



Town of West Newbury

Select Board FY '23 Budget Policy Direction

Approved December 20, 2021

To insure the growing and continued financial health of the Town of West Newbury, provide the public with confidence that Town officials respect their responsibility for fiscal stewardship and demonstrate to taxpayers and bond rating agencies that the Town has thoughtfully prepared for its future, the Select Board present to our employees, Boards, Commissions and Committees the following guidance in preparing the FY23 budget.

1. We propose a FY23 operating budget that will limit the overall increase in the expense budget to no more than 2.5%, not including any school budget increases including related to the Pentucket Middle/High School override. If, in order to meet this budgetary goal, the proposed budget includes any changes in organizational structure, employee head count, hours of operation and/or budgeted level of service, these changes should be specified.
2. We propose that the operating budget specify financial impacts, if any, of COVID-19 on proposed FY23 operating budgets, taking into account that some expenses that have become necessary or customary as a result of COVID-19 (such as remote meeting platforms, enhanced cleaning protocols, etc.) are no longer funded by the Federal CARES Act.
3. We will carry out a clear, transparent public process for finance committee and public review of the proposed FY23 budget, taking into account information from taxpayers, town officials, department heads, Boards/ Commissions/ Committees, and residents.
4. We propose to recommend that Town Meeting continue to appropriate retired debt service into the School Stabilization Fund; and that the Town continue to draw-down the balance in that fund in FY23 based on a multi-year plan to mitigate the taxpayer impact of the Middle/High School project.
5. We propose that updates and revisions to the Capital Improvement Program be presented by the Town Manager in accordance with the timeline requirements in the Capital Improvements Committee Bylaw. We propose that the Capital Improvements Committee and the Town Manager evaluate whether an appropriation of \$500,000 from the operating budget into the Capital Stabilization Fund is an appropriate amount when taking into account FY23 and future years' anticipated capital funding needs.
6. We propose that the FY23 budget process include consideration of whether documented Town and/or Water capital project costs or other eligible expenses may be paid in full or in part through the Town's allocation of Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
7. We propose that the Town Manager and Department Heads both continue to consider and expand consideration of potential opportunities to regionalize some town services, if this can be achieved at cost savings while maintaining or enhancing current levels of service, including exploring potential opportunities that may not be ready for implementation in time for FY23.
8. In anticipation that the Wage and Classification Study now underway may not be complete prior to Town Meeting adoption of the FY23 operating budget, we propose that an appropriate amount of funding be proposed, either within the FY23 operating budget or in a separate Warrant Article, that would allow for adjustment of wages (prior to and/or during FY23) if/as found to be appropriate based on the recommendations of the study.

9. We propose that the FY23 operating budget support a staffing structure for administration and finance operations that is designed to provide adequate staffing to ensure that, whatever other special projects or “crises” may arise, these will not compromise the Town’s ability to complete all “baseline” responsibilities as required by various statutes, bylaws and policies.
10. We propose that the FY23 budget should take into account the estimated impacts, if any, of any newly effective requirements imposed by statute, bylaw, regulation or policy, and should specify the estimated impact of any such newly effective requirements. These estimates should take into account the anticipated impacts of any new statute, bylaw, regulation or policy that is known or proposed to take effect during FY23.
11. We propose that, for each section of the proposed budget, specify the individual(s) or the Board/Commission/Committee that will have authority to expend the budgeted funds.

Approved by 3-0 vote of the Select Board

December 20, 2021