

FY 2021 Budget Questions & Answers Finance Committee

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405 Public Works	Cunningham: New organization chart shows a requirement for an additional engineer. Please explain the need and work requirements.	Starratt: The new position in FY 2022 will include stormwater compliance duties, mapping, fee credits, reporting, oversight of consultants, culvert projects, etc. The new position is needed because the existing staff cannot assume the new workload and maintain current services.
405 Public Works	FitzPatrick: Would all public works (i.e. al the 400s) be in the DPW?	O'Donnell: The public works department will oversee the 294 Tree Warden, 410 Engineering, 421 Highway, 423 Snow & Ice, 424 Street Lights, 442 Wastewater Management, 600 Water Enterprise, and 650 Stormwater Enterprise.
410 Engineering	Cunningham: Please explain the relationship between the Engineering Department and the Permanent Town Building Committee. How much oversight and support does the Engineering Department provide for Town and School facility design and construction projects?	Starratt: ENG provides services to PTBC as requested, like site plans, conceptual plans, site analysis and cost estimates. ENG also reviews plans and stormwater designs on PTBC projects that go to the Planning Board.
410 Engineering	Cunningham: Why was the Project Inspector/Facilities Technician moved from Engineering to Stormwater Enterprise? The duties of Project Inspector go beyond just stormwater.	Starratt: We anticipate an increased workload for the first year while establishing the stormwater program. Shifting the Project Inspector is a cost-effective solution instead of creating a new halftime position for one year. Non-stormwater inspection duties, like road construction, will be outsourced for one year.
410 Engineering	Cunningham: The Project Inspector/Facilities Tech appears to return to Engineering in FY22 and beyond. Please explain.	Starratt: After the increased workload while establishing the new stormwater program during the first year, the Project Inspector can shift back to halftime under the Engineering Department.
421 Highway	Cunningham: Please explain the \$56,440 for stipends.	Barrett: Each Hwy employee is given a stipend for his licenses over and above his CDL license, up to

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		four licenses per employee. They are given a stipend for being available all winter, volunteering for the winter on call list, and volunteering for the summer call list.
421 Highway- Personal Services	Bao: The Highway Manager is moved? Where did he go?	Barrett: This position was the Office Manager in the Highway budget and is now the Office Manager in the DPW Budget
421-Highway Dept-Phone Allowance	Greene: Please explain this line item.	Barrett: Hwy employees are offered a Town phone, or they can use their own phone and be reimbursed \$25.00 per month
421-Highway Dept-Traffic Lines/Crosswalk Maint.	Greene: Why is this line item so much higher than FY19 actual?	Barrett: \$30,022.33 was encumbered into the FY20 budget.
421 Highway Dept-Advertising	Greene: Why is FY19 actual \$3,971? This is much higher than budgeted. What is advertised and where?	Barrett: The Highway department advertising bids along with any other public notices. This year reflects the one-time requested advertising for plow drivers and contractors. (resulted in zero)
424 Street lights	Greene: Please give an update on the tariff rate adjustment from National Grid. What is our estimate of this adjustment?	Heideman: The town purchased the street light assets from National Grid in October 2018. NGRID estimated it would take up to 18 months to fully convert our tariff rate, which would result in a significant credit balance. In December 2019, we received notification that our tariff rate transition to S-5 was complete and that we had an approximate credit balance of \$38,400, which will be applied to future invoices.
427 Stormwater Enterprise	FitzPatrick: How will condo's be assessed a stormwater fee?	Collins: First of all, condo values include the value of the land and all the other amenities. Land is not broken out separately because no one owns it individually – they all own it. A condo's value is all

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		<p>inclusive. I found this description which I thought was pretty good.</p> <p>“An individual condo owner holds title to the condominium unit only, not the land beneath the unit, so condos can be stacked on top of each other. All condo owners share title to common areas. Common areas include land, the exterior of buildings, hallways, roofs, swimming pools -- any area used by multiple owners.”</p> <p>Condos in the stormwater impervious map are showing as one unit with all the condos included. Our original plan was to bill the association and allow them to divide the fee between all the units as part of their assessment or as a special assessment. We are discussing that plan now as we are trying to work out exemptions and future liens. It may be better for the town to divide the large stormwater unit into individual bills for condos by the percentage of beneficial interest that comes off the master deed. But, we are still thinking this through. The BOS policy as it stands right now calls for a bill to go to the association. So, if this were to change, it would be a BOS decision.</p>
432 Recycling	Galvin: What plans, if any are being made to address the significant cost increase in solid waste disposal from 688K in FY21 to a projected 800K in FY23?	Heideman: The Town Manager’s Office will be presenting a 5-year projected financial forecast for both solid waste and recycling at a BOS meeting in

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		late January or early February. We will be seeking BOS direction based on the projections presented.
432 Recycling	Cunningham: Recycling has been trending down since FY16. What changed and have these trends continued in first half FY20?	O'Donnell: Through the first four months of FY20, we have spent a total of \$74,209 in tipping fees. The projection for the year is \$222,627. The current FY20 budget for tipping fees is \$208,000, so we may need a supplemental budget appropriation at the Annual Town Meeting. The main cause of the
433 Solid Waste	Cunningham: Trash collection has been trending up since FY17. Has this trend continued in FY20?	Heideman: The town's cost to dispose of solid waste per ton (tipping fee) continues to increase. We are currently paying \$73.04 per ton in FY20. We likely will be paying \$75.78 in FY21 and then a significant increase to \$90.00 per ton in FY22.
433 Solid Waste	FitzPatrick: Also, I had wanted to ask the recycling group if they had an idea of the increased costs needed to institute a pay as you throw program and how much of the fee after those costs would go to reducing the budget.	We are projecting a significant budgetary increase for both solid waste and recycling in FY22. We plan to present a forecast to the Board of Selectmen in January or February 2020. The Board of Selectmen may or may not support exploring pay-as-you-throw. If they do, we would have a significant number of tasks to figure out in order to implement the program in FY22. There are State grants available to get PAYT programs started. We would need to complete further analysis to determine how much funding we would need to raise in order to counter any identified budget shortfalls. The program would need to be designed to work specifically for Westford. If the BOS does not support PAYT, we would have to look at other

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		options to correct budget deficits, such as an operational override, if supported by the BOS.
491 Cemetery	Cunningham: Water expense was transferred from Perpetual Care to operating expense. How much, if any, of the water bill is paid from the interest on the Perpetual Care account?	Duane: YTD for FY20 no water invoices have been paid from the Perpetual Care Interest Account. FY19 there was approximately \$1,976.67 in water invoices charged to the Perpetual Care Interest.
491 Cemetery	Greene: What is the current Balance of the perpetual care and sale of lots accounts?	Duane: Perpetual Care Trust (non-expendable): \$518,000 Perpetual Care Interest (expendable): \$16,500 Sale of Lots: \$171,000
491 Cemetery	Greene: Last year it was stated that a financial analysis of lot charges was being conducted. What was the outcome of that analysis?	Duane: The most recent analysis of lot charges was done in 2018. As a result of that analysis, the Cemetery Commission did not make any adjustments to lot rates and will continue to monitor rates in the future.