

FY 2022 Budget Questions & Answers
Finance Committee

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600, Water Enterprise Misc.	Vetsa: I remember a discussion few years ago about the ground water allocation for Westford. Can you give me a report about the current ceiling and draw?	Cronin: Our current Water Management Act permit was slated to expire November 30, 2018, but due to delays in the WMA permitting process in other regions of the Commonwealth, MassDEP has extended all existing WMA permits in the Merrimack River Basin. Our Permit Renewal Application is on file and we are awaiting our Draft Renewal. MassDEP has not committed to a date. We anticipate that Town of Westford's new withdrawal allowance will be 1.84 million gallons per day, which is 0.6 million gallons per day less than our current withdrawal permit of 2.44 million gallons per day. Withdrawal for the last five years was: 2016 – 1.44MG, 2017 – 1.49MG, 2018 – 1.5MG, 2019 - 1.47, 2020 (Preliminary) – 1.66MG
600, Water Enterprise Personnel	Vetsa: Did we move Admin asst to Records supervisor 2 or is this a planned financial move?	Cronin: Following the retirement of the Highway Department Office Manager in June 2020, management bargained with OPEIU and CWA to redistribute functions of the position among existing administrative staff. The Highway and Water Administrative Assistant positions were reclassified to Records Supervisors and the Public Works Office Manager position was eliminated.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: Under the DPW creation, my memory was that salary lines might shift down. I understand it's been hard to hire a water super, was consideration given to a different title/roll. It looks like now we are hiring at the same level. Budget is up 7% from actuals over two years.	Cronin: The Board of Water Commissioners have considered several options for this position, including new titles, and interim appointments. We have been through several rounds of interviews and made several offers which have not been accepted, primarily due to salary. After

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		reviewing current market basket salaries, we adjusted the salary within the band to ensure that the compensation is competitive.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: How many GIS people work for the town?	Cronin: Currently, the Town employs one GIS Coordinator. A second GIS position, funded by the Water Enterprise, is vacant. The Water Department has only received minor support from the Town's GIS Department in the past. The Water Department, and the industry in general, are becoming increasingly reliant on GIS systems. The Department's GIS assets require updating. It has been an ongoing goal of the Department to implement a GIS-based Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) to improve efficiency, schedule, track, and analyze distribution system maintenance, streamline the creation and distribution of service records/gate & tie cards, and improve maintenance reporting. This position will assist in the development of a unidirectional flushing program, hydrant inspection and preventative maintenance program, gate valve maintenance program, and field oversight of Capital Improvement Projects. We plan to advertise for this position in the summer of 2021.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: Are there specific projects in building maint? How many buildings does this cover?	Cronin: The building maintenance line item is for preventive, routine, and emergency maintenance for the two water treatment plants, the water maintenance garage and cold storage garage, ten

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		pump station buildings, Boston Road booster station, and storage tank equipment buildings. Maintenance for the HVAC, Security, and Fire & Safety systems is charged to this account along with expenses related to grounds maintenance, general building repairs, janitorial supplies, trash and waste disposal, and fence repair.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: Please remind me why laboratory services jumped last year and is that the new threshold.	Cronin: Laboratory Services decreased from \$45,000 in FY19 to \$40,000 in FY20. The Laboratory Services line item is for sample analyses conducted by outside labs that are certified by EPA or MassDEP for specific methods and analytes. The line item varies from year to year depending on the sampling schedule we receive from the regulatory agencies. The increase in FY21 is a result of new sampling requirements for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: What are the engineering services? Are they outsourced?	Cronin: The Engineering Services line item is for outside consulting and engineering services related to water system impact studies and hydraulic analyses for proposed development projects, test well investigations, new source studies, and SCADA system troubleshooting and improvements.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: Can you provide an overview of pipe supplies?	Cronin: The pipe and pipe supplies line item is for water main and water service repair and installation materials, such as repair clamps, water main pipe, water service pipe, service saddles, service corporations, service boxes, gate valves,

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		gate boxes, and all other water services brass fittings.
600 Water Enterprise	<p>FitzPatrick: Are hydrants replaced on a certain schedule? Could the payments be leveled out? 2.8 fy90, 0 ytd fy20. Is the fire hydrant replacement from a grant or are they included in the hydrants line?</p> <p>Similar question with meters... under budget</p>	Cronin: Hydrant and meter replacements are determined primarily by age. Meter replacements required us to enter homes to access the meter. Due to the current pandemic, we were unable to replace all of the meters scheduled for FY20. We expect meter replacement activity to return to normal in FY22. Hydrant replacements were also deferred in FY20 to prevent system disruptions during the day, when the majority of residents were working or learning from home.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: Is unaccounted water at less than 10% an industry standard?	Cronin: Yes, 10% Unaccounted-For-Water is an industry standard. It will be a requirement in our new permit.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: There is an operation decrease but the verbiage describes an increase. Is the factor the same?	Cronin: The FY 2022 Operating & Maintenance expense budget increased by \$13,000 or 0.8% from the FY 2021 budget. The overall budget including personnel services, expenses, and debt service increased by \$37,918 or 0.81%. A summary of the changes can be found on page 163 of the budget.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: The Permit expired in 2018 but the descriptions says it is slated to expire. Have we had the impact of that expiration already or is it still pending? Is there a more recent withdrawal number than 2015? I see that the permitted allowance is expected to be reduced but is there compensation given for all the new development?	Cronin: The permit renewal is pending. We anticipate that Town of Westford's new withdrawal allowance will be 1.84 million gallons per day, which is 0.6 million gallons per day less than our current withdrawal permit of 2.44 million gallons per day. Withdrawal for the last five years was: 2016 – 1.44MG, 2017 – 1.49MG, 2018 –

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		1.5MG, 2019 - 1.47, 2020 (Preliminary) – 1.66MG. Compensation will be given for new development, however, the Town will need to demonstrate that it can mitigate.
600 Water Enterprise	FitzPatrick: when is the next projected rate increase?	Cronin: The next rate increase is projected to be in FY24. Based on current projections, we are predicting a 5% increase will be required.
600 Water Enterprise	Bao: Most of the expenses are unchanged. Is it final?	Cronin: The majority of the lines item have been adequately funded based on previous budgets. Incremental adjustments were made where necessary.
600 Water Enterprise	Bao: Water conservation has a negative impact on Water Enterprise income. Is there any state grant to support conservation activities?	Cronin: We are not aware of any grants to supplement revenues lost through conservation. The Department has secured grants in the past to fund programs aimed at promoting conservation, such as the installation of smart meters and radio read devices, distribution of low flow plumbing fixtures, and rebate programs for the replacement of high flow toilets.
600 Water Enterprise	Cunningham: Superintendent pay goes up 22.22 %. Please explain.	Cronin: The Water Superintendent position was reclassified from a Band 7 to Band 6 at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting. The position is currently vacant. We have been through several rounds of interviews and made several offers which have not been accepted, primarily due to salary. After reviewing current market basket salaries, we adjusted the salary within the band to ensure that the compensation is competitive.
600 Water Enterprise	Cunningham: Supervisor pay goes up 46.30%. Please explain.	Cronin: The Water Administrative Assistant

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		employee was reclassified as a Records Supervisor. The salary was moved from the Administrative Assistant line item to the Records Supervisor line item.
600 Water Enterprise	Cunningham: Transfer reduced by 20.97%. Reason?	<p>O'Donnell: The direct and indirect costs decreased from \$562,770 in FY21 to \$437,818 in FY22. The three largest contributors to this decrease were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The health insurance assessment decreasing from \$154,052 to \$108,384 due to staffing changes (\$45,668) 2) The elimination of the DPW Office Manager which 50% of the salary was allocated to the water enterprise (\$34,732) 3) In FY21, the water enterprise received a credit of \$6,539 based on the FY19 actual costs. In FY22, that credit increased to \$40,141 based on the FY20 actual costs (\$33,602)