

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

January 27, 2020

Chairman Gregory B. Bendel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 9 of the Town Hall. Present were Selectmen Kevin A. Caira, Jonathan R. Eaton, Michael V. McCoy and Jomarie F. O'Mahony. Also present was Town Manager Jeffrey M. Hull.

Chairman Bendel asked those present to rise and he led the pledge of allegiance.

TREASURY WARRANTS

Chairman Bendel asked for a motion to accept the Treasury Warrants. A motion was made by Selectman Caira, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen accept Treasury Warrants 29, 29A, 30 and 30A.

JORGE VARGAS, GREEN SAUCE, INC. DBA CASA BLANCA RESTAURANT, RE: REQUEST TO OBTAIN A COMMON VICTUALER LICENSE FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 207 MAIN STREET

Chairman Bendel welcomed Mr. Vargas and commented that the most frequently asked question lately is when Casa Blanca will be opening. Present with Mr. Vargas was Mia Sarabey Munez, Alcohol Manager.

Town Manager Hull reviewed favorable recommendations from Health Director Shelly Newhouse and Building Inspector Al Spaulding.

Chairman Bendel asked if Mr. Vargas would like to offer any comments. Mr. Vargas advised that the plumbing inspector was at the restaurant today to do the final inspection and sign off. He expects that the gas inspector will be in Tuesday. The wiring inspector will need to sign off as well as inspections by the Building Inspector and Fire Department. Mr. Vargas estimates that they will be able to open in three to four weeks.

A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman Caira and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen issue a Common Victualer License to Green Sauce, Inc. DBA Casa Blanca Restaurant for property located at 207 Main Street.

JORGE VARGAS, GREEN SAUCE, INC. DBA CASA BLANCA RESTAURANT, RE: REQUEST TO OBTAIN AN ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 207 MAIN STREET

Chairman Bendel asked Mr. Vargas to elaborate on what type of entertainment they are looking to have. Mr. Vargas stated that they are requesting the license to enable them to have televisions, amplifier and music on Saturdays. He clarified that he is not requesting permission for live musicians.

Chairman Bendel asked Mr. Vargas what the hours will be. Mr. Vargas stated the restaurant will be open seven days per week, Sunday through Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Selectman Eaton, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen issue an Entertainment License to Green Sauce, Inc. DBA Casa Blanca Restaurant for property located at 207 Main Street.

**JEFFREY M. HULL, TOWN MANAGER, RE: PRESENTATION OF TOWN MANAGER'S
FY 2021 BUDGET**

The Board of Selectmen was provided with information regarding the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. Included in the information was the Town Manager's budget summary, Municipal Personnel Book, Motor Vehicle Book and the Capital Improvement Plan.

Finance Committee members were provided the same information, department heads were provided with a copy of the Town Manager's budget summary. Town Manager Hull provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining his budget message which, by attachment, is made a part of these minutes.

Town Manager Hull recognized department heads and other employees that worked closely with him in preparing the budget, members of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and the School Department.

Chairman Bendel thanked the Town Manager for his presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board. Members of the Board commended the Town Manager for the budget presentation, offered comments regarding different aspects of the proposed budget.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

**BOARD TO CONSIDER RATIFICATION OF TOWN MANAGER'S APPOINTMENT OF
PAUL L. CHALIFOUR AS A MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

A motion was made by Selectman McCoy, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Paul L. Chalifour as a member of the Historical Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2021.

**BOARD TO CONSIDER REQUEST OF WILMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TO
CONDUCT A FUNDRAISER CAR WASH AT THE TOWN COMMON PARKING LOT ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 FROM 9 A.M. TO 12 P.M.**

A motion was made by Selectman Eaton, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen approve the request of Wilmington High School Football to conduct a fundraiser car wash at the Town Common parking lot on Sunday, September 13, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**BOARD TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INHABITANT BY-LAW
COMMITTEE**

Chairman Bendel thanked members of the By-Law Study Committee who volunteered their time. He noted that this item was on the agenda for the Board's meeting of January 13 and the Board tabled it as the By-Law Study Committee was meeting to discuss the Selectmen's feedback. Chairman Bendel stated that the By-Law Study Committee has notified the Board that they stand by their recommendations. He stated that there were nine recommendations and he would like to take each one up individually. If the Board votes favorably, they will be added to the Warrant for

consideration at the Annual Town Meeting. As each recommendation was brought up, members of the Board discussed the pros and cons and whether they were in favor of the recommended change. As appropriate, members of the By-Law Study Committee, including Police Chief Joseph Desmond and Gary DePalma who were present in the audience, offered comments as to the rationale for the recommendation. Following are the votes:

Amend Chapter 2, Section 1: Annual Town Election by changing the date of the Annual Town Election to the last Saturday in April.

A motion was made by Selectman Cairra, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of four with Selectman McCoy opposed, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 2, Section 1 of the By-Laws by changing the date of the Annual Town Meeting to the last Saturday in April and the Annual Town Election be scheduled the Saturday prior.

Amend Chapter 2, Section 3: Annual Town Meeting Date and Start Time by empowering the Board of Selectmen with discretionary authority to set the date of the Annual Town Meeting to any Saturday in April preceding the last Saturday in April and to change the starting time of the Annual Town Meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Selectman McCoy, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 2, Section 3 of the By-Laws by changing the time of the Annual Town Meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Recommendation for Chapter 2, Section 10A by including an overall Omnibus Budget Presentation by the Town Manager followed by taking up of the operating budget as a whole rather than dividing into smaller portions.

A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman Eaton and by the affirmative vote of four with Selectman Cairra opposed, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 2, Section 10A of the By-Laws by including an overall Omnibus Budget Presentation by the Town Manager followed by taking up of the operating budget as a whole.

Recommendation for Chapter 2, Section 10B to eliminate random selection of certain articles.

A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman McCoy and by the affirmative vote of four with Selectman Cairra opposed, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 2, Section 10B of the By-Laws by eliminating random selection.

Recommendation for Chapter 2, Section 19 to eliminate the quorum requirement.

A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman McCoy and by the affirmative vote of Selectman McCoy and Selectman O'Mahony with three opposed, the motion to eliminate the quorum failed.

Recommendation for Chapter 3, Section 6: Town Counsel Opinions relative to mandatory filing of Town Counsel opinions with the Town Clerk be amended to bifurcate said opinions between matters subject to the Attorney/Client privilege and those matters of general interpretation that should be available to the public for purposes of transparency and consistency in the application of the By-Laws and statutes.

A motion was made by Selectman Caira, seconded by Selectman Eaton and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 3, Section 6 of the By-Laws as it relates to Town Counsel Opinions mandatory filing with the Town Clerk to bifurcate said opinions between matters subject to the Attorney/Client privilege and those matters of general interpretation that should be available to the public for purposes of transparency and consistency in the application of the By-Laws and statutes

Recommendation for Chapter 5, Section 27 to grant the Animal Control Officer the right to enforce by issuance of a citation, all provision of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140.

A motion was made by Selectman Eaton, seconded by Selectman McCoy and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen take no action as Town Counsel has provided his opinion that the Animal Control Officer currently has the right to enforce.

Amend Chapter 5, Section 27.5 by removing the language “or Town property adjacent to the water” thereby allowing properly leashed dogs to be on Town property that is not adjacent to the water throughout the year.

A motion was made by Selectman O’Mahony, seconded by Selectman McCoy and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending Chapter 5, Section 27.5 of the By-Laws by removing the language “or Town property adjacent to the water”

Recommendation that the Town of Wilmington adopt a Construction Noise By-law. Police Chief Desmond prepared a draft by-law.

A motion was made by Selectman McCoy, seconded by Selectman O’Mahony and by the affirmative vote of three with Selectman Caira and Chairman Bendel opposed, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen recommend amending the By-Laws of the Town of Wilmington by adopting a construction noise by-law.

BOARD TO CONSIDER REQUEST OF CHRISTINA STEWART, LIBRARY DIRECTOR, TO USE THE SWAIN GREEN ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 11:00 P.M. FOR A PERFORMANCE OF MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING AND ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2020 FROM 5:30 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M. FOR THE ANNUAL SUMMER BASH

A motion was made by Selectman Eaton, seconded by Selectman Caira and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen approve the request of Christina Stewart, Library Director, to use the Swain Green on Thursday, August 13, 2020 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. for a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* and on Friday, August 14, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the Annual Summer Bash.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kevin MacDonald, Andover Street, offered his comments regarding Elderly Housing and Senior Center and his opinion that the Town should propose to the Cummings Corporation that they build housing on town property.

Mr. MacDonald asked how much the Town's insurer paid to settle the lawsuit regarding the hockey rink and Town Manager Hull advised that the Town was not sued.

Mr. MacDonald asked what the Town's deductible is for the employee health insurance. He commented that it was \$50,000 prior to Mr. Hull's appointment to Town Manager and when he was appointed it went up to \$150,000. Mr. MacDonald questioned what it is now. Assistant Town Manager Kerry Colburn-Dion stated that she would like an opportunity to confirm but she believes the deductible is now \$175,000.

Ethan Sawyer, Lawrence Street, asked why the Town Hall/School Administration is being presented at this time. He stated that the only reason he can identify has to do with siting and phasing. He stated that he understands there are issues with Town Hall but he does not consider spending between \$20 million and \$30 million for a Town Hall/School Administration building a conservative approach to the budget when there is so much up in the air such as fire substation and schools. Chairman Bendel clarified that the Town Manager is proposing spending \$955,000 on a feasibility study and not \$20-30 million.

Mr. Sawyer commented that about 20 years ago where he grew up they rebuilt schools on parks and when they tore down the school, they built the new park. He referenced the Town turning down the opportunity to license the fields at Textron at a cost of \$250,000, a lot less than \$20 million. He opined that if siting is the issue, there are better solutions. Selectman Eaton noted that the cost was estimated at \$350,000 to repair the field. Town Manager Hull noted that the Town would be spending tax dollars on property it did not own.

Selectman Cairra asked where the \$20-30 million came from and was advised that the resource for that number was the Facility Master Plan.

Mr. Sawyer opined that spending the \$1 million to sure up the Town Hall and get another five to ten years of use would be better use of the funds. He asked members of the Board whether the Town Hall/School Administration building is the project that should be taken up first.

Janice Sawyer, Lawrence Street, asked for clarification regarding how the vote for a feasibility study for a Senior Center versus a feasibility study for a Town Hall/School Administration building would be put forward. She stated that she got the impression that the feasibility study for the senior center would be a stand-alone, did not get that impression for the Town Hall/School Administration. Town Manager Hull stated that in each case if it is the desire of the Board of Selectmen to place articles on the Town Meeting Warrant, there would be an article for the Senior Center and one for a Town Hall/School Administration building. He stated that they would be handled the same way and voted independently.

Ms. Sawyer stated that part of the explanation why a feasibility study is not being proposed for the North Wilmington substation at this time is that a parcel of land had not been identified. She stated that parcels had not been identified for either the Town Hall/School Administration or the Senior Center and opined that is a reason to conduct the feasibility study. Chairman Bendel stated that in all likelihood, those buildings will be sited on property the Town already owns. He stated that in his opinion, it is likely that the Town will have to identify private property and the Town can't conduct a study for property it does not own.

Ms. Sawyer asked whether it is typical for Town Halls and School Administration to be in one building. Town Manager Hull stated he did not want to say it was typical, but there are instances where they are combined citing the Town of Franklin.

Mr. MacDonald opined that the Town could begin operating a fire substation within a very short period of time by opening a bay at the Public Works Garage on Andover Street.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Selectman O'Mahony offered congratulations to Selectman Eaton and his wife Sarah who are expecting their second child tomorrow.

Chairman Bendel stated that he joined his colleagues, Selectmen Caira and Eaton, at the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Annual Meeting. He stated that two issues stood out were cost of trash and recycling collection and the proposed gas tax.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

IMPORTANT DATES

Town Manager Hull reviewed important dates including:

- January 28 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
FY 21 BUDGET OVERVIEW; REVENUE; GENERAL GOVERNMENT
- January 30 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
PLANNING & CONSERVATION, BUILDING INSPECTOR/BOARD OF APPEALS, BOARD OF HEALTH
- February 4 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
- February 6 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
VETERANS' SERVICES, ELDERLY SERVICES COMMISSION
- February 7 – Last Day to Submit Petitioned Warrant Articles for Inclusion
on the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting – May 2, 2020
- February 10 – Board of Selectmen – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
- February 11 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
- February 12 – Last Day to Register to Vote in Presidential Primary
Town Clerk's Office Open Until 8:00 p.m.
- February 13 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
PUBLIC LIBRARY, RECREATION, HISTORICAL COMMISSION
- February 24- Early Voting – Town Hall – Auditorium – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- February 28 – Thursday, February 27 – 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- February 24 – Board of Selectmen – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
- February 25 – Finance Committee – Public Safety Building – 7:00 p.m.
POLICE DEPARTMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY CENTRAL DISPATCH, FIRE DEPARTMENT
- February 27 – Finance Committee – Town Hall – Room 9 – 7:00 p.m.
TOWN CLERK, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- March 3 – Presidential Primary – Polls Open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- March 3 – Finance Committee – Shawsheen Tech – 7:00 p.m.
SHAWSHEEN TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
- March 5 – Finance Committee – Wilmington High School – 7:00 p.m.
WILMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A motion was made by Selectman Eaton, seconded by Selectman Caira and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary



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January 27, 2020

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET
General Remarks

CHAIRMAN Gregory B. Bendel
MEMBERS of the BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CHAIRMAN John F. Doherty, and
MEMBERS of the FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dear Members:

Each year, in accordance with the Town Manager's Act not less than ninety (90) days before annual town meeting the Town Manager is required to present the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee with an estimate of the expenditures for each department and an estimate of the anticipated revenues for the upcoming fiscal year. Presented this evening for your review and consideration is the annual operating budget for the fiscal year which begins July 1, 2020. As a supplement to this document you are receiving a copy of the five (5) year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Town of Wilmington. The CIP consists of proposed expenditures in excess of \$20,000 in value with an expected useful life of three (3) years or more. The range of items in the CIP include vehicles, building improvements, technology and planning and design services.

The total operating budget is proposed to increase **\$4,606,989 or 3.96%** over the current year to a total amount of **\$120,817,437**. Four major categories of expenditures make up the budget in order of size as a percentage of the entire budget: Wilmington Public Schools, Statutory Charges, General Government and Shawsheen Valley, Technical High School. Shared costs include statutory charges, insurance and debt and interest.

	FY2020	FY2021	\$\$\$ Change	% Change
Wilmington Schools	\$ 41,939,603	\$ 43,722,036	\$ 1,782,433	4.25%
Shared Costs	\$ 38,560,419	\$ 40,556,545	\$ 1,996,126	5.18%
General Government	\$ 31,062,862	\$ 31,658,926	\$ 596,064	1.92%
Shawsheen Tech	\$ 4,647,564	\$ 4,879,930	\$ 232,366	5.00%
Total	\$ 116,210,448	\$ 120,817,437	\$ 4,606,989	3.96%

The overwhelming majority of the Wilmington Public School's 4.25% increase results from personnel costs. Step and lane changes, collectively bargained adjustments and new hires account for an increase of \$1,607,548 in the fiscal year 2021 budget request. The majority of the 11.25 full time equivalent (FTE) new positions are intended to bolster Student Support Services. Focusing additional resources on meeting the social/emotional and mental health needs of students and supporting individual education plans of students is a major goal of the School Department.

Shared costs include assessments such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Mosquito Control Program. Wilmington's contribution to the Middlesex County Retirement System is a shared cost. Debt service and insurances are also included in this category. The largest insurance line item is health insurance. In fiscal year 2018 the health insurance budget was \$13,612,967. The budget was reduced to \$13,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 and remained at that level in fiscal year 2020. It is only recommended to increase the budget for fiscal year 2021 by 1.5% or \$195,000. This cost stability has occurred in spite of many communities dealing with significantly higher increases to their health insurance budgets.

Costs associated with General Government operating expenses are projected to increase \$596,064 or 1.92% over the current fiscal year. Major contributors to the cost increase are a request for four (4) new full-time and one (1) part-time position between the Police Department, Dispatch Department and Town Manager's Department. This budget proposes to retain the services of a part-time Substance Abuse Recovery Coach currently supported by a grant from the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI). That grant is due to expire in August of 2020. The Elderly Services Department has received grant funding for the past twenty (20) years from the Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs which has been used in part to fund an Elder Services Coordinator Assistant. This budget proposes to increase the hours of that position from thirty (30) to thirty-five hours (35) per week and pay for a share of the salary.

Other significant cost increases to the operating budget include the cost increase of \$301,148 for curbside collection of trash and recycling and the disposal of the material at the incinerator in North Andover and the increase of \$513,694 in Middlesex County Retirement System's assessment to the Town.

This budget proposal continues the commitment to pay down the Town's unfunded pension liability, earmark funds to address the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liabilities and to provide additional funds to the Capital Stabilization Fund.

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School is projecting an increase of five percent or \$232,366. Continued fluctuations in enrollments between member communities in addition to uncertainty around state aid to regional school districts and the expiration of two collective bargaining agreements are contributing factors for this increase.

Capital improvements play a major role in this budget and will be more fully described later in this document.

As existing developments including Green Meadow Drive, Murray Hill, Spruce Farm and McDonald Road are drawing to a close, the number of homes being constructed in new developments is declining. New construction for 50 apartments and commercial space at 203 Lowell Street has received approval from the Planning Board. New condominiums at 635 Main Street and 168 Lowell Street are in the permitting process. Demolition and replacement of existing homes continues at a modest pace. The fact that Wilmington's averaged assessed residential value increased again for the seventh consecutive year demonstrates that the Town remains a desirable place to live and raise a family.

On the commercial/industrial front warehousing projects have been approved for 256,649 square feet of new warehouse/flex space at 36-38 Upton Drive and for the reuse of the 400,000 square feet of space at the former xPedex building at 613 Main Street. Owners of property at 100-110 Fordham Road obtained permits to increase the height of their building, add loading docks and modify parking. Currently the owner is in a second phase of

permitting to make further modifications to the property to accommodate a future tenant. Monogram Foods is in permitting to add space to their existing manufacturing operation on Ballardvale Street. A new retail/restaurant building is under construction at the corner of Ballardvale Street and Route 125. Analog Devices continues work on their \$142.9 million campus expansion.

Increases in assessed values and continued activities on the building front serve as positive indicators of a vibrant community. Attracting and retaining desirable retail businesses along the Route 38 corridor remains a challenge. Under the leadership of Chairman Michael Champoux, the Economic Development Committee has been taking steps to develop recommendations to stimulate interest in the retail sector including the recent issuance of a survey to identify the types of retail enterprises desired by residents.

REVENUE

As has been the longstanding practice, revenue projections continue to be very conservative. The property tax levy, which accounts for nearly three quarters of the Town's entire revenue stream has been adjusted to increase by 2.5% in addition to new growth of \$1.1 million for a total of \$90,234,330. Local aid, the second largest source of revenue, accounts for 12% or \$14,578,126 of total revenue and is not expected to increase significantly. Any increase is likely to be attributed to Chapter 70, education aid. In November, Governor Charlie Baker signed into law the Student Opportunities Act, the first major overhaul of Chapter 70 funding since 1993. The law proposes to phase in \$1.5 billion in additional education aid to cities and towns by 2026. The expectation is that the largest share of this additional aid will be directed to urban school districts. This budget projects an increase of \$57,346 in educational assistance. Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), the other primary component of local aid is only expected to increase marginally. Local Receipts account for \$9,495,750 or 7.86% of revenues and is expected to remain largely unchanged except for a slight increase in proceeds received from motor vehicle excise taxes. Free cash, which is generated from financial reserves, will be drawn upon to fund several projects and makes up just over 4% or \$4,865,000 as a one-time supplement to the revenue stream. Total revenues for fiscal year 2021 are projected at \$120,817,437.

LONG RANGE GOALS:

Invest in the success of students by supporting the initiatives and providing the resources for a 21st century education.

The fact that financial resources directed specifically to education exceed 40% of the Town's budget demonstrates that facilitating the ability of our youngest members of the community to learn and adapt, to develop the social and emotional skills to be resilient and responsible and to instill the principle of community is priority number 1. This budget calls for an increase in spending by the Wilmington Public School Department of \$1,782,433 over the current fiscal year which represents a 4.25% increase. Approximately 90% of this increase is tied to personnel related costs. The School Superintendent is recommending the addition of 11.25 full time equivalents (FTEs). Collective bargaining obligations for step and lane changes and salary adjustments are expected to total \$1,468,348 in fiscal year 2021.

In an effort to further address the mental health and social/emotional challenges that exist with students at all grade levels, new positions are proposed for the Office of Student Support Services. The position of Team Leader will be created to improve the operational oversight of student placements both in and out-of-district. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst will supplement the existing 2 FTEs that provide services to students in specialized programs and provide intervention services. The school budget calls for the creation of one special education teacher and a social worker for the Wilmington Middle School. Both positions are expected to enhance inclusion services for students with disabilities and to further support social emotional learning. The need for further support of students with individual education plans will be addressed through the addition of 5.4 FTE educational assistants across the district.

Capital investment in education will account for \$831,000. The greatest and most immediate facility need facing the Town is addressing the Wildwood School. The Facilities Master Plan, issued in January of 2018, noted: "The Wildwood School is the oldest of the six lower school facilities, and is in relatively poor condition." The finishes are worn, windows are discolored and the forced steam heat struggles to maintain consistent temperatures throughout the school. However, addressing the future of the Wildwood School has implications for the remaining pre-K to grade 5 schools throughout the district. Developing a strategy that will provide safe and inviting learning areas for the youngest students within the community is like solving the challenge of a Rubik's Cube. The Facilities Master Plan concluded that the town's elementary schools are undersized, do not meet current MSBA standards and lack flexibility with respect to learning spaces found in more modern schools.

In order to obtain financial assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to address the Wildwood School and the remaining elementary schools, the Town must have a coherent and comprehensive strategy supported by the School Committee and the community at large. The sum of \$200,000 is recommended to engage the services of a firm specializing in working with the community to develop a school grade configuration plan and an approach to renovation, expansion or new construction of multiple schools. Simultaneous to this effort the firm would work with the Town to arrive at a more immediate approach to provide education space for students and staff who attend the Wildwood School. This interim approach could extend several years while the districtwide strategy for addressing elementary school buildings is executed.

Technology remains a vital tool for students, teachers and administrative personnel. The district proposes to spend \$25,000 to replace desktops and laptops for administrative personnel. Replacement of laptops, docking stations and monitors in the high school will cost \$195,000. Chromebooks are an integral part of the learning environment and are used for MCAS testing. Chromebooks and the associated carts and licenses are being replaced on a phased schedule at a cost of \$80,000. Plans also call for replacement of the existing laptops, docking stations and monitors in grades pre-K to 3 for \$195,000.

Additionally, projectors in the elementary schools are scheduled for replacement with more interactive projectors at a cost of \$80,000. The sum of \$56,000 is requested to replace a 2011 wheelchair accessible minivan which is used to transport students in and out of district.

Reducing energy consumption by improving efficiencies of our buildings, vehicle fleet and systems throughout Town.

This budget proposes the funds to conduct a feasibility study and develop schematic design documents for a new Senior Center and a combined town/school administrative building. Aside from the level of service advantages, new facilities will be far more energy efficient than the existing Buzzell Senior Center, constructed in 1935, the Roman House constructed in 1900 and the Town Hall constructed in 1959. Due to the age of these buildings, the building envelope makes them prone to heat loss from windows with little "R" value and limited insulation throughout the buildings. Steam heat is original to Buzzell Senior Center and the forced hot air system is original to the Town Hall. The distribution of heat does not take place efficiently and in a balanced way throughout the buildings. While limited lighting upgrades have been completed, most fixtures in each of the buildings do not meet today's energy efficiency standards. New facilities will meet or exceed current building code standards and improve energy efficiency.

The fiscal year 2021 budget seeks \$100,000 to complete work started in the current fiscal year to replace existing lighting at the West Intermediate School with high efficiency LED fixtures. Aside from the benefit of reducing the electricity bill to the School Department, the new lighting provides a much improved lighting environment within which students and teachers can learn and work.

Decisions about continued investment in specific general government buildings and school buildings is dependent to a large degree on the future status of each building. Oftentimes replacing light fixtures throughout a building or replacing windows, heating systems and roofs cost several hundred thousand dollars or more for each project. The estimated cost for replacing windows at the Woburn Street School, for example, is over \$2.0 million. Knowing which buildings are expected to remain “as is” for the long term and which buildings are slated for major renovation, expansion or shuttering is critical when determining whether to recommend additional major investment in a given building. Maintaining a facilities plan to address building replacement or expansion, establish when that work will occur and a plan that draws broad community support will lead to wise use of public dollars.

This budget also focuses on efficiencies in the Town's vehicle fleet. Two vehicles proposed for purchase in the Police Department will be mid-sized sedans that will offer greater fuel efficiency than the standard police cruiser.

Improved service delivery through utilization of technology as a tool in our organization.

Providing access to a pool of highly competent, engaged and skilled teachers will always be the foundation for developing our leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists and educators of tomorrow. In light of the highly competitive demand for skilled employees it is critical that these teachers be able to provide student access to current technology as a learning tool. That is why, as previously noted, the School Department is seeking over a half million dollars to replace existing laptops, docking stations, monitors and interactive projectors. Ensuring that these tools are reliable and secure when needed requires the technology infrastructure to support them. Being mindful of their responsibility to support the tablets, laptops and other direct interface equipment, the School Department must also invest in the so called “back of house” infrastructure. Network wiring, switches, servers and other components are included in their 5-year capital plan for recommendation in future years.

Technology is no less important to general government. Administrative offices all rely upon desktops and laptops for everything from communication, to maintaining financial records to issuance of tax bills and accounting for payments. Both the Public Buildings and Public Works Departments rely on software to maintain their work order system. The IT Department is requesting \$100,000 to expand the capacity to electronically store data, to make this storage scalable for future growth and enhance the security of stored data for all departments including public safety. The department is maintaining a schedule of replacing approximately 25% of the desktops, laptops and tablets each year in an effort to maintain more current reliable computers. Funds in the amount of \$60,000 are included in the IT operating budget to cover these and other peripheral expenses.

Due to several staffing changes of key personnel, the planned transition in the Town's financial software from SoftRight to Tyler Technology had been delayed until those positions were filled. Efforts resumed in August of 2019 to execute the phased transition. Revising the chart of accounts was the first major milestone to address. Spearheaded by Finance Director/Town Accountant Bryan Perry, this work has been completed and uploaded to the MUNIS system. Currently historical data is being uploaded to MUNIS with the goal of establishing full functionality for the general ledger and accounts payable by July 1, 2020. Other elements of the transition including payroll and tax collections will be implemented at dates to be determined. The level of effort required to make this transition cannot be understated. All financial records including accounts payable, accounts receivable, property taxes, water and sewer billing, and assessing records must ultimately be transitioned to MUNIS in a manner that ensures the information remains fully retrievable. Training the personnel expected to use this software on a daily basis is critical to minimizing the glitches that arise with any transition of this scale.

As was noted in my 2019 message, the communication infrastructure relied upon by the Police and Fire Departments was installed when the Public Safety Building was completed in 2001. The current budget begins the process of replacing outdated technology that has passed its useful life with current communications technology. Funds appropriated at the May 4, 2019 Annual Town Meeting have been used to replace the fire alarm alerting system and radio box fire alarm receiver system.

A capital request in the amount of \$194,000 has been budgeted to address the Central Dispatch workspace. This project will include replacing the existing raised flooring which is original to the building, reorganizing the wiring located under the raised floor which connects all the dispatch computers and communications devices and replacing existing dispatch furniture. During the time of this work, dispatch consoles and associated computers will be disconnected and reconnected in a managed manner to a mobile public safety answering point (PSAP) located in the parking lot next to the Public Safety Building. When work to replace the flooring and the associated console furniture is completed the dispatch consoles and computers will be transferred back into the dispatch center and reconnected.

The Town's communications infrastructure consists of radio communications equipment, leased copper lines and municipal signal copper lines located at remote locations across the town that receive and send signals over the air from satellite towers in Wilmington, which in turn receive signals from the dispatch center. Police and fire personnel communicating with mobile radios in their vehicles rely on this system to send and receive messages. Antennas are located at several high points throughout town to boost signals received from portable radios and transfer or transmit the signal from dispatch to police and fire personnel in the field or transmit messages between individual police and fire personnel in the field. The Town's existing system is analog based which is outdated technology. The public safety communications industry has been moving to digital based communications technology over the past several years. Verizon no longer supports their leased copper lines which creates a significant problem if a failure to one of these circuits occurs. Such a situation has already occurred once. This resulted in Police personnel being required to use Fire Department portable radios for a few hours awaiting a Verizon technician to arrive and fix the problem. Due to the age of the radio communication equipment, making repairs is extremely difficult.

The sum of \$450,000 is requested which will be the first of a three phased effort to replace antiquated radio equipment, discontinue use of leased and town owned copper lines and use the existing municipal fiber loop and install microwave antennas at designated locations. The goal is to improve the reliability, timeliness and clarity of communications and to establish redundancy so that a malfunction to one component of the infrastructure will not compromise the ability to communicate via mobile vehicular radios or portable radios carried by personnel. This initiative will lead to improved communication between Central Dispatch and Police and Fire personnel and amongst Police and Fire personnel in the field. Additionally, rebuilding the communication infrastructure will benefit Public Works, Public Buildings and School personnel who rely upon portable radios for some of their communications.

Establish and maintain a multi-year capital improvement plan to enable the Town to make informed decisions on spending, borrowing and saving for future capital improvement needs.

Maintaining a projection of the major costs facing the Town five years into the future is more important now than ever. With the Town's free cash and capital stabilization funds at historic levels there have been comments in many quarters suggesting that permitting reserves to reach these levels is irresponsible or that large scale drawdown of these funds should occur now because of more immediate projects on the docket. The capital improvement plan serves a vital role in conveying the cost of a variety of equipment purchases, infrastructure projects or building related projects that need to be addressed in the "not too distant future." Aside from ensuring that the Town maintains an adequate "rainy day" fund for those years when local aid, motor vehicle excise, meals tax and other forms of revenue plateau or shrink, these reserves need to be accessed in a measured way to address some of the cost burdens for projects.

Several significant projects have been identified as priorities and will rely on some measure of funding from free cash or capital stabilization funds. A fire substation has been discussed at various times since at least the 1960s. A new substation is of paramount importance, given the level of development occurring in North Wilmington and the ongoing obstacles emergency response personnel encounter when MBTA commuter trains stop on Route 62 in

North Wilmington. The Town owns property in a prime location on Route 125. However, due to the fact the property is deemed Article 97 land, there are significant hurdles that would need to be cleared before a portion of the property could be used to host a Fire Substation. The other option being explored is the prospect of purchasing private property. At this point, due to the lack of options for siting of a substation, no funding is being requested. Efforts are ongoing to identify one or more locations suitable for consideration.

While the Facilities Master Plan already targeted the need to replace the Buzzell Senior Center, many in the elder community have made their voices known that a new senior center must be a priority. The shortcomings of the existing senior center have been described on several occasions and I share the Board of Selectmen's conclusion that a new senior center that will accommodate the growing needs of a growing population is a priority. To that end this budget proposes \$650,000 to complete a feasibility study and schematic design. It is recommended that these funds be drawn from free cash. In accordance with Massachusetts General Law an Owners Project Manager (OPM) will be hired to serve as the Town's representative in dealing with the design. Building projects in excess of \$1.5 million are required to have an OPM. A firm with experience designing senior centers will be hired to first work with the Town to examine potential sites to consider and reach consensus on a preferred site. Based upon the preferred site the designer will prepare schematic design documents which will propose the total square footage of the building, locate it on the site, outline the number and size of rooms, the building systems and provide an estimated cost for construction. When this work is complete the Town will be in a position to seek funding for construction of the facility.

A similar process is also recommended to address the need for a town/school administrative building. There is no question that such a facility lacks the appeal of a substation or senior center. Those individuals responsible for the operation of town and school functions are typically unheralded. The fact that in many instances they are responsible for the "mechanics" of local government does not lend them to developing a supportive constituency. Nevertheless, both the Town Hall and Roman House are older buildings not originally designed for their current function. The fact that these buildings are costing more than necessary to operate and are not fully accessible should be of concern. The Glen Road site will not be available for construction of other municipal facilities, unless the existing ball fields or possibly the basketball and pickle ball courts are removed. Even if the ball fields and courts are removed, overcoming the challenges of placing another building on that site without impacting residents surrounding the property and accommodating the traffic from two independent operations will be challenging at best.

In an effort to begin work on siting and construction of a town/school administrative building the sum of \$955,000 is requested from free cash to procure an OPM and designer to complete the feasibility study and schematic design services described above.

Recent changes to the regulations governing asbestos has made removal of asbestos encapsulated materials from areas within buildings far more difficult and expensive. The Town's Public Buildings Department has personnel certified in handling small quantities of building materials containing asbestos such as floor tiles or ceiling tiles. Recently adopted changes in regulations mean that even small jobs will require the hiring of a licensed contractor. Instances occur regularly in which custodians or other building maintenance personnel are required to remove ceiling tiles to address lighting issues or access plumbing or wiring above the tiles. Since ceiling tiles in some of the schools contain asbestos, removing those ceiling tiles will require a licensed contractor. The asbestos is fully encapsulated as part of the tile in their current condition and does not pose a health threat. The Town seeks to avoid significant costs going forward by requesting \$360,000 from free cash to contract with a vendor to remove and properly dispose of all the existing ceiling tiles at the West Intermediate School. These tiles will be replaced with new non-asbestos tiles. A similar project is planned for the Woburn Street School for fiscal year 2022.

In order to provide access to individuals with mobility limitations at the West Intermediate School a Limited Use Limited Application (LULA) elevator was installed in 2009. This unit has been discontinued and replacement parts are unavailable. The LULA, which provides individuals with access to the second floor, is unreliable. In order to continue to provide access to the second floor an appropriation of \$79,000 is requested to install either a chair climber unit or unit similar to the existing LULA.

A retrofit is planned for the Fire Department's existing 2008 Ford F350 diesel truck which is in good condition. This vehicle is relied upon to respond to issues like brush and mulch fires in locations inaccessible by other fire apparatus. The retrofit will include installing a flatbed and skid pump and upgrading the suspension for a cost of \$32,250. A 1996 Chevrolet 3500 pickup truck is scheduled for replacement with a Ford F250 pickup truck for \$52,700. This vehicle serves a valuable support role and can be called upon to respond to any incident requiring additional equipment or personnel on scene that cannot be transported by the other responding apparatus. It also responds to ice and water rescues. A request is made for \$39,000 to purchase additional radios for the department. The existing radios in the inventory are no longer manufactured which means service and parts will be difficult to obtain. This in combination with additional shift "manning," necessitates the purchase of radios. The department is seeking \$32,000 for the purchase of a power loader for the ambulances. This unit takes all the weight of the patient and stretcher as the patient is being moved into or out of the ambulance, greatly reducing the risk of injury to the fire fighter/EMTs and the patient.

Capital improvements for fiscal year 2021 total \$8,114,950 and break down as follows:

Funding Source	Expenditure
Chapter 90	\$ 770,000
Tax Levy	\$ 2,761,950
Free Cash	\$ 2,865,000
Water/MTBE	\$ 750,000
Water	\$ 928,000
Recreation Revolving Fund	\$ 40,000

In a slight change from prior practice the funding request for replacement of police vehicles is reduced to \$190,000. Two sedans will be directed for use by the detective bureau. Two vehicles will replace existing front line vehicles. An existing 2016 Chevrolet Tahoe will be modified to replace the Police Chief's existing 2012 Ford Expedition.

Since 2015 the Public Works Department has requested funds for repaving of town and school parking lots at various locations. In the upcoming fiscal year \$210,000 is requested to complete the second and final phase of repaving the Woburn Street School parking lot. A request in the amount of \$280,000 is made to replace a 2008 mechanical sweeper in poor condition with a vacuum sweeper. Funds are requested to replace a heavy duty dump truck with plow and sander and a one ton dump truck with utility body and plow for \$155,000 and \$85,000 respectively. A three quarter ton pickup truck with plow is proposed to replace a 2007 Ford F250 for a cost of \$43,000

The department plans to continue efforts to extend sidewalks from Glen Road along Lawrence Street to Shady Lane Drive ultimately connecting with Middlesex Avenue/Route 62. Phase 4 of this multi-phase project seeks \$50,000 to continue the construction along Shady Lane. The final phase of this project should be completed in fiscal year 2022. An existing culvert which passes under the roadway in the area of 290 Middlesex Avenue requires

repair. A concrete "sleeve" is planned for installation within the existing culvert at a cost of \$80,000. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a mechanism to control the quality and quantity of stormwater discharge. Communities must obtain a National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit for operation of the town's stormwater collection system. Funding in the amount of \$50,000 is requested for laboratory costs associated with testing, maintenance of 73 retention basins and assistance with cleaning the 7800 catch basins throughout Town. Funding to remain in compliance with the NPDES permit will be required on an annual basis and will increase in cost going forward.

The Shawsheen tennis courts and basketball courts are used by children participating in the summer Town sponsored recreation program, by students attending the school and by families in the neighborhood outside of school hours. The courts are experiencing extensive cracking. Crack sealing has been performed in the past as a temporary measure to extend the life of the courts. At this point plans are in place for full reconstruction of the courts. In fiscal year 2021 \$40,000 is slated to be drawn from the recreation revolving account for engineering design services. In fiscal year 2022 the sum of \$380,000 will be requested for the actual reconstruction.

Continuation of the phased development of areas within the Wildwood Cemetery is proposed again in this budget. The amount of \$40,000 is requested to lay out new graves, pre-install monument boundaries and potentially include walkways in section P and O of the cemetery. According to current projections, within approximately 15 years the remaining space for graves will be claimed. The Town is seeking to expand the existing cemetery to an area adjoining the cemetery. Efforts continue to establish a dialogue with the abutting property owner to purchase the property. Funds in the amount of \$450,000 are proposed to be made available from free cash for this purpose.

The complete listing of capital projects can be found on pages 73 through 75 of the budget book.

Develop policies, plans and tools to enhance our financial capabilities, reduce risk and improve efficiency and operations.

The establishment of the Finance Director/Town Accountant position to provide oversight of the Treasurer/Collector, Assessor and Accounting departments is already translating into positive results. While Bryan Perry, Finance Director/Town Accountant has been in his position for just over six months he has become *the* point person for the implementation of the MUNIS financial software system. While several other individuals in the town and school finance departments have key roles to play Mr. Perry has taken the lead in guiding this process.

With the demands for replacement of multiple town and school buildings, ongoing significant investment in some of the existing buildings, possible purchase of property, and significant costs associated with the replacement of equipment within the next five years, the pressure on use of reserve funds will only increase. Over the coming year, discussions with members of the financial team will occur about establishing guidelines as to the types of circumstance for which free cash and capital stabilization funds should be used. Borrowing will need to be one of the tools used to pay for these significant capital costs. Developing a plan to stagger the borrowing in such a way so as to mitigate the impact of debt service on the operating budget will be part of this effort. The Town's existing financial policies will be revisited to determine if adjustments should be made to improve the ability to achieve the intended results.

This year the budget recommends that additional funds be directed to pre-payment of the Town's unfunded pension liability. The last several years have seen the earmarking of funds to establish a Retirement Stabilization Fund and to making advance payments towards the retirement liability. This year no additional funds are recommended for the Retirement Stabilization Fund. Instead, the \$500,000 that was directed to that fund for fiscal year 2020 is proposed to be directed to early payment. For fiscal year 2021 \$1.5 million is planned for early payment of the Town's unfunded liability. The long term plan is to continue this pre-payment approach with the expectation that

when the unfunded liability can itself be “retired” the funds that were going to the pre-payment will be directed to increasing the funding of the Town’s OPEB liability.

In the meantime, this budget proposes that \$1.0 million be directed to the Town’s Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) trust fund. Once again the Town’s contribution would exceed the obligation established in its formal OPEB policy which is to direct funds at least in the amount of the revenue received from the meals tax toward its OPEB account. The Town continues to receive approximately \$400,000 per year in meals tax revenue.

PERSONNEL

Additional staffing is recommended for fiscal year 2021. In the budget proposal submitted in fiscal year 2020 four (4) new police officers were recommended. The principle reasons for the request were not driven by overtime concerns, but rather a need to respond to the increased service demands on the department. In the end funds were redirected from additional police personnel to fire personnel. The calls for service and challenges that faced the department last year have not abated. Unfortunately, due to a combination of significant turnover, the lengthy period to onboard new hires and long term absence from work and non-work related injuries, police overtime is expected to be well in excess of the \$625,000 budgeted for fiscal year 2020. This budget proposes a phased approach that would add one sergeant and one patrol officer this year and one sergeant and one patrol officer for fiscal year 2022. The additional cost for police base salaries in fiscal year 2021 will be \$131,654.

The Town has been fortunate to have the services of a Recovery Coach for sixteen hours per week funded via a grant. This person works with the Wellness and Recovery Coordinator to address substance abuse and social/emotional challenges experienced by individuals and families throughout the community. The grant will cease in August of 2020. Wilmington has clearly benefited from the services of this position in collaboration with the Wellness and Recovery Coordinator. This budget includes the continuation of the position for sixteen hours per week at a cost of \$17,472.

The amount of \$43,056 is requested to add one position to Public Safety Central Dispatch. The complement of dispatch positions has not been increased since fiscal year 2003 when the number was increased from 10 to 12 dispatchers. The increase in call volume indicates that funding one additional dispatch position is advisable. Call volume is particularly high during the 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. shifts. Overtime is on the rise due to the high level of turnover and the time required to recruit and train new hires. In fact, the Town is currently concluding the hiring process to fill three (3) vacancies from a staff of 12 employees. While the Dispatch Supervisor has historically worked regular shifts, the administrative demands of maintaining compliance with the Massachusetts State 911 Department reporting and regulations and ensuring arrangements are made for staff to maintain certifications and obtain continuing education has reduced the amount of time that the supervisor can dedicate to being at the dispatch console.

The position of Human Resources Generalist is requested for the Town Manager’s Office and is budgeted for \$60,000. This position is needed to address the burgeoning demands associated with the management of personnel. These responsibilities include ongoing reporting requirements associated with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), management of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), onboarding of new hires and ensuring that accurate information about health insurance contributions is reported to the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System and the Middlesex County Retirement System. The number of retirements has increased over the past year and is expected to remain at higher levels for the foreseeable future. Many communities similar in size to Wilmington have a separate human resources department with an HR director and staff. Currently the Assistant Town Manager, the Payroll & Benefits Coordinator and the Procurement and Human Resources Coordinator must perform these functions amongst their other responsibilities.

The Elder Services Coordinator Assistant position in the Elderly Services Department, which is currently a thirty (30) hour per week position will be expanded to thirty-five (35) hours per week. This position has been funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs. Going forward the Town will fund half of the salary in the amount of \$17,904.

CONCLUSION

I wish to acknowledge current and prior members of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee for endorsing the approach that has been taken towards the preparation of the annual financial plans over the past many years which have fostered healthy financial reserves. Most seasoned personal financial planners emphasize the importance of individuals maintaining strong financial reserves that can sustain them during periods of job loss, major illness or other unanticipated major expense, in addition to setting funds aside for retirement, a child's college tuition or significant planned expenses such as the addition to a home.

The same theme holds true for municipalities. Reserves should be established to sustain operations during unanticipated changes in the economy, major unanticipated expenses to repair a building or reconstruct a heavily traveled roadway. As with individuals, cities and towns must set money aside to address future obligations. For Wilmington, some of those future obligations are addressing the Town's school and general government buildings. Just as the community made the commitment to invest in a middle school and public safety building twenty years ago and more recently invest in the high school, the community must once again come together in support of the next round of replacement or expansion to public buildings.

Many may disagree with the need for a Facilities Master Plan, the approach taken in developing the plan or even the specific recommendations for sequencing of projects and reconfiguration of elementary school grades, but the underlying point should not be in dispute. Wilmington has multiple aging facilities with a variety of shortcomings that over time will only become more pronounced and more expensive to address.

The time is now to begin the next phase of investing in the community's public buildings. Developing a coherent plan that addresses the approach to deal with specific facilities, the location for new facilities and the sequencing of these facilities that garners consensus amongst elected officials and residents is the first step. These actions combined with the phased and judicious use of reserves coupled with financial assistance from the state and borrowing will provide a way forward. Additionally, providing a greater measure of certainty with respect to the intentions for Town facilities will enable officials to make decisions about existing buildings that merit significant investments in roof or window replacements, for example. Buildings expected to remain for the foreseeable future may warrant that major expenditure. However, buildings slated for replacement within five (5) years may not warrant that same expenditure.

The facilities discussions will take place within the context of deliberations about other major expenditures to replace and fortify the communications infrastructure for public safety and other departments, constructing a fire substation, upgrading roadways, developing procedures for the acceptance of unaccepted roadways; expanding the cemetery; expanding the sidewalk network and determining the best approach for providing reasonably priced ice time that is predictable and sufficient to meet the needs of the high school and youth hockey teams.

In closing I extend a sincere "thank you" to all the individuals who come to work for the Town of Wilmington every day with a commitment to serve and to the volunteers who serve on boards and committees with no expectation of remuneration. While some may be applauded for the roles they play and the responsibilities thrust upon them, many are behind the scenes playing their unique role to ensure that the services expected are the services provided and whenever possible service expectations are exceeded. Your dedication to the community does not go unnoticed.

The conclusion of this budget presentation now begins the process of debate and deliberation over the merits of the expenditure plans presented in the operating budget and supplemented with the capital budget. This operating budget is an honest and deliberate effort to recommend the funding of goods and services that will meet the expectations of the residents we serve. There will inevitably and legitimately be differences of opinion of approaches and priorities. In the words of Abraham Lincoln: "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow, by evading it today." In the end we must act based upon our best judgments. I look forward to engaging in discussions with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.

Meetings with the Finance Committee begin tomorrow evening and will continue on Tuesday and Thursday evenings through February before concluding in early March. I trust that after reasoned discussions and careful consideration, we will be prepared to present a responsible operating budget for residents to consider at the Annual Town Meeting on May 2, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted

Jeffrey M. Hull
Town Manager