

2017 John J. Cronin Public Service Award

James J. Gavin

The John J. Cronin Public Service Award committee annually awards Westwood's highest honor to an individual who has been remarkable in service to the community. John J. Cronin, Town Treasurer, for many years selflessly gave of his time and expertise for the betterment of the community, both as an elected official and in numerous volunteer activities. To recognize the spirit of community involvement illustrative of John Cronin's life, it is with great pleasure we announce James Gavin as the fifteenth recipient of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award.

Jim was appointed to and served on the Finance Commission from 1997 to 2002, serving as Chairman in 2001 and Vice Chairman in 2002. Jim's professional knowledge of finances directly contributed to the general understanding of the financial impact of Town Meeting decisions on taxes. Jim's input and leadership throughout his six years provided guidance to the Municipal Subcommittee, Education Subcommittee and Revenue Subcommittees in order to address and explain to residents the needs of the community and the services it can provide within the requested budgets.

In 1999, the Town began a multi-year process which included the support of Town Meeting voters for \$45 million override to fund the construction of a new High School. By 2002, all approvals necessary to issue the bonds were in place. In September 2002, the Board of Selectmen appointed Jim to serve as the Town Treasurer at a critical moment after John Cronin stepped down due to illness. Jim subsequently ran for and won the election of Town Treasurer on April 29, 2003. That same year, Jim coordinated the issuance of the High School \$45 million bond, the largest bond issued by Westwood.

In 2012, Jim led the Financial Team through a process called refunding. By refinancing the remaining balance of the High School Bond, the Town was able to take advantage of the historic low interest rates and adjust the remaining payments, which saved the Town \$2.7 million in interest costs over the remaining term of the bond.

Over the last 15 years, Jim, serving as Treasurer, has issued over \$95 million in bonds for various school and municipal projects and capital investments. His understanding of finances, Department of Revenue regulations, and bonding obligations have been crucial to maintain the Town's outstanding financial standing and ability to repeatedly secure bonds at the lowest rates and terms in the best interest of the Town.

From 2002 through 2008, Jim was appointed and served on the Permanent Building Committee. While serving on the PBC, Jim was an important contributor to the construction of the High School by providing professional and financial guidance throughout the construction period.

In 2014, Standard & Poor's Rating Services, a municipal bond credit agency, upgraded the Town's underlying long-term rating to 'AAA' the highest rating a community can receive. The rating reflects the Town's very strong economy, management, budgetary flexibility, budgetary performance and stable revenue profile, liquidity, providing cash to cover debt service and operating expenditures and very strong debt and contingent liabilities position as positive credit factors. Jim's leadership over the years was a significant contribution to the Town achieving this AAA rating.

Over the last 15 years, Jim has also served on the Aid to the Elderly and Infirm, Long Range Financial Planning Committee, OPEB Liability Task Force, Custodian Tax Title Representative and Budget Steering Committee in addition to being re-elected as Town Treasurer five times. Jim continues to add financial guidance and leadership on all the boards and committees he serves on, guiding the Town and its financial staff on what is in the best fiscal interest of the Town. Jim has and continues to oversee the Treasurer's Office and its staff working closely with the Finance Director to ensure all the key functions and duties are carried out and automated to best serve the community and its residents.

As a lifelong resident of Westwood, Jim and his wife Diane of 31 years raised four children, Katelyn, Jimmy, Kevin and Danny. He is also the grandfather of two-year old Keagan Shaw. True to the community, Jim has coached Youth Hockey, Soccer, Baseball and Pop Warner Football. In his free time, he served on the Board of Peoples Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation from 2008 through 2015 and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Rockland Trust/Peoples Federal Charitable Foundation.

On behalf of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award Committee, it is with great pleasure that we present this prestigious award to James J. Gavin and add his name to the plaque displayed in Town Hall listing all previously honored individuals.