



Town of Newcastle

www.NewcastleMaine.us

Kevin L. Sutherland - Town Manager

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FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, Town Manager
TO: Newcastle Select Board
CC: Town Staff
DATE: May 13, 2024
RE: Town Manager Report

Paving on Sheepscot Road

The Town Office received a letter last month from MDOT regarding paving Sheepscot Rd sometime this summer. After reaching out, I've confirmed with the resident inspector on the job that depending on weather, the goal is for this to begin mid-July. We'll send updates and broader information sharing as July approaches.

William Brewer, CPA

We've signed an engagement letter with William Brewer, CPA for the FY23 audit. Staff have worked to collect much of the information we expect the auditors will need so we hope to make quick work of this and can be ready to engage for FY24's audit.

Village Partnership Initiative (VPI)

Since the [kick off workshop](#) for the VPI in February, the engineering firm Wright-Pierce has begun their process of collecting data for right of ways and developing some preliminary street scape concepts. They've met with abutters at the beginning of May and will be looking to gather more information at a public meeting scheduled for next Wednesday May 22nd at the Fire Station Community Room from 6pm until 8:30pm. More information about the agenda and handouts will be added [HERE](#) once they are ready for distribution.

Community Resilience Partnership (CRP)

The [survey](#) is up for the Community Resilience Partnership. The information gathered will help determine the point of conversation for the Newcastle Community Climate Workshop. This workshop event will take place at Lincoln Academy's ATEC Building from 2-3:30pm on Saturday, June 1st.

Lynch Road Minor Span - Three things related to this!

1) A few weeks ago we were made aware that the project we've been moving through the process has a federally approved replacement expense of \$1.15 million. This is crucial for a 'large project designation' (over 1 million) which means, after review by mitigation and added costs for mitigation work, can become a request to replace it with a bridge span instead (which is what the Select Board moved forward with designing last Oct). This also means we have more time to complete the project (initially we only had 18 months before it was deemed a large project)

I can't thank Carl Ayers and Brian Reeves from VHB enough for their quick turn around on FEMA requested information and to our liaison Marisol Rodriguez from FEMA who has been walking me through all the steps to make sure we get what we need.

2) Earlier this month, we also learned that our now 100% designed bridge has been approved by USACE. However, because of its potential use as a fish passage, the window for work in the stream is limited to a Nov-April time frame. This might work out in our favor for two reasons. One, we cannot bid this project out until we have approval for this from FEMA (I do believe this will be resolved in the next month or so and can be sent out this year). Two, with a winter window, contractors will be looking for work to keep their crews and we may see some savings.

3) The Department of Transportation had their bridge inspector out and they are very concerned about the Lynch Road culvert. The compromised culvert becomes more and more of a compromised structure with each intense storm. I explained to the DOT that we're going through the process with FEMA and have already taken several temporary measures to keep it together. I will be meeting with reps from DOT/DEP to figure out additional temporary solutions, potential costs, and funding opportunities but I can't rule out the possibility that this crossing will need to be closed.

Neck Bridge

Back in January, the Select Board was told by the DOT that we had to post a 30 Ton weight limit on the bridge to South Dyer Neck. The information we received at that time was that the state was updating many of their load ratings in their inventory to current standards which are not condition driven.

Q: I thought bridges in Maine were the responsibility of MDOT? They are! Except when they are LURBs. Low Use or Redundant Bridges. A low use bridge is a bridge on a town way with an average daily traffic count of less than 100. A redundant bridge is a bridge located on a town way with an average daily traffic count multiplied by the detour length of less than 200. Neck Bridge is LURB and is therefore a responsibility of the town.

So, we've asked VHB, the engineering firm that provided a study of this bridge a year or so ago to give us a proposal to do a load rating test of this bridge which we can take to the state's posting committee to reconsider the 30 Ton limit. That written proposal came in at \$38,500. It's unclear where we are going to find the funding to pay for this, but I will come to the meeting on the 28th with some options.

GSB School Budget

The Special Town meeting for the GSB School Budget and Secondary Education is this Wednesday evening starting at 6:30pm. I wanted to make sure our Select Board was aware of some changes that were made to the final warrant numbers for GSB. Page 42 of the [Select Board packet from April 22, 2024](#) shows property tax impact at 6.95% driven in part by the Municipal budget but also the total education budget.

BUDGET SUMMARY

(removed one-time use of fund balance to show more accurate change in annual operations)

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual*	FY24 Budget	FY25 Manager	FY25 Select Board	Net Change \$	%
101 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT	529,382	547,290	658,407	681,168	683,168	24,761	3.76%
102 - COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SERVICES	174,248	179,707	197,542	202,864	202,864	5,322	2.69%
103 - PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	15,636	67,298	131,651	89,471	90,671	-40,980	-31.13%
105 - PUBLIC SAFETY	176,780	253,696	277,311	281,191	282,391	5,080	1.83%
107 - PUBLIC WORKS	534,329	631,791	662,399	812,450	812,450	150,051	22.65%
110 - DEBT SERVICE	257,880	253,716	253,717	249,857	249,857	-3,860	-1.52%
118 - TRANSFER TOTALS	799,484	914,333	984,780	1,007,116	1,069,035	84,255	8.56%
TOTAL MUNICIPAL BUDGET	2,487,739	2,847,830	3,165,807	3,324,117	3,390,436	224,629	7.10%
GSB Community School District			1,797,250	1,907,273	2,027,450	230,200	12.81%
Adult Education			8,812	0	0	-8,812	-100.00%
Secondary Education			1,724,397	1,810,617	1,698,062	-26,335	-1.53%
TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET*			3,530,459	3,717,890	3,725,512	195,053	5.52%
Lincoln County Tax			457,253	475,257	475,257	18,004	3.94%
LINCOLN COUNTY - NEWCASTLE SHARE			457,253	475,257	475,257	18,004	3.94%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET			7,144,707	7,517,264	7,591,205	446,498	6.25%
101 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT			482,800	502,055	527,055	44,255	9.17%
302 - STATE & FEDERAL REIMB			791,171	781,700	783,709	-7,462	-0.94%
801 - HARBOR/MOORING			1,500	3,000	3,000	1,500	100.00%
TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET			1,275,471	1,286,755	1,313,764	38,293	3.00%
PROPERTY TAXES			5,869,236	6,230,509	6,277,441	408,205	6.95%

*Education Budget will be voted on in Special Town Meeting on May 15, 2015

Newcastle's share of GSB itself shows a 12.81% increase. However, it came to our attention last week that the \$2,027,450 is \$94,321.21 short of what was needed. The school's line-item budget and categories were developed accurately but the total sum at the bottom failed to capture the systems administration budget of \$287,389.43 (Newcastle's share being ~\$94k).

This has impacted the number that may already be out there publicly. The new summary shows an 8.56% on property taxes, driven in large part by the now 18.06% increase for GSB.

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Upcoming Agenda Items

Item 10 on the Select Board Agenda is a list of items staff hope to bring to your attention at a future meeting. This section of the Manager's Report tries to provide some initial background information to that list.

Harriet Gertrude Bird Clubhouse and Playground Committee Bylaws

Staff and I meet with committee members two week to establish some bylaws for the committee and make more concrete decisions about staff responsibilities and committee responsibilities. We'll be coming to the board for your approval of the bylaws and some other updates about the use of the reserves to cover capital needs, etc.

Fish Ladder Agreement

In summer of 2023, the Select Board met with Newcastle's representative to the Damariscotta Mills Fish Ladder Restoration Committee to begin discussions on an interlocal agreement. There seems to be some reluctance to formalize anything at the moment. Jim and I are still working toward a solution. A more comprehensive update is still pending.

Ground Lease Agreement

This item is related to the conversation we had on [November 13th](#) about the potential for a Cell Tower on our landfill. Just keeping this on the near-term list as we work through details with legal.

Harbor Management Ordinance

This item was discussed in a joint workshop with Damariscotta in mid-January. We're just waiting to get through the budget process to begin reviewing the suggested changes for a late summer/early fall goal of a Joint Special Town Meeting to address this Ordinance and hopefully any changes to the Shellfish Conservation Ordinance.



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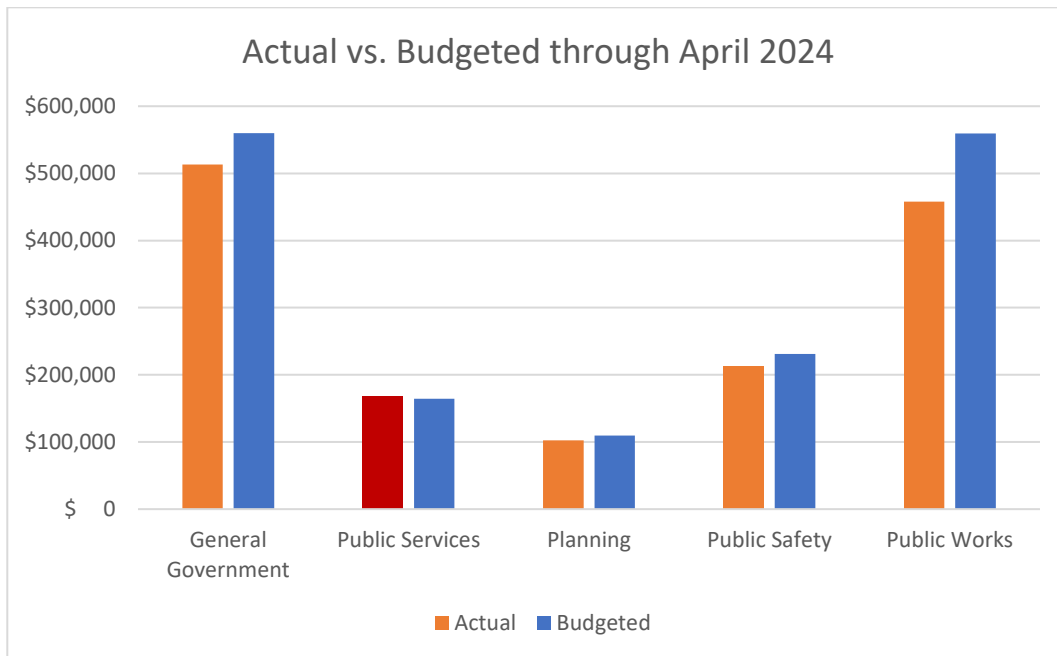
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FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, Town Manager
TO: Newcastle Select Board
CC: Town Staff
DATE: May 6, 2024
RE: Town Manager Monthly Financial Report

We've now reconciled our accounts through ten months of the fiscal year (July – April). This memo was developed to show a quick snapshot of Actual spending compared to Budget.

After ten months or 83.33% of the fiscal year (represented below in the blue bars for each of the spending categories), there is only one category which we're currently over budget (red bar) – Public Services.

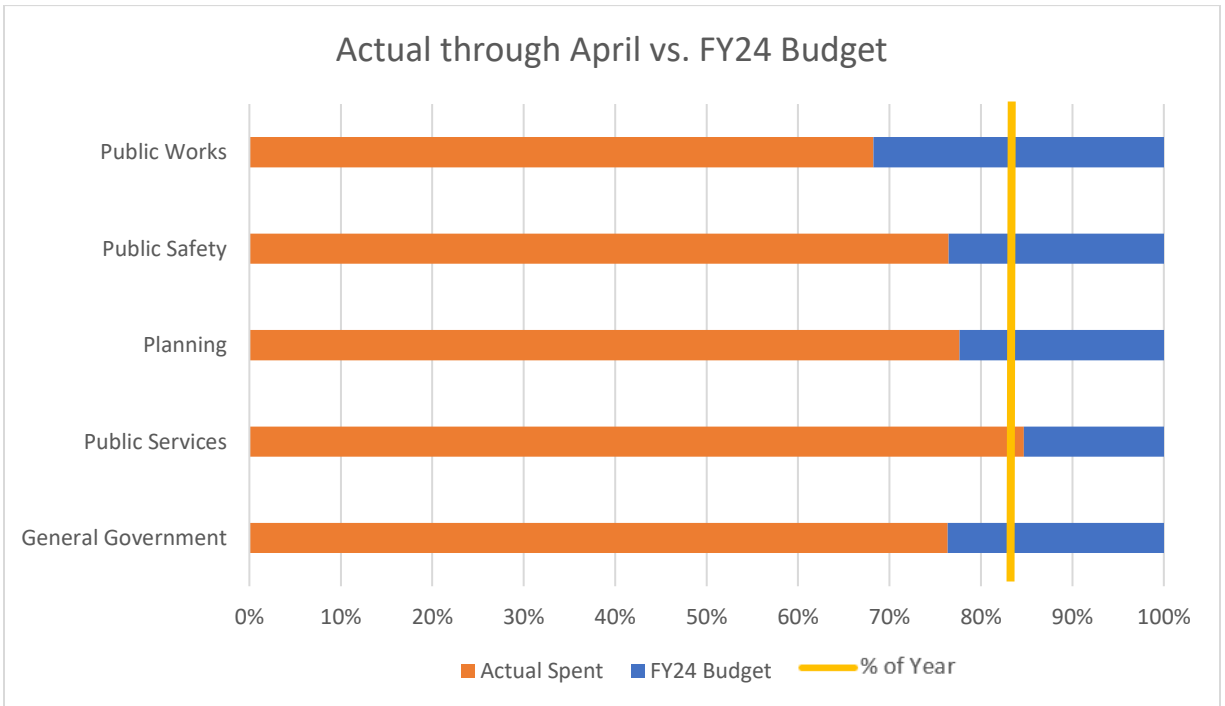
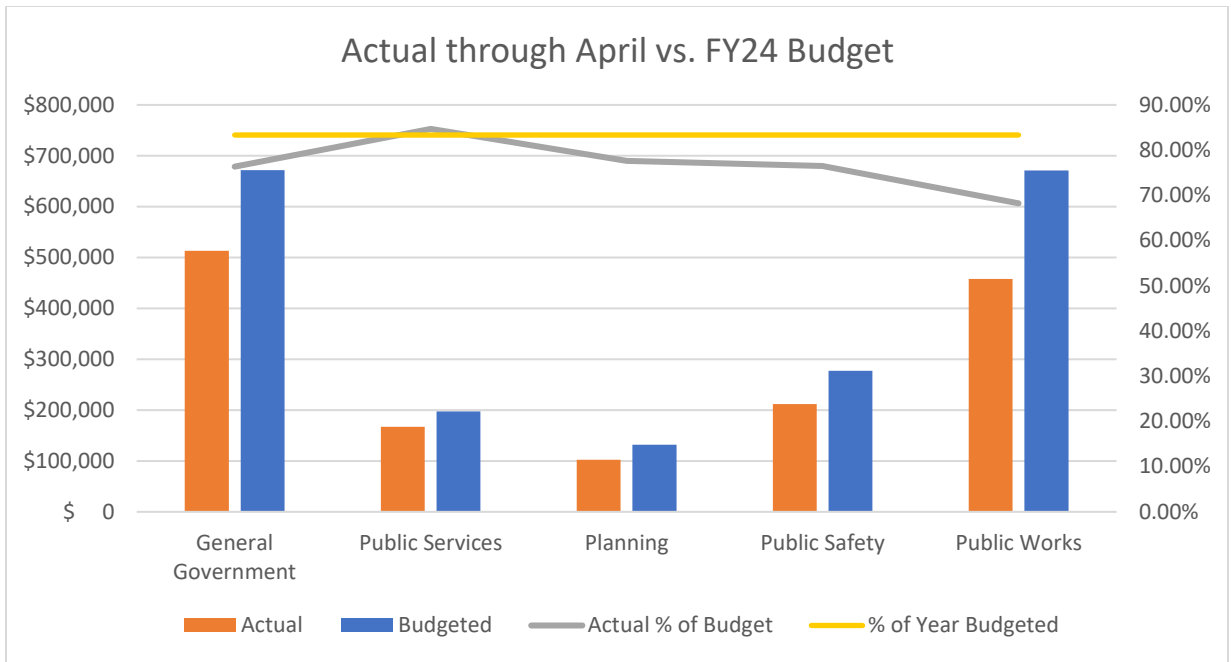


Public Services

This category is over the ten-month budget as the provider agencies have all received their contributions. If we were to amortize those payments, we would be at 79.17% of the Public Services category actual expenditures for ten months. This is below the budgeted 83.33%.

Overall

The sum of Budget through April is \$1,624,380 (83.33% of the annual budget) and the sum of Actual through April is \$1,452,476 (74.51% of budget). This has Newcastle under budget through April by \$171,904 (or 8.82% under budget).



	FY24 Budget	Actual thru 04/24	Remaining
General Government	\$671,665	\$512,962	\$158,703
Public Services	\$197,542	\$167,301	\$30,241
Planning	\$131,651	\$102,221	\$29,430
Public Safety	\$277,311	\$212,096	\$65,215
Public Works	\$671,087	\$457,896	\$213,191
TOTAL OPERATING	\$1,949,256	\$1,452,476	\$496,780