

FINANCIAL SECTION AND WARRANT
FOR
THE 2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
LINCOLN, MASSACHUSETTS



SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024
9:30 AM

DONALDSON AUDITORIUM

PLEASE read this document & bring it with you to the Meeting.



TOWN OF LINCOLN

MIDDLESEX COUNTY MASSACHUSETTS

Sarah Cannon Holden
Town Moderator

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To All Lincoln Registered Voters,

2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OVERVIEW. We meet next as a Town on Saturday, March 23rd in the DONALDSON AUDITORIUM at the Lincoln Schools. **Doors open at 8:30 AM.** Please arrive early so we will have a quorum and I can call the meeting to order at 9:30. This Warrant Booklet contains the important background materials for the Warrant Articles that will come before the Town for your consideration. Please **READ IT CAREFULLY.** We will proceed through the meeting as follows:

- After some preliminary business we will go right into the meeting.
- Article 3: Housing Choice Act Zoning Bylaw
- Article 4: Funding request for the Community Center
- Article 7: The Finance Committee will give its report ([see Table 1](#) on page 54) followed by capital and community preservation requests.
- Article 11: We have put a more than usual number of items on the CONSENT CALENDAR with the hope that those items may be taken up as a whole with one vote if none is held out. Any item may be held out and then considered when we come to it in its original spot in the warrant listings.
- Article 27 & 28: Citizen Petitions

PRE-MEETING INFORMATION. In the days leading up to Town Meeting all the Town Boards and Committees as well as proponents of Citizen Petitions will be given the opportunity to offer background information on the Warrant Articles they have sponsored. These presentations will be live and later posted on the Town web site. [2024 Annual Town Meeting | Lincoln, MA - Official Website \(lincolntown.org\)](#) We hope this process will answer voters' questions and cut down the time for presentations at the Town Meeting.

ADDITIONAL SPACE. The Reed Gym will be open and will have a moderator so comments and voting can occur in coordination with the auditorium.

GENERAL COMMENTS. All Lincoln registered voters are encouraged to attend this meeting, a unique New England experience of direct democracy. As everyone is aware, there have been many meetings and lots of discussions leading up to our Annual Town Meeting. It is your chance to participate in our local legislative process. Your voice and your vote are essential parts of that process. It is a time, also, to be in community with others. If this is your first Town Meeting, come to listen, to participate and to learn. We hope that you will find a way to volunteer for one of the Town Boards or Committees. The Town depends on volunteers.

Efficiency is not a hallmark of democracy but together we can do our best.

Voice Of The Electorate

Monday, March 25th – There are several **contested elections** this year. Please exercise your right to vote in the Reed Gym at the Lincoln Schools.

An Outline of Town Meeting Procedures

You will find below a description of some basic Town Meeting procedures which govern the presentation, consideration and voting on matters which come before Town Meeting.

To arrive early is to arrive on time; we will begin promptly at 9:30!

Warrant Articles and Motions

- The Warrant is the official notice of the actions and their sponsors to come before Town Meeting. The Motion made at Town Meeting must reflect the essence or be within the “scope” of the Article printed here.
 - Example: A warrant Article proposes the purchase of a police cruiser for \$50,000. It would not be within the scope of the Article for the Motion to be to purchase a police cruiser and a fire engine for \$150,000. The Moderator determines if a motion or an amendment to a motion meets the “scope” requirement.
- Other than the Articles on the Consent Calendar (discussed below), the Articles in the Warrant will be taken up in order.
 - If there are two or more Articles which deal with the same or similar issues, sponsors of the Articles will often ask to make some general comments about all the related Articles before presenting the individual Motions under each one.
- If the sponsor of an Article decides not to go forward with it, there will be a motion to “pass over” the Article. **This requires a majority vote.**
- At the Meeting, please pick up the “*salmon-colored sheet*” which lists the proposed Motions to be made under each of the Articles. When the Article is called for presentation, the sponsor will make the Motion “as printed on the “Salmon Colored Sheet.” If there are any changes or refinements to the printed Motion, these will be noted. Once the motion is seconded, the sponsor will speak.
- Before an Article is open for general discussion and debate from the floor, other Town Boards may wish to speak.
- **To Ask a Question or Make a Comment:** Please go to one of the standing microphones. When called upon please give your name before making your comment. Please keep your comments to no more than two minutes.
 - If you are not a resident, you need to request permission of the Moderator to speak.

Voting

- Most motions at Town Meeting require a **simple majority vote**.
- By statute or Town Bylaw, some motions require a **2/3 majority vote**, for example:
 - Motions to amend the Zoning Bylaws
 - Votes to approve bonds or other types of funding mechanisms
- Registered voters will receive a voting card when checking in for the meeting.
- Voting is done first by voice vote, aided by the voting card.
 - If the Moderator is uncertain of the outcome, she will call for a standing vote.
 - If the vote is still unclear, there will be a count take by tellers appointed by the Moderator.
 - The Moderator’s determination of the results is final, unless seven voters stand and challenge the determination, in which event a count will be made.

Amendments to the Motions – simple majority vote required

- Amendments to a Motion may be made if they fall within the scope of the Article, as discussed above.
 - If someone wishes to make an amendment, they should write it down on an amendment form that can be found on the tables in the center of the Auditorium. When ready, go to a microphone. It is not necessary to have a carefully worded amendment in advance; the Moderator and Town Counsel can help.
 - A proposed amendment must be seconded before it is open to discussion.
- After discussion, the Meeting first votes on the Amendment. If the Amendment is approved, the Meeting then discusses and votes on the Main Motion *as amended*. Amendments to an amendment can also be made following the same procedure.

Calling the Question – 2/3 majority vote required

- After a full airing of questions and concerns someone may rise to “Call the Question.”
- ***The speaker may not make a statement or ask a question before calling the question.***
- All debate stops and a vote will be taken on whether to cut off debate and vote on the Article.
- If passed, debate ends and a vote on the Main Motion is taken.

Procedures for Voting on the Budget – simple majority vote required

- The Budget (See Table 1, page 54), as printed in this booklet, is presented by the Finance Committee.
- Following the presentation, the Moderator will go through the Budget line by line and ask if anyone wishes to “hold out” any line item for further discussion or amendment.
- To hold a budget item out, raise your hand and identify the budget line item number of concern.
- The rest of the Budget (excluding the items held out) will be voted on without further discussion. The Meeting will then turn to discuss items held out and take separate votes. The Moderator will typically return to the person holding out each item to begin the discussion.

Consent Calendar – simple majority vote required

- Pursuant to the Town’s Bylaws, the Moderator may designate certain Articles to be placed on the Consent Calendar.
- These items are considered routine, non-controversial, and not expected to generate discussion or opposition. Only items requiring a simple majority may be on the Consent Calendar.
- The Motions to be made under each Article are listed on the *green* Consent Calendar which is included in this mailing.
- When the Meeting reaches the first of these Articles, the entire Consent Calendar will be considered. The Moderator will read the list of Articles to determine if anyone wants to hold one out. Any individual voter may do so by calling out the Article to be held out, in which event it will be taken up in the normal manner in its regular sequence on the Warrant.
- The remaining Motions will be adopted with a single vote. This procedure expedites the conduct of the business of the Meeting.

Participation.

Citizen engagement is vital in making Town Meeting an effective form of government. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or to express opinions or concerns!

REPORT
of the
FINANCE COMMITTEE
of the
TOWN OF LINCOLN
for the
FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

LINCOLN FINANCE COMMITTEE

Merrill Berkery

Paul Blanchfield, Vice Chair

Fuat Koro

Nancy Marshall

Andrew Payne, Chair

Rich Rosenbaum

Ellen Meyer Shorb

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1. Introduction

The Finance Committee is charged with advising and making recommendations to Town Meeting on the budget, capital projects and other areas of finance, as well as administering the Town's Reserve Fund. The committee seeks to develop an overall budget that is fiscally prudent, that reflects the Town's values, and that meets the needs of residents. It also seeks to obtain broad public understanding and support for the budget that it recommends at Town Meeting.

In this report, we describe the FY25 budget and its component parts, including supporting detail, and outline issues facing the Town that underlie our budget recommendations. The Finance Committee works closely with many boards and committees to build the recommended budget. Among many others, we thank Lincoln Town Administrator Tim Higgins, Finance Director & Town Accountant Colleen Wilkins, Lincoln Public Schools Administrator for Business and Finance Mary Ellen Normen, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Business Manager Kirsteen Patterson, Library Director Melissa Roderick, and Capital Planning Committee Chair Audrey Kalmus.

Executive summaries of the Annual Town Reports are included in the respective department or agency section below. The full version of the reports can be found on the websites of the participating departments and agencies.

2. Overview

For FY25, the Finance Committee is recommending a base budget of \$47,182,141 which includes \$4,760,669 in debt service for the school building project approved by residents in December 2018. In recognition of the tax burden imposed by the school building project and revenue risks, the Finance Committee established a modest budget increase guideline of 2.5%. While inflation rates vary year-to-year, this guidance generally allows the Town to maintain existing services, despite increases in underlying costs (e.g. wages/salaries, health insurance, service contracts, maintenance expenses, capital expenditures, etc.)

In addition, the Committee recommends funding several items in excess of guidance, including:

- An additional \$130,497 to maintain “level services” in general government, public safety, and human services, for: IT (malware and authentication software contracts), sourcing energy at “green” contract rates, the maintenance contract for the new digital radio system, and continuing funding for social worker services previously funded by ARPA.
- An additional \$138,200 for general government for: expanding the IT department from one full-time person to two full-time positions, engineering consulting support for key town initiatives (e.g. Lincoln Station planning, climate action planning, roadway & traffic planning, and bicycle & pedestrian planning), and a part-time support position in the

Cemetery department.

- An additional \$498,067 recommended by the Capital Planning Committee for: a digital records and mapping program for the Cemetery Commission, a loader for the DPW, an electronic voting system, and town hall lighting controls.

For additional details, see the respective sections of this report.

The Town continues to benefit from the strong financial position that it established before the 2008 recession, strong cooperation from town employees in contract negotiations, conservative budgeting, changes in health insurance providers and plan design changes, and for the seventeenth year in a row, the operating budget can be funded without an override.

For FY25, the property taxes on the median value house (FY24 assessed value of \$1,430,050) will increase by about \$439 (2.38%) with the proposed budget. This figure assumes the application of CPA funds to the payment of Town Offices debt (included in Warrant Article 9), which represents a reduction of .8% (\$150). Note: individual property owners who have undertaken construction or made improvements to their properties may see an additional increase in their taxes.

The Town budget is based on projections and assumptions which reflect local needs and available funds in the context of the economic and political conditions of Massachusetts and the United States. The budget is heavily dependent on real estate taxes (the tax levy and excluded debt). In FY01, real estate taxes (tax levy plus excluded debt) accounted for 68% of revenue. For FY25, real estate taxes are projected to account for about 78% of revenue. The Town has a small number of commercial properties and relatively few opportunities to increase local revenues. Although the FY25 state budget is not yet finalized, the Town's FY25 budget assumes that FY25 state aid will be \$2,659,300 up slightly from the prior year.

The Finance Committee builds the budget by reviewing available funds and revenue projections and setting aside funds for fixed costs, such as pensions, insurance and debt service. This process, which the committee calls a "funds available analysis," results in a budget guideline for the base budget. Last fall, the committee set the base budget guideline at 2.5%, based on tax impact concerns from the school project debt, pandemic uncertainties, results of FY23, and assumptions considered reasonable at that time. All departments and committees were very cognizant of the continued tax impact of the school project, the proposed Community Center project, and the need for compliance with the budget guideline.

In addition to the operating budget (Warrant Article 7) and the cash capital budget (Warrant Article 8), Town Meeting will consider maintenance articles and other appropriations (Warrant Articles 15 and 16).

At town meeting, residents will also vote on a proposed Community Center project (Warrant Article 4). If the project is approved, the Finance Committee is recommending using \$4.75 million from the Stabilization Fund and \$2.0 million from Free Cash for the proposed Community Center project, with the balance funded via bonding and possible private contributions. Note: the Finance Committee expects this funding strategy to accommodate "private use" requirements specified by the Community Center Building Committee (CCBC).

The Finance Committee believes that the Town should make an ongoing commitment to address its liability for retiree health care benefits and is recommending contributions to trust funds that support the funding of these liabilities (Warrant Articles 18 and 19). The Finance Committee takes these other appropriations into account when determining the funds available for the operating and capital budgets.

The Finance Committee places a high priority on maintaining adequate Emergency Reserves. Emergency Reserves allow unforeseen changes in revenues or needed expenditures to be addressed without undue disruption of ongoing activities. The committee's goal is to set aside an amount equal to 3 to 5% of the prior year's General Fund budget as Emergency Reserves (the General Fund budget is the Town operating budget as shown in the P&L-based presentation of Revenues and Expenditures on page 8). The Finance Committee defines Emergency Reserves as unspent certified Free Cash, plus no more than half of the Reserve Fund, and the full amount of any Stabilization Funds. It is desirable that a 3% minimum Emergency Reserve be set aside entirely from unspent certified Free Cash.

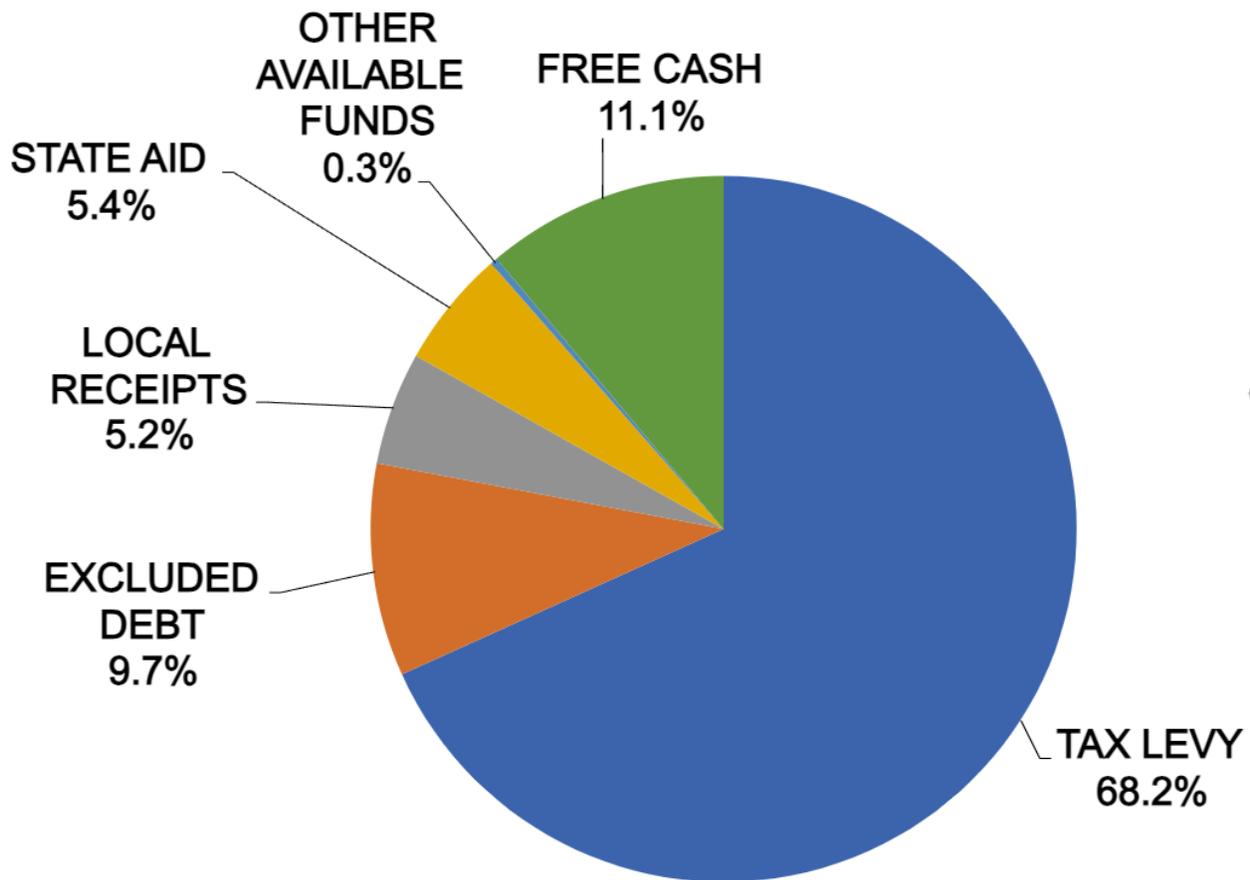
Following many years in which the financial reserves were well below the 3% minimum, the Finance Committee recommended that the Town work to rebuild its financial reserves. Since FY08, targeted minimum reserves (also known as "unspent certified Free Cash") have been set at 3% of the General Fund budget for that year (including capital and other articles). The budget proposed for FY25 would maintain the financial reserve at no less than 3%.

The committee also recognizes the importance of maintaining the Town's favorable bond rating. Thanks to the Town's ongoing prudent financial management, commitment to maintenance of adequate cash reserves, and recent efforts to formalize financial management policies, the Town was able to retain its AAA bond rating (the best rating possible) from S&P in March 2022, despite the impact of the large school project debt exclusion approved in December 2018. This rating enhances the Town's financial flexibility and allows borrowing at the lowest possible interest rates.

3. Revenues

Total Town revenues for FY25 are projected at \$49,309,750 (excluding Water Department revenues), a 3.9% increase compared to FY24. Revenue from state aid is projected to increase slightly (2%) from the initial FY24 projection. Local Receipts are projected to increase by 2% based on historical trend information. The 148% increase shown reflects a shift in budgeting to better align with actual performance, thus reducing the reliance on free cash. The chart below shows revenue categories and the percentages of total revenue that they represent.

Revenues by Category: FY'25



Proposition 2½ allows towns to raise the real estate tax levy by 2.5% per year without an override. The tax levy may also increase (beyond 2.5%) because of taxes attributable to new construction. For FY25, real estate taxes are projected to account for about 68% of revenue. Compared to FY24, real estate tax revenues are projected to increase by \$865,705. This projection assumes CPA funds are used to service town office debt, an increase within the Proposition 2½ limit, a decrease from debt service and capital exclusions previously approved (including the school project), and a significantly lower amount of new construction relative to prior years.

Additional property tax revenues may be raised through debt exclusion, following approval by a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting and a majority vote at the Town Election. Excluded debt includes property tax revenues that pay for such Town debt (for example, the recent school project, new trucks, new buildings or major repairs to roads or existing buildings) as well as the Lincoln portion of the principal and interest payments on debt for the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District. When payment is complete, the debt is retired and the property tax to fund the project is no longer collected. In FY25, excluded debt (from prior-year votes) is projected to represent 9.7% of revenues.

The application of Free Cash is projected to provide 11.1% of FY25 revenue. In October 2023, the Department of Revenue certified Free Cash for the Town from FY23 at \$10,528,273. This represented a 29% increase from the amount certified in October 2022. The FY25 budget targets Free Cash as part of Emergency Reserves at year-end of \$5,044,712. This is the major component of the Town's Emergency Reserves. Major contributors to the FY23 Free Cash balance were: (1) a turn back from the Lincoln Schools and savings in health insurance, (2) receipts in excess of budget, such as for motor vehicle excise and licenses and permits, and (3) turnback from the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund. The Free Cash balance is a major contributor to the Finance Committee's ability to propose a budget that can be funded without an operating override.

Local receipts, which include excise taxes, rental fees, license and permit fees, investment income, cell tower income, and other fee income, such as parking, recreation and ambulance fees, are projected to provide 5.2% of revenue in FY25, comparable to FY24.

State aid, which includes Chapter 70 (education reform) funds, lottery, and other assistance, is projected to provide 5.4% of revenue in FY25, compared to 5.7% in FY24. Actual state aid is not yet known, as the state budget is determined after the Town budget, but it is projected to increase about 2% relative to FY24 to \$2,659,300.

If the actual amount is greater than budgeted, the difference will accrue to Free Cash. If the amount were to be lower than budgeted, the Town would first look to available Free Cash to make-up the difference.

Other available funds, which are projected to provide 0.3% of revenue in FY25, include miscellaneous items, such as payments from the Water Department and Hanscom Air Force Base for certain services provided by the Town. In general, the amounts received are offset by corresponding debits.

ARPA Funding

The Town received a total of \$2,108,000 in funding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). Our ARPA spending priorities were determined by a Select Board appointed ARPA working group comprised of representatives of key stakeholder groups. As of this writing, \$1.2 million has been expended from the ARPA fund. Our ARPA funds were targeted primarily at Water infrastructure improvements (\$1.4 million or 68.5% of total funding), school-related investments (\$130,353 or 6.2%); social services related programs and support (\$161,728 or 7.7%); hiring a consultant to help the Select Board and Town Administrator develop an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Anti-racism (IDEA) action plan (\$100,000 or 4.7%); and several miscellaneous other investments as specified in the table below.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)		
Total ARPA Funding Received		\$ 2,108,000
Project Requests- Phase 1		
	Sponsor	Amount
ARPA Unallocated Funding/COVID Response Contingency	All	91,567
Restore Parks & Trails	Conservation	6,823
Water Storage Tank -Bedford Rd	Water	500,000
Water Distribution Repairs	Water	200,000
Water -Well Replacement -Tower Rd	Water	600,000
School Retention & Incentive Pay -Food Service Employees	School	21,441
School Faculty Residency -Antiracism Inclusion Diversity & Equity (AIDE) & Deeper Learning Coach	School	71,999
Emergency Assistance Fund- Housing Grants	COA	43,500
Mental Health Clinics	COA	12,000
Social Worker	COA	106,228
IDEA Consultant	Select Board	100,000
LSRHS Ventilation System Improvement	LSRHS	15,000
Total Round 1 Project Distributions		1,768,558
Total Amount Available for Round 2 Distribution		339,442
Project Requests-Phase 2		
	Sponsor	Amount
Lincoln School Security Cameras	School	130,353
Water SCADA Upgrade Phase 1	Water	99,430
Water SCADA Upgrade Phase 2 (partial funding)	Water	45,159
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee- Engineering	BPAC Committee	44,000
Trail Restoration & Infrastructure Improvements	Conservation	12,000
Information Technology Hybrid Meeting Equipment	Select Board	8,500
Total Round 2 Project Distributions		339,442
Total ARPA Funding Distributions		\$ 2,108,000

According to ARPA regulations, the funds must be fully expended by December 31, 2024.

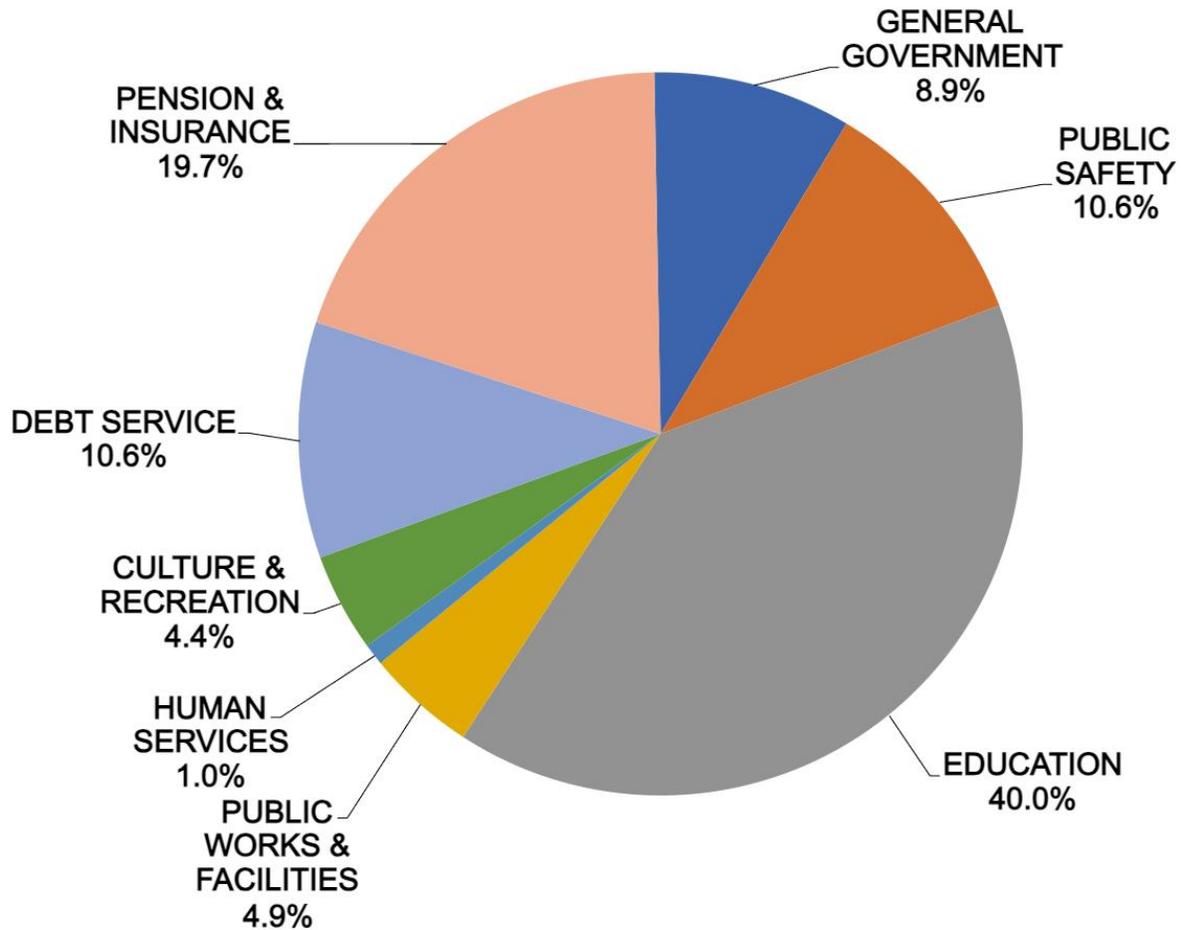
4. Operating Expenditures

Total Town operating expenditures consist of both the General Fund and the Water Enterprise Fund. The Water Department's operating budget (\$2,098,750 for FY25) is funded entirely through fees paid by water consumers. The General Fund budget includes all other operating expenditures.

The proposed FY25 budget is \$47,182,141. The General Fund total is \$45,083,391 exclusive of capital items and other articles.

The following chart shows the breakdown of expenditures by category (excluding Water Department expenditures). Education is the largest component, representing 40% of General Fund expenditures. This includes the Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School and expenditures for vocational technical high school students. For high school expenditures, the education component includes all costs to Lincoln, including debt service, pensions and insurance. For the Lincoln Public Schools, debt service, pensions and insurance are *not* included in the education component; they are part of the Town expenditures for these items.

Expenditures by Category: FY'25



The growth in the appropriated budget for the Lincoln Public Schools, exclusive of pensions and insurance, is 2.5%. For more information, please see page 23. The budget for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School is shared between Lincoln and Sudbury; it reflects a two-part formula that incorporates relative wealth between the two towns and a three-year rolling average of the number of students enrolled from each town. The FY25 ratios are 12.7% Lincoln and 87.3% Sudbury, nearly unchanged from FY24. While Lincoln’s portion of the high school’s operating budget is based on the budget presented by Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School to the Finance Committee, Lincoln’s assessment may be less than the recommended appropriation or less than the budget guideline due to factors discussed below (see the “Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School” section below). Any excess appropriation amounts for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School are added to the Town’s Stabilization Fund.

The proposed General Government budget for FY25 is up 6.8% from FY24. The growth in the Public Safety budget is 2.9%. Pensions and Insurance expenditures for FY24 are projected at \$8,888,389, a 1.4% increase over FY24. Pensions and Insurance represent approximately 19.7% of General Fund expenditures.

Debt service for FY25, excluding debt service for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School and after application of the proposed CPC offset, is \$4,735,669, nearly flat compared to FY24. About 90% of the Town's debt service is for the school building debt, bonded in February 2019, with the second tranche issued in March 2022 and payments starting in September 2022.

The categories of operating expenditures are covered in more detail in the departmental budget sections of this report.

A P&L-based presentation of Revenues and Expenditures for FY25 compared to FY24 follows:

Town of Lincoln				
FY2025 Proposed Budget				
	FY2024	FY2025	\$ change	% change
REVENUE				
TAX LEVY	32,800,008	33,651,884	851,876	
EXCLUDED DEBT	4,800,658	4,802,479	1,821	
LOCAL RECEIPTS	1,030,043	2,551,571	1,521,528	
STATE AID	2,608,145	2,659,300	51,155	
OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS	166,657	160,955	(5,702)	
FREE CASH	6,060,000	5,483,561	(576,439)	
TOTAL REVENUE	47,465,511	49,309,750	1,844,239	3.9%
EXPENDITURES				
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	3,739,266	3,992,724	253,458	
PUBLIC SAFETY	4,661,991	4,795,954	133,963	
EDUCATION				
<i>Lincoln K-8 School</i>	13,161,319	13,490,352	329,033	
<i>Lincoln Sudbury High School</i>	4,292,657	4,421,436	128,779	
<i>Vocational School Assessment(s)</i>	350,905	105,500	(245,405)	
PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES	2,120,071	2,207,464	87,393	
HUMAN SERVICES	389,730	434,226	44,496	
CULTURE & RECREATION	1,918,800	1,986,677	67,877	
DEBT SERVICE	4,759,169	4,760,669	1,500	
PENSIONS & INSURANCE	8,768,467	8,888,389	119,922	
CAPITAL PLAN	800,292	1,296,841	496,549	
STABILIZATION FUND	1,638,696	-	(1,638,696)	
WARRANT ARTICLES	864,148	2,929,518	2,065,370	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	47,465,511	49,309,750	1,844,239	3.9%

5. Capital Expenditures

The Capital Committee (CapCom) and the Finance Committee work collaboratively to enhance the Town's capacity to identify, prioritize, and understand the financial implications of capital projects and land acquisitions. The CapCom composition and charter were revised at the March 2012 Town Meeting. The committee is composed of 9 members: 5 At-Large Members, 3 of whom are appointed by the Select Board and 2 of whom are appointed by the Moderator; and 4 Representative Members, consisting of 1 appointed by and from each of the Select Board, the School Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the Library Board.

The CapCom reviews all requests for equipment and facility and infrastructure construction or improvements with a life of 5 years or more and a value of at least \$10,000. It also reviews maintenance warrant articles. During the past year, the committee continued to look longer-term and updated its 5-year capital plan. The Finance Committee strongly believes that timely maintenance, combined with a comprehensive understanding of the Town's assets, is the best way to protect the Town's investment in capital infrastructure. All proposed capital expenditures are also assessed to determine whether they might qualify for funding under the Community Preservation Act. Appropriate requests are referred to the Community Preservation Committee for review.

For FY25, the Finance Committee set budget guidelines of \$524,973 for capital expenditures and \$273,801 for the annual maintenance warrant articles, representing a 2.5% increase from the previous year.

Most approved capital expenditures are financed within the annual budget. Expensive items with a long useful life may be proposed for debt exclusion (bonding), which requires approval at Town Meeting and the Town Election. Bonding allows the Town to finance the purchase and spread the cost of capital items over several years, outside of the limitations of Proposition 2½.

The Capital Committee suggested the following disposition:

Recommended funding for cash capital:	\$1,154,593
Recommended funding for maintenance:	\$142,248

These recommendations represented a preferred budget and were in excess of initial guidelines by \$498,067. Variations from guidance often occur, as capital projects are lumpy by nature. The preferred items recommended by CapCom are \$24,200 for a digital records and mapping program for the Cemetery Commission, \$250,000 for a loader for the DPW, \$35,000 for an electronic voting system, and \$200,000 for town hall lighting controls.

The Finance Committee has reviewed these funding requests and recommends the capital expenditure and maintenance articles at proposed levels, using available funds without needing any debt or capital exclusions.

Warrant Articles

Article 8	Cash Capital Expenditures	\$1,154,593
	Cemetery Digital Records and Mapping Program 24,200 Conservation 2023 Tacoma SR5 Work Truck 43,938 Conservation Rock Rake 5,387 DPW Loader 250,000 Fire Department Air Supply Unit for Firefighting SCBA. 78,000 IT Network Electronics Upgrade 95,000 LPS Maintenance Vehicle 40,000 LPS Facilities Director Vehicle 25,000 LPS Wireless Access Point Replacement 64,787 LPS Hartwell Wooden Window Curtain Wall Replacement Design 15,000 LSRHS Exterior Masonry (stairwells) 19,035 LSRHS Lighting Control Analog Panel Replacement. 21,015 LSRHS WiFi Network Upgrade 10,348 Police Department Replacement of nine (9) ballistic vests and carriers 26,654 Police Department Replacement of Marked Cruiser #6 64,729 Electronic Voting System 35,000 Facilities Director Vehicle 21,500 Town Hall Lighting Controls 200,000 Public Safety Boilers Replacement 115,000	
Article 15	Town Buildings Maintenance	\$78,648
Article 16	Library Building Maintenance	\$63,600

6. Community Preservation Act

The Town of Lincoln approved the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in November 2002. Pursuant to the CPA, the Town levies a surcharge of 3% on Lincoln real estate bills. These local CPA revenues are matched by the state from a dedicated fund. Through FY07, the state matched local CPA revenues at 100%. Due to an increasing number of cities and towns participating in the CPA, a decline in funds to the state matching fund, and legislative changes for state funding sources, the amounts matched by the state have varied over recent years.

Lincoln received a percentage match on its fiscal year surcharges since FY10 as follows:

FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
34%	33%	34%	65%	40%	39%	25%	22%	22%	32%	38%	52%	58%	51%

The CPA requires that a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) be formed with four members appointed by the Select Board and five other members nominated from each of the following: Conservation Commission, Housing Commission, Historical Commission, Planning Board, and Recreation Committee. The mandate of the CPC is: to study the needs of the Town in consultation with other municipal boards and committees; to solicit input from the Town as to its community preservation needs, possibilities, and resources; and to make recommendations to the Town for expenditures in four areas of community interest: open space, preservation of historic structures, community housing (defined as low to moderate income housing), and recreation.

Spending must be recommended by the CPC and then approved at Town Meeting.

Generally, the CPA also requires a minimum of 10% of annual revenues be spent on *each* of three categories: (1) open space (excluding recreation), (2) historical preservation, and (3) community housing. If the 10% annual minimum for a given category is not met, the shortfall must be “banked” and spent in subsequent years.

For fiscal periods 2003 through 2023, the CPC has recommended, and the Town has approved, funding for the following projects:

**Town of Lincoln
CPA Appropriations & Project Status**

Category	Appropriation	Paid to Date	Balance	Status of Project
75 Tower Rd Renovation	150,000	150,000	-	Complete
Admin Expenses	55,500	55,375	125	In progress
Arborvitae Cemetery	50,000	50,000	-	Complete
Battle Rd Farm Unit	150,000	150,000	-	Complete
Bemis Hall Repairs	639,985	533,150	106,835	Complete
Bemis Hall Basement Reconstruction	290,000	107,946	182,054	Complete
Borrowing costs	63,111	63,111	-	Complete
Codman & Ballfield Rd- Athletic Fields Irrigation	400,000	343,905	56,095	In progress
Codman Barn A restoration	112,000	112,000	-	Complete
Codman Barn Repairs	111,500	71,672	39,828	In progress
Codman Farm Hay Barn structural study	5,000	5,000	-	Complete
Codman Farm Main Barn electrical work	15,000	15,000	-	Complete
Codman Farm Parking Lot & Driveway Improvements	329,950	329,950	-	Complete
Codman Pool Chemistry Controller	42,500	42,500	-	Complete
Codman Tot Pool Renovation	182,000	151,475	30,525	Complete
Community Housing Rental Assistance Prog	269,863	221,594	48,269	In progress
Conservation Stonewall Restoration	20,000	20,000	-	Complete
Conservation Improved Trailhead & Wayfinding Signage	7,266		7,266	In progress
Construction of archival vault at the Library	489,097	489,097	-	Complete
Control invasive species on conservation land	51,280	51,280	-	Complete
Debt Service on Town Office Renovation	4,184,311	3,928,781	255,530	In progress
Flint Homestead Survey	8,000	7,860	140	Complete
Fund debt service on borrowing for CPC project	2,088,116	1,984,436	103,680	In progress
Funding of Affordable Housing Trust	4,217,829	4,217,829	-	Complete
Funding of Conservation Fund	487,359	487,359	-	Complete
FY15 FoMA area studies	6,000	6,000	-	Complete
Historic Properties Inventory	75,250	70,050	5,200	Complete
Historic records archive and preservation	388,727	337,794	50,933	In progress
Historic Town buildings needs assessment	25,000	25,000	-	Complete
Housing Consolidated Plan	20,230	17,230	3,000	In progress
Housing Commission -Affordable Housing Unit Repairs	245,500	16,022	229,478	In progress
Land Acquisition	2,425,000	2,425,000	-	Complete
<i>Harrington Row property</i>	<i>350,000</i>			
<i>Booth property</i>	<i>250,000</i>			
<i>MacDowell property</i>	<i>400,000</i>			
<i>DeNormandie property (Rt 2 parcel)</i>	<i>100,000</i>			
<i>Schmid Property</i>	<i>200,000</i>			
<i>Jerodel Property</i>	<i>100,000</i>			
<i>Hargreaves-Heald</i>	<i>225,000</i>			
<i>Wang Property</i>	<i>500,000</i>			
<i>Twin Pond Lane</i>	<i>200,000</i>			
<i>Conservatin restriction 241 & 247 Old Concord Road (returned funds-not needed)</i>	<i>100,000</i>			
LSRHS Softball Field	50,000	-	50,000	Not needed
Model historic preservation restriction easement	5,000	5,000	-	Complete
Multi-sport Court	146,000	146,000	-	Complete
Pierce House Repairs	482,976	411,977	70,999	In progress
Regional Housing Support Services	91,700	91,550	150	In progress
Rehabilitation of tennis courts	20,000	20,000	-	Complete
Repairs & Improvements to Lincoln Library	1,439,227	1,349,775	89,452	In progress
Repairs to historic cemetery monument	42,300	42,300	-	Complete
To Reserves	3,015,051	3,015,051	-	Complete
School Playgrounds	161,200	161,200	-	In progress
Smith School Playground	50,000	50,000	-	Complete
Sunnyside Lane	792,500	792,500	-	Complete
Tot-lot at Codman Pool	50,000	45,191	4,810	Complete
Town Office Athletic Field-Drainage Study	26,800	25,000	1,800	In progress
Town Office Athletic Field-Drainage Improvements	310,000	42,428	267,572	In progress
Town Office Renovation	1,000,000	1,000,000	0.34	Complete
Town Office renovation feasibility study	135,000	135,000	-	Complete
Wayfinding Battle Road Byway	1,000	-	1,000	In progress
Wetland Trail and Observation Platform	137,355	114,543	22,812	In progress
Grand Total	25,561,484	23,933,931	1,627,553	

This table summarizes money raised and appropriations to date:

CPA Revenues and Expenditures														
Revenues	FY '03-11	FY '12	FY '13	FY '14	FY '15	FY '16	FY '17	FY '18	FY '19	FY '20	FY '21	FY '22	FY23	FY24*
Town Rev's‡	\$4,414,511	\$644,328	\$649,035	\$667,117	\$691,581	\$765,657	\$740,896	\$893,839	\$ 772,958	\$ 890,954	\$ 932,229	\$ 927,624	1,094,274	990,725
State Match	\$3,414,738	206,190	216,875	424,815	266,411	259,639	191,804	164,520	\$ 197,220	\$ 253,236	336,984	532,005	481,330	193,278
Total Revenues	\$7,829,249	\$850,518	\$865,910	\$1,091,932	\$957,992	\$1,025,296	\$932,700	\$1,058,359	\$ 970,178	\$1,144,190	\$ 1,269,213	\$ 1,459,629	\$ 1,575,604	\$ 1,184,003
Expenditures#														
Housing	\$1,496,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ -	\$151,600	\$ -	\$ -	278,329	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,100	\$ 60,920	112,861	373,063
Historic	\$1,528,406	64,593	629,250	558,051	564,364	491,255	533,607	434,680	\$ 509,711	\$ 18,123	\$ 517,881	\$ 363,648	1,083,779	364,974
Conservation	\$1,212,800	-	20,000	62,774	-	525,000	70,512	541,088	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 289,000			7,266
Recreation	\$ 942,500	-	-	232,000	109,020	25,000	201,593	41,000		\$ 94,174	\$ 232,923	\$ 199,857	245,411	107,550
Administrative	\$ 945,500	2,500	3,000	3,000	2,875	2,875	2,875	2,875	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	3,500	3,500
Total Approp's	\$6,125,206	\$157,093	\$742,250	\$ 855,825	\$827,859	\$1,044,130	\$808,587	\$1,297,972	\$ 513,211	\$ 145,796	\$ 1,073,404	\$ 627,925	\$ 1,445,551	\$ 856,353
*projected revenues- not yet certified														
‡ includes interest earned														
# actual amount spent is shown, where less than appropriation														

At Town Meeting, the CPC anticipates recommending a total of \$1,735,925 of funding for the following projects:

Warrant Article 9

Town Office Renovation -debt service	Select Board	Historic	287,460
Housing Rental Assistance Program	Lincoln Housing Commission/COA	Housing	97,250
Housing Support Services	Housing Comm, Housing Trust, Lincoln Foundation	Housing	30,400
Housing Trust Request for Funds	Select Board	Housing	500,000
Archives - Flint Family Historical Records	Town Archives	Historic	22,726
Elm Brook Hill Battlefield Preservation Project	Historical Commission	Historic	150,000
Codman Community Farm C Barn Sprinkler Installation	Select Board	Historic	400,000
Pierce House -ADA Walkways	Pierce House Committee	Historic	20,000
Pierce House -Exterior Carpentry	Pierce House Committee	Historic	25,000
P&R Tennis Court Irrigation System upgrade	Parks & Recreation	Recreation	38,900
P&R Tennis Court Irrigation Landscaping	Parks & Recreation	Recreation	1,200
P&R Codman Pool Cover	Parks & Recreation	Recreation	27,488
Library AC Replacement pans	Library	Historic	4,951
Library Boiler & HVAC System Study	Library	Historic	23,500
Wang property and athletic field debt		Debt	103,550
Administrative Expenses		Admin Exp	3,500
Total Requests			\$1,735,925

7. Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability

The Town of Lincoln has a significant obligation to its current and retired employees for healthcare and other non-pension benefits after employment by the Town. These are also known as Other Post-Employment Benefits (“OPEB”), and they consist primarily of benefits received through the Town’s Postretirement Medical and Life Insurance Plan.

Beginning in FY09, as a municipal government, the Town of Lincoln became subject to Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 45, *Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions*. This accounting rule calls for municipal governments to report on the expected costs of the benefits that have already been earned by active and retired employees as well as the benefits active employees will earn in the future. The OPEB liability, first recorded by the Town in its FY09 financial statements, represents the present value of these benefits earned to date, which are estimated for the Town by an actuary. Biannual updates to the actuarial valuation are required. Many variables in actuarial assumptions contribute to the liability amount, including discount rate, demographics of retirees and active employees, how health care costs are shared between employees and the Town, and benefit eligibility.

Beginning in FY17, GASB Statement No. 74, *Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans*, changed the requirements on OPEB accounting and reporting for the Town. GASB 74 requires additional disclosures and Required Supplementary Information schedules regarding the Town’s OPEB Trust Fund. Most of the reporting necessary for the new requirement is provided by an actuary based on data provided by the Town. GASB 74 also more tightly defines what discount rates can be utilized in the valuation based on the Town’s OPEB Policy and the funding status of the OPEB liability.

Beginning in FY18, GASB Statement No. 45 requirements were replaced by GASB Statement #75, *Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other Than Pensions*, which most significantly obligates the Town to report its entire OPEB liability on its financial statements. Prior to the issuance of GASB 75, the OPEB liability was being “phased in” to the Town’s statement of net position over a 30 year period. Reporting the entire OPEB liability had a negative impact on the Town’s Unrestricted Net Position. However, bond rating agencies and other informed readers have been considering OPEB liabilities for years, and in February 2019 and in October 2020, Standard & Poors reaffirmed the Town’s AAA bond rating despite the impact on the Town’s financial statements.

The Town’s OPEB liability was originally estimated at \$61.7 million in 2007. Although there is currently no federal or state requirement to fund this liability, due to its large size and the ultimate need to meet the Town’s obligations, the Finance Committee and the Town have taken numerous steps to fund this liability and reduce its size.

Actions taken by the Town include establishing and depositing monies into an OPEB trust fund and adopting Section 18, under which qualified retirees must join Medicare. The Town also moved to provide health insurance through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) instead of self-insurance and made health care plan design changes. In FY17, the Town took

further steps to reduce the cost of retiree prescription drug benefits by implementing a switch from Medex III to Medex II, and in FY18, the Town implemented additional plan design changes including increasing emergency room co-pays. Other changes put in place to reduce the liability include appointing the Massachusetts Pension Reserves Investment Management Board as the fund manager of the Town’s OPEB trust fund, and enacting a Finance Committee OPEB Policy in June 2015, subsequently revised in June 2017, December 2018, and March 2019 regarding trust fund contributions going forward.

The Finance Committee’s March 2019 revision to its OPEB Policy was motivated by recommendations from the Town’s actuary, as part of the actuarial valuation performed in December 2018, to consider how funding the OPEB liability interacts with the Town’s state mandated assessments under its pension obligation, which are estimated to climb steadily until the pension plan is fully funded in 2037 and then fall off sharply. As a result, the Finance Committee significantly amended our OPEB Policy to be less aggressive in its funding of the OPEB liability until the pension plan is fully funded, then to re-appropriate a portion of the “freed up” pension funding to OPEB for some number of years until the OPEB liability is fully funded. This new approach will materially smooth the combined required contributions by the Town over the next 25-30 years, arguably resulting in a more even distribution of resident tax burden across the decades.

To date, the Town has chosen to pay the portion of the annual cost that represents the current-year benefits to retired employees as well as appropriating amounts into the Town’s OPEB trust fund to partially fund the liability. From FY09 through FY19, the Finance Committee recommended, and the Town approved, increasing annual contributions to the OPEB Trust Fund, ranging from \$100,000 in FY10 to \$950,000 in FY19. In recent years, the Finance Committee recommended, and the Town has approved smaller contributions, based on the Finance Committee’s latest OPEB Policy:

	OPEB Contribution
FY20	\$650,000
FY21	\$350,000
FY22	\$350,000
FY23	\$650,000
FY24	\$650,000
FY25	\$650,000*

* Recommended in this budget

In recent years, the Water Department has also included amounts in their budget (\$40,000 in FY25) to transfer to the Town’s OPEB trust fund to cover their portion of the liability. In addition, over the past fourteen years, the Lincoln School Committee has made contributions to the fund (from

the Town’s contract with DoDEA) to offset the liability for Hanscom school employees and retirees.

The balance in the OPEB trust fund is now \$18,517,650, representing about a 21% increase from last year (due to investment gains and contributions from the Hanscom contract fund).

As a result of the above actions, as well as changes in actuarial assumptions, the Town’s estimated unfunded OPEB liability has declined from \$61.7 million in 2007 down to \$43.4 million in 2015 and \$22.6 million in 2019 and up to \$28.5 million as of the most recent interim valuation (measurement date of June 30, 2023). The \$5.9 million increase between 2019 and the 2023 interim valuation is due primarily to a decrease in the discount rate assumption from 6.75% to 6.30% (to reflect GASB standards), adjusted actuarial assumption changes surrounding health care cost trend rates, morbidity rates, and the passage of time (service cost, interest and payments).

The most recent interim actuarial valuation also showed an Actuarially Determined Contribution for FY23 of \$2.6 million. This consists of a Service Cost of \$1.2 million, which is the contribution needed to fund employee benefits earned in FY23, and \$1.4 million, which is the amount that the Town would need to contribute to the OPEB trust fund annually to fully fund the OPEB liability over a 30-year period. In fact, the Town contributed \$1,090,000 in FY23, which when combined with the \$1.6 million in current payments to retirees represents 103% of the Actuarially Determined Contribution.

The next actuarial valuation is set to be completed in the fall of 2024.

For FY25, the Finance Committee recommends that Town Meeting appropriate \$650,000 (Article 18) as a further contribution to the trust fund against the liability. The Water Department has also included \$40,000 in its FY25 budget to transfer to the Town’s OPEB trust fund. In addition, the committee recommends that the Town Meeting appropriate \$55,455 for Lincoln’s portion of the high school’s funding of its OPEB trust (Article 19).

The Finance Committee continues to be alert to any additional actions needed to manage the Town’s OPEB liability, and we continue to explore options that could further reduce our liability without significant impact on the Town’s operations or capital plans. Our current practice of funding the annual cost of retirees and contributing an amount to the trust fund – as well as closely managing health care expenses – puts Lincoln ahead of many peer communities in addressing the OPEB issue.

Warrant Articles

Article 18	Funds for Group Insurance Liability Trust Fund	\$650,000
Article 19	Funds for Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School District Retirees Health Insurance Trust Fund	\$55,455

8. Estimated Property Tax Impact

The table shows the estimated tax impact on a median-value house for the proposed FY25 budget. The estimate assumes a median FY24 assessment value for a single-family home of \$1,430,050, up about 13% from FY23.

FY25 assessment values will be determined in the fall when the Town sets its tax rate. Note: the impact on individual homeowners who have undertaken construction or made improvements to their property could be higher.

FY25 Known Tax Increases					Potential Offsets to Reduce Taxes (To reduce debt service)	
Fiscal Year Impact	Prop 2.5%	Existing Debt Exclusions	Total Estimated Tax Bill	CPC Funds	Total Tax Bill	
	Increases/(decreases)	\$ 853,697	\$ 289,906	\$ 1,143,603	\$ (287,460)	\$ 856,143
Dollar Tax Impact	\$ 441	\$ 150	\$ 591	\$ (152)	\$ 439	
% Tax Impact	2.39%	0.81%	3.21%	-0.82%	2.38%	
Median Tax Bill			\$ 19,024		\$ 18,872	
Assumptions:						
Based on FY24 Valuation data						
FY24 Median Tax Bill \$18,433						
Median House Value of \$1,430,050						

In addition to the tax impact of the proposed operating budgets and capital projects, the town will be considering a Community Center building project at the upcoming town meeting.

If residents vote to approve the project, the Finance Committee recommends using \$4.75 million from the Stabilization Fund and \$2.0 million of Free Cash, with the remainder funded via bonding (borrowing) and possible private contributions. The final total project budget and committed private contributions are not known at the time of this printing. However, assuming a "worst case" of a \$24.02 million budget and no private contributions, the bonded amount would be up to \$17.27 million.

For a 30-year level debt service and a 4.0% to 4.5% interest rate assumption¹, that borrowing amount would imply an estimated \$516 to \$548 increase to the median tax bill of \$1.4 million. If

¹ At the time of this printing (February 2024), 30-year AAA municipal bond rates are approximately 3.9%.

the final project budget comes in lower and/or there are private contributions, the tax impact would be proportionately lower.

If the project is approved by residents, it's expected that the tax increase would appear on the FY26 (November 2025) or FY27 (November 2026) tax bills, depending on the timing of bond issuance.

9. Looking Forward

The Finance Committee works closely with the Town, the Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, the Capital Planning Committee and independent Boards to anticipate the Town's future needs and to analyze the financial impact of these needs and various policy options for addressing them. The Committee draws upon the expertise of the Town's very able and experienced professional staff to manage Lincoln's finances in the midst of uncertainties that impact both revenues and expenditures.

Revenue uncertainties include state aid which is dependent upon economic performance of the Commonwealth and local receipts, neither of which is known until after the Town's budget is in place. On the expenditure side, the share of funding for operations at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School is calculated in two parts, each of which are subject to a formula that could result in an increase or decrease in Lincoln's assessment each year. Health insurance costs and pension costs are subject to continued uncertainty and need to be estimated as part of the budget process.

Some indicators point to stable economic conditions. The assessed value of the median single family Lincoln home rose about 13% in FY24 to \$1,430,050, after steadily falling from a peak of \$948,400 in FY07 to \$796,700 in FY13. Town finances remain strong, and the Finance Committee is able to recommend an annual budget with no operating override for the seventeenth year in a row.

However, the Committee remains cautious about committing Town resources, chiefly due to the dependence on Free Cash in the operating budget and concern about the capital needs facing Lincoln. Free Cash represents amounts accumulated from savings in prior years' budgeted expenditures as well as receipts in excess of budgeted sources. In recent years, the balance has grown due to savings in health insurance costs, higher revenues than estimated, and savings in the Lincoln Schools budget that were returned to the Town. Lincoln's high Free Cash balance of approximately \$10.5 million demonstrates the capabilities of the Town's professional staff and the success of a conservative budgeting philosophy. Nevertheless, Free Cash has become a greater share of the operating budget in recent years. In the FY25 budget, Free Cash represents 11.1% of projected revenues. In FY08, that share was just 7.3%. The Committee believes that savings which contributed to the current balance may come under pressure, and that there may be pressure on the tax levy in future years.

The Committee is very mindful of the resident tax burden, especially the debt service for large capital projects. At the December, 2018 Special Town Meeting, residents voted for a school building project, the largest capital investment in the Town's history. At that meeting, residents

approved \$88.5 million to be raised via bond issuance, \$4.4 million appropriated from the Stabilization Fund, and \$1.0 million appropriated from Free Cash.

At the upcoming March 2024 town meeting, residents will consider another large capital project: a proposed Community Center at the Ballfield Road campus. At the time of this printing, the Community Center Building Committee (CCBC) is still finalizing the overall budget and any private contribution commitments but has requested a funding recommendation for (a) a total project budget amount up to \$24.02 million, and (b) an accommodation for a “private use” component² for LEAP and a possible solar PPA agreement. Given those requirements, as well as a general town requirement to maintain adequate financial reserves, the Committee is recommending to use \$4.75 million from the Stabilization Fund, and \$2.0 million from Free Cash, if the project is approved by residents.

It is important to note: these projects do not proceed without strong resident support. Like the school building project, the Community Center project requires a supermajority vote (2/3rds) at town meeting, followed by a simple majority vote by ballot on the following Monday.

Given this context, and as a matter of best practices, the Finance Committee will continue to act to preserve Lincoln’s financial capacity and flexibility. For FY25, these actions include maintaining a conservative budget approach that supports efficient operations and does not require an override. In addition, contributing to the Town’s OPEB trust is an important step to take in support of Lincoln’s long term financial health, given its substantial post-employment benefit liabilities. Lincoln’s early commitment to OPEB has yielded some strong market returns in several recent years.

Also, the Committee is recommending a Reserve Fund of \$616,025 for FY25, representing about 1.3% of the prior year’s operating budget, in line with current policy. Consistent with the Finance Committee’s Emergency Reserves Policy, the FY25 budget deliberately sets aside Free Cash at a level of at least 3% of the prior year’s operating budget and attempts to incorporate conservative estimates of uncertain revenues and expenditures.

The rating agencies and the financial markets are increasingly focused on local government financial results and financial policies that ensure sufficient reserves and that address future and contingent liabilities. The Town’s AAA rating, its access to debt financing and its flexibility to consider major capital projects are all dependent on maintaining and improving sound financial decisions and practices.

² Municipalities cannot use tax-free bond proceeds to fund projects that have a “private use”. However, stabilization funds, free cash, and/or private contributions can be used to fund those private uses.

10. Departmental Budgets

General Government

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$3,273,648	\$3,739,266	\$3,992,724

General Information

General Government includes: Town Moderator, Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Offices, Legal Services, Reserve Fund, Assessors, Law Department, Town Clerk, Town Archives, Registrar of Voters, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Agricultural Commission, Board of Appeals, Town Report, Town Buildings, and Town Access PEG Cable. The largest account is Town Offices, which includes personnel costs and administrative and financial department expenses.

Key Issues

- The increase in the General Government proposed budget is higher than usual (6.8%) due to three factors: (1) the expansion of the IT Department from one full-time position to two full-time positions, (2) the purchase of software to enhance IT security, and (3) increased electricity costs associated with the Town’s commitment to green sourcing.

Collectively, the remaining elements of the General Government segment of the budget are increasing at a more customary rate of 2.7%. It is worth noting that the increased costs of “greener” electricity contracts will be more than offset by the economic benefits that will accrue to the Town when the landfill solar project goes on line in 2025.

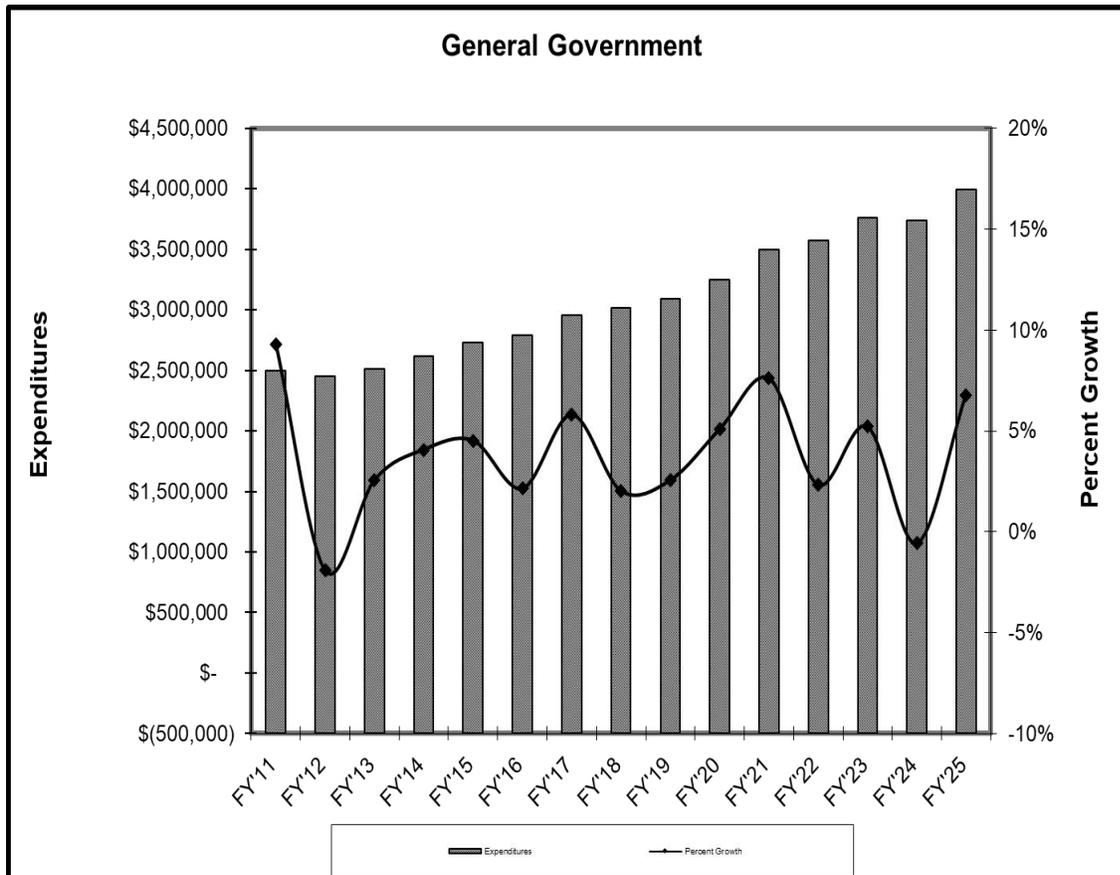
- The Reserve Fund is part of the General Fund and is intended to cover extraordinary and unforeseen needs of the Town, the Lincoln Public Schools, and independent boards. The Finance Committee recommends the Reserve Fund be set at its customary policy of approximately 1.3% of the prior year’s budget, to cover unforeseen expenses. The Committee reconsiders this percentage annually based on risks and operating experience.

Warrant Articles

Article 4: Community Center Funding (Funding sources: Free Cash, Stabilization Fund, borrowing authorization)	\$24,020,000
Article 5: Bright Light Award	\$500
Article 6: Electronic Voting Technology	\$35,000
Article 8: Information Technology- Electronic Upgrades	\$95,000
Article 8: Facilities -Director’s Vehicle (Split with Schools)	\$21,500
Article 8: Facilities- Town Hall Lighting Controls	\$200,000
Article 9: (CPA) Debt Service on Town Office Renovation	\$287,460
Article 9: (CPA) Archives Preservation Flint Family Historic Documents	\$22,726

Article 9: (CPA) Codman Community Farm C Barn Sprinkler System	\$400,000
Article 13: Senior Tax Work-off Program: Vote to Renew	\$100,000
Article 15: Town Buildings Maintenance	\$78,648
Article 17: Debt Stabilization Fund Appropriation	TBD*
Article 18: Transfer to Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Fund	\$650,000
Article 19: Transfer to LSRHS OPEB Fund	\$55,455

*To be determined at town meeting, depending on the outcome of the Community Center vote. If residents do not approve the project, the Finance Committee is recommending that the \$2 million of Free Cash proposed to fund the project be put into the Stabilization Fund.



Public Safety

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 4,546,736	\$ 4,661,991	\$ 4,795,954

General Information

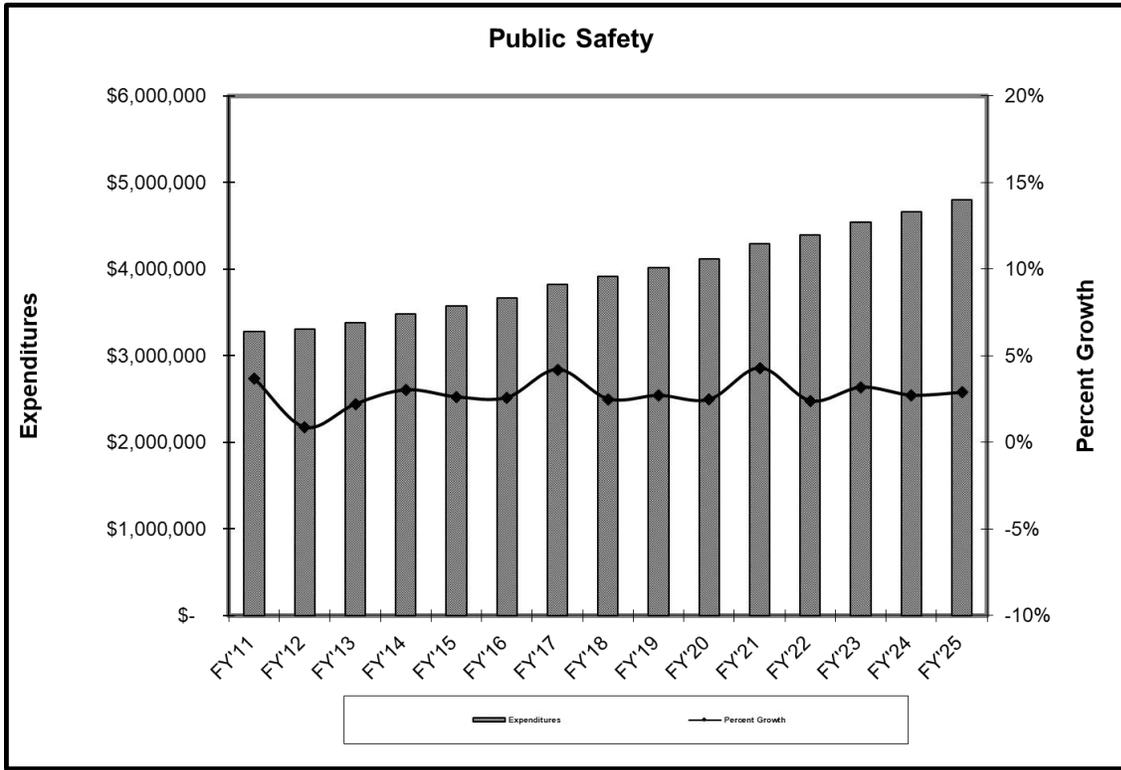
Public Safety includes the police department, the fire department, emergency medical services, the building department, the communications center, emergency management, the dog officer and the public safety building.

Key Issues

- The Public Safety segment of the proposed budget is increasing at 2.9%.
- The Police Department’s budget is absorbing the cost of a maintenance contract (\$22,000) in support of the new digital emergency radio communications system that was purchased and installed in 2023 at a cost of \$1,823,000. Otherwise, the budgets of the remaining departments and programs that comprise the Public Safety segment of the budget are increasing at a total of 2.4%.
- The Town’s three labor agreements (Police, Fire & DPW) will expire in June of 2024. The proposed FY25 budget includes certain assumptions about wage increases that will result from the negotiating process. The Town’s goal in negotiations is to maintain wage and benefit parity with our peer towns so that we can retain competent and talented professional staff, and attract good candidates when vacancies occur.

Warrant Articles

Article 8: Police- Replace Ballistic Vests & Carriers	\$26,654
Article 8: Police- Replacement of Cruiser	\$64,729
Article 8: Fire- Air Supply Unit for SCBA	\$78,000
Article 8: Public Safety Building- Replacement of Boilers	\$115,000



Lincoln Public Schools

FY 23 Actual	FY24 Approved	FY25 Proposed
\$12,109,004	\$13,244,119	\$13,548,852

General Information

The Lincoln Public Schools District serves students from Pre-School through Eighth Grade from three communities: Lincoln resident students, children who reside and attend school on Hanscom Air Force Base, and students who reside in Boston and attend the Lincoln School via the METCO Program. Additionally, many children of Lincoln town employees attend school on the Lincoln campus. The student population is diverse, with more than 40% of students identifying as students of color.

The Lincoln School budget is supported by approximately 89 percent appropriation of Town funds which includes state Chapter 70 and Student Opportunity Act funds and about 11 percent by

several state and federal grant programs, user fees, and reimbursements. The Hanscom school budget is funded by a five-year contract with the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). The DoDEA contract benefits Lincoln School by facilitating cost sharing of the district's central administration and common special services with Hanscom. The DoDEA contract ends at the close of FY25. The District will be applying for a new contract to begin in FY26 and last for a minimum of five years.

FY25 Budget Request for Lincoln Schools

Education is Lincoln's biggest investment – about 40% of the Town's overall operating budget is dedicated to running our schools.

The Lincoln School Committee has approved a \$13,548,852 operating budget request for FY25, including \$13,490,352 from town's general fund appropriation, which is within the 2.5% increase guideline issued by the Finance Committee, and \$58,500 in federal Medicaid grants for separate appropriation by Town Meeting (Article 21). This budget assumes a continuation of the regular educational models and class sizes and includes a new level service to address the needs of students post pandemic.

The proposed FY25 budget includes \$229,537 for improvement initiatives, including:

- **Psychologist - 0.40 FTE**
 - This will supplement the existing .6 Psychologist position to make it full-time, and will allow for increased behavioral and therapeutic supports to specialized programs at the Lincoln School.
- **Grade-Level Field Trips**
 - The cost of grade-level field trips have traditionally been borne by families. This budget includes money to minimize or eliminate the cost of grade-level field trips for families.
- **Expansion of Foundations Literacy Program**
 - The district currently uses the Foundations phonics program at multiple grades to supplement the Revised Units of Study literacy program. This will expand the use of Foundations to first-grade classrooms at the Lincoln School. For the 2024-25 school year, we will continue to use the phonics portions of the Revised Units of Study in kindergarten.
- **Additional After-School Activities**
 - The budget includes multiple stipends to support additional after-school activities for students K-8. It also includes funding for an additional day of the Boston late bus to ensure equitable access to after-school activities for Boston-resident students.
- **AIDE, Curriculum, and Professional Development Support**

- A revised AIDE plan and the Superintendent’s Entry Plan will be presented to the School Committee in the spring. There is flexible funding in the FY25 budget to support near-time priorities identified in those two documents.
- **Data Warehouse and Dashboard**
 - Student data are currently maintained in a variety of different formats and programs. A formal data warehouse and dashboard will allow the schools and district to bring student data into one comprehensive platform, allowing for more timely, sophisticated, and comprehensive analysis

NOTE: The School Budget was written prior to completing negotiations on a three-year contract for Education Support Professionals.

Personnel costs for faculty and staff continue to comprise about 75 percent of the District’s operating expenses and are set by contracts. The number of teachers and support staff on each campus is determined by enrollment, class size policy, and the individual needs of our students.

The remaining portions of the budget are dedicated to general operations, instruction materials, utilities, food service, transportation, and routine maintenance.

Key Issues:

- Utility costs may differ from estimates for the all-electric Lincoln School building as the solar project comes online.
- Special Education Out-of-District Expenses: the FY25 budget is based on currently known out-of-district tuition and transportation costs, which can change as students move into or out of the district.

Warrant Articles

Article 8 (Capital): Replace Maintenance Vehicle F250	\$40,000
Article 8 (Capital): Replace Facilities Director Vehicle	\$25,000
Article 8 (Capital): Wireless Access Point Replacement	\$64,787
Article 8 (Capital): Hartwell, Refresh design for Wooden Window Curtain Wall Replacement	\$15,000
Article 21: Transfer Medicaid reimbursements into budget	\$58,500

District Enrollment

Lincoln’s school budget is dependent on enrollment, student needs, and class size. As of October 1, 2023, the LPS total enrollment pre-K - 8 was 1,070 students. Included in these totals, the district has 29 students in out-of-district placements, 87 METCO students, and 12 employee children.

	PreK	K-4	5-8	Total
Lincoln	30	278	240	548
Hanscom	77	268	177	522
Total	107	546	417	1,070

Strategic Objectives

Our goal as a district is to strengthen the engagement, achievement, and social and emotional development of all students. For the 2023-24 school year, two of our strategic priorities emphasize the importance of equity and culture in reaching that goal. First, we are working to revisit and revise the district’s five-year AIDE plan through a collaborative process that identifies both short-term and long-term steps. Secondly, we are supporting faculty and staff in the implementation of Responsive Classroom to ensure that all students feel a sense of connection and belonging in their classrooms. Finally, as part of the Superintendent’s formal Entry Plan, we are reviewing student learning data, district curricula, and pedagogical practices in order to identify targeted areas for long-term improvement connected to curriculum, instruction, and educator growth and innovation.

The District Strategic Plan is available here: <https://www.lincnet.org/strategicplan>

Lincoln School Building Project Update

The school building project is one of the largest capital projects in the Town’s history. At the December, 2018 Special Town Meeting, residents approved \$88.5 million of financing being raised via bond issuance, \$4.4 million appropriated from the Stabilization Fund, and \$1.0 million appropriated from Free Cash,

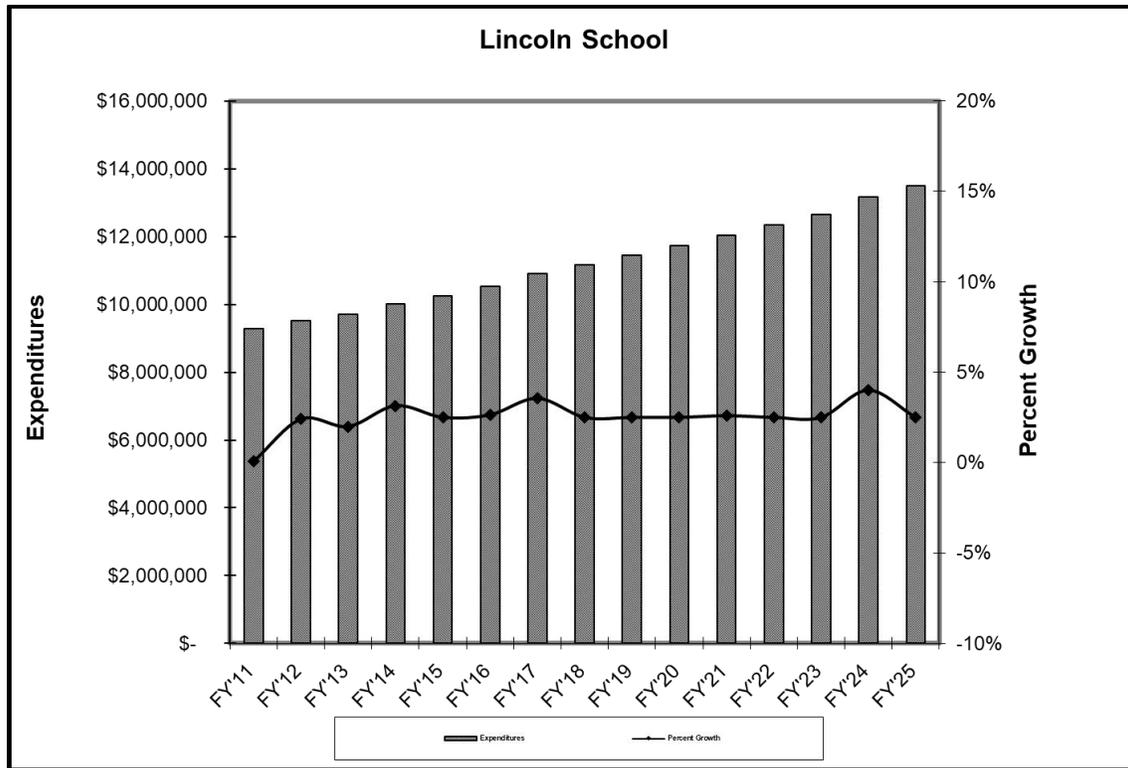
The Finance Committee works closely with the School Building Committee (SBC), the School Committee, and the town professional staff to track schedule and budget risks. Construction on the project began with the construction of a temporary modular facility in July 2019. The revitalized Lincoln School was beneficially occupied with the start of the school year in September 2022. Work continues on completing the last few punch list items and several remaining project tasks which the SBC anticipates will be completed this summer.

Lincoln School Solar Project Update

Acting on behalf of the Town Meeting, the School Committee entered into a power purchase agreement (PPA) and lease with a developer (TotalEnergies) in 2020 to construct and operate a photovoltaic (PV) system. The goal of the PPA is to provide electricity to power the all-electric

Lincoln School building at a rate reduced from that charged by Eversource. The original target date for receiving power was October 2022. The path to system approval has been torturous, requiring Eversource to develop new policies and procedures to handle our large behind-the-meter system, creating significant delays. Additionally, the impact of supply chain issues associated with the COVID pandemic hampered rapid construction by adding tremendous friction to the process. Nevertheless, the planned PV panels totaling about 1.2 MW have been installed on the roofs and carport structures, the 500 KW Tesla battery was installed, and the system was tested through a cold commissioning process.

TotalEnergies was recently notified that a safety device installed on each of the roof-mounted panels must be replaced. The work required for the replacement will take several months, pushing the date for system acceptance and grid connection by Eversource into June, 2024.



Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Final Appropriation	FY25 Proposed***
Total Budget	\$35,910,735	\$37,095,789	\$38,357,107
Offsets *	\$-4,059,151	\$-4,420,394	\$-4,557,899
Total Assessment	\$31,851,584	\$32,675,395	\$33,799,208
Lincoln Assessment **	\$3,981,820	\$4,137,697	\$4,301,727
Lincoln Appropriation	\$4,167,628	\$4,292,657	\$4,421,437

* Offsets include State and Other General Fund Revenues.

** Due to Sudbury’s budget process and Sudbury Town Meeting occurring after Lincoln’s process, Lincoln’s Assessment is subject to change after Lincoln’s budget is finalized. In recent years, any amount from Lincoln’s Appropriation that is not assessed has been moved to the Stabilization Fund.

*** FY25 Total Budget, Offsets, Total Assessment and Lincoln Assessment are current estimates and are subject to change based partly on final Chapter 70 funding and the budget process and vote in Sudbury.

General Information

The FY25 proposed budget for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School generally reflects the continuation of current service levels and meets the Town of Lincoln’s budget guidance. The budget aspires to carry forward most existing staff positions in the operating budget. Due to financial assumptions as outlined below, including the modest impact of a 3.8% increase in health insurance premiums, and slight increases in transportation costs, and a 2.03% increase in Out-Of-District Tuition costs, the district has recommended staffing increases as follows: 0.25 FTE each in Math and Science, 0.25 FTE Substance Interventionist, and 2.0 FTE Special Education Teaching Assistants, totaling 2.75 FTE, which meets the budget Guidelines as set by Lincoln and Sudbury.

The FY25 LSRHS budget will provide the following programmatic impacts:

- It will sustain current staffing and programming
- It will sustain all recent general and special education program improvements
- It will meet all fixed and variable costs
- It supports the LSRHS Portrait of a Graduate for all students

The budget also reflects the of the most recently negotiated 3-year collective bargaining agreement, FY23-FY25 as follows:

	COLA EFFECTIVE DAY 1	COLA MULTI-YEAR
JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025	2%	N/A

The district is noting a modest 1.7% increase in the contract rate for regular transportation and food services. The contractual rate for special education transportation is flat. Out-of-District tuition is currently expected to increase 2.03% net of Circuit Breaker reimbursement from the state. Health insurance is projected to increase by 3.8% and LS expects a 10% increase in pension funding. The budget reflects level funding allocation for its Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) accrued actuarial liability for FY25 of \$383,109.

The Lincoln appropriation encompasses operating expenses, including employee benefits, as well as debt service. The allocation of the required minimum contribution between Lincoln and Sudbury and the enrollment figures for FY25 are based on the Governor’s Budget Chapter 70 numbers as well as the Required Minimum Contribution Amounts as established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The Governor’s Budget is subject to affirmation by the State Legislature.

LSRHS enrollment for FY24 is 1461 per the October 1, 2023 final counts reported to DESE. The number of Lincoln students attending LSRHS is 184 in FY24 (October 1, 2023 enrollment report) and is projected to be 192 for FY25. Projections from a 5-yr cohort survival model indicate that the overall on-campus enrollment could fall as low as 1344 by FY30. While enrollment is declining, staffing has remained almost constant, with modest partial FTE decreases in FY24 plus reductions in staffing occurring through natural attrition. There will be modest staffing additions for FY25. The projected number of students in out-of-district educational placements is 60 students, reflecting an increase of 11 between FY24 and FY25, with a relatively low increase alongside in tuition and transportation costs.

Each town’s share of the annual payment obligation for LSRHS (assessment) consists of two pieces: the amount within the levy (operations) and the amount outside the levy (capital/debt). The amount within the levy is assessed in two parts. The first portion is a minimum contribution mandated by state law and determined by DESE. The allocation of this portion is determined by

a number of factors that include enrollment at LS relative to the total student population of each town, and a property wealth formula established under state law and updated annually. The second portion is the amount of funding above the required minimum contribution. That portion is allocated based upon a three-year rolling average that measures each town's portion of students enrolled at the high school, as well as out-of-district special education and charter/school choice programs. The amount of the assessment outside the levy is typically dedicated to capital projects. These projects can be financed with debt or on a one-time basis. The amount of the assessment outside the levy is apportioned based on the same three-year rolling enrollment proportion.

Lincoln's share of the blended total (net) assessment for FY25 incorporating the two factors described above will increase slightly to 12.7%. Lincoln's apportioned share for LSRHS has been 12-16% for the last 20+ years. Lincoln's minimum required contribution for FY25 is not yet formalized with the volatility in state revenue to confirm the preliminary Ch.70 state funding portion. Lincoln's minimum required contribution for FY24 was 12.8%, or \$2,068,356. Lincoln's share of LSRHS funding above the minimum required contribution is confirmed at 12.69% for FY24, up from 12.56%, reflecting again a very slight increase in the three-year rolling average of Lincoln students enrolled at LSRHS.

The LSRHS Total Budget, as shown in the opening chart is the sum of the operating budget, which is subject to Lincoln and Sudbury's respective Finance Committee guidelines, and capital/debt, which is determined by the terms of the existing construction bonds or new capital projects. The Offsets are then subtracted to determine the Total Assessment. The Lincoln Assessment is then determined by the two-part apportionment ratio.

The LSRHS Regional Agreement requires that the LSRHS budget meet the lower of the town budgets approved by Lincoln or Sudbury. Both the Lincoln and Sudbury Finance Committees adopt annual budget guidelines that establish an allowable increase in spending for the upcoming year. The Lincoln guideline for FY25 is 2.5%, with an additional factor built in to allow for accommodation of variances in the allocation for both towns. This guideline is applied to the LSRHS budget after first accounting for the cost of debt service, health and other insurances, and pension and OPEB contributions. At the time this report was written, Sudbury's FY25 guideline was set at a 3.9% increase over its FY24 budget, inclusive of pensions, insurance and OPEB. It is anticipated that Sudbury's guideline will be more restrictive than Lincoln's guideline.

It is possible that the full amount of funding for LSRHS that is available under the Lincoln Finance Committee's guideline will not be required for spending in FY25. The Finance Committee recommends that any allocation to LSRHS that is not required to fund its final budget assessment be transferred to Lincoln's Town Stabilization Fund to use for needs in subsequent years.

Key Issues:

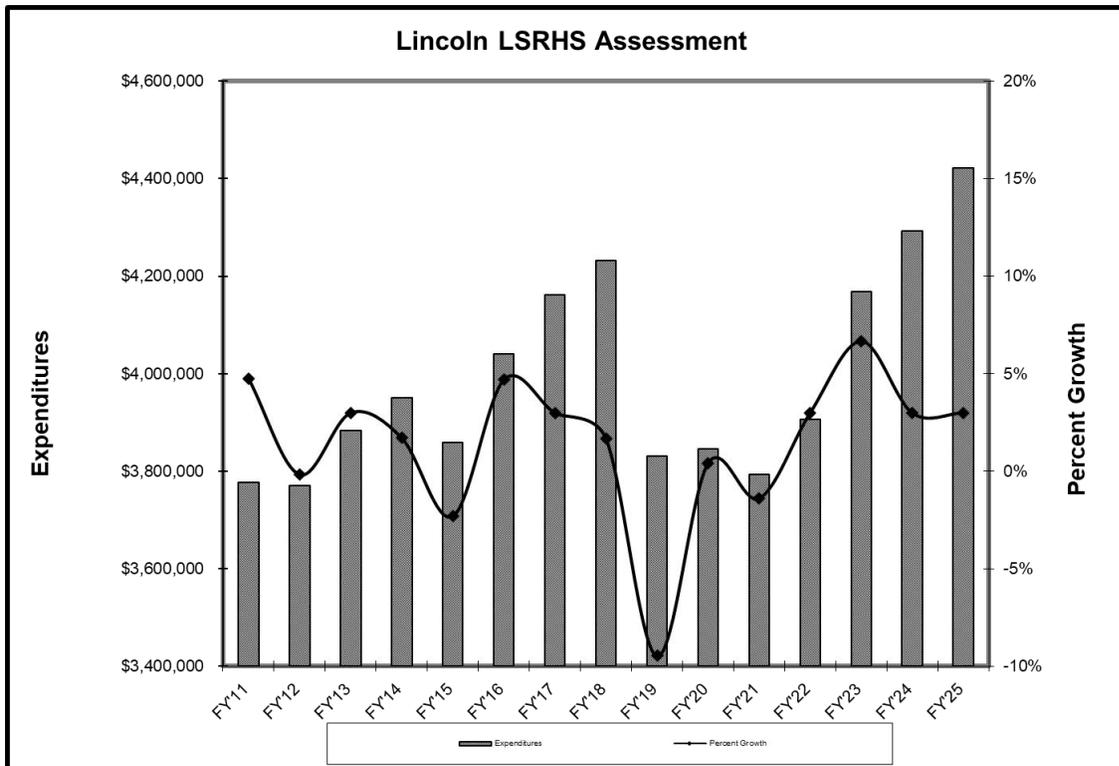
- The proposed FY25 budget meets Lincoln's budget guideline.
- The proposed budget retains current educational programs, inclusive of modest increases in personnel in line with student needs. It requires modestly increased costs for out-of-district and in-district transportation, level funding for OPEB, slightly increased Out-of-

District tuition costs, an increase in health insurance and pension costs, flat projected utility costs, and increased funding for instructional capital.

- The current on-campus enrollment is projected to decline slightly in FY25, and the projection is for steady decline over the next five years.
- The proposed aggregate budget increase is 3.4% (each 1% is \$370,957).
- Lincoln’s share of the total assessment for FY25 is 12.7%, up slightly from FY24 and subject to the publication of Governor’s FY25 Budget, and within that, Lincoln’s Minimum Required Contribution.
- Lincoln’s FY25 total assessment based on the aggregate proposed budget is projected to be \$164,030 higher than FY24.

Warrant Articles

Article 8 (Capital): Exterior Stairwell Construction	\$19,035
Article 8 (Capital): Lighting Control	\$21,015
Article 8 (Capital): WiFi Network Routine Upgrade	\$10,348
Article 19: Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund for LSRHS	\$55,455



**Annual Town Report: FY24
Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School
Executive Summary**

Introduction

The high school serves students from the towns of Lincoln and Sudbury. As such, the school is comprised of students from the Pre-K to 8th Grade “feeder” districts, resident students of the towns that attended non-public schools, and students from Boston who participate in the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) program. This section compares Lincoln-Sudbury to the following neighboring and peer districts: Acton-Boxborough, Bedford, Concord-Carlisle, Lexington, Newton, Wayland, Wellesley, and Weston.

The comparative information provided herein is based on the data provided by the State’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Data for the 2022-2023 school year is the most recent information available. This data is available at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>.

Expenditures

The residents of Lincoln and Sudbury provide a high level of support to their regional high school. In turn, the high school provides a high quality educational experience to its students at a fiscally responsible per pupil expenditure. As shown below, Lincoln-Sudbury’s per pupil expenditure in FY22 was \$24,061, slightly above the group average.

District	FY22 Per Pupil Expenditure	Out of District Tuition as % of Budget
Acton-Boxborough	\$19,315	6.5%
Bedford	\$22,107	7.1%
Brookline	\$25,802	3.5%
Concord-Carlisle	\$24,823	7.1%
Lexington	\$22,737	6.1%
Lincoln-Sudbury	\$24,401	13.2%
Newton	\$24,522	3.9%
Wayland	\$21,579	2.7%
Wellesley	\$25,313	6.2%
Weston	\$30,446	3.8%
Average:	\$24,105	6.01%

Graduation Rates

There are many data points to determine the effectiveness of the educational program at the high school. The state provides comprehensive analysis of MCAS results. These include scores on standardized tests, such as MCAS, and graduation rates. In the most recent DOE report available, for the class of 2022 Lincoln-Sudbury had a 4-year graduation rate of 96.6%, slightly above the average among the peer groups – 96.3%.

4-Year Graduation Rates	
Acton-Boxborough	97.0%
Bedford	98.2%
Concord-Carlisle	98.5%
Lexington	96.1%
Lincoln-Sudbury	96.6%
Newton	96.2%
Wayland	98.5%
Wellesley	95.9%
Weston	95.2%
Group Average:	96.6%

MCAS Results

LSRHS did administer MCAS in May 2023 to the 10th grade class (Class of 2025).

MCAS results from the 2023 “next generation” MCAS scores for 10th graders reveal that 56% of students met expectations and 27% of our tenth grade students exceeded expectations (the highest category) in Math. In 10th grade English, 54% of students met expectations and 26% of our students exceeded expectations. In 10th grade Science, Technology and Engineering 53% of students met expectations and 24% of our students exceeded expectations.

Class Sizes

With the modest decreases in staffing and FY24 seeing a small decrease in enrollment, LSRHS has seen an increase in the percentage of students in classes with 25 students or more, with the median for FY24 being 23 students or less across all subject areas.

The chart below is based on FY23 Semester 1 enrollments.

% of Students in Classes of 25 Students or More

	FY22	FY23	FY24
Computer (Instructional Technology)	49.6%	11.6%	35.4
English	15.5%	12.4	14.3
Fine, Applied, and Technical Arts (FATA)	9.3%	8.3%	13.8
History	36.0%	37.3	34.0
Math	13.9%	35.6	37.5
Science	35.8%	31.9	35.8
Wellness	14.0%	22.7	11.6
World Language	19.3%	16.6	18.2

Vocational Technical High Schools

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 43,179	\$ 350,905	\$ 105,500

General Information

FY18 marked a change in the way in which vocational technical high school services are provided to Lincoln students. As a result, budget estimates for vocational technical high school expenses going forward are less certain than they were in prior years. The Finance Committee’s proposal for FY24 is based on historic enrollments as well as estimated tuition rates and other associated costs.

Through FY17, Lincoln was a member of the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School District (“Minuteman”), a four-year career and technical high school located in Lexington and Lincoln that consisted of 16 member towns. In February 2016, six member towns, including Lincoln, voted to leave the district effective July 1, 2017. In September 2016, the Town of

Belmont voted to leave the district effective July 1, 2020. Also in September 2016, a majority of voters in the remaining district towns approved a \$145 million project to construct a new high school, located in Lincoln. That building was completed in 2019.

Having voted to exit the district, Lincoln is not obligated to pay for the debt service associated with the new building project, however, the Town is assessed a “Capital Fee” (currently, about \$8,200 per student). The Town is also still responsible for its share of prior outstanding debt. Lincoln’s share of debt service on prior borrowings is \$6,902 in FY24. Both the Capital Fee and the prior outstanding debt amounts are included in the recommended budget appropriation.

Enrollment

Enrollment of Lincoln students in the vocational technical high school program at Minuteman in recent years ranged between 6 and 11.

There are currently no Lincoln students enrolled. The table below shows historic Lincoln enrollments.

Lincoln Vocational Technical High School Enrollment, 2006 to 2023
(measured at 10/1)

School Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lincoln	5	4	2	3	4	4	4	6	6	11	8	11	11	10	8	3	1	0

Tuition Rates

Beginning in FY18, Lincoln students were eligible to attend vocational technical high school programs at Minuteman or outside of the Minuteman district. At this time, there are no Lincoln resident students attending vocational technical high schools other than Minuteman. The Town has assumed that should students decide to go to another vocational technical high school in FY25, the cost should be offset by the savings in the budget for Minuteman. Along with expanded choices in vocational technical schools, the amount paid by the Town for its vocational technical students could vary by student. With Lincoln’s students considered non-resident students, tuition will be assessed at rates set by the State Commissioner of Education. Historically, the out-of-district tuition rates were lower than those assessed on a per-pupil basis to Minuteman member towns. The table below shows the out-of-district rates applicable at Minuteman and several other nearby regional vocational technical high schools in recent years.

Name	Location	Out of District Tuition				
		FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24 ³
Assabet Valley	Marlborough	\$16,787	\$16,335	\$17,070	\$17,234	\$18,945
Minuteman	Lincoln	\$17,965	\$18,400	\$18,679	\$19,622	\$20,613
Nashoba Valley	Westford	\$17,965	\$18,048	\$18,143	\$18,084	\$18,382
South Middlesex	Framingham	\$17,965	\$18,400	\$18,679	\$19,622	\$20,613

Additional Costs

In addition to out-of-district tuition, some of the vocational technical high schools assess a fee for special education services. Minuteman charges an additional fee of \$7,940 per student for FY23. The Town is also expected to pay for transportation for students to vocational technical schools, the cost of which is currently shared with the Town of Sudbury.

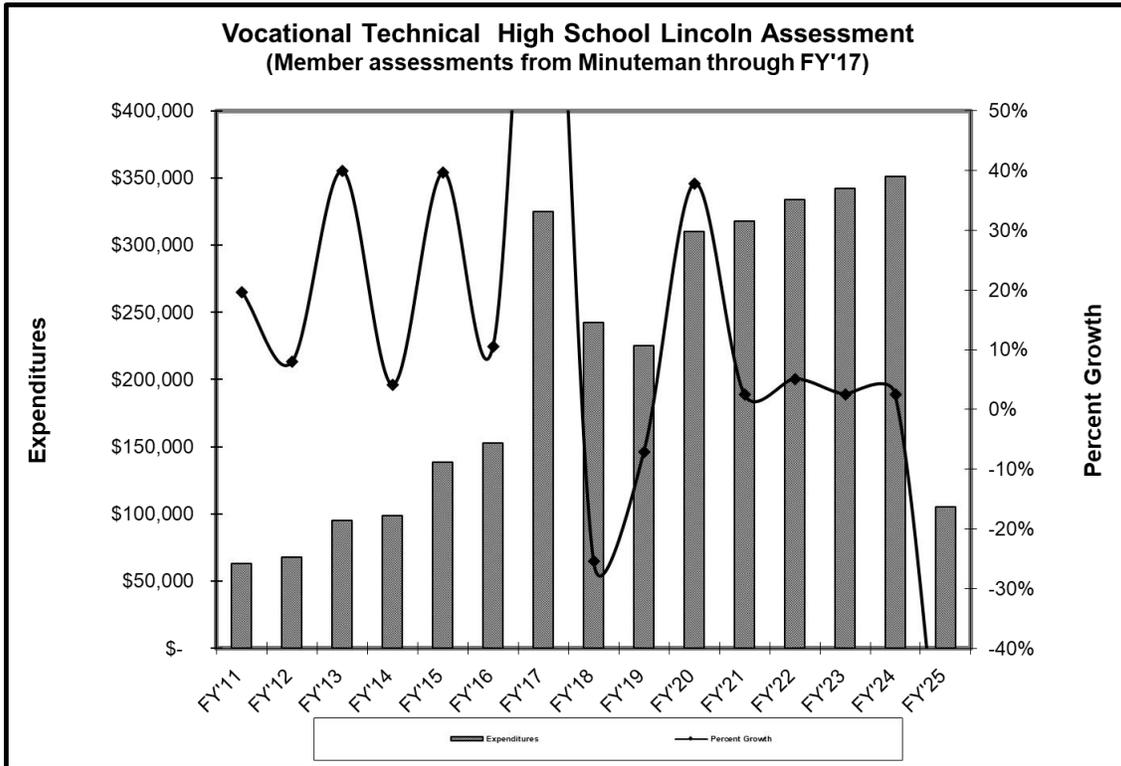
The Finance Committee believes the proposed budget amount would be sufficient to fund Lincoln's share of existing debt service for Minuteman as well as tuition, the Capital Fee, special education services, and transportation costs for high school students who choose to attend a vocational technical high school.

Key Issues:

- There are currently no Lincoln students enrolled at Minuteman.
- Following Lincoln's decision to exit the Minuteman District, Lincoln high school students who wish to enroll in vocational technical programs have more choice.
- Lincoln students at vocational technical high schools will pay out-of-district tuition rates, which are set by the State.
- The Town also expects to pay transportation costs for any Lincoln students enrolled at area vocational technical schools.
- Certain vocational technical high schools in the State assess a per-student fee for special education services.

³ Final FY25 rates were not available at the time of this printing.

- Lincoln remains obligated for debt service on borrowings undertaken while the Town was a member of the Minuteman District.
- Beginning in 2020, non-member towns are assessed a Capital Fee for each student who attends Minuteman.



Public Works and Facilities

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 2,285,065	\$ 2,120,071	\$ 2,207,464

General Information

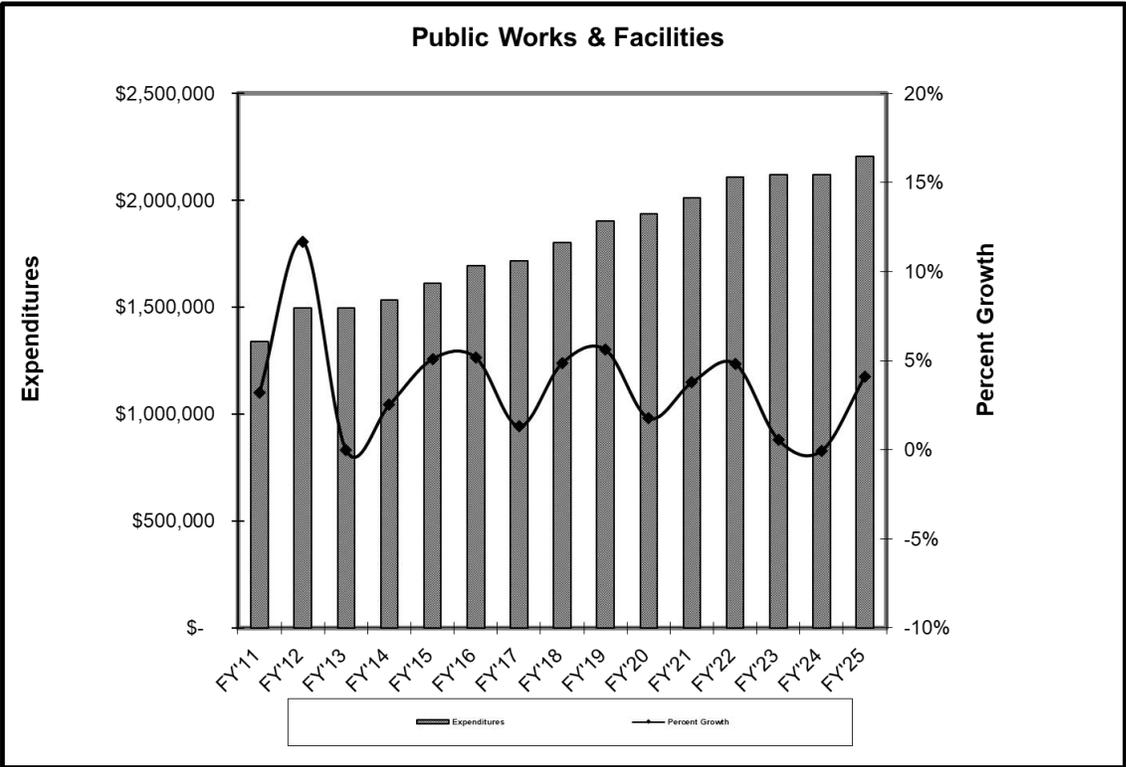
Public Works and Facilities includes Engineering & Consulting, DPW Operation & Maintenance, Snow & Ice Control, Street Lighting, Tree Warden, Building Maintenance, Rubbish Removal, Transfer Station, Facilities, and Cemetery.

Key Issues

- The Public Works segment of the proposed budget is increasing by 4.1% owing primarily to two factors: 1) a \$30,000 increase in the town-wide Consulting & Engineering budget in support of a number of key town initiatives (e.g., Housing Choice Act zoning and planning, Climate Action planning, Roadway & Traffic and Bicycle and Pedestrian planning, and others); and 2) \$18,200 for a ten hour per week Cemetery Commission support position. Collectively, the remaining departments and programs that comprise the Public Works segment of the budget are increasing at 2%.
- Lincoln receives roadway maintenance and improvement funds from the Commonwealth in the form of “Chapter 90” payments. In recent years, payments from the state have averaged \$250,000. In FY24 our Chapter 90 allocation increased by \$154,000 as the result of a supplemental state budget appropriation.
- The Town’s three labor agreements (Police, Fire & DPW) will expire in June, of 2024. The proposed FY25 budget includes certain assumptions about wage increases that will result from the negotiating process. The Town’s goal in negotiations is to maintain wage and benefit parity with our peer towns so that we can retain competent and talented professional staff, and attract good candidates when vacancies occur.

Warrant Articles

Article 8: DPW Loader	\$250,000
Article 8: Cemetery Commission- Digital Records & Mapping Program	\$24,200
Article 20: State Roadway Funds (Chapter 90) - annual vote to accept state highway grant	



Human Services

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 438,731	\$ 389,730	\$ 434,226

General Information

Human Services covers a broad range of programs. It includes the Board of Health, the Council on Aging, Veterans’ Services, and the Minuteman Home Care Membership. The Council on Aging is the largest component. Lincoln has an agreement with Concord that provides for inspection services and health-related technical support.

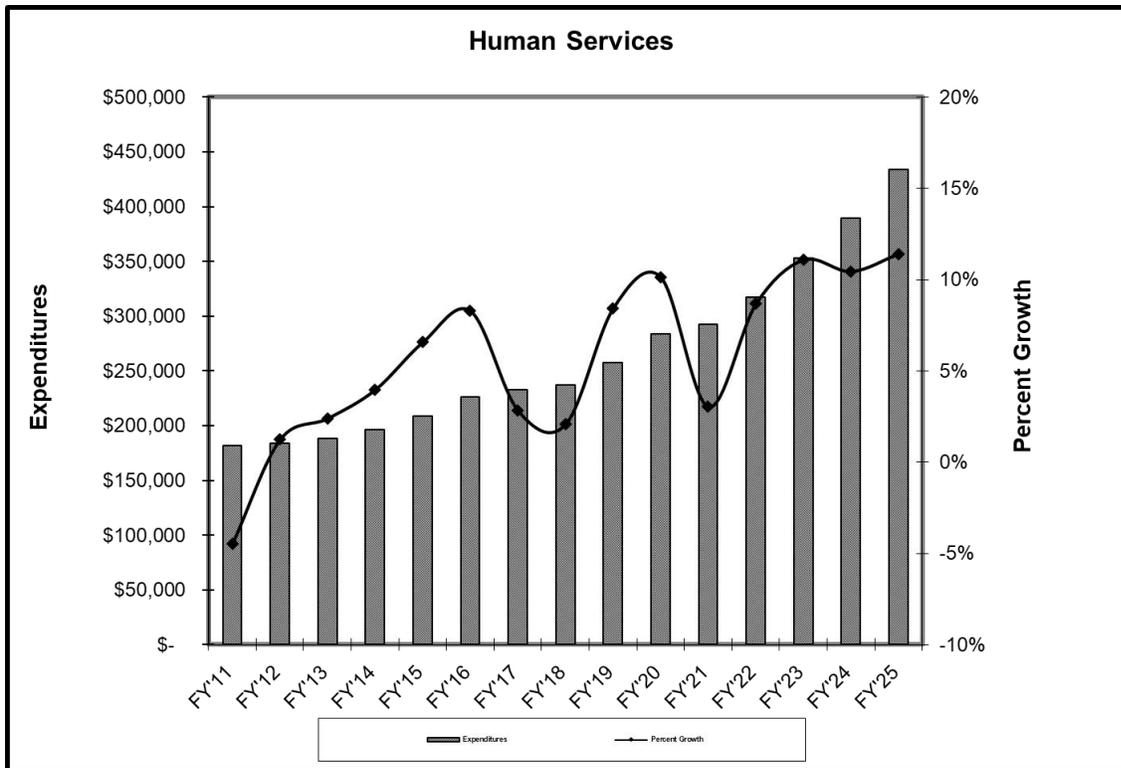
Operating Budget Key Issues

- The Human Services segment of the proposed budget is increasing by 11.4% primarily due to three factors: 1) a decision to backfill the loss of ARPA funds that allowed the Council on Aging & Human Services (COA & HS) to increase Social Worker from 20 to 40 hours per week (at a cost of \$22,000), 2) accounting for the cost of annual step increases for COA & HS staff who have not yet reached the top step of their respective pay grade, and 3) the addition of a \$5,000 stipend to compensate a staff member now providing administrative

support to the Housing Commission. Otherwise, the collective budgets of the remaining departments and programs are increasing by a more customary rate of 2.5%.

Warrant Articles

Article 9: (CPA) Housing Rental Assistance Program	\$97,250
Article 9: (CPA) Housing Support Services	\$30,400
Article 9: (CPA) Affordable Housing Trust Fund Transfer	\$500,000
Article 14: Veterans Work-off Program	\$8,000
Article 23: Create OPIOID Settlement Special Revenue Fund	\$57,063



Recreation, Conservation, Celebrations, Pierce House & Historical Commission

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
Recreation	\$ 609,479	\$ 579,412	\$ 593,898

Conservation	\$ 127,447	\$ 138,741	\$ 162,991
Celebrations	\$ 7,029	\$ 7,151	\$ 7,330
Pierce House	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
Historical Commission	\$0.00	\$5,000	\$5,250

General Information

A six-member Parks and Recreation Committee, half elected and half appointed by the Board of Selectmen, oversees the Parks and Recreation Department. Staffed by a director and assistant director, the department provides a range of recreational activities for citizens of all ages. It manages all of the Town's recreational facilities, including the tennis courts, playgrounds, playing fields and the Codman Pool. The department also operates a children's summer camp and schedules use of facilities at the Lincoln School campus for after-hours activities.

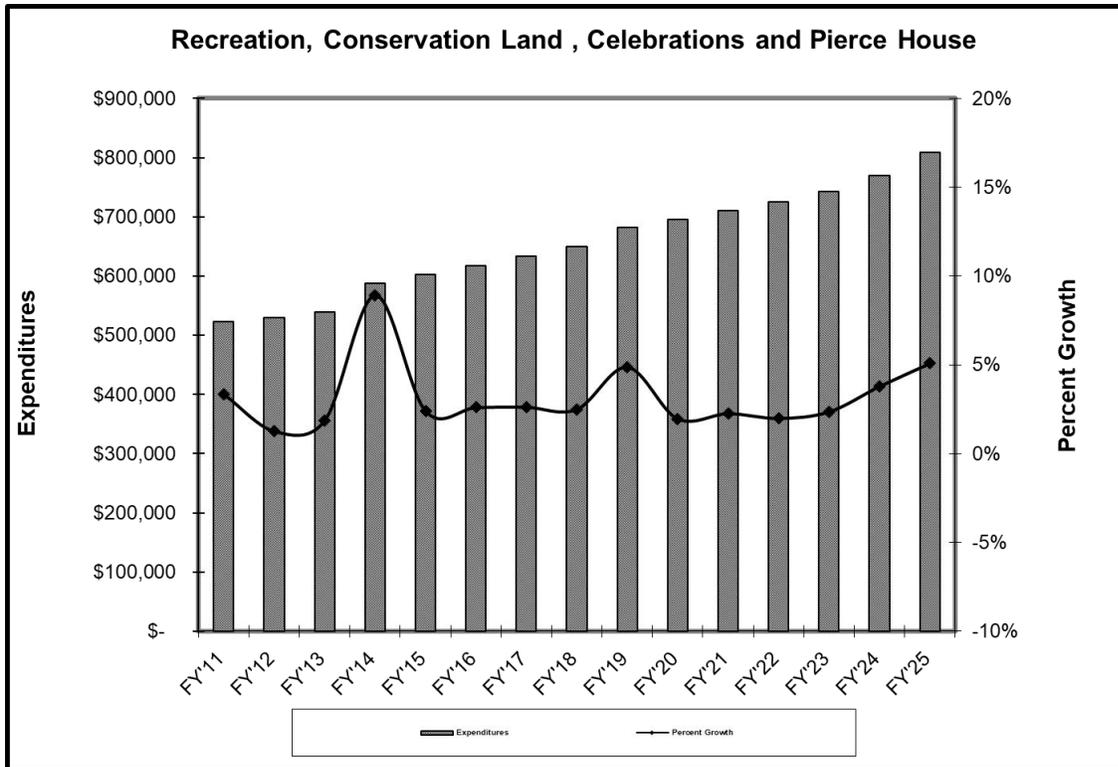
The Parks and Recreation Department also has responsibility for organizing town celebrations, including Memorial Day, all July Fourth festivities, and the Pierce Park Summer Concert Series. The conservation land budget includes expenses for the maintenance and recreational use of conservation land. Personnel costs for the Pierce House are also included in this category.

Key Issues

- The Culture & Recreation segment of the proposed budget is increasing by 3.5%, slightly above the historic growth rate, due to a salary market adjustment for our Conservation Land Management staff.

Warrant Articles

Article 8 : Conservation Work Truck	\$43,938
Article 8: Conservation Commission- Rock Rake	\$5,387
Article 8: Library Building Maintenance	\$63,600
Article 9: (CPA) Historical Commission- Elm Brook Battlefield Preservation Project	\$150,000
Article 9: (CPA) Pierce House- ADA Walkways	\$20,000
Article 9: (CPA) Pierce House -Exterior Carpentry Repairs	\$25,000
Article 9: (CPA) P&R Tennis Court Irrigation System Upgrade	\$38,900
Article 9: (CPA) P&R Tennis Court Wind shield	\$1,200
Article 9: (CPA) P&R Codman Pool Cover	\$27,488
Article 9: (CPA) Library AC replacement pans	\$4,951
Article 9: (CPA) Library Boiler Study	\$23,500
Article 24: Conservation Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	\$15,000



Library

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 1,086,788	\$ 1,148,496	\$ 1,177,208

General Information

The Lincoln Library aims to provide the highest level of service and develop responsive programming, collections, and policies. Our mission is to facilitate and nurture an environment for the exchange of ideas, to strengthen our community, and to enrich the lives of every member. With a dedicated staff of three full-time employees and twenty-seven part-time employees, the library provides a wide range of services for adults and children.

The library trustees and staff continue to manage and maintain the historic and architecturally significant library building and grounds that anchor the town center and include Lincoln’s War Memorial.

Key Issues:

- This budget meets the 2.5% increase recommended by the Finance Committee and maintains current service levels.

- Personnel Services costs will be 1.2% higher in FY25 as some staff are eligible for annual salary increases and to meet the projected 3% cost of living adjustment.
- Library Expenses will be 15% higher in FY25 as fees paid to the Minuteman Library Network for software and services that support library operations will be 7% higher than FY24. In addition, we will have added costs for online communication tools to promote library services and programs to the community. We have increased the training budget for staff to acquire new skills needed for staying abreast of emerging library trends and technologies. We have budgeted for additional technology equipment to improve operational efficiency and support training programs for both library staff and patrons.
- Building Expenses are up 2%. Although natural gas and electricity prices were expected to increase dramatically, this budget was raised by 25% last year so a lower increase this year is warranted.
- The library is required to spend a minimum of 15% of its total municipal appropriation on the library collection (books, audio books, DVDs, music CDs, and digital content) to meet the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' materials expenditure requirement. Meeting this condition determines state funding and is one of the requirements for maintaining state library certification and allows for reciprocal borrowing privileges for our patrons at libraries throughout the state. During FY23, the Library borrowed 31,303 items from other libraries for Lincoln residents and loaned 30,632 items to other libraries for their residents.

Warrant Articles

Article 9: (CPA): Boiler & HVAC System Study	\$23,500
Article 9: (CPA): AC Replacement Pans	\$ 4,950
Article 16: Annual Library Maintenance	\$63,700

Library Services

Programs and Events

The library held a mix of in-person, hybrid, and virtual programs throughout FY23 for adults and children. Our monthly ongoing events included three book groups - Mystery Mondays, Reading for Racial and Social Justice, and the Friday Morning Book Group which has been meeting since 1979! Online Reading Adventures based on a theme were offered monthly. Patrons who participated entered to win a prize at the end of the month. We also host regular groups for writing, knitting, music, films, and photography.

Children's Services

Two weekly story times and one monthly Saturday story time were held at the library for babies through pre-school. Children's librarians also led five monthly book groups for kindergarten through sixth grade. Staff made story time visits to Magic Garden, Birches Preschool, Lincoln Preschool and Hanscom Preschool, as well as LEAP. Children's Librarians offered monthly book talks for middle schoolers at the Lincoln Public Schools, Hanscom Public Schools, and Birches School.

Online Services

In the past fiscal year, the library has continued to expand online services to meet the evolving needs of our diverse user community. Our digital offerings include an extensive collection of e-books, streaming videos, and research databases. Some new additions to highlight are a subscription for digital access to New York Times Cooking and an upgrade to our Novelist Database to add Book Chat, a service that allows patrons to receive book suggestions and reading advice on the spot via chat either in the library or remotely. The Lincoln Review was digitized and added to the Internet Archive. This resource was linked to the Online Collections section of the Archives page on the library website.

FY25 Budget

The 2.5% budget increase will allow the library to maintain the current level of services. We appreciate the support of Lincoln residents who make it possible for us to provide these services.

Accomplishments

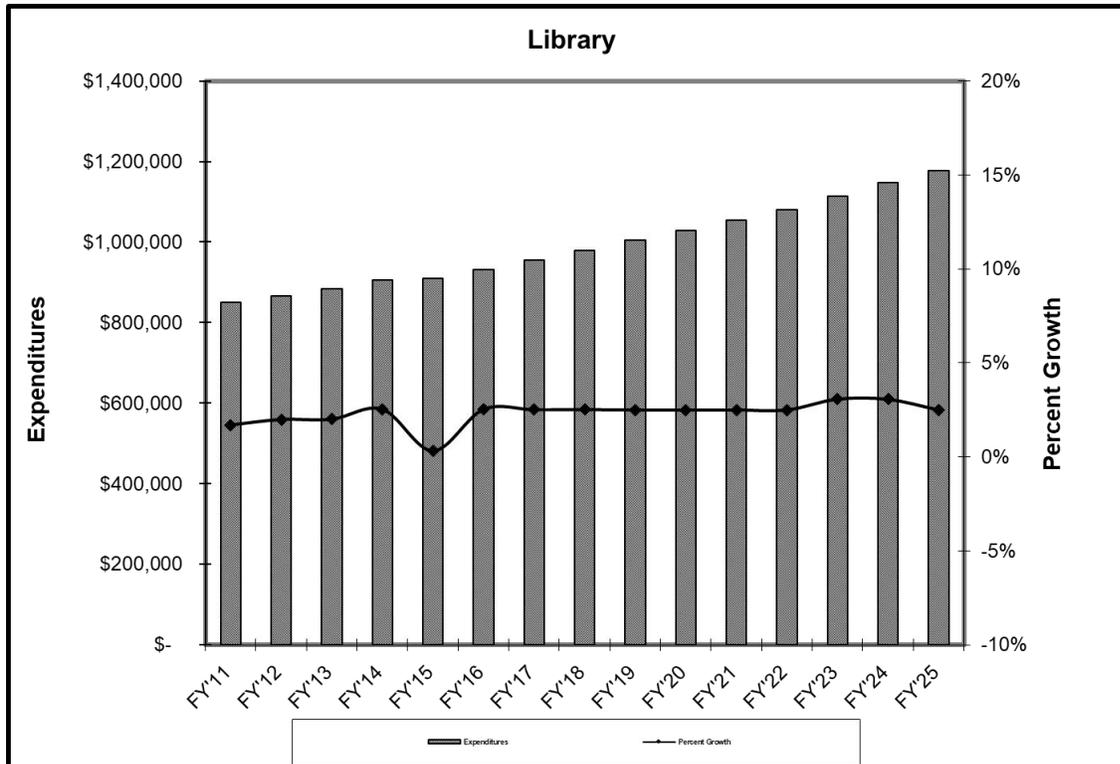
- In FY23, the number of items borrowed from the library totaled 163,116. Eighty-six percent of the materials that were checked out were physical items and 14% consisted of digital content. We welcomed 60,961 visitors, an increase of 24% over FY22. The library hosted 735 programs with 7,415 attendees – up 51% from last year.

	FY2022	FY2023	% Increase
Physical Circulation	134,942	135,342	+0.3%
Digital Circulation	28,648	27,774	(3.1%)
Total Circulation	163,590	163,116	(0.3%)
Ratio of Physical to Digital Circ.	82% : 18%	86% : 14%	
Hanscom AFB Circulation	3,245	1,679	(48.3%)
Reference Questions	6,092	6,354	+4.3%
Programs	405	735	+80.7%
Program Attendance	4,913	7,415	+50.9%
Patron Visits	48,988	60,961	+24.4%
Cardholders	3,763	3,773	+0.3%

- **Redesigned Website** – A redesigned library website was launched on August 4th. It provides the public with a simplified navigation menu, dedicated pages for the library’s ongoing events, and the Library of Things collection as well as better website searching and improved mobile access.
- **New Study Room** - The library was pleased to offer a new quiet study room, this fall. We saw increased patron demand for a space to take a private zoom meeting or have a small conference. Through funding from the Friends of the Lincoln Library, some shelving was relocated, and a door was added to the main floor Turret Room located off the reference room. The study room opened in October with 168 bookings as of December 2023.

Challenges

- Adapting and maintaining a historic library building to meet current demands, offer collaborative spaces and accommodate user needs.
- Addressing disparities in digital literacy skills among library users through targeted educational programs and resources.
- Ensuring that library services and resources are accessible to all members of the community, including those with disabilities or diverse needs.



Debt Service

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 4,735,813	\$ 4,759,169	\$ 4,760,669

General Information

Debt service represents principal and interest payments on the Town's outstanding loan obligations. It increases when Town Meeting authorizes short-term borrowing or the issuance of bonds. It decreases as the loans or bonds mature. Because principal has traditionally been repaid

on a level basis and interest is paid on outstanding balances, debt service is “front loaded” with high payments initially that decline as principal is paid down over time (unlike a mortgage payment that remains level throughout its life). Some debt, however, such as the debt for the Town Offices renovation, was issued with a hybrid financing structure, with initial years of level debt service (like a home mortgage), converting to level principal payments in later years. This structure has the effect of reducing the front loading effect of the debt, resulting in a smaller impact on property taxes, but does result in more total interest paid out over the life of the bond.

Most recently, the Lincoln School building project was bonded over a 30 year term and entirely with level debt service due to its large size and the desire by the Finance Committee to best match the impact and term of the debt to the expected lifetime of the renovated buildings. The first tranche of that funding (\$80 million in bonds) was issued in February 2019, out of \$88.5 million of debt authorized for the project. The Town raised the remaining \$8.5 million authorized in March of 2022, with payments starting in September 2022. For FY25, the debt service represents approximately \$2.9 million for interest payments and approximately \$1.8 million for principal payments.

The Town of Lincoln continues to maintain the most favorable long-term bond rating available, AAA, from S&P. This rating provides for the lowest borrowing costs available for future indebtedness. Town approval of debt exclusions (i.e. votes to exclude debt service from Proposition 2 ½ property tax limitations) is a positive credit rating factor.

Note: debt service for LSRHS is part of the high school budget and not included in this section of the report.

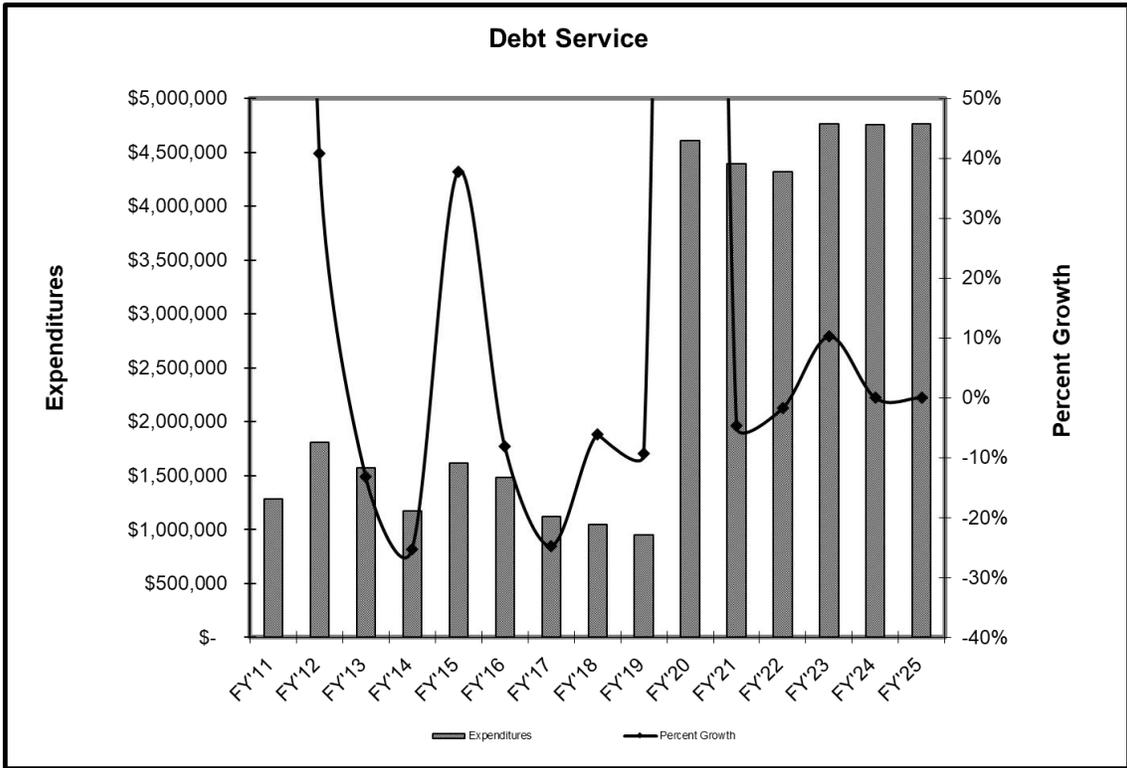
Key Issues:

- Projected debt service for FY25 is level compared to FY24. Current outstanding debt on the School Building Project is structured as level debt payments, and thus remains the same throughout the term of the bond.
- The FY25 amount excludes \$287,460 of debt service on the Town Offices project, that the Community Preservation Committee is recommending be funded with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. It also excludes \$103,550 of debt service for the Wang property, which was authorized for CPA funds by a prior year vote.

Warrant Articles

Article 9: (CPA) Wang Property Debt Service (prior year vote)	\$103,550
Article 9: (CPA) Debt Service on Town Office Renovation	\$287,460
Article 17: Debt Stabilization Fund Appropriation	TBD*

*To be determined at town meeting, depending on the outcome of the Community Center vote. If residents do not approve the project, the Finance Committee is recommending that the \$2 million of Free Cash proposed to fund the project be put into the Stabilization Fund.



Pension and Insurance

FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget	FY25 Proposed
\$ 7,193,968	\$ 8,768,467	\$ 8,888,389

General Information

This category covers health insurance, retirement assessment, unemployment insurance, FICA/Medicare, life insurance, and general insurance, e.g., property and casualty. Overall for FY25, this budget is 1.4% higher than FY24.

The largest component of this category of expense is health insurance, which represents about \$4.5 million, or about 51%, of the FY25 Pensions and Insurance budget. The Town offers health insurance plans to its employees, including employees of the Lincoln Public Schools. Note: school employee health insurance expenses are carried in this line item, not in the K-8 School Budget.

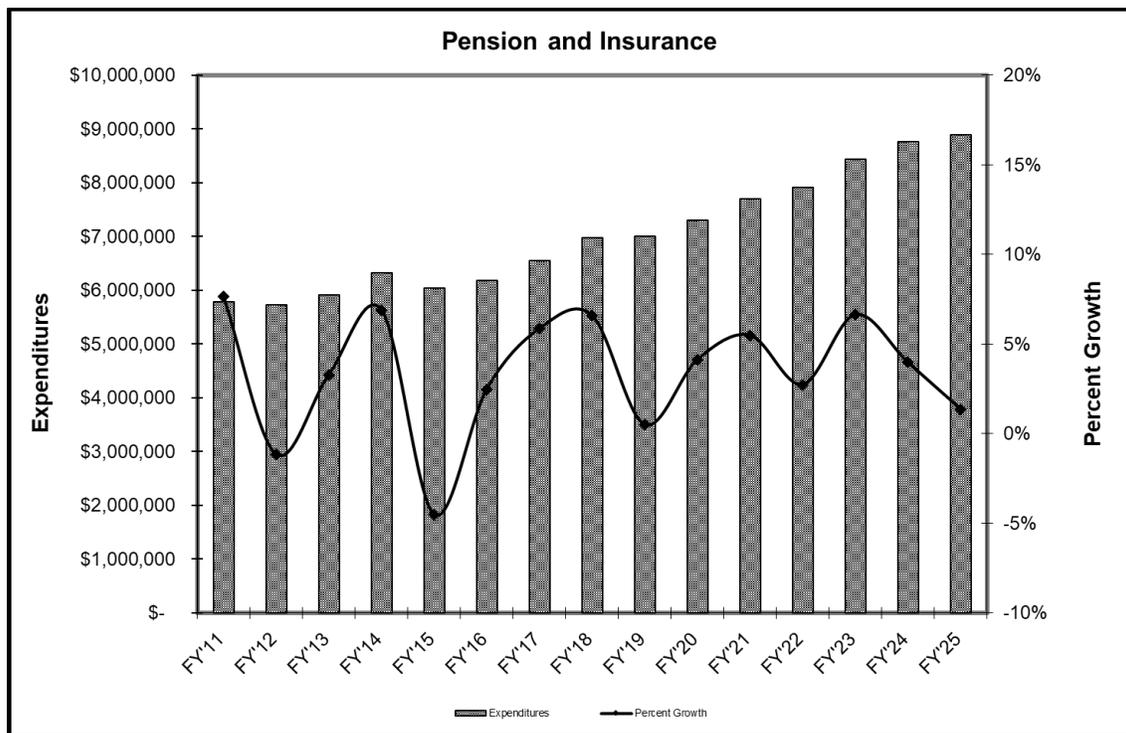
In recent years the Town, with the assistance of the employee unions, has saved approximately \$1.6 million in annual health care costs. The savings result from a number of actions including:

adoption of Section 18, which requires qualified retirees to join Medicare (FY09); health insurance plan design changes (FY12); conversion of health insurance program to Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) from self-insurance (FY11); steps to reduce the cost of retiree prescription drug benefits (FY17); plan design changes including an increase in ER co-pay (FY18). In addition, the Town has implemented plan design changes that shifted enrollment to lower premium plans. The Town pays 60% of premium costs.

The Town’s assessment for retirement contributions accounts for about \$3.0 million, or about 34.5% of the FY25 Pensions and Insurance budget. Lincoln is a member of the Middlesex Retirement System and contributes annually to a retirement fund that covers public sector employees within the former Middlesex County. The assessment continues to grow each year as employees earn a portion of their retirement with each year of service as well as with the requirement to fully fund the liability by the year 2037. For FY25, the cost is expected to increase slightly (0.6%) compared to FY24.

General Insurance includes worker’s compensation, liability insurance, and the bonding of appropriate Town personnel. The cost of this insurance is expected to be \$689,589 in FY25, a 14% increase over FY24.

The Town also pays for unemployment, life insurance and employee-related FICA/Medicare costs. State and federal law, personnel by-laws, and union contracts determine the Town’s contributions. In combination, these expenses are expected to total \$587,375 in FY25, a 2.5% increase from FY24.



Water Department

	FY23	FY24	FY25
Budget	\$1,926,819**	\$2,049,390**	\$2,098,750**
Actual	\$2,126,305	TBD	TBD
Voted from retained earnings	\$62,500	\$68,000	\$45,000

** FY23-FY25 budgets include a \$75,000 emergency reserve fund that reverts to the water surplus fund if not used.

General Information

The Lincoln Water Department (LWD) maintains Lincoln’s water supply and distribution system, providing fire protection capacity and assuring the Town is supplied with an adequate quantity and quality of drinking water. As an Enterprise Fund, its operating budget is funded entirely through fees paid by water consumers. Revenues in excess of operating costs are contributed to retained earnings, which are used as a surplus fund for capital or emergency needs; its balance at the start of FY2024 was \$1,626,284, an increase of \$109,893 from its balance at the beginning of FY2023 of \$1,522,391. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has allowed the Lincoln Water Department to invest in infrastructure without increasing water rates for the past few years. It has also allowed us to use funds from our operating budget to initiate our unidirectional flushing program, which includes the exercising of valves and hydrants throughout the system. With a significant capital improvement project to come in future years; for water main replacement and possible additions or modifications of water treatment, we are working on a 20-year capital improvement spending plan that will match annual water rate increases to forecasted capital improvement spending.

Key Issues

- *Staffing:* We were happy to welcome Daniel Mattus as a water operator in the Spring of 2023. He brings a wealth of treatment and distribution experience and has been an excellent addition to our staff.
- *Capital projects:* The Bedford Road Water Storage Tank Cover Repair has been completed with ARPA funds. We are in the process of replacing the Tower Road Well with ARPA funds. Test well and a report have been completed; well construction proposal and bidding are due this spring. We are in the middle of a SCADA System Upgrade (hardware, software and programming) for the Water Treatment Plant, Tower Road Well, Bedford Road Tank and Raw Water Pump Station that will make communication and operation more robust. At this year’s ATM, the LWD will seek to fund a segment of the Bedford Road / Lincoln Road Water Main Replacement project.

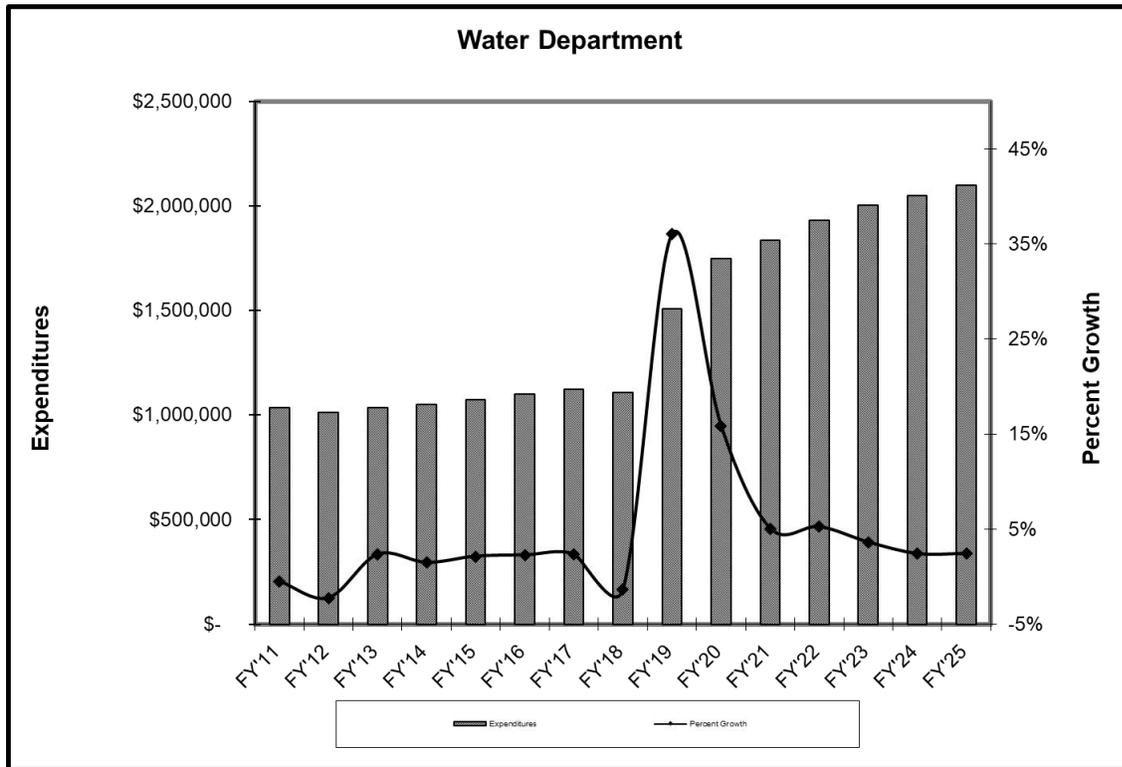
- *Longer-term financial strategic planning:* Lincoln has been invited to join a regional group of towns to consider possible regional membership to MWRA. The timeline on this is still many years out, but it may represent potential benefits over joining as an individual town, both in terms of costs as well as our eligibility to join. With regulatory changes around PFAS and PFOS becoming increasingly more aggressive; in the long-run, there could be economies of scale to be shared across all MWRA members for increased treatment costs to deal with lower Minimum Contaminant Levels for PFAS, PFOS and potentially other related compounds. Lincoln has 58 miles of water mains, virtually all of which are decades beyond their expected life. To be in the running for large SRF or MassWorks grants for such projects, the LWD must proactively do the engineering work before applying; and, in some cases show that the town has voted to fully fund the project. Having “shovel-ready” projects is an important criterion to be met for such grants. We will be finishing up the engineering work in FY24 and preparing to go out to bid for a segment of Bedford / Lincoln Road Water Main replacement in FY25. The LWD has finalized the Asset Management Plan project which will help prioritize long-term investments. Pending this project, there may be other potential long-term strategic and capital-intensive projects to be considered, along with the replacement of water mains and the treatment consequences of stiffer regulatory requirements, as components of any longer-term financial strategic plan.
- *Water rates:* Water rates will be reviewed as we bring our 20 year Capital Improvements Plan into focus. Thanks to the modest budget increase in FY24, the proposed budget increase for FY25, and the generous distribution of ARPA funds to the LWD, there is less pressure than there normally would be to begin to raise rates. However, with inflation in personnel and supplies costs, known needed repairs to the water mains and other longer-term considerations, the commissioners may raise rates in the next year. Current water rates in Lincoln result in an annual cost of \$656 for a typical use of 70,000 gallons / year, marginally lower than the median of \$704 for neighboring towns; well below the median of \$984 for a sample of eight similarly small towns in MA that, like Lincoln, need to amortize high fixed costs over a small population.

For FY25, the Water Department is requesting \$40,000 to replace an air compressor at the Treatment Plant that operates the pneumatic valves, \$120,000 to start replacing our water meters with smart meters, \$45,000 from retained earnings to pay for an M36 Water Audit (which will be reimbursed by a state Clean Water Trust grant) and \$2,200,000 for phase 1 of the Bedford / Lincoln Road water main replacement project. We did place the water main replacement project in the SRF (State Revolving Fund) system looking for low interest loans and / or principal forgiveness loans, but it did not make the initial cut. PFAS is dominating State and Federal funding priorities right now.

Below is a preliminary itemization of each warrant amount; please consult the Town Meeting motion for final values.

Warrant Article 22 – Authorize \$278,411 for Water Capital Improvements

Category	Description	Amount	Funding Source
Air Compressor	Air Compressor to replace aging unit at the treatment plant that operates pneumatic valves	\$40,000	Bonding
Smart Water Meter Upgrade	Initial phase to include data collection tower of smart water meter upgrade – will be a multi-year project	\$120,000	Bonding
Bedford / Lincoln Road Water Main Replacement	One segment of Bedford / Lincoln Road Water Main replacement. The only way to tackle the daunting task of updating water mains is to move forward.	\$2,200,000	Bonding
M36 Water Audit	Mandatory by the DEP, we have received a grant from the MA Clean Water Trust to reimburse us for this cost.	\$45,000	Retained Earnings
	Total Water Capital Projects	\$2,405,000	



WATER DEPARTMENT – 2023 Annual Report

Commissioners:

Steven Gladstone, Chair
Matthew Bio
Patrick Lawler

Established in 1874, the Lincoln Water Department (LWD) provides clean, safe drinking water and fire flow protection throughout the Town. The main components of the system are: two sources of supply, Flint’s Pond and the Tower Road Well, the raw water pump station, the micro-filtration plant on Sandy Pond Road which treats the Flint’s Pond water, the 1.2-million-gallon storage tank on Bedford Road, 53 miles of distribution piping, and 488 fire hydrants.

Governed by three elected Commissioners, the Department operates as an Enterprise Fund, as required by state law; being funded entirely by user fees. Revenues are managed to meet or exceed expenditures on a year-to-year basis, with the difference (retained earnings) held in reserve to fund emergency repairs, capital expenditures, and system improvements. At the end of FY23, the Cash Reserve was \$1,626,284. Our operating budget and capital expenditures are approved by the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

	Operating Budget	Revenue	Capital Budget
FY2023	\$1,926,301	\$2,126,305	\$142,500*
FY2024	\$1,974,390		\$315,000
FY2025 (Proposed)	\$2,023,750		\$2,405,000

* Does not include \$1,450,000 of federal funding recommended by the ARPA Working Group

The proposed operating budget for FY25 reflects the continuation of proactive repair and maintenance of the distribution system infrastructure and higher personnel costs.

Lincoln Water Department received a \$1.45 million ARPA grant that enabled necessary maintenance of the water system without impact to rate payers. The grant proceeds allowed for; repair to the Bedford Road Water Storage Tank cover repair (completed), installation of replacement well on Tower Road, distribution system maintenance, and SCADA System upgrade at the Filtration Plant. The ARPA grant for capital projects has allowed LWD to maintain a healthy operating budget and avoid the need for rate increases for the last few years.

To protect the Charles River watershed, the MASS DEP issues a Water Management Act withdrawal permit to limit water use. Our usage has historically exceeded the permitted Charles River Watershed annual withdrawal limit, our RGPCD (residential gallons per capita per day) and the target of $\leq 10\%$ unaccounted for water loss. In response, the LWD is contracting leak detection surveys biannually (instead of once every three years) and working with residents to repair found leaks quickly. Residents have also helped us locate a few substantial leaks where water was leaking from the distribution system directly into storm drains without appearing on the surface. We are confident these measures will help us get closer to our Water Permit goals.

There is currently a study under way to evaluate a regional approach to water supply for the metro west area; evaluating the option of obtaining drinking water from the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) in the future. Joining the MWRA water supply would offer a number of benefits, including five times greater drought tolerance. Any MWRA connection would be a long-term option, requiring 10-20 years to implement. Lincoln Water Department will continue to evaluate such options and continues to assess the best path forward for the future of the town's water supply.

We happy to announce the promotion of Rick Nolli to Distribution Foreman. We also welcome Daniel Mattus to our Water Operations team. Dan brings a wealth of experience with distribution systems and various treatment techniques.

We were sad to say goodbye to Michelle Barnes, who served as Water Commissioner from 2019 until Spring 2023 and Chaired for the last several months. We are grateful for her years of exemplary service and are happy to she is still volunteering in Lincoln as the Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Rural Land Foundation and the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (since May of 2019).

2023 Water Department Staff:

- Alison Boland (Administrative)
- Gary Tuck (Water Treatment Plant Manager),
- Rick Nolli (Distribution Foreman / Treatment)
- Will MacInnes (Distribution / Treatment)
- Dan Mattus (Distribution / Treatment)
- Davis Scribner (weekend / holiday operations)
- Nick Iarussi (weekend / holiday operations)
- Darin LaFalam (Superintendent)

11. Appendix

**TABLE 1
FISCAL DETAIL
FY 2023-2025**

		ACTUAL EXPENDITURES FY23	CURRENT YEAR BUDGET FY24	PROPOSED BUDGET FY25
GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
1114	MODERATOR	-		
	Personnel Services	-	500	500
	Expense		1,500	1,500
	TOTAL 1114	-	2,000	2,000
1122	SELECT BOARD			
	Personnel Services	500	400	400
	Expense	1,131	3,000	3,000
	TOTAL 1122	1,631	3,400	3,400
1124	DIVERSTIY & ANTI-RACISM			
	Personnel Services	-	-	-
	Expense	2,680	15,000	15,000
	TOTAL 1122	2,680	15,000	15,000
1290	TOWN OFFICES			
	Personnel Services	1,183,571	1,234,750	1,365,931
	Expense	580,463	596,264	645,183
	TOTAL 1290	1,764,034	1,831,014	2,011,114
11312	FINANCE COMMITTEE			
	Expense	184	640	656
	TOTAL 11312	184	640	656
11322	RESERVE FUND			
	Reserve Fund Appropriation	299,566	601,000	616,025
	TOTAL 11322	299,566	601,000	616,025
1137	ASSESSORS			
	Personnel Services	74,601	76,370	78,843
	Expense	95,933	102,250	104,200
	TOTAL 1370	170,534	178,620	183,043
11512	LAW DEPARTMENT			
	Expense	131,534	82,500	82,500
	TOTAL 11512	131,534	82,500	82,500
1590	TOWN ARCHIVES			
	Personnel Services	21,225	25,073	26,593
	Expense	1,121	1,771	1,886
	TOTAL 1590	22,346	26,844	28,479
1161	TOWN CLERK			
	Personnel Services	234,761	256,152	265,631
	Expense	13,592	11,597	11,597
	TOTAL 1161	248,353	267,749	277,228
1162	REGISTRAR OF VOTERS			
	Personnel Services	350	8,450	8,450
	Expense	15,451	15,782	16,300
	TOTAL 1162	15,801	24,232	24,750

1171	CONSERVATION COMMISSION			
	Personnel Services	175,553	184,213	196,539
	Expense	5,223	4,250	4,250
	TOTAL 1171	180,776	188,463	200,789
1172	GREEN ENERGY COMM			
	Personnel Services	348	5,000	5,000
	Expense		2,500	2,500
	TOTAL 1171	348	7,500	7,500
1175	PLANNING BOARD			
	Personnel Services	210,987	218,740	227,926
	Expense	4,621	9,800	5,160
	TOTAL 1175	215,608	228,540	233,086
1176	BOARD OF APPEALS			
	Personnel Services	32,567	32,900	34,006
	Expense	2,398	3,240	3,537
	TOTAL 1176	34,965	36,140	37,543
1792	AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION			
	Personnel Services			
	Expense	6,245	6,401	6,555
	TOTAL 1792	6,245	6,401	6,555
1195	TOWN REPORT			
	Expense	36,100	30,000	22,650
	TOTAL 1195	36,100	30,000	22,650
1191	TOWN BUILDINGS			
	Personnel Services	66,210	69,000	73,101
	Expense	76,734	140,223	167,305
	TOTAL 1991	142,945	209,223	240,406
	TOTALS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT	3,273,648	3,739,266	3,992,724
	PUBLIC SAFETY			
1211	POLICE DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	1,735,497	1,797,655	1,835,312
	Expense	136,609	138,822	137,576
	TOTAL 1211	1,872,106	1,936,477	1,972,888
1221	FIRE DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	1,656,225	1,699,205	1,744,609
	Expense	70,332	71,240	73,835
	TOTAL 1221	1,726,557	1,770,445	1,818,444
1231	EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES			
	Personnel Services	86,100	86,750	86,500
	Expense	30,846	30,989	30,850
	TOTAL 1231	116,946	117,739	117,350
1249	BUILDING DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	240,394	229,610	237,144
	Expense	9,512	15,932	15,375
	TOTAL 1249	249,905	245,542	252,519
1251	COMMUNICATIONS CENTER			
	Personnel Services	372,710	375,175	388,192
	Expense	41,087	44,683	64,418
	TOTAL 1251	413,798	419,858	452,610

1291	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT			
	Personnel Services	3,000	5,000	5,000
	Expense	14,708	12,762	12,762
	TOTAL 1291	17,708	17,762	17,762
1292	DOG OFFICER			
	Expense	13,201	12,000	18,681
	TOTAL 1292	13,201	12,000	18,681
1299	PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING			
	Personnel Services	-	-	-
	Expense	136,515	142,168	145,700
	TOTAL 1299	136,515	142,168	145,700
TOTALS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY		4,546,736	4,661,991	4,795,954
EDUCATION				
1310	LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM			
	Personnel Services & Expense	12,612,162	13,161,319	13,490,352
	TOTAL 1310	12,612,162	13,161,319	13,490,352
1331	LINCOLN-SUDBURY REG HS			
	Regional School District Assessment	4,167,628	4,292,657	4,421,436
	TOTAL 1331	4,167,628	4,292,657	4,421,436
1333	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL ASSESSMENT(S)			
	Regional School District Assessment	43,179	350,905	105,500
	TOTAL 1332	43,179	350,905	105,500
TOTALS FOR EDUCATION		16,822,968	17,804,881	18,017,288
PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES				
1411	ENGINEERING & CONSULTING			
	Expense	188,637	138,000	168,000
	TOTAL 1411	188,637	138,000	168,000
1422	DPW OPERATION & MAINTENANCE			
	Personnel Services	790,308	834,900	864,170
	Expense	403,426	387,690	399,360
	TOTAL 1422	1,193,734	1,222,590	1,263,530
1423	DPW SNOW & ICE CONTROL			
	Personnel Services	67,887	90,130	92,370
	Expense	308,074	240,500	233,500
	TOTAL 1423	375,961	330,630	325,870
1424	STREET LIGHTING			
	Expense	15,374	14,000	17,000
	TOTAL 1424	15,374	14,000	17,000
1427	TREE WARDEN			
	Expense	9,523	8,500	8,700
	TOTAL 1427	9,523	8,500	8,700
1429	DPW BUILDING			
	Expense	28,760	35,896	29,200
	TOTAL 1429	28,760	35,896	29,200

1434	TRANSFER STATION			
	Personnel Services	55,600	57,000	58,400
	Expense	264,899	206,700	206,500
	TOTAL 1434	320,499	263,700	264,900
1435	FACILITIES DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	64,789	71,769	74,502
	Expense	1,699	2,526	2,453
	TOTAL 1435	66,489	74,295	76,955
1491	CEMETERY DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	7,406	7,100	27,949
	Expense	22,442	25,360	25,360
	TOTAL 1491	29,848	32,460	53,309
TOTALS FOR PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES		2,228,825	2,120,071	2,207,464
HUMAN SERVICES				
1511	BOARD OF HEALTH			
	Personnel Services	18,990	32,000	33,100
	Expense	50,130	33,477	31,998
	TOTAL 1511	50,130	65,477	65,098
1522	MINUTEMAN HOME CARE			
	Expense	1,594	1,634	1,675
	TOTAL 1522	1,594	1,634	1,675
1541	COUNCIL ON AGING			
	Personnel Services	247,023	262,149	300,303
	Expense	16,977	18,094	18,694
	TOTAL 1541	264,000	280,243	318,997
1543	VETERANS' SERVICES			
	Personnel Services	5,202	5,332	
	Expense	117,805	37,044	43,456
	TOTAL 1543	123,007	42,376	43,456
1591	HOUSING COMMISSION			
	Personnel Services	-	-	5,000
	TOTAL 5910	-	-	5,000
TOTALS FOR HUMAN SERVICES		438,731	389,730	434,226
CULTURE & RECREATION				
1611	LIBRARY			
	Personnel Services	782,357	822,402	832,263
	Expense	239,206	240,104	257,195
	TOTAL 1611	1,021,563	1,062,506	1,089,458
1612	LIBRARY BUILDING			
	Expense	65,225	85,990	87,750
	TOTAL 1612	65,225	85,990	87,750
1631	RECREATION DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	412,667	429,190	441,029
	Expense	196,812	150,222	152,869
	TOTAL 1631	609,479	579,412	593,898
1651	CONSERVATION LAND			
	Personnel Services	117,310	127,718	151,968
	Expense	11,137	11,023	11,023
	TOTAL 1651	128,447	138,741	162,991
1661	CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE			
	Expense	7,029	7,151	7,330
	TOTAL 1661	7,029	7,151	7,330

16931	PIERCE HOUSE			
	Personnel Services	40,000	40,000	40,000
	TOTAL 16931	40,000	40,000	40,000
16911	Historical Commission			
	Personnel Services	-	5,000	5,000
	Expense			250
	Total 16911	-	5,000	5,250
TOTALS FOR CULTURE & RECREATION		1,871,744	1,918,800	1,986,677
DEBT SERVICE				
1791	INTEREST SHORT-TERM DEBT/ISSUANCE COSTS			
	Expenses	-	25,000	25,000
	TOTAL 1791	-	25,000	25,000
17753	TOWN OFFICES RENOVATION			
	Principal Long-Term Debt	-	-	-
	Interest on Short Term Debt	-	-	-
	TOTAL 17753	-	-	-
17755	2019 SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT			
	Principal Long-Term Debt	1,640,000	1,765,000	1,855,000
	Interest on Long Term Debt	3,095,813	2,969,169	2,880,669
	TOTAL 17755	4,735,813	4,734,169	4,735,669
TOTALS FOR DEBT SERVICE		4,735,813	4,759,169	4,760,669
UNCLASSIFIED				
INSURANCE				
1911	RETIREMENT ASSESSMENT			
	Expense	2,566,498	3,050,494	3,069,360
	TOTAL 1911	2,566,498	3,050,494	3,069,360
1913	UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE			
	Personnel Services	86,142	40,055	41,057
	TOTAL 1913	86,142	40,055	41,057
1914	HEALTH INSURANCE			
	Personnel Services	3,647,731	4,510,580	4,510,580
	Expense	1,564	31,485	31,485
	TOTAL 1914	3,649,295	4,542,065	4,542,065
1915	LIFE INSURANCE			
	Personnel Services	6,992	10,953	11,227
	TOTAL 1915	6,992	10,953	11,227
1916	FICA/MEDICARE			
	Personnel Services	422,050	522,040	535,091
	TOTAL 1916	422,050	522,040	535,091

1942	GENERAL INSURANCE			
	Expense	462,992	602,860	689,589
	TOTAL 1942	462,992	602,860	689,589
TOTALS FOR UNCLASSIFIED		7,193,968	8,768,467	8,888,389
TOTALS FOR GENERAL FUND		41,112,433	44,162,375	45,083,391
WATER ENTERPRISE FUND				
61451	WATER DEPARTMENT			
	Personnel Services	636,289	732,990	760,450
	Expense	1,290,530	901,400	915,300
	SUB-TOTAL	1,926,819	1,634,390	1,675,750
	Capital Outlay		340,000	348,000
	TOTAL 61451	1,926,819	1,974,390	2,023,750
614513	WATER DEPARTMENT			
	Emergency Reserve	-	75,000	75,000
	TOTAL 614513	-	75,000	75,000
TOTALS FOR WATER ENTERPRISE FUND		1,926,819	2,049,390	2,098,750
APPROPRIATION SUMMARY -				
GENERAL GOVERNMENT		3,273,648	3,739,266	3,992,724
PUBLIC SAFETY		4,546,736	4,661,991	4,795,954
EDUCATION		16,822,968	17,804,881	18,017,288
PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES		2,228,825	2,120,071	2,207,464
HUMAN SERVICES		438,731	389,730	434,226
CULTURE & RECREATION		1,871,744	1,918,800	1,986,677
DEBT SERVICE		4,735,813	4,759,169	4,760,669
UNCLASSIFIED		7,193,968	8,768,467	8,888,389
WATER DEPARTMENT		1,926,819	2,049,390	2,098,750
TOTAL - ARTICLE 7		43,039,253	46,211,765	47,182,141

TOWN OF LINCOLN, MASSACHUSETTS

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Saturday, March 23, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

2024 WARRANT



TOWN OF LINCOLN

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MIDDLESEX, ss

To either of the Constables of the Town of Lincoln in said County:

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth you are hereby required to notify the legal voters of said Town of Lincoln qualified to vote at Town Meeting for the transaction of Town Affairs to meet for the **Annual Election (Article 1) at the Reed Gymnasium at the Lincoln School at 6 Ballfield Road in said Lincoln on Monday, the twenty fifth day of March, 2024 next, with the polls to be open at 7:30 a.m. and closed at 8:00 p.m.**, then and there to act on the following Article 1, and also to meet for the **Annual Town Meeting in the Donaldson Auditorium at the Lincoln School at 6 Ballfield Road in said Lincoln on Saturday, the twenty third day of March, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.**, then and there to act on the following articles, except Article 1, by posting a copy of this Warrant, by you attested, in said Town, seven days at least before the 23rd day of March next.

Public Health Note: In recognition of ongoing public health concerns, protective measures are being implemented to enable town meeting to proceed in the safest possible manner. Said measures include following all local Board of Health recommendations.

Additional Dates: In the event that meeting business cannot be completed within the allotted time for the meeting, per the discretion of the moderator, town meeting will be continued on Tuesday, March 26th at 7:00 p.m.

Accommodations: Any person interested in exploring accommodations to enable full participation in town meeting is urged to contact the Select Board's Office at 781-259-2601. Every reasonable attempt will be made to provide the necessary assistance.

ARTICLE 1

To bring in their votes for one or more members of each of the following offices:

- Board of Assessors - one seat for three years
- Board of Health - one seat for three years
- Cemetery Commission - one seat for three years
- Commissioners of Trust Funds - one seat for three years
- Housing Commission - one seat for three years
- Lincoln-Sudbury Regional District School Committee - two seats for three years each
- Parks and Recreation Committee - one seat for three years
- Planning Board - one seat for three years
- K-8 School Committee - two seats for three years
- Select Board - one seat for three years
- Bemis Trustee - one seat for three years
- Water Commissioner - one seat for three years

BALLOT QUESTION

QUESTION 1

Shall the Town of Lincoln be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition Two-and-One-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued for the purpose of paying the costs of designing, renovating, rebuilding, constructing, equipping, and furnishing a new Community Center to be located in the Hartwell Complex of the Ballfield Road school campus, Lincoln, MA, including payment of costs incidental or related thereto?

ARTICLE 2

To bring in their votes for any Committees, Commissioners, Trustees, and other officers required by law to be elected by ballot or otherwise.

Select Board

ARTICLE 3

To see if the Town will vote to amend its Zoning Map and Bylaw, Section 12 Overlay Districts by adding a new Section 12.9 titled Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Overlay Districts; and, further, to amend Section 23 Definitions by adding definitions, including: 3A District; Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC); Live/Work Unit; Multi-Family Housing; and Street Activating Uses; and further that non-substantive changes to the numbering of this bylaw be permitted to comply with the numbering format of the Town of Lincoln Zoning Bylaw; or take any action relative thereto.

NOTE: This change will create a multi-family overlay district that meets the requirements MGL Chapter 40A, Section 3A; and a mixed-use district that meets the requirements of a mandatory mixed-use district as defined by EOHLC.

Planning Board

ARTICLE 4

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow, transfer from free cash, stabilization, or other available funds, or any combination thereof, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Community Center Building Committee for costs of designing, renovating, constructing, rebuilding, equipping, and furnishing a new Community Center, to be located in the Hartwell complex of Ballfield Road School campus, Lincoln, MA, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; provided, however, that the vote taken hereunder shall be expressly contingent upon approval by the voters of a ballot question to exclude the amounts required to pay for the bond and/or any notes issued for said building project from the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2 1/2) if debt is authorized; and further, to authorize the Select Board to enter into agreements with vendors and take whatever action is necessary to lease Town property to be used by a solar energy provider to erect, operate, and maintain solar energy facilities, and to enter into renewable energy power purchase and/or net metering credit or other agreements including contracts in excess of three years, and to take whatever additional action may be required to effectuate said lease and solar agreements; or take any action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 5

To receive and act on a recommendation from the Select Board with regard to the presentation of the annual Bright Light Award, and to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash a sum of money to support this award; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 6

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, including stabilization funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to purchase an electronic voting system, including the cost of training and maintenance; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 7

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money for the necessary and expedient purposes of the Town for Fiscal Year 2025; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 8

To receive and act upon a report of the Capital Planning Committee on the Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget, and to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, including stabilization funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to purchase and equip various capital items, or to fund capital projects all as recommended by the Capital Planning Committee, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

Capital Planning Committee

ARTICLE 9

To receive and act upon a report from the Community Preservation Committee on the Fiscal Year 2025 Community Preservation Budget, and to appropriate or reserve for later appropriation monies for the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee, the payment of debt service, the undertaking of Community Preservation projects and all other necessary and proper expenses for the year, and to determine whether such sums shall be raised from the Community Preservation Fund, transferred from available funds, borrowed, or any combination thereof; or take any other action relative thereto.

Community Preservation Committee

ARTICLE 10

To see if the Town will vote to implement the special act signed to law pursuant to the action taken by Town Meeting under Article 33 of the May 15, 2021 Annual Town Meeting approving the filing of a home rule petition for a so-called Property Tax Circuit-breaker program, and as subsequently approved by the Legislature, the purpose of which is to provide a property tax exemption to homeowners meeting certain income and asset tests and who have resided in Lincoln for at least five years; and further, to authorize all actions necessary for successful implementation of the program; or take any action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 11

To receive and act upon the reports of the Town Officers, Committees, Commissioners and Trustees.

Select Board

ARTICLE 12

To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries and compensation of the several elective officers of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 13

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, or otherwise, to fund the Town’s Senior Tax Work-off Program, as established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5K, as it may be amended from time to time; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 14

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, or otherwise, to fund the Town’s Veteran Tax Work-off Program, as established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5N, as it may be amended from time to time; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 15

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to be used for the repair and maintenance of certain Town buildings, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 16

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to be used for the repair and maintenance of the Lincoln Library, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

Library Trustees

ARTICLE 17

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds (including any amount appropriated under Article 7) that exceeds the final Lincoln assessment voted no later than July 31st, by the Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School Committee for the fiscal year 2025, in

accordance with law, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to add funds to the Debt Stabilization Fund, so called, previously established in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 5B at the March 26, 2011 Annual Town Meeting, Article 19, for the purpose of funding future debt service obligations; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 18

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to add funds to the Group Insurance Liability Fund established by Chapter 474 of the Acts of 2008, which Fund will help offset the Town's so-called "Other Post-employment Benefits (OPEB)" liability established by Statements 74 and 75 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 19

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money by taxation, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing or any combination thereof, to add funds, representing Lincoln's proportionate share of the contribution recommended by the LSRHS School Committee, to the Lincoln Sudbury Regional School District Retirees Health Insurance Trust Fund, established by the acceptance of Chapter 32B, Section 20 of the Massachusetts General Laws, for Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School, which Fund will help offset the High School's so-called "Other Post-employment Benefits (OPEB)" liability established by Statements 74 and 75 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 20

To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend such sum or sums of money that may be available under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90 or any other state roadway reimbursement programs and to authorize the Select Board to enter into a contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division for such purposes and further to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow in anticipation of 100% reimbursement of said amounts; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 21

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash a sum of money equal to the state reimbursement amount for Special Education Medicaid expenses to supplement the Fiscal Year 25 Lincoln School operating budget; or take any other action relative thereto.

School Committee

ARTICLE 22

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from the PEG Access and Cable Revolving Fund, established under Article 32 of the March 19, 2016 Town Meeting, to support cable related purposes consistent with the franchise agreement between cable operators and the Town of Lincoln, including, but not limited to: (i) support of public, educational or governmental access cable television services; (ii) monitor compliance of the cable operator with the franchise agreement; and/or (iii) prepare for renewal of the franchise license; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 23

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from free cash the amount of settlement funds paid to the town as a result of class action lawsuits, initiated by the Commonwealth on behalf of its municipalities against certain opioid manufacturers and distributors, into a special revenue fund that has been established for this express purpose; and further, that said funds be expended without further appropriation at the direction of the Select Board only for purposes (i.e., addiction prevention, harm reduction, and recovery) identified in said settlement agreement; or take another action relative thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 24

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Conservation Receipts reserved for Appropriation Account to allow the Conservation Department to undertake a variety of land stewardship projects, including trail head parking lot maintenance, and bridge and boardwalk repairs; or take any other action relative thereto.

Conservation Commission

ARTICLE 25

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash or any other source of funds a sum of money to reduce the total amount to be raised by taxation pursuant to the votes previously taken under Article 7 of this Warrant, or any other article of this Warrant authorizing the appropriation of funds from taxation; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 26

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, including bond proceed balances from previously authorized projects in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c.44, s. 20, and/or borrow a sum of money or any combination thereof, to purchase and equip various capital items, and/or to

fund capital projects of the Water Department, as recommended by the Water Commissioners, including all costs incidental or related thereto, and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow all or a portion of said funds under the provisions of G.L. c.44 or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; that such bonds or notes shall be general obligations of the Town unless the Treasurer with the approval of the Select Board determines that they should be issued as limited obligations and may be secured by local system revenues as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 29C, as amended, it being the intent of the Town, however, in either such case that the entire principal of and interest on such bonds or notes shall be paid from water rates and/or surplus; that the Treasurer with the approval of the Select Board is authorized to borrow all or a portion of such amount from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust established pursuant to Chapter 29C, as amended and in connection therewith to enter into a financing agreement and/or security agreement with the Trust and otherwise to contract with the Trust and the Department of Environmental Protection with respect to such loan and for any federal or state aid available for the project or for the financing thereof; that the Select Board, Board of Water Commissioners or other appropriate local body or officials be authorized to enter into a project regulatory agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, to expend all funds available for the project and to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out the projects; or take any other action relative thereto.

Water Commission

Article 27

To see if the Town will vote to authorize and request the Select Board to petition the Massachusetts General Court for special legislation to allow the Town to satisfy requirements for legal notices set forth in the general laws by allowing the publication of notices in local digital newspapers, print media, or both, as the Town shall determine; and, further that the Select Board is authorized to draft said petition on behalf of the petitioners; and, further provided that the General Court may make editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Select Board approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court that are within the scope of the general purpose objectives of this motion; or take any action relative thereto.

Citizens' Petition

Article 28

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following Citizens' Petition:

Citizens Petition for Notice of Proposed Rezoning to Property Owners, Residents and Abutters.

This petition directs that any Lincoln Town Board, sanctioned group or committee proposing rezoning of an existing district, must notify by mail each property owner, resident and abutter in the area of rezoning 14 days prior to their first public meeting wherein the zoning change would be discussed. Similar notice would also be sent for any future meeting wherein the decision on rezoning may be made as well as any Town Meeting where a vote on rezoning would be conducted. This Notice of Proposed Rezoning shall outline the parameters of the existing district's zoning along with the proposed changes.

The Notice of Proposed Rezoning by the Town would be in the spirit of the current requirement that developers and property owners must notify their neighbors when land use may change. When the Town may rezone an area under its own initiative, the Town should do its best to notify property owners and residents within that area about the specific changes that could impact them personally and financially.

The Notice of Proposed Rezoning would be different from and in addition to any general information mailing because of the detail it would include. The following examples are not intended to represent or provide the exact wording of notice; instead, they show how a general information mailing differs from a specific notice with more detail to an impacted party:

- Example of general information notice through Town-wide Mailing:
[Town Board, Sanctioned Group or Committee] will be addressing proposed zoning changes in Lincoln on February 1st, 8th and 15th.
- Example of zoning change detail to a property owner, resident, or abutter:
[Town Board, Sanctioned Group or Committee] will be addressing proposed changes wherein your property currently in an R1 district may be rezoned to be part of a new district with density of 18 units per acre. The first meeting to discuss the proposed rezoning will be on February 8th at 7pm. Please contact [appropriate Town Office email and phone number] with any questions.

If this Citizen's Petition passes at the March 2024 Town Meeting, the Town is directed to take all additional necessary steps so that the Town Boards, sanctioned committees and groups enact the practice of Notice of Proposed Rezoning outlined above.

Citizens' Petition

Hereof fail not and make return of this Warrant with your doings, thereon to the Town Clerk, at or before the time for the meeting aforesaid. Given under our hands this the 23rd day of February, 2024.



Jim Hutchinson, Chair



Jennifer Glass



Kim Bodnar

Lincoln Select Board

Glossary

Debt Exclusion and Capital Exclusion: Proposition 2½ allows a town to raise monies for capital projects or for the payment of debt service costs using either a **capital** or **debt exclusion**, respectively. Unlike the override, which results in a permanent increase in the town's levy limit, a **capital exclusion** is added to the levy limit or ceiling only for the year in which the project is being undertaken, and requires majority approval at town meeting. Likewise, **debt exclusion** is added to the levy limit or levy ceiling for the life of the debt only, and requires 2/3 vote at town meeting. Both of these exclusions require a 2/3 vote of the Selectmen in order to be placed on a ballot, with a majority of the electorate at the ballot box needed for authorization.

Debt Limit: Massachusetts state law (Ch44 S10) limits the amount of debt that a town can issue to no more than 5% of the “equalized valuation” (EQV) of the taxable property in town, unless approval to exceed it is obtained from the Municipal Finance Oversight Board.

Free Cash: This is money that had been appropriated but not spent for various budget line items together with revenues received over budgeted projections. These monies are certified annually by the Department of Revenue as the town's **free cash**.

Levy (Tax), Levy Ceiling, and Levy Limit: The property **tax levy** is revenue raised through real and personal property taxes. Municipal revenues are raised through the tax levy, State Aid, and local receipts. The tax levy is the largest source of revenue.

Proposition 2½ places constraints on the magnitude of the levy imposed by a town as well as the amount by which the levy can be increased from one year to the next. The two limits on property taxes imposed by Proposition 2½ are:

- **Levy ceiling** - This establishes an overall cap on the levy. Ordinarily a town cannot levy more than 2.5% of the total full and fair cash value of all taxable real and personal property, which means the **tax rate** cannot be set higher than \$25 per \$1,000 of property value.
- **Levy limit** - The maximum levy allowed in a given year is the **levy limit**. This will always be equal to or less than the **levy ceiling**. The levy limit for any fiscal year amounts to the previous year's levy limit (less excluded debt) increased by 2.5% plus new growth, exclusions, and any override authorized by the electorate.

Levy Increase: The difference in the levy between one year and the next is the **levy increase**. This number is often represented as a percent. The town may set its levy at any amount up to its levy limit. It is important to recognize that the actual levy may increase more than 2.5% in a given year. This is allowable under Proposition 2½.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB): Benefits such as medical and life insurance premiums that an employee will begin to receive at the start of retirement. The Town is required to recognize these benefits as they have already been earned by active and retired employees. This does not include pension benefits paid to the retired employees.

Reserve Fund: This fund, established by the annual Town Meeting, is under the control of the Finance Committee. Transfers may be made from it for unforeseen expenditures. The limit on the size of this fund is 5% of the **tax levy** of the current fiscal year.

Stabilization Fund: The **stabilization fund** is a reserve account that allows the Town to put aside money in anticipation of future expenses.

Tax Rate: The **tax rate** is the amount of tax charged by the Town expressed in terms of a unit of the tax base: for example, \$9.35 per \$1000 of the assessed valuation of taxable property.

Tax Exemptions

Property Tax Exemptions

PROGRAM	Senior & Veterans Work Off	Deferral 41A	Temporary Deferral 18A	Elderly 17E	Elderly 41D	Blind 37A	MA Income Tax Circuit Breaker
Eligible Age	Seniors: 60 Veterans: none	60	None	70	65	None	65
Income Limit	None	Single \$64,000 Married \$96,000	Financial hardship	None	Single \$26,629. Married \$39,939. excluding some SS	None	Single \$69,000 Married \$103,000
Asset Limit	None	None	Financial hardship	\$48,347. excluding domicile	Single \$53,252. Married \$73,223. excluding domicile	None	Domicile \$1,025,000
Assistance	Seniors up to \$1,500 Veteran's up to \$1,500	Total Bill (but not CPA tax)	Total Bill (but not CPA tax)	\$766	\$2,000	\$1,000	For 2024, tax credit of up to \$2,590*
Inflation Adjustment	None	None	None	Annual CPI	None	None	Annual Adjustment
Apply	Annually	Annually	Annually (for 3 years only)	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
Deadline	Call Council on Aging 781-259-8811	Within 3 months after tax bill	Within 3 months after tax bill	Within 3 months after tax bill	Within 3 months after tax bill	Within 3 months after tax bill	File State Tax Form and Sch CB – can file for past 3 years

*Circuit Breaker Tax Credit = (RE tax + 50% water bill) – (10% qualified income)
FY 2024

Veterans Exemptions

Clause	Type	Amount *	Veteran	Spouse	Surviving Spouse	Surviving Parent
22	Veterans with minimum 10% war service disability	\$800	X	X	Until remarriage	
22	Veterans awarded Purple Hearts	\$800	X	X	Until remarriage	
22	Gold Star parents	\$800				X
22A	Veteran who lost one hand, foot or eye; or received a Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross	\$1,500	X	X	X	
22B	Veterans who lost two hands or feet, or both eyes	\$2,500	X	X	X	
22C	Veteran with 100% disability and specially adapted housing	\$3,000	X	X	X	
22D	Surviving spouses of veterans killed in a combat zone	Total for 5 years, then \$2,500			X	
22E	Veterans with 100% disability	\$2,000	X		X	
8A	Paraplegic veterans	Total	X		X	

Veterans are also eligible for the Property Tax Work Off program

FY 2024