

MINUTES OF
TOWN OF SEEKONK FINANCE COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
April 15, 2025
Select Board Room, Seekonk Town Hall, 100 Peck St

PRESENT:
Normand Duquette, Chairperson
Michael Brady, Vice Chairperson
Phillip Yan, Clerk
Joanna L'Heureux
Christopher Rizzo
Matthew Salisbury

Director of Finance: Jennifer Argo
Town Administrator: Shawn Cadime

Mr. Duquette called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

Overall review of FY26 budget w/ Town Administrator

- Mr. Cadime presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Town's FY26 Proposed Budget. Questions & discussions were made during the presentation:
 - o Balancing Growth & Sustainability in Challenging Times
 - o Growing Concerns
 - Limited Ch. 70 Funding Growth
 - Sustainability of School Dept Budget in Question
 - Tri-County School Building Project & Debt Impact
 - o FY 2026 – Initial Budget GAP
 - Tri-County School Building Debt: \$635k
 - Judgements (Asphalt Settlement): \$300k
 - Long-Term Debt: \$579k (South End Fire & DPW projects)
 - Interest Debt: \$279k (Firefly Golf Course)
 - Liability Insurance Increase: \$90k
 - Reduced Revenue: \$600k
 - o Stabilizations Accounts – minimum balances per the Town's financial policy reached
 - o Budget Assumptions:
 - New Growth - \$500,000
 - 2.5% Tax Levy increase
 - Conservative on local receipts
 - Local Aid based on Governor's budget
 - Expenditures & Funding Sources
 - o Budget Summary:
 - Balanced budget - \$75,235,289 (3.3% increase from FY25)
 - General Fund - \$73,285,033
 - o General Government - \$20,197,219
 - o Education - \$35,892,660
 - o Fixed Costs & Debt Service - \$17,195,154
 - Sanitation Enterprise Fund - \$1,950,256 (4.0% increase from FY24)
 - o Budgeted Resources:
 - State Aid - \$9,819,238
 - General Unrestricted Local Aid - \$1,688,317 (\$63k increase)
 - Chapter 70 - \$8,130,921 (\$210k increase)
 - Tax Levy - \$56,013,018
 - Local Receipts - \$4,344,850

- Motor Vehicle - \$2,950,000
- Other Sources - \$1,302,749
 - Ambulance Receipts - \$790,368
 - Overlay Surplus - \$450,000
 - Other Revenue - \$62,381
- Revenue Type – 5 Year Trend Graph
- General Budget Overview
 - Key Highlights:
 - Salary increases based on contractual obligations
 - No new positions added
 - Office supplies consolidated into a single cost center
 - \$1.3m reduction
 - Department-Wide cuts
 - Funding by Group – FY26 vs FY25
- Departmental Budgets:
 - General Government - \$3,456,428 (2% increase)
 - General Government Legal - \$155,000 (6% decrease)
 - Public Safety - \$12,328,786 (1% decrease)
 - Education - \$35,892,660 (4% increase)
 - Highway & Streets - \$2,007,324 (0.2% increase)
 - Other Environmental - \$180,142 (26% increase)
 - Human Services - \$683,430 (2% decrease)
 - Culture & Recreation - \$1,338,467 (1% increase)
 - Debt & Interest - \$3,016,702 (17% increase)
 - Other Fixed Costs - \$14,178,452 (4% increase)
 - Sanitation Enterprise Fund - \$1,950,256 4% increase)
- % of Departmental Budgets Pie Chart
 - Education – \$35,892,660 - 49%
 - General Government – \$20,197,219 - 28%
 - Employee Benefits/Fixed Costs - \$14,178,452 – 19%
 - Debt Services - \$3,016,702 – 4%
- General Government Highlights:
 - Legal Services - \$155,000 – 6% decrease
 - Elections – 19% decrease
 - decrease number of elections
 - Registrars – 4.4% increase
 - increase in stipend
 - Town Treasurer – 5% decrease
 - retirement – savings in salary & longevity
 - savings in office supplies & advertising
 - Town Clerk – 5.7% increase
 - retirement – buyout
 - savings in office supplies & instate travel
 - MIS – 4% increase
 - increase in service and maintenance agreements
 - Town Hall – 39% increase
 - all Town Hall cellphones moved to single cost center
 - all Town Hall office supplies moved to single cost center
 - Town Meeting – 13% decrease
 - reduction in consulting for electronic voting system
- Public Safety Highlights:
 - Police Dept – .4% decrease

- Police Tech stipend removed
 - Community Engagement & Accreditation reduced
 - Retirement Buyback removed
 - Overtime level-funded
 - Police training decreased
 - Pre-employment, medical expenses, service books eliminated
 - Flock Cameras - \$60k
- Fire Dept – 1.6% decrease
 - No new hires
 - Salary budgeting adjusted
 - Overtime reduced
 - Reimbursements reduced to anticipated certification completion
- Communications – 2% decrease
- DPW & Other Environmental Highlights:
 - Highway & Streets – 0.2% increase
 - Conservation – 26% increase
 - Salaries 100% covered in operational budget
 - reduction in equipment, consulting services, special events, and property maintenance
- Culture & Recreation Highlights:
 - Veterans Services – 15% decrease
 - Reduction in expenses based on actuals and number of veterans serviced
 - Library Services – 1.6% increase
 - mandatory required spending to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)
- Debt & Fixed Costs Highlights:
 - Other Fixed Costs – 3.8% increase
 - increase in Pension assessment
 - increase in Liability Insurance
 - increase in Health Insurance
 - increase in payroll taxes
 - Debt & Interest –17% increase
 - Principal paydown for South End Fire Station & DPW building projects
 - Interest payment for Firefly Golf Course
- Education Highlights:
 - Seekonk Schools – 2.5% increase
 - Net School Spending Requirement is \$28,498,529
 - School Department budget is \$33,748,864 - 18% above NSS
 - Direct & Indirect Costs - \$7.85m
 - School Committee voted on a budget with a 2.66% increase
 - Tri-County School Assessment – 44% increase
 - 84 students enrolled
 - Seekonk represents 8.8% of total enrollment
 - \$1.4m required contribution
 - \$635k debt assessment
 - Bristol County Agricultural Assessment –12% decrease
 - 11 vs 13 students enrolled
- Sanitation Highlights:
 - Sanitation – 4% increase
 - Increases due to Year 2 of a 5-year contract

Recommendations on FY26 Proposed Budget

- Section A General Government, Lines 1-12; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section A General Government, Lines 13-27; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section A General Government, Lines 28-38; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total General Government; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section B General Government – Legal, Line 39; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total General Government - Legal; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section C Public Safety, Lines 40-55; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Public Safety; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section D Education, Lines 56-60; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Education; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section E Highways & Streets, Lines 61-70; recommend approval Mr. Yan, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Highways & Streets; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section F Other Environmental, Lines 71-72; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Other Environmental; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section G Human Services, Lines 73-81; recommend Mr. Yan, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Human Services; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section H Culture & Recreation, Lines 82-85; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Culture & Recreation; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section I Debt & Interest, Lines 86-112; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Debt & Interest; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section J Other Fixed Cost, Lines 113-118; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Other Fixed Cost; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Section K Sanitation Enterprise Fund, Lines 119-123; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Total Sanitation Enterprise; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)

Recommendations on May 12th Town Meeting Warrant

- Article 1 – Town Reports; no recommendation Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Yan (4-0-2, Brady & Salisbury absent)
- Article 2 – FY26 Budget; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 3 – Salary of Elected Officials; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Ms. L'Heureux (4-1-1, Rizzo abstain, Salisbury absent)
- Article 4 – Municipal Capital Fund Appropriation
 - o #1 – Year 2 of 3-year lease of bucket truck; recommend approval Mr. Yan, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
 - o #2 – Purchase & install traffic light camera at Arcade Ave and Ledge Rd; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Brady (4-1-1, Duquette oppose, Salisbury absent)
 - o #3 – Purchase and replace (4) exterior cameras at Public Safety Complex; recommend approval Mr. Yan, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)

- #4 – Purchase a VIAVI CX300 service monitor to service public safety radios; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- #5 – Purchase a mini excavator for DPW; recommendation on Town Meeting Floor Mr. Brady, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- #6 – Purchase and replace Mobile Data Terminals for police cruisers; recommend approval Mr. Yan, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- #7 – Purchase and install (5) Code Blue AED call boxes; recommendation on Town Meeting Floor Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- #8 – Replace the Backup & Disaster Recovery Server at Town Hall; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 5 – FY26 CPA Appropriation; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 6 – CPA Appropriation for Medeiros Farm Committee; recommendation on Town Meeting Floor Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 7 – Surplus property; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 8 – Free cash appropriation to Snow & Ice; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 9 – Year 2 of a 4-year lease from Ambulance Receipts; recommend approval Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 10 – PEG Cable Access appropriation to Seekonk Cable Access; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 11 – PEG Cable Access appropriation to Seekonk Public Schools; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 12 – Veterans Exemption COLA adjustment; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 13 – ‘HERO’ Act; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 14 – LED lighting upgrades at the Seekonk Public Safety Building; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 15 – Renovation of the Seekonk Public Library; recommendation on Town Meeting Floor Mr. Brady, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 16 – Discontinuance of Old Fall River Ave; no recommendation Mr. Brady, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 17 – Re-zoning 1484 Newman Ave; no recommendation Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 18 – Repairs to Hurley Middle School heating system; recommend approval Mr. Brady, second Ms. L'Heureux (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 19 – Asbestos floor tiles at Seekonk High School; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 20 – Updating door locks @ Seekonk High School and Martin School; recommend approval Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)
- Article 21 – South End Fire Station constructions; recommendation on Town Meeting Floor Mr. Rizzo, second Mr. Brady (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)

Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes of March 25, 2025.

Motion to approve minutes as amended Ms. L'Heureux, second Mr. Rizzo (5-0-1, Salisbury absent)

Future Meetings

Monday, May 12, 2025 Seekonk High School @ 6:00.

Motion to adjourn Mr. Brady, second Mr. Yan (5-0-1, Salisbury absent) at 9:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip Yan, Clerk

Items Distributed at the Finance Committee Meeting

- Mr. Cadime's Power Point presentation
- FY26 Budget summary
- May 12, 2025 Spring Town Meeting Warrant
- Minutes of the March 25, 2025 meeting