

COHASSET SELECT BOARD

The mission of the Select Board is to protect, maintain and enhance our dynamic community, historical heritage and coastal environment by providing thoughtful leadership and fostering citizen engagement

Budget Message for FY 2023

The Cohasset Select Board is committed to the delivery of quality services to our residents, continued infrastructure planning and maintenance, and strong financial management. Despite the unprecedented challenges faced during this past year, Cohasset's financial health continues to be strong. The town has maintained a strong bond rating, steady revenues, prudent operational budgeting, and policies that set benchmarks for making annual contributions to its stabilization and reserve funds.

The Board wants to aggressively pursue opportunities that will come with ARPA and other pandemic-related relief funds as well as any potential federal infrastructure funds, recognizing the Town's commitment to funding critical infrastructure needs. The Board also recommits to our vision of collaboration among all town and school departments to identify resource sharing opportunities for optimal long and short-term budgeting. We also encourage identifying operational and planning efficiencies through strategic partnerships with our neighboring communities. We support a professional and well-trained workforce enhanced by our committee volunteers and are thus supportive of providing adequate resources for the Town Manager to ensure optimal town operations.

The Select Board charges the Town Manager to craft a Fiscal Year 2023 budget that meets these guidelines:

1. Continue to support the Town's fiscal management and reserve policies by:
 - Maintaining a AAA bond rating.
 - Continuing to address the Town's OPEB obligation through continued funding of the OPEB Trust Fund and adhering to the policy recommendations adopted by the Board in 2020;
 - Reviewing and, where needed, recommending updates to the Town's financial policies.
 - Maintaining and building reserve balances in compliance with reserve policy goals.

2. FY23 operating budget should support town services equivalent to the preceding fiscal year within available revenue sources. The Board notes that Cohasset's tax base is predominantly residential and encourages prudent budget planning that recognizes these limitations and offers strategic long-range capital and departmental planning while considering the Town's long-term funded and underfunded liabilities.
 - The Town will seek efficiencies of services and look to deliver services at or below the tax levy. We anticipate adopting a uniform tax rate and seeking a maximum 2.5% increase in the tax levy.

- Support and budget for prioritized recommendations of various study committees including Harbor, Affordable Housing and Master Plan, Town Hall Building Committee, and School Facilities Committee as they relate to operational needs of the Town.
3. Establish capital priorities and funding plans.
- The Town Manager will update the 10-year capital plan and establish a parallel major infrastructure plan which includes prioritization of projects along with anticipated funding sources and dates; this plan should form the basis for annual capital planning and long-term investments in major infrastructure.
 - Projects included in the Harbor and Master Plans and identified as priorities by the Master Plan Implementation and Harbor Committees, as well as the Select Board, shall be included in the capital and major infrastructure plans
 - The work of the Town Hall Building Committee and the School Facilities Committee should be considered priority funding items for the FY23 capital and major infrastructure plans
 - Maintenance of capital and infrastructure assets, including roads and fields, will be included in the appropriate budget
 - The Select Board will review and affirm the FY23 plans and collaborate with the Town Manager to budget for and fund the capital and major infrastructure recommendations contained therein
4. Provide support for Select Board goals on Planning and Communication
- Allocate resources to support the work necessary to study and update the Town's zoning bylaws
 - Develop and propose a budget for a communications plan, including:
 - i. IT infrastructure, including web-based platforms and tools
 - ii. Support for internal and external communications strategies
 - iii. Continued efforts to manage records electronically for improved public access

This encompasses the Select Board's Budget Message for FY2023

The Board looks forward once again to working with Town Manager Chris Senior, the employees of the Town and Cohasset's volunteer boards and committees on the development of the FY23 budget.

Adopted 10/05/2021