

At the Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown, County of Washington, and State of Rhode Island, held in and for said Town, County, and State this 19th day of April, 2023 at the Town Hall Council Chamber, 80 Boston Neck Road, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President
Katherine K. Anderson
Lawrence C. Mandel
Matthew B. McCoy
Dr. Kimberly Ann Page

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk
Matthew F. Callaghan, Jr., Town Solicitor

An audio recording and video recording of this meeting was made to supplement the written record.

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on April 19, 2023 was called to order by President Mancini.

2. Notice of Meeting being posted

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

3. Salute to Flag

President Mancini led those in attendance in a salute to the flag.

President Mancini led a moment of silence in honor of the passing of Leah Rosin-Pritchard a former resident of Jamestown and North Kingstown graduate and Senator MaryEllen Goodwin.

I. PUBLIC HEARING

Town Council's Preliminary Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

4. All Funds except for School Fund and School Capital Reserve Fund

President Mancini acknowledged Chief Kettelle and the Fire Department and their dedication to their profession, our community, and the neighboring community. Their actions at the recent fire in Exeter saved homes and lives. It is his understanding that our Chief gave the Governor a tour to view the damage as a result of this fire. On behalf of the Council, he would like to express how proud we are of our Chief and our Fire Department.

President Mancini stated that tonight is a public hearing on the Town's preliminary budget and School Budget. Before we hear from the public, the Town Manager will make a brief presentation on the Town's budget. At 7:00 p.m., we will hear a brief presentation from the School Department and School Committee on their budget and then we will have public comment. Prior to tonight, the Town Manager worked with Department heads over several months on the budget. An all-day budget work session was held on March 16th and an evening session on March 20th where each department head and the School Department presented their budget to the Council. Council Members asked numerous questions throughout this process and the Council decided to unanimously adopt the Preliminary Budget as presented by the Town Manager. Tonight, is the opportunity to hear from the public and we ask that comments be kept to 3 minutes.

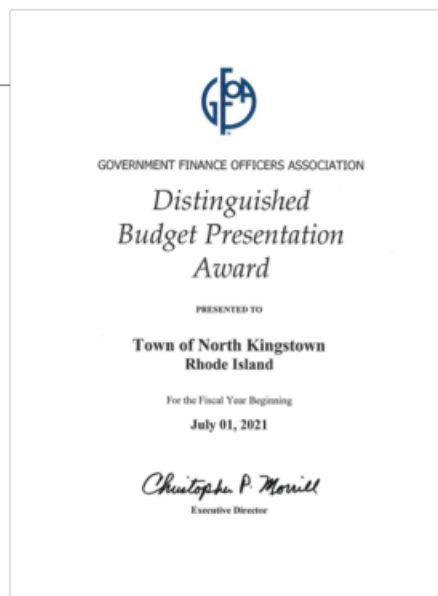
Mr. Mollis thanked the Council and gave the following presentation:

FY 2024 NORTH KINGSTOWN BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING



A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager

April 19, 2023



04/19/2023

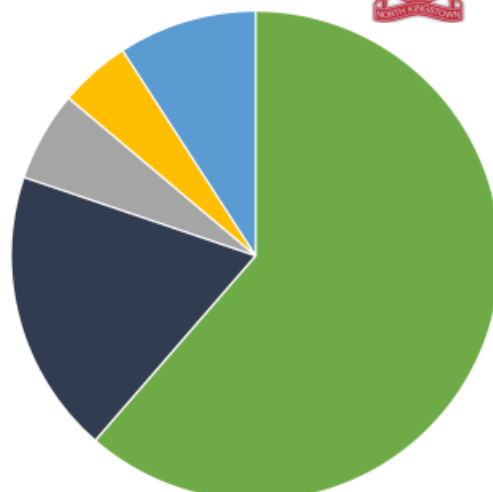
FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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OVERVIEW 2023-2024 BUDGET



School Department \$71,083,818	62%
Public Safety \$22,296,567	19%
Public Works & Utilities \$7,211,288	6%
Debt Service \$5,365,110	4%
Government Services (Administrative, Library, IT, Senior Center, Recreation, GDC, Civic Contributions) \$11,559,974	9%



04/19/2023

FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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INITIATIVES 2023-2024 BUDGET



- \$700,000 road paving
- 2 Additional Police Officers (Four fully-staffed shifts)
- Senior Center Building Repairs
- Renovations to Municipal Office Building (Fund Balance & ARPA)
- Renovations to Community Center (Restricted Accounts)
- Advancements to address Cyber Security
- Funding of priorities outlined within Asset Management Commission CIP
- AEDs throughout our Town
- Continued improvements to the Municipal Golf Course & Allen Harbor
- Renovations to Parks with court resurfacing and dedicated pickleball courts (ARPA Funded)
- Increased OPEB Funding
- Post Road Façade Improvement Program



04/19/2023

FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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OPERATIONS 2023-2024 BUDGET



- Public Safety
- Maintenance of over 150 miles of paved Town roads
- Senior Center Services
- Library Services
- Legal Services
- Civic Contributions
- Debt Services
- State-of-the-art Recreation programs and facilities
- Maintenance of over 200,000 sq. ft. of municipal buildings
- An award-winning student body
- Municipal operations among 24 departments
- Cyber Security
- GDC maintenance agreements



04/19/2023

FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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ENTERPRISE FUNDS 2023-2024 BUDGET



FUND	FY 2023	FY 2024
Golf Course	\$1,811,869	\$1,968,137
Municipal Court	\$206,021	\$198,921
Sewer	\$2,606,290	\$2,568,684
Transfer Station	\$1,323,181	\$1,354,673
Water	\$4,214,518	\$5,784,736



04/19/2023

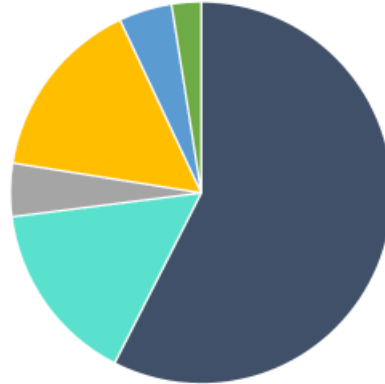
FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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FUNDING OF THE FY2024 BUDGET



Residential Taxes	\$66,842,879	57.0%
Commercial Taxes	\$18,453,900	15.5%
Quonset Business Direct Payments	\$5,214,440	4.5%
State Aid (Inc. Motor Vehicle Reimbursements)	\$18,299,559	15.5%
Departmental Revenue & All Others	\$7,689,975	6.5%
Hotel, Meal & Beverage Taxes	\$1,016,004	1%



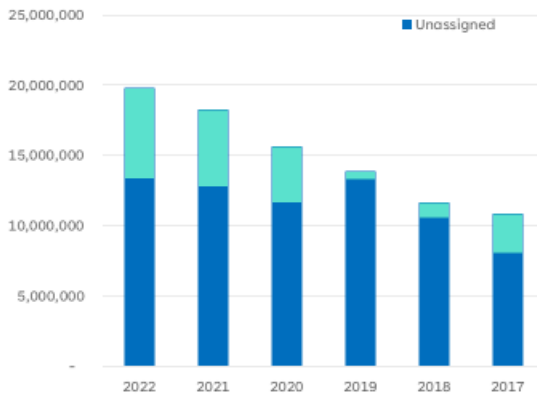
ARPA Funding	\$2,160,700
Fund Balance	\$1,250,000
Restricted Capital Accounts	\$125,000

04/19/2023

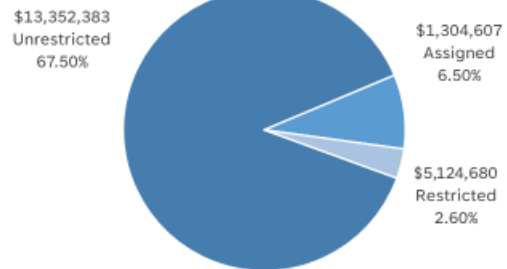
FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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FUND BALANCE



Fund Balance: \$19,781,670



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FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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PROJECTED 2% TAX INCREASE IN FY 2024



- THIS FOLLOWS NO TAX INCREASE IN 2021
- AND AN AVERAGE TAX INCREASE OF 1.2% OVER FISCAL YEARS 2021 & 2022

TO LESSEN THE EFFECT OF THE STATE-MANDATED PROPERTY REVALUATION, TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTED A 5% HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION AND REDUCED TAX RATES

And continues to provide over \$3.8 Million in exemptions:

- Gold Star Families
- Veterans
- Disabled
- Senior/Flat
- Senior/Income
- Income
- Homestead

No Motor Vehicle Taxes effective FY 23

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FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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THANK YOU

04/19/2023

FY24 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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President Mancini thanked the Town Manager for the presentation and opened the floor for public comment.

George Silva, 82 Fowler Street, stated that he has been a resident of North Kingstown for 55 years. He is a widower and does not have any children. Come this June he will be turning 98 years old. He is requesting that senior homeowners have their taxes frozen. He leaves it up to the powers that be to set the age limit and he is thankful for the tax break that he receives now.

Richard Welch, 8 Arrow Lane, stated that he agrees with Mr. Silva. He has lived in Town since 1974 and has paid taxes along the way. We, the taxpayers, have favorably supported the Town and school over the years because we like it here. Unfortunately, over the last three plus years we can't say the same thing about the School Department. He doesn't feel they should get any more additional money due to the fact that they have a lot of money and a lot of unfilled positions that are already in the budget which probably represents 500-600 thousand dollars in savings in wages and benefits. That along with the \$3,000.00 signing bonus for returning teachers really frosts his cake. The teachers in this Town get paid very well. Out of the top 100 teachers, they make over \$100,000.00 per year in pay and benefits. Having served as the chair of the School Committee, he is aware of the situation, and it is time for the Town Council to do the job the School Committee is not. This is an embarrassment to the Town.

Rickey Thompson, 194 Plain Road, read the following statement:

“My comment and 2 questions pertain to our Undesignated Fund. First, I would like to thank you, Mr. Mollis for providing me with the details relating to our Undesignated Fund. If I may, I would like to ask clarification of 2 items as associated to this fund: First, per the voter approved Sewer Bonds, my perception is that our Sewer Funds are to be self-funded by the Sewer District such that I would like to ask why is a \$2.85M Sewer Fund debt listed within the Undesignated Fund? Finally North Kingstown’s Financial Report clearly states our Financial Policy as follows: “The Town has adopted a fund balance policy that identifies a threshold of a minimum (8%) and a maximum (15%) for unassigned fund balance of general fund expenditures. It dictates actions should the fund balance fall outside these thresholds. Should the level fall below the 8% minimum, the Town Manager and Finance Director must develop a plan to restore the level of fund balance to 8% within 5 years. Should the balance exceed the maximum, funds shall be used for one-time expenditures that will not require future additional expenditures for maintenance or staffing.” In consideration to North Kingstown’s Financial Policy and considering that our Undesignated Fund is significantly short of the stated 15% threshold, why is this Council considering spending \$1.25M of our Undesignated Fund, especially when considering that you can accomplish your efforts and much more without using Undesignated Fund dollars?

President Mancini thanked those in attendance for their comments and closed the public hearing for the municipal budget.

The Council recessed the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

5. School Fund and School Capital Reserve Fund

President Mancini welcomed everyone in attendance and stated that this portion of the Public Hearing is for the School Fund and School Capital Reserve Fund. Tonight, we have with us School Committee Chair Erin Earle and Interim Superintendent Dr. Frank Pallotta.

School Committee Chair Erin Earle thanked the Council for the opportunity to present the School Budget. She thanked the School Department staff for their hard work in putting this budget together. This has been a challenging year with transitions, and she has been impressed with how the staff stepped up. She thanked the School Committee for their time as they have had multiple meetings on the budget. She further stated that she would like to reinforce the unprecedented times that schools are facing now. As School Committee Chair and a mom in the district, it is palpable, and the effects of the pandemic are still very real in the schools every day. As we have discussed during our budget presentation at the work session, the mental health challenges our students and staff are facing is something the School Committee feels strongly that needs to be supported as well as the learning challenges that we are still experiencing. These have been the factors that have driven the budget that we have presented.

Interim Superintendent Pallotta gave the following presentation:

FY 2024 North Kingstown School Department Budget



Presented to the
North Kingstown Town Council
April 19, 2023

Enrollment

	CURRENT TOTAL 2022-23	PROJECTED TOTAL 2023-24
Total District Enrollment 2022-2023 3791 (as of 2/12/23)		
Fishing Cove	335	333
Forest Park	257	264
Hamilton	424	446
Quidnessett	225	252
Stony Lane	380	339
Davisville Middle School	442	449
Wickford Middle School	356	331
NK High School	1352	1316
Davisville Academy	20	20
Anticipated District Enrollment 2023-2024 3750		



Staffing

Employees in Operating Budget	
Teachers	363.41
Teacher Assistants	96.5
Transportation	25
Operations (Maintenance)	9
Clerical & Business Operations	25.5
Administrators & Central Office	44
Technology	3
COTA	4.74
TOTAL	571.15



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Teacher and TAs FTE by Location

	Teachers	TAs
North Kingstown High School	124.26	14.12
Davisville Middle School	47.30	13.21
Wickford Middle School	34.84	4.01
Stony Lane Elementary School	30.27	8.60
Quidnessett Elementary School	25.40	9.22
Fishing Cove Elementary School	26.03	9.12
Forest Park Elementary School	24.46	10.12
Hamilton Elementary School	33.76	13.10
Davisville Academy	12.09	7.00
Fishing Cove Preschool	5.00	8.00
Totals	363.41	96.50



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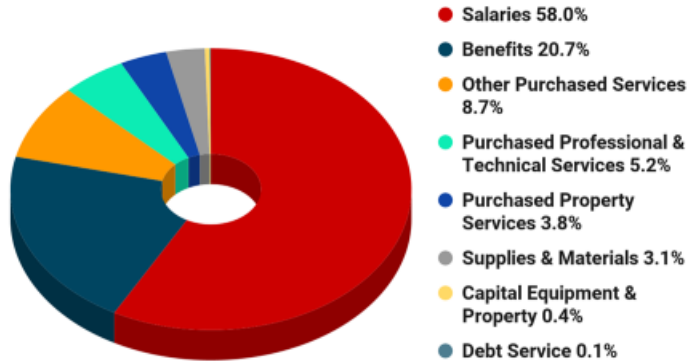
Fixed Cost Increases 2023-2024

Category	Additional \$ over 22/23
Substitutes	470,372
Statewide Transportation	261,014
Pension	313,059
Fuel (Transportation)	194,216
Utilities (Elec, Gas)	154,423
Custodial Services	106,600
Interpreters/Therapists	78,250
Non-Medical Insurance	31,403
Out-of-District Tuitions	9,226
TOTAL	1,618,563



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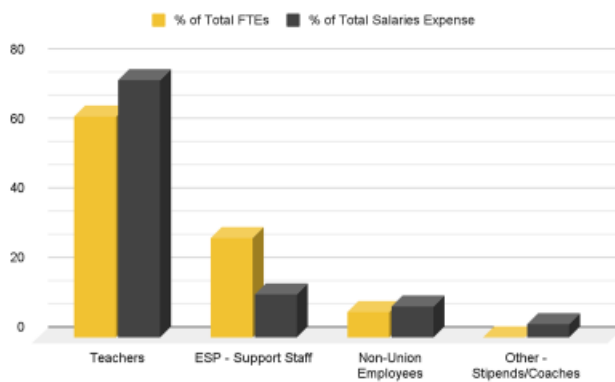
Overview of 2023-2024 Budget



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BOOK 110 PAGE

Salary Percentages by Category



Estimate of How Budget Will Be Funded

	2022-2023 APPROVED	2023-2024 REQUEST	DIFFERENCE	% over FY23 Revised
Town Appropriation	57,273,515	59,526,422	+2,252,907	3.934%
State Aid	11,541,757	11,557,376	+15,619	0.001%
Fund Balance - Reappropriation	500,000	500,000	0	
Tuitions	4,268,600	4,268,600	0	
Medicaid	300,000	300,000	0	
Other Earnings	103,000	130,000	+27,000	
Investment Earnings	15,000	60,000	+45,000	
TOTAL	74,001,872	76,342,398	+2,340,526	3.163%

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Historical Town Funding

	Budget	Increase in \$ over prior year	Increase in \$ over prior year
Projected 2024	59,526,422	2,252,907	3.934%
2023	57,273,515	1,396,915	2.500%
2022	55,876,600	1,970,074	3.655%
2021	53,906,526	95,783	0.178%
2020	53,810,743	1,729,910	3.322%
2019	52,080,833	1,872,139	3.729%
2018	50,208,694	1,724,373	3.557%
2017	48,484,321		



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Enterprise Funds

School Food Service	\$1,150,000
Athletic Gate Receipts	\$35,000
Athletic Activities - Sports Camp	\$30,000
Computer Repair Maintenance Program	\$30,000
Total Enterprise Funds	\$1,245,000
Restricted (Special Revenue) Funds TOTAL	\$6,098,500



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How Restricted Grants Support NKSD

Title I & COZ	Office of Family Learning is funded solely by grants - these are two that contribute immensely
Title II	Supports the Technology Instructional Coach, GEMS-Net Science Curriculum and other prof development
Title III	Supports MLL students
ESSER	Fully funded the DEI Audit, Right -to-Read Staff Training and several key positions
Categorical & Perkins Grants	Fund Career and Tech Programs at NKHS will begin to support feeder programs at DMS & WMS
IDEA/Preschool	Supports Special Education Program
Comprehensive Literacy Grant	Funds ELA Implementation



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Projected Grant Support for FY24

ESSER II & III	3,400,000
CRP	2,100,000
CTE & Perkins	230,000
Comprehensive Literacy Grant	100,000
COZ	39,500
ARP-HCY	29,000
Others	200,000



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President Mancini thanked School Committee Chair Earle and Dr. Pallotta for their presentation.

President Mancini opened the floor for Public Comment.

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Tom Schafer, 79 Pine Tree Circle, stated that he has lost two classmates to suicide. There is a need for mental health services. He also congratulated Ralph Mollis on his Budget award and stated that the school has won many awards.

Anne German, 90 Plum Beach Road, Saunderstown, stated that she is compelled to say that as a parent of a child who receives services, she is grateful to the staff, teachers and all involved with the services they receive. She appreciated the efforts by the Town Council and School Committee to include additional staff for mental health in the schools.

Lise Felice, 13 Loop Drive, stated that she has no children in this district but works in other districts as a health professional. She appreciates all the work that goes into putting together a budget and doing it all with very limited resources. She supports all increases that have to do with Mental Health.

President Mancini thanked everyone for their participation in tonight's discussion and stated the Council is looking forward to working with the School Committee.

II. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward
Town Clerk