



Town of Wilmington
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FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET
General Remarks

CHAIR Gary B. DePalma
MEMBERS of the Select Board

CHAIRMAN John F. Doherty, and
MEMBERS of the Finance Committee

Dear Members:

Introduction

It is an honor to present the Fiscal Year 2025 recommended budget as the temporary Town Manager for the Town of Wilmington. This document is designed to serve as a financial management plan for the operation of Wilmington's town government. It is intended to carefully, and fairly, allocate the community's finite resources among a variety of worthy, competing needs. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work across departments to deliver a reasonable budget that the taxpayers of Wilmington have come to expect.

Fiscal responsibility at this scale is a team sport. It requires discipline, an eye towards the future and cooperation across the board. I thank all the department heads and their staff for their willingness to put together reasonable budgets that prioritize only the most important capital projects. We are extremely fortunate to live in a town where highly capable people are contributing to the success of our town across all its departments. I am fortunate to work with, and learn from, them every day in this role.

It is a great honor to serve as the temporary Town Manager and to work with so many passionate employees who have devoted their professional life to the Town of Wilmington. I want the next Town Manager to inherit a strong, stable and clear direction. I may be temporarily holding this office, but that doesn't mean we can be complacent. On day one I met with all our Department Heads and I asked them to level fund their FY25 budgets as best they could. As you will see in this budget presentation, other than payroll and contractual agreements, they all did an amazing job keeping their budgets under control and for that I am grateful. There are plenty of exciting projects underway that we are continuing to support, while also looking ahead to significant capital projects that will benefit our entire town, the Senior Center and the Town Hall / School Administration Building are obviously two major projects that will be moving forward in 2024.

The Select Board budget is mostly level funded except for contractual services i.e.: printing, binding, advertising & town meeting expenses. Also, you will see a notable increase in the Town Manager's budget reflected in the \$220,000 salary for the new Town Manager.

The Treasurer/Collector's office, Town Clerk's office and Assessors' office all have an increase in contractual services and payroll due to step increases. I expect the Town Clerk's office will have an increase due to the number of state and local elections this year.

Town Council also shows an increase in their services of \$257,500.

Information Technology

In today's world, boosting our security and adding to the IT budget is an important step to ensure the safety of the Town of Wilmington from cyberattacks. A financial commitment in this space is a statement that Wilmington is prepared for a rapidly changing future and the safeguarding of our residents' personal data is of the utmost importance.

Cyberattacks aren't a hypothetical risk – they exist today. Other municipalities in our area were victims of cyberattacks in 2023, which required full systems shutdowns and restorations, which are costly and time-consuming. This is why I am asking for a new FTE for our IT Department. An increase of \$90,104 represents salary increases for the staff and a new FTE.

Another component of the increase from FY24 is the subscription costs for our new phone system. Originally, we included the year-to-year subscription costs in the three-year Capital costs for the project's implementation. In FY25, the subscription costs now move over to the IT budget. This is an increase of approximately \$40,000 and consolidated to one phone system for the Town and Public Safety, cloud redundancy, auto-attendants, voice mailboxes for all our employees and over 200 physical phones throughout our buildings. This new phone system will easily be implemented into the new buildings.

A second major factor in the increase to the IT FY25 budget over the previous year is the Town's new insurance requirements that were introduced at the beginning of calendar year 2023. This will be the first time that the costs for the Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) are reflected in the annual budget. Last year, additional funds were requested from the Finance Committee for both the FY23 and FY24 budgets to meet these new requirements given the timing of the directive. The costs are close to \$65,000 and include MFA technology using Cisco Duo and additional Microsoft licensing we purchased to take over the Library's Microsoft accounts and email accounts for custodial staff from the School Department.

Last and certainly not least, a contributing factor to the increase over last year is inflation. We saw increases across the board on almost all of our software and technology costs ranging from 1% to 20% from the previous year. As you will see in the FY 25 budget, inflation is a big factor across the board in all departments.

Public Safety

The dynamics of being a police officer have changed over the past few years and, with scheduled retirements, we want to make sure we are filling staff vacancies by prioritizing the recruitment and retention of our Police Department. I'm proud to say we were able to come to an agreement with the Patrolmen's union after being without a contract for two years.

The Police Department, as have all our departments, worked very hard to level fund their FY25 budget. The one capital project that was very important was for range maintenance. The \$40,000 is to hire a specialized vendor to conduct comprehensive cleaning and disposal activities in compliance with OSHA/EPA regulations. As you know, the range has been in operation since 2016 and has played a vital role in training our officers. \$20,500 is for replacement of tasers.

The Fire Department also worked hard to level fund their FY25 budget. The Fire Department only has two capital requests. The \$475,000 is for a new ambulance, it is important to note that it takes approximately two years to receive a new ambulance after it is ordered. The Town is actively seeking land in North Wilmington for a fire department substation. \$600,000 has been allocated from available funds-free cash for a feasibility study/schematic design. A substation will allow faster response times in emergency situations for residents in and around North Wilmington. The Public Safety Dispatch has increased its budget in payroll only. The Town adjusted the dispatchers' pay last year to make them comparable to surrounding communities. They play a vital role in public safety and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated staff.

Animal Control has also increased its budget in payroll. Mr. Sullivan does a great job and has made himself available for many situations including off hours for animal emergencies and almost 1,000 calls for service in 2023.

I would also like to recognize the great partnership between our Police and Fire Chiefs and their departments working with each town department and the residents of Wilmington, keeping us safe while we live our lives in our wonderful Town. Over the past three months I have witnessed firsthand how passionate the brave men and women on our Police and Fire departments handle their important charge.

Department of Public Works/Water Department

The DPW budget shows a modest increase overall due to payroll and contractual agreements. We will be asking for one new FTE under Parks and Grounds. We are requesting a new DPW employee that will be brought on to assist with the expanded footprint of the Senior Center, Town Hall / School Administration Building, other town buildings and the newly acquired fields on Main Street, at the old Textron ballfields. The cost of a new Vactor truck will be funded equally by DPW and the Water Department. We budgeted \$330,000 each from available funds - free cash and the water budget as the new truck is used by both departments. Larger projects such as resurfacing and crack sealing various town roadways will be handled with CH90 funds. As you will see in the capital portion of the budget, we will be replacing two vehicles to make improvements in an aging fleet. A heavy-duty front-end loader (\$205,000) and a mini wing mower (\$50,000) are part of the DPW's capital budget. Jamie Magaldi, DPW Director; Joe Lobao, DPW Deputy Director; and their team do an amazing job in their departments. It is reflected in their budgets and annual reports how busy both their departments are with upcoming major projects such as the Route 38 water

main replacement project (\$4,500,000 water budget) and I have no doubt they will complete their mission.

Board of Health/Building Inspector

The Board of Health and the Building Inspector's budgets are also level funded, showing a small increase in payroll. I would like to thank Shelly Newhouse and Al Spaulding and their staff for continuing to provide the residents of Wilmington with the great service we as residents have come to count on from their office.

Planning & Conservation

Valerie Gingrich and her staff have also level funded this year and have a modest increase in their budget. Because of the hard work in their office, we were awarded a \$150,000 grant for design of a pedestrian bridge over the Maple Meadow Brook Aqueduct to connect the Middlesex Canal Towpath to Town Park among other projects they are currently working on including the MBTA Communities Multi-family Overlay District.

Public Buildings Department

The Public Buildings Department has done an amazing job working with me and my staff to level fund one of the biggest budgets we have. An increase in payroll and utilities are the only increases in their budget and they are only requesting two vehicles in the capital plan (\$122,000) total. I would like to thank George Hooper and congratulate him on his retirement. Dennis Kelly has assumed the role of Superintendent in the Public Buildings Department. I am sure George left him in good shape.

Veterans' Services

Veterans' Services overall budget has reduced and will be requesting that Patti Meehan's position in the Veterans' Office increase to full time. As you know the Veterans' office shares Patti's salary with Elderly Services therefor, both departments are asking for ½ salary increase to get a full-time position. The CH115 budget is (\$200,000), down from \$250,000, due to the hard work of Mike Frotten and Patti Meehan to get the CH115 recipients on other sources of income, i.e.: Federal Benefits, Veterans Administration.

Elderly Services

The Elderly Services Department has a budget that reflects a new full-time employee. This is a result of Patti Meehan's position being increased to full time in the Veterans' Services Office. Obviously with a new Senior Center building opening this year, we are hoping to see more participation of our growing senior population with many new events, and classes and they will need a new Program Director.

Recreation

While continuing to offer high quality, relevant programs Brett and his team have worked hard on a budget that has minor increases in payroll, program supplies and training and conferences. Total increase in their budget is \$7,125.

Historical Commission

There is also a modest increase in the budget to reflect an increase in payroll.

Library

The Library budget is increased due to payroll contractual agreements, books and library materials.

Education

Last year, \$1.2 million was allocated for the Wildwood School project to explore the grant process within the Massachusetts School Building Authority. This program offers potential funding for school building proposals in the Commonwealth. If accepted, the planning, design and construction of a new Wildwood School would be a collaborative process with the state. These types of initiatives show our town's continued commitment to our children and reinforce Wilmington's reputation as a great place to raise a family. The operating budget received from the School Department requested an increase of 4.34%, largely due to the negotiated contracts for FY25. Total budget for the school is \$57,742,305. Moving forward, we are excited with the prospect of opening a new school for the children and their families of Wilmington.

Finance/Town Accountant

I cannot express enough gratitude for all the help from Bryan Perry our Finance Director/Town Accountant. His department has level funded their budget with a minor increase for payroll. Bryan has been an amazing asset to me during this budget process. Bryan has inspired me to be the best I can be regarding the budget the residents of Wilmington expect and deserve. Bryan is a true gentleman and I wanted to publicly thank him for all his help.

Conclusion

The Town Manager in Wilmington is vested with the responsibility to prepare a budget and the authority to administer the programs and services outlined in that budget. Preparation of the town's annual financial plan depends upon the assembly of reliable information, the assistance of a valuable staff and the direction of this document and ultimately judges its content.

I look forward to spirited and productive debate on the issues addressed by this plan. I am confident that a thorough public examination of our budget recommendations will serve to assist the town in its preparation for the transition to a new Town Manager.

With an overall budget of \$138,133,707, representing an overall increase of 4.20%, I am confident the new Town Manager will have a great starting point to start their hopefully long career in Wilmington.

I have chosen to call Wilmington my home for the past 40 years. My wife and I have raised three wonderful children here, all of whom attended Wilmington public schools, and have enjoyed the safety and fiscal responsibility our town has prioritized.

Lastly, I would like to thank every department head and their staff for all your hard work, without all of you I would not have been able to present this budget on behalf of the Town of Wilmington.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lou Cimaglia, IV
Temporary Town Manager