

FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RESPONDED TO BY WIZZ-AM, ALONG WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMMING TREATMENT OF THOSE ISSUES FOR THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 1ST, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST, 2023. THE LISTING IS BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. THE ORDER IN WHICH THE ISSUES APPEAR DOES NOT REFLECT ANY PRIORITY OR SIGNIFICANCE.

Quarterly Issues: WIZZ-AM Q4 2023

WIZZ-AM airs a weekly show called “Beyond the Headlines.” This is a news and public affairs program that takes a deeper look into the news and issues of that week, and how they affect the local community. The 30 minute show runs Sunday mornings at 6:00am.

10/1/23 – **Public Education:** Greenfield mayor Roxanne Wedegartner discusses recent layoffs in the Greenfield school system, the search for a new superintendent for next year, and the looming decision of what to do with the long-shuttered Green River School building. **Local Infrastructure:** The city of Greenfield has received a \$2.5 million dollar Solid Waste Infrastructure Recycling Program grant that will give the city a whole new fleet of trash trucks, and drastically change how recycling works in the city. Greenfield mayor Roxanne Wedegartner tells us about it in this segment. **Local taxes:** Greenfield treasurer Kelly Varner and town attorney Jesse Belcher-Timme addressed the city council last week to provide them with more information about a proposed ordinance that would require the city return any excess revenue accrued from the sale of a home taken for back taxes. Opponents of the practice call this home equity theft, but Varner says she's just following the law. Also, Greenfield resident Joan Jackson responds to the treasurer's presentation. As someone who nearly had her home taken and told for back taxes, Jackson has become an advocate for changing what she sees as an unjust system of selling homes taken for back taxes, and watching the city keep the profits.

10/8/23 – **Greenfield Election:** This show aired segments of the recent Greenfield Mayoral debate. We carried the opening statements from current mayor Roxann Wedegartner and challenger Virginia Deshorger. The candidates then responded to multiple questions.

10/15/23 – **Fuel assistance:** Applications for fuel assistance opened on October 1st. Community Action agencies across the state are the primary means for people to access and apply for fuel assistance, so in this segment we spoke with

Community Action Pioneer Valley executive director Claire Higgins about the program. **Affordable Housing:** Wayfinders president and CEO Keither Farey tells us about Wayfinders new affordable housing development in South Hadley, the need for subsidies to build more affordable housing, and the prospects for a new Housing Bond bill that would give developers a leg up bringing more units onto the market. **Environment:** The new executive director for the Greenfield-based environmental advocacy nonprofit the Connecticut River Conservancy tells us about her work and some of the issues facing all 410 miles of the Connecticut River watershed.

10/22/23 - **Food security:** Co-director of the Stone Soup Cafe, Ashley Kramer tells us a bit about what's wrong with our food system today, and how the holistic approach of stone soup cafe helps to remedy these big problems. **Renewable energy:** Senator Paul Mark reports back from the conference about energy policy in Washington D.C. called the Legislative Energy Horizons. He tells us what the energy industry is saying about the future of renewables, versus natural gas, and what it could take to modernize our electric grid. **Public education:** Representative Mindy Domb testified in favor of a bill she filed, "An Act Reducing the cost of attending College" before the Joint Committee on Higher Education last week. Domb co-filed the bill which would make certain course materials public domain, and thus free to all college students, with Springfield-based representative Bud Williams.

10/29/23 – **Greenfield election:** This show included coverage of the “candidates forum” held earlier in the week with candidates in the upcoming Greenfield election. Including, John James Garrett's opening statement. As an educator and union advocate, he talks about how he fought for fair treatment of Greenfield school teachers. Jesus Leyva's opening statement, in which he addresses how he became inspired to be a part of city government, first in Northampton where he could no longer afford rent, and now in Greenfield where he owns a home. Wahab Minhas, a Greenfield business owner, shares his background and interests at last night's candidates forum. **Public safety:** Greenfield Mayor Roxanne Wedegartner answers Bill Newman's questions in regard to the public's perception of the police department, and particularly Chief Haigh, in the run-up to the election just two weeks away.

11/5/23 – no show

11/12/23 – **Greenfield election coverage:** A volunteer with Virginia "Ginny" Desorgher's campaign, and member of Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution, Doug Selwyn shares his reaction to the news of Desorgher's overwhelming victory in her mayoral campaign. **Public education:** Senator Jo Comerford talks to Bill Newman about the prospect of pay raises for community

college employees, and why we need to pay educators fairly if we want to expand access to free community college for all. Also, Senator Jo Comerford testified in favor of the bill she co-filed with Representative Natalie Blais, "An Act Providing a Sustainable Future for Rural Schools." The state-appointed Rural Schools Commission recommended \$60 million dollar influx in aid to rural school districts. State aid increased this year thanks to the Fair Share Amendment passing, but it hasn't been completely enough. Comerford briefly explains to the members of the Joint Committee on education why they should support this bill. **Public health:** Bills to increase the access and safety of menstrual products , and then Bill Newman asks about the prospects of these bills passing this legislative session.

11/19/23 – **Local veterans:** State representative Natalie Blais talks to Bill Newman about two bills that she is co-sponsoring that would help veterans. The first would guarantee that cities and towns that provide services to veterans are reimbursed by the state more quickly than they are currently, and the second would give a leg-up to veteran owned businesses. **Local agriculture:** Last month the state legislature's 21st Century Agriculture Commission met to discuss economic and community development on farms in the Commonwealth. Angie Facey of Bree-Z-Knoll Farm, the family-run dairy farm in Leyden, spoke at the hearing about some of the struggles faced by their dairy farm, and how diversifying the business model to stay financially solvent comes with more work than their small staff can reasonably handle. **Public education:** For rural schools with long bus routes, transportation can be expensive. Combine that with declining school enrollments, and the ballooning costs of special education services, and you have a budgetary nightmare in the making for small rural school districts. In this segment Collaborative for Educational Services director Todd Gazda tells us about new legislation in the works that would give a much-needed boost to rural school district to cover transportation, and other costs.

11/26/23 - **Disaster relief:** Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Jo Comerford held a virtual press conference on Tuesday to launch their bill "An Act creating a state disaster relief fund for emergency management," It would establish a \$250 million financial relief fund to help those impacted by natural and man-made disasters across the Commonwealth, to be managed by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, or MEMA. In this segment Blais and Comerford introduce and explain their bill. Also, Phil Kantor, chair Conway Selectboard talks about how the town of Conway was hit hardest by the heavy rains in July, and why the rural nature of the town makes it difficult to qualify for federal funds. Conway was named the rainiest municipality in North America by the National Weather Service in July, and sustained 3.9 million dollars in damage. **Public health:** UMass Amherst professor of economics Gerald Friedman also spoke in favor of the bill, pointing out that the U.S.spends around \$6,000 per person every year on

healthcare, but meanwhile mortality rates in the U.S. has been on the rise relative to other countries.

12/3/23 - **Greenfield election:** : Greenfield mayor Roxane Wedegartner talks about her failed reelection campaign and the factors that may have contributed to it, including the school budget cuts and ongoing development projects that Virginia Desorgher will have to take over as the next mayor of Greenfield. She discusses these topics with WHMP's host Buz Eisenberg. **Public safety:** State representative Lindsay Sabadosa has filed a bill relative to gun sales that would establish a voluntary do-not-sell list in the state legislature. The bill is aimed at suicide prevention and mental health, as the representative explains in this exchange with a member of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. Also, Governor Maura Healey's administration is taking steps to combat hate crimes in Massachusetts. The state police have been tasked with leading a new task force managed a new task force called the Hate Crimes Awareness and Response Team, or HEART. Last week the governor hosted a press conference to talk about the new initiative and the importance of policing hate crimes.

12/10/23 – **Local economy:** Yesterday the Massachusetts legislature convened in an emergency formal session and successfully passed a \$3 billion supplemental budget for some vital programs before the end of the calendar year. Senator Jo Comerford spoke with WHMP's Bill Newman prior to the vote yesterday. **Public safety:** Ghost guns, those being guns assembled from parts bought online that do not have individual serial numbers, are growing in popularity. The Massachusetts legislature is working on a bill that would increase regulation of these untraceable firearms as a part of a broader gun law reform bill that Senator Jo Comerford tells us about in this segment. **Public utilities:** The cost of electricity and natural gas is going up, and recently the state legislature's Joint Committee on Energy and Environmental Affairs held a listening session in Pittsfield to see how these rates are impacting residents. Senator Paul Mark talked to Buz Eisenberg about us how the hearing being held in Pittsfield makes a difference for western Massachusetts residents who are often not given access to public hearings in Boston.

12/17/23 – **Greenfield politics:** City councilor Marianne Bullock, who has represented Precinct TTKK for two years, talks about the relationship between the city council and the current mayor, and what she hopes to see change under the leadership of Greenfield's next mayor, Virginia Desorgher, once her term begins in January. **Public education:** The Greenfield public school district is losing students, and as a result losing funding. City councilor Marianne Bullock tells us what she thinks the district needs to get back on track. **Charitable giving:** For those of us itemize their taxes and claim deductions based on charitable donations, this one is for you. WHMP host Bill Newman talks about how charitable giving deductions have

changed over the years and a recent change that congress made to the benefit of the taxpayers claiming charitable deductions, and the charities that receive these funds.

12/24/23 – No show. Christmas programming.

12/31/23 – **Greenfield/state politics:** Outgoing Mayor Roxann Wedegartner on the city's council's rejection of her Board appointments at the tail end of her final term, and the hand-off to the mayor-elect Ginny Desorgher. Also, Housing, climate change, and food security are top priorities for Representative Mindy Domb for 2024. She talks about those priorities in this segment. And, there were close to 7,000 bills filed this session in the Massachusetts statehouse, and we're only halfway done. In this segment Amherst Representative Mindy Domb tells us about some of the successes, and the frustrations, she has had with the legislature this session, and the painstaking process of passing a bill.