

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

The council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, and called to order at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held in person at the Town Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Council Chairman, Nathan Calouro
Vice-Chairwoman, Mary Parella,
Councilman, Antonio "Tony" Teixeira
Councilman, Timothy Sweeney
Councilman, Aaron Ley

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, Steven Contente
Town Treasurer, Carl Carulli

404 TOWN SOLICITOR

Michael A. Ursillo, Esq., Town Solicitor

Assistant Town Solicitor Teitz presents an overview of the solicitor's budget, highlighting a 3% increase in litigation costs. He explained that the hourly rate for litigation has increased to \$225 per hour, which remains lower than rates charged in other municipalities.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

603 PUBLIC WORKS

Chris Parella-Public Works Director

DPW Director Parella presented an overview of the department's conservative budget, highlighting increased costs related to maintenance of packer, and recycling vehicles. A significant increase is tied to the need to rebuild the floor of an older trash truck. He also noted the high cost of auto parts and the necessity of sourcing certain spare parts from Canada for recycling vehicles.

An increase in the transfer station operations budget was requested to accommodate the purchase of two additional compactors, each estimated at \$10,000, to be ordered by July 1. The Council recommended pre-authorizing the Director to proceed with the purchase prior to that date.

Director Parella also mentioned the need to purchase new trash carts and recycling bins due to rising demand from residents

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

many of the due to damages. He discussed the high costs associated with snow and ice management, despite relatively low snowfall this year, and noted the use of liquid brine mix as a cost-saving measure for pre-treating road.

Director Parella provided a brief update on holiday lighting. He noted that the Town's investment in long-lasting LED lights and improved storage has led to a reduced holiday lighting budget. The Council inquired about extending the lighting area from Franklin Street to Constitution Street. It was noted that this expansion is part of a phased capital project scheduled for completion in 2027

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

604 WATER POLLUTION CONTROL

Jose DaSilva- Water Pollution Control Superintendent

Superintendent DaSilva provided an overview of the water pollution control budget, highlighting a requested increase in pre-treatment funding due to new state-mandated PFAS testing requirements. He also noted the need for building repairs, particularly to the main facility, and emphasized the growing importance of updated instrumentation and controls in response to advancing technology. Additional discussions included the potential use of ultraviolet treatment to reduce chemical usage and improve environmental outcomes, as well as strategies to minimize runoff water entering sewer lines.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

606- COMPOSTING FACILITY

Superintendent DaSilva provided an overview of the composting facility budget, highlighting requests for additional funding to support compost analysis and necessary building repairs. The Council discussed the impact of PFAS on compost sales and explored the potential of transitioning to compost mulch. Superintendent DaSilva explained the facility's capability to press liquid solids into a truckable form, helping to reduce transportation costs. The Council also considered long-term

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

strategies for managing compost and yard waste, including the possibility of future state approval for energy production.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

607- ENTERPRISE FUND

Treasurer Carulli provided an overview of the debt service schedule and provided an update on the Enterprise Bond, including the possibility of a new bond to support wastewater treatment facility improvements. The Council also discussed the anticipated significant impact of the school bond proposed for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

806- MUNICIPAL OBSERVANCES

Fourth of July Committee

Camille Texeira, Chairwoman of the Fourth of July Committee, addressed the Council and presented the Committee's request. Chairman Calouro expressed the Council's full support for the Committee and its volunteers, acknowledging their continued dedication year after year. He noted that despite recent challenges, the Council has always had faith in the Committee's decisions and continues to offer its full support, describing the group as a "class act."

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator

Veterans Holiday

Town Administrator Contente noted that the requested funds would support Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities, including parades and the laying of wreaths.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

Christmas Festival

Town Administrator Contente noted that the requested funds would support activities for the annual Christmas Festival.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator

Personnel Board

Town Administrator Contente noted that the requested funds would support the need for supplies, materials, and advertising needs for the testing and hiring process.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator

405-Boards & Commissions-

Barbara Palumbo-Bristol Substance Abuse Coordinator

It is noted for the record that discussions regarding item 405 occurred at the end of the listed agenda due to Barbara Palumbo arriving late to present her budget. However, the information is recorded in the order it appears on the agenda.

Coordinator Palumbo mentioned partnering with the Parks and Recreation Department to offer programs for youth in the community, focusing outside of school-based programs, as the schools already have many initiatives in place. Discussions included the duration of opioid-related programs, the expected decrease in funding, and the significant drop in opioid-related revenue, all of which are anticipated to impact the budget.

803-Parks and Recreation

Warren Rensehausen-Director

Director Rensehausen presented his budget request, highlighting several key points. Director Rensehausen presented his budget request, highlighting several key items. He proposed a 9% salary increase for Michelle Martins, the current secretary, and recommended updating her job title to better reflect her expanded responsibilities. Martins' current role involves much more than traditional secretarial work, including managing administrative tasks. The proposed salary adjustment would reflect a 9% increase, raising her pay from \$52,136 to \$56,828; the Council agreed to round the amount up to \$57,000. cross multiple locations. Although this adjustment was not part of the original request, earlier discussions with the Town Administrator indicated that it was necessary to include.

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

Director Rensehausen noted that several line items had been consolidated to make the budget clearer. Community Center supervisors were combined into one line item, and staffing for the front desk and evening operations was incorporated. He also shared plans to expand coverage to the Wally School within the next six months.

In terms of programming, he reported that the Team Zone program at the school has resumed and is very successful, especially during the winter months. Daytime senior card programs are also performing well. The department continues to maintain two supervisors at the front desk at all times.

Town Administrator Contente and Council discussed the importance of assigning a job title for Mrs. Martins that accurately reflects her diverse responsibilities. Titles such as "Program Coordinator" or "Administrative Assistant" were suggested.

Further discussions included telephone and internet costs, with a note that the Recreation Department operates at two separate sites—one at the Town Beach and one at the Recreation Center—unlike some departments that only have one location, or the Fire Department, which has five. These differences contribute to variations in costs across departments. The discussion also touched on how the number of iPads and cell phones assigned to each department further impacts overall communication expenses.

(*) The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk at budget line 803-41100 as a placeholder to potentially allocate an additional to increase the Secretary's salary from \$52,136 to \$57,000.

802-ROGERS FREE LIBRARY

Eileen Dyer- Library Director

Library Director Dyer presented an overview of the department's budget. It was highlighted that the library is requesting a 9% salary increase for full-time professional staff and proposing the addition of a new full-time Assistant Director/Adult Services Coordinator position, to begin in January. This role will oversee reference services, adult programming, and maker space initiatives, bringing full-time staff from seven to eight.

It was noted that the library has reduced 27 part-time hours through attrition and adjusted the circulation librarian

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

position due to internal changes. Current staffing includes approximately 30-31 employees, with around 20 part-time staff and flexible scheduling.

Strategic goals include implementing a new five-year plan, increasing funding and grant opportunities, and preparing for the Community Learning Center project. Program commitments focus on education, health, and workforce development.

It was noted that when presenting the salary budget adjustments, the information should be provided in a clearer and more transparent format. Due to the number of staff and various adjustments, it was difficult to determine how many full-time positions currently exist, how many are being added or removed, and the actual number of part-time positions and hours. Clarification is also needed to indicate whether individuals are being added or removed from the staffing structure.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator

Recap

Chairman Calouro recapped the following question items to be discussed for consideration at a later time (asterisk items)

701-POLICE DEPARTMENT

(*) The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk at the Police Department budget line for clarification on the amount of that transfer in the previous year(s) in the motor vehicle line item 701-44310 and questioned whether the proposed budget increase was reasonable.

Treasurer Carulli noted that an interdepartmental reallocation of funds totaling \$1,400 was made in FY 2024, and a reallocation of \$3,500 was done in FY 2025 to absorb the cost of the budget deficit.

702-ANIMAL CONTROL

(*) The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk at the budget line 702-43341 to acknowledge that an additional \$5,000 could be earmarked for reallocation elsewhere in the budget if needed

703 HARBOR PATROL

(*) The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk at budget line 703-45300 as a placeholder to potentially allocate an additional \$5,000 to help manage the cost of internet services.

803 Parks And Recreations

(*) The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk at budget line 803-41100 as a placeholder to potentially allocate an additional to increase the Secretary's salary from \$52,136 to \$57,000.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Sweeney, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Parella, and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk