019	2020	2021
Stories Posted	1,205	1,656	1,814
Email Subscribers	1,690	1,961	2,161
Facebook Followers	2,260	2,541	2,700
Twitter Followers	1,370	1,567	1,650
Instagram Followers	-	-	980
Story Views	541,000	909,672	1,070,539



# Thank You to Our Donors

Thank you to our generous donors who provide 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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