

**TOWN OF RYE SELECT BOARD
2024 TOWN BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Thursday, November 2, 2023

8:30 a.m.

Rye Town Hall & Via Zoom

Select Board Present: *Chair Tom King, Vice-Chair Bill Epperson, and Selectman Bob McGrath*

Others Present: *Town Administrator Matt Scruton, and Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron*

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair King called the meeting/budget work session to order at 8:31 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. 2024 Budget Work Session

Department	Account	Requested	Recommended
Sewer	Fund 2	\$509,944	\$528,484
Lee Arthur & John McCune	4326-90	<i>(initial request)</i>	

Highlights: Lee Arthur reviewed the proposed sewer budget for the Select Board. The increases in the sewer budget are due to COLA at 3.75% for wages and salaries. There are also increases to FICA and Medi. The increase to the engineering line item is due to proposed upgrades to the pump stations. There is also an increase in the legal services line item to cover costs associated with the agreement renewal with North Hampton. It was noted that there is an increase in the Lafayette sewer line item to cover increasing Portsmouth costs; however, those are reimbursable expenditures from Adam's Mobile Home Park. Ms. Arthur spoke in regard to the overall sewer usage and its effect on the budget. She also spoke about the proposed new line item for grant matching for a sewer infrastructure vulnerability assessment, which would be an additional \$18,500 to the budget being presented.

The Select Board agreed that a new line item for grant matching should be added to the budget to keep consistency with other departments throughout the Town.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$528,484 for the Sewer Budget. Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0

Ambulance	4215-19	\$196,290	\$196,290
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Fire Chief Mark Cotreau

Highlights: Chief Cotreau reviewed the line items in the proposed ambulance budget for 2024. The budget includes items for vehicle fuel and oil, vehicle repair, wages, patient billing and collection service fee, and equipment contracts.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$196,290 for the Ambulance Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Fire Dept.	4220-16	\$2,158,774	\$2,158,774
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Fire Chief Mark Cotreau

Highlights: Chief Cotreau noted that the overall increase in the Fire Department Budget is about 10% with the bulk of that increase being in contractual wage increases and the funding of the Deputy Fire Chief position for nine months. The uniform line item was increased due to the number of per diem new hires. Chief Cotreau gave an explanation on the difference between overtime wages versus replacement wages. It was noted that protective gear is increasing by 8%, which reflects the vendor costs to the Department. The decrease in vehicle oil and fuel is based on the two-year average use at \$3.50 per gallon. Vehicle repairs has increased by 5% due to overall rising costs. Other increases in line items include member dues, and professional training.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$2,158,774 for the Fire Department Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Beach/Lifeguards	4520-52	\$106,036	\$106,306
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Fire Chief Mark Cotreau

Highlights: Chief Cotreau spoke in regard to proposed increase to the lifeguards' wages and the implementation of rainout days wages, in an effort to retain guards for the season. The department has fourteen lifeguards at full staff. This past season the Town was at nine guards. There was discussion with the Select Board about incentives that might be considered to support the recruitment of lifeguards. After discussion, the Select Board agreed to support the proposed lifeguard wage increase for 2024.

**Motion by Tom King to approve the new wage schedule for the lifeguards as written.
Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0**

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$106,036 for the Beach/Lifeguards Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Public Safety Bldg.	4194-08	\$94,897	\$94,897
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Fire Chief Mark Cotreau &

Police Chief Kevin Walsh

Highlights: Chief Cotreau reviewed the proposed budget for the Public Safety Building.

**Motion by Tom King to recommend \$94,897 for the Public Safety Building Budget.
Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0**

Emergency Mngt. 4290-17 **\$14,050** **\$14,050**

Police Chief Kevin Walsh

Highlights: Chief Walsh presented the Emergency Management Budget for 2024 to the Select Board. There were no real issues or concerns with the proposed budget.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$14,050 for the Emergency Management Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Police Dept. 4210-15 **\$1,977,659** **\$1,977,659**

Police Chief Kevin Walsh

Highlights: Chief Walsh noted that the increase in the budget is mostly due the wages and salaries, retirement, FICA and Medi, and health insurance lines items. At this time, the Department is at full staff. Chief Walsh spoke about the importance of offering a competitive wage and benefit package in order to retain competent officers. He also spoke about local programs the Department is involved with to help with mental health training and support.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$1,977,659 for the Police Department Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Animal Control 4414-38 **\$87,365** **\$87,366**

Police Chief Walsh

(initial request)

Highlights: Chief Walsh spoke to the Select Board regarding his request to move the animal control officer position to fulltime. He had previously spoken to the Select Board about this request during a Select Board work session, in which all new positions for town departments were reviewed. *(Please see BOS Minutes of 10/12/23)*

It was noted by Chair King that at this time, DPW pays for the dog waste bags, but animal control fills the dispensers with bags. He asked if this expense should be under the animal control budget. Chief Walsh agreed to follow up on this for future budgets.

Chair King suggested putting funds in the travel and mileage line item to cover costs due to the Animal Control Officer driving their own vehicle when the Department's ACO vehicle is not available. It was noted that moving the position from part-time to fulltime may have less flexibility with regard to work hours.

It was agreed to add \$1 to that line item, so it can be used as an expense if needed.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$87,366 for the Animal Control Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Parking Enforce Fund 8 **\$68,260** **\$68,260**

Police Chief Walsh

Highlights: Chief Walsh spoke to the Select Board about the wages line item. He noted that the year-to-date revenue for Fund 8 is approximately \$95,000. The revenue is a 60/40 split with 60% going to pay for parking enforcement and 40% going to the general fund. Chief Walsh pointed out that the 2024 budget includes the replacement of a moped, which is done every other year.

The Select Board reviewed the wages line item versus the anticipated revenues for 2024. They also reviewed the proposed administration wages.

Motion by Bill Epperson to approve the new pay scale for parking enforcement for 2024. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$68,260 for the Fund 8 Parking Enforcement Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Outside Details	Fund 7	\$103,753	\$103,753
Police Chief Walsh			

Highlights: Chief Walsh explained the funding for the outside details for the Police Department. The officers are paid \$60.00 per hour to work an outside detail. The Town adds to that amount a \$23.00 an hour for an administrative fee. If a police cruiser is used for the detail, it's invoiced out at \$12.00 per hour. He pointed out that the officers' wages for details is going up to \$61.00 per hour in April. He will be asking the Select Board to go to \$15.00 per hour for the cruiser in the future. Vendors and companies requesting the outside detail are invoiced for the job. New vendors, who have not yet worked with the Town, must prepay for the detail.

It was noted by Finance Director Becky Bergeron that Fund 7 is a self-supporting fund, which means that it doesn't get tax appropriations, it's basically supported by fees. She also noted that Fund 7 covers outside details for both the Fire and Police Departments.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$103,753 for Fund 7 Outside Details. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Town Custodian	4194-02	\$195,280	\$195,280
Director Jason Rucker			

Highlights: DPW Director Jason Rucker noted that the wages line item has increased due to one staff member being at maximum wage. The budget has also increased due to the COLA and increase in health benefits. The budget also takes into account the possibility of an employee retirement, which is being addressed between wages and contracted services. This will give the Town a contingency plan, if the Town finds itself short a custodian. This was also done in the 2023 budget.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$195,280 for the Government Buildings Town Custodian Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Public Works Bldg.	4194-06	\$21,225	\$21,255
Director Jason Rucker			

Highlights: Director Rucker noted that the increase in this budget reflects the electrical expenses for the addition of a salt storage heater. The maintenance supply line is being increased to reflect increasing supplies. The heating line item has decreased. This is an estimate, as there is no historical data on propane usage.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$21,225 for the Public Works Buildings Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

DPW Personnel	4312-23	\$909,480	\$909,480
Director Jason Rucker			

Highlights: Director Rucker noted that the wages and salaries line item is down a bit from 2023, which is due to correcting personnel assignments. There was a reassignment in wages for one of the highway workers to the transfer station budget, which will be reflected in that budget for 2024. Also, two tenured public employees retired in 2023 and they were replaced with grade 1/step 1

employees. There is also a small increase to the budget for background and physical drug testing, due to the constant recruitment and retention over the last couple of years. The uniform line item has increased slightly to reflect the additional staff member that was added to the Public Works Department.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$909,480 for the Public Works Personnel Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

DPW Operations 4312-24

\$846,470

\$891,470

Director Jason Rucker

(initial request)

Highlights: Director Rucker noted that the operations budget is up about 9% for this coming year. The majority of the increase is in pavement costs, which is proposed at an additional \$25,000. He is also asking for an increase to the salt budget, so there will be enough treated supply on hand for unanticipated storm events. The request is to increase both the treated and bulk salt by 100 tons. Director Rucker noted that another increase is in the contracted services line item. Historically, the Department has budgeted to a lowest bid option. He is recommending that the budget reflect an average for contracted services, which covers services such as; catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, line striping, and pavement markings. Director Rucker pointed out that the Town is also required through the EPA for MS-4 to sweep the streets twice starting in the coming year, so this is reflected in the 2024 budget.

There was discussion about increasing the paving budget, which would also need to include additional costs for lane marking and overtime wages. The Select Board agreed to support \$520,00 for the paving budget to cover an additional 1,500ft of paving in 2024, in order for the Department to start catching up on paving throughout town. The increase to the paving line item adds \$45,000 to the Public Works Operation Budget.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$891,470 for the Public Works Operation Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Street Lighting 4316-27

\$3,800

\$3,800

Director Jason Rucker

Highlights: There were no issues or concerns with the street lighting budget.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$3,800 for the Street Lighting Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Transfer Station 4323-33

\$378,105

\$378,105

Director Jason Rucker

Highlights: Director Rucker noted there is an increase in wages, which is the significant increase in the 32% overall budget. This reflects the reassignment of wages for three fulltime attendants at the Transfer Station. The other increases to the wages reflect the COLA and increase to health and benefits. There is also an increase in the equipment and vehicle maintenance line item, due to deferred maintenance and other increases in supply chain and service calls.

Motion by Tom King to recommend the Transfer Station Operations Budget in the amount of \$378,105. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

\$370,600

Highlights: Director Rucker noted that the budget has increased by 5%, which is due to the increase in contractually obligated costs for tipping fees, as well as the hauling contract. There has been a slight increase in the tonnage, but that has been accounted for in the budget.

\$166,061

Highlights: It was noted that the increase to the budget is due to wages and benefits for the Land Use Assistant. A significant amount of increase is due to landfill monitoring costs for additional monitoring of Parson's Creek, as well as landfill monitoring. There's a slight increase in the contracted services line for anticipated increases for mowing services for town property.

\$52,735

(initial request)

Highlights: The increases in the budget reflect increases in wages due to increases in overtime and tenured employee wages. There's an increase in the contracted services line item for anticipated increases for rubbish pickup.

It was noted by Finance Director Bergeron that the environmental service line item covers the cost for beach monitoring at some of the beaches. The sampling cost is covered by beach parking stickers, which is 75% of that revenue. The revenue to Fund 12 is approximately \$63,000 for 2023. She also noted that the fund is now back in the black. There had been discussion about using the additional funds from the fund balance to fund some capital outlay projects; such as, beach equipment replacement.

There was discussion about the repair and maintenance of the porta-potties and the structures that surround them, along with the lifeguard chairs and other equipment. Director Rucker noted that the materials and supplies line item went over this year because the Department did some renovations and reconstruction of the beach chairs and lifeguard boxes.

There was further discussion about adding to the equipment maintenance fund, as well as the materials and supplies line item to cover unanticipated repairs. It was agreed to add funds to each of those line items to bring them to \$5,000., which is an additional \$3,500 to the overall budget for beach cleaning.

\$403,387

Highlights: It was noted by Building Inspector Chuck Marsden that the biggest increase in the budget is due to wages, as the budget covers the addition of a parttime building inspector at 32 hours a week. Other increases in the wages reflects the COLA and increase in employee benefits.

It was also noted that the contracted services line item covers costs associated with septic review and site visit inspections by Dennis Plante. That is a number that is not known, as it depends on the amount of septic work being done by homeowners and builders. These costs are reimbursed by the homeowner and builder.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend the Building Inspection Budget in the amount of \$403,387. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Zoning - BOA	4191-10	\$19,060	\$19,060
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Planning/Zoning Administrator Kim Reed

Highlights: Administrator Reed reviewed the proposed zoning budget and outlined the increases, which are seen in the advertisement, contracted services, and postage line items.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend the Zoning Board of Adjustment Budget in the amount of \$19,060. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Planning Board	4191-11	\$241,760	\$241,760
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Planning/Zoning Administrator Kim Reed

Highlights: Administrator Reed noted that the increases to the budget can be seen in the conferences line item, mileage, postage, and consulting fees. Administrator Reed reviewed how the revenues from applications are used and what items it covers in the budget. Revenues to date are \$10,467 for planning board applications.

There was discussion about whether the planning board applications pay for all fees associated with the applications. Administrator Reed reviewed the expenses that are covered by an applicant. It was agreed to break out the legal fees from the consulting fees and put it in a legal line item in the planning board budget. It was also agreed to do this for the zoning budget.

**Motion by Tom King to recommend the Planning Board Budget in the amount of \$241,760.
Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0**

Library	4550-58	\$796,250	\$796,250
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**Library Trustees (Jeff Ross) &
Director A. Richmond**

Highlights: Director Richmond reviewed the details of the proposed budget for the Library. There is a decrease in wages due to retirement of tenured employees. There is also a decrease in the heating line item. Increases to the budget include books and materials, purchasing and shipping, electronic services with the State, and software licensing fees. The overall budget shows a 1.2% increase.

Library Trustee Jeff Ross noted that the Library implemented a merit-based salary system that has been in place for about four years. This has really helped in the management of salaries.

Director Richmond explained that the wage scale has been developed based on a regional comparison of libraries of the same size, population, and budget. The compensation is not always paid out in the form of salary, as it could be paid as a bonus.

**Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend the Library Budget in the amount of \$796,250.
Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0**

The Select Board recessed for lunch at 12:17 p.m.
Meeting/Budget Work Session reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
Conservation	4611-53	\$152,650	\$146,650

Suzanne McFarland & Sally King *(initial request)*

Highlights: Conservation Commission Chair Suzanne McFarland reviewed the proposed conservation budget. She noted that based on estimates recently received from Rockingham Planning Commission, the consulting fees line item can be reduced by \$5,000. This line item covers items for wetland scientists, forestry, and engineering services. The salt marsh restoration line item can also be reduced by \$3,000., as that estimate has also been received. She requested that the line item for the Town Forest be increased by \$2,000 to cover invasive work and the relocation of a trail. With these changes, this would bring the overall budget to \$146,650.

The Select Board allowed Hugh Lee, Pioneer Road, to briefly speak in regard to the legal expense line item in the budget. He has sent an email to the Select Board outlining his suggestions for this budget.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend the Conservation Commission Budget in the amount of \$146,650. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Cons. Bldgs.	4194-53	\$13,280	\$13,280
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Suzanne McFarland & Sally King

Highlights: The electricity line item has increased because the Goss Farm now has a well and is no longer on town water. There is a new line item to cover the costs of the well to be turned on/off seasonally and for water sampling.

Motion by Tom King to recommend the Conservation Buildings Budget in the amount of \$13,280. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Mosquito Ctrl.	4414-39	\$115,450	\$115,450
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Tim Sanborn

Highlights: Mosquito Commissioner Tim Sanborn reviewed the increases to the budget for mosquito control. He noted that the State is now requiring mosquito testing starting on June 1st, where it previously started in July. This has added to the expenses in the budget. Other increases are due to anticipate inflation costs for vendor services.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend the Mosquito Control Budget in the amount of \$115,450. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Recreation	4520-50	\$403,075	\$403,075
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Dyana Martin & Corey Belden

Highlights: Recreation Director Dyana Martin reviewed the proposed budget for the Recreation Department. There is a decrease in software licensing, as the Department is using new software that is less expensive. A lot of the recreation budget is the same. She reviewed the changes to specific line items; such as, vehicles and repairs, uniforms, and professional training.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$403,075 for the Recreation Department. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Recreation Director Martin spoke to the Select Board about the recent request she received to add \$2,000 to the recreation budget to cover the expense of an annual community picnic, which was done this year in celebration of Rye400. Chair King noted that the Rye400 funding team wants to stay together to help raise funds for community events in the future. There was some discussion on whether to add seed money to the budget, under programs, to be used for community events; such as, Rye Day, and/or a community picnic. The Select Board agreed to add funds to cover those community events. Finance Director Bergeron recommended adding funds to the budget for patriotic purposes under a new line item for community events.

Patriotic Purposes	4583-59	\$18,600	\$28,600
Dyana Martin		<i>(initial request)</i>	

Highlights: The Select Board agreed to add a line item for community events and to add \$10,000 to the proposed budget.

Motion by Bill Epperson to amend the 2024 Patriotic Purposes Budget to include a community event line of \$10,000 and recommend a budget of \$28,600. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Rec Revolving	Fund 9	\$260,180	\$260,180
Dyana Martin & Cory Belden			

Highlights: The Select Board reviewed the Recreation Revolving Budget, which pays for recreational programming and is reimbursed by fees charged for the programs. It was noted that 56% of the budget is fixed and less than half is programming.

Motion by Tom King to recommend the Recreation Revolving Budget in the amount of \$260,180. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Heritage	4590-57	\$4,800	\$4,800
Peter White			

Highlights: Heritage Commission Treasurer Peter White presented the budget for the Heritage Commission. There are no changes or increases being proposed for 2024.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$4,800 for the Heritage Commission Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Energy Com.	4620-46	\$1,500	\$1,500
Tom Pfau & Howard Kalet			

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron presented the Energy Committee Budget on behalf of Tom Pfau and Howard Kalet. It was agreed to breakout the professional training line item from administration; however, this will not change the requested budget for 2024.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$1,500 for the Energy Committee Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

<p>The Select Board recessed the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Meeting/Budget Work Session reconvened at 2:12 p.m.</p>

Town Clerk/Reg. 4140-13 \$7,450 \$7,450

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Donna DeCotis

Highlights: There were no issues or concerns with the proposed budget.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$7,450 for the Town Clerk/Registrations Budget.

Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Tax Collector 4150-14 \$357,640 \$345,140

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Donna DeCotis *(initial request)*

Highlights: Town Clerk DeCotis reviewed the Tax Collector Budget for 2024. She noted a change to the proposed amount under software licensing from \$14,000 to \$12,500. This will lower the overall budget to \$345,140. Main increases to the budget are in salaries and wages, and employee benefits.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$345,140 for the Tax Collector Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Elections 4140-03 \$55,290 \$55,290

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Donna DeCotis

Highlights: Clerk DeCotis noted that this budget covers expenses for four elections in 2024.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$55,290 for the Elections Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Beach Comm. 4520-53 \$1,985 \$2,135

Mary-Ann Sullivan *(initial request)*

Highlights: Beach Committee Chair Mary-Ann Sullivan presented the budget for 2024 for the Beach Committee. She spoke about the beach sampling being done by Surfrider during the shoulder season. It was noted that Surfrider does not do testing during the shoulder season at Wallis Sands Beach. The Beach Committee has offered to take the samples at Wallis Sands a couple of times during the shoulder season.

There was some discussion about how much should be included in the budget to cover the lab fees for the Wallis Sands Beach testing. It was agreed to budget an additional \$150 to cover the costs of these samples.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$2,135 for the Beach Committee Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Historic Dist. 4589-54 \$3,745 \$4,045

Kaitlyn Coffey *(initial request)*

Highlights: Historic District Chair Kaitlyn Coffey presented the budget for 2024 for the Historic District Commission. She requested additional funds for professional training/development in order to take advantage of training that may be offered through the NH Preservation Alliance. The Select Board agreed to add a professional development line item in the amount of \$300.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$4,045 for the Historic District Commission Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Executive	4130-01	\$393,960	\$390,640
Finance Director Becky Bergeron & Town Administrator Matt Scruton		<i>(initial request)</i>	

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron noted the increases to the budget, which include COLA for salaries and wages. Other increases are in the overtime line item and medical benefits. She noted that the Telecommunications Infrastructure Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Select Board, has asked for some funds to hire a consultant to update the cell coverage maps. This amount is shown in the contracted services line item. The original request for those services was for \$5,000; however, that amount is now being reduced to \$1,500., which would bring the overall budget down to \$390,640.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$390,640 for the Executive Office Budget. Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0

Assessing	4150-20	\$212,600	\$212,600
Finance Director Becky Bergeron & Town Administrator Matt Scruton			

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron presented the budget for the Assessing Office. The increases to the budget are due to the COLA and health insurance. The contracting services for Municipal Resources, Inc. has been estimated at a 4.1% increase for budgeting purposes.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$212,600 for the Assessing Office Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Finance	4150-21	\$292,815	\$292,815
Finance Director Becky Bergeron & Town Administrator Matt Scruton			

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron noted that the increase in wages includes scheduled salary increases and a new position for a parttime finance assistant starting in April of 2024.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$292,815 for the Finance Office Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

CIP Com.	4150-90	\$1,540	\$1,540
Finance Director Becky Bergeron & Town Administrator Matt Scruton			

Highlights: The CIP Committee Budget covers the costs to create the Capital Improvements Plan document.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$1,540 for the CIP Committee. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Legal 4153 \$173,070

**Finance Director Becky Bergeron &
Town Administrator Matt Scruton**

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron explained that the Legal Budget is based on 500 hours at \$200 per hour. She reviewed the specific line items in the budget. There was discussion about adding funds to the budget to cover unanticipated expenses due to enforcement.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$173,070 for the Legal Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Town Hall Bldg. 4194-07 \$33,345 \$33,345

**Finance Director Becky Bergeron &
Town Administrator Matt Scruton**

Highlights: There were no issues or concerns with the proposed budget.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$33,345 for the Town Hall Building Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Town Hall Annex 4194-09 \$28,550 \$28,550

**Finance Director Becky Bergeron &
Town Administrator Matt Scruton**

Highlights: The Select Board reviewed the Town Hall Annex Budget and briefly discussed some of the specific expenses.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$28,550 for the Town Hall Annex Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Insurance 4196-12 \$242,028 \$242,028

**Finance Director Becky Bergeron &
Town Administrator Matt Scruton**

Highlights: Finance Director Bergeron reviewed the expenses outlined in the budget for town insurances, which includes worker's compensation, unemployment, and property/liability.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$242,028 for the Insurance Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Regional Agencies 4197-22 \$40,966 \$40,966

**Finance Director Becky Bergeron &
Town Administrator Matt Scruton**

Highlights: The Select Board has reviewed the recommendations made by the Regional Association Committee and have discussed at previous meetings as to how to move forward with the budget. Selectman McGrath reminded the Select Board that there was an agreement to do a separate warrant article for the Center for Wildlife.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$40,966 for the Regional Agencies Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

**Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$174,276 for the General Government Budget.
Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0**

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$14,750 for the Health Officer Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

It was noted by Administrator Scruton that welfare is mandated by the State to be provided when needed. If funds are not budgeted, those costs will have to come from another department, which may affect services in town. It's better to budget for it and not use the funds, rather than to not have the funds available.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$50,484 for the Direct Assistance Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Debt Service Prin. 4711-67	\$350,884	\$350,884
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Highlights: The Select Board reviewed the debt schedule for the current bonds.

Motion by Tom King to recommend \$350,884 for the Debt Service Principal Budget.

Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Debt Service Int.	4790-67	\$50,489	\$50,489
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Highlights: There were no issues or concerns.

Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend \$50,489 for the Debt Service Interest Budget.

Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0

Debt Service TANS 4723-67	\$1	\$1
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Motion by Tom King to recommend \$1 for the Debt Service TANS Budget. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Debt Service BANS 4723-67	\$1	\$1
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Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$1 for the Debt Service BANS Budget. Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0

Cemetery	4195-25	\$147,755	\$147,755
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Highlights: It was noted that the cemetery covers this budget and there is no tax impact.

Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend \$147,755 for the Cemetery Budget. Seconded by Tom King. Vote: 3-0

No further budgets before the Select Board.

III. Other Business

- Select Board agreed to schedule a meeting on November 7th at 8:15 a.m. to go over 2024 Capital Outlay requests.
- **Flag Policy**

Town Administrator Scruton noted that he has drafted a flag policy based on the Select Board's request. This goes back to a 2022 Supreme Court ruling where the City of Boston was found to have been in violation of rights that the public had to choose which flags to fly. One of the primary reasons Boston lost that case, which cost the City over two million dollars, was because there was not a policy clearly defining that it was the City that was expressing their speech, instead of the public's speech. Since then, a lot of towns and municipalities have adopted flag policies to define that the flag pole is not an expression of the public's freedom of speech, but yet it's an expression of the town; therefore, the town has the right to decide which flags are flown.

Administrator Scruton noted that he has looked at a number of flag policies to draft what he thinks reflects what the Select Board desires, which is to establish a policy giving the Board the right to determine which flags are flown; specifically, the United States Flag with first priority, followed by the State Flag, followed by the Town Flag, and then a category called ‘Other Flags,’ as defined under Section 3.

The Select Board reviewed the Flag Policy presented by Administrator Scruton and agreed with the draft.

Motion by Tom King to adopt the Town Policy on use of flag poles on town property, as written. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0

Motion by Tom King that subject to availability, the Select Board will approve the Honor and Remember Flag at the Town Green and the Public Safety Building for Veterans Day for one day. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0

Adjournment

Motion by Bill Epperson to adjourn at 4:11 p.m. Seconded by Tom King. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger