



WALPOLE
MASSACHUSETTS

Town Administrator's

2024 Annual Budget Message

James A. Johnson – Town Administrator
January 23, 2024



Introduction

To the Honorable Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee and residents of Walpole, it is my pleasure to submit the Town Administrator's Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2025. The budget process began in October of last year, with staff developing their proposed budget requests. Town departments were advised to prepare level-service budgets and those requests were reviewed in mid-November in order to reach the recommended budget presented.

Preparing a budget is always a challenging endeavor as local, state and national revenues are unknown and the volatility of many expenditures requires certain assumptions to be made. The recommended budget supports level-services including funding for maintenance of municipal facilities in addition to funding for collective bargaining contracts. The priority has been to maintain existing services, address infrastructure and facility needs and evaluate any requests for additional resources based on the availability of funds. There still exists needs for additional staff in multiple departments but currently revenues do not permit the addition of hours or personnel in the general fund supported departments.

The information outlined in this document reflects strong collaboration with elected and appointed officials. Revenue projections are clouded by the possibility of a recession, shortfalls in state revenue and expense projections are meaningfully impacted by stubbornly high inflation. While we all hope a recession can be avoided, warnings signs loom. As such, during the development of the FY 25 budget I was mindful of the fact that, even a moderate hit to the economy over the next year could tip it into recession.

As we head into FY 2025, the Town's ability to fund expanding demand for programs, provide more services, maintain quality of life, and maintain facilities and infrastructure will be stretched however I am confident Walpole will be able to meet these demands head on as we always have. In summary, the FY 2025 budget is balanced. The Town's financial management continues to be strong and the outlook for Fiscal Year 2025 will continue to be steady and conservative.



Ongoing Growth in Walpole

Although the Town of Walpole has enjoyed considerable economic growth since the recovery of the pandemic beginning four years ago, I anticipate a rebalancing of the economy and construction in Walpole over the next few years. Between FY 2019 and FY 2022, about 530 housing units were added between Pennington Crossing, Liberty Village, and 95 West. In the years ahead, we can anticipate an additional 410 new units between Summer Street and Gilmores. These two projects will not make significant construction progress between now and the end of FY2024, however I do expect our new growth to start increasing again in FY 2026 or FY 2027.

Municipal Projects

Construction of the new middle school located at the current Bird Middle School site continues. Last year I reported that the final bids and contract for the project came in under budget. I am pleased to report that this trend continues, with the project remaining on schedule and under budget. As of the writing of this budget message, the structure itself is up and construction all around the site continues. The building remains on track to be completed in time for the school year beginning this Fall.



Middle School Construction layout relative to the existing Bird Middle School



Town and school officials continue to work toward addressing the facility needs of Walpole High School, which were identified back in 2018 in a Statement of Interest that was submitted to the MSBA. Officials continue to work with the same design team that developed the Middle School project. The School Committee voted this past year to endorse the schematic design for an addition/renovation project at the High School and the Select Board voted to approve up to \$2,000,000 in ARPA funds to complete the project design. It is expected that a project funding request will be presented to the Fall 2024 Town Meeting for consideration.

Private Developments

Private Development Projects

Commercial and Residential projects in Walpole continue. The Building Department and Community Development Department remain busy assisting with development in Town. The Building Department issued 1,544 building permits in 2023. The following list is a breakdown of some of the major commercial and residential private properties that are taking place in Town:

PENNINGTON CROSSING (FMR WALPOLE WOODWORKERS)

86 1 & 2 bedroom AQV condos
Buildings 1, 2 & 3 are 100%
complete and occupied

Construction 100% done and fully
occupied

AGE QUALIFIED VILLAGE (55+) AT RENMAR AVENUE/WEST STREET

105 proposed units approved by the
Planning Board; Developer applied to
the Planning Board for modification to
their special permit and site plan
approval. Modification approved
Construction expected to start Spring
of 2024.

NORTH WOODS ESTATES IV SUBDIVISION

Subdivision proposes 12 homes.
Currently before Planning Board
for review and approval

TESLA 295 UNION STREET

Developer rehabilitated existing
commercial site. All necessary
permits approved. Building almost
completed and site work 90%
complete.

BURNS AVE COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

48 Burns Ave 40B received its
comprehensive permit for 20 single
family units. Construction has yet to
start.

SUMMER ST. COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

268 Unit 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom
40B project approved by the ZBA
in 2021. Access road over
wetlands done and permits
applied for and will start build
April 2024



<p><u>GILMORES 1015 EAST ST.</u> <u>140+ UNIT LOCAL INIT. PROGRAM</u></p> <p>Proposal has been approved by the Select Board and joint application has been approved with EOHLC. The case is with the ZBA where it is currently in the public hearing process.</p>	<p><u>MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT</u> <u>1363 - 1391 MAIN ST.</u></p> <p>Mixed use project which includes 18 housing units and ground floor commercial space. Foundation and 1st floor steel and concrete done. Started framing exterior walls and 2nd,3rd floors</p>	<p><u>BANK OF AMERICA LOCATION</u> <u>979 MAIN ST.</u></p> <p>8 residential units and ground floor retail/restaurant has been approved. Construction underway.</p>
<p><u>DUPEE ST.</u> <u>COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT</u></p> <p>8-unit 40B development, single-family dwellings, on a 53,000 square foot parcel. Project was originally denied by the ZBA and the decision is being appealed. A decision from Housing Appeals Committee is pending.</p>	<p><u>931 MAIN STREET</u></p> <p>Application is for a mixed-use project within the downtown that consists of nine (9) one-bedroom units and two (2) units of commercial space. Foundation poured and starting framing mid-January</p>	<p><u>925 MAIN ST.</u></p> <p>A 3-unit commercial building to include an Ice cream store, bagel shop, and hair salon. Hair salon is open and work is still ongoing for the other two units</p>
<p><u>PINNACLE POINT</u> <u>COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT</u></p> <p>Current project proposals calls for 28 ownership townhouse style units. ZBA declared safe harbor at opening of public hearing which was appealed by the Applicant to the state. The Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) remanded the case back to the Zoning Board.</p>	<p><u>NEPONSET VILLAGE</u> <u>COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT</u></p> <p>Current project proposal calls for 24 ownership townhouse style units. ZBA declared safe harbor at opening of public hearing which was appealed by the Applicant to DHCD. The Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) remanded the case back to the Zoning Board. ZBA currently holding public hearings.</p>	<p><u>MUFFIN HOUSE</u></p> <p>The Muffin House Restaurant will be opening a location at 907 Main Street. The restaurant is expected to open in February of 2024.</p>
<p><u>173 HIGH PLAIN STREET</u></p> <p>3 story building mixed use residential building with commercial on the 1st floor and a total of eight (8) two-bedroom apartments on 2nd/3rd floors. Foundation done and framing started</p>	<p><u>WALPOLE MALL</u></p> <p>Multiple new businesses have opened over the last year including, Duck Donuts , chiropractors office and hair salon with 27 stations opening in February. Chick-fil-a to break ground in 2024.</p>	<p><u>INTERSECTION AT</u> <u>WEST ST. & SPRING ST.</u></p> <p>22 unit Live/Work mixed use residential development. Site Plan Review with Planning Board is complete. Rights and site sold to a new developer.</p>



Private Developments (cont.)

<u>EAST WALPOLE CLOCKTOWER</u> 6 townhouse units with commercial space on first floor. Applications approved by the Land Use Boards	<u>LINCOLN ROAD SUBDIVISION</u> "Lincoln Estates" 24 lot subdivision; project denied by the Planning Board; Land court has remanded this project back to the Planning Board. Deliberations expected to restart Winter 2024.	<u>LEAGUE SCHOOL</u> School is proposing to expand the campus. Currently before the Planning Board.
<u>DARWIN COMMONS COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT</u> Current project proposal calls for 28 ownership townhouse style units. ZBA declared safe harbor at opening of new public hearing in 2022 which was appealed by the Applicant to the state. Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) remanded the case back to the Zoning Board where it is currently in the public hearing process.	<u>VETERINARY NEUROLOGY AND PAIN MANAGEMENT CENTER OF NEW ENGLAND</u> Foundations have been poured for the approved 9,500 S.F. addition to Veterinary Neurology Center at 2250 Boston-Providence Highway.	<u>ALEXANDRIA SUBDIVISION</u> Approved 6 lots subdivision. 3 homes occupied and last 3 will be complete by the spring of 2024
<u>TESSIE'S BAR & KITCHEN</u> Tessie's at 1006 Main Street has expanded to take over the vacant storefront next to them at 1010 Main Street. This new dining space is expected to become available by the end of January 2024.	<u>PEACH STREET SUBDIVISION</u> Subdivision approved for 5 lots homes. 2 homes near completion.	<u>120 SOUTH ST.</u> A new warehouse is being proposed at this location. They are currently before the Planning Board for Site Plan Review.

Financial Foundation

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget that I present to you this day totals \$119,906,018. This budget does not include override funding, use of reserves or one-time revenues in the balancing process. The budget has been balanced using all available revenues known to us at this time. The FY 2025 budget continues the commitment to the services upon which the residents of the Town have come to depend while maintaining a realistic and conservative revenue outlook. In the same way we cautioned about revenues and expenses in last year's budget, we are closely monitoring economic trends, state revenue collections, and continuing with our cautious approach to both revenue and expense projections. Just as central banks have a balancing act between subduing inflation and tipping the global economy into recession, so too, the Town faces a delicate balance of



managing the increasing demands of a growing community while remaining within the levy limit.

The Select Board, Finance Committee and School Committee met together multiple times prior to finalizing this budget message in order to provide a framework for building the budget. Town departments were advised to prepare level service budgets and those requests were reviewed in order to reach the recommended budget presented. The priority has been to maintain existing services, address infrastructure and facility needs and to evaluate any requests for additional resources based on the availability of funds.

The budget is lengthy and prepared well in advance of the upcoming fiscal year, therefore, estimates can change during the review process and amendments may be necessary. The challenge for the Town continues to be balancing infrastructure and program needs with ever increasing material, personnel and service costs while still maintaining the high level of service expected by citizens. The FY 25 recommended budget continues to allocate resources in a fair and equitable manner to balance infrastructure needs and provide necessary services but at the cost of some infrastructure and equipment needs and identified personnel needs.

Revenue

The revenue to support the general fund budget is mostly composed of property taxes, local receipts, aid from the Commonwealth and indirect costs. The primary source of revenue for Walpole is the property tax levy. The total amount anticipated to be raised from the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2025 is \$95,346,626 which utilizes the full limits of Proposition 2 ½ and projects new growth at \$650,000. The higher than normal new growth that has occurred over the last several years however is declining due to major projects reaching completion. This decline was forecast but it has created some challenges over the next few years.

In addition to the funds derived from Proposition 2½, local receipts make up just about \$10,219,000 of the FY 25 budget. Predicting future revenue figures can be a difficult process, however given the historical data available the Finance Director and I have worked to provide the best forecast possible while being mindful of the information that has been coming out at the state level in regards to the revenue shortfall.

Another contributing factor on the revenue side of the budget is state aid. Governor Healey is expected to file her "House 2" General Appropriations Act proposal for Fiscal Year 2025 after this message is finalized. At this time, I am projecting state aid to be level funded at \$13,334,909.



Expenses

Each year the Finance team reviews each and every budget request that is submitted and requires department heads to justify each request. The Budget that is being presented for Fiscal Year 2025 includes moderate increases to some of the various departments in Town. The amount requested for appropriation for FY 25 totals \$119 million. Given some of the uncertainties coming up over the next year the FY 2025 recommended general fund budget, exclusive of the School Department, includes the following components:

- Recommended level services budget
 - ❖ No one-time revenues has been used as an offset for the operating budget
 - ❖ Allocates funding for estimated union/nonunion step increases and COLAs
 - ❖ Allocates \$275,000 toward Town's OPEB liability
 - ❖ Provides \$1,500,000 in funding towards the Capital Stabilization fund
 - ❖ Sustained allocations to maintenance and repairs as needed to Town facilities.
 - ❖ The budget adds funding for Animal Control support as Walpole was recently notified that the Town of Norwood will not be able to continue with our Inter-municipal agreement.

Areas on the expense side of the budget that I would like to call your attention to include:

Public Works:

Walpole's Department of Public Works continues to actively manage and perform critical community service operations such as road, sidewalk, athletic field, and common grounds maintenance and snow and ice control. Along with continuing to managing bridge and dam inspections the department is heavily involved in the Complete Streets and other community improvement programs such as way finding and CBD connectivity. Additionally, water, sewer, and storm water management infrastructure of the town are maintained and operated at a very high level by the department. The Fiscal Year 2025 budget does not propose any major budgetary changes to the departments that make up the Walpole Public Works. Director Mattson and his skilled team of Superintendents, Department Heads and staff continue to be innovative in the approach they take when it comes to taking on projects in Walpole. Many projects that would typically be contracted out are now performed in house by the staff. Some of these include the design and construction of the basketball and pickle ball courts at the SM Lorusso Athletic Complex, the reconstruction of Eastland Circle, the planting of trees in passive recreational common spaces and the remediation of drainage issues in several areas of the community.

**Public Safety:**

Walpole's Police and Fire personnel remain committed to providing the citizens, business owners, and visitors of Walpole safe and effective public safety in Walpole. Our Firefighters and Police officers continue to support our community by responding to emergency situations with integrity every day. The Select Board continues to be focused on providing each department with the staffing and resources to keep our community safe.

In 2023, a new command structure was implemented in the Walpole Fire Department. The Select Board voted appoint to Paul Barry as the 8th full time Fire Chief for the Town of Walpole. Chief Barry immediately got to work reorganizing the command structure of the Department. The new structure aimed to improve communication and coordination within the Town's fire service. New command positions were created as part of the revised structure, including an assistant chief and two deputy chiefs, allowing for better management of resources and response efforts.

The Fire Department continues to see an increase in calls for service year after year. With 4369 emergency responses, 2023 was the Fire Department's busiest year, up 2% over last year and a 51% increase since 2013. We anticipate a continuing rise in emergency responses in direct relation to the continued growth Walpole is steadily seeing. I am pleased to report that the Fiscal Year 2025 budget fully funds 48 firefighters.

The Walpole Police Department remains very busy. Over the last year, more than 21,562 incidents were reported and investigated by the department. A significant trend for the Police Department in 2023 includes over 700 incidents involving persons experiencing some form of mental health crisis. In addition to incidents, public safety dispatchers fielded 6,910 emergency 911 calls.

As the department continues to adapt to the needs of the community, Chief Kelleher and the Select Board remained focused on community policing, police officer training, social services, and supporting ongoing public safety measures in the community. Last year as part of this initiative, the department secured a mental health clinician to be embedded with patrol officers and respond to calls for service that involve individuals in crisis. This position will be funded through a grant from the Department of Public Health and the clinician will be dedicated solely to the Walpole Police Department and will work in a full-time capacity. The department is pleased to report that this program has been largely successful in its first year of existence with more services being offered to those who need them through extensive follow up by our clinician and constant collaboration with various social services agencies.



Chief Kelleher and Deputy Kilroy continue work collaboratively with the Walpole Police Officers union to ensure that all of the recent police reforms at the state level are implemented and adhered to. By the end of this calendar year, all of the current Walpole Police Officers will have been certified or recertified through the POST Commission as this has been a multi-year effort by the commission to certify every police officer in the state. Additionally, the Walpole Police Department continues to work hard to build strong relationships and to ensure that they adhere to their mission of being a partner with the community to solve problems and improve public safety in a manner that is fair, impartial, transparent, and consistent. I commend the Police Department for their efforts throughout the certification process. I have been very impressed with the welcoming manner in which the Walpole Police Department have embraced all of the new reforms.

The Walpole Police Department Budget is set to see a modest increase of just over \$249,657. With over 26,000 residents, and 48 current officers, the Walpole Police Department has approximately 1.8 officers per thousand inhabitants. The majority of area communities maintain a range of 1.4 to 2.8 officers per thousand residents.

I commend Chief Barry, Chief Kelleher and all of the Dispatchers, Police Officers and Firefighters in Walpole for their daily efforts and protection. Walpole is fortunate to have dedicated Public Safety personnel that continue to do an excellent job keeping Walpole safe.

Public Education:

This year the total public education line is recommended to be \$57,576,475 which represents an increase of 4% increase over the FY 24 appropriation.

Throughout the development of the FY 25 Budget one of my overarching goals has been to support the budgetary needs of the Walpole Public Schools. The recommended budget for the Walpole Public School Department stands at \$55,552,475 which is a 3.75% increase over Fiscal Year 2024. School and Town officials have a proven track record of working cooperatively and have always found ways to provide the necessary funding for the School District to meet their needs and provide an outstanding education to our students. This collaborative effort was particularly evident this year throughout the development of the budget when members of the Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee met multiple times to discuss the needs of the Walpole Public Schools going forward.

Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School officials have advised that their assessment for this upcoming fiscal year is set to increase by \$190,000 which represents



a 11% increase over the previous Fiscal Year. This increase is primarily attributed to a minor increase in enrollment and the recent passage of a vote to construct a new High School. I expect that Walpole's yearly assessment will more than double over the next few years.

Debt Service:

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 debt budget provides for the payment of principal and interest costs for long-and short-term bonds issued by the Town for General Fund purposes. Walpole currently has a AA+ rating. The Fiscal Year 2025 Debt budget is \$7,751,894, which is just about level funded with the previous Fiscal Year.

Our debt level continues to be modest and practical. We continue to work with Hilltop Securities, our financial advisor to ensure that the Town is capitalizing on the market when it comes to interest rates and borrowing. Through the foresight of the Select Board the Town has recently been able to realize approximately \$7,000,000 in savings for Walpole taxpayers when the Board acted shortly after the override vote to authorize a \$70 million in borrowing, enabling the Town to take advantage of favorable interest rates for the next 30 years for the Middle School project.

Assessment and Fringe Benefits:

The Assessment and Fringe Benefits portion of the budget which consists of the Other Post-Employment Benefits, Retirement Assessment, Net Metering, Unemployment and Insurance is budgeted at a 4% increase at this time.

The FY 25 health insurance is estimated rise by \$774,000. This increase is higher than normal. Specifically, early projections indicate increases in the range of 10% for all health insurance plans, resulting in projected increases in health insurance costs. More information will become available later on this Winter relevant to the range of potential increases.

With respect to health insurance, we have introduced a number of initiatives in recent years to help offset costs: we adopted a program that allowed retirees over the age of 65 who originally did not qualify for Medicare to now qualify. This took these retirees off our costly HMO plans and enrolled them on Medicare and our senior supplemental plan. We also introduced a couple of rate saver HMO plans and negotiated reductions in the percentage that the Town contributes toward employees' health insurance and more. These initiatives have resulted in a considerable amount of savings over the last few years. Another ongoing budgetary challenge is our financial obligation regarding Walpole's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability, associated primarily with health care



and other (non-pension) retiree benefits. Communities are required to identify the magnitude of their OPEB liability but, at this time, there is no funding obligation. However, failure to initiate a funding program would be viewed very unfavorably by our bond rating agency and put our coveted bond rating at risk. The budgeted OPEB contribution is \$275,000 in FY 25. This recommendation maintains our ongoing commitment to funding the Town's OPEB liability. Since 2014 the Town has increased the OPEB account from \$1,072,538 to \$11,473,226. The Town's recent actuarial study estimated Walpole's Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability at just over \$63.7 million. I commend the Select Board and the Finance Committee for their continued disciplined approach to funding OPEB each year.

Reserves

A community's reserves are the bellwether of a municipality's overall financial stability and adaptability, particularly in the face of adverse economic trends or unforeseen emergencies. Reserve funds are critical implements in the municipal budgeting toolbox. They allow the Town to set money aside from the general fund for specific purposes. Not only do healthy reserve fund contributions improve municipal bond ratings, they also allow the Town to maintain stability during economic downturns.

We continue to add to our financial reserves and maintain a solid AA+ bond rating for the Town. The resources in the Town's reserves include Free Cash, the Stabilization Funds, and the Town's unassigned fund balance.

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget maintains \$450,000 in the reserve fund. This account which, falls under the jurisdiction of both the Select Board and Finance Committee will allow Town officials to address unforeseen and extraordinary shortfalls if necessary.

Undesignated fund balance, informally known as "Free Cash," was certified at \$13,069,466. The Fall Town Meeting appropriated \$8,768,155 for a variety of items. The following list breaks down the identified uses of Free Cash:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • Fall Town Meeting Capital Appropriations | \$4,574,762 |
| • School Appropriations | \$462,141 |
| • Fall 2023 Stabilization Appropriation | \$1,300,000 |
| • Fall 2023 Capital Stabilization Appropriation | \$1,360,000 |
| • Fall 2023 OPEB Appropriation | \$1,071,252 |



\$4,301,311 of the certified Free Cash funds were not appropriated last Fall. The Finance Committee wisely made this recommendation in order to allow the Town to address any potential shortfall that may need to be addressed at the Spring 2024 Town Meeting.

The Stabilization Fund remains strong. Since 2014 the Town's Stabilization Fund has grown from \$1,827,245 to \$12,114,699. A best management practice is to have the Capital Stabilization fund reserves that are at least 10% of the budget. I expect that Walpole may be able to continue meeting or exceeding this suggested practice at some point over the next fiscal year.

At the Fall 2021 Town Meeting the Town reestablished a Capital Stabilization account which currently has a balance of \$5,415,961. The intent of the fund is to allocate monies for larger capital acquisitions or costs that cannot be absorbed in any one given fiscal year. This will help create stability over time with the intent of avoiding debt spikes.

Throughout my tenure as Town Administrator, I have been proud to work with the Select Board and the Finance Committee to add to the Town's reserves. These reserves provide much needed flexibility as we go out to borrow for some of the larger capital projects and if ever necessary that the day comes where the Town needs to access these reserves in order to bridge potential budget gaps. The identified reserves will continue to allow us to preserve Walpole's long-term financial stability.

Capital Investments/Infrastructure

The Capital Budget requests last Fall exceeded \$17,000,000 and Town Meeting voted to fund more than \$7,000,000 million in requests. I commend the Capital Budget Committee for their efforts overseeing the Capital Budget requests and the Town's long-term capital planning processes. Some of the major items that received funding included:

- \$2,161,762 for improvements to the Town's Capital Infrastructure, including funding for improvements to Town offices, chemical treatments to Walpole's ponds, improvements to school buildings and design and construction services for Walpole's pools.
- \$1,588,000 for Capital Equipment, including police cruisers, heavy duty dump trucks, new lawn mowers, and funds towards the School Department's 3-Year Technology Plan.
- \$2,008,049 for Street and Drainage Improvements, including \$865,000 from the state's Chapter 90 road improvement program.
- \$2,135,000 for investments to the Water and Sewer infrastructure.



Addressing Walpole's capital needs and funding the associated debt presents considerable challenges each year. Increased focus on Town infrastructure continues to be a priority for the Select Board. Work to compile and update a comprehensive list of all town-owned facilities, along with condition assessments, current maintenance needs, and a maintenance schedule is something that continues each year. We have been strategic over the last few years with funding sources for some capital requests and I expect that this will continue in FY 25 especially for High School renovation/addition project that is set to be presented to Town Meeting in the Fall.

Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds

The Water and Sewer Enterprise funds are self-supporting accounts. The Water & Sewer budgets next fiscal year will show a combined total just over \$12 million dollars. The Fiscal Year 2025 Water Enterprise Fund budget is recommended at \$6,220,600. The current Water Retained Earnings balance is \$1,597,161. The recommended Sewer Enterprise budget is \$6,132,440. The current Sewer Retained Earnings balance is \$1,438,012.

The Sewer and Water Commissioners continuously work hard each year to set water and sewer rates that provide a good balance to meeting the needs of the Sewer and Water Departments while also being mindful of not drastically increasing rates across the board for the rate payers.

Spring Town Meeting Warrant

At this time there are currently several Articles that are set to be considered. Some articles of note include:

- The Fiscal Year 2024 in year budget adjustment
- The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
- The Fiscal Year 2025 Sewer and Water Budgets
- An article to address any snow and ice deficit that may be encountered.
- An article that funds Walpole Media Corp in Fiscal Year 2025.
- An article that will allow solar panels on multiple Town owned parcels.
- Zoning Bylaw amendment with will allow for Inclusionary Housing for projects that creates 6 or more apartments or townhouses.

A detailed description of the proposed warrant articles will be available on the Town's website soon.



Conclusion

The FY 2025 General Fund Budget continues Walpole's proud tradition of being financially sound while providing funds for important programs and services. I want to thank the department heads and committee members who thoroughly consider their annual goals and the resources necessary and work toward continuous improvement.

Thanks are also extended to the Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee and the Capital Budget Committee who continue to spend their time and efforts reviewing the Town's recommended operating and capital budgets. I look forward to working with the everyone as we lead up to the Spring 2024 Town Meeting.