



Select Board Regular Session Minutes
Swampscott High School
200 Essex St., B129
March 6, 2024
7:30 PM

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: DAVID GRISHMAN, MARYELLEN FLETCHER, KATIE PHELAN, PETER SPELLIOS,

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: DOUG THOMPSON

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS: SEAN FITZGERALD, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, PATRICK LUDDY, TOWN TREASURER/COLLECTOR, AMY SARRO, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION, PETE KANE, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR/DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & LAND USE

MEETING OPENED AT 8:07 PM.

A. TA REPORT:

- i. DISCUSSED OFFICER TOM LUCAS'S PASSING AND HIS FUNERAL PROCESSION & SERVICES.
- ii. PRESENTING THE FY25 BUDGET TONIGHT WHICH KICKS OFF MONTHS OF BUDGET DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS. NEW GROWTH REVENUE IS OFF THIS YEAR BUT HE EXPECTS IT TO REBOUND IN FY2026 WHICH WILL HELP REBUILD TOWN RESERVES.
- iii. MET AT LYNN CITY HALL LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS THE TOWN'S IDDE WORK WITH LWSC AND THE CITY. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE EPA & MA DEP WERE THERE. HE ADVOCATED FOR MORE AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS FROM THEM. EVERYTHING THEY'VE BEEN ASKED TO DO UNDER THE CONSENT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN DONE BUT THE TOWN WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND BOLSTER EFFORTS. THEY ALSO DISCUSSED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PAA TO DISINFECT FLOWS IN SWAMPSCOTT & LYNN DRAINAGE CULVERTS WHICH DISCHARGE INTO KING'S BEACH.
- iv. THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS HOSTING A HEALTH FAIR ON SUNDAY, MARCH 17TH FROM NOON-4PM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL.
- v. THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR PICKLEBALL COURTS WAS WELL ATTENDED. RESIDENTS HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE LOCATION, PARKING AND FLOODING. CHIEF ARCHER AND MARZIE GALAZKA CONDUCTED A NOISE STUDY AND FOUND NO DISCERNABLE DECIBEL LEVELS. THEY ARE GOING TO SEEK SELECT BOARD APPROVAL FOR THE INSTALLATION OF RECREATIONAL STICKER SIGNS AT PHILIPS PARK. IF TOWN MEETING APPROVES THIS PROJECT, THE TOWN WILL WORK WITH A CONSULTANT AND WILL KEEP THE COMMUNITY INFORMED.
- vi. ELM PLACE IS MOVING ALONG.
- vii. THE CLERK'S OFFICE IS PREPARING FOR BOTH THE UPCOMING LOCAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. ROBOCALLS WILL BE SENT WITH IMPORTANT INFORMATION, INCLUDING UPDATES ON EARLY VOTING HOURS.
- viii. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN AWARDED \$18,000 FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY & THE DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES TO PURCHASE FIT TESTING EQUIPMENT FOR SCBAs.
- ix. THERE WAS A CELEBRATION FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LAST WEEK. THIS WAS WELL ATTENDED.
- x. THE NEW OVEN HAS BEEN INSTALLED AT THE SENIOR CENTER. TOGETHER WITH HEAD CHEF THEO, DIRECTOR HEIDI WHEAR, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SABRINA CLOPTON AND PROGRAM & VOLUNTEER MANAGER SONJA NATHAN AS WELL AS SENIOR TAX WORK OFF VOLUNTEERS, WE SERVED LOBSTER BISQUE, MAC & CHEESE AND HOT DOGS & BEANS TO 80 SENIORS!

SELECT BOARD COMMENTS:

Ms. PHELAN THANKED MAX KASPER.

Ms. FLETCHER 1) THANKED GINA BUSH & MARILYN CASSIDY FOR GETTING THE KITCHEN. IT'S INCREASED FEEDING CAPACITY FROM 30 TO 80. SHE WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE DISHWASHER AT THE SENIOR CENTER. 2) HAS CONCERNS WITH THE EPA/DEP BEING IN SUPPORT OF AN OUTFLOW PIPE. , SHOULD'T THE SELECT BOARD BE MORE FOCUSED ON THIS? IN SECTION 21, CONSENT DECREE SAYS ILLICIT DISCHARGES SHOULD BE REMOVED IN 60 DAYS. TA FITZGERALD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE EPA STATING THAT THERE IS MORE TO LOOK AT THAN AN OUTFLOW PIPE INCLUDING EEL GRASS AND OTHER DESIGNS

INCLUDING UV LIGHTS. 3) WHERE ARE WE WITH I&I FEES FOR THE WESTCOTT DEVELOPMENT, APPROXIMATELY \$250,000? TA FITZGERALD: THERE'S A LEGAL OPINION ABOUT THE TIMELINE OF WHEN THE PROJECT WAS APPROVED. HE WILL SEND IT TO MS. FLETCHER. MR. SPELLIOS STATED THAT THEY ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED RELIEF FROM THE ZBA AND THAT THEY'VE TAKEN THE POSITION THAT ALSO GIVES RELIEF FROM I&I FEES. 4) WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GET AN UPDATE ON THE I&I FUND. SHE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN INHOUSE AUDIT & REPORT BACK TO THE SELECT BOARD.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT: MR. GRISHMAN READ A STATEMENT ABOUT PUBLIC COMMENT INCLUDING EXCLUDING AGENDA ITEMS.

- i. ALEX JAFARZADEH-KHAMNEH, 155 ELMWOOD RD.: FEELS THERE IS A CULTURE OF DISTAIN AND DISRESPECT IN THESE MEETINGS. HE IS HERE TO REMIND THE BOARD THAT THEY WORK FOR RESIDENTS. WHEN WE ENGAGE WITH OUR MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, WE EXPECT PROFESSIONALISM, COURTESY AND RESPECT FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ENGAGE WITH OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS.
- ii. MARTHA CESAR, 80 NASON RD.: BELIEVES SOME MEMBERS OF THE SELECT BOARD AND THE TOWN MODERATOR MANIPULATED VOTES DURING THE DECEMBER SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON THE PICKLEBALL ARTICLE. THE MODERATOR DID NOT EXPLAIN THAT IF THE PICKLEBALL ARTICLE FAILED, IT WOULD BE BROUGHT BACK ON ANOTHER WARRANT.
- iii. MAURA LAU, 15 OUTLOOK RD.: GIVES A SHOUTOUT TO ANDREA AMOUR & ELIZABETH SMITH FOR BEING NAMED SWAMPSCOTT PEOPLE OF THE YEAR IN THE LYNN ITEM. 2) FEELS THAT THE VOTE TO CHOOSE A DEVELOPER SHOULD HAVE HAD MORE DEBATE OVER A COUPLE OF MEETINGS, THAT THERE IS A BETTER WAY FOR THAT PIECE OF PROPERTY TO BE USED AND FEELS THE HAWTHORNE SITE IS A BETTER CHOICE FOR A HOTEL.
- iv. ANDREA AMOUR, 15 SHERIDAN: SAYS THE EPA IS NOT HAPPY WITH THE TOWN, THAT WE NEED TO PURSUE IDDE SO WE DON'T INCUR ADDITIONAL FINES.
- v. STEVE RILEY, 5 WILL TERR: DISCUSSED THE PICKLEBALL COURTS WHICH WILL AFFECT PARKING AT PHILIPS PARK FOR EISMAN'S AND FISHERMAN'S BEACHES. HE FEELS THE TOWN IS IGNORING PARKING CONCERNS, THAT PICKLEBALL COURTS WILL TAKE UP HALF OF THE AVAILABLE PARKING AS WELL AS FLOODING. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM IN A DIFFERENT SPOT.
- vi. FRANK SMITH, 6 ARCHER ST.: HE IS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THE PARKING ISSUE COMES IN, GIVEN THAT RECREATIONAL BOATERS HAVE BEEN MOVED, OPENING UP MANY SPOTS. HAS ACCESS BEEN INCREASED NOW THAT THE BOATS HAVE BEEN RELOCATED?
- vii. STEFANIE NEUMANN, 53 OCEAN VIEW RD.: DISCUSSED WHY THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH PUTTING PICKLEBALL COURTS AT PHILIPS PARK AND ASKED THE BOARD TO READ ARTICLES ABOUT PICKLEBALL AND WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD.

C. NEW & OLD BUSINESS:

1. REVIEW OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT: TABLED UNTIL MARCH 11, 2024.
2. PROPOSED FY2025 BUDGET: TA FITZGERALD THANKED THE FINANCE TEAM FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DISCUSSED THE BUDGET PROCESS, EFFORTS TO BALANCE THE STRUCTURAL NEEDS OF THE TOWN AND TO MOVE THE TOWN FORWARD. MS. SARRO DISCUSSED \$81,233,644 AND GAVE A BREAKDOWN OF THE KEY FUNDING AREAS, THE TOWN'S CURRENT RESERVE BALANCES, WHICH HAVE INCREASED BY 4% BUT ARE BELOW THE LOW-END OF THE FINANCIAL POLICY. THIS IS WHERE THE RATING AGENCIES TOOK A HARD LOOK. MR. LUDDY DISCUSSED STATE AID, THE LARGEST REVENUE FUND OUTSIDE OF PROPERTY TAXES, THE FY2025 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. THERE IS AN END OF EMPLOYMENT RESERVE FUND BUT KNOWN FUTURE RETIREES END OF EMPLOYMENT FUNDS ARE BUDGETED. THE SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND IS NOT SELF-SUSTAINING. DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS WERE DISCUSSED. .63 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR GOES TOWARD SCHOOLS, INCLUDING SCHOOL DEBT. THE VOKE TECH DECREASED. THEY'VE NEVER RE-ASSESSED AFTER THE BUDGET HAS BEEN SET. THE DEBT SERVICE IS \$7.5M FOR A 6% INCREASE DUE TO THE NEW SCHOOL. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS LINE HAS DECREASED. THERE IS A CONTINGENCY IN THE LINE BECAUSE RATES AREN'T SET UNTIL APRIL, BEFORE OPEN ENROLLMENT. RATES ARE EXPECTED TO RISE BETWEEN 8-9%. TA FITZGERALD HAS REACHED OUT TO BCBS. WE'RE IN GIC FOR ANOTHER 2 YEARS BUT IT IS TIME TO SIT WITH OTHER PROVIDERS. MS. FLETCHER AND MR. THOMPSON HAVE BEEN FOCUSED ON THIS TOO.

THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASE OF 33% OF STATE AID ASSESSMENTS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS BUT MS. SARRO ISN'T EXPECTING ANY MAJOR CHANGES. THE GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND IS AT 9%, CAPITAL IS AT 1.97% AND FREE CASH AT 3.72%.

TA FITZGERALD DISCUSSED ONGOING TOWN INITIATIVES, INCLUDING RENEGOTIATING ALL FIVE OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS, THE OPENING OF THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, DESIGN FOR THE HAWTHORNE PROPERTY, \$2.5M FOR KING'S BEACH CLEAN-UP, HADLEY HOTEL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR VETERANS. OPERATING COSTS ARE INCREASING AND HE RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHING STABILIZATION FUNDS FOR UTILITIES (\$250K) AND SPECIAL EDUCATION (\$200K). HE IS GOING TO CONTINUE WORKING COLLABORATIVELY. HE WOULD LIKE TO INCREASE THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION BUDGET AS THEY ARE LOOKING AT HISTORIC PROPERTIES THAT ARE WORTH PRESERVING.

SELECT BOARD COMMENTS:

MS. FLETCHER: 1) THE TOWN AND SCHOOL HAVE TO PREPARE FOR ANY EMPLOYEE WHO MAY RETIRE DURING THE YEAR AND CAN ESTIMATE THE COST OF RETIREMENTS. MS. SARRO WILL PROVIDE THE BOARD WITH THE ACTUALS OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS. 2) CAN MS. SARRO PROVIDE THE BOARD WITH ALL OF THE AMOUNTS IN THE STABILIZATION FUNDS, INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGES AS TO WHERE THEY ARE IN REGARD TO THE FINANCIAL POLICY, INCLUDING SOLID WASTE (YES, THERE ARE NO RETAINED EARNINGS FOR SOLID WASTE. EVERYTHING RETAINED GETS REINVESTED IN THAT FUND TO REDUCE THE TAX SUBSIDY. THIS ACCOUNT IS NOT SELF-SUSTAINING).

MS. PHELAN ASKED WHEN THE NEXT DISCUSSION IS ABOUT ARPA FUNDS (IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, ONCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE WRAPPED UP). SHE'S HOPING THAT ANYTHING MISSING FROM THE BUDGET, ARPA FUNDS CAN BE USED.

MR. SPELLIOS: 1) DISCUSSED STABILIZATION FUNDS AND THEIR USES (FOR UNFORESEEABLE INCREASES/EXPENSES). 2) THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF FOCUS ON THE CAPITAL PLAN BUT HE FEELS THERE SHOULD BE SOME RESETTING. HE HOPES THAT THE CAPITAL PLAN IS DRIVEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION. CIC REPORTS TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE THEN TO TOWN MEETING. HE FEELS WE'RE LOSING THE INTENT OF THE PLAN. TA FITZGERALD DISCUSSED THE CAPITAL PLAN, THAT THE TOWN IS PLANNING OUT 30 YEARS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE. HE WILL WORK WITH THE FINANCE TEAM. 3) DISCUSSED RESILIENCY AND THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES WORKING ON RESILIENCY AND IF THEY ARE WORKING TOWARD THE SAME THING OR AGAINST EACH OTHER.

PENDING LITIGATION: MR. GRISHMAN READ A STATEMENT ABOUT THE FEBRUARY 12TH MEETING AND WHETHER OR NOT THE SELECT BOARD SHOULD RELEASE THE MCAD COMPLAINT INCLUDING THE TOWN'S FINDINGS. THE INFORMATION IN THE LYNN ITEM WAS ONE-SIDED AND HE ENCOURAGED THE BOARD TO RELEASE TOWN'S REPORT, WHICH CONTAINS A LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF THE SELECT BOARD'S DETAILED INVESTIGATION OF THE EMPLOYEE'S COMPLAINT AND DOES NOT FIND HIM IN VIOLATION OF BIAS. THE TOWN WILL DISTRIBUTE ITS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY ANNUALLY AND CONDUCT TRAINING REGARDING THE POLICY FOR ALL PERSONNEL AT LEAST EVERY THREE YEARS. THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TOOK A REFRESHER COURSE ON DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

MR. GRISHMAN INVITED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK. NO ONE SPOKE.

TA FITZGERALD DISCUSSED THE DIFFICULTY HE HAS FACED LISTENING TO PEOPLE DISPARAGE HIM. THIS IS A POLITICAL TACTIC, RETALIATION FOR THINGS HE'S HAD TO DO THAT THE TOWN DOESN'T USUALLY TALK PUBLICLY ABOUT. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF NEPOTISM, FINANCES WERE OUT OF WHACK, INFRASTRUCTURE WAS IGNORED. HE HAD TO REORGANIZE DEPARTMENTS AND MAKE STAFFING CHANGES. WE'VE GONE FROM AA- TO AAA+ IN SIX YEARS AS A RESULT OF MAKING SURE THE MOST TALENTED INDIVIDUALS ARE WORKING FOR THE TOWN. WE BROUGHT TRAINING TO EMPLOYEES, STARTED PROGRAMS SUCH AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND PRIDE CELEBRATIONS. HE TOOK THE TOWN OUT OF CIVIL SERVICE, FRUSTRATING THE POLICE UNION.

MS. FLETCHER STATED THAT SHE WILL NOT COMMENT IN PUBLIC ON PERSONNEL ISSUES AND THAT WE SHOULD FOCUS ON OFFICER TOM LUCAS'S FUNERAL THIS EVENING.

MR. SPELLIOS APPRECIATES THAT TA FITZGERALD SHARED HIS SIDE, STATING THAT DECADES PASSED WHERE THERE WAS NO INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE OR SCHOOLS, IN THE KING'S BEACH CONTAMINATION, THE TOWN CAN CONTINUE DOING NOTHING AND IGNORING THE COMPOUND OF OUR PROBLEMS. NO ONE HAS BEEN ASKED TO DO MORE HARD THINGS THAN

THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, WHICH IS WHAT HE IS PAID TO DO. HE BROUGHT HIS EXPERTISE IN NEGOTIATING CONTRACTS, EXAMINING EVERY EXPENSE IN THE BUDGET, ELIMINATING POSITIONS OR MOVING PERSONNEL TO DIFFERENT JOBS, EXPANDED TOWN-WIDE EVENTS, BROUGHT A FOOD PANTRY TO TOWN, HAS SUPPORTED A LOCAL ARTS NONPROFITS AND LEFT CIVIL SERVICE, BRINGING A DIVERSE GROUP OF CANDIDATES TO TOWN. IF THE GOAL WAS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, BOTH THE COMPLAINT AND THE TOWN'S RESPONSE WOULD'VE BEEN LEAKED. HE HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE LEAK WAS DESIGNED SOLELY TO EMBARRASS THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR. THE FEBRUARY 12TH MEETING WAS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE SHOWN DISSATISFACTION WITH SOME OF THE CHANGES. A RESIDENT PURPORTING TO WORK IN HUMAN RESOURCES SCOLDED THE BOARD BUT NEVER ASKED FOR THE TOWN'S RESPONSE. MR. SPELLIOS STATED THAT HE IS NOT OKAY WITH THIS UNFAIR, UNSUBSTANTIATED AND UNBALANCED CRITICISM OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WITHOUT PROVIDING THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WITH THE DUE PROCESS AFFORDED EVERY EMPLOYEE IN THE WORKPLACE. HE THANKED MS. PHELAN FOR SPENDING COUNTLESS HOURS WITH HIM IN THIS INVESTIGATION AND MAKING SURE IT WAS FULL, FAIR AND ACCURATE.

D. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE A ONE-DAY LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE SWAMPSCOTT LIBRARY FUNDRAISING EVENT ON APRIL 5, 2024, SWAMPSCOTT LIBRARY, 2ND FLOOR
2. VOTE TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF 2/7/24, 2/12/24 & 2/28/24

THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY PULLED THEIR APPLICATION AND WILL BE BEFORE THE BOARD ON MARCH 20TH.

MS. FLETCHER ASKED TO TABLE THE MINUTES UNTIL MARCH 20TH.

SELECT BOARD TIME:

MS. FLETCHER: 1) ALSO REQUESTS THAT THE LIQUOR LICENSES BE ON THE NEXT AGENDA. 2) THANKED SAM, DAVID & ETHAN FOR WORKING TONIGHT. 3) ASKED THAT EVERYONE STAND OUTSIDE DURING OFFICER LUCAS'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

MS. PHELAN: 1) IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO SIT ON THE BOARD AND KEEP HER PHILOSOPHICAL VALUES. SHE TRIES TO SIT AND LISTEN. SHE'S ON THE BOARD BECAUSE THE COMMUNITY SAW SOMETHING IN HER AND SHE IN THE COMMUNITY. SHE'S ADVOCATED FOR GRACE DURING MEETINGS. SHE ADVOCATES FORGIVENESS AND OWNING ONE'S MISTAKES. SHE WILL CONTINUE TO SIT IN GRACE AND ASKS AUDIENCE MEMBERS TO DO THE SAME, TO BE RESPECTFUL TO EACH OTHER AND TO THEMSELVES. SHE IMPLORES WE TRY TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF THEMSELVES. 2) ASKED THAT THE LIQUOR LICENSES BE ON THE NEXT AGENDA.

MR. SPELLIOS: NOTHING TO ADD.

MR. THOMPSON: ABSENT.

MR. GRISHMAN: JOIN THE LIBRARY FOR THEIR 2ND COMEDY NIGHT ON APRIL 5TH.

UPON **MOTION**, DULY MADE BY MARYELLEN FLETCHER, SECONDED BY KATIE PHELAN, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY **VOTED** TO ADJOURN AT 10:22 P.M.: ALL IN FAVOR: YES. ANY AGAINST: NO. MOTION CARRIES.

TRUE ATTEST,

Dianne Marchese

DIANNE MARCHESE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR & SELECT BOARD

MINUTES APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 3, 2024

ATTACHMENTS:

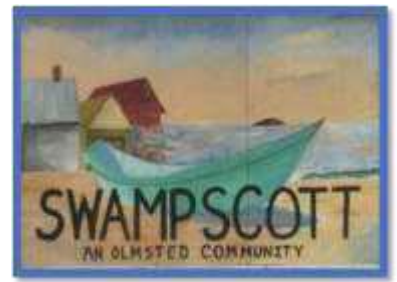
TA REPORT

FY25 BUDGET PRESENTATION



Town of Swampscott

Office of the
Town Administrator
Elihu Thomson Administrative Building
22 Monument Avenue
Swampscott, MA 01907



Sean R. Fitzgerald

Tel: (781) 596-8850

Swampscott Select Board
Town Administration
Building 22 Monument
Avenue
Swampscott, MA 01970

RE: March 6TH REPORT TO THE SELECT BOARD

Dear Select Board:

I am pleased to be able to offer the following report on programs and initiatives that are on-going in the Town of Swampscott, as well as some updates on a variety of things that have happened since my last report.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

I would like to begin today's meeting with a moment of silence to recognize the loss of Officer Tom Lucas. Tom was well liked and often could be found with an easy smile and agreeable nature.

Tom lost his life last week after a long and courageous battle with cancer. His funeral services are as follows: tomorrow, Officer Lucas will be transported to the Ocean St. location of Solimine's Funeral Home where he and his family will be met with Officers from Swampscott on motorcycles and in cruisers. Doors to the funeral home will open at 4:00 PM for the public to pay their respects. His funeral service will be held at the funeral home at 7:00 PM.

This is a tough week for the SPD and the Town and our thoughts and prayers are with Officer Lucas' family.

FY 25 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

Tonight, we will present the FY25 budget proposed budget. This kicks off months of budget discussions and meetings as we do our best to balance the services and needs of a very busy community. While we certainly could cut many lines and reduce budgets and increase estimated revenues, we are simply looking to strike a balance this year. We are off on new growth revenue this year and I expect that this will rebound next year, and we will be in a better position to rebuild some of the Town's financial reserves.

The Town's Director of Finance and Administration Amy Sarro and Town Treasurer Patrick Luddy will join me for this presentation.

Additionally, the warrant for next week's Town Meeting was mailed to Town Meeting members on Wednesday, February 14th. If you are not a Town Meeting member but want to review the warrant,

copies are available in the Town Clerk's office and online at https://www.swampscottma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1296/f/uploads/2024_stm_warrant_report.pdf.

KING'S BEACH

I participated in a meeting at Lynn City Hall today to discuss some of the Town's IDDE work with LWSC and the City of Lynn. The EPA and MA DEP were at this meeting and simply advocated for more aggressive efforts—I asked the EPA and DEP to be more specific and they have asked us to take a closer look at some of the proposed work to see where we can expedite some efforts.

The meeting was a bit frustrating as we have done everything we have been asked to do under the Consent Decree but they want us to be more aggressive. With this, we are always open to good faith efforts to think anew and see how and where we can be more effective with IDDE. We do have some ideas and we will bolster some efforts.

We also met last week to discuss the effectiveness organic peroxide (PAA) to disinfect the flows in the Swampscott and Lynn drainage culverts discharging to King's Beach. Full scale pilot test was considered first; however, after further research we are recommending starting with bench-scale testing to help refine the relationship between PAA dose, PAA decay rate, detention time, and Enterococcus counts. The results of the bench scale testing are intended to provide a refined range of design criteria for the pilot testing which we anticipate will follow. Kleinfelder will employ Blueleaf Inc. as a subconsultant to perform the bench scale testing under our oversight. Blueleaf Inc. is a local process engineering company that specializes in bench scale and pilot studies for water and wastewater treatment systems. (There is a slight chance this could help this summer. Only slight.)

RECREATION

The Recreation Department is hosting a Health Fair at Swampscott High School on Sunday, March 17th, from noon- 4PM. There will be 40 vendors as well as demonstrations and Narcan training. Earth Day is Saturday, April 27th. Be on the lookout for more information as we get closer.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The community engagement for the proposed pickleball courts was well attended, with over 50 individuals attending. At this meeting, updates were provided on site selection, grant requirements and the potential benefits to the community. Residents spoke in support of the construction of pickleball courts. Several residents have concerns about the location while others are concerned about noise and flooding. The Executive Director and residents of the Bertram House are in support as well.

On February 6th, staff, including Marzie & Chief Archer, conducted a noise study, resulting in minimal decibel readings and concluding that noise impact is unnoticeable. Town staff will work with DPW to address parking and will seek Select Board approval for the installation of recreational sticker parking signs at Philips Park. Town staff will also work with a consultant to design the courts with additional public meetings regarding design and location should Town Meeting support this project.

WESCOTT DEVELOPMENT

Town Staff are meeting to help coordinate the development this major housing project along Elm Place. Updates can be found on the Town's website: <https://www.swampscottma.gov/community-and-economic-development/pages/elm-place>.

TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk's office is still hard at work preparing for the upcoming local & presidential elections. Robocalls will be sent with important information, including early voting hours.

Per the Secretary of the State office, as of February 14th, the Clerks office has processed 2026 requests for ballots and mailed out 1932. Of those, 1380 are Democratic ballots, 512 are Republican ballots and 40 are Libertarians. There are 15,122 registered voters in town.

Early voting hours at Town Hall for the upcoming April local election are Saturday, 4/20, 11:00-5:00, Town Hall will be open 8:00-8:00 Monday through Thursday and 8:00-Noon on Friday, 4/26.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department has been awarded \$18,000 from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Department of Fire Services as a part of the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant. These funds will allow the department to acquire fit testing equipment for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Chief Archer states that this grant meets his priority of keeping Town residents and Swampscott's Firefighters safety.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

I was pleased to attended Swampscott's third annual Black History Month celebration at the High School last Tuesday. This event was very well attended and it is astonishing to me how much work we need to do to honor our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Indeed, there are forces in play to deny this should even be a priority and we must continue to have these uncomfortable yet, critically important discussions about how equality and freedom can be pillars of this democracy and this Town.

SENIOR CENTER

The new oven is finally installed! Last week, I had the pleasure of being the first person to use it, cooking up a storm of lobster bisque, mac & cheese and a secret family recipe of baked beans, pure maple syrup, molasses and hotdogs with the help of top-notch help from Chef Theo McDonough, Director Heidi Whear, Assistant Director Sabrina Clopton, Sonja Nathan, Program & Volunteer Manager and volunteers Janet Fischer, Michelle Ferragamo, Marie Yannaco-Grant, Caroline Scott & Olga Fresinkonje. Together we served 80 seniors lunch and dessert.

I want especially want to thank Max Kasper for all the great work in getting this project completed and of course all of our Seniors for a sell out grand opening!

Respectfully Submitted,



Sean R. Fitzgerald
Town Administrator



FY2025 Town Administrator's Proposed Budget

Presentation to the Select Board &
Finance Committee
03.06.2024

Current Conditions

- This budget continues the efforts to balance the structural needs of the Town and move Swampscott forward as a community. This vision for Swampscott's future includes priorities identified in the Town's various plans while continuing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This budget also balances the financial priorities of the Town.
- Over the last few years, Swampscott has made extraordinary progress while maintaining services and minimizing the financial impact on our taxpayers. We look forward to a robust conversation about this document over the next two months and leading up to our Town Meeting in May.
- As we look back over the last year, we have much to be proud of as we think about the projects and initiatives that are underway in Swampscott. Just a few short years ago, Swampscott was struggling to get our bearings with some key fiduciary responsibilities and today, we have grown into a thriving, dynamic, diverse community that is celebrating our unique place in the Commonwealth.



The FY25 Budget continues to focus on balance and core services that have helped Swampscott families and citizens thrive during these challenging times.

- Supports a robust level of funding for Swampscott Public Schools
- Sustains Current Service Levels
- Advances efforts to address Climate Change and Growth
- Continues our meaningful efforts to promote Diversity, Equity, Belonging & Inclusion
- Meets Debt and Contractual Obligations
- Continue to invest in our Veterans and Senior Citizens
- Maintains Progress on Funding Long-Term Liabilities
- Healthy Support of Capital Infrastructure and Maintenance
- Compliant with Select Board and Finance Committee Financial Policies and Tax Impact Limits
- This budget continues the hard work of balancing priorities while striking a balance with how we address municipal priorities. With this, the financial challenges are real, and we are facing extraordinary pressure to address critical infrastructure needs that have been neglected for decades.

FY2025 Budget

The FY2025 proposed budget totals \$81,233,644.

Balanced using conservative estimates for state aid and local receipts.

Proposed FY2025 budget ensures that adequate resources were provided to maintain services but refrained from funding significant new initiatives.

Funding to meet increased costs due to inflationary increases, including utilities expenses and maintenance agreements.

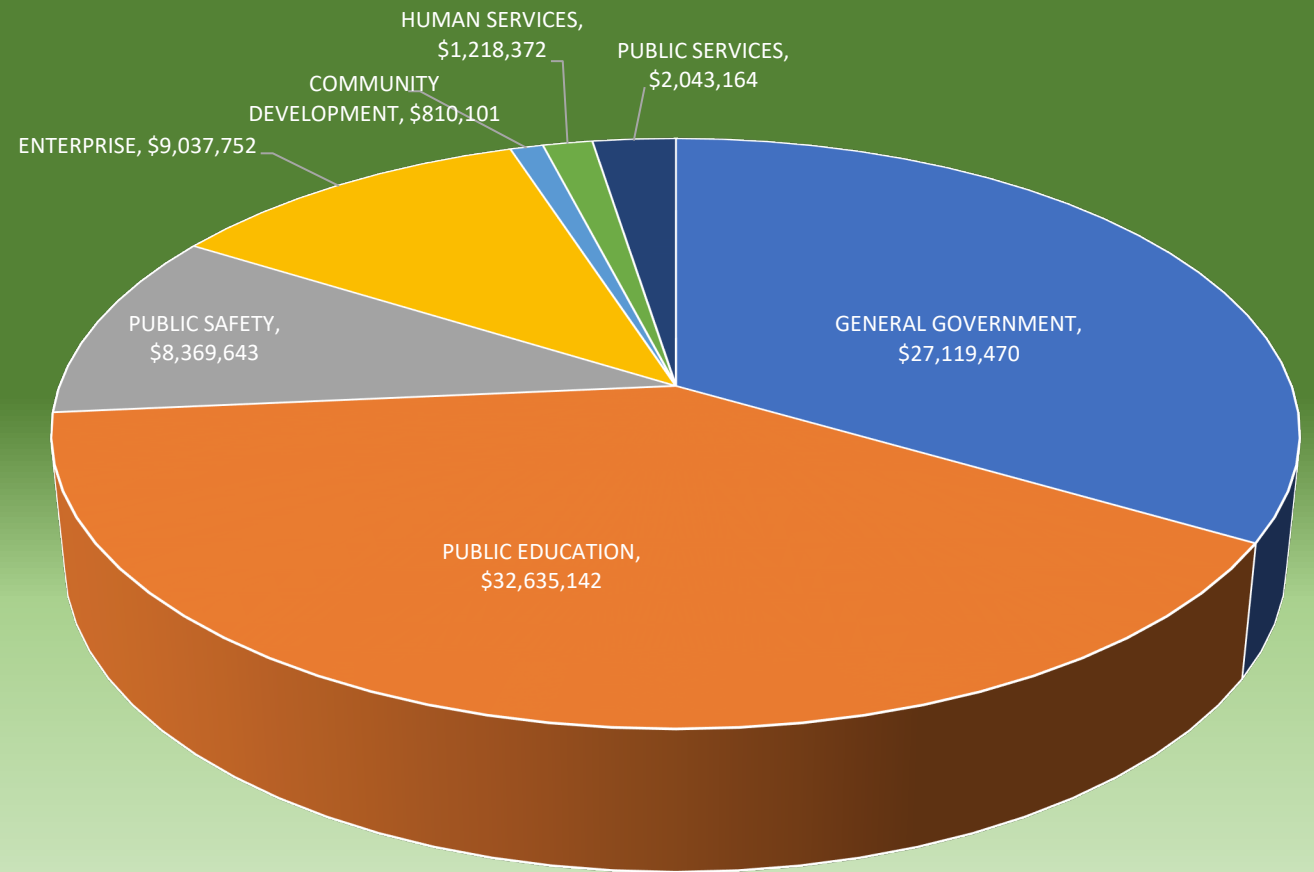
Funding of collective bargaining agreements for all Town Union Collective Bargaining Contracts Wage increases and funding for wage increases for nonunion employees.



Overview – FY2025 Proposed Budget \$81,233,644

Swampscott's Town Budget has seven key funding areas:

- General Government 33.4%
- Community Development 1.0%
- Public Safety 10.3%
- Public Services 2.5%
- Human Services 1.5%
- Public Education* 40.2%
- Enterprise Funds 11.1%



**Includes Regional Vocational School*

Current Reserve Balances

Free Cash: \$2,709,832

General Stabilization: \$6,397,124

Capital Stabilization: \$1,423,085

Excess Levy Capacity: \$7,203,355

Reserves as % of Revenue: 25.44%

4% increase in reserves
compared to FY2020



Overview

Estimated Revenue

Budget Process

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights

- General Government (Administration & Finance)
- Community & Human Services (Community Development, Library, Senior Center)
- Public Services (DPW, Facilities)
- Public Safety (Police, Fire, Emergency Management)
- Public & Regional Schools
- Debt and Benefits

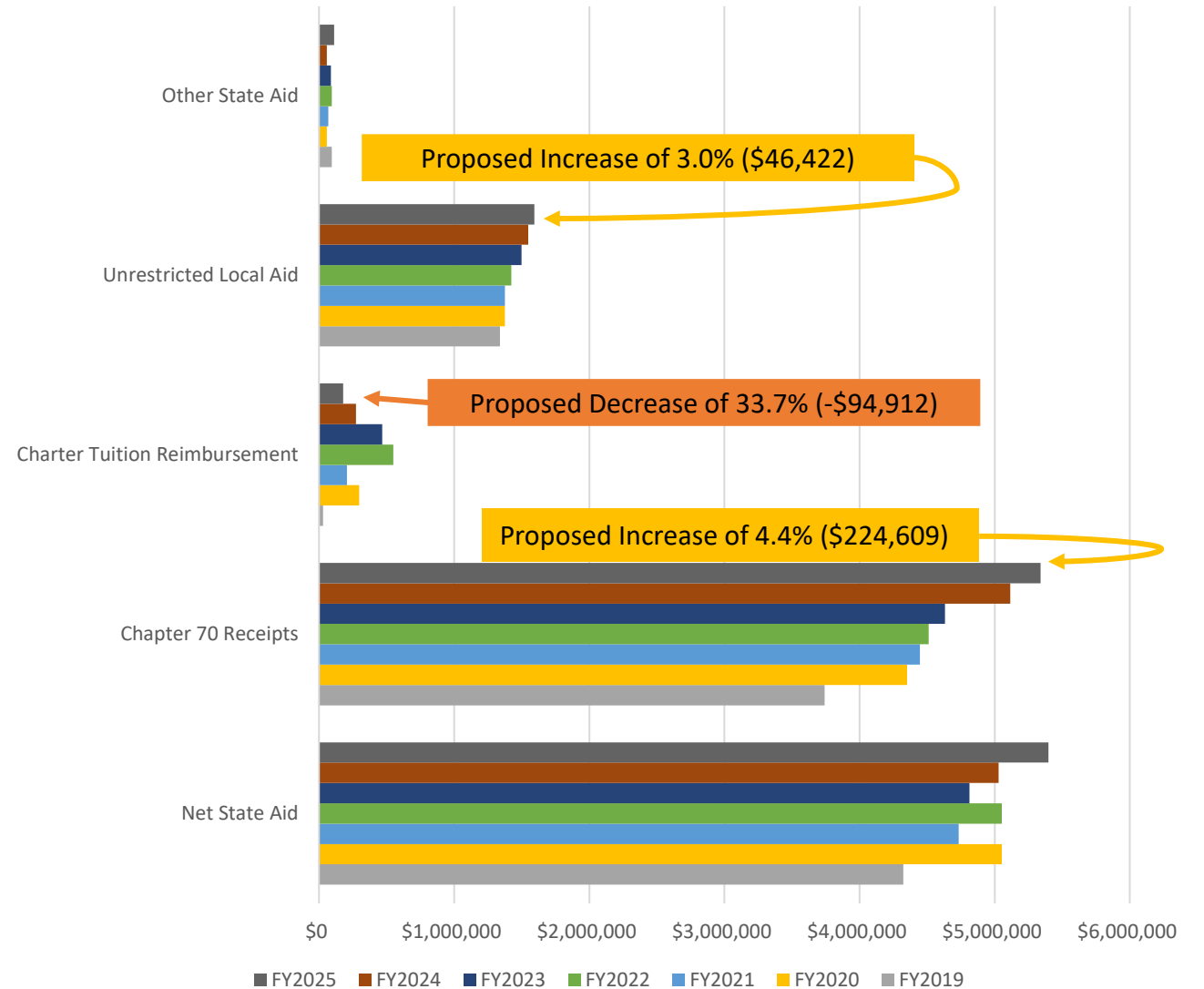
The Ongoing Challenges

Questions

Based off Governor's proposal

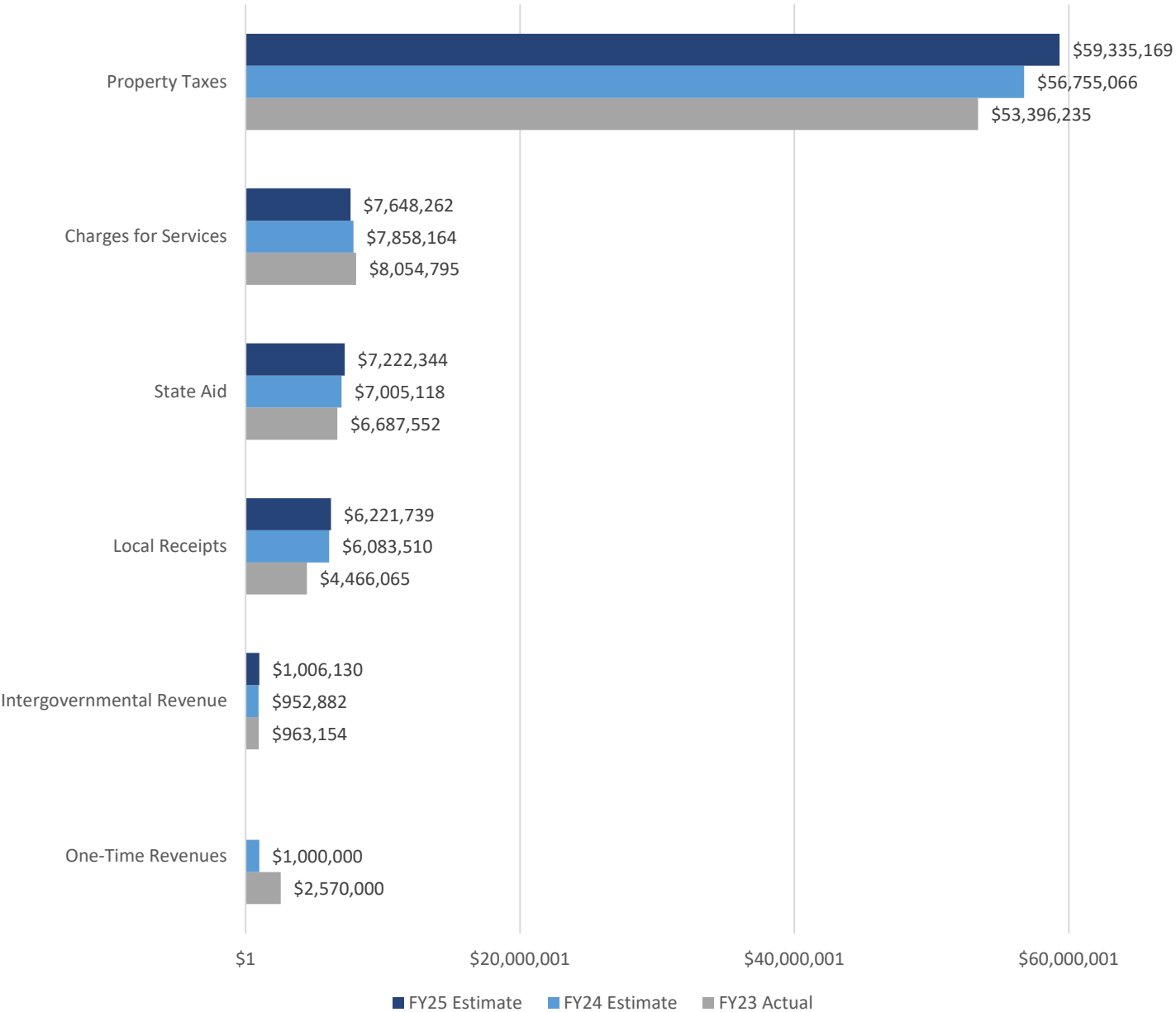
Proposed Budget Highlights – STATE AID

Swampscott has seen an average increase of 8.0% (\$535,955) in State Aid assessments in the past 3 years



Proposed Budget Highlights – LOCAL RECEIPTS

The Town continues to estimate receipts conservatively based on actual historical receipts collected without use of any one-time funds



FY2025 Budget Development Process

January 4th

Town released budgetary guidance and asked all Town Departments to provide a realistic outlook for FY2025. We also asked for the following fiscal scenarios

SCENARIO #2: 10% REDUCTION

This means that the bottom line of Department budgets should represent a reduction to personnel and expense budgets and the what the effects of those cost reductions will be on services and programs

SCENARIO #1: ITEMIZED NEED BUDGET

This means that each item/use would be listed out separately showing your department will still provided level services to the Town to fund key services

January 19th

Budgets were due and review meetings with the Finance Team took place between mid-January and early February. The teams considered changes in municipal spending that would improve the delivery of municipal services. Detailed reviews and discussions lead to a number of changes to the budget.

FY2025 Budget Process

FY2025 Budget follows the 2% + \$425,000 of new growth policy for the tax levy that gives the General Fund guideline of \$72,195,892



This budget includes \$9,037,752 for the following Enterprise Budgets in FY2025:

Sewer	Water	PEG	Solid Waste
\$2,965,359	\$4,293,773	\$200,400	\$1,578,219

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE \$3,524,167

Includes:

- Select Board
- Town Administrator
- Town Accountant
- Assessors
- Treasurer/Collector
- Information Technology
- Parking Enforcement
- Legal/Liability Insurance
- Human Resources
- Salary Reserves/End of Employment
- Town Clerk/Elections

Proposed Budget includes a increase of \$314,092 (+9.78%) over the FY2024 budget

Major drivers are:

Increasing technology subscription costs

Increase in Salary Reserve due to ongoing Collective Bargaining and Employment Contract negotiations

Includes increase for anticipated End of Employment costs for Town & School

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT \$810,101

Includes:

- Conservation Commission
- Community Development
- Board of Appeals
- Building Department
- Health Department
- Recreation
- Historical Commission

Proposed Budget includes an increase of **\$56,029** (+7.43%) over the FY2024 budget

Major drivers are:

Filling of the Director of Planning & Land Use Position and increasing the Land Use Planner to full-time

Increase to the Historical Commission budget

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – PUBLIC SERVICES \$2,043,164

Includes:

- Facilities
- Cemetery
- Public Works
- Snow & Ice

Proposed Budget includes a increase of
\$18,211 (+0.90%) over the FY2024 budget

Major driver is:

Increases to Utility Costs for Municipal
buildings

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – PUBLIC SAFETY

\$8,369,643

Includes:

- Police
- Constables
- Harbormaster
- Fire
- Emergency Management

Proposed Budget includes an increase of **\$227,501** (+2.79%) over the FY2024 budget

Major drivers are:

Collective Bargaining COLAs

Increase for Police Body Camera annual contract

Increase to the Lynn Dispatch contract

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – HUMAN SERVICES \$1,218,372

Includes:

- Senior Center
- Veterans Services
- Library

Proposed Budget includes an increase of **\$28,516** (+2.40%) over the FY2024 budget

Major drivers are:

Continued investments in community programming

Increased van driver line for Senior Center

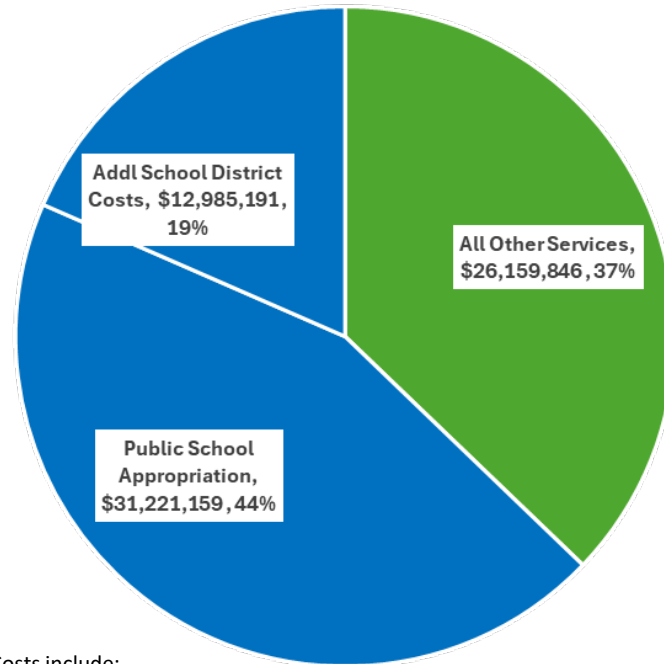
Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – PUBLIC & REGIONAL SCHOOLS \$32,635,142

Proposed Budget includes an increase of **\$1,190,383** (+3.84%) over the FY2024 voted* budget for the Public Schools

Proposed Budget includes an decrease of **\$74,429** (-14.58%) under the FY2024 budget for the Regional Voc. Tech

This increase does not include funding to the School Department from the non-resident tuition revolving fund of \$1,834,422

Education Costs



Indirect Costs include:

Finance & IT Support	Essex Tech Assessment
Snow & Ice Removal	DPW Field Lining Labor
Retirement Assessment	Employee Health Insurance
Property Insurance	Auto Insurance
School Resource Officer	Workers' Compensation
End of Employment	Unemployment (Admin Fee)
Medicare Taxes	School Debt – Principal & Interest

For FY2024 Public Education is estimated to account for approximately **63% (\$44,206,305)** of all general fund appropriation.

- 44% Direct Appropriation
- 19% Indirect Costs

The remaining **37% (\$26,159,846)** of general fund appropriation is distributed amongst all other functions of the town

- Public Works, Public Safety, Administration, Community Development, Public Health, Senior and Veteran Services, the Public Library and more

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – DEBT SERVICE

Proposed Budget
includes an increase
of \$435,339
(+6.16%) over the
FY2024 budget

Total Principal payments due from existing debt are .68% more than FY 2023 **+\$26,428**

Issuance of bonds on 3/6/24

Offset by Maturity of existing debts

Total Interest payments due are 12.93% or **+\$413,091** more compared to FY24

Major driver is new short-term debt

- Issuance of notes on 3/6/24 requires a \$347,000 interest payment for new school construction plus \$135,798 interest payment for various capital projects

Maturing bond anticipation note for land acquisition

Proposed FY2025 Budget Highlights – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS \$14,135,632

Proposed Budget includes an decrease of **\$45,593** (-0.32%) over the FY2024 budget

Decrease to Employee Health Insurance estimate

Actual rates won't be released until prior to open enrollment in April

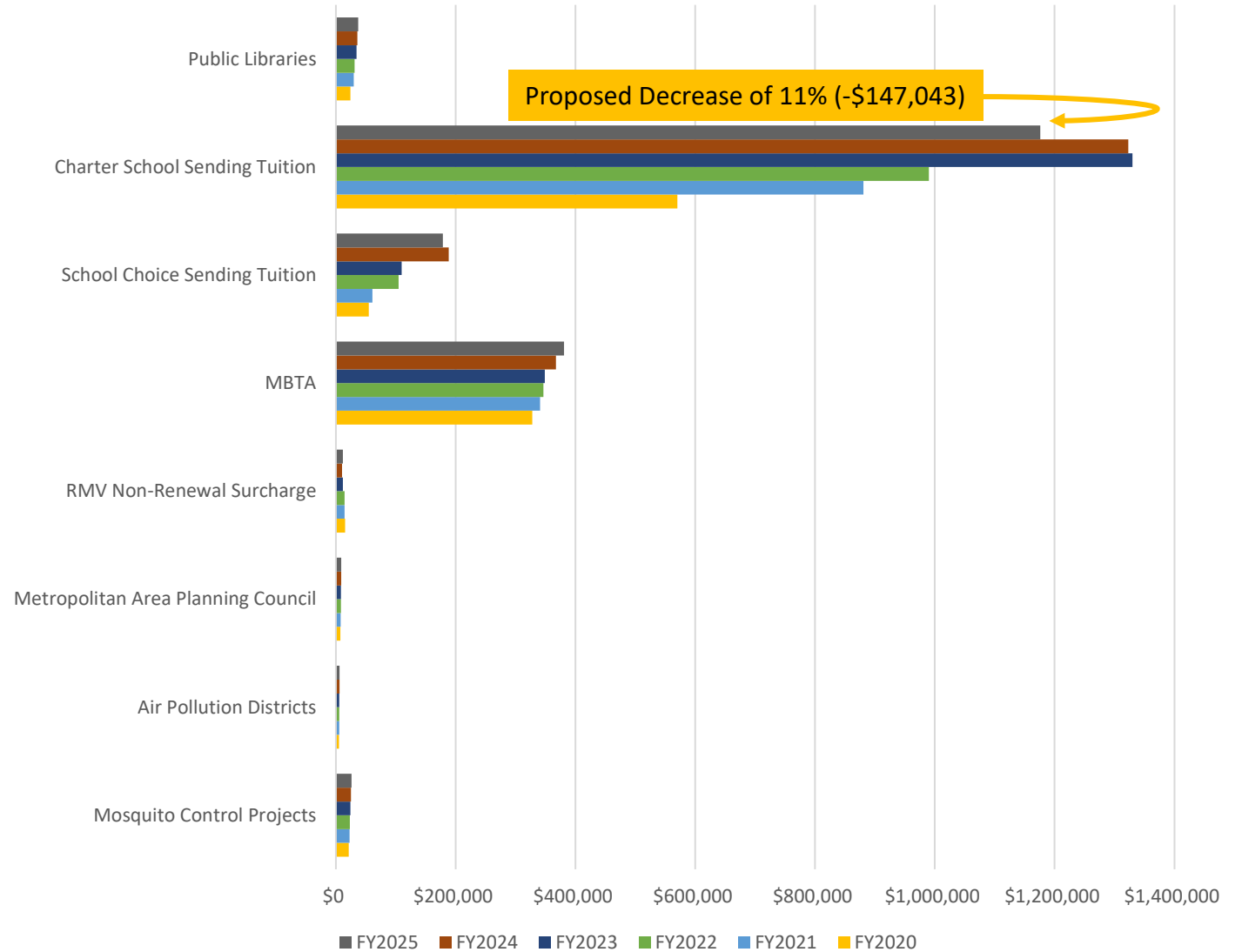
Current enrollment is down

Pension Contribution is 4.68% above FY2024

Based off Governor's proposal

Proposed Budget Highlights – STATE AID

Swampscott has seen an average increase of 33.9% (\$462,319) in State Aid assessments in the past 5 years



FINANCIAL RESERVES

Recommended General Fund Operating Budget of \$72,195,892

General Stabilization – Funded at a level of no less than 9%, preferably 10%
 \$72,195,892 x 9% = \$6,497,630; \$72,195,892 x 10% = \$7,219,589
 Current Position: **8.86%**

Capital Stabilization – Funded at a level of no less than 2%, preferably 4%
 \$72,195,892 x 2% = \$1,443,918; \$72,195,892 x 4% = \$2,887,836
 Current Position: **1.97%**

Free Cash – Funded at a level of no less than 3%, preferably 5%
 \$72,195,892 x 3% = \$2,165,877; \$72,195,892 x 5% = \$3,609,795
 Current Position: **3.72%**

<u>RESERVE FUND BALANCE</u>	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024*
FREE CASH	\$3,161,170	\$4,430,176	\$4,716,580	\$3,164,503	\$3,630,045	\$3,630,509	\$2,683,387
GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND	\$5,058,310	\$5,905,117	\$6,750,956	\$7,185,169	\$7,125,102	\$6,267,052	\$6,397,124
CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND	\$609,980	\$866,286	\$974,122	\$1,281,189	\$1,678,331	\$1,396,168	\$1,423,085
OPEB TRUST FUND	\$1,775,191	\$2,187,015	\$2,396,196	\$3,099,789	\$3,150,060	\$3,418,622	\$3,588,018
*Unaudited Year-to-Date							



Ongoing Town Initiatives

- The Town has successfully negotiated all five (5) of the collective bargaining contracts for Town Unions. Currently, all Union contracts are settled.
- I am grateful for the approval of a townwide consolidated elementary school that will serve all the students in Swampscott. This new school will be a hallmark of this generation's support for education, and I want to thank all of those who advanced the efforts for this needed investment.
- This past year we advanced design efforts for the Hawthorne Restaurant property. We are continuing our efforts to listen to residents to help evolve a bold vision for this iconic property.
- The Town has successfully advanced advocacy for \$2.5 Million in additional funding for King's Beach clean-up and this work has been programed to be expended in the spring of 2024. Swampscott has taken a leadership role in bringing local, state, and federal partners together to address this critical need and this past year we have completed a feasibility study to address the contamination of the beach.
- Fiscal Year 2023 included accomplishments and achievements within the Town of Swampscott, including multiple Town Meetings. The Town, fresh off its acquisition of the Hawthorne, held numerous idea sessions with the public (400+ attendees at the Hawthorne visioning session in January 2023) to gather input and continue making progress as to the next chapter at the Hawthorne property.
- Additionally, both Town Staff and Select Board members have spent considerable time, effort, and energy with consultants to ready the Hadley Hotel RFP, which will redevelop and reimagine the Hadley School as an economic engine that will revitalizes and reenergizes Humphrey Street and our downtown corridor.
- The Town continues to advance discussions to help support additional affordable housing and Veteran's Housing for Swampscott.

Ongoing Considerations:

SWAMPSCOTT IS FACING MAJOR CHALLENGES:

- Increased operating costs related to providing benefits for active employees and retirees
- Recommendation to establish a Stabilization Funds for FY 25 for Utilities (\$250K) and additional funding for Special Education Stabilization fund (\$200K)

IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Swampscott is in a strong financial position—reaching AAA status this year!
- Strong track record of balanced, stable budgets
- Excellent fiscal management and forward-looking plans
- Team approach to solving problems
- We are planning the work, and working the plans!





Next Steps...

- In the coming weeks and months we will all need to work collaboratively and seriously discuss how best to manage public expectations, and strategically plan for a successful future.
- We work very well with our State and Federal legislative delegation but we need more assistance for a number of critical initiatives.
- The Town must also set some new spending priorities, especially when considering federal stimulus money is drying up.
- The operating budget challenges we are seeing this year, and will be here in subsequent years, requires a major recalibration with respect to spending.
- We must live within our means if we aspire to be a community accessible for all residents. We hear regularly that Franklin is becoming increasingly unaffordable.
- There is no panacea our future except hard work in balancing the fiscal priorities for Swampscott.

