



# TOWN OF TOPSFIELD

**Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator**

*8 West Common Street, Topsfield, Massachusetts 01983*

*Telephone 978-887-1500; Fax 978-887-1502*

January 8, 2024

## **BUDGET MESSAGE**

Dear Honorable Select Board:

I am pleased to present to you and the residents of Topsfield, the Town's preliminary Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget.

Throughout the past year, our team has been focused each and every day on delivering top notch services to the Topsfield community while staying within the confines of our operating budget. By identifying and introducing new revenue streams, aggressively pursuing grant awards and using innovation and creativity we continue to meet the growing needs of our community in a fiscally responsible manner. This approach is reflected in this year's Operating Budget as well. This year's budget provides transparency and takes a fiscally responsible approach while maintaining the highest standard in the delivery of services to the taxpayers of Topsfield.

Many hours have been spent to ensure this budget is complete and thorough. Multiple meetings with department heads to perform line-by-line review of their budgets, onsite walkthroughs of facilities and discussions regarding the prioritization of needs and long-term vision for each department. Thank you for the hard work by the many department heads, but a special thank you to former Town Accountant Catherine Gabriel and current Town Treasurer Morgan Dwinell for their work in preparing the budget document.

Overall, our Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal:

- Represents an increase in the FY25 base budget from the final FY24 appropriated budget (using the Finance Committee Guidelines to estimate the schools) of \$939,340 or 2.74%
- Prioritizes additional funds for first responder trainings (Police and Fire)
- Invests in Information Technology and IT security
- Requests more administrative resources for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals as well as a part-time Local Inspector for the Building Department
- Includes costs associated with an extra election in 2024
- Incorporates the contractual 21% increase in trash hauling services
- Estimates an 8%-10% increase in property insurance and health insurance
- Represents a reduction of annual debt service costs
- Funds downtown beautification efforts

Over the coming months, my team and I look forward to working closely with the Select Board, the Finance Committee and the residents of Topsfield as we collectively review the contents of the proposed budget.

Over the next month there will be:

- Select Board Working Sessions, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>rd</sup> where the proposed budget will be reviewed in detail.
- Finance Committee Meetings will be held to do the same.
- A “Town Administrator Capital Open House” and a “Town Administrator Budget Open House” have been scheduled for January 18<sup>st</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup> respectively. These meetings will be opportunities for the public to say hello, to share any thoughts or specific questions they may have regarding the budget or to learn how a budget is crafted and what it represents.
- And as always, the case, the public can call or email my office any time to chat on any matter – including the budget.

Please note that the proposed FY25 Budget and supporting documents have also been posted to BoardDocs under the 1/10/2024 Work Session and will also be posted on the Town’s website for the public to access.

Lastly, Select Board, I am grateful for your support, your collaboration, and your determined efforts to make Topsfield a special place to live, work and enjoy. I am honored to serve the Town of Topsfield and to partner with so many wonderful people in this community. With such passion and commitment, the possibilities are endless. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Kevin Harutunian  
Topsfield Town Administrator