

TOWN OF ELIOT

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET

Joint Meeting of Eliot
Select Board and Budget
Committee

January 17, 2024

Presented by
Town Manager Michael J. Sullivan

INTRODUCTION

This work product is a result of hundreds of labor hours from department managers, the Finance Director, the Assistant Town Manager, the Town Manager and others. There was input sought from key staff, vendors, contractors, other municipalities, and wide-ranging sources to better understand cost trends for fiscal year 2025. This information collection process began in August and is on-going.

Thank you to the members of the Budget Committee and Select Board for attending tonight and beginning the public process of reviewing the budget.

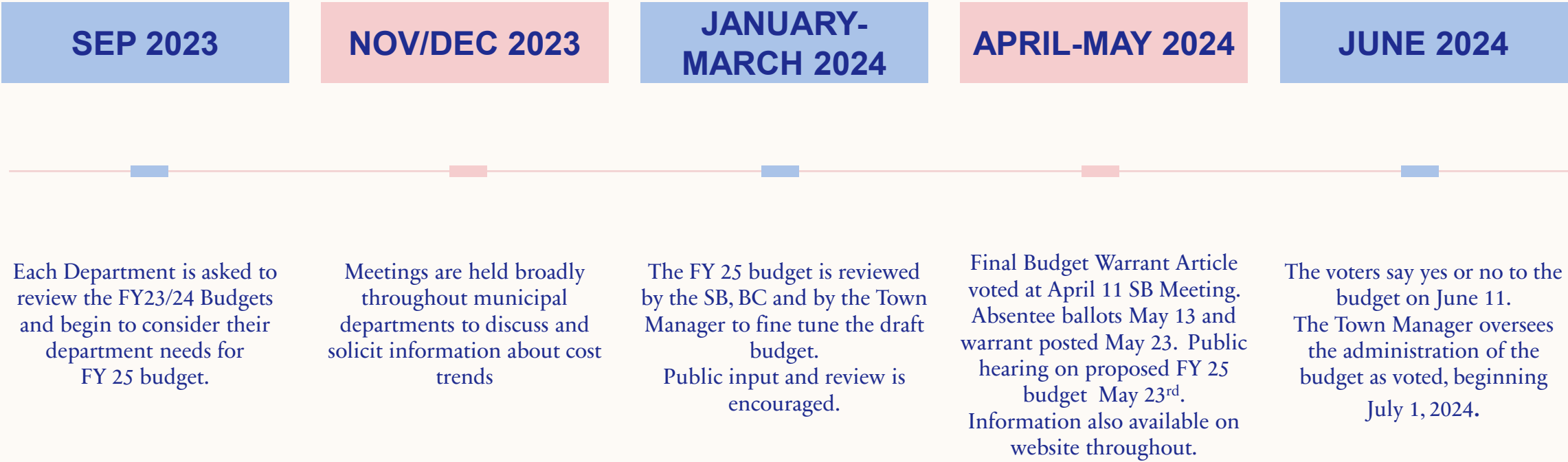
Thank you to the incredible Town of Eliot team for participating in this process.



PRIMARY GOALS

To provide essential quality services to the citizens of Eliot within an appropriate annual budget model.

TIMELINE



AREA OF FOCUS

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

- Employee share of cost ranges from 15% to 17.5 % (union) of plans
- Employee Family Plan total cost is \$32,093 for 2024.
- About half of the employees receive health insurance benefits (HIB) from the Town.
- Any FT not receiving HIB are compensated \$3,000 for non-union and \$4,200 for union employees.
- Last year by consolidating there was \$80K shaved off the previous year's projection.
- FY 25 increase in HIB premiums is estimated at \$131K.

OTHER EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- MPERS, FICA, Medicare, WComp, Training etc. up about \$280K
- Training increased across departments, some required, some to improve performance.
- Technology additions/increases over all departments. More efficient, less error, better results. (mapping, Adobe, Microsoft
- P&C insurance slightly up.

AREA OF FOCUS

TOWN HALL DEPARTMENTS

- Wages for Admin (3FT, 2PT), Clerk (4FT), Land Use (4 FT) increases by \$95K over FY 24 (average \$7916 per)
- “Elections” up, staffing needs for large Presidential election increases.
- Postage and building costs are positioned to go up slightly.

CHALLENGES AND POSITIVES

- Next year "temporary" Town Hall.
- Record keeping, access, retention.
- Improved communications with staff and the public.
- Professional association participation.
- Consultant and coaching investment.
- Increased institutional knowledge and reduced turn over.

AREA OF FOCUS

COMMITTEES

- There was no increase requested by Boards/Committees in their annual budget requests.
- The only substantial change to practice would be the Planning Board requested a modest stipend and the Select Board approved the request.
- It should be noted under capital/reserve requests the Conservation Commission asked for an increase to the Land Bank from \$5,000 annually to \$19,000 for this year.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- There were some modest increases in requests from Outside Agencies (\$12K).
- They were entered into the draft without any adjustment for the most part exception Day One, MPR, Lifeflight, York County Shelter.
- Eastern Trails request has been added for FY 25 at \$3,500.

AREA OF FOCUS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Compensation costs are up over the previous fiscal year by \$37K.
- This includes increasing the force by two officers, compensation and adjustments.
- There is a significant reduction of \$57K in “Boat Basin Seasonal Staff”. The Community Service Officer program and increased PD presence at the Boat Basin will continue.
- “Uniforms” is up \$16K. Two new officers. (\$6K FY26).
- Regional dispatch is up as contracted for FY 25 by \$7K.

CHALLENGES AND POSITIVES

- Recruitment remains a challenge, though nothing suggests Eliot is the problem.
- Safe and appropriate back up on shifts.
- Organizational restructuring of department.
- ACO, Harbormaster, innovative approaches.

AREA OF FOCUS

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Modest increase of \$17K for a critical public safety function.
- \$332,800 to provide a well-trained volunteer FF-based service.
- Making reasonable strides in replacing outdated equipment and gear.
- Using grants effectively to lessen cost to the taxpayer.

CHALLENGES AND POSITIVES

- As community grows, when will a volunteer department no longer fit the need?
- Calls for service increasing yearly, rank and file age.
- A decade ago, it was uncommon to have two calls in one day, now more unlikely to have a day with out multiple calls.
- The “alarm” sounded about 325 times in the last calendar year.

AREA OF FOCUS

PUBLIC WORKS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

- The Public Works “Highway Department” draft budget request is up about \$34K budget from FY 24
- Recommended wage increases, as is the case with other departments and comparable positions by about \$121K.
- The increase was offset in a reduction to Paving by \$200K.
- Various other line (i.e., fuel, grounds, guardrails, equipment, vehicles) were adjusted to reflect trends or history.
- This “Highway Department” budget historically has returned healthy unspent funds to the General fund.

CHALLENGES

- Attracting qualified staff.
- Rethinking how we deliver services.
- Growing organizational capacity through training.
- Utilizing equipment fully, including adding necessary training when appropriate.
- What equipment should we lease vs. purchase in the future? What work should we perform vs. Contract vs. We should not be doing?

AREA OF FOCUS

PUBLIC WORKS TRANSFER STATION

- The Public Works “Transfer Station” operation increase in salary is about \$16K (6PT).
- The overall budget increases about \$19K.
- Tipping fees continue to increase(\$4K) as recycling revenues shrink.....
- Household Hazardous Waste cost increasing.
- Training costs increase and necessary.

CHALLENGES AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- Should Eliot stay in the trash business?
- Should we modify the process with the clear intent of lower costs?
- The State of Recycling and “China Sword”
- Rates and efficiencies
- Regional partnerships
- <https://www.centerforecotechnology.org/what-is-the-national-sword/#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20policy%20in,recyclables%20like%20greasy%20paper%20goods.>

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE.....

- Debt will add in 2026 Town Hall and Engine #4 to “Leases”. It is yet to be determined what model the Select Board use and from what source. (MMBB, marketplace, BANs)
- The Sewer Enterprise Budget will be on June ballot and does not affect GF taxation.
- General Assistance Budget has increased relative to demand and costs. Administrative fee to be paid to Mainspring \$18,000 for administering the program for Eliot. The budget is \$57,375 total with \$27,563 reimbursable from the State under the present 70%.
- Fixed Assessments, Wm Fogg Library request is increased \$7K, School Budget process is just beginning, I put a placeholder in at 6%, County Assessment did not arrive last year until June (placeholder in budget with estimated increase.)

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE.....

Capital Planning and Reserves.

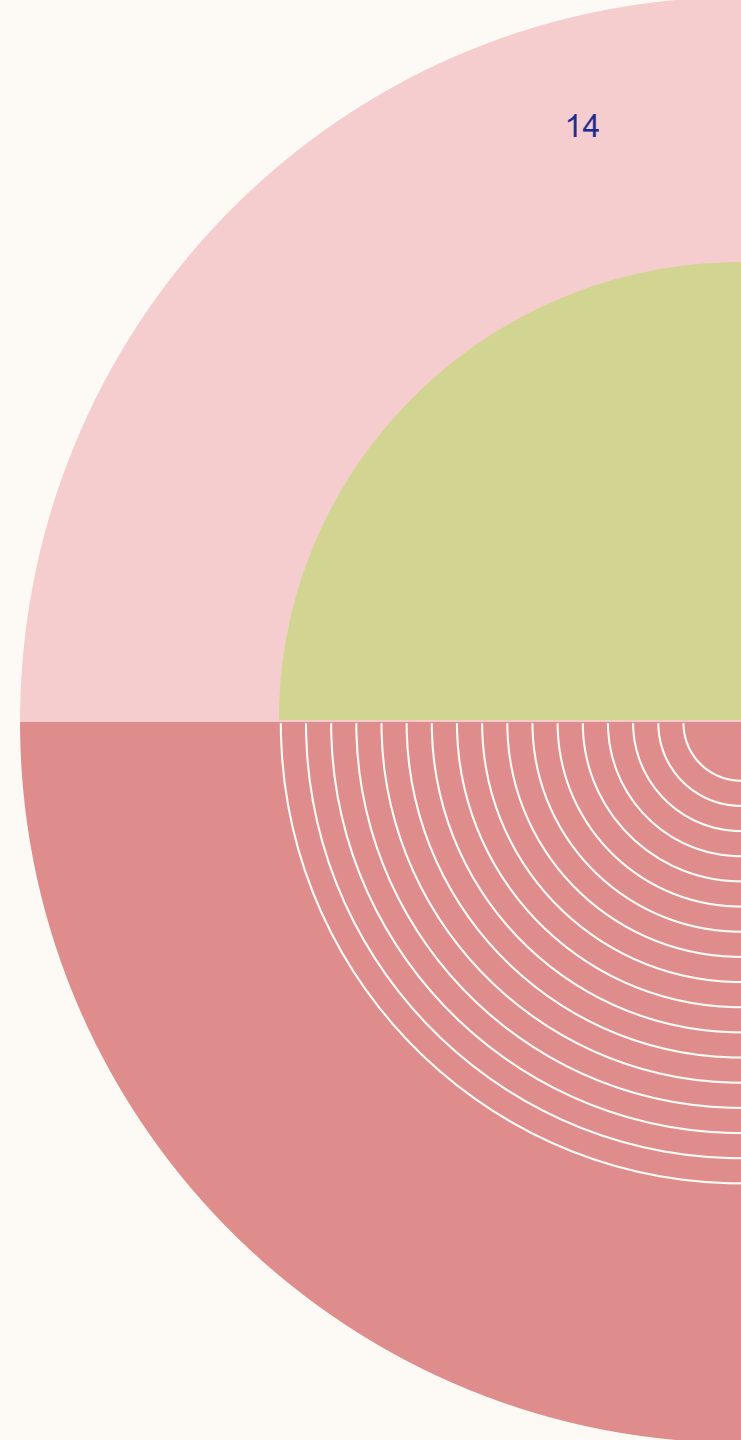
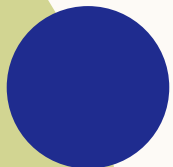
I will be recommending that we adopt a process of using unassigned audited funds to replenish reserve capital and department funds to the greatest extent appropriate.

The unassigned fund balance (UFB) recaptures funds unused in the previous fiscal year. By way of example, the unaudited FY 23 of about \$526,000 will be returned to the UFB adding to the

SUMMARY

This work product is a result of hundreds of labor hours from department managers, the Finance Director, the Assistant Town Manager, and the Town Manager. We sought input from key staff, vendors, contractors, other municipalities, and wide-ranging sources as to cost trends for the fiscal year 2025. This information collection process began in August and is on-going.

Thank you to the incredible Town of Eliot team for participating in this process.



THANK YOU

If you have any question or comments, please send them to msullivan@eliotme.org

Or call 207.451.1205

Citizens are also encouraged to attend the Select Board and/or the Budget Committee meetings to express your opinion, ask questions or thank the members!