



Town of Franklin

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget Message

April 12, 2024

Town Council

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<http://www.franklinma.gov/town-budget>

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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In compliance with Article Six, Sections 6-3-1 through 6-5-2 of the Franklin Town Charter, I am submitting the proposed FY25 Budget Message & Budget to the Town Council and Finance Committee.

I am presenting a balanced budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). The Executive Summary explains the budget process, highlights, assumptions, and some general overview statistics and trends. Detailed department budget narratives that speak about the mission and strategic initiatives within each department are included in Section 2 of this document and detailed budget line item numbers are in [Appendix A](#). The budget process is a year round exercise. Throughout the entire fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), Town staff continuously update the budget model as new information becomes available. A budget review typically occurs every November prior to setting the annual tax rate. I encourage residents to sign up for [Town Council agendas and legal notices here](#), which disclose the most up to date townwide budget actions and discussions in town. Residents who seek to take a deeper dive into departmental or project specific finances can review the [Franklin Finance Committee meetings](#). The Finance Committee meets regularly to discuss and debate townwide financial issues at length. Please visit the [Town Budget page](#) and consult the website for the latest FY25 budget information. All budget meetings can be viewed on the Town's [YouTube](#) channel, live and in archive, and on Franklin TV.

Despite the public discussions around School finance, the organization continues to perform at a very high level. The Town and Schools provide exceptional services to constituents at a very good value. I encourage every person who reads this to reflect on their own success: very high graduation rates and college readiness, incredible school athletic achievements, superior special education services, and the vibrancy of school extracurricular activities, arts, music and more. Franklin Police is now a fully accredited agency and the Fire Department is the 459th fire department out of 45,000 in the United States to reach an [ISO-1 rating](#). In the last two years over 200 acres of open space have been preserved, with new acquisitions on the horizon. Over the next five years we will be planning how to use this open space to meet the needs of the community. The Department of Public Works (DPW) continues to be a regional leader in rebuilding the Town's infrastructure, including the largest public works project in history over the next three years in the [Beaver Street Interceptor](#). Recreation, Library and Senior Center programs have never been more popular as we continue to see record breaking numbers in customer demand. For the first time in the Town's history, we received a [AAA Bond Rating](#) in 2022 and I am proud to say we have maintained this noteworthy status. This rating allows the Town to borrow at a lower rate, saving the Town as well as our residents and taxpayers significant money over time. Despite the overwhelming amount of requests the Town receives for services, departmental operations have excelled throughout these past few years and have become even more efficient. We continue to innovate ways to do more with less.

Enough cannot be said for the dedication, commitment, passion, innovation, humility and teamwork the staff of this organization continues to showcase on a daily basis. The overall achievements of this organization have been tremendous, and we should all be thankful and appreciative of what this team has achieved and the role the municipal and school staff play in the community. The future of the organization remains as bright as ever, and the quality of life in Franklin is as exceptional as it has ever been.

As I have documented in prior Fiscal Forecasts and Budget Narratives, while services in FY25 will remain highly effective, inflation has now settled into the local budget. We are still feeling the effects of 40-year high inflation and the money we raise each year simply does not go as far as it once did. While the Town and

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Schools received over \$12.2 million in grant funds, including the remaining ARPA funds, and over \$475,000 in donations in FY23, we will not see grants at this volume in FY25. Inflation, coupled with the loss of significant grant funding, will make it challenging to make substantial new strategic investments that the community is asking for.

Here are the assumptions being incorporated into the FY25 budget:

Revenues Highlights

- The proposed FY25 budget does not include any revenues from the **Budget Stabilization “Rainy Day” Fund**. The fund currently has a balance of \$3,156,460. It is vital for the Town to continue to maintain and grow the Rainy Day fund rather than deplete it. Budget Stabilization reserves set the town up to be prepared in the event of an emergency, but equally as important, these reserves illustrate to bond rating agencies and financial institutions sound financial policy and execution. Well founded financial annual audits, an effective OPEB policy, passage of the Community Preservation Act, the implementation of a stormwater utility and increasing emergency reserves puts the town in a healthy position to maintain a stable AAA bond rating and quell interest rates in an era of record high inflation.
- The **Property Tax Levy** and **“New Growth”** revenue forecast will decrease a cumulative **\$137,751** to **\$3,264,366** from FY24. Traditionally, the Town has used a ten-year average model for the new growth figure. However, the Town’s New Growth has plateaued and is now at the decreasing end of the arc from the front end of the pandemic years.
- **State Aid** is assumed at the Governor’s FY25 budget levels. Currently, the town stands to realize a net loss of \$76,782 in local aid from FY24. The House of Representatives and the State Senate historically increase local aid in their subsequent budgets and the Town ends up with a higher figure than the Governor’s proposed budget. Given the timing of the final state budget, the Town will need to readjust for the final state budget in November. That said, as staff, stakeholders, and elected officials have discussed for many years, state aid is likely not to increase substantially.
- **One-Time Revenues** will be used to accommodate \$2 million of the FY25 operating budget revenue projections. This decision will result in a structural deficit of just over \$2 million going into FY26. The breakdown is as follows:
 - \$1.507 million in Free Cash; and
 - \$500,000 from the MECC Stabilization account to help ease the full assessment back into the budget.
- The Town’s **Local Receipts** look to rebound past pre-pandemic numbers, while also recognizing that hotel tax revenue and cannabis excise sales taxes are both now in this revenue category. Staff assume an additional \$1,116,253 in local receipts over FY24. The preliminary budget model was level service, but in evaluating the forecast, we believe FY25 will show an uptick due to several additional factors:
 - \$100,000 in ambulance receipts have climbed steadily due to a record breaking amount of ambulance calls and the Fire Chief’s ability to stay at market levels for ALS/BLS rates. Those numbers will be evaluated by the end of March and a small increase will be made in the formal budget proposal in April. However, revenues will be invested in additional paramedic positions

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to reflect the increased demand and we will bring the backup ambulance into the peak, daytime rotation to address the high volume of calls we are seeing.

- \$100,000 in cannabis excise local option tax (3%) is well ahead of projections in FY24, and we expect a revised number with additional revenue by the April 12th budget submission.
- \$300,000 due to a fourth hotel opening and numerous events in the area from Gillette Stadium, Great Woods Xfinity Center, Dean College and sporting and entertainment events from Marlborough to Mansfield.
- \$500,000 Motor Vehicle Excise Tax estimates based on the automobile market, which has historically come in over estimated amounts and the valuation of automobiles increasing due to innovation and limited supply.
- A reminder that most of this revenue source is fee-for-service and reflects fees collected to perform services (e.g. licensing, building permits, ambulance receipts, recreation fees). Motor vehicle excise tax is slightly less than half of the revenue. [See FY 2025 assumptions below.](#)

Expenditures Highlights

- The Franklin Public School District will see an increase in their budget of \$3,000,000 over FY24, which is a 4.2% increase and tied for the largest single year increase the Schools have ever received. Further analysis is in the Future Trends section below.

Year	Superintendent's Request	Town Council Allocation
2019**	\$3M (4.98%)	\$3M
2020*	\$3.8M (6.07%)	\$1.26M
2021*	\$3.9M (6.03%)	\$800,000
2022	\$3M (4.61%)	\$2.16M
2023	\$2.4M (3.53%)	\$2.4M
2024	\$3.37M (4.8%)	\$1.77M
2025**	\$9.3M (12.9%)	\$3M

* denotes the two pandemic impacted budget years (does not include federal stimulus funds)

** denotes a use of \$1.8 million in Budget Stabilization funds in FY19; one time free cash in FY25.

- The budget includes a 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all municipal personnel, including collective bargaining agreement commitments, which amounts to \$625,000. School salaries are located in the school budget.
- Municipal employee pension costs will absorb almost \$388,320 in new revenue for municipal departments and some non-teacher school employees.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- What is **NOT** in the budget compared to the [Preliminary Budget Model presented on March 6th, 2024](#):
 - \$378,000 in additional DPW expenses;
 - \$85,000 (plus benefits) in the Facilities Budget for a Sustainability Coordinator;
 - \$200,000 in additional Public Property and Buildings expenses (School related);
 - \$2,000 in additional Town Council expenses;
 - \$5,000 in additional Cultural Council grant money;
 - \$5,000 in additional Historical Museum expenses; and
 - \$6.3 million for Franklin Public Schools Level Service plus Restoration of cuts.

- What is **NOT** in the budget with regard to long-term planning:
 - Additional resources toward Debt & Interest. In 2026, we anticipate borrowing for a Remington-Jefferson remodel and the Horace Mann Roof replacement;
 - Additional public infrastructure costs for roads, sidewalks, parking lots, trails, crosswalks, tree trimming to prevent power outages, bike lanes, traffic calming to slow people down; pedestrian crosswalks and other public works improvements;
 - \$2 million in annual capital needs transferred to the operating budget - costs for Police and Fire safety gear, school curriculum, school and town technology, school and town fleet, and DPW apparatus.
 - Funds to address an increasing demand and reliance on Technology, mostly in our Schools.
 - Additional staffing investments for green and sustainability goals, open space planning, conservation efforts, and net zero initiatives.
 - Funding for Municipal Capital Projects: Police Station, Beaver Street Recycling Facility and other community requests, such as an Arts Center.
 - An additional \$4.3 million for level service for Schools or \$6.3 million to restore some previous cuts in 2023-24 to the Schools;
 - Additional Strategic investments toward Franklin Public Schools, such as foreign language, capital, facilities, clubs, academies, and arts related curriculum; and
 - Assumptions related to collective bargaining negotiations for the Town's unions, as these contracts expire at the end of FY25. CBA's will be for FY26, FY27 and FY28.

Future Trends

The constant pressure on local government to fund all of the work that needs to get done is becoming unsustainable. The Massachusetts Municipal Association [continues to advocate](#) for greater investment in infrastructure from the state and to relieve the many unfunded mandates the state is placing on local governments. Municipal and School departments work hard managing their budgets, investing in value added services and adapting to citizen feedback and a changing world. Moving into FY25 and the following fiscal years, we see a handful of issues that need to be monitored, most notably cost increases to residents in the form of stormwater utility rates, sewer rates and other major capital investments in town.

1. **Affordability for all residents.** Residents have seen costs increase across all aspects of their lives. As outlined at the March 6, 2024 Joint Budget Subcommittee meeting, as leaders in the community we have to be conscious of the effects the costs of doing business have on our residents. In addition to the likelihood of an override ballot question for a new Franklin Police Station, residents will also see an increase in the following areas:

- Sewer Rates. Effective July 1, 2024, there will be a 15% increase in sewer rates. We are required to raise rates to create surety behind the loan for the Beaver Street Interceptor. The interceptor was first built and paid for 109 years ago and lasted for generations. The time has come for the residents of Franklin today to pay for a new interceptor and pay the debt for current and future generations of Franklinites.
- Stormwater. FY24 represents year one of the [Stormwater Utility](#) to address the federal unfunded EPA mandates. As each year progresses, the permit becomes shockingly more expensive. A rate increase will be required to stay up-to-date with the permit. We estimate a minor increase of about \$1.50 per billing unit, which is on average \$10-\$20 a year for most households. This rate increase will ensure solvency of the stormwater utility budget. However, in the next few years, a much more detailed public discussion must take place on the expense associated with the Town's Phosphorus Control Plan, which is estimated to cost \$30 million over five years. Addressing this issue is not optional, as these are unfunded federal mandates. The town has already sued the federal government over this issue.
- Water Rates. Residents can also expect to see an 8% water rate increase in each of the next three years. Two major federal and state regulatory required projects are expected to come online in the form of a \$25 million water filtration project (water tank membrane to protect from manganese and iron) and the first of the Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) required projects - a \$6.5 million PFAS Filtration Plant (with a zero % interest loan from the state). Rate payers will see an approximate \$50 increase per year over the next three years.
- The Tri-County School Project. In November 2023, 61% of residents that participated in the [election](#) voted in affirmative to raise property taxes through a debt exclusion to pay for Franklin's anticipated \$2.1 million per year assessment. Congratulations to the Tri-County School community for their campaign to build a new facility and successfully navigate the MSBA process. Approximately 1/3 of the project is paid for by the state. The tax impact for this project

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will begin in FY25 and is reflected in the debt exclusion budget model and expenditure line item with an increase of \$132,298. The tax rate will be adjusted later this year to reflect the increase in levy for Franklin's portion. This project is budget neutral. At full maturity in FY27, an average (\$650,377) Franklin household will have taxes raised by \$169/year to pay for this. That rate will decline over the life of the project.

While I am sure these messages of rate increases are hard to handle, residents must also realize every city and town in Massachusetts is going through similar situations managing severe cost drivers related to public infrastructure. We are fortunate to have ample and clean resources, we do pay for it in Massachusetts.

2. **The Franklin Public Schools** have informed us that in order to maintain “level” or “status quo” services from the current year to FY25, a budget increase of \$7.3 million, or 10.13% is required. A level services budget *plus* restoration of FY24 cuts yields an increase of \$9.3 million, or 12.92% Please review the [Budget Update from the School Committee meeting on February 13, 2024](#) for additional information. Below are some additional informational points that relate to the fiscal challenges of the public schools:

- The state’s [Chapter 70 Formula](#) is not in the Towns’ favor and will continue to be a pressure point, especially if the Legislature is forced to alter the formula due to the Town’s increasing “Hold Harmless” situation.
- Significant fixed costs and capital costs to technology, facilities, and fleet will compete with operating costs to education and classrooms. These costs are not a part of the preliminary budget model, but still need funding sources.
- Collective bargaining looms in FY26 with Franklin Education Association (FEA) and other unions. Labor and personnel costs have risen significantly for the schools, but this is also a trend affecting all municipalities statewide.
- Unsustainable special education cost increases, which put pressure on all aspects of the school budget.
- Central office staffing capacity in Administration, Finance and Human Resources and technology investments.
- School Revolving Funds solvency at the end of FY24 heading into FY25 and having some respectable reserves.
- Town and School federal ARPA and ESSR money expires at the end of this calendar year.
- Continued declining enrollment. In 2008, the school district enrollment was 6,464. The most recent enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year is 4,721 (as of Feb 2024). The school district is losing 100-150 students a year in district enrollment and this trend is expected throughout most of the rest of the decade. In 2022, the School Committee hosted a [redistricting exercise](#) and looked at future enrollment projections and facilities needs, but that resulted in no action. They have reenaged McKibben Consulting to relook at the district demographics; however even

the assumptions used in that study does not offer a clear picture. Town staff have worked closely with the Schools to ensure the correct development and growth assumptions are made in any final study that may shape redistricting and the better use of town and school facility space. The objective is to streamline operations and maximize space to alleviate increasing fixed costs.

- It is also important to note that portions of the municipal budget are made up of school related costs in the amount of approximately \$20 million when fully funded (Note: It is important to note that figure is based on conservative assumptions. This figure could be much higher). Both the Facilities Department and the DPW have seen consistent increases to their budgets specific to school related costs. While these costs continue to increase, it is important to note that their budgets have not been fully restored to pre pandemic levels for school or municipal costs. The “Municipal” budget pays for all school building debt & interest, property and casualty insurance, worker’s compensation, snow removal, non-teacher pension costs, grounds & building maintenance, utilities, OPEB costs, fuel for the school van fleet, unemployment insurance, retired teacher health and life insurance, some staff, and much more.

3. **Budget capacity to fund future projects.** The Debt and Interest budget remains one of our most pressing budgetary concerns. At 1.59% of recurring general fund revenues, this slice of the budget is far below town goals and has been trending in the wrong direction for years, due to previous borrowing costs coming off the schedule and high interest rates to quell inflation. It should increase through the rest of the decade to maintain our Public Schools and Town facilities. Other scheduled capital facilities or infrastructure projects that would be paid for in these budget line items over the next five years are the Remington-Jefferson rehabilitation, the High School ten-year update, Washington Street to Grove Street sidewalk, Beaver Street Recycling Center and Solid Waste Master Plan, and the Police Station. If the town borrows to do any of these projects in the future, debt and interest will rise and leave fewer dollars available for other areas of the budget.
4. **Sustainability.** Also looming around the corner for FY26 is a new round of collective bargaining negotiations for the Town's unions - teachers, police patrol, police sergeants, fire, public works, police sergeants, custodians, maintenance/trades, and librarians - as these contracts expire at the end of FY25. If we are to avoid sizable layoffs and/or cuts to all town services this fiscal year, and certainly in FY26 and beyond, the community must recognize that we are all in this together. It is imperative that residents take the time to learn and understand the budgeting pressures on both the schools and the municipality at large, and how these cost pressures counterbalance affordability to all citizens, businesses, and stakeholders in the Town of Franklin. We hope to avoid an “Us v. Them” debate. As we have suggested for many years, the Joint Budget Subcommittee may want to endorse a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Equity Goal to avoid deepening budget deficits in future fiscal years. Otherwise, an escalation of budget increases in personnel and labor will most certainly result in unsustainable costs to the town, including the schools. This issue does not even include a calculation that additional staff investments may be needed for school and municipal services based on what the community desires. The town will be in a painful position of extensive layoffs or service reductions if we do not (1) start to manage expectations on the capacity of the town’s service limits and (2) start to coordinate and better strategically plan town and school operating budget finances.

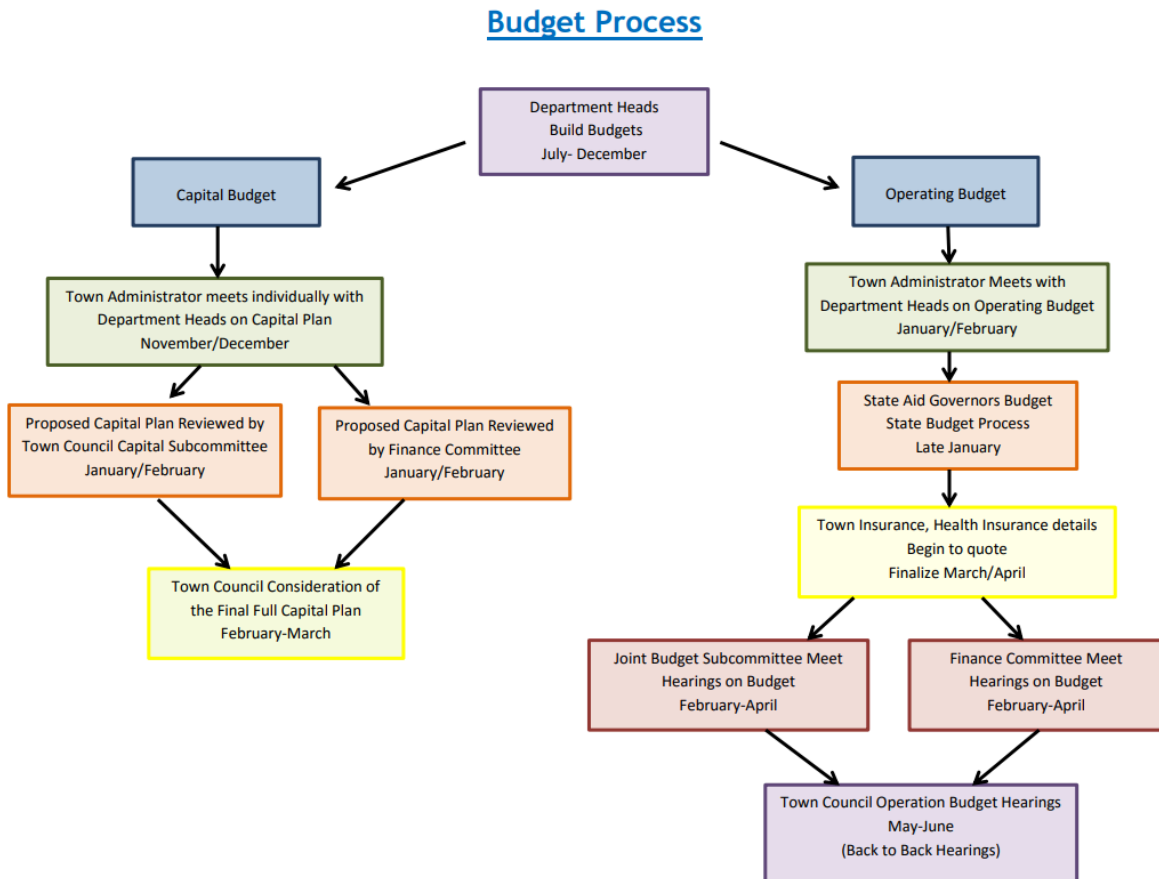
Budget Basics & Process

Annual Budget Process

The [Town Charter can be found here online](#) to read the legal requirements of the budget process.

Each department is required to submit a proposed budget to the Town Administrator by December 31st each year. The Town Finance Team, which includes the Town Administrator, Deputy Town Administrator, Finance Director/Comptroller, Deputy Comptroller, Treasurer-Collector, Human Resources Director and Operations Assistant to the Town Administrator, reviews each department budget requests with the departments throughout January and February.

Please see the following Budget Process FlowChart, which is a general guide to the process and helps illustrate in general terms the checks and balances and process.



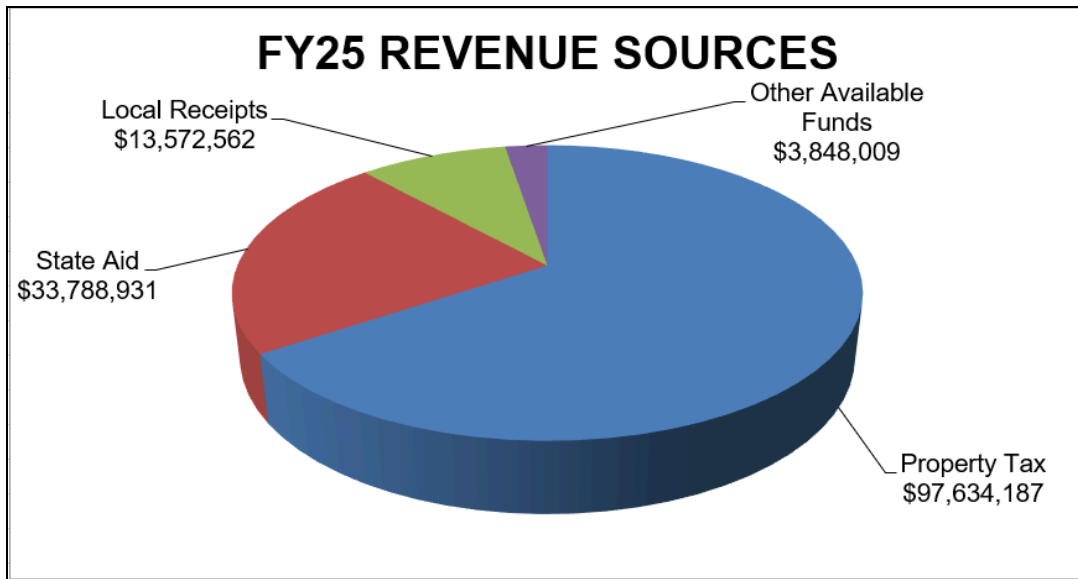
The Town Administrator reviews the highlights of the Town’s fiscal plan with the Budget subcommittee of the Town Council and the Joint Budget subcommittee, composed of members of the Town Council, Finance Committee and School Committee. Based on input and the meetings with the Department Heads, the Town

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Administrator makes a budget recommendation to the Town Council and the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee reviews the Town Administrator’s proposed budget and forwards their recommendations to the Town Council. The Town Council holds two public hearings prior to adopting the budget. Those meetings are typically held prior to Memorial Day.

The vast majority of revenues collected by the Town are controlled by state law or by the annual appropriation of State Aid as well as local receipts, which are mostly fees for service (similar to School revolving funds). Fixed costs (health insurance, general insurance, energy, pensions, etc.) continue to increase and must be paid with limited growth in revenues. These forces all combine to place additional financial pressure on the overall municipal budget.

Revenue Source	Amount	% of Total
Property Tax	\$97,634,187	65.60%
State Aid	\$33,788,931	22.70%
Local Receipts	\$13,572,562	9.11%
Other Available Funds	\$3,848,009	2.59%
Total	\$148,843,689	100.00%



For more historical data, please visit the [Town Budget website](#).

Property Taxes Overview

The primary source of revenue for Franklin is the property tax. Property taxes account for approximately 66% of revenues (excluding use of reserves and enterprise funds). State Aid accounts for approximately 23% and local receipts for approximately 9% of the overall revenues. The remaining 2-3% are other available funds.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

The Town’s Board of Assessors determines the value of all taxable real and personal property under guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. For the purpose of taxation, real property includes: land, buildings, and improvements erected on/or affixed to land. Personal property includes: stock, inventory, furniture, fixtures, and machinery. The Assessors determine the full and fair market value every three years and update the values annually.

There are three major factors affecting real and personal property taxes:

1. **Automatic 2.5% increase** - Each year, a community’s levy limit can increase by 2.5% over the previous year’s tax levy limit. In FY25, the Town has an additional \$3,402,117 in new levy capacity via Prop 2 1/2.

Proposition 2 ½, passed by the voters in 1980, caps revenue growth to the largest portion of our revenues (property tax) to 2 ½% of the previous year’s tax levy plus new tax revenues from construction/improvements of buildings. For more details and links on Prop 2 ½ or other state finance issues, [visit our website for links in Other Resources](#).

2. **New Growth** - A community is able to increase its tax levy limit each year to reflect new growth in the tax base. Assessors are required to submit information on growth in the tax base for approval by the Department of Revenue as part of the Tax rate setting process. Usually we assume a 10-year average to project new growth, but late indicators project a slowing in growth so we are not going on that assumption.

New Growth				
FY 2014 to FY 2025				
Fiscal			Fiscal	
Year	Amount		Year	Amount
FY14	\$1,047,493		FY20	\$1,864,418
FY15	\$716,096		FY21	\$1,668,392
FY16	\$820,004		FY22	\$1,106,044
FY17	\$1,185,535		FY23	\$1,299,688
FY18	\$1,479,902		FY24	\$1,137,751
FY19	\$1,515,478		FY25 (Est)	\$1,000,000

3. **Overrides/Debt Exclusions** – A community can permanently increase its tax levy limit by approving an “operational override” of a certain dollar amount by approval of the voters at the ballot. “Debt Exclusions” are a temporary increase in a community’s levy limit for the life of the debt to pay for the

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

project and then they “sunset” and the tax is relieved. These revenues show up on the Control Sheet in their own section. A few points:

- a. Since Proposition 2 ½ began in 1980, the Town has had nine override proposals and all have failed except one in 2007.
- b. Including the recent Tri-County vote, voters have approved 9 of 12 debt exclusions in town history.
- c. On the horizon, a renovated and expanded Police Station will be needed. A new Police Station would almost certainly require a debt exclusion. The Police Station Building Committee has been appointed and has begun their work

State Aid

Massachusetts General Law provides that the Commissioner of Revenue estimate the State’s funding of local assistance programs authorized by law and appropriated annually by the legislature. State Aid line items are based on pre-established formulas, but the amount of funding is subject to annual review by the Governor and the Legislature. There are many different categories of state aid, local options, assessments or other state mandated services. The DOR combines these formulas into a “[Cherry Sheet](#)” for each municipality.

FY25 will be a more bumpy ride than the previous several fiscal years. The Town’s FY25 budget assumes Governor Healey’s budget model and assumes a \$76,782 net loss in local aid. The current revenue estimates (on which this budget is based) FY25 Chapter 70 Aid for education at \$29.34 million and non-school aid of about \$4.45 million including the Charter School reimbursement. The Charter School tuition reimbursement is \$980 thousand, and the assessment for the Charter School is more than \$6 million.

A recent history of local aid:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

FY25 Cherry Sheet Analysis								
	Total	%	Dollar	Total	%	Total	%	Dollar
	State	Increase	Increase	State	Increase	Net State	Increase	Increase
	Revenue	(Decrease)	(Decrease)	Assessments	(Decrease)	Revenue	(Decrease)	(Decrease)
2016	30,641,751			5,128,575		25,513,176		
2017	31,043,709	1.31%	401,958	5,009,105	-2.33%	26,034,604	2.04%	521,428.00
2018	31,384,347	1.10%	340,638	5,003,326	-0.12%	26,381,021	1.33%	346,417.00
2019	31,536,248	0.48%	151,901	4,951,856	-1.03%	26,584,392	0.77%	203,371.00
2020	32,358,580	2.61%	822,332	6,067,450	22.53%	26,291,130	-1.10%	(293,262.00)
2021	32,048,524	-0.96%	(310,056)	6,000,581	-1.10%	26,047,943	-0.92%	(243,187.00)
2022	32,035,104	-0.04%	(13,420)	6,074,892	1.24%	25,960,212	-0.34%	(87,731.00)
2023	33,134,171	3.43%	1,099,067	6,789,568	11.76%	26,344,603	1.48%	384,391.00
2024	33,605,238	1.42%	471,067	7,085,694	4.36%	26,519,544	0.66%	174,941.00
2025*	33,788,931	0.55%	183,693	7,346,169	3.68%	26,442,762	-0.29%	(76,782.00)

* Governor's Budget

Local Receipts - See the chart below on FY25 Local Receipts assumptions:

General Fund Revenue - Local Receipts			
Account	Estimated FY24	Estimated FY25	% Increase
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax	\$ 5,266,161	\$ 5,766,161	9.49%
Meals Tax	\$ 679,173	\$ 740,027	8.96%
Hotel Tax	\$ 393,263	\$ 493,263	25.43%
Cannabis Excise Tax	\$ 293,265	\$ 393,265	34.10%
Penalties and Interest	\$ 356,095	\$ 388,001	8.96%
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$ 25,000	\$ 27,240	8.96%
Fees	\$ 2,623,527	\$ 2,723,527	3.81%
Rentals	\$ 236,597	\$ 257,796	8.96%
Departmental Revenue Recreation	\$ 614,152	\$ 669,180	8.96%
Licenses and Permits	\$ 1,302,294	\$ 1,418,980	8.96%
Fines and Forfeits	\$ 71,992	\$ 78,442	8.96%
Investment Income	\$ 363,260	\$ 395,808	8.96%
Federal Revenue	\$ 222,646	\$ 211,192	-5.14%
Miscellaneous Recurring	\$ 8,884	\$ 9,680	8.96%
	\$ 12,456,309	\$ 13,572,562	8.96%

For Local Receipts Historical data, [please visit the Town Budget Archives](#).

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

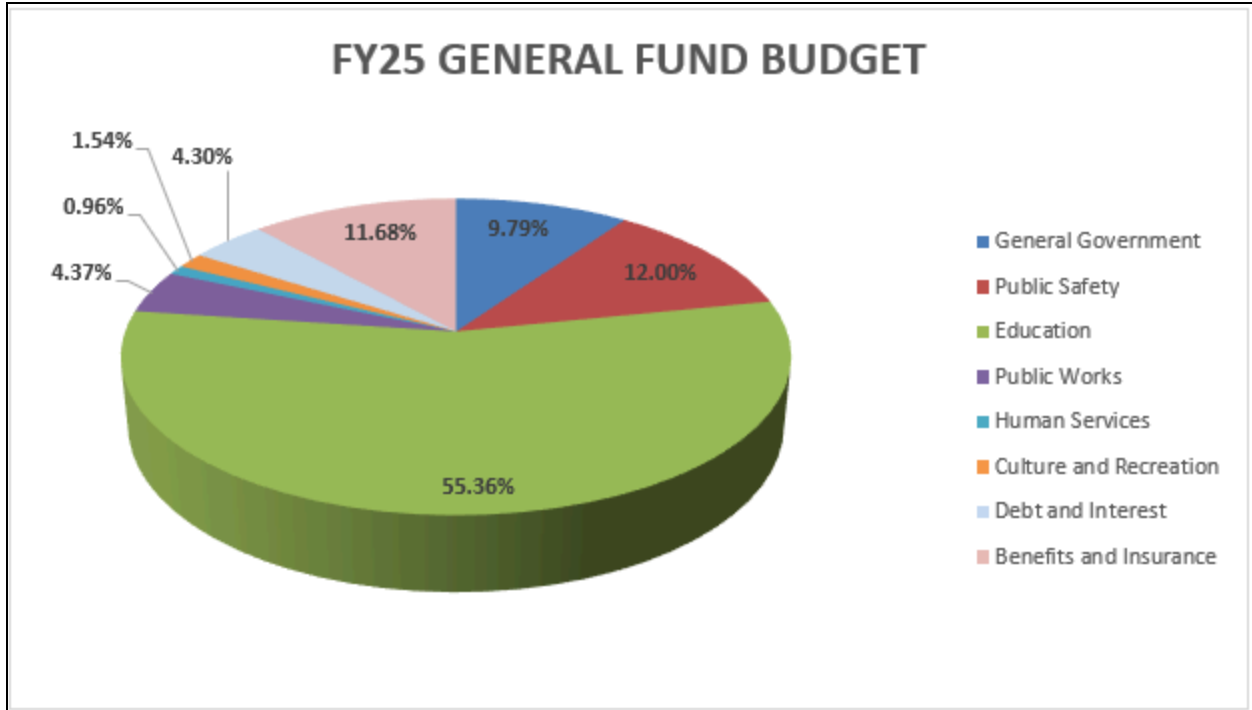
FY25 Projected Expenditures

A Summary of increases to the major budget sections:

<u>Budget Category</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>
General Government	\$914,438.00
Public Safety	\$1,229,947.00
Franklin Public Schools	\$3,000,000.00
Education (all public schools)	\$3,237,378.00
Public Works	\$149,899.00
Human Services	\$84,632.00
Culture and Recreation	\$231,493.00
Debt and Interest	(\$123,166.00)
Benefits & Insurance	\$719,448.00

FY25 General Fund Budget Breakdown:

<u>Budget Category</u>	<u>Town Budget FY25</u>	<u>% of Total Budget</u>
General Government	\$13,795,519	9.79%
Public Safety	\$16,896,415	12.00%
Education	\$77,967,916	55.36%
Public Works	\$6,159,667	4.37%
Human Services	\$1,352,000	0.96%
Culture and Recreation	\$2,171,654	1.54%
Debt and Interest	\$6,057,087	4.30%
Benefits and Insurance	\$16,447,262	11.68%
TOTAL	\$140,847,520	100.00%



Health Insurance Trends

Personnel wages and benefits are almost two-thirds of the Town budget. The following chart show trends in expenditures for municipal employee health insurance:

Fiscal Year	Employee Health Insurance Budget	Increase % over prior FY
2025	\$3,901,000.00	5.03%
2024	\$3,704,743.00	12.19%
2023	\$3,383,325.00	0.97%
2022	\$3,486,500.00	7.41%
2021	\$3,268,000.00	16.29%
2020	\$2,775,000.00	-1.69%
2019	\$2,822,000.00	4.35%
2018	\$2,750,000.00	5.82%
2017	\$2,590,000.00	5.89%

Please note that the Town has to estimate benefits each budget season based on the preliminary rates provided to the Town by the health insurance company. We have to make conservative estimates and assume that people will stay on the same plan for the following year and guess what plans new employees might choose. We often go back and reduce the health insurance budget each November after we look at the actual data. This is why the numbers may not match the original budget that is put out each May.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

The Town continues to work through the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) to maintain current plan design, contain costs and stay on the cutting edge of healthcare for employees. This is very challenging, but the IAC has done a great job and is a great example of collaboration.

The most impactful policy change was the institution of the high deductible health plan (HDHP) in conjunction with a [Health Savings Account](#) (HSA) program which saves money on premiums. The Town established the HDHP and HSA program seven (7) years ago and we have been able to contribute annually to our employee's Health Savings Accounts (\$750 for an individual plan, \$1,500 for a family plan).

Pension Trend

The following chart shows the Town's pension responsibility from Norfolk County for the past ten years. Since 2016 the Town's assessment has almost doubled in total dollars.

Fiscal Year	Norfolk County Retirement Assessment	Increase % over prior FY
2025	\$7,890,141.00	5.18%
2024	\$7,501,821.00	4.44%
2023	\$7,183,210.00	7.31%
2022	\$6,693,600.00	8.4%
2021	\$6,174,365.00	7.09%
2020	\$5,765,354.00	10.37%
2019	\$5,223,882.00	9.48%
2018	\$4,771,398.00	9.65%
2017	\$4,351,658.00	10.24%
2016	\$3,947,535.00	7.81%

Enterprise Accounts (Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, Stormwater)

These accounts are self-supporting by ratepayers and set up as enterprise funds in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. Changes to these budgets do not affect the general fund budget. If there are any unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year, they are automatically closed to their respective account's fund balance. The Town charges these accounts indirect costs that are transferred to the general fund to offset expenses paid for by the general fund. As described above in the Financial Policies, all utility funds that currently have an active fee, meet town policy for emergency use funds in those accounts.

1. Water Enterprise Fund. Due to an infusion of ARPA funds, the Town has spent millions of dollars on new water line construction. The Town will have two new water projects in the near future: PFAS treatment at Well 7/7A and PFAS upgrades to the Fisher Street Water Treatment Plant. These two projects alone will cost \$32.2 million, so we are recommending annual increases of 8% each year in FY25, FY26 and FY27.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

2. Sewer Enterprise Fund. Sewer rate increases have previously been approved for FY24, FY25 and FY26 to pay for the Beaver Street Interceptor project. Bids came in at approximately \$27 million. The project will be 4-5 years in length and will replace the 110-year old sewer line that carries $\frac{3}{4}$ of Franklin's sewage.
3. Refuse/Trash/Recycling. Global refuse and recycling markets are experiencing significant price increases. We will be recommending a rate increase for FY25 of approximately 17.5% or \$12.50 per quarter to cover the anticipated budget shortfall.
4. Stormwater Utility. This is the utility enterprise fund created as a part of the requirements in the new MS4 Permit. It began operations on July 1, 2023 and a new utility fee is charged to ratepayers. We will be requesting an increase in this fee in FY25 of approximately 8% or \$1.48 per unit as we expand operations.

Town Population & Demographics

Below is the Town’s most recent population data. This information is provided by both the Town Clerk’s Office, which is updated annually, as well as the 2020 U.S. federal census which is updated every ten years. Those interested in a very deep dive into the world of changing demographics and local precincts can see the Town Clerk’s October 20, 2021 [presentation](#) to the Town Council.

Overall, the Town experienced significant growth from 1960 to 2010 (212%). In the decade from 2010 to 2020, the Town saw a leveling off of resident growth with only a slight increase in population of 2.38%. In more recent years the Town’s population has experienced minor fluctuations, with slight declines in 2021 and 2022, followed by a slight incline in 2023.

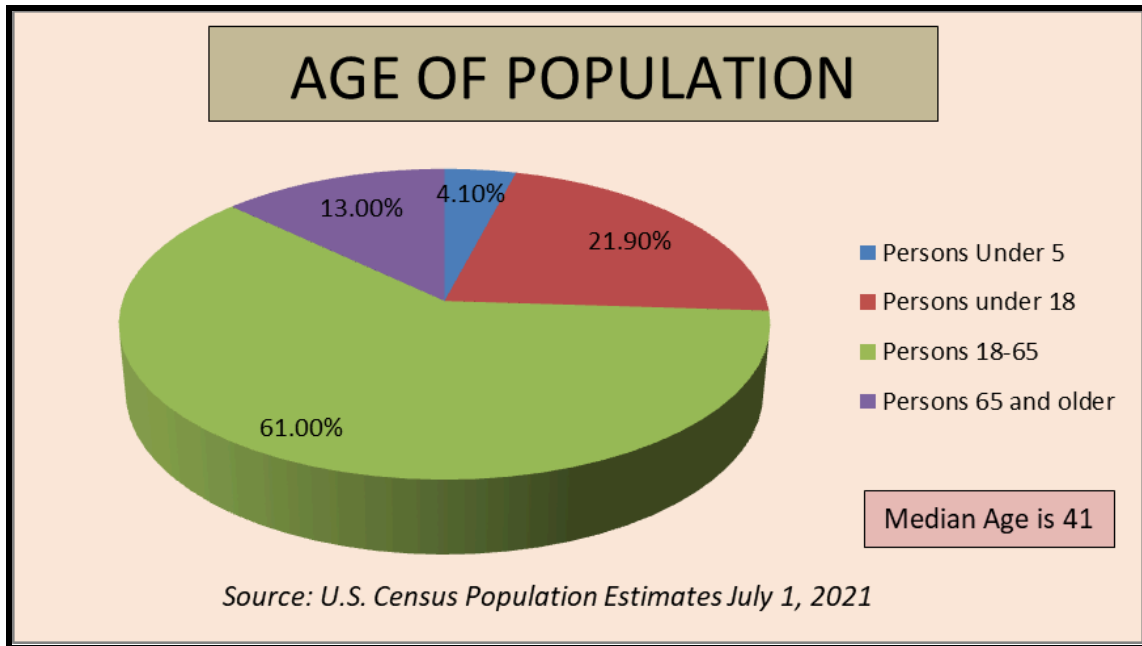
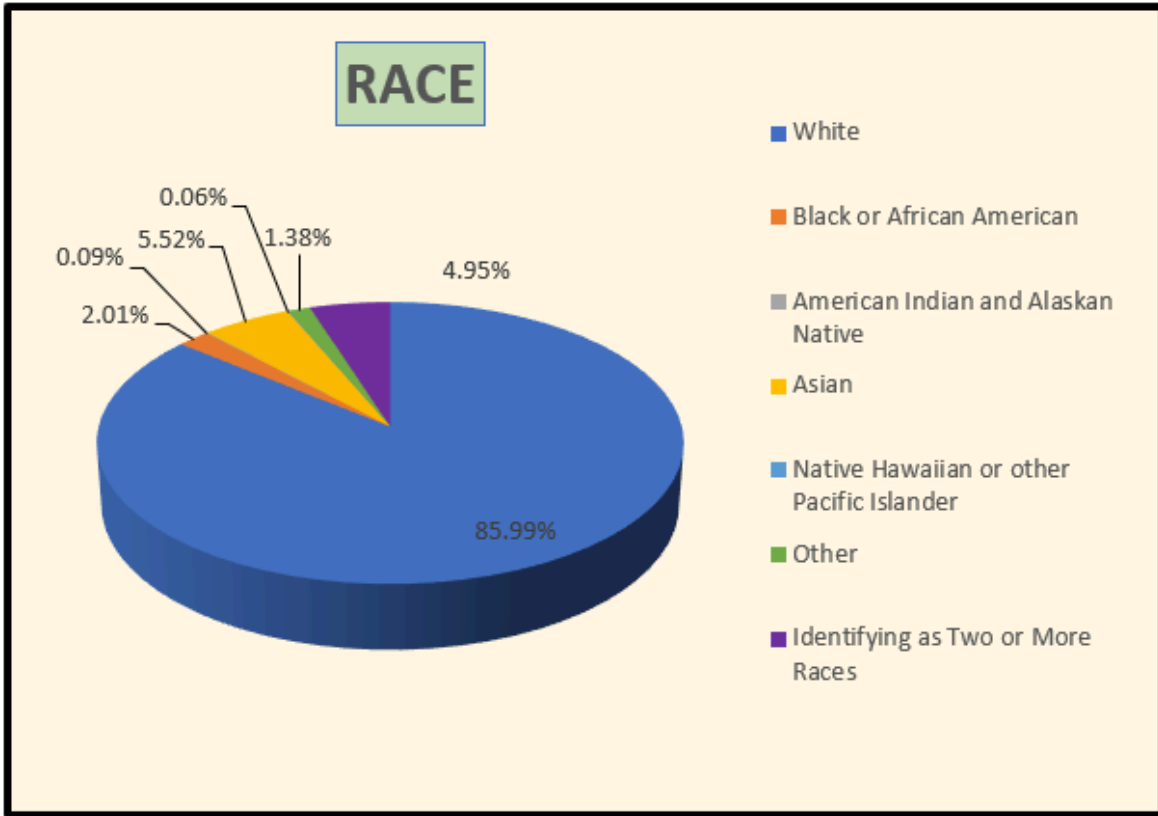
Year	Population	Change over prior shown period	% Change in Population
1960	10,530		
1970	17,830	7,300	69.33%
1980	18,217	387	2.17%
1990	22,674	4,457	24.47%
2000	29,738	7,064	31.15%
2010	32,862	3,124	10.51%
2020	33,644	782	2.38%
2021	33,261	-383	-1.14%
2022	32,500	-761	-2.29%
2023	33,262	762	2.34%

Race

The following information is based on the 2020 U.S. Federal Census (submitted in 2021) which is performed every 10 years. In Franklin, 85.99% of the population identifies as White, 5.52% of the population identifies as Asian, 4.95% identifies as having two or more races, and 2.01% identify as Black or African American. Of the population in Franklin, 3.7% identified as Hispanic or Latino. Per the U.S. Census, Hispanics may be of any race, so are included in applicable race categories.

Age

According to the U.S. Census, the median age in Franklin is 41 years of age, with 61% of the population between the ages of 18 and 65 years old.



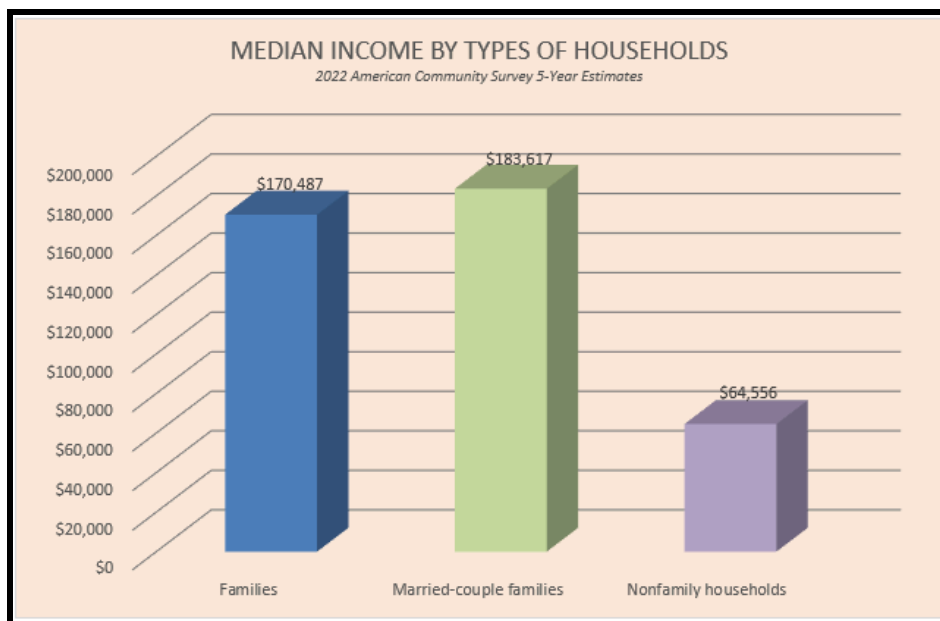
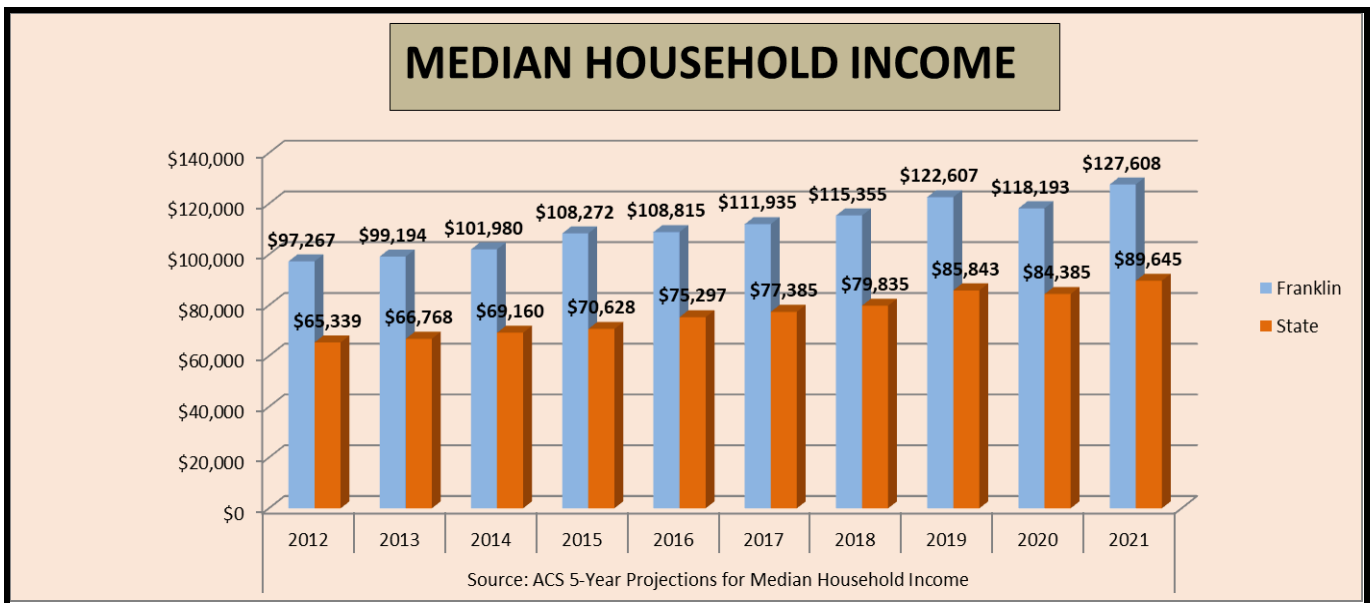
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Education

According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, 55.6% of the population has a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Franklin. Comparatively, 46.6% of Massachusetts residents have a Bachelor's Degree or Higher.

Median Household Income

While the population growth leveled off and actually began to decline over the past decade, the Town's Median Household Income has continued to rise. Franklin's Median Household Income in 2021 of \$127,608 is 42.35% higher than the State's Median Household Income. In fact, it is nearly 1.3 times the Median Household Income of the Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area.



Acknowledgements

The preparation of this budget would not be possible without the hard work of our Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Finance Director Chris Sandini, Treasurer-Collector Kerri Bertone, Deputy Comptroller Linda Darling, Human Resources Director Karen Bratt, Operations Assistant to the Town Administrator Julie McCann, Administrative Assistant Jared Miller and the cooperation of all the department heads and town employees. The preparation and work done to complete this budget is a TEAM effort.

I am very proud of all of our employees and sincerely hope the Town's citizens are as well. The Town's employees are dedicated in their personal lives and in many cases they donate their free time to make Franklin a great community to live and work. We can't solve all the problems, but each employee gives their all in an effort to provide the highest quality of life for the least amount of money. This fact was no more evident than over the past four years where every member of our team stepped up to do their part during the pandemic and the many issues that have arisen in our country, state and town over this decade. Almost every conceivable issue that draws out the emotions of our citizens and stakeholders has been on display in the 2020's and our town and school staff are, as Tina Turner would sing, "simply the best, and better than all the rest." If any citizen sees a public official, please thank them for their tireless work and dedication. We can say with great certainty the Town of Franklin is a better organization than when the pandemic began.

Thank you to the Finance Committee for their role in the budget process. We always say they are the "citizen peer review" and perform a very important role. The more eyes and ears that participate in our government the stronger we become as a community. The Finance Committee hosts a "Deep Dives" series on town financial matters, departments, initiatives, laws and much more. If folks tuned into their 8-10 1-2 hour meetings a year, one would understand most of what the Town and School Departments do! Their meetings are [here](#).

I also want to send a special thanks this year to the Franklin School Committee, Superintendent Lucas Giguere, Assistant Superintendent Tina Rogers and School Business Administrator Bob Dutch. They have some of the most challenging jobs in our state right now and they continue to improve, communicate and work collaboratively with town officials. Franklin is very lucky to have these officials, as with all school staff, educators and administrators. Despite what the future beholds, everyone is doing their very best to make our schools the best of what's around.

Finally, on behalf of the town staff, I thank the Town Council for their continued support of the staff and community. These have not been easy times, but the Franklin Town Council has developed a framework for our government to succeed by consistently balancing support for schools, infrastructure, public safety, open space preservation, financial stability and proactive community development.

Jamie Hellen
Town Administrator

SECTION 2: DEPARTMENT NARRATIVES

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

TOWN COUNCIL

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Town Council, a nine member elected body, is the legislative and policy-making branch of Town government. The Council develops, adopts and enacts policies, resolutions and by-laws which promote the general welfare of the Town. Meetings are held bi-monthly on Wednesday evenings in the Municipal Building at 355 East Central Street. The Town Council also holds public hearings and workshops on those issues that require Council deliberation and public input.

Check the Town of Franklin’s website at www.franklinma.gov for the most up to date schedule of meetings.

Residents can also sign up for emails to receive Town Council Agendas here:

<http://www.franklinma.gov/subscribe>

Strategic Initiatives:

- The FY25 budget proposes an increase in expenses for the Council budget to reflect an increase in Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) dues and to provide a small budget for training and conferences.

DEPARTMENT: TOWN COUNCIL		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 111			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
EXPENSES	3,982	4,000	6,000	7,000	7,000	-	-	
TOTAL TOWN COUNCIL :	\$3,982	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	-	-	

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Town Administrator is the chief executive officer of the Town and is responsible for the administration of the policies and programs approved by the Franklin Town Council and the implementation of the various sections of the Town Charter concerning management of the Town of Franklin. It is the responsibility of the Town Administrator to annually submit a balanced budget, capital improvement program, five year financial forecast, and other reports to the Town Council, per the [Town Charter](#). This includes revenue projections,

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

analyzing use of reserves for capital acquisitions and projects, and working closely with the School Administration to maintain a strong partnership.

The Town Administrator is also responsible for negotiating and administering all collective bargaining agreements with employee organizations representing Town employees, and participating in the deliberations of the school committee in collective bargaining pertaining to school employees.

Staffing:

- 4 full-time
- 1 part-time (Recording Secretary)

Strategic Initiatives:

- In FY24 the Town Administrator's office welcomed three full time positions to our staff: a Deputy Town Administrator, a Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (a new department), and an Administrative Assistant. The office has not been at full, consistent staff for over four years. The addition of the new staff have fully blended right into the organization and are leading many great projects the public will see in FY25, including coordinating townwide social service delivery, marketing, economic development projects, developing a new website, communications, giving Jamie a breather every once in a blue moon and much more. In FY25, the Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy will move into their own department. We anticipate an even greater level of productivity and accomplishment going forward as a fully staffed office!
- This year Town Administrator Jamie Hellen was voted by his peers as Vice President of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). The MMA is the voice of cities and towns in Massachusetts, bringing municipal officials together to advocate for policies, share information, and work together to increase efficiency and effectiveness of municipal service delivery. As MMA Vice President, Town Administrator Hellen will have an opportunity to highlight all the important initiatives taking place in Franklin and be a supportive voice not only for Franklin but for local leaders and communities across the Commonwealth on Beacon Hill and beyond.
- This year we will execute Phase 1 of the branding & marketing analysis, including a refresh of the Town's website. We will do this in anticipation of the arrival of the World Cup in Foxborough in 2026. Working with our regional partners, we hope to take advantage of this economic opportunity and showcase all that Franklin has to offer to the World stage!
- The Town negotiated an impressive 200 acres of open space protection in FY23 and FY24. In FY25 we will fund the Master Plan of the Maple Hill and Schmidt Farm parcels and will focus on how to use and preserve this space in the way that best meets the needs of the Franklin community, while also looking to prioritize the Open Space and Recreation Plan implementation goals, and expand our open space acreage with new acquisitions on the horizon.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- The Community Preservation Act (CPA) has been a big success with the open space protection, renovation of the Red Brick Schoolhouse, redevelopment of the Nason Street Tot Lot, investments in the Franklin Ridge Affordable Housing project and much more! The CPA will go down as one of the best decisions Franklin has ever made. Better late than never!
- Last year the Town received a AAA bond rating for the first time in town history. This was validated a second time earlier this year and we expect to follow the advice of our financial team to maintain that rating.
- Municipal Aggregation. The Town accepted a low electric standard rate for all ratepayers at \$0.107 per Kwh when the program began in November 2020 through November 2023. This rate successfully helped electricity ratepayers save an estimated \$11.5 million throughout the previous three-year contract. In 2023 the Town renewed the program and selected a supplier at a rate of 15 cents per Kwh. This new rate will run from November 2023 through November 2025. For more on municipal aggregation, visit the [Town website](#).
- This year will continue to manage the final allotments of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal stimulus funds, and develop a comprehensive strategy for the use of the opioid settlement funds as prescribed in the state-subdivision agreement.
- In addition to budget and override discussions, in FY25 we will begin collective bargaining with all of our unions prior to contract expiration in the summer of 2025.
- Operations Assistant to the Town Administrator, Julie McCann, co-chairs the Town's Safety Committee with the Human Resources Director. The Safety Committee coordinates professional development training and workplace injury prevention. The Town maxed out its rewards again this year and will see approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000 off the Town's insurance premium.
- 2024 marks the Town's sixth year anniversary as a [Green Community!](#)

DEPARTMENT: TOWN ADMINISTRATOR		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 123			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	395,095	409,638	584,802	579,799	579,799	-	-	
EXPENSES	17,660	105,663	44,782	39,782	39,782	-	-	
TOTAL TOWN ADMINISTRATOR :	\$412,755	\$515,301	\$629,584	\$619,581	\$619,581	-	-	

FINANCE COMMITTEE

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

A Finance Committee of 9 members is appointed by the Town Council for staggered 3-year terms. The Finance Committee elects from its membership for one-year terms of office a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Clerk. The Town Finance Director/Comptroller and the Town Treasurer-Collector shall have ex-officio membership, without voting rights, on the Committee. All [Finance Committee meeting dates are here](#).

The Finance Committee carries out its duties in accordance with the provisions of general law, the Town Charter and bylaws, and has regular and free access and inspection rights to all books and accounts of any Town department or office. The Committee carefully examines all budget and appropriations proposals and issues its recommendations thereon prior to consideration, debate and vote by the Town Council. The duty of the Finance Committee is to recommend a balanced operating budget to the Town Council upon recommendation of the Town Administrator. The Finance Committee meets periodically to make recommendations upon all financial matters that are brought forward to the Town Council.

DEPARTMENT: FINANCE COMMITTEE	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 131			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
EXPENSES	345	352	1,500	1,500	1,500	-	-
TOTAL FINANCE COMMITTEE :	\$345	\$352	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	-	-

OFFICE OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR/COMPTROLLER

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The responsibility of the Office of the Finance Director/Comptroller is to safeguard the financial assets of the town through the use of sound professional accounting practices and internal controls; to ensure that the financial integrity of the town is preserved and protected; to provide the Town's management with accurate and timely financial information and to provide controllership and audit functions for the town and its departments. The Department operates primarily under MGL Chapter 41 and 44 and the main duties are:

- Financial Oversight – Provides financial oversight for all town transactions (receipts, expenditures, abatements, commitments), to include all municipal and school departments; responsible for maintaining the fixed asset and infrastructure for the General Fund and Enterprise Funds.
- Under its umbrella are the Offices of the Collector, Treasurer, Assessor, Comptroller, Procurement, Payroll and Accounts Payable.
- Financial Analysis and Reporting - Provides timely, accurate and informative reporting to departments, decision makers and the general public.
- Reconciliation of all funds – Reconciles General, Capital, Special Revenue, Trust & Agency, and Debt & Fixed Assets to include receivables and cash accounts. Assists in preparation of the Town's financial forecast. Maintains a computerized general ledger. Completes all statutory reporting requirements.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Budget Preparation - Develops and assists in the presentation of the Town's budget. Records and monitors the Town's operating and capital budgets. Compiles the Town's budget books for the Finance Committee, Town Council and financial officials. Provides Town departments with monthly budget and encumbrance status reports.
- Accounts Payable/Payroll – Processes all payments for all Town invoices and administers the payroll functions. Reconciles all payroll withholdings to the monthly health, life, dental, and other insurance invoices. Provides deduction and health insurance information to Norfolk County Retirement Board.
- Purchasing – Has broad oversight over the procurement functions. The Purchasing Office is responsible for the procurement of all goods and services. Operates under the applicable sections of MGL Chapter 41, Chapter 30, Chapter 149, Chapter 7C and Chapter 30B.
- Audit - Coordinates the Town's annual audit as required by Massachusetts General Law. Provides an audit firm with a comprehensive balance sheet and financial statements.
- Assists the Town Administrator in the development of the Management Discussion and Analysis section of the audit as required under GASB 34.

Comptroller Department Staffing:

- 8 full-time
- 1 part-time
- Plus additional staff in Departments under the Finance Director

Strategic Initiatives & Accomplishments:

- Reconcile all accounts receivable, cash, and trusts with the Treasurer-Collector.
- Timely submittal of balance sheet, Free Cash certification, Schedule A, & Tax Recap.
- Successful completion of FY 2023 audit with no management letter or significant recommendations for improvement due to high performance.
- Maintain the Town's AAA Bond Rating which saves the taxpayers' money with lower interest rates.
- Successfully implemented all Affordable Care Act requirements.
- Completed an independent [Risk Assessment](#) in 2018 with few recommendations for improvement, including better documentation of internal protocols and policies with significant staff transitions due to retirements. All risk assessment tasks are complete.
- Developed internal controls and procedures manual for procurement and enhanced online procurement options.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Replaced a retiring Payroll Clerk with a higher level Payroll Administrator and promoted the existing Purchasing Agent to Chief Procurement Officer, providing the Department with a path to more streamlined and efficient operations.
- Oversaw a significant upgrade to the Town’s financial management software requiring 2 years of preparation and coordination with virtually every Town Department.
- Instituted an integrated cash management and reconciliation system that significantly reduced the amount of time needed to reconcile cash to the General Ledger.
- Enacted a new Stormwater Enterprise fund.
- Continue to implement the provisions of the Community Preservation Act as approved by a significant majority of Town voters.

TOWN OF FRANKLIN FY2025 BUDGET LEVEL REVIEW - DEPARTMENT SUMMARY							
DEPARTMENT: COMPTROLLER	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT				DEPT #: 135		
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	506,806	468,343	721,361	754,630	754,630	-	-
EXPENSES	69,311	76,921	85,800	84,600	84,600	-	-
TOTAL COMPTROLLER :	\$576,117	\$545,264	\$807,161	\$839,230	\$839,230	-	-

ASSESSORS DEPARTMENT

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The primary mission of the Board of Assessors, its professional and administrative staff is to prepare assessment roles for the taxation of real and personal property and motor vehicle excise. In order to assure that the tax levy is applied fairly and equitably at full and fair cash value, the inventory of all taxable property must be annually updated. Then, through a market analysis, each parcel and account is appraised and classified according to use in order to apply the appropriate tax.

For Town of Franklin [AxisGIS](#), Real Estate Data and Tax Rate history, please visit [the Board of Assessors website](#).

Staffing:

- 4 full-time

Strategic Initiatives:

- Successful timely tax rate setting, finalized the tax rate at \$11.79 per thousand dollars.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Complete annually updating the inventory of real and personal property.
- Value and classify all real and personal property each year according to the optimum schedule based on our market analysis subject to approval by the MA DOR.
- Conduct research on the real estate market; sales ratio studies and investment property income & expense analysis.
- Identify “new growth” and report it to the DOR for certification, along with valuation and tax rate reports for their approval.
- To make location-based data readily available for Town Staff and the Public, continue to advocate use of the unique Parcel ID’s in addition to the Town’s MAT (Master Address Table) of accepted addresses. Encourage Town Staff to request datalinks in AxisGIS to enhance this “one-stop shopping” Central Database, thus improving research and decision-making for all Town Staff.
- Process betterments, liens and apportionments. Prepare and certify lists of abutters for legal notices for Hearings by Town Council, Conservation, Planning and the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Annually maintain assessors’ maps, plans, property transfers and valuation records.
- Process all real and personal property tax commitments, abatements and exemptions.
- Generate motor vehicle and boat excise tax commitments and process abatements of the same as required by Massachusetts General Law.
- Maintain and provide Public Records in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.
- Upon use of a new system/application or increased use of an existing application, establish uniform standards of database building and ongoing updating. Examples:
 - 2002 - standards established for Patriot Real Estate administration & appraisal
 - 2003 - standards established for new Maps/GIS (aerials, deed & plan research)
 - 2006 - standards established for MUNIS Excise, Real & Personal Property Taxes
 - 2016 - standards established for Records Archives, organization & retention

DEPARTMENT: BOARD OF ASSESSORS	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 141			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	327,628	347,612	370,860	381,597	381,597	-	-
EXPENSES	95,627	98,220	104,900	127,400	127,400	-	-
TOTAL BOARD OF ASSESSORS :	\$423,255	\$445,832	\$475,760	\$508,997	\$508,997	-	-

TREASURER/COLLECTOR

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The mission statement of the Treasurer/Collector's office is very simple. Provide the taxpayers and employees of the Town of Franklin with the highest level of professional and courteous service, maintain accurate records of all receipts and disbursements, invest town funds with a goal of SLY (safety, liquidity, and yield), actively pursue delinquent taxes and maintain our already high collection rate.

S&P awarded the Town a AAA rating which is the highest possible rating that may be assigned. AAA rated means the Town has a high degree of creditworthiness because they are easily able to meet financial commitments and have the lowest risk of default.

Collector's Core Functions:

- Accept property tax commitments from the Assessors, have bills printed and mailed to all Franklin property owners (44,000 per year).
- Accept motor vehicle excise tax commitments from the Assessors, have bills printed and mailed to owners (35,000 per year).
- Accept utility commitments from the Department of Public Works, have bills printed and mailed to customers (40,000 per year).
- Issue demand (late) notices for above bills.
- Receive payment for all of the above bills. Currently 90% of the bills are processed through our lockbox, tax services and online bill pay through Unibank/UnipayGold. The 10% processed in our office are for cash transactions, late bills, partial payments, etc.
- During the calendar year 2023 and early 2024, online bill pay through Unipay processed 24,878 payments for a total of \$13,004,522.
- Although we are using a lockbox service and online bill payment, we still have a large number of taxpayers/customers who pay in person, approximately 10,000 per year. Customer Service is a top priority.
- We take many telephone call inquiries from taxpayers, customers, mortgage companies, law firms as well as email requests.
- Research and prepare municipal lien certificates. A total of 550 processed this year with 55 requests received and processed using Viewpoint. In 2021, we implemented the ability to request a Municipal Lien Certificate (MLC) through Viewpoint.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Research and prepare all betterment releases for recording at the registry of deeds.
- Research and prepare refund checks for real estate, personal property, motor vehicle taxes and utility overpayments.
- Prepare and deliver the warrant of unpaid excise taxes and personal property taxes to the Deputy Collector, Kelley & Ryan. Receive payments and turnover from the deputy collector and update accounts.
- In FY24, we added the Stormwater fee to our Utility bills.

Treasurer's Core Functions:

- Receive turnovers of receipts from all departments. This includes taxes, utility, charges, and fees. Some examples are school bus fees, inspection fees, liquor license fees, charges for dog licenses, fees for recreation programs, pistol permits, street opening permit fees, Adult Education fees, school program fees, etc.
- In FY 2023 the School Department received and turned over \$1,110,509.55 in Student Activity Fees.
- Receive all state and federal disbursements during the year.
- We continue an aggressive collection program for past due tax title accounts. Results show six (6) properties being redeemed through March 2024.
- Maintain and reconcile 81 bank accounts. Move funds between accounts according to safety, yield and cash flow needs.
- Payroll and Vendors. Reporting and payment of payroll taxes to DOR and IRS, and distribution of payments by check, direct deposit, or wire to employees, various retirement plans and vendors. Report W-2 information to the Social Security Administration and 1099 and 1095 information to the IRS every year. Distribute W-2's, 1099's and 1095's every January.
- Notify taxpayers/customers of returned checks.
- Responsible for all debt beginning with preparing the official statement, bond sales, preparing the continuing disclosure statement, bond ratings, and payment of debt and interest. This also includes working with Mass Clean Water Trust for all water and sewer projects.
- Responsible for managing and collecting on tax title accounts through letter writing to taxpayers, phone calls, notifying mortgage holders and ultimately foreclosure. Prepare instruments of redemption for recording at the registry of deeds and notices of final disposition.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Staffing:

- 6 full-time

Strategic Initiatives:

- In FY25, The Treasurer-Collector's Office will continue to take advantage of professional development opportunities to be educated on the threats of cybersecurity. The Treasurer/Collector has been appointed to the MCTA executive board and has shared her experience at several MCTA conferences.
- We continue to streamline in-house procedures eliminating much of our manual work by utilizing available technology. We began using a check scanner and we are utilizing that function for scanning in checks we receive from the department turnovers. We also have a check scanner for our Lockbox. This has eliminated the need to mail the payments to the lockbox company and has reduced the turnaround time when checks are deposited.
- We recently worked with the Motor Vehicle Leasing companies and we now receive a text file that we can upload to Munis to post many payments.
- Implemented the General Billing module in Munis to generate invoices to our Retiree's who need to pay a portion of the medical benefits. This process creates a receivable in the general ledger which helps to monitor that payments have been received. We now plan to expand and are partnering with DPW so they may generate invoices for emergency water shut off services.
- We offer e-billing where taxpayers and utility customers have the option of receiving their bills by email. This also includes Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills. The Town is now promoting paperless billing. We currently have 512 residents enrolled in paperless billing. The Town also announced that they will absorb the ACH fee as a way to promote paying online and going paperless. The Town absorbs the ACH fee for all Town and School transactions.
- Created a process with our Lockbox Company to have the ability to process electronic checks. Electronic checks are generated when a citizen uses their on-line checking account to pay a bill.
- We contracted with an outside collection agency for delinquent Personal Property accounts in 2015. As a result, we continue to work with the collection agency and have collected over \$61,000 in personal property back taxes, interest and penalties.
- Implemented card-based transactions (accessAPcard) processes. This eliminated costly, inefficient paper-based procedures and another function that was created and beneficial during COVID.
- Continue to invest the town's monies in secure funds with the highest possible rate of return yet retain adequate liquidity. Confirmed that all bank accounts are FDIC insured and anything over \$250k are DIF or Collateralized.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Continue a yearly cycle of clearing up outstanding checks. We must locate the owners of uncashed checks through direct mail or advertising and reissue stale, dated or lost checks. Unclaimed funds will be handled according to Massachusetts General Law.

DEPARTMENT: TREASURER/COLLECTOR		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 147			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	383,222	357,272	442,959	455,780	455,780	-	-	
EXPENSES	86,422	83,867	91,105	91,105	91,105	-	-	
TOTAL TREASURER/COLLECTOR :	\$469,644	\$441,139	\$534,064	\$546,885	\$546,885	-	-	

LEGAL

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The legal department is responsible for providing independent legal advice and for participating in the drafting and reviewing of all legal instruments. The Town Attorney represents the town on all legal matters, including litigation, contracts, drafting of Town bylaws and enforcement of the bylaws through the court system. The Town also engages special counsel for labor negotiations and other specialties as needed, such as solar.

Staffing:

- 1 part-time

DEPARTMENT: LEGAL SERVICES		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 151			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	109,662	117,531	125,105	128,726	128,726	-	-	
EXPENSES	35,928	54,601	60,000	70,000	70,000	-	-	
TOTAL LEGAL SERVICES :	\$145,590	\$172,132	\$185,105	\$198,726	\$198,726	-	-	

HUMAN RESOURCES

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The department serves the Town of Franklin by matching the value of human capital (people and their skills) with Town initiatives, values, strategies and the needs of all citizens. The office provides high quality customer service to employees and citizens.

Staffing:

- 4 full-time

Strategic Initiatives:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- FY24 was our first year having a Benefits Coordinator in Human Resources. Diane has been a wonderful addition to our staff and has worked closely with both the Town and School HR and Finance Departments. The Benefits Coordinator has taken over enrollment and management of health insurance and other benefits for all Town and School employees and retirees. This has opened up time for the School and Town HR staff to focus on other tasks, including recruitment and training.
- In FY25, we have added an Administrative Assistant to assist in benefits administration and other tasks in Human Resources.
- We had a fairly quiet year in terms of labor relations. All seven (7) Town unions were in the second year of their three year collective bargaining agreements. The current agreements end on June 30, 2025, so we will likely start meeting with unions in February 2025 to start negotiating the next set of agreements.
- We have had a pretty positive experience in our second year offering health insurance through the Massachusetts Strategic Health Group (MSHG). The MSHG is a self-funded trust that is made up of 15 different towns, school districts and public entities. Employees and retirees who are on the Town of Franklin's health insurance plan can choose from 3 different plans and have access to providers within the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and United Healthcare networks.

In FY24, we were able to offer different rate increases depending on the health insurance plan an employee elected. We had a 6% increase on the EPO and PPO plans and a 4.5% increase on the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). Unfortunately, we were not able to split the rates for FY25, and our rates will increase by 7.6% across the board. The Town will continue to provide a contribution to an individual's Health Savings Account (HSA) if they join the high deductible health plan. The contributions will be the same as prior years - \$750 for an individual plan and \$1,500 for a family plan.

- The MSHG also helped the Town transition our medicare eligible retirees to a new Medicare Advantage plan with Aetna at the beginning of calendar year 2024. This move resulted in substantial savings for our retirees and for the Town. Our retirees are very pleased with the plan, especially with the customer service offered by a third party company, Retirees First.
- The Human Resources office continues to be very involved in recruitment activities across the Town. We also manage medical and personal leaves, injuries on duty and worker's compensation claims, safety management, and training. In April 2024, we had mandatory training for all employees on Harassment in the workplace. We have also invited an outside company to do a training in June for department heads and deputy department heads on preventing discrimination and harassment.

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DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 152			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	185,959	186,898	279,500	352,404	352,404	-	-	
EXPENSES	36,415	20,827	38,650	38,950	38,950	-	-	
TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES :	\$222,373	\$207,726	\$318,150	\$391,354	\$391,354	-	-	

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The mission of the Technology Information Services Department is to furnish secure, dependable, and consistent technology services and support to all Town and School District personnel and students within the Franklin Public School system. Furthermore, the department is dedicated to the maintenance and development of the foundational physical infrastructure, foreseeing future growth to enhance efficiencies and foster opportunities across computing and learning environments.

The Technology Information Services Department comprises 11 full-time and 2 part-time employees. As a Town/School "merged" department, we assume responsibility for supporting all technology initiatives and employees across both town and school departments, serving approximately 1000+ end users and approximately 4,800 public school students. Despite the fact that, as a merged department, we support both town and school, the department's employee salaries are funded solely by the budget allocated to the Franklin Public School system.

Our team manages a diverse array of approximately 7,000 end-user computing devices, including chromebooks, desktops, laptops, tablets, and cell phones and an array of peripheral devices connected to this equipment. These devices require access to a wide range of software and services. Our computing and network environment is built upon a private fiber optic wide area network (WAN), interconnecting 22 buildings throughout the town and providing access to over 100 file, application, and print servers.

Moreover, we ensure ubiquitous, enterprise-class wireless network access in all school and town buildings, facilitating seamless connectivity for our users.

The primary responsibilities of the Technology Information Services Department are as follows:

- Provide, support and maintain a reliable, stable Information Technology environment.
- Provide, support and maintain a secure network infrastructure for data, internet access and email communications.
- Provide, support and maintain a secure and reliable remote learning and working environment.
- Provide the Town and Schools with proper support for our public facing websites.
- Provide secure and reliable backup of all user data.
- Work with the Facilities Department to create the proper physical environment to support ongoing and future technology initiatives.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Make recommendations regarding changes and upgrades to existing technology.
- Increase efficiencies in all departments by working closely with department personnel to research and implement new technologies.
- Support and build data continuity between departments.
- Approve, negotiate and oversee the procurement process for all technology related purchases for the Town and School District.
- Adhere to state standards as related to technology.
- Generate and submit required state reports.
- Ensure proper software licensing and compliance.

Staffing:

- 11 full-time and 2 part-time employees funded wholly via the school department
- 1 full-time Cyber Security Specialist will be fully funded by the Town of Franklin, so that we may offer a competitive salary as we have posted many times without success due to the low salary.

Strategic Initiatives completed FY24:

- Implemented Multi-Factor Authentication for Town and Schools to comply with MIIA cybersecurity insurance requirements
- 117 Laptops deployed to FHS teachers
- Completed Phase I of Crestron AV system update at FHS
- Installed 17 menu displays with associated hardware at all school lunch locations
- Upgraded all School POS lunch terminals
- Implemented automated late pass badge-scanning system at FHS
- Upgraded Police Wi-Fi
- Implemented 802.11 enhanced network security measures to prohibit unauthorized network connections within our buildings (physical connections, not Wi-Fi connections)
- Converted FHS Language Lab to cloud based system
- Implemented [DOSArrest](#) internet security to protect against devastating [DDOS¹ attacks](#)

Strategic Initiatives for FY25:

- Implement virtual Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) to enhance security
- Replace and upgrade Facilities School Dude management system
- Replace and upgrade Town website
- Replace and upgrade School website with Regroup replacement/conversion
- Implement Online Passport Appointment scheduling software
- Build Senior Center Tech Learning Lab (grant funded)
- Position the town and school district to take advantage of the rapidly changing world of AI. Staying ahead of this relatively recent development is imperative to the ongoing function of the town and schools on many levels from both a security standpoint as well as leveraging the potential benefits.

¹ Distributed Denial Of Service attack

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Implement an electronic document management system for the HR department
- Implement an Applicant tracking / hiring / onboarding system for the HR department
- Capital initiatives funded this year:
 - Purchase approximately 400 Chromebooks for FPS students
 - Extend the laptops warranty for administrative laptops
 - Install interactive displays (TouchViews) at FHS
 - Update large format projectors at FHS
 - Continue with the second phase of Crestron A/V system update
 - Work with Facilities to upgrade the NVR security camera servers at FHS
 - Replace Fire ruggedized mobile unit laptops
 - Replace Police Dept Desktops

Future Trends & Challenges:

- **Security** is an ongoing challenge for several reasons. The first challenge is acquiring talented, experienced candidates for the salaries we can support within the town/school budget. In lieu of hiring a full time specialist, we are investigating and piloting a “Virtual CISO” consultant (Chief Information Security Officer). This person will work with existing Technology Department personnel to implement a fully developed disaster recovery plan and incident response plan. This first step will prepare us for a [“penetration test” by EOTSS²](#)
- **Staffing** continues to be an issue in the technology sector. Finding viable candidates requires providing competitive wages and this is where we struggle the most; especially in the more highly skilled positions requiring advanced degrees or experience.
- **Technology replacement.** While we were able to make a sizable dent in this area with our generous capital funding, the replacement of aging equipment is an ongoing challenge. Some estimates of our needs in the next few years are listed here:
 - FY 2025:
 - Nearly 300 laptops for K-8 teachers (replaced every 3-4 years) - \$360,000
 - Second half of FHS Touchview interactive screens - \$120,000
 - Annual replacement of approximately 400 Chromebooks for our students - \$100,000
 - FY 2026
 - Replacement of the Town/School server stack/virtual environment - \$100,000
 - Wireless Access Point 5 year license replacement - \$150,000
 - Annual replacement of approximately 400 Chromebooks for our students - \$100,000
 - FY 2027
 - 110 laptops for our FHS teachers (replaced every 3-4 years) - \$120,000
 - Annual replacement of approximately 400 Chromebooks for our students - \$100,000

² Executive Office of Technology Services and Security: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/penetration-testing-services>

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- This is not an all-inclusive list and many unanticipated lower cost items will reveal themselves as the years progress (\$10,000-\$30,000 range). In order to meet these challenges into the future, I recommend the implementation of a Technology stabilization fund similar to the funding created for Franklin Fire for fire truck replacement.

DEPARTMENT: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 155			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
PERSONAL SERVICES	31,713	18,164	36,952	92,605	92,605	-	-
EXPENSES	287,672	308,902	457,215	467,448	467,448	-	-
TOTAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY :	\$319,385	\$327,066	\$494,167	\$560,053	\$560,053	-	-

TOWN CLERK

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The office of the Town Clerk is responsible for the management of statutory functions including: The maintenance of town records; coordination and administration of elections; issuance of permits and licenses; recording and reporting of vital statistics; and other duties pertaining to the functions of the town clerk in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Through its work as the keeper of permanent and vital records, the department is responsible for issuing marriage licenses, recording vital statistics, issuing dog licenses, registering businesses, licensing underground storage and hazardous materials, recording and collecting various citations, and updating and transmitting all approved new legislation to General Code. The Town Clerk also prepares the Annual Town Report and the Annual Street Listing.

The Town Clerk's office conducts elections in conformance with State, Federal and Local laws, and with the assistance of the Board of Registrars, processes voter registrations and certifications. The office is responsible for maintaining the Code of Franklin. The Clerk issues copies of the Open Meeting Law to newly appointed/elected officials; ensures that Code of Ethics is completed by all new members of Boards & Committees; conducts oath of office; certifies appropriations and borrowing authorizations.

Staffing:

- 3 full-time, including 1 elected official
- 6 Senior Work-Off employees at Census time.

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DEPARTMENT: TOWN CLERK	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 161			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	207,378	219,539	236,950	248,955	248,955	-	-
EXPENSES	12,117	11,509	20,850	21,150	21,150	-	-
TOTAL TOWN CLERK :	\$219,495	\$231,048	\$257,800	\$270,105	\$270,105	-	-

ELECTIONS & REGISTRATIONS

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

Under state statute, the Town Clerk, by virtue of the position, is a member of the Board of Registrars and carries out the daily functions of this office along with the office staff. Major responsibilities include the conducting of elections, compilation of the annual Census and the Street/Voter Lists, certification of nomination papers and petitions, and maintenance and custody of the ballot boxes. The Town Clerk staff recruits election workers, processes absentee ballots and records election results. They rely solely on the Commonwealth's Central Voter Registry.

Staffing:

- 9 Wardens (part-time during election season)
- 3 Registrars (part-time during election season)
- 10-20 temporary on-call employees preparing vote by mail ballots

Strategic Initiatives:

- Continue to upgrade software and systems for the digital voter machines and Poll Pads for ease of voting and also upgrade all security devices and supplies needed to run a compliant, safe, and secure election.
- Provide excellent customer service. Service with a smile!

State Regulations - State Computer (time sensitive)

- Certifying Nomination Papers
- 2024 Census (over 13,000 dwelling units) - updates and changes (moved, name changes, occupation, additional family members, etc.) Currently there are 5,364 non responders. We are in the process of requesting a residence list from apartment complexes and senior living facilities to update residents before starting our very costly second mailing (in-house)
- Voter Registration - new registration, pre-registration, party change etc. to stay in compliance with State Regulations.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- 2024 Elections - Presidential Primary (3/5/24), State Primary (9/3/24), Federal/State Election (11/5/24) and possible Special Town Election (June)
- Current population as of March 2024 is 33,179 (includes 968 Dean Students); 24,667 Registered Voters, 7544 Non-Voters

DEPARTMENT: ELECTION & REGISTRATION	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 164			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	15,575	33,248	19,480	133,689	133,689	-	-
EXPENSES	31,845	41,252	60,700	65,700	65,700	-	-
TOTAL ELECTION & REGISTRATION :	\$47,420	\$74,499	\$80,180	\$199,389	\$199,389	-	-

CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Conservation Department is to improve the natural environment of Franklin by preserving its water and land resources. Central to this mission is the protection and restoration of natural habitats and ecosystems. The operations of the Conservation Department are complex and diverse, with two primary branches of function:

- Acting as a permitting agency and enforcing authority, and
- Serving as a natural resource management department

In FY25, the Conservation Department will be moved out of the Department of Planning and Community Development and into its own department.

The authority for the Conservation Department to function as a permitting agency and enforcing authority is granted by the Conservation Commission under the [Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act](#) and local [Wetlands Protection Bylaw and associated Regulations](#). The Conservation Commission is the main permitting authority and approves and oversees proposed and ongoing projects near or within Resource Areas, including wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, habitats, and surrounding landscapes. The Conservation Department, led by the "Conservation Agent/Natural Resource Protection Manager", serves as the Town liaison for the Conservation Commission and vice-versa. The Conservation Agent role has the responsibility of guiding residents, developers, and the Commission through permitting processes; enforcing remediation for environmental violations; and providing expertise on wetland regulations, science and functions, as necessary. Most recently in FY23, the Conservation Commission permitted 63 new projects, extended 5 previously permitted projects, and closed out 17 existing projects. The Conservation Department and Commission also works closely with other community groups, such as Scouts, to facilitate project feasibility and approval at our open space and conservation areas. The momentum of projects submitted to the Conservation Department is generally increasing.

In addition to its regulatory role, the Conservation Department oversees 1,076 acres of open space and conservation areas. The Department also engages in grant writing to support conservation initiatives and land acquisition, advises other Town boards and staff on environmental issues, manages forestry in conservation areas, designs and restores habitats, and provides conservation programs for Franklin residents. The department concurrently manages four Forest Stewardship Plans, a turtle habitat, three biodiversity areas, ten beaver flow devices, several grants, an aquatic management plan, and a community stewardship group, alongside its obligations to the Conservation Commission.

The Conservation Department is also a member of the Charles River Climate Compact and the Charles River Climate Compact Equity Advisory Team. This regional partnership allows the Conservation Department to further current initiatives and ensure that Franklin has representation during regional environmental planning.

The combination of environmental permitting responsibilities and land management expertise has enabled the Conservation Department to emerge as a comprehensive resource for environmental permitting and project implementation. This has also positioned the Department as a leading authority on land protection, management, and restoration.

The Conservation Department has recently accomplished several milestones, including the 2023 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan, establishing turtle habitats and biodiversity zones to protect endangered bumblebee species, implementing flow devices to address beaver-induced flooding, organizing conservation educational workshops, launching the Backyard Ecosystem Education (BEE) Program, and developing Forest Stewardship Plans. Looking ahead, the department aims to strategically develop Schmidt's Farm, Maple Hill, and enhance open space connectivity across the Town (known as the "Franklin Greenway"). Commencing from Fiscal Year 2025, the Conservation Department will operate with its own budget, a significant move towards promoting sustainability, conservation efforts, and natural resource management initiatives.

This year the Conservation Department has been able to secure two grants and is in the process of securing another.

Staffing:

- 1 full-time

FY25 Strategic Initiatives:

1. Continue to place Forest Stewardship Plans on open space and conservation areas throughout Town
2. Finalize the 2023 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan
3. Shepherd's Brook culvert retrofit - MVP Grant
4. Design and develop a plan for Schmidt's Farm
5. Design and develop a plan for Maple Hill
6. Design and develop a plan for Franklin Greenway

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DEPARTMENT: CONSERVATION COMMISSION		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 171			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	-	-	-	75,541	75,541	-	-	
EXPENSES	-	-	-	12,060	12,060	-	-	
TOTAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION :	-	-	-	\$87,601	\$87,601	-	-	

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The appointed board currently consists of three (3) members and two (2) associate members. The board hears all appeals for zoning variances for the town in accordance with Mass General Laws. The Board holds public hearings, as advertised, for variances, special permits, findings and Chapter 40B applications. The Board also renders determinations on land use and zoning issues. This budget is for advertising costs.

DEPARTMENT: ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 176			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
EXPENSES	4,309	3,046	9,000	7,000	7,000	-	-	
TOTAL ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS :	\$4,309	\$3,046	\$9,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	-	-	

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

Mission and Responsibilities. DPCD’s mission is to plan and implement comprehensive policies and initiatives that work to fulfill the community development and land use-related goals of the Town and its residents. We make every effort to maintain the character of the community while enhancing its economic vitality. The Department works in all areas of planning and community development, and is responsible for traditional land-use related activities such as updating the Town’s plans, and amending and creating zoning bylaws.

Support of Town Boards, Commissions, and Committees. DPCD’s most important function is to provide staff support to several boards, commissions and committees, including the Planning Board, Design Review Commission, Cultural District Committee, Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, Technical Review Committee, and the Town Council’s Economic Development Sub-committee. In addition, DPCD staff frequently provide professional technical assistance to other public entities including Town Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, and various ad hoc committees, including the Master Plan Committee and Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. Planning Board and Conservation Commission related issues utilize well over half of DPCD’s total staff hours. The DPCD Director also sits on the Franklin Downtown Partnership’s Board of Directors.

Projects and Initiatives. DPCD produces a substantial amount of quality work over and above its top priority of providing staff support to the organizations mentioned above, and in recent years has worked on dozens of

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

projects in all areas of planning and community development, including, comprehensive planning, downtown revitalization, economic development, open space preservation, wetlands protection, natural hazard mitigation, brownfields redevelopment, historic preservation, affordable housing, transit oriented development, and sustainable development including the use of smart growth and low impact development concepts. In addition, DPCD manages the Town's Passport Acceptance Office.

The Department regularly identifies and sources funding for various community development projects and activities. DPCD balances its approach to these initiatives through long-term planning and public participation. DPCD will continue to undertake a wide range of community and economic development projects, programs, and planning initiatives that will keep the Town's goals and objectives current and representative of Franklin's needs and desires.

Staffing:

- 4 full-time
- 2 part-time

Strategic Initiatives:

- Provides helpful and timely customer service to both internal stakeholders and the general public who call for a variety of questions and public records requests.
- Continuously working to streamline permitting processes and convert to electronic applications and plan submittals.
- Master Plan.
 - Provides administrative and technical support to the Master Plan Committee and its five subcommittees.
 - Coordinates the efforts of the consultant team hired to develop an updated Master Plan.
- Economic Development and Zoning
 - Provides technical staff support to the Economic Development Subcommittee of the Town Council.
 - Developed Zoning Bylaw amendments that changed the Town's zoning regulations in the following ways:
 - Updates the Marijuana Use Overlay District map.
 - Allows multifamily housing by-right in the Commercial I and General Residential V zoning districts.
 - Added multifamily with Three Housing Units to the use regulations.
 - Added §185-51 Inclusionary Zoning, which requires multifamily developments with 10 or more housing units to have at least ten percent of the housing units as affordable.
 - Added a definition for Accessory Dwelling Units and related regulations.
 - Developed a draft 40R Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Worked with the Town Administrator to develop and execute a 10 year Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement with Plansee USA LLC, which helped Plansee make major investments in their facilities at 115 Constitution Boulevard. The TIF agreement made it possible for Plansee to obtain \$125,000 in State investment tax credits. Plansee is a technological leader in high precision machining, and part of the company's expansion included a state-of-the-art Manufacturing Training Center.
- Cultural Economic Development
 - Provides support to the Cultural District Committee in order to market and enhance the Franklin Cultural District, and obtain grant funding for special projects. The Town's efforts are resulting in the Franklin Cultural District being recognized as the arts and culture hub of the south MetroWest region. FY24 projects included assisting the CDC with the second year of their "Artsy Box" public art project.
 - Develop grant applications, and manage Cultural District related grants and budget for the Cultural District Committee.
 - Working with the Town's new Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy on various cultural economic development related projects and issues.
- North Grove Priority Development Area
 - DPCD continues to work to complete assessment and remediation activities, and develop plans to sell and or redevelop the Town's Nu-Style Property, as well as revitalize the North Grove Priority Development Area (PDA).
 - Applying for State and Federal funding needed to complete environmental assessment and remediation activities on the Town owned Nu-Style property; the Town received a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant to clean up the site.
 - Applying for grants and technical assistance, to obtain the services required to plan and implement the proposed North Grove PDA Revitalization & Access Roadway Project.
 - Worked with MassDevelopment and the Urban Land Institute, Boston/New England to complete an all day Technical Assistance Panel that brought several real estate, environmental and development professionals to Franklin to work on the North Grove PDA Revitalization & Access Roadway Project.
- Affordable Housing
 - Working to implement the Town of Franklin's 2022 affordable Housing Production Plan (HPP). Recent work includes development of an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) Bylaw, and Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) related Zoning Amendments.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Worked with Franklin DPW and JNJUHL & Associates on implementation of a Mass Housing Choice grant funded project to design a water booster station, water mains and other infrastructure to support the Franklin Ridge senior housing development project.
- Worked with Franklin DPW and JNJUHL & Associates on a MassWorks grant application to obtain funds needed for the construction of infrastructure needed for the Franklin Ridge & Veterans Memorial Way project. The Town was successful in receiving a \$3.2 million MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant for this project.
- DPCD worked with the Administration and other Town Departments to develop a Request for Proposals for the Town owned South Franklin Congregational Meeting House at 762 Washington Street. The process resulted in execution of an agreement with Habitat for Humanity who will develop an affordable single family residence.
- Climate Change and Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning
 - Working with other Town of Franklin departments, the Charles River Watershed Association, and 15+ other communities along the Charles River, on a Regional Watershed Modeling Project, which is resulting in creation of a river flood model that identifies areas vulnerable to flooding under future climate conditions.
- Open Space and Recreation Plan
 - Worked with the Conservation Commission to update the 2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan, including implementation of an extensive public input process.
- DelCarte Conservation Area
 - DPCD continued to implement the DelCarte Conservation Property Master Plan, including the ongoing pond treatments, and minor improvements.
- Open Space Preservation
 - Worked regularly with Town Administration and other Town departments on open space preservation projects.
- U.S. Passport Application Acceptance Office
 - For the last several years DPCD has managed the Town's Passport Application Acceptance Office, which is located on the first floor of the Municipal Building. The Office is open three days per week (by appointment only) to assist residents of Franklin and surrounding communities with passport applications. During FY23, Passport Office personnel reviewed and accepted DS-11 Passport applications for 785 applicants, and took 550 passport photos.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & GROWTH MGMT		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 177			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	310,355	412,081	456,979	394,671	394,671	-	-	
EXPENSES	28,009	17,195	32,300	31,000	31,000	-	-	
TOTAL PLANNING & GROWTH MGMT :	\$338,364	\$429,276	\$489,279	\$425,671	\$425,671	-	-	

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

General purpose/Mission statement:

The Agricultural Commission’s mission is to preserve, revitalize and sustain the Franklin Agricultural Industry and its lands. The Commission also encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agricultural-based economic opportunities, and protects farmland. Please visit the [Ag Comm page](#) on the Town website for the latest meetings and efforts.

The Committee consists of five (5) members with 3 year terms and two (2) associates. Two of which must be active farmers, employed in an agriculture-related field or have experience and knowledge in agricultural practices or business.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Help educate the Franklin Community about produce in Franklin and help support the local agricultural business in town.
- Build relationships and help resolve conflicts between farms and neighbors or town boards.
- Serves as a resource on agricultural matters for all town boards and citizens.

DEPARTMENT: AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION		FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 184			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
EXPENSES	147	50	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	-	
TOTAL AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION :	\$147	\$50	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	-	-	

PUBLIC PROPERTY & BUILDINGS (Town and School Facilities)

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

- The Director of Public Facilities and the Deputy Directors manage various capital projects and work closely with architects, owners, project managers, contractors and constituents from the community. The Director of Public Facilities maintains a long-term, 10 year capital plan, which the Town has worked hard to further develop over the last two years. All capital budget materials for the Public Facilities department can be found in our Capital Budget Archive.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Staffing:

- 6 full-time administrative staff
- 34 full-time school custodians
- 15 part-time municipal custodians
- 3 full-time tradespeople

Strategic Initiatives & Current Efforts:

- The Town Council has authorized a building committee to be formed to start work on the schematic design of a new Police Station that will meet the future staffing levels in Franklin. In April the Facilities Director and Deputy Director will be working with the Building Committee to select an OPM and then an architect to perform this first design step.
- In 2023 the Town Council formed a committee for the reuse of the Davis Thayer School. Facilities hired Kaestle Boos Associates to update their 2013 study on the condition of the building and to explore possible reuse options for the site. This study is almost complete. Currently the Town has issued a request for expressions of interest for Purchase / Lease and Redevelopment of the former Davis Thayer Elementary School. Expressions of interest are due May 31, 2024.
- A cooperative effort was made between the DPW solid waste department, School Food Service and Facilities to start a food waste recycling program in all the elementary and middle schools in Franklin. At the end of each lunch every day, students deposit food waste in special totes owned by Agricycle, and liquids in a 5 gallon bucket. The totes are picked up weekly and eventually are trucked to a big digester outside of Bangor ME. Heat given off by the digester during the composting process is used to heat dairy barns. Food composting removes most of the heavy waste from our trash and saves tonnage that we have to pay for at the Millbury incinerator. Since the inception of the Food Waste Recycling Program, we have removed 70.7 tons from the waste stream.
- During the summer of 2024 the Town, with the use of CPA funding, will restore the Cupola on the top of the Franklin Historical Museum.
- Currently the Facilities department is looking to install DC fast charging stations at a few locations where they can be easily accessed by the public. Currently NGRID's DC fast charging program will pay \$396,246 of a \$411,394 cost to install charging for 6 vehicles simultaneously. In the summer of 2023 Facilities installed 8 EV charging spaces at Franklin High School. The new spaces installed brings the total number of charging spaces to 24 at town and school buildings. These spaces will be used for town electric vehicles and also will be made available to the public. 90% of the charging station cost and installation was paid for through state grants and NGRID incentives.
- School Food Service and Facilities have teamed up with our energy expeditor and NGRID to replace food service equipment at Horace Mann and Keller Sullivan complexes. Swain, a food service dealer, did an operating cost profile on Keller Sullivan's 22 year old dishwasher versus a new Hobart dishwasher. The energy analysis showed we currently spend \$13,317 a year operating the current

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

dishwasher but the new Hobart will only cost \$1,919 producing a savings of \$11,398 per year. We will also be eligible for an incentive from NGRID to buy the new dishwasher.

- Upcoming projects will be a proposed cell phone and radio tower in the Populatic section of Franklin that will enhance public safety radio coverage in this part of town. Another upcoming project slated for the summer of 2025 will be for the Remington Jefferson School complex. It will include new roofing, new fire alarm system and a new mechanical system for heating and cooling.
- LED light conversions have been completed in all school and town buildings in the Spring of 2023, making all buildings 100% lighted by LED. NGRID has been instrumental in providing Franklin with rebates for lighting conversions totaling up to \$200,000 every year since 2014.
- Over the winter we replaced the 1,500 watt metal halide light fixtures at the Franklin High School Stadium with 800 watt LED fixtures and reduced the number of fixtures needed from 78 to 44 maintaining the lumens (light measurements) the old fixtures produce. The project reduced the wattage needed to light the field from 117,000 watts to 35,200 watts along with an incentive of \$35,600 from NGRID. It also produced a desired side effect for safety. When the old metal halide lights went out they had to cool down to be re-energized but LED lights come back on instantly.
- We have bid on projects to update the Municipal building that was opened in 2004, with new carpet, security system, bathroom renovations, blinds and some furniture. Boiler replacements were completed in the fall of 2022 adding super high efficiency Lochinvar boilers made in Tennessee.
- The Town bought into another solar farm in 2022 located in Bellingham and continues to get 95% of the Town's electricity from a PPA (power purchase agreement) with a solar farm located in Franklin and now Bellingham.
- Facilities continues to run a full “preventative maintenance” system to better plan for schools’, town buildings’ and athletic fields’ capital needs in the future. The maintenance team, carpenter John Rondeau, plumber Mike Carter and electrician David Gregoire, led by Deputy Director Stephen O’Neill, accounted for over 1,900 staff work orders completed in town and school buildings in FY 2024 (April to April). In addition, they have helped manage all contractors and worked with staff in every department.

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC PROPERTY & BUILDINGS	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 192			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
PERSONAL SERVICES	2,828,348	2,930,769	3,326,055	3,484,614	3,484,614	-	-
EXPENSES	4,426,236	4,925,035	5,172,200	5,384,040	5,384,040	-	-
TOTAL PUBLIC PROPERTY & BUILDINGS :	\$7,254,584	\$7,855,804	\$8,498,255	\$8,868,654	\$8,868,654	-	-

PURCHASING / CENTRAL SERVICES

Central Services has traditionally been its own department with only an expenses budget. The Purchasing Agent was a position within the Finance Department. We recently upgraded the Purchasing Agent position to

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Chief Procurement Officer and are moving this position to its own department. The Chief Procurement Officer will be responsible for managing the Purchasing/Central Services Department.

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

Procurement for the Town of Franklin is centralized and is responsible for ensuring that services, supplies, equipment and construction related activities are procured in the most efficient and cost effective manner. All Town departments are subject to the [Commonwealth's procurement laws](#) including Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B, Chapter 7, Chapter 30 §39M and Chapter 149. It is the goal of the Procurement Office to provide efficiency and best value to Town Departments and Staff, and ultimately to the taxpayers.

The mission of Central Services is to proactively review the status of shared copiers and mailing equipment to ensure that the Town/School shared equipment will meet the demands of its users. Central Services budget also covers costs associated with the Town's permanent record storage/retrieval and postage.

Some highlights from the past fiscal year include:

- Conducted 91 procurements through the use of Invitations for Bids, Requests for Proposals, Cooperative Contracts, OSD Statewide Contracts, and Requests for Written Quotes which totalled over \$44 million in contracted activities and supplies for the Town.
- Publicly auctioned surplus supplies through the Municibid platform totaling over \$72,500 which was returned to the General Fund.
- Initiated the process of maintaining digital procurement files, thereby beginning the undertaking of moving away from the task of maintaining and coordinating hard copies of files per the timelines designated in the [Massachusetts Public Records Law](#).
- Providing procurement training to key personnel who are involved in making purchasing decisions to ensure they are knowledgeable of processes and procedures required under Massachusetts law.

Staffing:

- 1 full-time

FY25 Strategic Initiatives

- To continue to modernize the Procurement Office through the use of digital recordkeeping.
- Offer training opportunities to departments to increase key personnel's understanding of the procurement process.

Classification	FUNCTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT			DEPT #: 196			
	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	Department Request	FY 2025 Budget Levels		Town Council Final
				Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend		
PERSONAL SERVICES	-	-	-	92,249	92,249	-	-
EXPENSES	119,242	157,943	161,000	170,524	170,524	-	-
TOTAL PURCHASING/CENTRAL SERVICES :	\$119,242	\$157,943	\$161,000	\$262,773	\$262,773	-	-

PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE DEPARTMENT

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The mission of the Franklin Police Department is to work collaboratively in partnership with our community to enhance the quality of life in our town, while maintaining order and protecting the people we serve. We will accomplish this mission by providing high quality law enforcement service, doing so with professionalism, honor and integrity.

Our primary function as stated in our Mission Statement is to enhance the quality of life while protecting and serving the Citizens of the Town of Franklin and the general public at large. This responsibility is accomplished by all employees of the department, but mostly through the efforts of the Operations Division who handle a majority of the requests for service the agency receives. This division consists of one lieutenant, seven sergeants and thirty-four patrol officers. The main task of the Operations Division is motorized patrol, responding to calls for service, traffic enforcement, parking related issues and performing initial investigations. The FPD Co-Response Program consisting of three highly trained mental health clinicians is also assigned to the Operations Division.

Our Specialized Services Division, led by a Lieutenant, is divided into two separate functions consisting of the Criminal Investigations / Court Unit and the Community Services Unit. The Criminal investigations / Court Unit consists of one sergeant, five investigative officers, and one court officer. Their responsibility is the investigation of all major crimes, narcotics investigations, and follow-up investigations received as a result of initial reports submitted by the Operations Division. Due to the ever-present threat of illegal narcotics, one of the investigators is exclusively tasked with investigating narcotics related activities and one investigator is assigned full-time in a multi-agency task force with the Homeland Security Investigations agency of the Treasury Department. The Court Prosecutor is responsible for all District, Superior and Juvenile court cases making sure they are well prepared and ready for successful prosecution.

Our Community Services Unit consists of one sergeant and three patrol officers. Unlike many other towns and cities throughout the state, we have been fortunate to assign these four the primary task of oversight of our public schools. It is our belief that their presence has been nothing short of a positive experience for students, faculty, the police department and town. Their activities include programs working with our elderly, youth, schools and local businesses.

The Administrative Services Division is responsible for managing all administrative related tasks such as records, information technology, accounting, finance, personnel & scheduling, facilities management, grant management, recruitment & training, firearms licensing, etc. To accomplish these tasks the division consists of one lieutenant, one administrative patrol officer and two civilian administrative personnel.

Staffing:

- Fifty-Eight (58) Sworn Officer Personnel
- Two (2) Administrative Civilian Personnel
- Three (3) Mental Health Clinicians

Strategic Initiatives:

- **Law Enforcement Accreditation:** On October 26, 2022, the Franklin Police Department was awarded Law Enforcement Accreditation by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC). After five years of hard work and tireless determination by personnel, the department met the 382 standards necessary to obtain accreditation. Achieving accreditation is not an easy task. Of the 351 municipalities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts only 119 have achieved accreditation. Only 11 of the 28 communities in Norfolk County have been awarded accreditation. Law Enforcement Accreditation is a “Badge of Honor” in the Law Enforcement Profession. It is one of the best measures of a Police Department’s compliance with professional Law Enforcement standards. An accredited agency needs to complete a reaccreditation process every three years. We are currently preparing for our reaccreditation by completing all of the changes required by the adoption of the 6th edition of MPAC Accreditation and expect to start the accreditation process in June, 2025.
- **Therapy Dog Program:** In February, 2019, the department established a Therapy Dog Program with the purchase of Ben Franklin (Golden Retriever puppy). Ben immediately won over the hearts of the town residents and people throughout the country due to his being the cutest dog you ever saw and his continuing antics. To capitalize on the success of the program, increase availability of a therapy dog when needed and to ensure the continuity of the program; the department purchased “Frankie” a female chocolate Labrador Retriever in February, 2023. Frankie has completed her training program for therapy dogs and friendly find training, so she may be used to locate missing individuals during search and rescue incidents. Frankie has been a fixture at the public schools since completing her training.
- **High School / College Internship Programs:** The Dr. Pietro (Pete) Savo Criminal Justice Internship Program, in collaboration with Dean College has been a major success. Established in 2021 in honor of Dr. Pietro Savo, a beloved member of the Dean community and the Program Coordinator for the Criminal justice and Homeland Security programs prior to his unexpected passing. The internship provides the opportunity for one student each semester to gain valuable experience in the field of law enforcement and provides the student with valuable information should they be interested in further pursuing a career in law enforcement. Students are exposed to the daily operations of the department, participate in training and learn about the different programs and initiatives the department offers and is currently working to implement. The program has successfully hosted 6 interns to date. The department also hosts a Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School student intern for an entire semester and 6-8 Franklin High School students for their senior project.
- **Police Station Building Committee:** The 10 members of the Police Station Building Committee have met twice to date. The committee will evaluate all options to expand and/or build a new police

station for the future public safety needs of the community. The duties of the committee will be to select an Owner's Project Manager (OPM), an architect for the needs analysis and design, evaluate all potential expansion and renovation options for the current and future needs of the Franklin Police Department, present the proposed plans to the Town Council for approval and oversee the project until substantial completion. The department looks forward to working with the Building Committee to get this needed project started as the current police station is sorely lacking the space, infrastructure and technology needed to support a professional law enforcement agency. The committee recently reviewed several proposals for an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) position and will complete interviews in April.

- **Two-Way Radio Communication Project:** With the completion of phase 2 of the two-way radio and communication project last year, the department is continuing to work with the Facilities Department and the Franklin Fire Department to modernize our public safety communications system. Phase 3 will include two initiatives, the first is obtaining a simulcast license from the Federal Communications Commission, the purchase and installation of simulcast equipment at several transmission locations. The second is the construction of a radio tower in northern Franklin by a private vendor with the ability for public safety communications equipment installation. We are excited to report that the simulcast system has been completed and is working well by providing a more enhanced two-way radio system. The construction of the tower is slowly progressing.

- **FPD Co-Response Program:** The Franklin Police Department Co-Response Program was initially launched by a third-party behavioral health agency contracted through the Department of Mental Health in November of 2018., The program began as a regional Jail Diversion Program, partnering the Franklin Police Department and the Medway Police Department. The objective of the program was to provide on-scene crisis de-escalation, immediate support to those in need, and mental health and substance use evaluations. The intended outcome of this initiative was to keep people in the community with appropriate resources and support in place, diverting them from unnecessary arrest or hospitalization.

The regional program experienced great success for five years, however the needs of the Franklin police Department and the Town of Franklin grew exponentially. In July 2023, the department pursued continued grant funding through the Department of Mental Health, and launched our own Co-Response Program independent of a third-party agency (Advocates). The program continues to pair mental health clinicians with police to best suit the needs of the community. In July 2023, a Co-Response Program Manager was hired to lead the program and utilize additional funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to hire additional mental health clinicians. In November 2023, the second clinician was hired and we expect the third clinician to join the department in April, 2024. With three full-time clinicians we will be able to service the community better by providing additional coverage during evenings and weekends.

During the calendar year 2023 officers and our program clinicians completed 247 interventions of individuals encountered in a mental health related incident. This represents a significant decrease from 581 interventions completed in 2021 and 369 completed in 2022. However, we were without the services of a clinician for the first five months (January – May) of 2022 and for the first six months

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

(January – July) in 2023, as we were in the process of hiring clinicians. Four (4) individuals with behavioral health conditions were diverted from arrest and into treatment. In addition to the benefit of diverting individuals in crisis from arrest, these diversions represent an estimated cost savings of \$11,960 to the criminal justice system (\$2,990 per arrest event). Twenty-two (22) individuals were diverted from unnecessary hospital admissions to facilitate outpatient treatment recommendations. In addition to receiving care outside of a hospital setting, these emergency department diversions represent an estimated health care cost savings of \$59,400 (\$2,700 per ED diversion).

Calendar Year	2021	2022	2023
Interventions	581	369	247

- Traffic Enforcement Focus:** The department has always placed a premium on utilizing non-directed patrol time to enforce motor vehicle laws in an effort to reduce speeding, stop and signal light violations, motor vehicle accidents and other related motor vehicle laws. When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred the department's priorities and the manner in which we operated necessitated a change due to social distancing. Traffic enforcement was no longer a priority due to less people traveling and the need to keep our personnel safe and healthy which resulted in social distancing guidelines that reduced in person encounters. Some took advantage of these operational and societal changes by refusing to abide with motor vehicle laws. We understand traffic violations are a major concern to our residents, town administration personnel and our legislative leaders. It is by far the largest complaint we receive from our residents. The department has made a commitment to re-energize our traffic enforcement efforts with the goal of increasing voluntary compliance from the motor vehicle traveling public. As you can see in the below chart the department's efforts have resulted in a major increase in motor vehicle stops related to traffic violations. A 30% increase in 2022 over 2021 numbers, a 93% increase from 2022 to 2023 and a two-year increase of 152% from 2021 to 2023. We also received funding through the FY23 capital budget to purchase a speed enforcement / sign board which will increase our fleet to three of these successful and often requested tools.

Calendar Year	2021	2022	2023
Motor Vehicle Stops	1639	2136 (+30%)	4132 (+93%)

- Training:** The department will continue its robust training program centered on tactics and responses to critical incidents, especially active shooter related incidents. In May, 2023 the FPD and the Franklin Fire Department participated in a joint training exercise designed to improve integration between law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) during an active shooter event. The training concentrated on the concept of a Rescue Task Force, defined as a temporary team of personnel composed of law enforcement and fire /EMS, whose primary function is to enter the critical incident scene in order to provide emergency medical care and evacuation. We will be conducting Rescue Task Force training again in May, 2024.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- **Officer Health & Wellness Program:** The department has instituted a number of physical wellness related programs by offering planned exercise regimens and has recently updated the small gym at the station. The department recently hosted a department wide training consisting of two sessions with an attorney and a financial planner to discuss and answer questions related to financial and legal wellness. A Health and wellness coordinator position was created and filled. This officer will be tasked with creating initiatives and programs designed to assist personnel with physical, mental, and financial health, as well as resiliency.

Budget Impacts:

- The Franklin Police Department budget is driven by approximately 95% personnel services (salaries) and 5% expenses. Overall, the entire budget is 97% contract driven. The department has come perilously close to spending in excess of our budgeted personnel expenses side of the budget in three of the last four fiscal years due to personnel shortages resulting in increased overtime expenditures.

FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
99.7%	98.6%	96.8%	94%

- It has been argued by the department for several years and during last year's FY24 budget discussions that our understaffed complement of sworn officer personnel had caused a number of agency problems and anticipated problems if solutions were not enacted soon. Increased overtime expenditures, ordering of personnel to work open shifts when they would prefer not to work, canceled training opportunities, canceled time off requests, reassignment of personnel from specialty positions were all issues that negatively affected the organization financially and drastically decreased morale of agency personnel. All of these problems were a result of not having adequate personnel to staff the Operations Division to the industry standard. During last year's budget discussions there was a lot of discussion related to schedule minimums and the need for the department to field a schedule that included two or more officers above the minimum number required throughout the day to meet the current call for service volume and provide adequate personnel to ensure officer safety. The department requested 4 additional patrol officer positions to provide the necessary staffing to create a schedule with the appropriate number of officers deployed throughout the day at two above the minimum.
- It was further explained that being understaffed was the reason the agency almost exclusively hires academy trained transfer officers rather than hiring from the candidate list generated from the entry examination we conduct every 2-3 years. To hire a non-trained individual off of the list to fill a vacancy would require sending the candidate to a police academy. From the candidate selection (interviews, background checks, pre-employment screenings, locating a seat at an academy) which takes 3-4 months, to the completion of the academy (6 Months) and a 3-month field training program, the entire process takes no less than 12-13 months. This would equate to an open position on the schedule for an entire year before it would be filled. An academy trained and experienced transfer officer may fill the open position in as little as 3-4 months. The department simply can't afford to have an open position for a year. The budget cannot sustain it and the additional forced overtime would only continue to erode

morale among the personnel. Not being fiscally able to use the entry examination list when hiring does have a negative impact on the goal of diversification of personnel. When advertising for open positions requesting transfer applicants, we have no control over who applies. We interview and seek the best candidates for the position from the applicants who apply. If the department had the ability to utilize the entry exam candidate list, we could interview candidates who meet the criteria we seek in our efforts to provide diversification of personnel.

- The department is ecstatic to report we have filled the 4 additional patrol officer positions we received in FY24. The last of the four started in October and all have completed their field training and are assigned to the Operations Division as of February. These four new officers have increased the staffing levels to two or more officers above the necessary minimum for 20 of 24 hours each day. The department predicted that when staffed with two or more officers above the minimum, many of the issues and negative consequences outlined previously would be drastically reduced, if not eliminated. It would provide the following:
 - Bring the FPD in line with current public safety standards for deployment of personnel and scheduling of two or more officers over the necessary minimum.
 - Account for current and anticipated increases in call for service volume, especially those incidents involving a mental health crisis that frequently require an extended time to resolve.
 - Safety of the officers would be enhanced with more officers assigned.
 - Allow for increased traffic enforcement, the largest request for service we receive, due to the ability to assign more frequent directed patrols.
 - Place the department in a much better position to deal with known and unanticipated events causing personnel reductions (retirements, injuries, resignations for other employment, etc.).
 - It realizes the cultural change associated with overtime and increases morale due to the reduction of forced overtime.
 - Allows the department additional options not currently available pertaining to the hiring of personnel that will enhance our ability toward personnel diversification.
 - It assists in maintaining our high training standards as required by the Massachusetts Police Training Council (MPTC), Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission and our own training programs by having sufficient personnel to cover officers attending training without it consistently requiring overtime expenditures.
 - With 34 officers assigned to the Operations Division and scheduling 2 over the minimum, the department expects a decline in overtime expenditures. The department anticipates it will obtain the ability to reduce FY26 overtime coverage line items by 10 – 15%. The agency

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

elected to fully fund overtime coverage line items in FY24 and FY25 because we do not possess the necessary data to accurately reduce the overtime line items. We also have no prior history of providing a schedule with 2 officers over the minimum to make a comparison.

- The department is pleased to report that it attained full staffing with all sworn officer positions filled (58) and all personnel healthy and working in February. In the short time we have been at full staff with the new schedule we have experienced the following:
 - Directed patrols for traffic enforcement and the number of violators stopped by officers have increased dramatically.
 - Forced overtime shifts have decreased drastically.
 - Training has been positively affected with opportunities increasing and cancellations nonexistent.
 - The threat of transfer from a specialty assignment no longer exists.
 - The department plans to hire an individual to attend an MPTC Police Academy in July.
 - We have experienced a reduction in overtime expenditures to cover time off benefits of Operations Division personnel. Once we obtain 2-3 quarters of data, we will be able to make accurate reductions to the FY26 budget.
- **Budget Request:** The department's FY25 budget request includes no new positions and increases are primarily related to Collective Bargaining Agreements with the Franklin Police Association and the Franklin Police Sergeants Union that cover FY22 – FY25. The department has requested an increase from FY24 to FY25 of \$363,237. This represents a 5.2% requested increase.
 - The department has requested an increase to the personnel services (salary) side of the budget of \$321,551. This represents a 4.8% increase and is almost entirely the result of the 2.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) as agreed to in the collective bargaining agreements.
 - On the expense side of the budget, we are requesting an increase of \$41,685 above FY24. A majority of the increases are due to inflation, increases associated with various software maintenance contracts and supplementing line items the department has found have been regularly underfunded over several fiscal years.
 - The department elected at this time to not request an additional Lieutenants position due to the current fiscal challenges the town is experiencing. During the last seven (7) years, the department has increased its staffing from 46 sworn officers and 2 civilian positions to 58 sworn officers, 2 civilians and 3 mental health clinicians. In that time the agency has only added one supervisory position, a Co-Response Program Manager. The agency has added 12 sworn

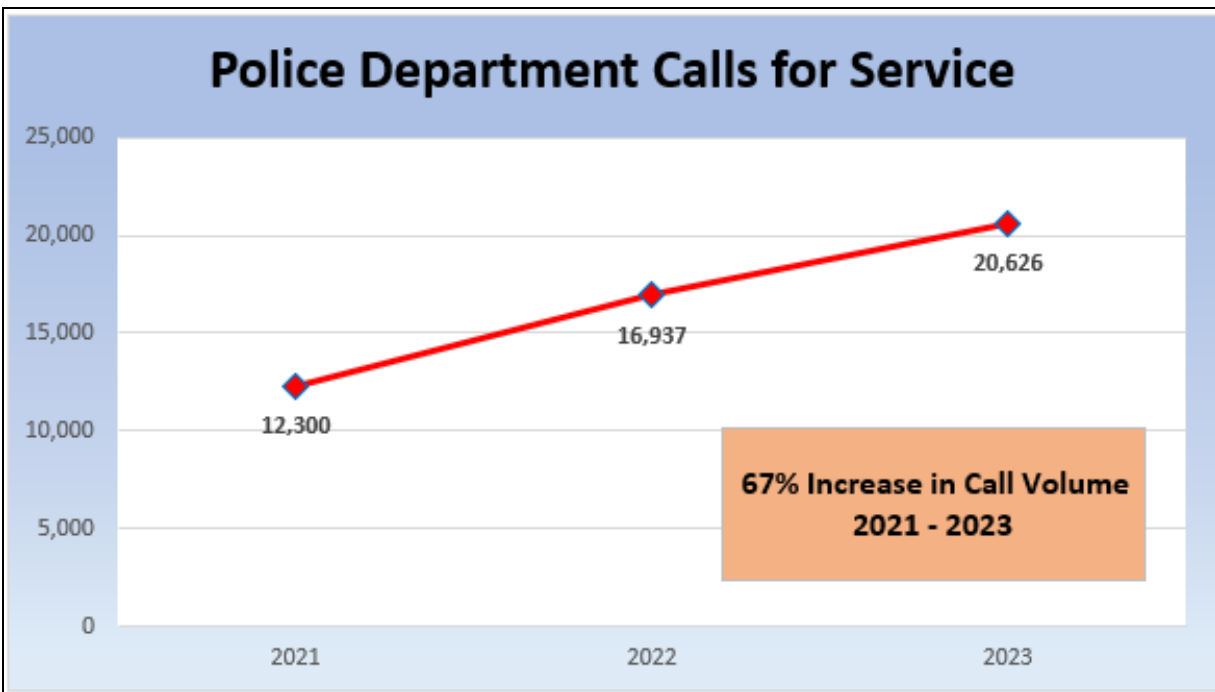
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

officer positions without adding any additional supervisor positions (Sergeant / Lieutenant) during the same time period. A majority of the 12 positions were added to the Operations Division and the span of control and duties have become difficult to manage. The department would like to add a Lieutenant’s position to the Operations Division. This position would join the current Lieutenant commanding the division and would result in having a Lieutenant lead each of the two squads within the Operations Division. This would provide a more appropriate span of control and division of responsibilities.

Trends:

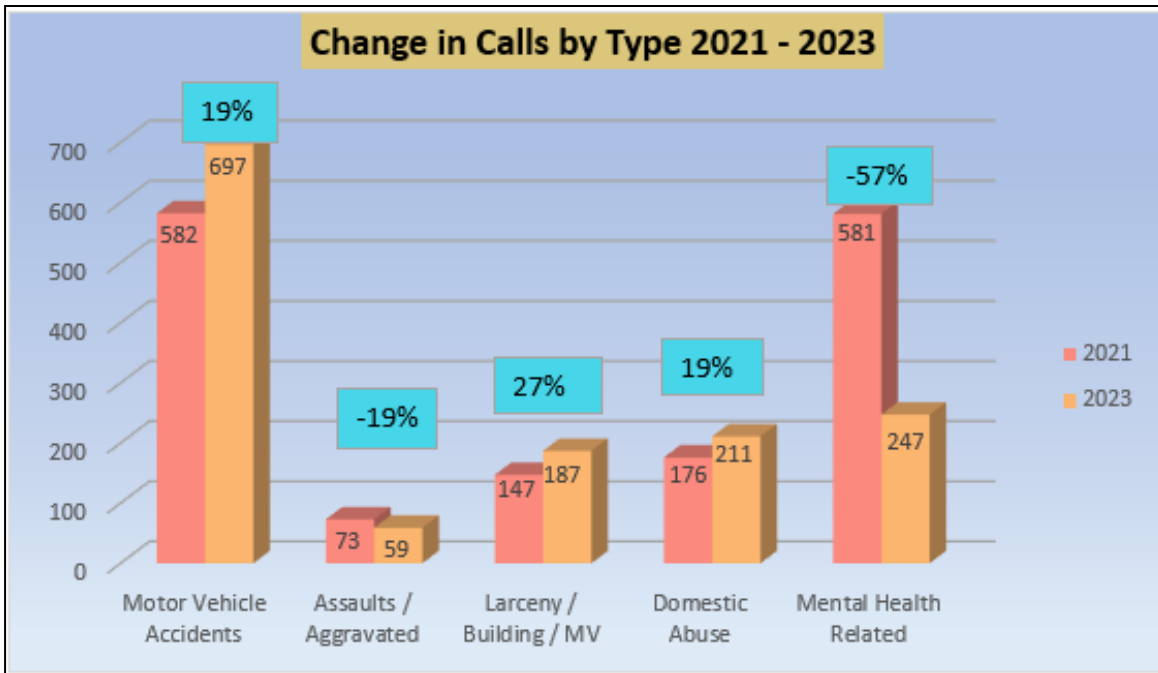
Call Type	2021	2022	2023
Calls for Service	12,300	16,937	20,626
Motor Vehicle Accidents	582	596	697
Assaults / Aggravated	73	105	59
Larceny / Building / MV	147	217	187
Domestic Abuse	176	163	211
Mental Health Related	581	369	247

There has been a 67% increase in call volume over the past 3 years from 2021 to 2023.



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The next chart illustrates the change in the type of calls in certain categories from 2021 to 2023.



Classification	FUNCTION: PUBLIC SAFETY			DEPT #: 210			
	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	5,567,483	5,662,825	6,688,800	6,974,304	6,974,304	-	-
EXPENSES	242,769	287,568	332,331	374,016	374,016	-	-
TOTAL POLICE :	\$5,810,252	\$5,950,393	\$7,021,131	\$7,348,320	\$7,348,320	-	-

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mission Statement:

The Franklin Fire Department is committed to providing the highest level of public safety services for our community. We safely protect lives and property through fire suppression, training, emergency medical and transportation services, disaster and crisis management, fire prevention, and public education.

The operational objectives of the department are to:

- Initiate advanced life support to patients within 8 minutes of receiving the telephone call at our communications center.
- Access, extricate, treat and transport trauma patients to a level one trauma medical facility within one hour of the occurrence of the injury.

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- Interrupt the progression of fires in structures within 8 minutes of receiving the telephone call at our communications center.
- Investigate ways to improve response times in certain areas of the Town.
- Teach fire and life safety skills to all students in grades K through 5, consistent with the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) initiative of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Provide continued valuable services to the senior population, including home safety inspections and smoke/carbon monoxide detector battery replacement. Also, provide community outreach through hosted social gatherings, including the annual St. Patrick's Day corned beef dinner at the senior center.
- Promote fire prevention and safety through timely, consistent code compliance services to the community.
- Provide educational opportunities for department members to ensure optimal performance and safety.
- Develop and maintain "best practices" to ensure personnel and citizen safety.

Staffing:

- 58 Sworn Firefighter/Paramedic Personnel
- 1 full-time Executive Assistant

Strategic Initiatives:

- Budget Requests: The FY25 Budget includes three additional Firefighter/Paramedics to staff a third ambulance during impact shifts which is 7am to 5 pm on weekdays bringing total department personnel to 61 members. If approved, each of the four shifts will have 14 members assigned including a Battalion Chief, Captain, Lieutenant and eleven (11) Firefighter/Paramedics. The Department formulated a strategic objective in 2022 to address the needs of the community in the most fiscally responsible manner. In FY24 we initiated the activation of the third ambulance on a limited basis with the hiring of two Firefighter/Paramedics. The additional personnel requested in FY25 will enhance our ability to have personnel on all four shifts to staff the third ambulance. Our early CY24 projections have the Department on pace for 5,532 calls with 70% being EMS calls. If funded, these positions will enable us to respond to emergency incidents during times of increased call volume. As the data shows, calls for service are greatest on weekdays; therefore, having this additional personnel will give us the opportunity to staff either a third rescue or our Tower Ladder more consistently during times of the greatest need. A further benefit to the extra personnel will be a relief in the overtime budget to cover leave under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. We feel this strategy will provide the additional needed support to meet our increased volume of calls for service and drive down the requests for mutual aid from neighboring departments that create delayed responses. As the demand

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

increases in the future the Department now has a structure established to make adjustments when the need arises in the future. Finally, the FY25 budget includes a 2.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for all personnel per the collective bargaining agreement as well as updated educational incentives.

- **Challenges:** The Department's call volume continues to increase year-after-year with 2023 being a historic high with 5,276 emergency calls. It is important to note that 2,447 (46%) of those 5,276 had both front line ambulances tied up on calls at the same time. In addition, as the surrounding communities are also seeing similar call volume increases, the requests for us to provide mutual aid ambulances has steadily increased as well. With the requested additional personnel, the Department intends to meet these increasing needs in the most cost effective manner for the citizens of Franklin. Your Franklin Firefighter/Paramedics continue to be the chief reason that the department is able to maintain the high level of professionalism and standard of care we provide you each and every day. Existing, new, and proposed buildings in Town present additional demands for the department. Over 70 structures in town are at least three stories or taller, which requires additional personnel at the onset of an incident to mitigate emergencies. There are over 550 residential units proposed to be added in Town, along with a handful of commercial buildings, which over the next couple of years will increase the demand for fire and emergency services.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):** The CBA for the period 7/1/22 through 6/30/25 was unanimously ratified by the Town Council, and as noted previously, includes a 2.5% COLA for each of the three years, consistent with the other Town Departments. Other significant components of the CBA include an increase to the education incentives and health/wellness initiatives.
- **College Relations:** Continue a solid working relationship with the leadership at Dean College to explore a partnership to benefit the school as well as enhance recruitment efforts for the Department in the future. We feel this is an important relationship to foster and establish strong communication channels to have in place to assist in safety messaging to the campus community. The Department works very closely with the campus security team to promote fire safety initiatives and training throughout the campus as well as EMS support during special events.
- **Secondary School Relations:** Encourage a solid working relationship with both the Franklin High School and Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School through our SAFE program to expose students to a potential rewarding career as a Firefighter/Paramedic. As a function of our SAFE program, high school seniors may be eligible to participate in either a two-month senior project or a year-long internship, depending upon which school they attend. Furthermore, there are current discussions with the school administration leadership to offer an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) curriculum to high school students to augment their CPR training before graduation.
- **Ambulance Transport Fees:** Subject to annual review, ambulance transport billing fees were adjusted with Town Council approval effective March 1, 2024. This annual review and adjustment, calculated as the average of our billing vendor's top fifty fire service clients in the area, ensures that our rates remain in line with the rates of the surrounding communities. In FY24, we anticipate receipts for ambulance transports, billed through a third party billing service, to exceed \$2.5 million. Additionally, the

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Department participates in the Ambulance Certified Public Expenditures (CPE) Program, which is a statutorily recognized finance program to capture eligible Medicaid funds for reimbursement under the State's approved Medicaid State Plan under the Social Security Act. We are anticipating \$205,929, before the close of FY24 to be reimbursed to the Town. Both these ambulance transport fees and CPE funds are deposited into the Town's General Fund. With the addition of a third ambulance during peak hours we project an increase of \$160,000 in ambulance transport revenue reimbursed to the Town in FY25. This increase from the third ambulance along with a projected \$2.9 million in transport fees and over \$200,000 in CPE reimbursement will provide over \$3 million revenue into the Town's general fund in FY25.

- **Community Public Health Education:** The department is committed to a partnership with the health department to provide free classes for our residents. The classes that we currently offer are CPR and Stop the Bleed. When bystanders learn these life saving skills patient outcomes improve and survival increases. We will be adding "Until Help Arrives" classes soon to enhance this public health education initiative.
- **Grants:** Since July 2019, the Department has received \$2,079,329 in grants from Federal and State agencies as well as opportunities with non-governmental agencies in the area. A Grant Committee is composed of on and off-duty department members, who volunteer their time pursuing and applying for funding opportunities that help offset department costs to the taxpayers. Some recent grant awards include:
 - Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) - \$8,500 Ballistic Gear
 - Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS) - \$24,936.30 Gear/ FIT
 - SAFE - \$7,200: Senior SAFE - \$2,600
 - AFG Grant - \$301,280- Various training programs
- **Donations:** We are very grateful to all the businesses and members of the community who have made generous donations to the Department. In total, local banking institutions alone have made over \$50,000 in donations to the Department, since July 2019, which is in addition to the many generous donations received from citizens in the community. These donations allow us to purchase specialized equipment and training programs that would not be able to receive within the normal operating and capital budgets.
- **Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 1:** On July 1, 2022 we were honored to be designated an ISO 1 Fire Department being the 9th department in Massachusetts, 15th in New England and 459th in the Nation to achieve this classification. At this point in time there are still only nine fire departments in the Commonwealth that are ISO Class 1. This effort was a collaboration of many people throughout the Town including the Water Department division for playing such an integral role with this significant accomplishment. This improved classification not only recognizes our readiness to quickly and efficiently extinguish a fire but allows all property owners in Town the potential of a reduction in

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

insurance policy premiums for both residential and commercial property owners. We are extremely grateful to all the men and women in this Department as well as others throughout the Town including elected officials who have all worked very hard to reach this amazing milestone. The Department is extremely proud of this accomplishment and will continue to maintain this high standard of service to the community in the future.

- **Emergency Management Agency (EMA):** The Town's Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) were both updated and approved by FEMA and the Town Council a few years ago which will afford the Town future opportunities to secure funding for mitigation projects in trouble areas throughout town to prevent future costs. Additionally, the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) was updated in March 2024 with the assistance of Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) from its previous 2012 version this year. These updated plans provide the Town the opportunity to receive future Federal funding for mitigation and preparedness projects. The Department also conducted a tabletop exercise (TTX) in coordination with senior students at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy to test our state of readiness for setting up warming and cooling centers in Town if needed.
- **Capital:** The Department was granted approval by the Town Council for several capital expenditures including turnout gear, EMS equipment, mobile radios, Shift Commander vehicle and various hose and nozzle accessories totaling \$337,854. Fortunately, the recent award of a regional AFG grant of \$632,268 allows the replacement of our portable radios for all our department members with no future cost to the Town from capital funds. We are grateful for the continuous support of the Town Council and Finance Committee to allow the purchase of these important items for the members of the department to provide the best service to the community.
- **Training:** The Department has instituted an aggressive internal training program that is spearheaded by a Battalion Chief who has a collateral duty of overseeing training. The Department trains consistently throughout the year in all emergency operation evolutions to provide the highest level of service to the community. As the growth in the volume and complexity of the citizen's demands for emergency services remain a challenge, the Department has a future goal of acquiring its own training facility in town. Currently, the department is unable to conduct live fire training without having to travel to different communities throughout the Commonwealth. A new training facility would allow members to train on duty while still remaining in town to address emergency incidents, as they occur. Additionally, being able to do more training while on-duty would help offset training overtime costs associated with having to cover personnel that are out of the region for training. In the past, the Milford Fire Department has been kind enough to let us utilize their burn building / training tower at no cost. However, due to its age and deteriorating conditions, Milford has had to suspend the use of the training building for structural and safety concerns indefinitely. No other city or town within 35 miles has such a facility that we can utilize, especially at no cost. As such, fire department administration has been actively pursuing opportunities through our State and Federal delegations of hosting a regional fire training facility in Franklin to conduct live fire training evolutions. Monthly, the Department participates in Technical Rescue training which involves specialized skills and equipment for "high risk-low frequency" incidents. Furthermore, the Department now has three certified Divers who are members of the Bristol

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

County Dive Team. These members coordinated with a recent department wide surface water rescue training program this past March has increased our state of readiness for water emergencies in Town significantly.

- Apparatus: The Department took delivery of a new ambulance, located at Headquarters, in September 2022. The Station 2 ambulance had been replaced previously in 2021. In addition to the two front-line ambulances, the Department maintains two reserve ambulances. The Headquarters reserve ambulance is fully equipped and ready to respond to emergency incidents, during times of increased call volume, should we have the available personnel. The additional manpower requested in the budget will allow this third ambulance to be more readily able to respond when the two front line ambulances are on calls. Once again , this manpower will also provide the much needed coverage on our Tower Ladder which is cross manned with our ambulance crew. The Station 2 reserve ambulance can be placed into service if one of the front line trucks is down for maintenance needs. The ambulance replacement schedule is based upon 2.5 years of front-line service, to assure dependability, followed by years of reserve service to maintain appropriate coverage and availability. A new ambulance is scheduled to be delivered in summer of 2024. At the February 1, 2023 Town Council meeting the town council members unanimously approved the purchase of a 2025 Pierce Tower Ladder, due to be delivered in the spring/summer of 2025, to replace the current 2008 Pierce Tower Ladder, which will be kept by the Town as a reserve truck at this point in time. As a reserve tower ladder this piece of apparatus will also be accessible to other town departments, such as the Water Department, when the need arises. Assigned to Headquarters, Rescue 1, which was the previous Engine 1, has been repurposed as a Heavy Rescue Pumper, equipped with specialized equipment to respond to “low incidence, high risk” calls, such as technical rescue, hazardous materials, and water rescue. Our two front-line engines, Engine 1 and Engine 2, which were purchased in 2021, are serving the Town very well with reserve Engine 3 available if needed.
- Health/Wellness: The Department has established a department Health & Wellness Committee that is composed of members throughout the Department. Their mission is to work with the Town with a focus on improving the health and wellness initiatives of our greatest asset - our firefighters. Programs being currently discussed with the Town include medical exams, physical training and cancer screening.
- The total number of calls for CY23 was 5,276 calls with 3,468 being EMS calls and 1,808 being fire, or other emergency, calls. Similarly to past years, EMS calls comprise approximately 66% of the emergency calls. With regards to ambulance mutual aid, we received mutual aid on 220 calls and rendered mutual aid on 89 calls to other communities in CY23. If the third ambulance was not put in service the last quarter of 2023 our mutual aid number would have been 260 calls for mutual aid for an ambulance from out of town. We will continue to closely monitor data on the occurrences of mutual aid calls received from neighboring departments, which occur when both our first-due ambulances are already committed on calls.
- Code Compliance and Inspections: The Fire Prevention Program consists of residential and commercial components. The Battalion Chiefs conduct smoke alarm inspections for the sale of residential homes and new construction. Additional residential inspections include plan review, propane

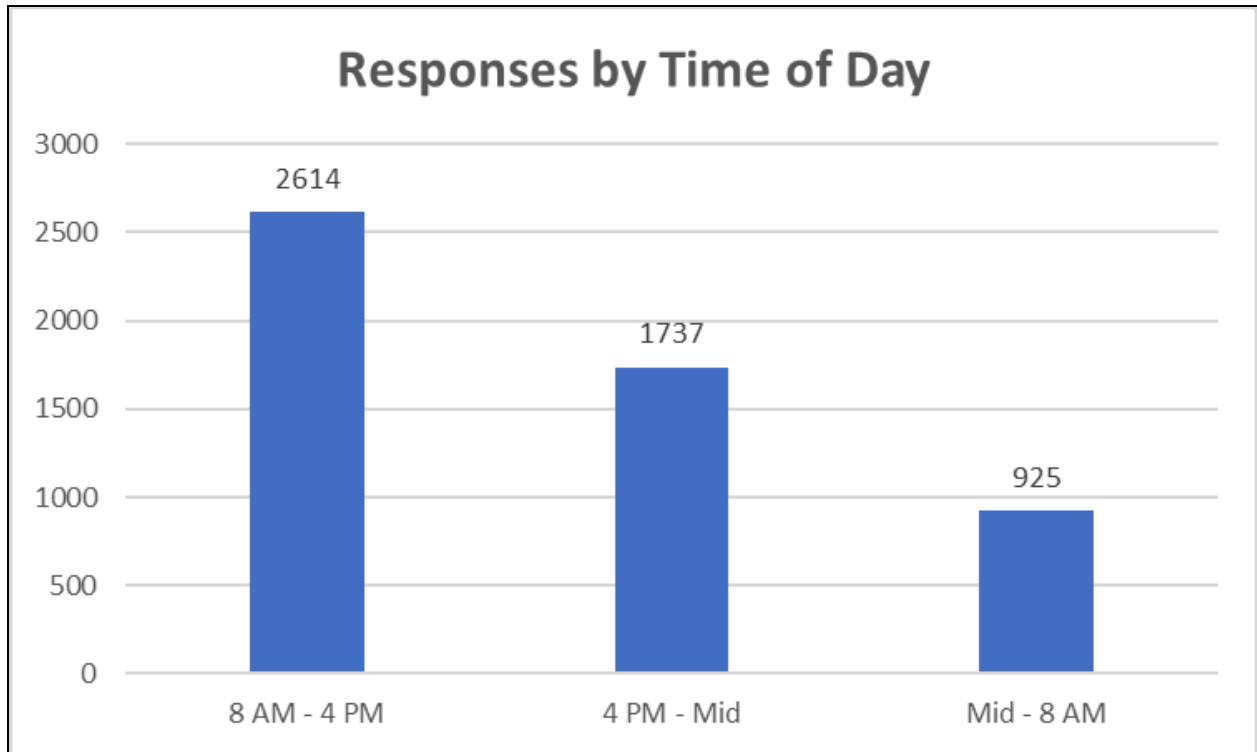
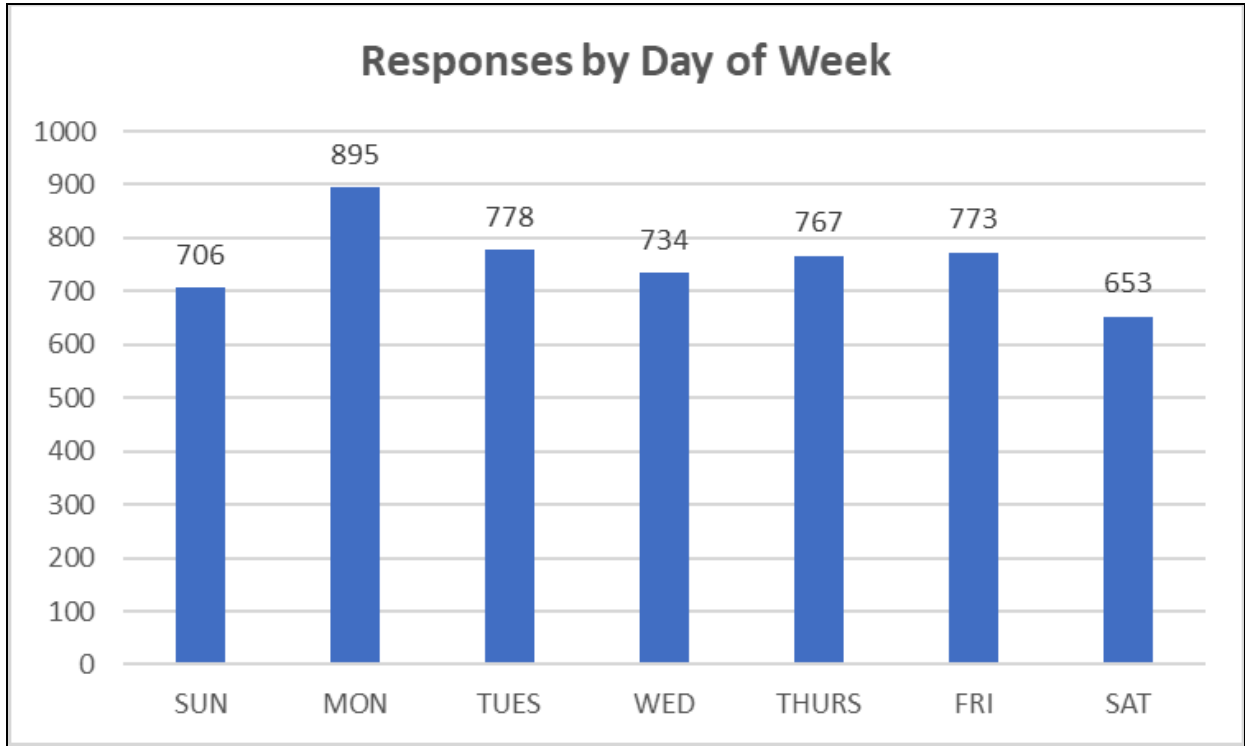
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

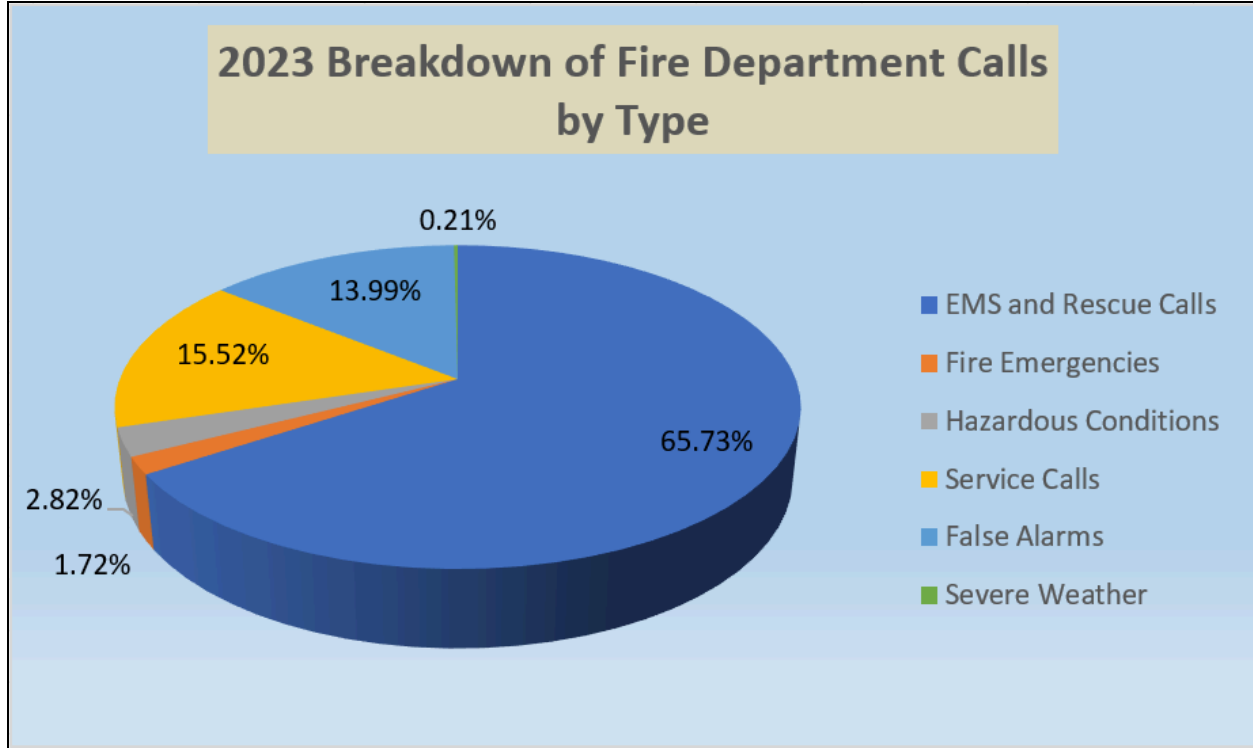
tank installations, oil burner installations, oil tank installations and removals. Scheduling for residential inspections continues to take place online through our website. On the commercial side, annual inspections for licensees were conducted. Additional inspections include summer camps, day care facilities, preschools, building fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Each school was inspected during February vacation in conjunction with the building department. School Fire Drills were coordinated with each school and carried out with the support of our on duty crews. Fire Drills at business were carried out at their request. Permitting for fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, blasting, hot works, flammable and combustible liquids continue to be processed. Fire prevention also handles numerous phone calls and email inquiries on a daily basis.

The Department will continue to remain steadfast to provide the highest level of service that the community both deserves and expects in the future. There is the utmost confidence that call volume to the community will be increasing every year going forward. The restructuring of the Department in July 2020, along with the FY25 request for three more members, will provide the resources needed at this point in time to properly meet the needs of the community in the most fiscally responsible manner. A well-staffed, trained and equipped department on the front lines is the most effective defense for the community. The Franklin Fire Department is extremely fortunate to have great support from the Town Administrator, Town Council, Finance Committee and the whole community to perform its vital mission to the community.

6 Year Trends in Franklin Fire Department Service Delivery by Calendar Year

Call Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
EMS and Rescue Calls	3269	2952	2,757	3,313	3,549	3468
Fire Emergencies	63	55	72	67	95	91
Hazardous Conditions	186	135	213	111	140	149
Service Calls	458	767	753	727	685	819
False Alarms	641	617	608	645	648	738
Severe Weather	11	4	27	14	3	11
Total Number of Responses	4628	4,530	4,430	4,877	5,120	5,276
% +/- from Previous Year	—	- 2%	- 2%	+ 10%	+ 5%	+ 3%





Classification	FUNCTION: PUBLIC SAFETY			DEPT #: 220			
	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	5,891,440	6,149,076	6,572,224	7,181,065	7,181,065	-	-
EXPENSES	503,807	524,966	654,000	506,000	506,000	-	-
TOTAL FIRE :	\$6,395,247	\$6,674,042	\$7,226,224	\$7,687,065	\$7,687,065	-	-

REGIONAL DISPATCH

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Towns of Franklin, Wrentham, Norfolk, Plainville, Mendon and Millville (In FY21 the Mendon-Millville Regional Center signed a merger with the MECC to consolidate costs. After this merger, the MECC still has additional capacity for another 10-20,000 inn population) have joined together to establish a regional district to operate and maintain a consolidated District-wide public safety communications/dispatch center that will be known as the Metacomet Emergency Communications Center (MECC).

The MECC has a Board of Directors which shall serve as the governing and administrative body and will have overall responsibility for the District. The District employs a MECC Director who has overall responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the MECC and will serve as the Chief Administrative and Fiscal Officer.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

There is an Operations Committee that comprises the Chiefs of the Fire and Police Departments (or their designee) of each member town.

Staffing:

- 4 full-time administrative personnel
- 16 full-time Dispatchers
- part-time Dispatchers

Strategic Initiatives:

- Visit the MECC Website HERE - <https://www.meccdispatch.org/>

DEPARTMENT: REGIONAL DISPATCH	FUNCTION: PUBLIC SAFETY			DEPT #: 225			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	435,074	610,664	958,670	1,309,797	1,309,797	-	-
TOTAL REGIONAL DISPATCH :	\$435,074	\$610,664	\$958,670	\$1,309,797	\$1,309,797	-	-

BUILDING INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Budget Narrative:

The Building Inspection Department’s mission is to ensure the Massachusetts State building, plumbing and gas codes as well as 521 CMR Architectural Access Board Regulations and the Town of Franklin Zoning Bylaws are enforced. The department conducts all the necessary inspections required to enforce these codes and bylaws, and protects the residential and business community through required building permits and periodic business inspections.

Building Commissioner’s Core Functions:

- Reviews all applications, issues permits and conducts required inspections
- Conducts field inspections for all issued permits
- Follows up on all zoning inquiries
- Administers, enforces and interprets Town of Franklin Zoning Bylaw.
- Works in collaboration with other Town departments to ensure safety and compliance across all building and zoning related matters
- Inspects all Town projects
- Administers the Sealer of Weights & Measures currently conducted by the state.
- Provides emergency disaster response services in collaboration with other Emergency Response departments or organizations
- Conducts periodic inspections of establishments that hold common victualer and/or liquor licenses.

Staffing:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- 3 full-time
- 1 part-time
- 2 part-time Mechanical Inspectors
- 4 on-call inspectors who work as needed

Goals Achieved:

- All inspection requests are logged in online.
- All inspections are being conducted in the field, through PPE protection.
- Ongoing online permit submissions are proceeding without a glitch.
- Weights and Measures are billed online.
- Inspectors and staff are educated daily on important departmental updates.
- All inspectors issue their respective trade permits, unassisted!
- FY24 was a productive year for us. Online permitting was the main ingredient for our banner year. Again, our department kept up with a high demand. As a department we were able to become fully staffed.

Strategic Initiatives:

- The Habitable Housing Task Force continues to identify properties that have challenges and need our help and so far we are quietly making a difference.
- Continue to meet and discuss with the Attorney General's Office how to handle vacant properties. With the help of the newly created HHTF we are making a difference.
- Continued education through State and Local programs.
- Danielly Fonseca recently joined the team and in the short time she's been here she has already had a huge impact on Department operations. She is looking into and revamping everything we do to streamline processes and improve overall efficiency.
- Strategize additional methods of keeping the public informed to continue providing excellent customer service.
- Continue utilizing OpenGov for administration of all building and zoning related certifications and inspections.
- Strengthen our web presence and related training for staff.
- Our Strategic Initiatives will continue at the high level the Town of Franklin has expected from us, always digging for the latest in technology that allows streamlining.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

DEPARTMENT: INSPECTION DEPARTMENT	FUNCTION: PUBLIC SAFETY			DEPT #: 240			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	430,314	328,943	426,373	416,583	416,583	-	-
EXPENSES	19,055	19,355	29,512	29,950	29,950	-	-
TOTAL INSPECTION DEPARTMENT :	\$449,369	\$348,298	\$455,885	\$446,533	\$446,533	-	-

ANIMAL CONTROL

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The [Animal Control Department](#) is responsible for the protection of domesticated animals in Franklin and the care and control of wildlife as needed. Animal licensing and enforcement of laws pertaining to the care and treatment of animals are under the jurisdiction of this department.

Franklin’s Animal Control Department is led by Department Head and Animal Control Officer Tracey Taddeo. Tracey, along with full-time Assistant Animal Control Officer Patrick Kelleher and four part-time officers, work diligently to provide excellent care to all animals in the Town of Franklin, making every effort to reunite domesticated animals with their owner, and always keeping the safety of animals and residents as their top priority.

Animal Control Officers Tracey Taddeo and Patrick Kelleher also serve as Inspector of Animals. The Inspector of Animals position is required for all domestic and wildlife bites and has the ability to quarantine residents’ pets. The Inspectors of Animals performs barn and kennel inspections and has the authority to grant or deny a kennel license.

The Animal Control Department is regionalized with the Town of Bellingham and offers 24/7 coverage.

Staffing:

- 2 full-time Animal Control Officers
- 4 part-time Animal Control Officers

FY23 Accomplishments:

The Animal Control Department received and investigated 3,179 calls in FY23, some of which are detailed below:

- 72 dogs were picked up; 64 of which were claimed and 8 of which were not claimed.
- 25 cats and 83 other unspecified animals were picked up.
- 29 animals were taken to be seen by a veterinarian.
- 294 deceased animals were removed from public spaces.
- 47 animals were humanely euthanized.
- 97 dogs were found off-leash.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- 84 animal bites were reported; all animals were quarantined for 10 days and none were found to be rabid.
- 14 animals were tested for rabies; none were found to be rabid.

Residents who are interested in contacting the Animal Control Department are encouraged to visit their [website](https://www.franklinma.gov/animal-control) (https://www.franklinma.gov/animal-control) or call (508) 520-4922.

DEPARTMENT: ANIMAL CONTROL		FUNCTION: PUBLIC SAFETY			DEPT #: 292			
		FY 2025 Budget Levels						
Classification		FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
	EXPENSES	76,386	75,522	92,700	104,700	104,700	-	-
TOTAL ANIMAL CONTROL :		\$76,386	\$75,522	\$92,700	\$104,700	\$104,700	-	-

EDUCATION

FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

INVESTING IN FRANKLIN'S FUTURE

The Franklin Public Schools provide education to over 4,700 students from grades PreK-12 and post-graduate programs. Currently, there is one integrated preschool, five elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. Franklin Public Schools students perform exceptionally well in academics, fine and performing arts, athletics, and numerous extracurricular activities. The school administration, faculty, and staff are dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment for students and families alike.

Our vision relative to budget development is straightforward but extraordinarily important and undeniably mission-driven by our Portrait of a Graduate. We remain focused on supporting student growth, recovery, and success and will continue prioritizing services and support for our students. We believe that all students should have equitable access to resources, an opportunity for each student to have access to personalized interventions and accelerations, and the advancement of their achievement, success, and wellness.

This budget supports Franklin's Portrait of a Graduate, a community consensus of five essential skills to be developed by each student through their PreK-12+ school experience. It aligns with the district's strategic objectives.



We have faced years of persistent structural deficits; nevertheless, we maintain hope that our community can navigate through these challenges ahead. We are engaged in a planning process that includes a student demographic and enrollment forecast, Educational Visioning, and an assessment of the Educational Adequacy of our facilities, which will result in a Comprehensive School Facilities Plan.

This proposed budget represents a crucial role in supporting our students' education and its broader impact on our community. It signifies our ongoing commitment to fostering intellectually stimulating and pertinent learning opportunities for all students within a dynamic educational setting. Our overarching goal is to propose a budget that upholds our community's commitment to educational excellence while also exhibiting fiscal responsibility.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Please see the [FPS FY25 Budget Book](#) and [Line Item Budget](#) for the Franklin Public School Districts' Proposed FY25 Budget. Additional information can be found on our Budget web page: <https://www.franklinps.net/district/school-district-budget/pages/1-fy2025-budget>

Community members may note the Frequently Asked Questions within the Budget Book linked above.

For more information on the Franklin Public Schools, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 508-553-4819.

DEPARTMENT: FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	FUNCTION: EDUCATION			DEPT #: 300			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
EXPENSES	67,180,085	70,120,235	71,989,431	74,989,431	74,989,431	-	-
TOTAL FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS :	\$67,180,085	\$70,120,235	\$71,989,431	\$74,989,431	\$74,989,431	-	-

TRI COUNTY REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Tri-County Regional Vocational School District was established by an act of the Massachusetts legislature on September 26, 1973. The act designated the towns of Franklin, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Sherborn, and Walpole as the original members; they were joined shortly after by the towns of Plainville, Seekonk and Wrentham. The school district was established in accordance with MGL Chapter 71 and as part of the agreement to establish the district, Tri-County was established under the provisions of MGL Chapter 74 and designated to include courses beyond the secondary school level in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 74 Section 37A. The Town has two (2) appointed members to the Regional School Committee.

In September of 1977, Tri-County opened its doors to a freshman and sophomore class and saw its first graduation in 1980. In its third year of operation, the school began offering its first postsecondary program in the field of Cosmetology and it is still in operation.

The academic program offers a broadly based comprehensive education through a highly structured core curriculum. The emphasis of this component is on applications involving communication, mathematics, science, and social studies. College preparatory instruction is included for those students who may opt for this direction. Through a combination of ability grouping and heterogeneous grouping, students are prepared to enter today's job market and are taught that education is a lifelong process. In today's changing workplace, our students are prepared to continue learning throughout their work life.

The Career Programs offered at Tri-County are broad enough in scope to appeal to almost any student. Instruction is offered in a variety of technologies by teachers who are experienced and, when appropriate,

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

licensed in the field they teach. This allows instructors to teach practical hands-on skills as well as the theory behind the application.

Tri-County’s mission is to provide an excellent comprehensive technical and academic education to regional high school students. State-of-the-art technical skills and knowledge are enriched and complemented by a solid foundation of academic skills. Creative and cooperative partnerships between area employers and a dynamic staff at Tri-County guarantee the continued growth and development of exciting programs designed to prepare graduates for careers in the twenty-first century. This is a place where students succeed and are well-prepared for work or college.

The FY25 enrollment at Tri-County is estimated at 942 students; 173 are from Franklin. The budget reflects the cost sharing agreement between the towns and the member assessments based on the annual enrollment from Franklin.

Tri-County Regional Vocational High School is still housed in its original building. However, on November 7, 2023 residents voted to raise property taxes through a debt exclusion to pay for a new Tri-County Regional Vocational High School. The total project cost is estimated at \$285,992,692 and upon completion will replace the Tri-County’s current facility on the same site which has been in existence since 1977. Construction plans call for shovels to hit the ground in the summer of 2024 with an anticipated opening in time for the 2026-2027 school year.

Franklin’s assessment of the project is anticipated to cost the Town \$2.1 million per year, with approximately \$102 million or 1/3 of the project being paid by the state through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The tax impact from this project will begin in FY25 and is reflected in the debt exclusion budget model and expenditure line item with an increase of \$132,298. The tax rate will be adjusted later this year to reflect the increase in the levy for Franklin's portion. This project is budget neutral. At full maturity in FY27, an average (\$650,377) Franklin household will have taxes raised by \$169/year to pay for this project.

DEPARTMENT: TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL SCHOOL			FUNCTION: EDUCATION			DEPT #: 390	
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	2,449,637	2,540,197	2,674,447	2,908,492	2,908,492	-	-
TOTAL TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL SCHOOL :	\$2,449,637	\$2,540,197	\$2,674,447	\$2,908,492	\$2,908,492	-	-

NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

GENERAL PURPOSE/MISSION STATEMENT:

Norfolk County Agricultural High School (NCAHS) is a public high school that offers academic and vocational training to over 500 students from the 27 towns and one city in Norfolk County and more than 40 out of county (tuition) towns. The school is situated on 365 acres in Walpole, a suburb of Boston, and offers specialty training to students who are interested in pursuing careers in Animal and Marine Science (veterinarian science, marine science, canine science, dairy and livestock management, research animal technology and equine studies),

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Plant and Plant Science (forestry, floriculture, landscape management, horticulture and natural resources, arboriculture and turf management), Environmental Science (climate change, natural resources, green engineering, environmental history, parks and recreation, new england wildlife, outdoor leadership, water treatment) and Mechanical Technology (diesel and heavy equipment operation and repair, welding woodworking). The school is one of four such schools in Massachusetts charged with promoting agri-science and agri-business opportunities.

Norfolk Aggie provides hands-on education in a welcoming and friendly environment and provides many clubs, sports and outdoor activities for the students. For more information about the Norfolk Agricultural School please visit <http://www.norfolkaggie.org>

DEPARTMENT: NORFOLK AGGIE VOC ED TUITION			FUNCTION: EDUCATION			DEPT #: 395	
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	29,468	68,564	66,660	69,993	69,993	-	-
TOTAL NORFOLK AGGIE VOC ED TUITION :	\$29,468	\$68,564	\$66,660	\$69,993	\$69,993	-	-

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

Use the highest standards of customer service and efficient use of Town resources and meet the public infrastructure needs of the Town of Franklin.

Assigned areas of responsibility are the following seven budget areas; Highway-General Maintenance (422-40), Grounds and Parks (422-41), Snow and Ice Removal, (422-42), Central Motors (422-43), Recycling Center (422-46), Administration & Engineering (422-49), and Street Lights (424).

Overall Departmental Service Goals:

- Customer Service – continually improve procedures to meet Town standards for customer service. Proactively anticipate customer needs. Explore increased use of technology on an ongoing basis.
- Management and Administration – continuously evaluate means and methods of service delivery, evaluate, and where applicable, implement best practices. Lead in technology implementation for DPWs.
- Infrastructure Planning – participate in general growth planning and lead in planning to meet future infrastructure needs resulting from Town growth. Monitor water system master plan to reflect the impact of improvements initiated to date. Evaluate the need for sewer/stormwater infrastructure improvements reflective of recent DEP policies.
- Infrastructure Design and Construction – ensure public infrastructure design and construction, whether by public or private parties, meets Town and professional standards, results in cost effective projects and minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts.
- Public Infrastructure Maintenance – proactively maintain all DPW-assigned public infrastructure assets and support equipment to meet service requirements.
- Emergency Response – be in a position to respond to major and minor emergencies to restore and maintain services.

General Department Overview:

- Director of Public Works
 - Develop and maintain relationships with state and federal agencies for permitting and regulatory compliance.
 - Long range infrastructure planning.
 - Resource development, including improving efficiency, acquiring grants, development of support facilities, coordination of divisions, etc.
 - Annual planning, budgeting, setting goals, program evaluation.
 - EPA MS4 Stormwater Phase II Plan implementation.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Evaluate all new technologies: GPS, Watersmart, ArcGIS, Fleetio Software, Brightly etc, throughout the organization to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Continue to work with other communities to share resources.
- Administration
 - Administration of water, sewer, sprinkler, hydrant, cross-connection, backflow, solid waste & recycling, and stormwater billing.
 - Customer Service: counter and telephone intake, public notifications, etc.
 - Permit processing (water/sewer/street excavation/public way access, drain layers licenses, etc.).
 - DPW-wide financial management, including payroll, AP/AR, and purchasing.
 - Support to operating divisions.
- Engineering and Construction Division (includes GIS)
 - Manage the design and construction of capital improvement projects while coordinating with operating divisions.
 - Provide technical review of private development site plans and subdivisions for the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Board of Appeals.
 - Provide construction inspection for municipal capital projects and work in the public right of way.
 - Manage street excavation and trench bylaws.
 - Maintain official Town records and maps.
 - GIS (Geographic Information System) - Constantly updating and maintaining numerous spatial databases to meet the needs of departments, boards, committees, professionals and citizens, while also expanding the information available in a simple and economical approach.
- Highway Division (includes Grounds, Park & Tree, Central Motors, Snow Operations, Beaver Street Recycling Center and Street Lighting):
 - Road Maintenance - pavement reclamation, asphalt overlays, chip seal, crack seal, infrared heat treatment, and patching
 - Sidewalks – Repair existing sidewalks and add new sidewalks where needed.
 - Grounds, Parks & Tree – Plant trees, maintain public shade trees, cut grass at ball fields, buildings, and cemetery and cut, prune, and trim shrubs and maintain landscaping around schools, municipal buildings and the Town Common, as well as landscaped areas within the public right-of-way.
 - Central Motors – Maintenance of approximately 170 Town vehicles, including DPW (84), Facilities, Inspection and Board of Health (11), Animal Control (2), Police (35), School (16), and Fire (22). Central Motors also maintains trailers (42) as well as equipment such as weed wackers, lawn mowers, chain saws, snow blowers, snow plows and sanders.
 - Snow Plowing & Sanding Operations
 - Beaver Street Recycling Center - Operation of a Recycling Center 3.5 days a week that provides excellent customer service and meets all DEP regulations.
 - Street Lighting - Repair and Maintain street lights throughout town.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

The Department of Public Works has 57.3 full-time equivalents (FTEs) split across multiple budgets. The total staffing includes:

- Management & Administration: 12 full-time
- Engineering/GIS Staff: 4 full-time
- Administrative Support: 3 full-time, 1 part-time (0.5 FTE)
- Highway Division Laborers: 8 full-time
- Grounds Division Laborers: 6 full-time
- Water Division Laborers: 11 full-time
- Sewer Division Laborers: 5 full-time
- Stormwater Division Laborers: 3 full-time
- Central Motors Laborers: 3 full-time
- Recycling Center Staff: 4 part-time (1.8 FTE)

The salary costs for the Director, Managers and Administrative Staff are shared between the DPW General Fund and the various Enterprise funds. The DPW General Fund pays for 22.65 FTEs.

- Management & Administration: 2.9
- Engineering/GIS Staff: 0.25
- Administrative Support: 0.7
- Highway Division Laborers: 8.0
- Grounds Division Laborers: 6.0
- Central Motors Laborers: 3.0
- Recycling Center Staff: 1.8

Strategic Initiatives:

- Provide exceptional and expedient customer service to every person who contacts the Public Works Department.
- Continue to develop and implement plans and oversight of all Public Works projects that meet safety concerns while ensuring protection of staff and residents
- Maintaining the Town's assets, such as fields, Town Common and other public ways in the community with the most cost effective use of resources whether public or private.
- Continue to work on the storm water challenge and funding of the requirements of the MS4 permit. Public Works continues to proactively work on this issue with the installation of rain gardens, improved road design and many other projects that help manage this costly endeavor going forward.
- Maintain excellence in snow and ice removal operations.
- Execute several miles of new water and roadway projects.
- Implement, evaluate and fund to the extent possible the Town's 5-year Pavement Management Plan. The Town has \$40 million in backlogged road work, and millions more required to maintain our parking lots and sidewalks.

The most significant changes to our salary budgets are due to COLA increases for our non union, part time and seasonal staff, and step and cola increases for the union members. The only other change worth noting is an increase in police details to support various projects for our highway and grounds departments of \$15,000.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Again, this is a result of the costs of police details increasing over the years as well as an increase in the need for maintenance work on our roadways.

As in past years, the majority of the changes to the DPW expenditure line items were made due to rising costs from inflation for supplies and materials as well as outside contracts and services. We were able to maintain level services in select areas by increasing those budgets; though to alleviate the budget impact, we had to make cuts in other areas. Most items were level funded, but with costs rising, these funds will purchase less, ultimately causing reductions to the services we can provide. Areas such as weed spraying, tree trimming, line painting, sidewalk maintenance and others are likely to be affected.

Additional examples of rising costs are evident in our need to increase the supplies and materials budgets in the Highway and Grounds Departments for signs, safety supplies and small equipment by approximately \$16,000, as well as an increase of \$45,000 to cover the increased costs of outside contractors to help maintain our schools, fields and parks. Increased demand at the Recycle Center, coupled with skyrocketing costs to dispose of mattresses, styrofoam, plastics and household hazardous waste, required an increase of \$17,000. In order to offset these and other increases, we had to cut our roadwork budget by \$150,000 and our engineering design budget by \$50,000.

Underfunding our roadway maintenance and engineering designs budgets is not a new issue. The road maintenance line item was slowly eroded over the years until it was funded at a bare minimum of \$75,000 in FY23. The engineering design budget was slowly increased over the past 5 years to a more appropriate level for a town of our size, but now is being reduced. In FY24 the town committed to rebuilding the road maintenance line item so that we could tackle more maintenance related projects such as crack sealing, chip sealing, infrared pavement repairs, patching etc, and funded it at \$600,000, but now must again be decreased by \$150,000. As this budget is reduced, it leaves us without the ability to adequately maintain our roads and perform needed repairs. Without proper maintenance, roads will deteriorate faster and require more expensive reconstruction treatments much sooner.

With the costs of materials and services rising, so are the costs and demands for software and technology. The current DPW work order system is no longer being offered. Therefore, the DPW had to upgrade to a new work order system and an upgraded GIS platform to manage all of the requests for services around town at an additional cost of \$24,000.

Although the Central Motors expense budget appears to have an increase of \$176,000, it is actually level funded for FY25. The two line items showing increases are both pre existing budgets that were moved to central motors from another department. The line item for \$16,000 for GPS devices for our fleet, was moved from the Highway Department budget to more accurately reflect where the management of these devices occurs. The \$160,000 line item for parts was reallocated from the Fire Department budget, as the maintenance of all vehicles and equipment for the Fire Department will now be managed by the DPW Fleet Manager. We expect this change to have a positive impact on the availability of vehicles and equipment for the Fire Department and eventually lead to a reduction in costs through improved efficiencies.

Although last year our fuel budget was of high concern, costs have been kept in check so far this year. Through February of FY24 we paid an average price per gallon of \$3.34 for diesel and \$ 3.20 for regular unleaded. With our estimated annual fuel use in FY25 at 35,000 gallons of diesel and 80,000 gallons of regular, our budget requests for fuel next year should support costs up to \$4.25/ gallon for diesel and \$3.75/ gallon for regular. We will be keeping a close eye on the market trends for FY25.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Average Fuel Costs DPW FY21-FY25

Fiscal Year	Avg \$/ Gallon with tax		Actual Total Fuel Costs			Total Cost Fuel
	Diesel	Regular 87	Central Motors	Snow & Ice	School Vans	
FY21	\$2.39	\$2.08	\$164,857	\$43,625	\$18,034	\$226,516
FY22	\$2.61	\$2.77	\$210,363	\$48,247	\$33,390	\$292,000
FY23	\$4.09	\$3.19	\$277,483	\$34,169	\$40,391	\$352,043
FY24 Estimate	\$3.42	\$3.28	\$294,676	\$40,965	\$48,143	\$383,784
FY25 Budget	\$4.25	\$3.75	\$350,000	\$55,000	\$45,000	\$450,000

We have had much success in our street light budget over the past several years, though our budget had to be increased by \$20,000 this year to address rising electricity costs. However, this is still a success story. Street lights costs have declined significantly since FY18/19 when the town switched over to LED lighting in our street lights. With this energy efficient upgrade, we have been able to significantly reduce our use of electricity in addition to reducing our maintenance costs. Not only has this saved the town money, but we are using more environmentally friendly fixtures that reduce light pollution and are safer for the environment. Since we moved over to LED lighting in 2019, costs have dropped dramatically as seen in the chart below. In FY25, although we are still using less electricity, the “cost/ unit” of electricity has increased, so our expenditures have ticked up the past several fiscal years.

Street Lighting Electricity & Maintenance Costs/ Year	
Fiscal Year	Total Cost
<i>FY25 Budget</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>FY24 Estimate</i>	<i>\$79,342</i>
<i>FY23</i>	<i>\$56,857</i>
<i>FY22</i>	<i>\$37,778</i>
<i>FY21</i>	<i>\$32,760</i>
<i>FY20</i>	<i>\$111,033</i>
<i>FY19</i>	<i>\$141,164</i>
<i>FY18</i>	<i>\$171,291</i>

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Snow & Ice Spending History:

FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY2024
\$1,432,100	\$712,347	\$1,031,929	\$1,135,327	\$1,001,273	\$679,597	\$1,078,789	\$1,285,313	\$544,824	\$904,227

As previously noted, with a net overall reduction in the DPW budget for FY25 after accounting for the Fire Dept expense transfer, this will inevitably lead to a reduction in the current level of services the Department will be able to provide.

DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS		FUNCTION: DPW - MULTIPLE			DEPT #: 422			
Classification		FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
					Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
	PERSONAL SERVICES	438,968	574,649	668,104	703,139	703,139	-	-
	EXPENSES	685,130	536,084	1,095,100	939,000	939,000	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/HIGHWAY	1,104,098	1,110,733	1,763,204	1,642,139	1,642,139	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	415,580	449,556	560,477	582,600	582,600	-	-
	EXPENSES	512,808	605,768	563,251	611,250	611,250	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/PARK & TREE	928,388	1,055,324	1,123,728	1,193,850	1,193,850	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	198,578	104,403	255,000	255,000	255,000	-	-
	EXPENSES	1,086,736	440,420	1,167,500	1,167,500	1,167,500	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/SNOW & ICE	1,285,313	544,823	1,422,500	1,422,500	1,422,500	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	189,056	193,019	272,169	271,735	271,735	-	-
	EXPENSES	498,403	619,855	713,500	889,500	889,500	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/CENTRAL MOTORS	687,459	812,874	985,669	1,161,235	1,161,235	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	73,438	75,091	89,492	93,066	93,066	-	-
	EXPENSES	102,889	118,556	149,000	166,000	166,000	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/RECYCLING	176,326	193,647	238,492	259,066	259,066	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	162,140	176,216	207,875	218,577	218,577	-	-
	EXPENSES	115,689	113,937	213,300	187,300	187,300	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/ADMINISTRATION	277,829	290,154	421,175	405,877	405,877	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	224,097	240,511	-	-	-	-	-
	EXPENSES	318,533	359,769	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/STORMWATER	542,630	600,281	-	-	-	-	-
	EXPENSES	-	56,858	55,000	75,000	75,000	-	-
	TOTAL DPW/STREET LIGHT	-	56,858	55,000	75,000	75,000	-	-
	PERSONAL SERVICES	1,701,857	1,813,445.72	2,053,117.00	2,124,117	2,124,117	-	-
	EXPENSES	3,300,187	2,851,247.28	3,956,651.00	4,035,550	4,035,550	-	-
	FUNCTION TOTAL: DPW - MULTIPLE	\$5,002,044	\$4,664,693	\$6,009,768	\$6,159,667	\$6,159,667	-	-

HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Franklin Health Department is required by state, local laws and regulations to perform many critical duties related to the protection of public health. These duties cover a wide range of public health control and prevention activities, including: disease surveillance; the promotion of sanitary conditions in housing, recreational facilities, and food establishments; elimination of nuisances; the protection of the environment; and numerous other responsibilities that include the following.

FOOD SERVICE

The Health Department conducts bi-annual inspections of 115 food service establishments and 19 retail food establishments (convenience stores) yearly. Each establishment receives a routine inspection and a follow up re-inspection subsequent to the original inspection. Not included in this number are complaint related inspections, and suspect food-borne illness investigations. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires all health departments to submit comprehensive inspection reports and illness worksheets for all suspect cases. The Health Department staff also must inspect and permit mobile food trucks and other seasonal and temporary food events throughout the year.

TOBACCO CONTROL

In December of 2019, legislation was passed signing into law An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control with additional authority to regulate access to tobacco and electronic delivery systems, including vaping. The new law placed restrictions on retail stores licensed to sell tobacco products. In 2023, the health department permitted 23 retail stores and three adult smoke shops. The Board of Health amended the 2023 Sales Regulation restricting the sale of tobacco and vape products to incorporate these minimum standards required pursuant to Massachusetts state law and regulations into the current board of regulations.

SEPTIC SYSTEM INSTALLATIONS

The Health Department is required to review all engineered plans for proposed septic system installations, upgrades and repairs to be in compliance with State Regulations. The Health Department has contracted with a septic consultant to review and approve all engineered plans and to monitor the progress of these installations by conducting a series of site inspections. The permitting process for septic installers continues to be done through the Health Department.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE/EPIDEMIOLOGIST

The public health nurse duties include but are not limited to communicable disease reporting, blood pressure and glucose and flu clinics are conducted. Additional training is conducted on hands only CPR, stop the bleed training, first aid and medical emergencies and other educational training held at the senior center, housing

authority and Tri-County school. The public health nurse is a member of the student health and wellness advisory council and the Massachusetts Association of Public Health Nurses.

The Epidemiologist is a grant driven position funded by the Metacomet Public Health Excellence Award. The Epidemiologist created the Healthcare Resources and Services dashboard by partnering with the GIS specialist that provides maps and charts of healthcare services, and in addition also provides data covering 29 health topics on healthy risk behaviors, prevention and health status. Three health fairs have been planned and implemented by the Epidemiologist as well as a food summit for food establishments. A homeless website has been created with multiple resources available for the community. Also, the Epidemiologist conducts surveillance and case management of communicable diseases.

HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Health Department enforces the State Sanitary Code, Minimum Standards of Fitness and Human Habitation and is mandated to investigate all complaints of unsanitary or substandard living conditions of dwellings. The Health Department formed a Habitable Housing Task Force that is comprised of the building, fire and police staff along with the Attorney General's Office for assistance with the Abandoned Housing Initiative. Inspections of abandoned buildings take place when needed and Order to Correct letters and are generated to move towards bringing the abandoned buildings up to minimum standards to eliminate blight within the community.

NUISANCE/ODOR/NOISE COMPLAINTS

The Health Department has the responsibility for investigating all reports of public health nuisances, which can include but is not limited to refuse, noxious odors, overgrown vegetation and stagnant water.

In addition to the above-mentioned primary responsibilities, the following is a list of additional departmental functions:

- Permitting and inspection of public pools and spas
- Permitting and inspection of recreational camps
- Permitting and inspection of tanning establishment
- Permitting and inspection of mobile food trucks
- Permitting and inspection of body art facilities
- Permitting and inspection of bodyworks facilities
- Process renewal applications yearly
- Process plan reviews for all establishments as submitted

All public swimming pools and spas receive both annual and regularly scheduled inspections by the Health Department. Improper sanitation and maintenance of public pools and spas has resulted in serious disease outbreaks and injuries. Presently the town has six year round pools, four hot tubs and fifteen seasonal pools that require inspections.

Recreational camps for children require an intensive review process by local Health Departments prior to issuance of a permit to operate. All campers' immunization records must be reviewed thoroughly for required

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

vaccinations by the public health nurse. The facility also requires a detailed inspection for compliance with all state regulations. Most recently the Health Department permitted 10 recreational camps for children.

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Organized and held a flu clinic at the Senior Center and vaccinated 90 individuals
- Organized and held a food summit for the food establishments
- Organized and held a fall and spring health fair held at the library
- Public health nurse partnered with the senior center, the fire department to give the community public health educational trainings
- Continue being engaged in a shared service grant with Wrentham and Norfolk enabling the health department to have a regional inspector and an epidemiologist on site
- Create a community resource website and Opioid dashboard located on the Health Department website
- Implemented retail food standards project for the health department through a grant initiative

Emergency Assistance Shelter 2023

- Took lead as the point person to oversee a coalition of town leaders to conduct assessments for those in the sheltered and blend resources to offer donated clothing, food, car seats, baby formula, diapers, wipes, personal hygiene products, toys, books, etc. Other resources provided include English as a second language lessons, weekly after school programs, job fair, vaccine clinics, weekly story hour and weekly public health nursing services, etc. A \$10,000 grant was received to fill the needs of the occupants of the shelter and was used for transportation services, diapers and baby formula.

Staffing:

- 4 full-time
- 1 Title 5 Contractor
- 1 grant contracted regional environmental inspector
- 1 grant contracted epidemiologist

Strategic Initiatives:

- Continue to lead the Emergency Shelter program until its sunset.
- Organize and implement a spring and fall health fair.
- Build additional community dashboards on GIS to provide guidance of services for residents
- Continue to offer residents public health training (stop the bleeding, hands only CPR, educational training).
- Implement a community homeless campaign.
- Implement a tobacco inspection program.

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DEPARTMENT: BOARD OF HEALTH		FUNCTION: HUMAN SERVICES			DEPT #: 510			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	205,244	242,386	296,931	306,553	306,553	-	-	
EXPENSES	38,175	36,837	48,400	48,400	48,400	-	-	
TOTAL BOARD OF HEALTH :	\$243,419	\$279,223	\$345,331	\$354,953	\$354,953	-	-	

DISABILITY COMMISSION

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The primary function of the Disability Commission is to advocate for persons with disabilities in the Town of Franklin. The Commission keeps the Town Administrator informed on issues and new laws and requirements under the Americans With Disabilities Act, and also acts as a resource center for those who may require services or have concerns.

Visit the Disability Commission's website here: <https://www.franklinma.gov/commission-persons-disabilities>

DEPARTMENT: DISABILITY COMMISSION		FUNCTION: HUMAN SERVICES			DEPT #: 535			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
EXPENSES	-	-	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	-	
TOTAL DISABILITY COMMISSION :	-	-	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	-	-	

COUNCIL ON AGING / SENIOR CENTER

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The mission of the Franklin Council on Aging is to enhance the independence and quality of life for Franklin's older adults by identifying the needs of this population and creating programs that meet those needs, offering the knowledge, tools, and opportunities to promote mental, social, and physical well-being, advocating for relevant programs and services, and serving as a community focal point for aging issues and as a liaison to local, state, and federal agencies that serve older adults and their families.

Our goal is to offer a variety of community services as well as opportunities for enhancing the quality of life for our aging population and residents with disabilities and their families by:

- Advancing safety and wellness through prevention, health screening, and nutrition and fitness opportunities.
- Fostering social engagement through socialization, intergenerational programs, and volunteer opportunities.
- Promoting independence by providing advocacy & support services.
- Improving economic security through education, information, resources, and outreach.

COA Programs:

The Franklin Senior Center offers a wide range of programs, services, and activities that serve older adults, individuals with disabilities, and non-elderly residents. We also serve younger residents and residents with disabilities by providing assistance with accessing social services through our Social Services Coordinator. We offer the following programs, services, and activities:

- Offer affordable, nutritious meals at the Common Grounds Café along with the opportunity for older adults to socialize and volunteer.
- Provide health and wellness programs and services; e.g., blood pressure and blood sugar screening, fall prevention, balance screening and classes, flu vaccine clinics, podiatry clinics, home safety evaluations and adaptation, low vision services, fitness programs, health education and support groups.
- Offer a Supportive Adult Day Program (The Sunshine Club), which provides a structured, supervised and stimulating environment for elders with mild to moderate dementia or cognitive decline, and those who are socially isolated. The program also offers a biweekly Caregivers Support Group for caregivers in our community.
- Provide Social Service Coordination to elderly, low-income and residents with disabilities by accessing public benefit programs; i.e., fuel assistance, prescription drug programs, food stamps, Mass Health, housing, financial assistance, etc. Home visits are also provided to offer assistance to frail, homebound elderly or disabled residents.
- Offer specialized Assistive Technology training and supportive programming to vision and hearing impaired individuals to help these elders maintain their independence and improve their quality of life.
- Offer Mental Health Counseling through EMHOT (Emergency Mental Health Outreach Team) to elders through individual and group sessions.
- Offer recreational programming including but not limited to themed social events and recreational activities such as cribbage, scrabble, Bingo, various card and board games, Mah-jongg, arts & crafts, quilting, knitting, pool, woodcarving, movies, flower-arranging, a chorale group, discussion groups, drum circles, and other various activities at low or no cost.
- Host a variety of monthly and annual events including the senior olympics, eat around the world, pizza & movie nights, themed parties with live music, memory cafes, Senior Expo, Disability Expo, etc.
- Provide a variety of exercise classes for all abilities including but not limited to Tai Chi, Cardio, Strength & Balance, Pound, Zumba, Chair Yoga, Walking Group, Line Dancing, Chair Volleyball, Low Impact, Pickleball, Bocce, and more!
- Provide travel opportunities for the community through various companies both domestically and internationally as well as multiple local day trips.
- Offer educational programming, including but not limited to health and wellness programs, history lectures, financial and legal concerns, as well as some continuing education through language classes, technology classes, cooking and nutrition classes, discussion forums, etc.
- Offer health insurance benefits counseling through the SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Everyone) program, which provides assistance with health and prescription drug insurance problems and questions regarding benefits.
- Provide professional services and amenities such as Hairdresser, Barber, Manicures, Fitness Equipment, Legal Advice, Hearing clinics, Tax Preparation Assistance, medical equipment loans and a Gift Shop for our members' convenience.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Offer Intergenerational programs with students from the Early Child Development Center, Oak Street Elementary School, Horace Mann, the Parmenter School, the Franklin High School, Xaverian Brothers High School, the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, Tri-County Regional Vocational High School and Dean College.
- Work closely with HMEA and Walpole League School to provide opportunities for their students to have real world working experiences in our Common Grounds Cafe.
- Publish a monthly newsletter, *The Senior Connection*, which is mailed to over 1000 senior citizen households in Franklin and to numerous on-line subscribers. The newsletter offers information about programs, services, and activities, as well as health education and information and relevant topics. We also host a Facebook page, Twitter account and Instagram page.
- Administer the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Program in collaboration with the Assessor's and Treasurer's Departments. The program provides tax credits to 100 seniors who work in various town departments.
- Provide Income Tax Preparation Assistance to residents through a partnership with AARP, which provides volunteers to prepare income tax returns for elders.
- Provide volunteer opportunities to residents who offer assistance in our gift shop, Café, Supportive Day Program, as instructors and in other capacities.
- Facilitate handicapped accessible transportation by working with GATRA and Tri Valley Elder Services to address issues and problems as well as planning for upcoming events.
- Provide grab bar installation opportunities for 2 homes a month

Staffing:

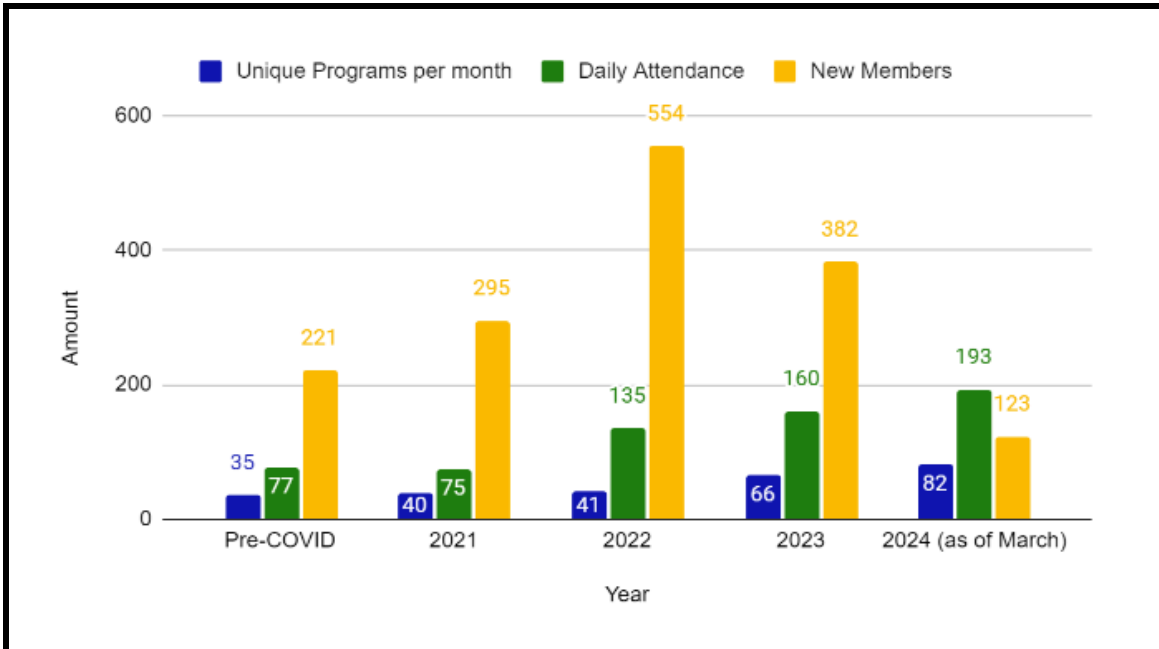
- 10 full-time
- 3 part-time

Note: Many staff positions are funded through grants, fees and revenues that pay directly for services such as the Sunshine Club, Common Grounds Cafe, program fees, donations from the Friends of the Franklin Elders and so forth.

Strategic Initiatives

The Franklin Senior Center continues to see an increase in daily attendance, programming, and social service needs. We continue to strive to identify, advocate, and implement meaningful educational, cultural, social, health/wellness activities and services for our aging population.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET



The bar graph above details 3 unique statistics showing the success of the Franklin Senior Center

- Unique Programs (Monthly)- Pre Covid (2019), the Senior Center offered around 35 unique programs a month, and as of 2024, we offer around 80 unique programs a month, more than doubling the programs offered.
- Daily Attendance (Annual)- From 2021 to March of 2024 has seen a 157% increase in daily attendance at the Senior Center. In 2024 we are seeing 193 members on average walk through the door daily.
- New Members (Annual)- In 2022 we saw a surge of new members sign up due to comfort after the COVID pandemic, and there still is a constant rate of new members. Already, in the first three months of 2024, we have had 120 new members join the Senior Center. In the past two years we have seen almost 1100 new members in total.

This past year, the Franklin Senior Center was successful in obtaining a bus, with assistance through a grant awarded by the Department of Transportation, to provide equitable and accessible transportation to those in our community, in addition to GATRA, to medical appointments, group shopping/luncheon outings, and other various day trips for social programming opportunities. A full time bus driver will be hired in FY 25 once the bus is delivered, hopefully Fall 2024. In addition to the DOT grant awarded paying for 80% of the 14 passenger bus, the Franklin Senior Center was also awarded 6 total grants totalling around \$200,000 (detailed in accomplishments below).

Two full time administrative assistants were hired in January 2024, and have been imperative to the continued success and growth of the Senior Center, assisting with administrative needs at the constantly busy front desk, offering social service and programming support, and with the addition of a bus and bus driver, scheduling and organizing all bus and transportation needs.

Our FY 25 Budget needs show a slight increase for personnel services with the addition and need of a bus driver, but no increase to our expense needs as they are fulfilled through steady flowing revolving revenue and grant funding.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Goals for FY25:

- Develop successful transportation system when acquire new bus
- Implement ongoing evaluations and surveys to receive feedback for programming, cafe, transportation, and other pertinent needs.
- Continue to provide awareness and education of Social Service resources, whilst advocating and developing partnerships and community connections. Working closely with FCAT (Franklin Crisis Advocacy Team)
- Continue to search out and apply for grant opportunities to provide subsidized programmings and services to the community
- Director will obtain MA Council on Aging Director Certification as well as looking into applying for the National Institute of Senior Center Certification for the Franklin Senior Center
- Continue to work with the community to be Age and Dementia Friendly

Accomplishments of 2023 and FY24:

- Awarded multiple grants to assist in subsidizing program costs and provide new opportunities (around \$200,000 awarded through following 6 grants):
 - Department of Transportation Grant (\$150,000 awarded, paying for 80% of bus cost): purchased 14-passenger bus for Senior Center, should be scheduled to start up in Fall 2024
 - Enhancing Digital Literacy through EOEA (\$34,800): purchased all new IT equipment, including computers, chromebooks, ipads, virtual reality headsets, etc.
 - i. Developed technology curriculum providing monthly tech literacy and scam prevention classes to resounding success
 - Nutrition Grant through MCOA \$10,000: implemented monthly Cooking classes and nutrition classes, in addition to all equipment needed for hands on learning, as well as provided more financial support for social services (Ben's Bucks gift cards)
 - Community Resource Website through MCOA (\$2,100): developing a web based community resource guide in conjunction with the Franklin Health Department to provide resources, guidance, and assistance to those in need.
 - Memory Cafe sponsored through a grant by Franklin Cultural Council (\$1,800) offering a monthly event in a safe and inviting space for those who are experiencing memory loss and for their families, including live entertainment and refreshments.
 - Kymberlee O'Brien, local resident and neurologist, was awarded a grant to provide monthly drum circles at the Franklin Senior Center to enhance community, reducing stress, increasing energy, lowering blood pressure, and boosting brain health.
- The Common Grounds Cafe continues to be an integral part of our senior center, providing affordable and nutritious meals to approximately 80 seniors daily for breakfast and lunch.
- Exponentially grow programs offered at the Franklin Senior Center
 - From Calendar Year 2022 to Calendar year 2024, the Senior Center has seen a 100% increase in programming, from an average of 41 unique programs monthly to now 82 programs.
 - Increased intergenerational programming with the local schools and volunteer groups
 - Continued to work closely with FOFE (Friends of Franklin Elders) to provide subsidized programs. Newer programs to note: American Sign Language classes, art classes, Medium

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Night, Winter Wonderland Community Events, and various activities, presentations, and discussions)

- Offer notary services, both scheduled events and an on-staff notary
- The Public Health Nurse and Epidemiologist providing health and wellness classes including but not limited to hand only CPR, first aid classes, stop the bleed training, nutrition classes etc. They also certified all Senior Center staff in CPR and AED Training.
- Provide low vision services in conjunction with Mass Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) to provide low vision assistance, technology assistance, and support for seniors in Franklin, as well as the surrounding communities: Blackstone, Bellingham, Douglas, Hopedale, Norfolk, Foxboro, Milford, Millis, Medway, Mendon, Millville, Northbridge, Upton, Uxbridge, and Wrentham.
- Provided successful themed monthly parties and events, most notably a Turkey Dinner with the Franklin Police Dept, a Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner with the Franklin Fire Dept, Elvis Friendsgiving, and a Murder Mystery Party. Our most popular, now monthly, program, Eat Around the World, is now at max capacity and continuing to gain traction. Members are offered a cultural experience learning about and trying the cuisine from a different country each month.
- Reinstated the Annual Senior Expo, having 45 different vendors and over 400 attendees.
- Hosted the Annual Franklin Senior Olympics, increasing it to two weeks and 16 different events for 90+ athletes, accessible to all levels and needs.
- Worked with the Disability Commission to host the first annual Disability Expo at the Senior Center.
- Organized and hosted a Chef Showdown, collaborating with local restaurants, to provide a unique dining and tasting experience for members.
- Our Senior Writing Group, the Senior Scribblers, successfully wrote and published a book of their works.
- Actively worked with the DPW to build additional garden beds for the Franklin Senior Center Garden Club. In 2023, our garden clubs were successful in producing vegetables and herbs for our Common Grounds Cafe and for members to take home. We continue to work closely with local farms and organizations to have more success.
- Collaborated with the Franklin Food Pantry and the Hockomock YMCA to provide a monthly Mobile Food Pantry, servicing around 45 members monthly.
- Have successfully collaborated with Dean College to provide opportunities for Seniors to audit Dean College courses, a monthly Dean College lecture series at the Senior Center, and more.
- Successfully held regular support groups: monthly bereavement support group, Alzheimer's Caregiver Support, Low Vision Support, Immunodeficiency support, etc.
- Implemented successful LGBTQ+ programming, seeing continued success with our monthly Rainbow Cafe, and in addition we've provided other programs such as Pride Events, LGBTQ+ game nights, and more.
- Provided a luncheon for First Responder Appreciation to thank them for all they do for our community, especially our seniors. In addition, collaborated with the Fire and Police Departments as well as FHS to offer a moving 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony.
- Helped over 300 Franklin resident's with human services related needs including housing, fuel assistance, MASS Health, Medicare, etc.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Continued to provide a Dementia Friendly Community, offering monthly memory cafes, bimonthly Caregiver Support Groups, and the Sunshine Club daily, a 10 member/day Supportive Adult Day Program.
- Extended and staffed night time hours weekly at the Senior Center for various programs and social services assistance.
- Collaborated with multiple travel agencies to offer more successful day trips in addition to at least biannual international and domestic overnight travel opportunities. In 2024, the Senior Center is heading to Portugal in April and Italy in October.
- Lent out a multitude of walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, and other medical devices for individual community needs, averaging giving out 30-40 devices monthly.
- Worked with AARP to provide free Income Tax Preparation Assistance to about 180 residents annually.
- Developed a new logo for the Franklin Senior Center with input from our members.

DEPARTMENT: COUNCIL ON AGING		FUNCTION: HUMAN SERVICES			DEPT #: 541			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	317,234	408,928	610,975	666,345	666,345	-	-	
EXPENSES	5,740	8,168	33,100	33,100	33,100	-	-	
TOTAL COUNCIL ON AGING :	\$322,974	\$417,095	\$644,075	\$699,445	\$699,445	-	-	

VETERANS SERVICES

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Veterans' Services Office's mission is to counsel, advise and assist Veterans and their dependents. The Veteran population reported on the most recent Franklin census is 1061. Duties encompass, but are not limited to, dispensing state-sponsored Veterans' Benefits under MGL Chapter 115. Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits vary according to need and income. They are considered a "benefit of last resort" because qualifying income thresholds are very low. The town is reimbursed 75% by the Commonwealth in the next fiscal year.

In addition to administering Chapter 115 benefits, Veterans Services also helps Franklin Veterans and eligible dependents...

- File VA claims, including disability compensation, DIC, VA Pension/Aid and Attendance
- Apply for VA Health Care (Veterans only)
- Cover emergency costs for heat, transportation, and food via Veterans' Municipal Fund
- Apply for low-income or emergency housing
- Access health care services through referrals to partnering agencies
- Access mental health, substance abuse, and vocational rehabilitation services
- Apply for Veterans' Property Tax Work-Off Program
- Learn about disabled Veterans' property tax exemptions
- Apply for Welcome Home Bonus, and RSVP Rides for Vets
- Connect with other Veterans by offering a diversity of social events

Staffing:

- 1 full-time
- 1 part-time

Strategic Initiatives to be continued in FY 25:

- Chapter 115. So far in FY 24, Veterans' Services has dispersed \$78,884 in Chapter 115 benefits to Franklin Veterans and eligible dependents. The Franklin VSO will soon be Chair of the MVSOA committee which reviews 108 CMR, the guideline for Chapter 115 benefits. The goal of participating on this committee is to advocate for changes to the CMR which benefit Veterans and eligible dependents.
- VA Claims. Veterans' staff have assisted Franklin Veterans in bringing in more than \$7.28 million worth of VA tax-free benefits that have helped improve the lives of Veterans and their families in town with monies owed to them for their service.
- Veterans' Organizations. Franklin VSO actively participates in the SMVSOA and MVSOA. Membership includes annual dues, and traveling to quarterly meetings and biannual training events.
- Franklin Municipal Veterans' Assistance Fund. This established dedicated fund authorized by the Town Council allows residents to make a donation to the fund to assist Franklin Veterans and their families with the costs of food, transportation and home heating oil. Thanks to very generous donors, so far in FY 24 the fund has provided \$5,477 in aid to 26 Veterans and eligible dependents in the form of grocery store gift cards, heat bill assistance, transportation to medical appointments, car repairs, and Senior Center Cafe Ben's Bucks. This fund's current balance is \$10,929.
 - Anyone can make a donation here and we appreciate your support for Franklin Veterans
 - <http://www.franklinma.gov/home/pages/online-payments>
- Veterans' Gift/Assistance Fund. This fund provides additional support to assist Franklin Veterans and Veterans' activities. Thanks to very generous donations from individuals and organizations, during FY 24 we have used \$11,027 of this fund to assist 11 Veterans and eligible dependents with housing, dental, and vision expenses, in addition to \$1,445 for Veterans' events. The fund's current balance is \$12,513. This fund is also supported by donations and anyone may make a donation.
- Memorial Walkway-Monument Restoration Fund. This fund is supported by donations from individuals and businesses, as well as the purchase of dedicated bricks for the Walkway. These funds support the construction and maintenance of the Walkway and town War Memorials. Excess funds can be used to support the Veterans' Assistance Fund. The fund's balance is currently \$57,325.
- Veterans' Memorial Walkway. The Veterans' Services Assistant manages the brick orders and installment for the Veterans Memorial Walkway. Eighteen (18) bricks were installed in Nov 2023 to coincide with Veterans' Day. There are currently seventeen (17) brick orders to be installed before Memorial Day 2024. Bricks may be purchased for any U.S Veteran, living or deceased.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Veterans' Property Tax Work-Off. This program is available to all Veterans as defined by MA state law and their surviving spouses. Currently, there are 10 active participants. The Veterans' Services Executive Assistant manages the program in coordination with the Director of Veterans' Services and Senior Center Director.
- Education and Outreach.
 - The Franklin VSO attends annual DVS training, biannual MVSOA trainings, and quarterly SMVSOA meetings to stay informed about all Veteran-related topics.
 - The Franklin Veterans' Services website was updated to include more information about housing, mental health, and resources for transitioning service members.
 - Outreach to local Women Veterans this year included a very successful Coffee and Tea Social sponsored by the Mansfield Daughters of the American Revolution in partnership with Franklin Veterans Services and the Franklin Senior Center on 18 Nov 2023.
- Veterans' Council. Veterans' Services continues to Chair the Veterans' Council which meets monthly to discuss and plan Veterans events and activities. The Council is comprised of representatives from Franklin Veterans organizations and other social and civic organizations in Franklin.
- Veteran mental health and suicide prevention.
 - Utilizing partnerships to expand community social networks
 - Attending training sessions on how to identify at-risk Veterans and situations
 - Working with healthcare partners to ensure at-risk Veterans and family members are given access to mental health services in a timely manner
 - Conducting comprehensive case management for at-risk Veterans to ensure they have access to all available support systems and resources.
 - Working with the Franklin Veterans' Liaison Police Officers to achieve optimal outcomes for Veterans in active crisis.
 - Participating on the Franklin Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT)
- Veterans Events
 - Veterans' Coffee Socials. Coordinated by the Veterans' Services Assistant and catered by Franklin Starbucks, these socials have maintained their popularity, with 40 to 50 Veterans typically in attendance. Guest speakers regarding Veteran-specific programs are invited on occasion. This year at the March 6th coffee social, Veterans enjoyed a legislative visit from EOVS Secretary Jon Santiago, Senator Rebecca Rausch, and Representative Jeff Roy. At the April 3rd 2024 coffee social, the Franklin Starbucks team will be recognized for five years of supporting these coffee socials.
 - Quilts of Valor. In honor of local Korean War Veterans, a Quilts of Valor ceremony was hosted on 05 July 2023 in conjunction with the monthly Veterans' Coffee Social and the Korean War Veterans Armistice Day (July 27). Fourteen (14) Korean War Veterans in attendance were honored with a quilt. Five (5) quilts were bestowed to Veterans at home later that week.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Purple Heart Community. On Aug 2, 2023 Franklin Purple Heart recipients and surviving family members were recognized at the Veterans' Coffee Social. Three "Purple Heart" ornaments were given to the Purple Heart recipients in attendance, and special music was performed by vocalist Rayna Nisbett. This event was held in honor of National Purple Heart Day, which is celebrated every year on August 7th.
- Tune It Out. Since its inception in 2021, this free guitar-instruction program for Veterans continues to meet every Tuesday from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the Franklin Senior Center. There are currently 3 volunteer instructors and 8 active participants. The group celebrated with a holiday pizza party on 12 Dec 2023 and will enjoy a Blues and Barbeque end-of-year celebration and volunteer recognition on 11 June 2024. Participants and instructors will all receive small gifts related to their music instruction.
- Warrior Within Yoga Project. Since Dec 7th, 2023, the nonprofit organization Warrior Within Yoga Project (WWYP) has been providing free yoga classes for Veterans, First Responders, and their immediate family members every Thurs from 6 to 7pm at the Franklin Senior Center. For FY 24, WWYP has relied on grant funding to provide these classes free of charge. Franklin Veterans Services has requested \$2000 in the FY 25 budget to provide additional funding to WWYP, if needed, to keep classes free of charge.
- Veterans' Day Luncheon. Along with partner organizations, Franklin Veterans' Services coordinated the annual 2023 Veterans' Day Luncheon, held on Nov. 10th 2023 at the Franklin Elks Club, in honor of Veterans Day Nov. 11th 2023. The luncheon featured guest speaker Major Travis Bowser, USMC (Ret.), Franklin resident and Senior Marine JROTC Instructor at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School. The Town's Veterans Gift Fund was used to provide flowers, decorations, and the cake for the luncheon. The 5th anniversary of the Veterans Memorial Walkway dedication was also celebrated. Walkway Committee members were publicly recognized, and each member was given a framed photo of the completed Walkway. Photos and news articles showing the progression of the Walkway construction were on display at the luncheon.
- Memorial Day Events. Plans for 2024 include a breakfast, parade, and ceremony. The Memorial Day breakfast will be held on Friday 24 May at the Franklin Senior Center. The featured speaker will be Joseph Landry, Navy Veteran and local historian. The meal will be catered by Tri-County Culinary students and paid for by Friends of the Franklin Elders. Franklin Veterans Services will pay for the cost of supplies and flowers. The parade and ceremony are being coordinated in conjunction with American Legion Post 75, VFW Post 3402, the Veterans' Council, Franklin Police Department, Franklin Fire Department, Franklin DPW, Franklin Facilities, Franklin TV, Franklin Public Schools, Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, Franklin Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and other partners. Franklin Educator and Veterans' Council member Rose Turco has been named the 2024 Parade Marshal and will speak at the ceremony. The Veterans' Services Memorial Day Fund will pay for the parade police detail, needed signage, cemetery flags, flags for the street-sign memorials, and breakfast supplies and decorations.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Partnerships. Veterans’ Services has established and/or reinforced partnerships with the following organizations: American Legion Post 75, VFW Post 3402, Franklin Senior Center, Franklin Police Dept, Franklin Fire Dept, Franklin Public Schools, Town of Franklin Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT), Franklin Elks Lodge 2136, Franklin Elks Riders, Franklin Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus Council 1847, Daughters of the American Revolution Mansfield Chapter, Franklin Housing Authority, Franklin Food Pantry, Tri-Valley Health Care Services, MA Executive Office of Veterans’ Services, MA Veterans’ Service Officer Association, Southeastern MA Veterans’ Services Officer Association, 22 Mohawks, Warrior Within Yoga Project, Boston VA Health Care, Brockton Vet Center, Home Base, RSVP Rides for Vets, Franklin TV, Franklin Matters, Franklin Town News, Franklin Observer, Franklin Historical Society, Ginley Funeral Home, Oteri Funeral Home, Franklin Starbucks, Franklin Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the Franklin Garden Club.

Trends expected to continue into FY 25:

- During FY 24, Veterans’ Services has provided comprehensive claim assistance and case management for over 94 Franklin Veterans and their surviving spouses.
- Stabilization in the number of Chapter 115 recipients. Currently (FY 24) there are 14 Chapter 115 recipients, which is the same as FY 23. This number is expected to stabilize or decline due to recipient deaths, recipients receiving new sources of income, and outdated budget guidelines.
- High/Increased demand for fuel assistance, affordable housing, and dental assistance. Grocery store gift cards are still in high demand, and Veterans’ Services has been making more referrals to the Franklin Food Pantry for clients with long-term need.
- High demand for assistance with VA disability compensation claims of all types
- High demand for assistance with VA survivor’s benefits
- Assisting with VA Health Care applications. The VA has recently expanded eligibility for Veterans exposed to toxins; an increase in the number of applications is therefore anticipated.
- Steady demand for eldercare services and caregiver support (referrals)
- Steady demand for mental health services for Veterans of all ages (referrals)
- High demand for social events and opportunities to connect with other Veterans
- Franklin Veterans’ Services will continue to provide excellent customer service and be a community leader for Veterans’ related activities and services.

We appreciate the steadfast support of our Veterans from the Town government and Franklin community. Thank you!

DEPARTMENT: VETERANS SERVICES		FUNCTION: HUMAN SERVICES			DEPT #: 543			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	73,755	97,679	107,852	119,487	119,487	-	-	
EXPENSES	15,428	6,710	11,115	12,115	12,115	-	-	
VETERANS SERVICES	116,984	120,983	165,000	165,000	165,000	-	-	
TOTAL VETERANS SERVICES :	\$206,168	\$225,372	\$283,967	\$296,602	\$296,602	-	-	

CULTURE & RECREATION

PUBLIC LIBRARY

General Purpose/Mission Statement

Town of Franklin's Community Vision

To be a vibrant community that supports the arts, non-profit organizations, higher education and businesses in an atmosphere that allows growth and prosperity while at the same time conserving our heritage, natural resources, and history. We will build on and celebrate our uniqueness as a community and maintain the quality of life that is a strength and competitive advantage.

Franklin Public Library Vision

Franklin Public Library strives to be the trusted source of information, inspiration, enrichment and opportunity.

Mission

The mission of the Franklin Public Library is to foster knowledge and engagement through education, enrichment, and technology.

In pursuing this mission, the Library values:

Access

The FPL is open and free to all. We are steadfastly committed to providing access to information, resources, and programming.

Community and Diversity

We value individual needs, experiences, and differences and strive to provide a welcoming and inclusive library community.

Technology

We support creative ideas, encourage experimentation, and embrace advancing technology. We continue to expand opportunities for virtual community engagement in addition to our traditional formats.

Knowledge

We are inspired by the transformative power of information and facilitate the pursuit of education and discovery through diverse resources, programs, and assistance.

Service

We are committed to providing professional and responsive services to a wide range of patrons.

Stewardship

We are committed to the prudent management of our resources and welcome the participation of our community in decision-making and service development.

Preservation

We honor and preserve our unique history and traditions.

Staffing:

- 12 full-time

Strategic Initiatives

The FY25 budget reflects a continued focus on the strategic goals that guide our work. Civic engagement and cultural enrichment; strategic communication; expanding access; literacy and learning; responsive and inspirational service; and operational excellence.

The library continues to enjoy extraordinary community and fiscal support. Thanks to the TA and Town Council. For the seventh year in a row, the library budget has met the Municipal Appropriation Requirement(MAR) thus retaining its certification status. Maintaining certification gives Franklin residents uninterrupted access to 59 million items across the state. This access saves money. Last year, Franklin residents borrowed 58,061 items from other libraries. If the library had to purchase these items, it would cost an estimated \$870,915; enormous savings for the Town of Franklin.

The library continues to be well-loved and well-used. This year, the circulation of digital collections has tripled and is growing. This increased use illustrates the importance of digital content, self service transactions and technology resources.

The library supplements municipal appropriations through grants and generous donations from the Franklin Library Association (FLA), the Friends of the Franklin Library and other charitable organizations who support the Library.

The library was awarded a \$15,000 literacy grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The Franklin Library Association (FLA) made its final donation of \$4,817.48 to the Library and closed its doors after a century of service. FLA's generosity - \$529,000 has made possible the restoration of the magnificent murals and paintings; the preservation of the original Benjamin Franklin collection; and a remarkable range of early written local materials with great significance to Franklin's history and the restoration of the beautiful paintings and murals. These efforts ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from our unique historical collections and enjoy the awe-inspiring splendor of the building. The community owes the FLA an innumerable debt of gratitude.

The Franklin Cultural District provided additional funding opportunities for music and creative engagement at the library.

To the Friends, we offer our grateful thanks for funding programs, museum passes and patio furniture.

Throughout the year, our dedicated and talented staff has worked diligently to expand core library services, provide learning opportunities, build innovative partnerships and engaging programs.

The Youth Services department has continued to enjoy a period of growth and community goodwill over this fiscal year, with successes in program attendance, school and community partnerships, and exciting plans for the future.

Keeping families and kids of all ages active and engaged through enriching early literacy programs, exciting after school activities, school outreach and dynamic summer learning activities remains a priority, as well as reaching new families at every developmental stage.

In January 2024, the Youth Services Department rolled out an annual reading challenge for all ages, which includes 12 monthly reading prompts and incentivizes participation and engagement by rewarding participants with free books and grand raffle prizes for logging completed books. Participants are also welcome and encouraged to submit reviews of completed books, which are aggregated and shared on the library website, serving to connect patrons through this shared activity while also promoting circulation.

Reference Librarian Vicki Earls' discovery of a 1784 letter between Benjamin Franklin and his Boston merchant nephew Jonathan Williams, Sr. explaining exactly *why* the town's founders chose the name of "Franklin" led her to a year-long research project culminating in the paper, *What's in a name: Benjamin Franklin and the birth of a new town in Revolutionary America*. *What's in a name* was subsequently published in the Spring 2023 edition of the New England Journal of History

Library partnerships

As demand for library services grows, the library continues to draw upon community partners to explore new opportunities. These partners include municipal departments, the Franklin Garden Club, Alarm Robotics, the Franklin Knitters Group, Dean College and gifted individuals.

Requests for English language learning help increased threefold within the year. This highlights an area of community need but also the unparalleled generosity, resourcefulness and dedication of volunteer tutors.

Our thriving partnership with Dean College has continued, with an expanded initiative to connect students and faculty to library resources. We have also made strides in strengthening the bond between Dean College and the Franklin community through exciting collaborative efforts at the library, such as the Coffee and Conversation with President Elmore, faculty presentations hosted at the library (the most recent being a documentary screening of a faculty project called "The Boatbuilders") and student art exhibits. The library staff meets regularly with the Dean College library staff to encourage cohesion, share best practices, and brainstorm further collaborations.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Vicki Earls, Head of Reference Services working with the Dean College History Department, assisted Dean history students with research for a documentary on library muralist Tommaso Juglaris. She also made a guest appearance in the documentary as the library's resident Juglaris expert.

The library joined forces with the Franklin Historical Museum to present programs for *Ben Franklin Book Week* "A Community Rediscovery of Ideas, Literature, and the Shared Gift of Language," Reference Librarian Vicki Earls did a brief lecture, "Getting to know Ben's Books", where attendees received a 36 page booklet, *Sense being preferable to sound: Dr. Franklin and America's First Free Lending Library*, created especially for this lecture. The library also hosted a very well attended performance by musician Vera Meyer, playing the glass armonica - an instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1761

We have continued to work with local community groups to expand our cultural programming through earnest and collaborative initiatives. This year's celebrations have included: Diwali, Eid al-Fitr, Tu B'Shevat and Shavuot, with a new Holi celebration in the works for April 2024.

Technology initiatives in the Youth Services department include an expansion of Dungeons and Dragons club and coding programs, and an exciting new collaboration with the 4H ALARM Robotics Team in Franklin, whose teen volunteers have brought energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to the many robotics events they have hosted for kids in the community here at the library.

This fiscal year has seen a few exciting additions to the children's room play space: a new dollhouse generously funded through a grant from the Franklin Cultural District, a light table generously donated by a local family, and sets of manipulatives and storage solutions donated by local parent organizations. These additions have been hugely popular and are well-loved and utilized daily within the children's space. Before the end of this fiscal year we plan to introduce a dramatic play dress-up station..

School relationships

This January we rolled out a wonderful Literacy Night in partnership with Franklin Public Schools, which included curated tables of books, reading program information and signups. It highlighted our valued collections; special appearances from FPS teachers and literacy specialists as well as Officer Gove and Frankie! Families were able to peruse the tables; check out materials; get tips, tricks; and advice from reading professionals and classroom teachers; sign up for the 2024 reading challenge and 1000 Books before Kindergarten program; and practice their reading skills with Frankie. We are planning to make this an annual event and expand our reach going forward.

We are working on a strategic approach to our summer reading outreach, working to spread awareness and excitement about the library's summer reading program across the district. We are also working with the literacy specialists to ensure cohesion and a smooth experience for families looking for suggested grade level titles, so that recommended reading lists match the library collection for a mutually positive and exciting experience.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Our monthly BLAST (Bringing Library and Schools Together) program reaches an average of 45-75 students per month at all 3 middle schools, and we are also testing pilot programs for the elementary students in Keller and Kennedy.

We are excited to be working with the Kennedy 1st Grade team on grant funding to create, maintain, and circulate a collection of literacy materials that would directly connect to first grade curriculum modules and help parents and caregivers engage learners at home both during the academic year and beyond, facilitating reading skills and preventing the summer slide. This collection would be available district-wide, year-round through the library.

We are currently planning our second annual graphic novelist panel in partnership with the middle schools scheduled for May, which will include not just author talks and signings, but also some creative expression and art department faculty and student involvement.

We have worked to continue storytime visits to the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) when possible, and we have continued our quarterly visits to Dean College Children's Center as well as seasonal storytime partnerships with Franklin Children's School. All of these collaborations serve to connect families to library services, familiarize children, teachers, and caregivers with the library's offerings and also boost circulation within the department.

Program Attendance

We have seen a steady upward trend in attendance numbers for our weekly, weekend, and afternoon storytimes. We have revamped our two weekly preschool-age storytimes with measurable success through improved attendance, with plans to continue over the summer with our new Pre-K Boot camp series. We have expanded our afternoon programming for all ages, currently providing toddler programs 3 afternoons a week, school-age programs 4 afternoons a week, a weekly art program for middle school children, and targeted special programming for early release days for the public schools. School vacation weeks are packed with performers and special events, and our weekly baby programs run year-round and have seen record attendance this year. Tween and teen attendance at weekly programs is thriving. We have also continued to enjoy impressive numbers at our fall and winter program staples, notably our Trunk or Treat event, Pancakes and Pajamas, and our Noon Year's Eve Party. We also had incredible success with some new special programs: Our Bluey Bash in September saw over 1000 attendees and our Taylor Swift Birthday Bash had over 50 teens on a weeknight!

On the Horizon

We are employing a targeted approach toward program expansion, with strategic initiatives that meet the community's needs and interests in creative and dynamic ways. A wintertime toddler and kids yoga series, and year-round passive scavenger hunts have made for exciting activities for families to enjoy together at the library.

Continued expansion of our summer reading programs alongside a dynamic lineup of summer events will engage and incentivize families and readers of all ages throughout the summer.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

We will continue our thriving partnerships with Dean College, including large scale community events geared toward families, teens and students. A community egg hunt, the Holi Festival color throw, and a week of Juneteenth celebrations are a few examples.

More exciting changes are coming to the play space in the children’s room to accommodate the growing numbers of patrons using the space, including an expanded imaginative play area and new manipulatives.

Adult Services

We have increased adult programming by adding an adult Dungeons and Dragons program, adult board game group, trivia nights, concerts, continuous education workshops, and art classes.

The library is currently in its second year of offering Tax preparation help to the community through the VITA program with over 70 people taking advantage of the free tax preparation services.

This year, library staff started collaborating with the local radio station as another point of contact to increase awareness of the abundance available from the library.

FY2023 in Figures

Library Collections Circulation			
	FY 22	FY 2023	% Change
Collection Use	397,120	404,646	1.9%
# of Children's Programs	470	525	11.7%
Children's Program Attendance	12,216	21,134	73%
# of Adult Programs	113	148	31%
Adult Program Attendance	1,626	1,746	7.3%
# of Teen Programs	287	242	-15%
Teen Program Attendance	3,753	3,155	-15%

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Library Facilities Usage			
	FY 22	FY 2023	% Change
Meeting/Study Rooms	1,047	2,183	109%
Library Visits	109,420	121,898	11 %
Computer Use	9,464	11,648	23 %
Website Use	117,135	100,324	-11%
Wi-Fi Use	0	35,456	%
NOTE: Wi-Fi use statistics for FY 2022 not available per IT Department			

Building upon the work done in the past year, this budget funds key strategic initiatives that further expand programs, collections and services, and support operational improvements.

FY 2025 Goals & Action Plan:

Goal 1: Franklin Public Library serves as a vital community resource, a facilitator of public discourse and civic engagement, the place where ideas are created, discovered and shared.

Objective

Establish the library as a civic focal point, a cultural destination and community-gathering place.

Actions:

- Convene at least four civic conversations annually where neighbors can discuss town, community, and national issues.

- Media literacy
- Digital literacy
- Civic health
- Financial literacy
- Sustainability initiatives
- Book banning

- Assess the merits of opening on Sundays during summer months.

Goal 2: The Library functions as a community advocate with engaging programs, collections and services that celebrate its unique history and heritage and promote an appreciation and understanding of the heritage of others.

Objective

Present events and exhibits focusing on Town of Franklin’s culture and history.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Actions:

- Connect our community with our diverse local culture and history through monthly exhibits/displays and programs that promote cultural understanding.
 - Diwali
 - Lunar New Year
 - Eid
 - Juneteenth
 - Pride Month
- Celebrate, uplift and elevate cultural traditions reflected in community demographics through compelling collections and expert assistance

Objective

Build a broader spectrum of collaborations and non-traditional partnerships that feature community voices and reflect community needs and interests.

Actions:

- Engage the creative community, colleges, the Franklin Cultural District and the Franklin Downtown Partnership, Municipal departments to initiate at least three community-wide projects annually.
- Develop target programming to reach new audiences.
 - Expand volunteer tax assistance VITA program.
 - Increase special needs programs
 - Expand English as a Second language ESL program to include citizenship and GED

Goal 3: The Library provides Franklin residents with state-of-the-art technology and high-speed access to the digital and online world and assistance navigating new technology, exploring new formats and experimenting with innovative devices.

Objective

Improve library productivity by incorporating new tools and technology strategies for the most efficient and cost-effective delivery of library services.

Actions:

- Identify options to improve the technologies and processes used to locate and circulate materials in ways that make services and collections more accessible and intuitive to the public.
- Evaluate and assess opportunities to include emerging technology into service delivery.

Objective

Evaluate, identify and provide training opportunities in alternate formats to staff.

Actions:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Focus on development of computer competencies for library staff so that staff will be prepared to educate for digital literacy.
- Provide training options using different media to all staff.

Courses to support DEI initiatives

Change management

Artificial intelligence

Goal 4: Awaken and nurture the community's love of reading and passion for learning and personal growth.

Objective

Build community around books in all formats.

Actions:

- Employ a variety of initiatives to foster the love of reading and learning, connect readers to new books, and provide opportunities for people to connect and engage around a common love of books, literature, community and culture.
 - 1000 books before Kindergarten
 - Celebrate the freedom to read - Annual Reading Challenge
 - Book discussion groups
 - Community wide read (Franklin Reads)
 - Summer reading programs for all ages
- Purchase multiple copies of new high - demand fiction and nonfiction in various formats.
- Expand community open houses with monthly book sales and a cultural component.
- Employ at least three different methods to highlight and promote library collections beyond basic book displays and social media.
 - Library monthly e-newsletter
 - Library website
 - Scavenger hunts

Objective

Develop relevant and inspiring collections that reflect the evolving and varied needs and interests of patrons.

Actions:

- Continue to use effective collection development tools to analyze collection use and trends and tailor purchases accordingly.
- Respond to the changing ways in which the community experiences books, gather information and create content.

Objective

Strengthen the Library's contribution to the education of Franklin's youth.

Actions:

- Develop resources that support school curriculum through collaborative relationships with educators.
- Continue bringing students and the library together through weekly school visits across the district.
- Ensure every teacher and school administrator is aware of the Library's ability to provide students with homework assistance and resources, access to technology and diverse collections through school-wide library card drives, classroom card creation, and live tutorials.

Objective

Develop a comprehensive approach to library programming for all ages.

Actions:

- Engage all ages and abilities with hands-on interactive activities and learning opportunities. - weekly Art workshops, music performances, dance lessons, STEAM, literacy, life skills, health and wellness, author talks, genealogy and much more.
- Maintain a successful series of weekly programs for children and continually evaluate these programs to ensure a commitment to an enriching, welcoming and friendly environment for all families.
- Maintain our robust program offerings for babies and toddlers, to facilitate new parent engagement with the library and foster lifelong library usership for families starting at birth.
- Expand school-age program offerings and monthly teen programming in conjunction with valuable input from the Teen Advisory Board.
- Continue to shape a flexible, successful model for our summer reading program that ensures an upward trajectory of both signups and program completions, factoring in ease of signups and reporting, and incentivizes active engagement and participation for all ages.
- Explore special programs for young adults such as mental wellness, stress reduction, financial literacy and other specific topics of interest.

Goal 5: Strengthen community awareness and engagement

Objective

The Library will find new ways to enhance its image and increase public familiarity with resources, services and programs.

Actions:

- Facilitate sign-ups for e-mail registration at all weekly programs & at community events to increase the reach of the monthly e-newsletter.
- Create a unique logo for the library.
- Use technology/social media weekly to disseminate information and promote access to information, library programs, materials and services.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Train front line staff to promote library resources and programs.
- Promote the library's mobile applications to enable patrons to engage with the library in new and creative ways.
- Update the library's web presence weekly to guide users to library resources, services, partner websites and complementary community resources

Goal 6: Visitors to the Library will have meaningful experiences in a comfortable, functional, inviting and accessible facility.

Objective

Adapt and energize library spaces for new uses in keeping with changing services, programs, interests, needs and the changing ways that patrons use the library.

Actions:

- Create additional quiet study and seating options with reservable group/individual study pods
- Update service desks and shelving areas in youth services
- Collaborate with the Franklin Knitting group to update furniture in the Reading Room.

Goal 7: Increase customer satisfaction, fiscal stability and sustainability

Objective

Use assessment and survey tools to learn more about the community.

Action:

- Conduct an annual community needs assessment & patron satisfaction survey.
- Include feedback from survey in annual review of goals.

Objective

Explore new revenue opportunities.

Actions:

- Strategize with the Friends and other fundraising organizations to create new additional fundraising opportunities.
- Review grant opportunities annually and assign them to specific staff.
- Adopt policies that foster efficiency, cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

Objective

Strengthen the library's capacity to deliver on its mission

Actions:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Maintain a diverse and active volunteer base through collaboration with the schools, Council on Aging and community groups.
- Work with the Union and Human Resources Department to use staff openings to reconfigure jobs, update job descriptions, roles and responsibilities to reflect new areas where additional support is required.

DEPARTMENT: LIBRARY	FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 610			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
PERSONAL SERVICES	641,684	732,123	814,818	862,725	862,725	-	-
EXPENSES	288,363	293,130	282,000	292,000	292,000	-	-
TOTAL LIBRARY :	\$930,046	\$1,025,253	\$1,096,818	\$1,154,725	\$1,154,725	-	-

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

General purpose/Mission statement:

Our mission at the Recreation Department is to deliver exceptional recreational programs and facilities that enhance the quality of life for our residents. Through a steadfast commitment to consistency, dependability, and a deep sense of obligation to our community, we strive to elevate the well-being of all those we serve.

As a service-based department, we operate on a self-supporting model, relying on program fees to sustain our operations. We foster collaborative relationships with local sports organizations, the Franklin Public School Department, individual residents, private groups, and other town departments to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to recreation.

Annually, our programs, parks, and playgrounds positively impact over 12,000 individuals, with registration numbers consistently on the rise, exceeding 7,100 this year alone. With responsibility for scheduling all fields, playgrounds, and courts, we are dedicated to maximizing accessibility and utilization of our recreational assets.

Continuing our legacy of service, the Recreation Department remains steadfast in its commitment to providing exceptional recreation and leisure services that enrich the lives of Franklin's residents.

Staffing:

- 3 full-time
- 1 part-time
- 100+ Seasonal staff

Strategic Initiatives:

- The Recreation Department has seen tremendous growth over the past year. Starting in July-September 2023, we saw the largest quarter of revenue in the department's history, bringing in

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

over \$237,000 in 3 months. Our department continues to see huge registration numbers this spring as we brought in \$260,000 from January 1-March 31. We anticipate \$815,000 in revenue in FY24.

- The Beaver Pond Expansion project is nearly complete as we have added an ADA compliant turf surface around the teen obstacle course, lacrosse rebound wall and the Vendetti playground. A new picnic area with handicapped accessible walkways and a newly irrigated grass playing field and a new scoreboard has been installed. As well as a self service kayak kiosk for residents to rent kayaks. We hope to complete the expansion project by this fall by adding a fully accessible elevated press box.
- Fletcher Field Playground construction has started and the playground will be furnished with a beautiful new play structure serving ages 5-12 year olds, an ADA compliant poured in place safety surface with newly relocated swingset and paved walkways throughout. This project was funded through the FY24 Community Preservation Funds with a \$50,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- King Street Memorial Park will see capital improvements in 2025, starting with a new playground for 2-12 year old children and an ADA compliant poured in place safety surface. We will seek CPA funding for a larger facility upgrade of the restroom building, field lighting, additional pickleball courts, parking lot for the Community Garden and court area and security lighting throughout the park.
- Coordinate recreational activities with the youth and adult sports organizations (baseball, soccer, boys and girls lacrosse, softball, football, adult cricket, pickleball, street hockey and more), school department, non-profit organizations and other citizens groups.
- Continue the better utilization of park lands and coordination of fields, and conservation land within the Town of Franklin.
- Coordinate trail maintenance with Eagle scouts, boys scouts and girls scouts.
- Improve the quality of life and involve residents in recreational programs and park planning.
- Establish new self-supporting programs and explore ways of generating additional revenue through grants, donations and fundraising.
- Recreation administration consists of one full time director, a full time deputy director and program coordinator and one part time clerical position.
- The Recreation Department has added additional programs (NHL Street, tennis and strength and conditioning at the new obstacle course).

DEPARTMENT: RECREATION	FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 630			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	336,281	430,818	467,656	511,472	511,472	-	-
EXPENSES	230,550	242,749	277,000	284,000	284,000	-	-
TOTAL RECREATION :	\$566,830	\$673,566	\$744,656	\$795,472	\$795,472	-	-

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The Franklin Historical Museum collects, preserves, and provides access to records and artifacts pertaining to the history and cultural heritage of the Town of Franklin. Through exhibits, archival finding aids, and research,

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FHM uses information contained within these artifacts and records to educate and engage the public in the telling of Franklin's rich history and continuous cultural development.

Vision Statement:

The Franklin Historical Museum will be a thriving center for research and learning, complete with scholarly research projects, educational public programming, and access permitted to everyone from the advanced researcher to the novice elementary school student.

The collections housed at the FHM will be arranged and described completely and digital initiatives will be derived which will make it possible to view collections materials and catalog information online. Both goals will lay a smooth path to exploring the past with ease.

The programs and exhibitions of the FHM will continue to tell the stories of the Town, bolstering a great understanding and endearing respect for its history. It will expand public relations and marketing through social media efforts and by providing public programming. As a result, the FHM will attract increased financial support and donations which will, in turn, allow the Museum to grow and provide better services to its constituency.

Staffing:

- 1 full-time

Strategic Initiatives:

- **Policy Revisions:** The Archivist and Franklin Historical Commission will revisit and revise existing museum policies surrounding the donation and accession of artifacts and archival materials, collection development, material deaccession, loan agreements, and research policies to align with professional archival and museum standards.
- **Collections & Research:** The vast majority of uncataloged artifacts and archival materials were recorded in 2022 and 2023, with the current focus being improved physical and intellectual organization of collections in line with professional archival and museum standards. In addition, FHM is investing in research tools and technologies to assist in patron inquiries and research requests, including tablets to accommodate digital searches of collections and an overhead document scanner to expedite the process of digitizing select records and visual materials.
- **Facilities Improvements:** The installation of six new shelving units in archival storage was completed in December 2023, with space for additional units pending material availability. Plans are underway for a redesign of the front hall and kitchen to open up the entryway, and a new layout of the exhibit hall. These improvements will provide a welcoming and engaging museum experience for visitors, with room for flexibility for temporary exhibit installations, and open opportunities for facility event rentals to generate income.

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- **Publicity, Outreach, & Programming:** Forge new partnerships with community organizations to engage new audiences in FHM exhibits and programming. FHM will establish a seasonal rotation of temporary exhibits, with a minimum of (4) exhibits in 2024, and increase social media presence and publicity with a minimum of (2) announcements for each FHM event through Facebook, Instagram, and/or other public channels. FHM is planning for the design and distribution of a quarterly or monthly newsletter advertising upcoming events, current exhibits, and recent item donations to FHM. FHM will continue to collaborate with community institutions such as Dean College, the Franklin Public Library, and the Franklin Downtown Partnership, in addition to seeking new partnerships with other community organizations, such as the Franklin Cultural Council.
- Significant progress is being made towards a comprehensive inventory and description of all archival holdings and artifacts at FHM. Currently, the Museum houses 70 collections spanning approximately 200 linear feet. These collections include postcards, sheet music, photographs, scrapbooks, letters, pamphlets, books, and other mediums. Looking ahead, the Franklin Historical Museum will continue to catalog collections in order to diminish backlog, rework some of the exhibits as well as add new ones to keep patrons interested in the history of the Town, apply for grants to aid in restoration, renovation and preservation initiatives, and work alongside the Historical Commission and Friends of the Franklin Historical Museum in order to keep history alive in the Town of Franklin.

DEPARTMENT: HISTORICAL MUSEUM		FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 690			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	9,235	22,023	73,928	70,057	70,057	-	-	
EXPENSES	-	974	3,000	10,000	10,000	-	-	
TOTAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM :	\$9,235	\$22,996	\$76,928	\$80,057	\$80,057	-	-	

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

General Purpose/Mission Statement

The Historical Commission is composed of seven (7) appointed voting members and several associate members. The mission of the Historical Commission is to preserve, protect, and develop the historic and archaeological assets of Franklin.

Mary Olsson is a longstanding and current member of the Historical Commission who served as Chairperson for nearly eight years. The Commission, as well as the Franklin community, were fortunate to have Mary's outstanding leadership for so many years, and are now looking forward to the leadership of recently elected Chairperson, Alan Earls.

Strategic Initiatives:

The Historical Commission works to preserve the history of the Town of Franklin by identifying, describing, and locating buildings, structures, objects, areas, burial grounds, landscape features, and other sites that are of historical, architectural, or archaeological importance to the community. Many of the Town's historical assets

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

are housed at the Franklin Historical Museum on West Central Street. The Commission works alongside the Archivist to make sure that these items are cared for properly.

The Historical Commission partners with the Building Commissioner to manage the Demolition Delay Bylaw in Town as well as with the Director of Planning and Community Development to monitor the Town’s entries on the National Registers of Historic Districts and Buildings.

The Historical Commission hosts a Second Sunday Speaker Series at the Franklin Historical Museum every year. The Series engages the public in interesting and informative lectures on a monthly basis.

Please visit the Historical Museum’s website here: <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.com/>

DEPARTMENT: HISTORICAL COMMISSION		FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 691			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
EXPENSES	3,807	3,526	4,000	4,000	4,000	-	-	
TOTAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION :	\$3,807	\$3,526	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	-	-	

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, CULTURE & THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

General Purpose/Mission Statement:

The arts and culture sector plays a vital role in enriching the fabric of our community as we strive to build a vibrant and inclusive municipality. Investing in arts and culture initiatives is essential for driving economic development, strengthening social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of identity among our community members.

Staffing:

- 1 full-time

FY25 Strategic Initiatives:

Our municipal arts and culture budget is designed to support the following strategic objectives:

- **Fostering Creative Expression while promoting Accessibility and Inclusivity:** We are committed to ensuring that all members of our community have equitable access to arts and cultural experiences, regardless of socio-economic status, age, ability, or background.
- **Enhancing Public Spaces:** We recognize the importance of integrating arts and culture into our public spaces to create vibrant and inviting environments that inspire and engage residents and visitors alike.
- **Stimulating Economic Growth:** By investing in arts and culture, we seek to stimulate economic activity, attract visitors, and support the growth of local businesses, artisans, and cultural organizations.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Budget Priorities:

Our proposed budget for the municipal arts and culture sector prioritizes the following key areas:

- Franklin Cultural District Committee Support | Public Art, Cultural Events, Festivals: We will support the on-going planning of various local committees/cultural agencies; cultural events, festivals, and performances that celebrate our community’s cultural diversity, heritage and traditions.
 - Public Art Installations & Programming: Revitalizing the Franklin Sculpture Park and building the Open Air Gallery Initiative
 - We will invest in the creation and maintenance of public art installations, murals, sculptures, and other artistic interventions that beautify our streets, parks, and buildings, while also reflecting the unique character and history of our municipality. Using free-public art making workshops to cultivate community member engagement, re-activate the ‘partners and community stakeholders’ interest.

- Arts Education | Advisor Mentorships/Creative Economy Internships:
 - Free Art Making - Arts Education and Public Art themed workshops; coordinated seasonal in the ‘shoulder’ timelines of community events. Contributes to volunteer cultivation, partnership marketing opportunities in an otherwise ‘slower event timeline/season.’ & Public Programming at the Franklin Sculpture Park (which ties together public arts and education/youth outreach).
 - Working with highschool instructors to create meaningful arts and culture related internship programs. As well as portfolio preparation beyond creating artwork; introducing the professional artist fundamentals: personal marketing, grant writing and professional responses to RFP and other artist related opportunities.

- Marketing Infrastructure: We will allocate resources to strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of our local arts and culture sector, re-organizing a marketing plan for the Franklin Cultural District Committee
 - Restructuring flow of information to the general community through revamped marketing plans; Including paid social media tools, media memberships, tourism events and upgraded signage.
 - Using marketing tools to gain data to aid in grants, sponsorships and partner investment in local programming.

In conclusion, our municipal arts and culture budget reflects our commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rich community. By investing in arts and culture initiatives, we aim to stimulate economic growth, foster social cohesion, and enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for our residents.

DEPARTMENT: ARTS & CULTURE	FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 693			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	-	-	-	95,000	95,000	-	-
EXPENSES	-	-	-	15,400	15,400	-	-
TOTAL ARTS & CULTURE :	-	-	-	\$110,400	\$110,400	-	-

CULTURAL COUNCIL

General purpose/Mission statement:

The mission of the Franklin Cultural Council (FCC) is to encourage participation and enhance opportunities for enrichment in the cultural arts and sciences throughout the community. The Council shall promote excellence, access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in order to improve the quality of life in Franklin. The Massachusetts Cultural Council encourages the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences within cities and towns by administering the distribution of the Arts Lottery Fund established under the provisions of MGL Chapter 10, Section 57. Each year, the Council receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as well as a local appropriation in the town's budget.

The Cultural Council decides on the distribution of State funds as well as the Town's appropriation to the Council to promote the arts in Franklin. The Cultural Council meets monthly and is composed of an appointed committee of volunteers who support events and programs through grants and coordinate grant applications and awards for the Town. In FY24 Franklin Cultural Council received an allocation of \$17,400 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and \$25,000 from the Town.

The FCC awarded grants and funding to the following recipients:

- Amy Adams - Live Art Performance - \$500
- Janet Applefield - Combating Hate and Prejudice - \$350
- Davis R. Bates III - Celebrating the Season: A Performance for Seniors - \$500
- Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School - Arts Enrichment Assembly - \$1,370
- Charles River Chorale, Inc. - Charles River Chorale Organizational Support - \$500
- Easton Community Access Television ECAT, Inc. - Hockomock Film Festival - \$500
- Diane Edgecomb - Fantastical Folktales of Flowers a Story & Harp Concert - \$625
- Rosann Fleischauer - Yarning Around Massachusetts - \$500
- Franklin Art Association, Inc. Guest Artist Demonstrations - \$2,000
- Franklin Cultural District - BT/ALC Jazz Big Band Guest Artist Performance & Clinicians - \$2,500
- Franklin Farmers Market - \$5,500
- Franklin High School - Family Art Night: Around the World - \$500
- Franklin LGBTQ Alliance, Inc. - Franklin LGBTQ Alliance and Celebration with Pride 2024
- Greater Milford Community Chorus - Golden Jubilee Holiday Concerts - \$325
- Grieving Hearts Inc. - Remembrance Rocks - \$350
- Horace Mann Middle School - Uncovering History - \$1,500
- Indian Cultural Association of Franklin - Navratri Dance Festival - \$3,000
- Brenna Johnson - Empty Bowls - \$750
- LiveARTS - The 2023-2024 LiveARTS Concert Series - \$1,500
- MUSE, Inc. - Musical Visits for Seniors - \$1,000
- MUSIC Dance.edu - Hip Hop Chair Dance for Seniors! - \$500
- Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild, Inc. - The MA High School Drama Festival - \$1000
- Norfolk Cooperative Primary, Inc. - Music Enrichment with Mr. Dave - \$100

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- Southeastern Massachusetts Community Wind Symphony, Inc. - Band Concert - \$650
- Celia Taylor - Let's Get It Started Dance Crew Adaptive Dance - \$500
- Town of Franklin - "Where's The Toast?" Memory Cafe - \$1,800
- Robert Zammarchi - Elijah T. Grasshopper & Friends - \$600

Strategic Initiatives:

- With a new Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, \$25,000 was included in the FY24 budget for additional resources to meet the public demand for expanded arts and cultural programs and opportunities.
- Continued expansion of cultural opportunities in Franklin through small grants to organizations to conduct arts and culture programming for the community.
- Continue to provide cultural rich programs and events for the public to enjoy.

DEPARTMENT: CULTURAL COUNCIL	FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 695			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			Town Council Final
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	
EXPENSES	15,000	15,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	-	-
TOTAL CULTURAL COUNCIL :	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	-	-

CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

General purpose/Mission statement:

The Cultural District Committee is an appointed seven (7) member volunteer board formed to provide oversight and management of the Franklin Cultural District. The Committee's mission is to enrich and inspire our residents and visitors by fostering local cultural, artistic, culinary and historical development aligned with local partners in a defined walkable area that is easily accessible and serves as the center of economic activity.

In January 2019, the Massachusetts Cultural Council awarded the Franklin Cultural District formal status as a Massachusetts Cultural District. It is the Cultural District Committee's responsibility to implement the Cultural District's goals, which are a blend of the Massachusetts Cultural District Initiative's goals and Franklin's previous planning initiatives. Franklin Cultural District goals are as follows:

- Foster Partnerships. Continue to build and strengthen Franklin's Cultural District Partnership based on our common vision, goals and collaboration.
- Attract to and Promote Franklin. Attract artists and cultural enterprises to the Franklin Cultural District and promote their activity to both within Franklin and regionally.
- Encourage Business Development and Stimulate Economic Activity. Encourage and collaborate in culturally-related locally-minded and locally-based business and job creation by advocating for creation and support of small business incubators, makerspaces, and other cultural economic development resources.
- Become a Cultural Destination. Establish the district as a cultural tourist destination in the region.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Historic Preservation. Preserve and reuse historic buildings and other sites.
- Arts and Culture Education. Foster local cultural appreciation and development via active community and school/education engagement.

Accomplishments:

The Franklin Cultural District is becoming the focal point for arts and culture in the south MetroWest region. During the Franklin Cultural District's first year, the Cultural District Committee worked to implement a short term action plan for the first six months following Franklin Cultural District's designation, including the following related accomplishments:

- Launching of Franklin Cultural District. The Committee assured the Cultural District was launched successfully, and worked towards meeting the Goals of the Cultural District.
- Cultural District Marketing. The Committee worked to implement the Cultural District's short-term marketing plan. Work included development of a wide range of marketing materials, attending public events in order to publicize the new Cultural District, and completion of the new Franklin Cultural District Website (www.franklinculture.org).
- Worked to Strengthen the Cultural District Partnership. The Committee has actively worked toward strengthening the Cultural District Partnership, and has substantially increased the number of "partnering" organizations, and others interested in participating in Cultural District events and activities.

Strategic Initiatives:

The Committee's current short term goals and initiatives include the following:

- Continue to strengthen FCD's Partnership, and increase the number of collaborative projects.
- Survey FCD Partners regarding the impact from collaborative marketing activities, as well as lessons learned and suggestions for the future.
- Develop FCD's long-term Marketing Plan, including further refinement of the cultural district brand and creation of a vibrant social media presence.
- Advocate for redevelopment of industrial properties within the Town's new Mixed Business Innovation District, which is the southwest corner of the Cultural District.
- Develop a Foundational Market Analysis and Market Position Summary for Franklin Center and Surrounding Neighborhoods. The Committee is collaborating with Franklin's Planning Department and Franklin Downtown Partnership on a substantial economic development research, analysis and planning project.
- The Committee and its partners will continue to improve the Cultural District area, build upon our current strengths of performing arts and arts education, strive to create opportunities for all arts and

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

culture related organizations and individuals, and continue to support and promote the arts throughout the Franklin Community.

DEPARTMENT: CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE	FUNCTION: CULTURE & RECREATION			DEPT #: 696			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	1,000	1,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	-	-
TOTAL CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE :	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	-	-

DEBT & INTEREST

RETIREMENT OF DEBT – GENERAL FUND

Type and Purpose of Debt

The Town of Franklin sells General Obligation Bonds to finance capital improvements and other projects that require large amounts of cash such as schools, public works, recreation, public safety, and public buildings. General Obligation Bonds are supported by the full faith and credit of the Town and are repaid from property taxes from both current and future property owners or, in the case of water or sewer projects, out of their respective enterprise funds. Over the last few years, typical rates for 20 year municipal bonds have been in the 3% to 4% range. With the current situation, rates may be more variable and possibly higher as less bidders compete in the marketplace.

The Town's last bond sale was for the purchase of open space land in December 2022.

Franklin's Current Debt Position

As of June 30, 2023, the Town of Franklin had approximately \$78.5 million of outstanding debt. Approximately \$37 million of outstanding debt is exempt under Prop 2 ½, \$19 million is water related; \$2 million is sewer related and \$14.3 million is non-exempt General Fund debt.

After a ratings review by Standard & Poor's in May 2022, the Town's bond rating was affirmed at AAA with a stable outlook.

Presently, there is a bond authorization for the ongoing water line and Beaver Street interceptor project. FY24 Debt Service by Category:

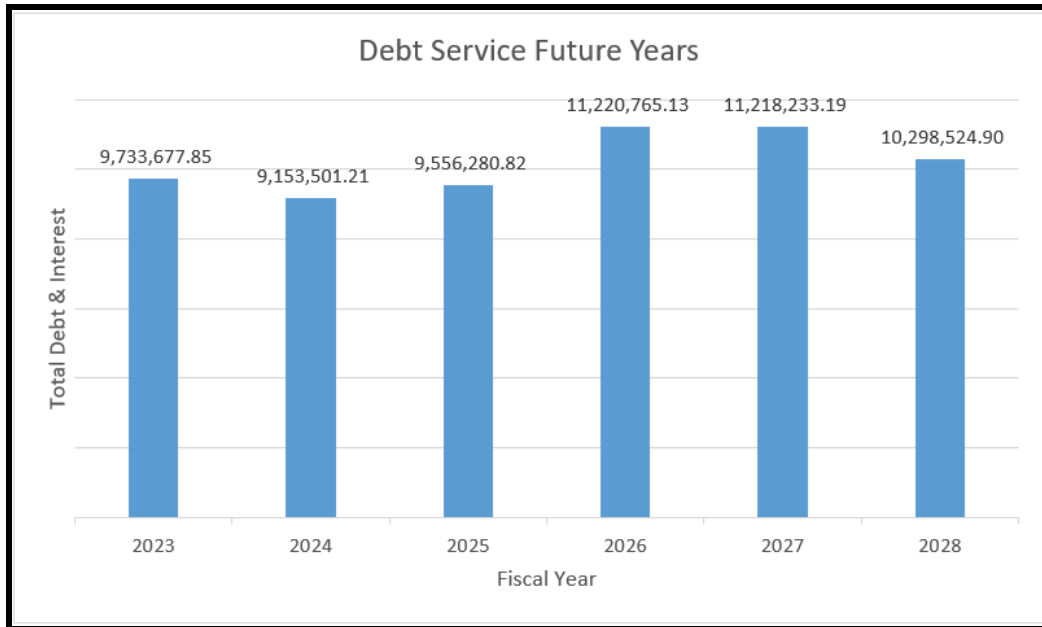
1. School Buildings – Franklin High School, Keller-Sullivan, and Horace Mann-Oak St.
2. Public Buildings – Municipal Building, Library
3. Technology - improvements to school and town systems
4. Public Safety – Fire Truck, Aerial Ladder Truck
5. Recreation – Beaver Street, High School football field, etc.
6. Public Works Buildings – DPW Garage addition/remodeling
7. Water Debt – Water mains, repairs, storage, lines and the water treatment plant through MWPAT.
8. Sewer Debt – MWPAT Beaver Street Interceptor and the MWPAT Title V loan and general sewer improvements throughout town.
9. Open Space - Purchased over 200 acres of open space, CPA funds

Debt Service Trend Chart

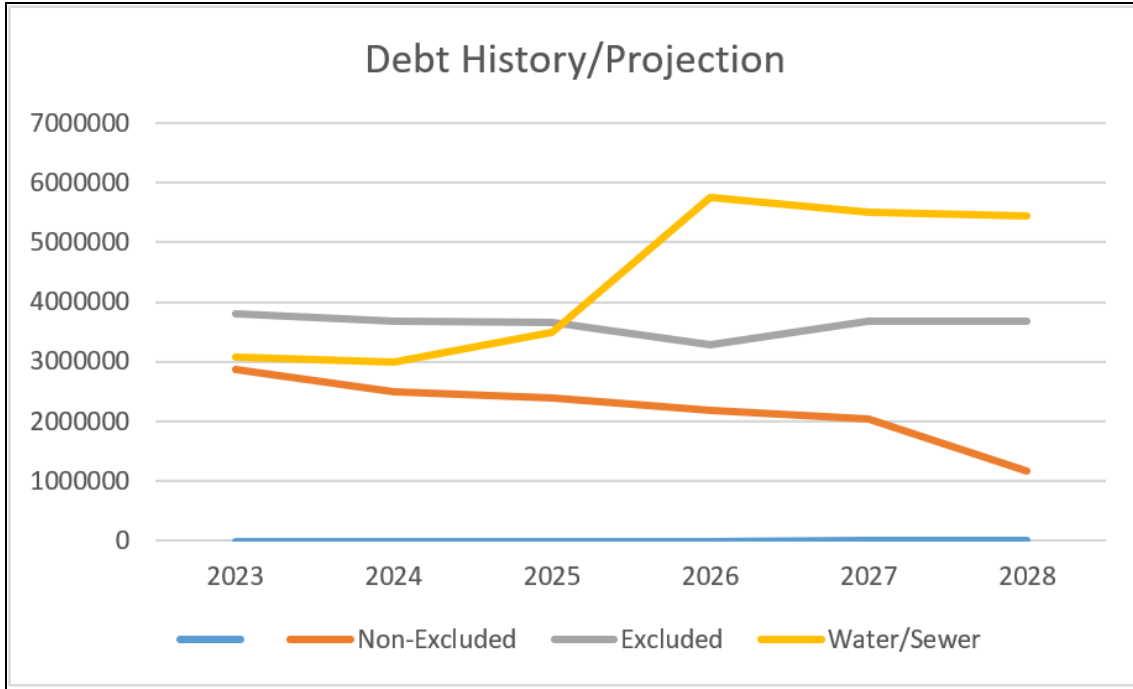
The chart below depicts a declining debt schedule over the next five fiscal years. As described in the Executive Summary, this is a major concern for the Town Administrator. [Town policy](#) aims at 3.5% of operating money for debt service. In FY25, only 4% of our operating money will be spent on debt service.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Town of Franklin Future Year's Debt for Planning Purposes FY23-FY28 Budget								
Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Non-Excluded Debt	2,102,000.00	2,098,000.00	2,180,000.00	1,897,000.00	1,745,000.00	1,750,000.00	1,680,000.00	890,000.00
Non-Excluded Interest	775,926.39	692,365.00	678,679.17	587,477.50	649,211.50	428,872.50	350,722.50	275,322.50
TOTAL	2,877,926.39	2,790,365.00	2,858,679.17	2,484,477.50	2,394,211.50	2,178,872.50	2,030,722.50	1,165,322.50
Excluded Debt	2,015,000.00	2,066,000.00	2,194,000.00	2,175,000.00	2,245,000.00	1,955,000.00	2,015,409.00	2,098,824.00
Excluded Interest	1,887,740.00	1,805,375.00	1,611,485.00	1,510,775.00	1,417,875.00	1,334,900.00	1,653,667.00	1,580,467.00
TOTAL	3,902,740.00	3,871,375.00	3,805,485.00	3,685,775.00	3,662,875.00	3,289,900.00	3,669,076.00	3,679,291.00
TOTAL Non-Excluded & Excluded Debt & Interest	6,780,666.39	6,661,740.00	6,664,164.17	6,170,252.50	6,057,086.50	5,468,772.50	5,699,798.50	4,844,613.50
Water/Sewer Enterpr	1,775,301.42	1,771,325.21	2,383,623.09	2,390,623.09	2,535,122.70	4,355,786.48	4,225,775.00	4,257,956.00
Water/Sewer Enterpr	563,940.56	639,518.38	685,890.59	592,625.62	964,071.62	1,396,206.15	1,292,659.69	1,195,955.40
TOTAL	2,339,241.98	2,410,843.59	3,069,513.68	2,983,248.71	3,499,194.32	5,751,992.63	5,518,434.69	5,453,911.40
YEAR	2021	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
TOTAL DEBT AND INT	9,119,908.37	9,072,583.59	9,733,677.85	9,153,501.21	9,556,280.82	11,220,765.13	11,218,233.19	10,298,524.90



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET



DEPARTMENT: DEBT SERVICE - PRINCIPAL				FUNCTION: DEBT & INTEREST				DEPT #: 710	
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels					
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final		
EXPENSES	4,387,900	4,374,000	4,072,000	3,990,000	3,990,000	-	-		
TOTAL DEBT SERVICE - PRINCIPAL :	\$4,387,900	\$4,374,000	\$4,072,000	\$3,990,000	\$3,990,000	-	-		

DEPARTMENT: DEBT SERVICE - INTEREST				FUNCTION: DEBT & INTEREST				DEPT #: 750	
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels					
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final		
EXPENSES	2,399,869	2,290,164	2,108,253	2,067,087	2,067,087	-	-		
TOTAL DEBT SERVICE - INTEREST :	\$2,399,869	\$2,290,164	\$2,108,253	\$2,067,087	\$2,067,087	-	-		

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

RETIREMENT

This line item funds pensions for the Contributory (MGL Chapter 32) retirees. There are 104 contributory retirement systems for public employees in Massachusetts. A retirement board governs each system and all boards, although operating independently, are bound together under one retirement law—Chapter 32 of the Massachusetts General Laws—that establishes benefits, contribution requirements, and an accounting and funds structure for all systems. All 104 retirement systems are overseen by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC), which was created by Chapter 306 of the Acts of 1996.

The Town of Franklin is a member of the Norfolk County Retirement System (NCRS). The Norfolk County Retirement System was established in 1911 for the purpose of providing retirement benefits for County employees. At present, the system includes not only County employees and retirees, but also nineteen (19) Norfolk County towns and twenty-three (23) authorities and special districts. The system is governed by a five-member board chaired by the County Treasurer, and the Treasurer is responsible for the management of the System's funds. PERAC (Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission) exercises general supervision of the System.

The Town of Franklin receives an annual assessment from Norfolk County which covers all Municipal employees and non-teaching School Department employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week. The appropriation funds both the normal cost (the cost of current employees' future pensions) as well as the unfunded pension liability.

Fiscal Year	Norfolk County Retirement Assessment	Increase % over prior FY
2025	\$7,890,141.00	5.18%
2024	\$7,501,821.00	4.44%
2023	\$7,183,210.00	7.31%
2022	\$6,693,600.00	8.4%
2021	\$6,174,365.00	7.09%
2020	\$5,765,354.00	10.37%
2019	\$5,223,882.00	9.48%
2018	\$4,771,398.00	9.65%
2017	\$4,351,658.00	10.24%
2016	\$3,947,535.00	7.81%

EMPLOYEE HEALTH/LIFE INSURANCE

This line item covers the cost of health and life insurance for all active Town employees and retirees from the Town.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

In FY23, the Town switched from standard health insurance with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care (HPHC) to a self-funded trust with the Massachusetts Strategic Health Group (MSHG). FY25 will be our third year with MSHG. The MSHG started with just three entities and has expanded to include about 14 public entities (towns and school districts). Additional entities will likely join the group in FY25.

Our employees and retirees are able to visit any provider covered by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care or United Health Care, but our overall plans are administered by our third party administrator (TPA) Health Plans Inc. (HPI). Since joining the Massachusetts Strategic Health Group in FY23, we had the following increases:

FY23 - High Deductible plan - 2% increase; EPO & PPO - 6.5% increase

FY24 - High Deductible Plan - 4.25% increase; EPO & PPO - 6% increase

FY25 - 7.6% increase on all three plans

Going forward into FY25, we were not able to “split” the rates to have a lower increase on the high deductible plan. We will therefore have a 7.6% increase on all three plans. This is certainly not great news for the Town or our employees, but unfortunately, it is well within the average for Municipalities. The Town is always watching trends within the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), MIIA, and other groups that provide insurance to municipalities. The average rate increases that we are seeing are around 5-11%, so the Town of Franklin is certainly not alone in this.

We will not have any plan design changes for Fiscal Year 2025. Like last year, we were able to finalize rates about a month earlier than we used to, since we have direct access to our claims data and do not have to wait for the insurance companies to catch up like we used to. We will have Open Enrollment during the month of May and the new plans are effective July 1, 2024.

We introduced the High Deductible plan option in FY19 and are entering our seventh year with this plan option. Employees have embraced the plan since they can pay a smaller premium over the course of the year and also receive “free” money from the Town towards their Health Savings Accounts (HSA). In FY25, the Town will continue to contribute \$750 to an employee on an individual plan and \$1,500 to an employee on the family plan. The Health Savings Account offers a rare triple tax advantage: an employee can contribute pre-tax dollars through payroll deductions; any interest or earnings grow tax-free; and an employee can withdraw money on a tax-free basis if it is used on qualified health care expenses.

At the time of this report, we have not yet entered the Open Enrollment period for FY25, so we do not know exactly what plans employees will choose in FY25. Like in other years, we expect that we may be able to reduce the health insurance budget in November based on more employees choosing the high deductible health plan.

At the time of this report, there are 1087 benefits eligible employees between the Town and the Schools. 590 employees are currently electing health insurance, which is about 54.28% of all employees.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

	Town	School	Combined
On Town Sponsored Health Insurance	176	414	590
Not on Town Sponsored Health Insurance	101	396	497
Total Eligible Employees	277	810	1087
Percentage of Employees on Insurance	60.54%	51.11%	54.28%

Plans chosen by Town Employees (active school employees are in the school budget):

	Individual	Family	Total
EPO	39	25	64
HDHP	51	59	110
PPO	2	0	2
Total	92	84	176

Number of employees (both Town and Schools) on the high deductible plan each fiscal year (data as of April 2024):

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Individual Plans	24	49	48	74	111	134
Family Plans	40	131	131	155	222	245
Total	64	180	170	229	333	590

Even though we have experienced high rate increases over the last several years, we have been able to keep our overall health insurance budget under control, partially because of the migration to the high deductible plan. The tables below show the savings for both the Town and the employee.

ANNUAL PREMIUM COSTS FOR THE TOWN (EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION)

	Individual Plan	Family Plan
EPO	\$9,375	\$23,959

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

HDHP	\$7,545 \$750 HSA contribution \$8,295 total	\$19,282 \$1,500 HSA contribution \$20,782 total
Annual Savings for the Town when an employee chooses the HDHP instead of EPO	\$1,080 per employee	\$3,177 per employee

COST FOR EMPLOYEES ON AN INDIVIDUAL PLAN

	Annual Premium	Potential RX Deductible	Potential Medical Deductible	Minus Town's Contribution to HSA	Potential Annual Cost for Employee
EPO	\$4,412	\$100	\$1,000	\$0	\$5,512*
HDHP	\$3,550	\$0	\$2,000	-\$750	\$4,800
Savings on the HDHP	\$862				\$712

An employee can save \$862 in annual premiums and potentially \$712 overall on the individual HDHP compared to the EPO (assuming they hit the deductible on both options).

COST FOR EMPLOYEES ON A FAMILY PLAN

	Annual Premium	Potential RX Deductible	Potential Medical Deductible	Minus Town's Contribution to HSA	Potential Annual Cost for Employee
EPO	\$11,275	\$200	\$2,000	\$0	\$13,475*
HDHP	\$9,074	\$0	\$4,000	-\$1,500	\$11,574
Savings on the HDHP	\$2,201				\$1,901

An employee can save \$2,201 in annual premiums and potentially \$1,901 overall on the family HDHP compared to the EPO (assuming they hit the deductible on both options).

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

* The cost of the EPO plan does NOT include additional co-pays, including \$30 for a primary care physician, \$45 for a specialist, \$45 for physical/occupational therapy, and \$150 for an ER visit (if not admitted). These costs can add up very quickly!

If a retiree is under the age of 65 and not eligible for Medicare, they may choose the HDHP as a retiree. In FY24, the Town started incentivizing retirees to join the HDHP by contributing to their Health Savings Accounts with the same dollar amount as active employees. At the time of this report, we have 19 retirees on the high deductible plan (7 individual plans, 12 family plans). If these retirees stay on the plan in FY25, it represents a savings of \$45,684 compared to what the Town would have paid if they were all on the EPO! Note, some of these savings are in the "Retired Teacher" line item of the budget since they are school employees.

Once a retiree turns 65, they are required by Massachusetts law to go on Medicare. At that point, they are eligible to join the Town's Medicare Advantage plan, which is offered by Aetna (through the MSHG). We partner closely with a concierge service "Retirees First" for all customer service related questions. Our Medicare retirees never have to call Aetna directly and their calls are always routed through Retirees First, which provides excellent customer service.

Retirees can receive Medicare Part A for free from the government and then pay an annual premium for Medicare Part B. Medicare premiums are set by the federal government and are updated in January each calendar year. The 2024 standard monthly premium is \$174.70, but the rate increases based on an "income-related monthly adjustment amount" (IRMAA). Retirees must pay Medicare directly for the plan, but then may elect to add the Town's Medicare Advantage plan to cover whatever Medicare might not cover and for prescription coverage.

In Calendar Year 2024, the full cost of the Aetna Medicare advantage plan is \$297.00 per month. The retiree pays \$95.04 (32%) and the Town is responsible for the remaining \$201.96 (68%). These rates are significantly lower than what they would have been if we stayed directly with Harvard Pilgrim. In January 2022, the plan cost \$326.40 and the retiree paid \$104.44 with the Town paying \$221.96. If we had stayed with HPHC, and had a 2.5% increase in 2023 and another 2.5% increase in 2024 (which would be very conservative increases), the Town would likely be paying around \$233.19 per retiree, which is roughly \$31.00 more per month, per retiree (\$375 per year). We have about 432 retirees on the Medicare Advantage plan, so the move to this plan saved us about around \$160,700 in FY25! Again, this is not all under one line item, but saves on benefit costs overall.

NON-GIC SCHOOL RETIREES HEALTH/LIFE INSURANCE

In FY15, School retirees were transferred out of the School Department budget into the Town's Employee Benefits budget.

This line item continues to increase as more employees retire and the costs of the plans for those under 65 continue to increase. As stated above, the changes to the Town's Medicare Advantage plan saves money in this budget compared to what we would have been paying with the HPHC Medicare Supplement plan.

RETIRED TEACHER HEALTH/LIFE INSURANCE

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Effective July 1, 2007, the Town Council voted to end its participation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission's (GIC) health benefit program for retired teachers. Teachers who had already retired were grandfathered into a special group and continue to pay the same employee premium that they would have paid under the GIC. The costs in this line item continue to go down each year as older retirees pass away. Any new retirees are budgeted under the "non-GIC" line item. In FY24, we budgeted \$570,000 for this group and are now down to \$560,000 in FY25.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

The Town purchases its Worker's Compensation insurance through MIIA. This policy covers all active town and school employees, excluding police and fire, which are covered through a different policy. MIIA offers programs for training and education that will help to offset increases in this area.

Payroll and job classification rates, which are part of the drivers that contribute to cost increases, are set by the State.

Our Police and Fire employees are covered under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, Section 100 and 111F, often referred to as "Injured on Duty", which is slightly different from standard Worker's Compensation. Our Injured on Duty insurance carrier is Gowrie Group.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Town of Franklin, like most Massachusetts communities, is self-insured. This means that we pay the full cost of benefits awarded to former employees. The Unemployment budget covers all employees including School Department personnel.

The Unemployment line item has typically been \$110,000 annually since Fiscal Year 2018. In FY21, we saw skyrocketing unemployment costs due to layoffs and changes related to the COVID pandemic and ended the year about \$100,000 over budget, at \$208,378. We increased the line item in FY22 to \$150,000 and were pleasantly surprised when it came in under budget at \$122,080. In FY23, we budgeted for \$120,000 and came in under budget yet again at \$63,525. In FY24, we budgeted only \$100,000 and have paid through February 2024 (4 months to go) and are already almost \$32,000 over budget. We are budgeting for \$125,000 in FY25, but if there are significant layoffs, we will likely go over this budget.

MEDICARE

Medicare is a federally administered health insurance trust fund that pays for health services for individuals 65 years or older or people who are considered disabled. Pursuant to Federal law, all employees hired after April 1, 1986 are subject to a 1.45% Medicare payroll tax. The Town of Franklin is obligated to match this payment. As salaries increase due to cost of living adjustments, the Medicare tax line item will continue to go up incrementally as well.

OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OPEB)

The Town provides post-employment healthcare and life insurance benefits for retired employees. The Town provides medical, prescription drug, and life insurance to retirees and their covered dependents. All active employees who retire from the town and meet eligibility criteria will receive these benefits. Retirees contribute

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

between 32% and 50% of the cost of the health plan, as determined by the town. The Town contributes the remainder of the costs on a pay-as-you-go basis.

The Town has financial policies which prioritize investing into OPEB each year. Current policies require increasing our contribution by \$50,000 each fiscal year. In FY25, we are contributing \$850,000. The Town also dedicates 10% of free cash to OPEB each year; however, the Town Administrator is proposing to pause the FY25 contribution in order to help fund the school department deficit.

The Town implemented GASB Statement 45, Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Post-Employment Benefits other than Pensions. Statement 45 requires governments to account for other post-employment benefits (OPEB), primarily healthcare, on an accrual basis rather than on a pay-as-you-go basis. The effect is the recognition of an actuarially required contribution as an expense on the financial statements when a retiree earns their post-employment benefits, rather than when they use their post-employment benefits. To the extent that an entity does not fund their actuarially required contribution, a post-employment benefit liability is recognized on the Town's Statement of Net Assets.

The most recent Actuary study was completed with data as of June 30, 2023. The Town's accrued liability as of this date was approximately \$73,516,932 and a net liability of \$61,167,930.

The Town created an OPEB Trust and all funds were moved from the OPEB Stabilization account by a vote of Town Council. The OPEB Trust Committee voted to invest these funds with the State Pension Reserves Investment Trust ("PRIT"). These funds are overseen by the State's Pension Reserves Investment Management Board ("PRIM"). The Trust currently has \$13,947,956 in net value.

COMPENSATION RESERVE

These funds are for any wage adjustments during the fiscal year, to cover absences in individual departments where additional coverage is necessary, unexpected retirement costs, to settle collective bargaining agreements and implement the nonunion compensation and classification plan. Collective Bargaining will commence again in late 2024 and early 2025 for a new contract cycle beginning July 1, 2025 (FY26).

DEPARTMENT: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	FUNCTION: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS			DEPT #: 910			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	13,481,052	13,677,538	14,782,502	15,627,691	15,627,691	-	-
TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS :	\$13,481,052	\$13,677,538	\$14,782,502	\$15,627,691	\$15,627,691	-	-

LIABILITY INSURANCE

GENERAL PURPOSE/MISSION STATEMENT:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

In addition to Worker’s Compensation, which is in the Benefits Budget, the Town also purchases the following insurance for the Town of Franklin and the Franklin Public Schools: Automobile, General Liability, Law Enforcement Liability, Property, Public Officials Liability and School Board Liability.

The Town has an active “Safety Committee”, which Operations Assistant to the Town Administrator Julie McCann and HR Director Karen Bratt co-chair. Representatives from each town department, both management and union, serve on the committee. The Safety Committee came up with best practices and policies to avoid workplace injuries and be safer on the job.

Our insurance company, MIIA, provides a great incentive to stay safe through the “MIIA Rewards Program.” MIIA provides a list of different practices and policies which will increase safety. For each task or training we complete, we receive a certain amount of money off of our Insurance Premiums the following year. For the past several years, we have maxed out our rewards and saved between \$35,000 to \$75,000 per year in insurance premiums. We expect to max out our savings again in Fiscal Year 2024, which will result in a discount of approximately \$35,000 against our FY25 premium.

DEPARTMENT: RISK MANAGEMENT	FUNCTION: LIABILITY INSURANCE			DEPT #: 945			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
EXPENSES	605,048	642,651	775,000	819,571	819,571	-	-
TOTAL RISK MANAGEMENT :	\$605,048	\$642,651	\$775,000	\$819,571	\$819,571	-	-

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

WATER ENTERPRISE

General Purpose/Mission:

Use the highest levels of science, innovation, conservation and customer service to safely deliver, and bill accordingly over seven hundred million gallons of potable water to the residents, businesses and industries of Franklin.

Objectives:

- Wells/water facilities (23 sites) - maintain chemical levels to State & Federal standards, daily pumping records, daily water testing, weekly water sampling and testing by certified lab, and monthly records reported to MassDEP. Maintain pumps, electric motors, telemetry, chemical feed systems, standby power supplies, buildings, security fencing, roadways and grounds.
- Water meters (~10,000 accounts) – all residential, commercial and industrial water meters read quarterly. Maintain meters, water meter calibration, water meter replacement program, final read inspections for homes over 20 years old, records for water meter installation, meter history and maintenance cards.
- Cross-Connection Control Program - Operate and maintain a cross-connection control program that oversees the testing and inspection of over 700 backflow protection devices.
- Water Distribution System Maintenance – Maintain and repair all of the Town's water mains, water service lines to and including the curb stop valves, and public hydrants. Perform annual hydrant flushing, valve exercising and annual leak detection to provide the Town with adequate flows and pressures for fire protection and domestic uses. Keep unaccountable water at a low percentage.
- Support Supplies & Equipment –Ensure the department has trucks, equipment, and a proper inventory of supplies for day-to-day operations and emergencies after hours.
- This department provides both technical and physical assistance to internal and external customers for public and private projects including plan review and permitting, and provides excellent customer service.

Staffing:

The salary costs for the Director, Managers and Administrative Staff are shared between the DPW General Fund and the various Enterprise funds. The Water Enterprise fund pays for 18.12 FTEs.

- Management & Administration: 3.78
- Engineering/GIS Staff: 2.29
- Administrative Support: 1.05
- Water Division Laborers: 11

Strategic Initiatives:

- Increased Mass DEP and EPA regulatory activities; particularly as they affect municipal water, PFAS, iron and manganese levels, lead and copper testing, water service line inventory and water management act conservation requirements.
- Lead in organizing municipalities to coordinate involvement in response to unwarranted and detrimental DEP policy making.
- Continue to secure water for the Town's future, by restoring capacity in existing wells (treatment plant, well redevelopment, water treatment etc.).
- Continue to promote and grow on the work the Town has done with "Water Smart" development regulations aimed at minimizing water use (especially peak) and maximizing localized recharge of storm water.
- Continue to foster a "water conservation" attitude and understanding throughout Town through education, outreach and enforcement. This has led to the Town being awarded for its low residential per capita consumption.
- Continue with a strong "leak detection" plan to limit the amount of lost water throughout the Town. This has led to the Town's unaccounted for water percentage consistently being well under 10%.
- Continued proactive meter replacement plan for accurate water billing. In addition, continue to invest in Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) to improve operational efficiencies and sustainability by effectively monitoring water usage and system efficiency, detecting malfunctions and recognizing irregularities.

Significant Adjustments:

- The FY25 budget was prepared as a "level service budget" to continue with residents' expected services. Exceptions include efficiency improvements, required increases in OPEB contributions, increase in required Federal and State water quality sampling, increased costs to administer our cross-connection program and large meter testing, and increases in utility costs and proposed service improvements that are noted below.
- With the costs of materials and services rising, so are the costs and demands for software and technology. The current DPW work order system is no longer being offered. Therefore, the DPW had to upgrade to a new work order system and an upgraded GIS platform to manage all of the requests for services around town at an additional cost of \$24,000.
- The FY25 budget does reflect step raises and other contractual requirements for union employees. In addition, the budget includes increases for police details.

Major Concerns:

In 2020 Well 7/7A had detections of four of six regulated PFAs. From December 2020 to January 2022 sampling results showed an overall increase in PFAS, with an exceedance of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) occurring in January 2022. Through the Town's Capital Budget money was allocated for the Piloting &

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Design of a new PFAS treatment facility adjacent to the current building at the Well No. 7/7A site. The Town was listed on the 2023 Final State Revolving Fund (SRF) intended use plan to receive \$6.5 million and since this project will be a PFAS treatment facility it will be eligible for an interest-free (0%) loan with additional principal loan forgiveness through the SRF program in thanks to the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Construction of this project is expected to start in summer of 2024.

The Fisher Street WTP will require a replacement of the obsolete Koch membrane equipment in use at the plant, replacement of the overall membrane system is expected to represent appreciable cost in 2025-2026. The Town reviewed its future options, namely a replacement membrane-based system versus installation of a non-membrane treatment system featuring a pressurized media filtration system such as greensand filtration, similar to the Grove Street WTP. To improve the system reliability, WTP safety of operations, reduce energy usage and provide operational consistency, the Town chose to proceed with the pressurized media filtration system option. Again through the Town’s Capital Budget money has been allocated for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Piloting & Design for the upgrade. The 30% Design estimated Construction Cost is \$25,696,000.00. The design is ongoing and we are looking for ways to reduce the cost.

The Town is on the 2024 Final Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) intended use plan to obtain low interest loans and principal forgiveness on the total \$25.696 million dollar project. Similar to the Well 7 project the Town is also eligible for 0% financing, depending on availability of funds, since the project includes PFAS remediation.

The Town currently utilizes two existing, riveted steel tanks as the Hillside distribution storage facility, Hillside Tank No. 1 was originally constructed in 1888 and Hillside Tank No. 2 in 1928. The Town elected to pursue replacement of the two existing riveted steel tanks with one new welded steel tank with combined capacity of 1.7 million gallons. The new tank will be equipped with a mixing system. The design of the project will be finalized in 2024, with the construction depending on availability of funding (estimated at \$7.8 million).

The Town will be continuing with the replacement of aging equipment and SCADA controls with current technology to prevent interruptions to water service. However, availability of materials, products and parts has been hampered by the current supply chain challenges. In addition the volatility in product costs, utility costs, and overall inflation is limiting how far the Town’s funding can go.

DEPARTMENT: WATER		FUNCTION: WATER			DEPT #: 450			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels				
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final	
PERSONAL SERVICES	1,196,811	1,450,345	1,694,900	1,783,316	1,783,316	-	-	
EXPENSES	1,775,254	2,006,997	2,446,045	2,491,147	2,491,147	-	-	
DEBT PRINCIPAL	2,146,054	2,070,065	2,107,204	2,009,026	2,009,026	-	-	
DEBT INTEREST	570,631	581,167	558,233	848,645	848,645	-	-	
TOTAL WATER BUDGET :	\$5,688,750	\$6,108,574	\$6,806,382	\$7,132,134	\$7,132,134	-	-	

SEWER ENTERPRISE

General Purpose/Mission:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

Use the highest levels of science, innovation, and customer service to safely convey and bill over nine hundred million gallons of wastewater to the Charles River Pollution Control Treatment Plant in Medway.

Objectives:

- Sewer pump stations (23 sites) - record daily pumping records, monitor daily operations, wash down, sanitize and maintain flows to CRCPD. Maintain pumps, electric motors, telemetry, standby power supplies, building security fencing, driveways & grounds.
- Sewer Collection System Maintenance – maintain and repair the Town’s entire sewer infrastructure including sewer mains, manholes, hydraulic cleaning, TV investigation and clearing of easements.
- Emergency twenty-four hour, seven days a week response/customer service.
- Support Supplies & Equipment –Ensure the department has trucks, equipment, and a proper inventory of supplies for day-to-day operations and emergencies after hours.
- This department provides both technical and physical assistance to internal and external customers for public and private projects including plan review and permitting providing excellent customer service.

Staffing:

The salary costs for the Director, Managers and Administrative Staff are shared between the DPW General Fund and the various Enterprise funds. The Sewer Enterprise fund pays for 10.5 FTEs.

- Management & Administration: 3.36
- Engineering/GIS Staff: 1.08
- Administrative Support: 1.05
- Sewer Division Laborers: 5

Strategic Initiatives:

- The biggest challenge will be the on-going construction of the Beaver Street Interceptor Repair and Replacement project. The 110-year old Beaver Street Interceptor, conveys over 70% of the Town’s raw sewage to the Charles River Pollution Control District. The location of the pipe is a major challenge to the construction as it goes through wetlands, the MBTA tracks, Franklin Village Mall and Route 140. The Town Council authorized \$33 million borrowing for the project and the construction of the project is being funded through Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) low interest loans and principal forgiveness due to the Federal Infrastructure Bill. FY25 will see the continuation of construction with the hope of as little disruption to the Town as possible. This will be one of the Town’s largest construction projects ever outside of a new school, but is critical to the health, safety, and prosperity of the community.
- Increased Mass DEP and EPA regulatory activities of delivery and operations of wastewater operations.
- Continue sewer improvements designed to reduce Inflow and Infiltration.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Continue to meter and model to evaluate the impact of these improvements, and to identify the need for further sewer work.
- Continue to work with developers to reduce flow during peak demand periods.
- Work with Charles River Pollution Control District on proposed Inflow and Infiltration work to the District owned interceptors and plan for future improvements to the District owned Treatment Facility.

Significant Adjustments:

- The FY25 budget was prepared as a “level service budget” to continue with residents' expected services. Exceptions include required increases in OPEB contributions and increases in utility costs and proposed service improvements that are noted below.
- While portions of the budget have been increased to maintain “level services”, reductions in Debt Principal payments were enough to offset those increases resulting in a lower overall budget as compared to last year.
- The FY25 budget does reflect step raises and other contractual requirements for union employees. In addition, the budget includes increases for police details.
- FY 25 Charles River Pollution Control District assessments are based on information provided by them. Number is subject to change.

Major Concerns:

The Town will be continuing with replacement of aging pumps, motors, drives, and SCADA controls with current technology to prevent interruptions to sewer service. In addition, the Town will be continuing its investment in Infiltration and Inflow removal from the sewer system, while repairing the structural integrity of older pipes in the system. However, the volatility in product costs, utility costs, and overall inflation is limiting how far the Town’s funding can go.

DEPARTMENT: SEWER	FUNCTION: SEWER			DEPT #: 440			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	668,734	767,246	935,104	989,282	989,282	-	-
EXPENSES	3,432,993	3,758,454	3,995,550	4,237,224	4,237,224	-	-
DEBT PRINCIPAL	321,700	288,000	768,703	245,000	245,000	-	-
DEBT INTEREST	86,762	75,010	315,470	396,525	396,525	-	-
TOTAL SEWER BUDGET :	\$4,510,189	\$4,888,710	\$6,014,827	\$5,868,031	\$5,868,031	-	-

SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE

General Purpose/Mission:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

To provide the highest level of customer service for curbside pickup of trash, recyclables and yard waste from 9,680 households for transportation to the Millbury WIN Incinerator, the recycling processing center, and composting centers.

Objectives:

- To continue with a high level of customer service and response times.
- Work to increase the Town’s recycling rate, while decreasing the amount of trash tonnage delivered to the Millbury Wheelabrator Incinerator.
- Work with the Town Council to establish enforcement criteria for improved recycling tonnage.
- Manage single stream and solid waste pick-up contracts.
- Implement the DEP funding grant for recycling monitoring and public education.

Staffing:

The salary costs for the Director, Managers and Administrative Staff are shared between the DPW General Fund and the various Enterprise funds. The Solid Waste Enterprise fund pays for 1.55 FTEs.

- Management & Administration: 0.9
- Administrative Support: 0.35
- Solid Waste Laborers: 0.3

Major Concern:

The continued volatility of the global recycling market and its effect on our operational costs.

DEPARTMENT: SOLID WASTE	FUNCTION: SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL			DEPT #: 434			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	83,940	104,263	132,806	141,400	141,400	-	-
EXPENSES	2,133,369	2,433,900	2,682,833	2,776,549	2,776,549	-	-
TOTAL SOLID WASTE BUDGET :	\$2,217,308	\$2,538,163	\$2,815,639	\$2,917,949	\$2,917,949	-	-

STORMWATER ENTERPRISE UTILITY:

General Purpose/Mission:

Use the highest levels of science, innovation, conservation, and customer service to collect and monitor stormwater, maintain stormwater infrastructure, educate the public, and treat stormwater as required by State and Federal permits.

All information on stormwater can be found on the Town website:

<https://www.franklinma.gov/stormwater-division>

Objectives:

- Catch Basins (5,700+) - continue to monitor and clean catch basins to maintain a level of <50% full
- Drain pipe (128 miles) - continue to monitor, maintain and repair all drain pipes to ensure proper passage of stormwater and prevent localized flooding
- Outfalls (502) - continue to monitor, maintain and repair all outfalls to prevent flooding and identify and remove possible illicit discharges
- Catchments (499) - continue to monitor and investigate stormwater catchments to ensure appropriate functionality of the drainage system and prevent illicit discharges into the MS4.
- SCMs (307) - continue to monitor and maintain all stormwater control measures, including rain gardens, detention, retention and infiltration basins, tree wells, stormceptors and other subsurface drainage structures. Franklin's SCM's play a critical role in removing pollutants from stormwater and encouraging infiltration, making their maintenance and continued functionality crucial to the success of the drainage system
- Public Education - continue to educate and engage with the public on stormwater pollutants, stormwater treatment and how residents can keep Franklin's stormwater clean and free from debris.
- Support Supplies & Equipment - ensure the future department has trucks, equipment, and a proper inventory of supplies for day-to-day operations and emergencies after hours.

Selected FY25 & Beyond Challenges/Strategic Initiatives:

- Increased MassDEP and EPA regulatory activities and how they may impact the current MS4 permit.
- The continued implementation of the Phosphorus Control Plan (PCP), specifically SCM retrofits and new construction to meet our phosphorus reduction goals.
- Continue to lead in organizing municipalities to coordinate efforts to meet regulatory compliance as possible cost saving measures.
- Continue to foster a "keep stormwater clean" attitude and understanding throughout Town with education, outreach and enforcement.
- Continue to perform public outreach regarding stormwater education and build upon past initiatives of story map and mailer information.
- Continue impervious area feature class updates to ensure accurate stormwater billing.

Staffing:

The salary costs for the Director, Managers and Administrative Staff are shared between the DPW General Fund and the various Enterprise funds. The Stormwater Enterprise fund pays for 4.5 FTEs.

- Management & Administration: 1.06
- Engineering/GIS Staff: 0.38
- Administrative Support: 0.35

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) BUDGET

- Stormwater Division Laborers: 2.7

Major Concerns:

As weather patterns continue to change, additional stresses will be placed upon the drainage system and its ability to function. Therefore, the Stormwater Division must be creative in managing future stormwater threats to Franklin. Through grant funding and collaboration with local non-profit groups, the Stormwater Division will continue to keep up-to-date on the latest innovative solutions and green infrastructure options to maintain and improve the drainage infrastructure.

DEPARTMENT: STORMWATER	FUNCTION: STORMWATER			DEPT #: 460			
Classification	FY 2022 Expended	FY 2023 Expended	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget Levels			
				Department Request	Town Admin Recommend	FinCom Recommend	Town Council Final
PERSONAL SERVICES	-	-	334,117	371,296	371,296	-	-
EXPENSES	-	-	500,000	728,360	728,360	-	-
TOTAL STORMWATER BUDGET :	-	-	\$834,117	\$1,099,656	\$1,099,656	-	-

SECTION 3: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RECOMMENDED VOTING DOCUMENT & BUDGET BOOK
(per Town Charter prevision 6-5-1 and 6-5-2)

[Town Administrator Recommended Budget Voting Document & Budget Book](#)

APPENDIX B

FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

[Franklin Public Schools FY25 Budget Book](#)

APPENDIX C

LOCAL HISTORICAL DATA

[Appendix C1 Budget Breakdown](#)

[Appendix C2 Operating Revenue](#)

[Appendix C3 Fixed Cost](#)

[Appendix C4 Local Aid](#)

[Appendix C5 Local Receipts](#)

[Appendix C6 Assessments](#)

[Appendix C7 New Growth](#)

[Appendix C8 Free Cash Balances](#)

[Appendix C9 FC & RE](#)