

The following NEW Article 6A is comprised, in part, of budget provisions set out in our current bylaws. It is followed by several amendments to budget provisions in the current bylaws.

ARTICLE 6A. BUDGET PROVISIONS

6A.1. Scope. The provisions of this article apply to all boards unless a specific provision of law otherwise provides.

6A.2. Responsibilities. The responsibilities for the Town-wide annual operating budget, the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program and the Town-Wide Financial Plan are as follows:

- a. **Town Manager.** The Town Manager shall be responsible for, and shall annually prepare and submit, a Town-wide annual operating budget with a Budget Message in accordance with Section 6A.4.a, a Town-wide Five -Year Capital Projects Budget, and a Town-wide Financial Plan to the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee and, except as provided in Section 6A.2.b, shall present these submissions, as they may have been modified from time to time, at the Annual Town Meeting. The Town Manager shall establish the procedure and format for budget requests, pursuant to Section 6A.3.a and in accordance with the timeline set forth in Section 6A.7.
- b. **School Superintendent.** The School Superintendent shall submit an annual operating budget request for the School Department with a Budget Message to the Town Manager in accordance with Section 6A.4.b, and shall present these submissions, as they may have been modified from time to time, at the Annual Town Meeting.
- c. **Boards and Officers.** All Town boards and officers shall ~~fully cooperate and participate, at the request of the Town Manager,~~ in preparing and maintaining the Town-wide annual operating budget, the Town-wide Financial Plan and the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program as they relate to their areas of jurisdiction in accordance with the timeline set forth in Section 6A.6.

6A.3. Annual Operating Budget.

- a. **Budget Requests.** Any board or officer requesting an annual appropriation as part of the Town-wide annual operating budget shall furnish to the Town Manager a voted budget with detailed estimates ~~with and~~ appropriate explanations, of the amounts necessary for the proper administration of the offices or department for which amounts are being requested, and of all income expected to be received in connection with the administration of such departments or offices in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to Section 6A.7.
- b. **Budget Preparation.** The Town Manager shall prepare a Town-wide annual operating budget for the next following fiscal year, taking into account (i) the Town's ability to generate the real estate property taxes assumed in the budget and to fund any deficit balance therein; (ii) the relative need for and level of the various expenditures proposed to be made by the Town; and (iii) alternatives to any of the various sources and uses of funds in the budget.

6A.4. Budget Message. The Budget Message that accompanies the annual operating budget shall include the Budget Messages of the Town Manager and School Superintendent: ~~consist of:~~

- a. **Town Manager.** The Town Manager's Budget Message shall: (i) outline proposed financial policies of the town for the ensuing fiscal year; (ii) provide an explanation of the proposed budget for all Town departments, both in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs; (iii) provide an explanation for any proposed changes to budget requests submitted pursuant to Section 6A.7.a that have not been subsequently approved by the submitting board and an explanation of proposed variations from the budgets submitted pursuant to 6A.3.a; (iv) describe important features of the budget and how the proposed budget advances the goals and objectives of any Town-wide strategic plan then in effect; (v) indicate any major variations from the budget for the current year in financial policies, expenditures and revenues, together with the reasons for such changes; (vi) summarize the town's debt position; and (vii) include such other material as the Town Manager deems desirable.
- b. **School Superintendent.** The School Superintendent's Budget Message shall describe important features of the School budget both in fiscal terms and in terms of programs; indicate any major variations from the School budget for the current year and the reasons for such changes; and include such other material as the School Superintendent deems desirable.

6A.5. Capital Projects Budget.

6A.5.1. "Capital Project" Defined. For the purposes of this section, a "Capital Project" shall mean:

- a. A public construction or public works project, estimated to cost in excess of \$100,000, including projects for the construction, reconstruction, replacement, major repair or renovation, extension or other improvement of a public building, highway, sidewalk, storm drain, sewerage installation, incinerator, bridge, playground, park or other public works; or
- b. A purchase of land, equipment, buildings or structures, estimated to cost in excess of \$100,000; or
- c. The preparation of plans, specifications or working drawings (estimated to cost in excess of \$10,000) for any project or purchase described in subsections a or b.

6A.5.2. Capital Projects Budget Program. The Town Manager shall annually prepare and submit a Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program as follows:

- a. Any board or officer seeking to have a Capital Project placed on the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program shall submit a request to the Town Manager voted by any such board, which shall include recommended sequencing and timing for each such project, taking into account the relative need for and cost of each project, the probable effect of each expenditure on the financial position of the Town, and available alternative methods of funding. An explanatory statement shall accompany each request, together with such additional information as may be requested by the Town Manager. All Capital Project requests shall be submitted in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to Section 6A.7.
- b. On the basis of the information submitted by each board or officer pursuant to the provisions of Section 6A.5.a, the Town Manager shall prepare for presentation to the Annual Town Meeting a Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program for the Town, identifying proposed and

anticipated Capital Projects and their timing, the anticipated use of borrowing or other means of funding for such projects, any anticipated so-called Proposition 2½ debt exclusion votes in connection with any such borrowing, ~~and~~ the impact of such borrowing on the Town's outstanding debt service and real estate property tax rates in upcoming years; and an explanation for any proposed changes to Capital Project requests submitted pursuant to Section 6A.7 that have not been subsequently approved by the submitting board and an explanation of proposed variations from the budgets submitted pursuant to 6A.3.a.

- c. The Town Manager shall prepare the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program sufficiently in advance of the Annual Town Meeting to permit its publication, together with any comments of the Advisory Committee, in the Reports to the Annual Town Meeting, pursuant to Section 11.8.
- d. The Town Manager shall annually make a written presentation of the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program to the Advisory Committee, together with any recommendations or comments as the Town Manager deems appropriate, and including an explanation for any proposed changes to Capital Project requests submitted pursuant to Section 6A.7 that have not been subsequently approved by the submitting board . The Town Manager may subsequently update or amend the Capital Projects Budget before it is published in the Reports to the Annual Town Meeting or presented at the Annual Town Meeting.
- e. The Town Manager shall recommend to any Annual or Special Town Meeting a method of funding for each Capital Project proposed to be submitted for approval at such Town Meeting. The Town Manager's recommendation shall state, for each proposed Capital Project, any proposed use of borrowing for such projects, any anticipated so-called Proposition 2½ debt exclusion votes in connection with any such borrowing, and the impact of such borrowing on the Town's outstanding debt service and real estate property tax rates in upcoming years.
- f. Before any appropriation for a Capital Project is considered at an Annual Town Meeting, the Town Manager shall deliver an oral report to the Annual Town Meeting on the substance of the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program, including any recommendations or comments as the Town Manager deems appropriate. Any board, official or officer may provide an oral report at the Annual Town Meeting on aspects of proposed or anticipated Capital Projects that relate to their areas of jurisdiction. Following the oral report on the Program, there shall be an opportunity for comments from the Advisory Committee and from Town Meeting Members.

6A.6. Town-Wide Financial Plan.

6A.6.1. –Definitions. For the purposes of this article, a “Town-wide Financial Plan” shall mean a sequenced combination of forecasts of the Town's operating budget (i) for the current fiscal year, (ii) for the next following fiscal year and (iii) for one or more fiscal years beyond the next following fiscal year. Forecasts shall be in the format commonly called “sources and uses of funds.” The term “sequenced combination” is intended to require that the three component parts of the Town-wide Financial Plan build upon one another in an orderly, reasonable manner. A “deficit balance” in a forecast shall mean that the total uses of funds in the forecast exceed the total sources of funds in the forecast.

6A.6.2. Report of Town-Wide Financial Plan. The Town Manager shall annually prepare and shall manage the Town-wide Financial Plan as follows:

- a. The Town Manager shall compile for presentation to the Annual Town Meeting a Town-wide Financial Plan for the Town. In this Plan, the forecast for the next following fiscal year shall be consistent with the Town-wide annual operating budget prepared pursuant to Section 6A.3.b.
- b. For any future fiscal year in a Town-Wide Financial Plan, the Town Manager shall estimate the property tax rate that would generate real estate property taxes equal to the sum of (a) the real estate property taxes assumed as a source of funds in the forecast for the fiscal year and (b) any deficit balance in the forecast for that fiscal year. In so doing, the Town Manager may use reasonable assumptions as to growth in the valuation of properties in the Town.
- c. The Town Manager shall prepare the Town-wide Financial Plan sufficiently in advance of the Annual Town Meeting to permit its publication, together with any comments of the Advisory Committee, in the Reports to the Annual Town Meeting, pursuant to Section 11.8.
- d. The Town Manager shall annually make a written presentation of the Town-Wide Financial Plan to the Advisory Committee, together with such recommendations or comments as the Town Manager deems appropriate. The Town Manager may subsequently update or amend the Plan before it is published in the Reports to the Annual Town Meeting or presented at the Annual Town Meeting.
- e. Before any appropriation article is considered at a Town Meeting, the Town Manager shall deliver an oral report to the Town Meeting on the substance of the Town-Wide Financial Plan, including any recommendations or comments as the Town Manager deems appropriate. Any board, official or officer may provide an oral report at the Town Meeting on aspects of the Plan that relate to their areas of jurisdiction. Following the oral report on the Plan, there shall be an opportunity for comments from the Advisory Committee and from Town Meeting Members.

6A.7. Timeline, Guidelines and Format. The Town Manager shall establish a timeline, format and procedures for the submission of proposed annual operating budget requests pursuant to Section 6A.3.a and Capital Project requests pursuant to Section 6A.5.2.a in a timely fashion in order to allow for review by all interested parties. Subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager shall also develop substantive guidelines for individual department requests. The Town Manager shall hold one or more meetings with board chairs and officers at an early stage of the budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year to consider the parameters of the Town-wide annual operating budget and the Town-wide Five-Year Capital Budget Program, including anticipated state or other revenues, expected adjustments to the Town's levy limit, and the relative demands for services anticipated by each Town board and department. The timeline shall include the following:

- a. Not less than 90 days before the start of the Annual Town Meeting, all non-school annual operating and Capital Projects budget requests shall be submitted to the Town Manager, with copies to the Advisory Committee; and the School Superintendent shall submit the school annual operating budget request, along with a Budget Message, and the school Capital Projects budget requests to the School Committee.
- b. Not less than 70 days before the start of the Annual Town Meeting, the School Committee, after public hearing and vote, shall submit an annual operating budget request for the School

Department with a Budget Message, together with any Capital Projects budget requests, to the Town Manager, with copies to the Advisory Committee.

- c. All budget requests made pursuant to Section 6A.7.a or 6A.7.b shall be subject to review by the Finance Department in the manner described in Section 20.5.c.
- d. Not less than 60 days before the start of the Annual Town Meeting, the Town Manager shall submit the Town Manager's preliminary proposed Town-wide Annual Operating and Capital Projects budgets, including the Town Manager's and School Superintendent's Budget Messages, to the Board of Selectmen, the Advisory Committee and all other Town boards and officers, for review and comment. All such comments shall be provided to the Town Manager and the Advisory Committee. If in the Town Manager's preliminary proposed Town-wide Annual Operating and Capital Projects budgets the Town Manager proposes any revisions to a board's budget that the affected board has not approved, the Town Manager shall furnish to that board a written explanation of any such revision, with copies to the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee.
- e. Not less than 45 days before the start of the Annual Town Meeting, the Town Manager shall submit the Town Manager's proposed annual operating and Capital Projects budgets, including any proposed revisions thereto, and including the Town Manager's and School Superintendent's Budget Messages to the Advisory Committee, with copies to all other Town boards and officers. If in the Town Manager's preliminary proposed Town-wide Annual Operating and Capital Projects budgets the Town Manager proposes any revisions to a board's budget that the affected board has not approved, the Town Manager shall furnish to that board a written explanation of any such revision, with copies to the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee.
- f. Whenever practicable, the Advisory Committee shall vote on the Town-wide Annual Operating Budget and Five-Year Capital Budget Program, pursuant to the procedures set forth in Sections 11.7 and 11.8, not less than seven days prior to Town Meeting.