



# Town of Newcastle

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FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, Town Manager  
 TO: Newcastle Select Board and Finance Committee  
 CC: Michelle Cameron, Casey Stevens, Seth Hagar  
 DATE: March 13, 2024  
 RE: FY25 Budget – changes to Public Safety and Public Works

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Last Wednesday, March 6th, I presented a preliminary budget for Public Safety and Public Works that was based on my review of the previous years' actuals and projections for this fiscal year. At that time, I was still waiting for responses to those suggested numbers from the Fire Chief and Road Commissioner. Since then, I've reviewed their comments and requests, and I modified several expenditures in those two departments to reflect the additional information.

On Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, I gave a presentation at the Select Board meeting that reflected those changes and serves as the Town Manager's formal budget request (a 5% overall expenditure increase on the municipal budget excluding use of reserve). What was handed out was a revised memo dated 3/11 (Section 1), an update to the format of Section 2, Page 1 with a printed date of 3/11 and a replacement of Section 3 (printed 3/11) includes a few changes to the Public Safety and the Public Works departments.

This memo is an attempt to walk from the **Manager Suggested** numbers (shared 3/6) to the **Dept Head Requested** and over to the **Manager Recommended** amount. I'd ask at this point, any further changes to the 'FY25 Manager' column in Section 2 and Section 3 be a motion to amend request of a Select Board member or a suggestion from a Finance Committee member to be considered at the March 25<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting.

With a new manager and a more detailed budget process, we're still working out our internal process. I hope this memo helps understanding and that it is more seamless in future years.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>COMPENSATION</b>					
08 - FIRE CHIEF PAY	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	
09 - FD OFFICERS	16,350.00	12,000.00	16,350.00	16,350.00	A
10 - FD HOURLY CALL PAY	16,000.00	15,000.00	17,800.00	17,800.00	B
<b>01 - COMPENSATION TOTAL</b>	<b>44,350.00</b>	<b>39,000.00</b>	<b>46,150.00</b>	<b>46,150.00</b>	

A. **Fire Chief:** This needs to stay the same. There are positions that either didn't get paid or they were deducted from the wrong account. I will be sorting it out this week but that is the total of all of the stipends.

**Manager Response:** Worked with Michelle and Casey, \$2,800 was pulled from 105-01-10 instead of 105-01-09. (Now reflected on the Section 3 Page 6 replacement page printed 3/13). This begs the question as to whether the budget for 105-01-10 is too high. Considering the fix, I believe the dollar an hour increase can be absorbed within the current budget of 16,000 based on average call volume.

B. **Fire Chief:** This includes a pay increase from \$19/hr to \$20/hr

**Manager Response:** My recommendation supports the increase in pay – but as mentioned in “A” above, with the movement of \$2,800 from one account to another, unless we have an above average year of fire department calls, I believe 16,000 may be enough to absorb the increase in pay.

<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>					
	<b>FY24 Budget Approved</b>	<b>FY25 Manager Suggested</b>	<b>FY25 Dept Head Requested</b>	<b>FY25 Manager Recommended</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>FIRE DEPARTMENT</b>					
09 - PHONES	1,500.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	
15 - FIRE DEPT. DUES	700.00	0.00	700.00	700.00	C
20 - S.C.B.A.	8,000.00	6,000.00	8,000.00	6,000.00	D
25 - COMMUNICATIONS	7,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	E
30 - TRAINING	4,000.00	500.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	F
40 - NEW EQUIPMENT	10,000.00	6,000.00	12,000.00	10,000.00	G
42 - EQUIPMENT/VEHICLE MAINT	15,690.00	15,000.00	17,690.00	15,000.00	H
45 - PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT	12,600.00	10,000.00	12,600.00	12,600.00	I
50 - INSURANCES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
52 - HOSE REPLACEMENT	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	J
55 - ADMINISTRATIVE/OFFICE	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	3,000.00	
60 - VEHICLE GAS & OIL	5,500.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	
<b>05 - FIRE DEPARTMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>74,490.00</b>	<b>54,500.00</b>	<b>75,990.00</b>	<b>68,300.00</b>	

C. **Fire Chief:** This needs to stay the same. I will be submitting invoices for dues beginning of April.

**Manager Response:** Line increased suggested to recommended to accommodate.

D. **Fire Chief:** Needs to stay the same. Instead of replacing all of our SCBA bottles at once we replace 2-4 bottles per year. The other expense is for required annual flow testing and parts and repairs on the air packs themselves. We will need to replace our air packs in the near future. We will try for another grant later this year which will be the second attempt. If unsuccessful we will need to request funding from the town.

**Manager Response:** SCBA bottles currently run about \$1,500. 6k would budget for three replacements and flow testing? I am not certain how much flow testing costs. Suggested to recommended stayed the same.

E. **Fire Chief:** This line was reduced by \$1,500.00. We were able to purchase needed equipment last year that will not be needed this year.

**Manager Response:** line stays the same from suggested to recommended.

F. **Fire Chief:** Training is unpredictable and hard to plan with volunteers. When the stars align we need to be ready to offer all the training opportunities we can. This is one of our most important objectives.

**Manager Response:** I don't disagree. Was just looking at past practice. Line increased suggested to recommended to accommodate.

G. **Fire Chief:** There are many items that need to be replaced. There is also equipment that we will start purchasing to equip the new truck. I am in the process of receiving quotes for the equipment we need over the next couple of years. I am certain the quote will be over this budgeted amount.

**Manager Response:** The original suggested line was increased, but not to the full amount requested. While the need might be there, all the information to support the comment isn't yet available. We have a list of equipment in Section 5 Page 5. This is the list of equipment that our insurance company is aware of. It would be helpful to understand if this is the full list. What each truck carries and what is sitting in the garage. It would also be helpful to understand the condition of each piece of equipment, replacement schedules, and what all is needed for the new truck (should be supported at Special Town Meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>) vs what would be transferred over from other trucks.

H. **Fire Chief:** We will go over budget this year due to current and upcoming repairs not yet submitted. Prices continue to increase for parts and labor.

**Manager Response:** Recommended is less than Requested. Another area where more information and regular communication about needs and repairs of current vehicles needs to improve. This is a good chance to test the use of contingency for FY25. When the 15k is spent, Casey and I can come to the Select Board to talk about repairs and costs and get support to move some of the contingency dollars to offset a budget overage.

I. **Fire Chief:** We are in the process of getting a second set of turnout gear for each member. This is for cancer prevention. Having a second set of gear allows the firefighter to have a set ready to go while one set is being washed. We also need to purchase a couple sets of turnout for new members.

**Manager Response:** Recommended increases Suggested to match Requested.

J. **Fire Chief:** This account was created last year so we could start replacing some hose which is greatly needed. We have not replaced hose for many years. We will also start purchasing some for our new Engine and not have to make one big purchase.

**Manager Response:** Recommended increases Suggested to match Requested. I had zeroed this out for suggested because we received a matching grant to buy hoses. Another inventory suggestion that we know how much hose we have, its condition, and what we need will have a greater influence on budget planning.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>105 - PUBLIC SAFETY TOTAL</b>	<b>176,779.84</b>	<b>260,241.00</b>	<b>288,881.00</b>	<b>281,191.00</b>	

Total difference between Suggested by Manager and Department Head Requested: \$28,640

Total difference between Department Head Requested and Recommended by Manager: -\$7,690

Total difference between Suggested by Manager and Recommended by Manager: \$20,950

# PUBLIC WORKS

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>CONTRACTED SERVICES</b>					
08 - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	10,000.00	0.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	K
<b>04 - CONTRACTED SERVICES TOTAL</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>	
<b>FACILITIES</b>					
01 - ELECTRICITY SAND/SALT SHED	600.00	350.00	600.00	400.00	L
02 - MAINTENANCE SAND/SALT SHED	5,000.00	500.00	5,000.00	1,500.00	M
03 - MAINTENANCE PUBLIC LANDING	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>40 - FACILITIES TOTAL</b>	<b>5,600.00</b>	<b>850.00</b>	<b>5,600.00</b>	<b>1,900.00</b>	
<b>WINTER OPERATIONS</b>					
01 - SNOW REMOVAL-ROADS	280,505.00	466,520.00	466,520.53	466,520.00	
02 - SNOW REMOVAL DOWNTOWN & MAIN	52,144.00	54,230.00	54,230.00	54,230.00	
03 - PERMITS-SNOW REMOVAL	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	N
04 - MISCELLANEOUS WINTER OPERATION	3,500.00	500.00	3,500.00	2,000.00	O
05 - WINTER SALT	88,000.00	74,364.00	88,000.00	80,000.00	P
<b>41 - WINTER OPERATIONS TOTAL</b>	<b>428,649.00</b>	<b>600,114.00</b>	<b>616,750.53</b>	<b>607,250.00</b>	

K. **Road Commissioner:** I have put into the budget to have survey work done on Glidden St. as we discussed.

**Manager Response:** For the interim I've increased to \$15,000 as there is some money I've included in the Road Capital reserve account as well to address engineering work. Not sure if it's a double request and we can address on 3/20 workshop.

L. **Road Commissioner:** I have seen many years where we have been way over, I try and keep the equipment not plugged in and the lights off as much as possible. If we have any sort of "normal" winter, we will be over on this line item as proposed. I have held the amount, even then we may be over if we return to "normal."

**Manager Response:** Slight increase from budget to recommended. Keep on keeping the lights off and things unplugged.

M. **Road Commissioner:** We have to do this every year per DEP, we sweep all the pavement and clean up any of the areas that allow for run off into the bay. I also try and do a small improvement every year, as our current site is not meeting our DEP requirements for storage of Sand. I wait and use this money at the end of the year as the clean up etc. is always in the spring.

**Manager Response:** Mostly I take issue with the 1 unit at \$5,000 invoice for Fiscal Year 2023. What was actually accomplished? Increased Suggested to Recommended by \$1,000.

N. **Road Commissioner:** This amount was given to me by the office, the MDEP permit is 2K and the payment to land owner was 2500.

**Manager Response:** The past two years has been a \$2,500 expense. I assume that's the payment to the landowner. The MDEP permit might be a once every few years? I've budgeted 4,500 throughout.

O. **Road Commissioner:** This amount is for all the issues that we have during the winter months. We routinely have to clean frozen culverts and we have areas that freeze when water runs across the road that we need to scrape. I understand that this year we did not need it, however we typically do every year. In the past the Board has asked for this to allowed for so that our regular maintenance aspect is not effected.

**Manager Response:** The expenses in this account line have been \$125 in 2022, \$0 in 2023, and \$0 in 2024. I have increased suggested to recommended by \$1,500 but am still not convinced even this amount is necessary.

P. **Road Commissioner:** Salt prices are not going down, we can not reduce the amount of salt that we need for our program, I am already 200 ton less than the amount that is needed by math. We have 6 major commute roads in town and the one improvement that everyone has been very happy with is the manner in which our roads are treated. We also need the salt for the Downtown portion of the snow discharge permit.

**Manager Response:** Salt may be going up in price, but the weather is changing too. Our budget in FY24 was 88k. We've spent roughly \$57,000 through February. For Recommended, I split the difference between suggested by Manager and Department Head Request. This is another area where if we're looking to go over budget next year, it would be a good opportunity to communicate with the Select Board and allocate some contingency.

## PUBLIC WORKS

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>ANNUAL OPERATIONS</b>					
01 - COLD PATCH	2,000.00	1,200.00	2,000.00	1,200.00	Q
02 - GRAVEL-GRADING	35,700.00	29,000.00	40,800.00	40,000.00	R
03 - GRADING	43,600.00	40,000.00	43,600.00	40,000.00	S
04 - MOWING-ROADSIDE	5,000.00	2,750.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	T
05 - CATCH BASIN CLEANING	5,000.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	3,000.00	
06 - CATCH BASIN REPAIR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
07 - CATCH BASIN REPLACEMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
08 - LINE STRIPING	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	
09 - STREET SWEEPING	7,500.00	6,500.00	7,500.00	7,500.00	U
10 - TREE WORK	30,000.00	17,500.00	30,000.00	17,500.00	
11 - CRACK FILLING	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	
12 - BRIDGE MAINTENANCE	20,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	V
<b>42 - ANNUAL OPERATIONS TOTAL</b>	<b>168,800.00</b>	<b>129,950.00</b>	<b>153,900.00</b>	<b>134,200.00</b>	

Q. **Road Commissioner:** If we want to reduce this you can, some years we have a lot, some we don't, our budget this year will be used.

**Manager Response:** Done. No change from suggested to recommended.

R. **Road Commissioner:**

S. **Road Commissioner:** These items go hand in hand. We have been working over the past few years to get the amount of material up to a level that we can maintain the roads. The town invested in putting geo-fabric down on some of the roads, and as result of not enough gravel, we are into that material when we are grading. We need to build these roads up. All of the gravel roads have several homes on them and some very positive strives have been made. The board has asked us to allow for grading twice a year, and we

always put the material on the roads in the spring to last for the summer season. We have 6 dirt roads, It takes roughly 2 weeks to complete all of this work on the initial install and the amount of material that is needed over 6 roads is very small (apx. 233 yards). I do vary the amounts depending on the size and use however that is not a lot of material on each one.

**Manager Response:** Suggested to Recommended on Gravel line increased 11,000. Both lines slightly below what was requested by the department head.

T. **Road Commissioner:** I leave this amount of money in the budget, because in the past we have been requested to cut the grass twice. We get a lot of complaints in the North Newcastle area about this and in the past have not had the funds. If you don't want to be able to have this as an option, you can reduce it.

**Manager Response:** Suggested to Recommended increase to recognize a twice a year mow.

U. **Road Commissioner:** We will have to cut something out if you reduce this line item. I have been asked several times by the board to increase this, and I have finally got it to a point where we are getting all the roads as requested done.

**Manager Response:** Suggested to Recommended increased to match Department Head request.

V. **Road Commissioner:** I have no request for this year, the plan has no needs.

**Manager Response:** great. This has been zeroed out.

## PUBLIC WORKS

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>GENERAL CONTRACTOR</b>					
01 - LABOR	9,750.00	25,000.00	9,750.00	9,750.00	
02 - EQUIPMENT	9,600.00	17,500.00	9,600.00	9,600.00	
03 - CULVERTS	10,000.00	20,000.00	9,600.00	18,500.00	
04 - MATERIAL	13,000.00	12,000.00	13,000.00	11,000.00	W
<b>43 - GENERAL CONTRACTOR TOTAL</b>	<b>42,350.00</b>	<b>74,500.00</b>	<b>41,950.00</b>	<b>48,850.00</b>	
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>					
01 - TRAFFIC CONTROL EQUIPMENT	1,000.00	750.00	1,000.00	750.00	X
02 - STREET SIGNS	4,000.00	3,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	Y
03 - TRAFFIC SIGNS	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
04 - MISCELLANEOUS SIGNAGE	1,000.00	250.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	Z
<b>44 - EQUIPMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>7,000.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>5,500.00</b>	<b>5,250.00</b>	

W. **Road Commissioner:** This is a place holder, you can adjust if you want, if we go over we will have to find funds from a different source.

**Manager Response:** I am really worried about Division 43 overall. With these intense storms that cause a lot of damage, we're seeing overages (right now were about \$22,000 over budget because of the clean up and repairs from severe storms (primarily the December 18<sup>th</sup> storm). These funds are typically used for

standard prep for capital work and for calls from residents to address potholes, culvert clean outs, etc. For this specific account line, while I've reduced further, I am not certain it's the best move. Another area where I'd like to monitor for FY25 and come to the board for use of contingency if needed.

X. **Road Commissioner:** I have been building up a supply of these items. We don't have enough to cover for storms etc. We have been relying on HEI to provide anything that we don't have and I am trying to get the town to a spot where we can be self sufficient

**Manager Response:** FY23 doesn't reflect that. Half of this years budget has been spent though. Suggested to Recommended is still the same, down \$250 from the Department requested.

Y. **Road Commissioner:** This line item is typically driven by storms and damage from accidents.

**Manager Response:** The Department Head request was less than the suggested. Recommended reflects requested.

Z. **Road Commissioner:** We will not be able to purchase our road posting signs, or temporary no parking signs (These are paper and purchased after use ) (use them for pumpkin fest, and if we need to post for snow removal.) we just posted the roads so I will be ordering more this week.

**Manager Response:** Recommended matches Requested, an increase of \$750 over suggested. I would argue with myself that I recommended too much.

## PUBLIC WORKS

	FY24 Budget Approved	FY25 Manager Suggested	FY25 Dept Head Requested	FY25 Manager Recommended	Note
<b>107 - PUBLIC WORKS TOTAL</b>	<b>662,399.00</b>	<b>810,414.00</b>	<b>838,700.53</b>	<b>812,450.00</b>	

Total difference between Suggested by Manager and Department Head Requested:	\$28,286.53
Total difference between Department Head Requested and Recommended by Manager:	-\$26,250.53
Total difference between Suggested by Manager and Recommended by Manager:	\$2,036.00