

At the Regular 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 4th day of March, 2024 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 80 Boston Neck Road, at 6:45 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President
Katherine K. Anderson
Lawrence C. Mandel
Dr. Kimberly Ann Page (arrived at 6:47 p.m.)

ABSENT: Matthew B. McCoy

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk
Susan A. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk
James M. Callaghan, Town Solicitor

Clerk's note: Due to technical difficulties, an audio recording and video recording of this meeting is not available until Item Number 19.

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on March 4, 2024 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. Executive Session

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4 and 42-46-5, Subsection (5) - Real Estate (Avigation Easement).

MEETING RECONVENED AT 7:00 P.M.

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To seal the minutes of the Executive Session.

4. Salute to Flag

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

5. Public Comment

There was no public comment; however, President Mancini stated that he feels it's important to recognize our outstanding students and the principal at the High School shared the following with him:

Academic Decathlon

15 teams competed and North Kingstown was 1st overall. We had 21 individual medal winners with Lilly Borkman coming in first overall in the Honors Division and Lucas Meier coming in first overall in the Scholastic Division.

The top 10 in the North Kingstown High School Class of 2024 in alphabetical order are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Juilliana Bucci | Quinn O'Connell |
| Bryce Cogswell | Audrey Paxton |
| Zachary DiBiase - Valedictorian | Brandon Richard |
| Sydney Howell - Salutatorian | Sofia Simas |
| Lena Lee | Tiffiani Tan |

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 6 through 18 as presented with the exception of Agenda Item Numbers 11, 12, and 14.

6. Approval of Minutes

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 12, 2024 as submitted by the Office of the Town Clerk.

7. Receipt of Donation

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the following donation in the amount of \$20.00:

For: Beechwood Senior Center
From: Joan Morito \$20.00

8. Authorization for the Town Manager to enter into a Payment-in-Lieu of Tax Agreement

VOTED: To authorize the Town Manager to execute a Payment-in-Lieu of Tax Agreement between the Town of North Kingstown and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, acting by and through its agent and attorney in fact, the Quonset Development Corporation and Green Development LLC.

9. Authorization to accept the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant

VOTED: To accept the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant in the amount of \$235,634.70 for the deep energy retrofit of the Municipal Office Building including the installation of a new efficient HVAC system, building controls, and insulation and weatherization measures; and to authorize the Town Manager to sign a Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of North Kingstown and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER).

10. Approval of Purchase

VOTED: To approve the purchase for the Fire Department for a Command Vehicle (2024 Chevrolet Tahoe) from Liberty Chevrolet, 90 Bay State Road, Wakefield, MA 01880 (MPA 563), in the amount of \$55,409.00.

Funding from Fire Prevention Expense Account #16708030-531113.

11. Award of Bid

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To award the bid for the Department of Public Works for one (1) 2024 John Deere 507E Utility Tractor with operators' cab, front end loader, and rear mount mower to Howard Johnson, Inc., 1978 Kingstown Road, South Kingstown, RI 02879, in the amount of \$68,000.00.

Funding is from Capital - Highway Vehicular Equipment - Account #30010021-550401.

Clerk's note: This item was pulled from the Consent Agenda to revise the funding source from ARPA.

12. Award of Bid

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To award the bid for the Department of Public Works for one (1) 2024 JCB 4CX-14 Super Backhoe Loader with Extendable Dipper Stick to Alta Equipment Co., 114 Hall Street, Concord, NH 03301, for a net bid price of \$148,000.00.

Funding for this purchase is from Town Capital Account #30010020-550401.

13. Award of Bid

VOTED: To award the bid for the Department of Public Works for one (1) 2025 Freightliner 108 SD Dump Truck with 10' Plow Package to Freightliner of Hartford, Inc., 222 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT 06108, for a net bid price of \$238,385.00.

Funding for this purchase will be from ARPA Funds.

14. Award of Contract

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To award a contract for the Planning Department for Professional Consulting Services to assist in the required Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update to GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., 188 Valley Street, #300, Providence, RI 02903, in the amount of \$39,500.00.

Funding is from:

- Awarded FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant - Account #17209010-531011 - \$36,000.00
- FY2024 Budget - Planning Department - Contractual Services - Account #0019010-531206 - \$4,000.00

15. Holiday Sales License (new)

VOTED: To approve to July 1, 2024 the application for a Holiday Sales License by White Pine Landscaping Inc., 22 Austin Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date, receipt of a copy of their RI Retail Sales Tax Permit, and approval from the Building Official and the Fire Marshall.

16. Refuse Collector – Commercial Not for Hire Licenses (6) (change of location) (renewals)

VOTED: To approve the application for Change of Location of six (6) Refuse Collector - Commercial Not for Hire Licenses from White Pine Landscaping LLC, 251 Exeter Road, to White Pine Landscaping LLC, 22 Austin Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To approve to January 1, 2025 the renewal application for six (6) Refuse Collector - Commercial Not for Hire Licenses from White Pine Landscaping LLC, 22 Austin Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date, receipt of a copy of their vehicle registrations, and a receipt of a copy of their certificate of liability insurance.

17. Holiday Sales License (new)

VOTED: To approve to July 1, 2024 the application for a Holiday Sales License by Tower Hill Convenience LLC, 1085 Tower Hill Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date, receipt of a copy of their RI Retail Sales Tax Permit, and approval from the Building Official and the Fire Marshall.

18. Victualling License (new)

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2024 the application for a Victualling License by Tower Hill Convenience LLC, 1085 Tower Hill Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a copy of a certificate from the Rhode Island Department of Health; receipt of a copy of their RI Retail Sales Tax Permit; and compliance with the recommendations of the Planning Department, the Building Official, the Water Department, and the Fire Marshall.

II. REPORTS

19. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

Projects

- We had our regularly scheduled meeting with Revolution Wind this past Thursday regarding their Offshore Wind Farm Project and not much has changed since my last Manager's Report. They continue to bring their On-Shore Substation up to grade, King Pile Driving has begun, all area abutters have received outreach, and Pipe Pile Driving at the Interconnection Facility will begin later this month with public notification going out once the time frame has been set. They have mentioned that they will be reaching out to me regarding off-hours request of work. I will review with staff as to the feasibility of this request and will keep the Council and the public up to date.
- In what is a sure sign of spring, Public Works will begin Street Sweeping next week, the week of March 11 – 15, weather permitting.
- Public Works has also completed their finishing touches on the improvements to the Wickford Public Restrooms. They recently completed HVAC additions which will now provide heat and air conditioning during the appropriate seasons, adding to the tile, petition, appliance, and paint improvements taken place over these past months.
- And the Tree Warden will be embarking on a project which will result in improvements and landscaping to our Veteran's Memorial Park, here across the street from our Town Hall.
- The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has implemented a new traffic pattern on Route 138 where it will pass underneath the Tower Hill Road/Route 1 Bridge in town. RIDOT will shift the travel lanes in both directions, creating a work zone in the center median. This is part of their \$35.8 million project replacing the bridge and will be in place for approximately 8 weeks. Additional information can be found on ridot.net/RhodeWorks.

School Department

- The School Department Building Committee will reconvene with its first meeting of 2024 this Thursday at 6pm at the School Department Administration Building in Quonset Business Park.
- Members of our team and I will also be meeting with members of the School Department team to follow up on our discussions regarding the various services we provide to the School Department, along with our use of School Department facilities such as their gymnasiums for our Recreational Programs, and how these services should be billed or, better yet and hopefully, not billed as it all comes out of the same taxpayer pockets.

Finances

- Our Finance Department issued our Popular Annual Financial Report, or PAFR, for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023. This report is available on our website and is a document designed to increase transparency and awareness to our finances and government through user friendly financial reporting. It was also submitted to GFOA as part of their awards program. My thanks to Deb and her entire Finance Team, along with Kate Glass of my office, for putting this together and making it available.

Recreation

- Another reminder that registration for our 2024 Summer Camp will be held at 9am, online, on Monday March 11th.

Scholarships for our Summer Camp are available. Please contact our Recreation Office and someone will assist you in applying.

And our Recreation Department's annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, March 23rd from 11am – 12:30pm at Wilson Park.

Miscellaneous

- Yet another congratulations to Haley Wicker and Chelsey Dumas-Gibbs on their receipt of another Scholarship Grant from the R.I. Interlocal Trust. They've been awarded \$2,000 to provide "Developing Managers as Leaders" Training to 20 of our Department Heads through this Scholarship Grant. They will be recognized for this and prior awards at the Loss Prevention Luncheon this month and I look forward to joining them as they are being recognized for their outstanding work.
- Based on the town's success and my talk before the R.I. Interlocal Trust Event late last year, the National Conference Director of Government Technology and the Homeland Security Cybersecurity Advisor for R.I. have asked me to present at the R.I. Digital Government Summit this coming May. I look forward to presenting a 15-minute case study on our Cyber Attack experience.
- There was an article in this week's local news regarding the Police Department's review of alleged threats to a School Committee Member. I would like to stress that what is taking place is not an independent investigation or an uncommon practice on matters such as this. As the State Police confers with the Attorney General, local police departments confer with their prosecutor to review material compiled by the Police Department before making a recommendation on whether the matter rises to criminal activity. In this particular instance, our Solicitor felt that there may be a conflict regarding another case he is handling and to protect the best interests of the town advised to hire a conflict attorney. Attorney Deaton is the conflict attorney. If she recommends moving forward with charges, she would follow through as the Prosecutor on behalf of the town in any resulting litigation. If she determines the matter does not rise to the level of criminal activity, then the matter will be closed. I felt it was important to let the Council know of this clarification.

Introduction/Presentation of Town Manager's Preliminary Budget – FY2024/2025

Mr. Mollis gave the following presentation:



FY 25 Town Manager Recommended Budget
(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)
Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island



"History is the best guide to the future." – B. Dedman

March 4, 2024
A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager
FY 25 Recommended Budget Presentation

In accordance with the Charter of the Town of North Kingstown, I hereby submit the proposed Annual Budget for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025.



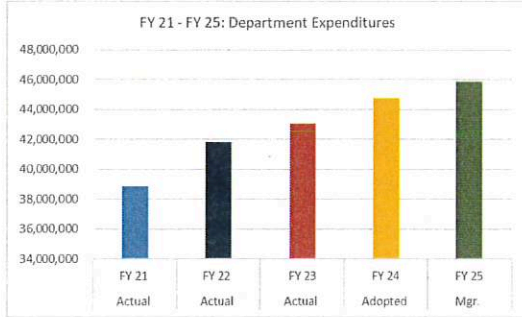
The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget reflects a zero based budgeting process as required by the Town Council. I want to recognize the dedication of our department heads as they have compiled departmental budgets which provide outstanding and exciting services and initiatives while avoiding adverse financial impact on our taxpayers. I also want to thank our entire dedicated workforce for their hard work. The employees of our town have established a reputation of responsiveness and compassion for our residents and businesses while being effective and efficient.

The Budget I present for Fiscal Year 2025 continues the award-winning format we designed and introduced six years ago. This format is informative, transparent, and easy to follow for our residents.

TAX RATES	
Residential	\$14.34*
Commercial	\$16.28
Tangible/Personal Property	\$17.85
*Homestead Exemption Rate (5% reduction)	\$13.62

This Fiscal Year 2025 Budget achieves the goal set by this Administration and Town Council of maintaining the tax rates at their current level. This 'no tax increase' proposal, coupled with the 5% Homestead Exemption adopted in Fiscal Year 2023, the phaseout of the Motor Vehicle Tax and the recent Personal Property Tax Exemption, provides significant tax relief to our residents and businesses.

FY 2024 and FY 2025 Expenditure Summary & Projections



	Adopted FY 24	Mgr. FY 25	% Change
Town Council	70,964	70,964	0.00%
Town Manager	327,070	326,873	-0.06%
Human Resource	1,402,981	1,370,120	-2.34%
Town Clerk	504,616	514,923	2.04%
Board Of Canvasser	120,867	165,607	37.02%
Legal Services	180,000	180,000	0.00%
Finance	1,932,475	1,956,670	1.25%
Assessor	373,246	375,373	0.57%
Technology	842,901	1,022,059	21.25%
Planning	882,184	845,368	-4.17%
Code Enforcement	620,008	635,297	2.47%
Senior Center	644,315	662,434	2.81%
Recreation	1,065,548	1,220,253	14.52%
Dispatch	788,956	832,655	5.54%
Fire	11,222,483	11,667,804	3.97%
Police	9,999,610	10,437,387	4.38%
Animal Contro	143,822	139,301	-3.14%
Harbor Master	141,696	147,528	4.12%
PW-Admin	377,149	404,320	7.20%
PW-Engineering	488,642	487,049	-0.33%
PW-Highway	3,082,620	3,043,510	-1.27%
PW-Facilities	1,616,594	1,681,108	3.99%
Utilities	1,646,282	1,519,374	-7.71%
Civic Contribution:	219,265	243,877	11.22%
QDC	676,267	691,015	2.18%
Debt	5,365,110	5,258,038	-2.00%
Total	44,735,671	45,898,906	2.60%
Library State Aic	294,145	260,615	-11.40%
Library Appropriation	1,403,121	1,431,325	2.01%
School State Aic	11,557,376	13,313,799	15.20%
School Dept Appropriation	59,526,442	61,359,855	3.08%
Capital Appropriation	-	-	0.00%
Total	117,516,757	122,264,500	4.04%

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget provides an increase of 2.60% to the ‘municipal’ portion of the budget (inclusive of School and Town Debt Service), virtual level funding of the Library Budget due to the reduction in Library State Aid and 5.1% increase to the School Department Budget (inclusive of the Town Appropriation and State Aid). The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget funds an award-winning school district; extensive Senior Center services; responsive and outstanding public safety; outstanding municipal operations; maintenance of over 150 miles of paved roads; parks and playgrounds that are the envy of the region; economic development; and maintenance of over 200,000 square feet of municipal buildings. A detailed, informative and transparent summary of all expenditures by department can be found within the budget book.

Town Manager Recommended FY 2025 Budget Enterprise Funds

FUND	FY 2024	FY 2025
Golf Course	\$1,968,137	\$2,315,109
Municipal Court	\$198,921	\$202,096
Sewer	\$2,568,684	\$2,419,412
Transfer Station	\$1,354,673	\$1,390,103
Water	\$578,4736	\$690,474
Allen Harbor	\$442,058	\$437,657

This Fiscal Year 2025 proposed budget also allocates funding towards our vital and award-winning Enterprise Funds. These funds are self-supporting and funded outside of the General Fund, meaning they are funded through the fees of their users. The Enterprise Funds include our highly regarded and award-winning Water Department, the popular Allen Harbor Marina, one of the best conditioned and busiest Municipal Golf Courses in Rhode Island, and our efficient Transfer Station, Municipal Court, and Sewer Department.



Many difficult decisions were made to reduce the General Fund Budget to a level that would maintain our current tax rates while sustaining and at times improving the services our residents have come to expect and deserve. There are many exciting projects and initiatives included in the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget that are supplemented with highly anticipated projects and initiatives being funded outside the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget via ARPA Funds and other accounts we have been able to save over the years for these purposes. While these initiatives and projects are too numerous to list, they include:

- The year-long celebration and commemoration of our 350th Anniversary.
- The long-awaited renovation of our Municipal Office Building.
- Continued improvements, renovations and maintenance to our playground and court facilities.
- Highly anticipated upgrade and renovation of Yorktown Park.
- \$700,000 of road paving and maintenance throughout our Town.
- Improvements to our premiere Municipal Golf Course.
- Upgrades to our critical information technology infrastructure.
- Wickford Waterfront/Streetscape Project.
- Continued funding of our OPEB obligations.
- Funding of priorities outlined with the CIP of our Asset Management Commission.

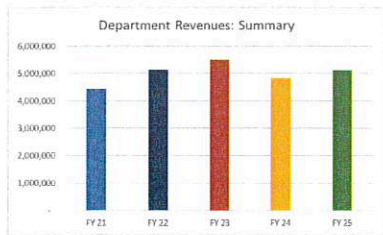
We are also excited about the many initiatives being funded outside of our municipal budget coming to fruition as a result of the due diligence of the town administration. These include the long-awaited beginning stages of the Post Road/West Main Street Sidewalk Project and the successful award of millions of dollars to our Water Department as a result of our initiative and actions in a Class Action Suit.

Description	NKSD FY25 Proposed Budget	Town Manager FY25 Recommended Budget	Notes
Town Appropriation	\$61,602,009	\$61,359,855	
Tuitions/Individuals	\$150,000	\$150,000	
Tuitions/LEAS	\$4,224,412	\$4,224,412	
Investment Earnings	\$144,000	\$280,000	Recommended
Other Fees	\$60,000	\$60,000	
Rental Income	\$25,000	\$25,000	
State Aid	\$13,257,645	\$13,313,799	
Medicaid	\$325,000	\$325,000	
Transfer In – Indirect	\$50,000	\$50,000	
TOTAL	\$79,838,066*	\$79,788,066	Recommended \$50,000 could be made up via reductions in legal or other line items
*4.58% increase over prior year			

Statically, North Kingstown has been one of the most generous communities in all of Rhode Island in our annual town appropriation to our School District, averaging over 3.36% in annual increase over the past 3 years. Fiscal 2025 is no exception. While this proposed budget includes some minor adjustments to the School Committee’s request, the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 will provide the School Department with an increase of 3.1% in the Town appropriation and, with our proposed adjustments, will appropriately fund their requested increase in their total proposed budget of 4.58% over last year’s budget.

As with last year’s budget, the Fiscal Year 2025 proposal does not include a direct Capital Appropriation towards the School Department budget. There aren’t any communities that I am aware of that annually fund School Department Capital outside the general appropriation. More importantly, taking into consideration the capital needs of our School District, it would not make financial or business sense to appropriate a small annual capital appropriation knowing the significant capital needs of our School Department. As with other communities, these needs must be met with a bond, and must be met now. I have committed to Superintendent Duva to partner with him and work tirelessly towards a bond question that would address, at the very least, the immediate capital needs of the School Department and have further committed to him the Town’s support to come up with a plan to address these needs no matter the outcome of a forthcoming bond.

FY 2024/25 Revenues Summary



	Actual FY 21	Actual FY 22	Actual FY 23	Jul-Dec FY 24	Adopted FY 24	Mgr FY 25	% Change
Taxes	81,505,849	83,883,378	82,947,107	47,193,680	85,295,302	85,260,731	1.13%
Prior Year Taxes	1,195,234	1,086,959	1,362,731	313,334	1,000,000	1,000,000	0.00%
Interest Late Pay	464,982	335,719	293,674	183,141	275,000	275,000	0.00%
QDC-Pilots	3,275,268	3,985,239	4,440,364	2,277,929	5,196,667	5,649,927	8.68%
Town Clerk	1,233,508	1,393,537	1,080,653	544,993	1,294,500	1,118,670	-13.58%
Probate Court	63,606	52,377	69,640	28,447	53,000	53,000	0.00%
Police	998,842	1,298,928	1,215,262	412,451	1,185,300	1,219,800	2.91%
Harbor Master	126,309	130,501	140,076	15,923	136,000	136,750	0.55%
Animal Control	1,548	3,546	3,105	350	4,135	2,635	-36.28%
Trans Ambulance	600,000	600,000	600,000	300,000	600,000	600,000	0.00%
Planning	84,275	74,883	65,951	33,280	67,500	73,000	8.15%
Code Enforcement	637,448	702,068	692,403	298,821	570,000	607,500	6.58%
Finance	288,837	499,842	1,188,812	962,848	511,661	873,184	70.66%
Recreation	372,094	397,846	451,007	146,070	383,000	414,000	8.99%
Assessment	137	-	-	-	150	-	-100.00%
Public Works	12,769	47,130	5,892	4,717	10,000	10,000	0.00%
MV Base	1,374,790	1,715,468	5,186,229	2,689,409	5,186,229	5,186,229	0.00%
MV Phase Out	192,580	192,589	192,559	-	192,589	192,589	0.00%
State-Pilot	453	1,080	1,149	50	1,005	100	-90.06%
Pub Service	326,401	312,449	325,676	367,064	325,676	367,064	12.71%
Hotel, Meal & Bev	622,435	1,070,493	960,713	397,485	965,000	1,052,197	9.04%
Airport	58,514	64,642	56,255	-	60,000	60,000	0.00%
Tangible Property	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Aid	1,551,291	1,001,318	1,074,898	543,899	949,516	1,491,166	57.04%
Other	1,296,798	696,688	1,028,364	231,671	725,000	1,387,500	91.38%
Allocated Cost	361,512	897,298	773,054	308,176	616,351	604,779	-1.88%
Total	96,655,489	100,443,978	104,155,595	57,253,747	105,605,581	108,635,820	2.87%
Pass Thru: Library	297,608	301,065	345,378	182,792	353,799	314,881	-11.00%
Pass Thru: School Aid	11,861,301	11,295,672	11,543,047	5,571,290	11,557,376	13,313,799	15.20%
Pass Thru: Total	12,158,909	11,596,737	11,888,425	5,754,082	11,911,175	13,628,680	14.42%
Total	108,814,398	112,040,715	116,044,019	63,007,828	117,516,756	122,264,500	4.04%

While most of our budget deliberations focus on departmental expenditures, it is the revenue portion of our budget that sets the tone for the upcoming year. Due to our success with PILOTS with Quonset Development Corporation, the efforts of our Finance Department in maximizing our revenue via tax collection and aggressive investing, our success in obtaining outside funding for projects, and our strong cash balance, our Fiscal Year 2025 revenue is projected to provide the sufficient funding to meet the needs of the 4.04% increase in our budget (Town, School, and Library combined) without raising our tax rate.

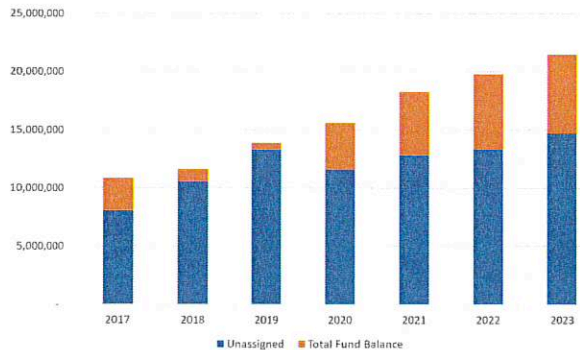
Real Estate Tax Exemptions

Exemption	FY2023	Total Evaluation Eligible	Tax Rate 14.34	FY2024	Total Evaluation Eligible	Tax Rate 14.34
Blind	13	390,000	5,593	16	480,000	6,883
Sr. Income	115	14,795,530	212,168	135	16,150,230	231,594
Disabled	10	518,235	7,431	8	354,340	5,081
Gold Star	3	33,000	473	3	33,000	473
Income	3	110,100	1,579	5	214,775	3,080
Veteran	1,219	15,287,500	219,223	1,208	15,159,330	217,385
Vet Disb	54	788,400	11,306	61	890,600	12,771
Disabled H	1	377,000	5,406	1	377,000	5,406
Flat Elderly	2,199	65,970,000	946,010	2,231	66,930,000	959,776
Homestead	6,386	163,884,102	2,350,098	6,612	169,405,453	2,429,274
Total	10,003	262,153,867	3,759,286	10,280	269,994,728	3,871,724

The Town offers a variety of exemptions to residents. In FY23, 6,386 taxpayers took advantage of the new Homestead exemption. In FY24, 226 additional applications were received. The exemptions here allowed tax relief totaling \$3,871,724 in FY24.

In addition to maintaining our tax rates, North Kingstown also continues to be generous in the exemptions we provide to our residents. These exemptions, highlighted by the Homestead Exemption, are listed in Appendix A of our Budget Book. In total, we provide over \$3.8 million in direct tax relief via exemptions to our residents.

Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island Fund Balance: Last Seven Years



Source: Town of North Kingstown 2023 Financial Statements 2/26/24. Presented by: Kyle Connors, CPA/Marcum LLP

We have been very successful with our financial accomplishments in my seven years as Town Manager. Fiscal Year 2023 was our seventh consecutive balanced budget and operating surplus. We've increased the funding of our OPEB obligation; been recognized by our Rating Agencies with an AA+ bond rating; and have been awarded the GFOA Budget Award; and our unrestricted Fund Balance has grown to \$14.7 million.

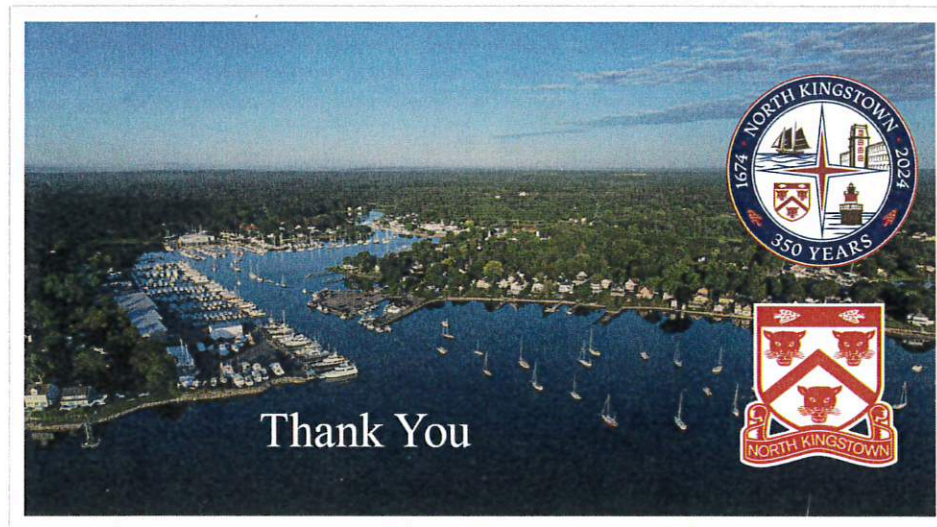
This is an exciting time for North Kingstown as we celebrate our 350th Anniversary. We continue to build our financial stability and embark on exciting improvements and initiatives, properly funding our assets and infrastructure and our award-winning Schools while maintaining our tax rates and providing tax relief to our residents. The Town Council, town employees, and residents have much to be proud of.

FY 2025 Budget Calendar

2023		2024	
Sept. to Dec. 2023			
October 2023	January 2024		
Monday, 16 th	Wednesday, 31 st	Deadline for Final Report of Capital Improvement Plan by Asset Management Committee (2 -333 Ordinances)	
Monday, 20 th	February 2024		
November 2023	Monday, 12 th	Town Council Meeting with Asset Management Committee regarding Capital Improvement Program	
By Wednesday, 1 st	Monday, 26 th	Deadline for submission of School Committee & Library Board of Trustees Budgets to Manager (Sec. 908)	
December 2023	March 2024		
Monday, 11 th	Monday, 4 th	Submission of Town Manager's Proposed Budget to Town Council (Sec. 1004)	
Friday, 15 th	Monday, 11 th	Evening Budget Work Session with Dept. Heads and School Department	
	Tuesday, 12 th	Budget Work Session w/Dept. Heads Adoption of Preliminary Budget by the Town Council. (Sec. 1005)	
	Wednesday, 13 th	Submission to State Department of Municipal Affairs "Notice of Tax Rate"	
	Thursday, 21 st & 28 th	Advertise "Notice of Tax Rate," "Budget Summary" & "Council Preliminary Budget Hearing"	
	April 2024		
	Wednesday, 3 rd	Town Council's Preliminary Budget Hearing (School only)	
		Town Council's Preliminary Budget Hearing (all Budgets except School) (Sec. 1006)	
	Monday, 22 nd	Deadline for submission of Petitions to Town Council (Sec. 1007)	
	Monday, 29 th	Town Council Meeting to consider Petitions and Adoption of the Town Council Budget (Sec. 1008 of Charter)	
	May 2024		
	Wednesday, 1 st	Deadline for Final Approval of Town Council's Adopted Budget by Town Council (Sec. 1008 of the Charter)	
	Thursday, 9 th	Advertise Town Council's Adopted Budget	
	Tuesday, 21 st	Deadline for submission of Final Petitions to Town Clerk (Sec. 1009)	
	Tuesday, 29 th	Deadline for verification of petition signatures by Board of Canvassers (Sec. 1009)	
	June 2024		
	Saturday, 1 st	School to balance appropriation (RIGL 16-2-21) (deadline, if no referendum is held) If Referendum is held - 7/1/2023	
	Tuesday, 4 th	Budget Referendum, if requested by qualified elector petition. (Sec. 1010)	



The next steps in the budget process will be budget sessions between the Town Council and Department Heads on March 11th and 12th, the planned adoption of the Preliminary Budget on March 12th and a public hearing to be held in our Town Council Chambers on April 3rd. I look forward to working with the Town Council in the days ahead as you deliberate, meet with my Administration, receive input from our residents, and adopt a budget that continues to build on our success.



Councilor Page stated that she appreciates the way the budget book is put together as it is very detailed and answers a lot of questions and shows the hard work staff has put into this budget.

Councilor Mandel echoed Councilor Pages' comments regarding the budget document. He asked how we will be able to realize no tax increase when the budget is increasing by 4.04%. Mr. Mollis stated there are several factors. The QDC PILOT agreements provide a significant "special" revenue, and we were able to structure those agreements, so they weren't front loaded but more consistent through the term of the agreements, for new agreements and amendments to some of those agreements. We have over the past several years been cautious with our collection rate and due to the efforts of our Finance Department the revenue has exceeded what we have budgeted, and our earned interest income and investments are another driving factor as we have been able to negotiate excellent interest rates for our fund balance. Our department revenues are consistently increasing with the use of ARPA Funds and the many grants received by the staff.

President Mancini thanked the Manager and Staff for presenting a budget which is resulting in a projected no tax increase.

Mr. Mollis stated that the following is a presentation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):



ARPA: American Rescue Plan Act

Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island

March 4, 2024

Overview



THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY ESTABLISHED THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021.

THE ACT CONTAINED \$350 BILLION IN FUNDING FOR ELIGIBLE STATE, LOCAL, TERRITORIAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS. OF THE \$350 BILLION.

THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND WAS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE \$1.8 BILLION.



THE TOTAL ALLOCATION FOR THE TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN WAS \$7,868,125.

Criteria of ARPA Funds

ELIGIBLE USES:

- Public Health
- Negative Economic Impacts
- Premium Pay
- Revenue Loss
- Investment in Water, Sewer & Broadband Infrastructure
- Other (Administrative Costs)

INELIGIBLE USES:

- Deposits to Pension Funds
- Projects in existence prior to ARPA
- Reductions in net tax revenue
- Debt service, legal settlements, or judgements
- Deposits to rainy day funds or reserves (Fund Balance)

North Kingstown is qualified under the mathematical formula determining eligibility for revenue loss. This is significant as revenue loss funds can be used for any community cost that does not fall under the ineligible uses. Expenditures within the revenue loss criteria still need to be spent within the ARPA timeline criteria and expenditures need to be tracked and reported as required within the ARPA criteria.

Reporting & Timing



Reporting



April 2022: 1st Report Due

Reports due periodically thereafter.

Timing

- Begins March 3, 2021
- Funds obligated by December 31, 2024
- Funds spent by December 31, 2026

Municipal Funds Received:

- 50% July 2021: \$3,934,063
- 50% July 2022: \$3,934,063

ARPA Funds Spent, Committed, or Allocated to date

As approved by Town Council

\$50,000	350 th Anniversary commemoration
\$1,250,000	Renovation of Municipal Office Building (includes Health & Safety Improvements via ventilation upgrade, interior & exterior improvements, accessibility upgrades, security upgrades & HVAC improvements)
\$1,949,686	Public Recreation improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$60,700 Ryan & Wilson Parks LED lighting • \$224,995 Wilson Park Public Walking Track • \$6,418 Court Renovations • \$32,000 Wilson Park Splashpad Improvements • \$774,530 McGinn Park Renovation Project (Court Improvements) • \$851,043 Wilson Park Renovation Project (Court Improvements)
\$317,012	Public Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$225,000 towards Summer Recreation Camp Program (expanded programs & scholarships/financial assistance) • \$60,983 Phillip Street Sewer Extension • \$4,034 Boone LLC Tourism • \$26,995 Community AED Equipment
\$289,390	Government Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$208,340 Network/IT Infrastructure Improvements • \$81,050 GIS Improvements
\$1,050,000	Administration/OPEB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750,000 OPEB Funding • \$300,000 Administrative Costs
\$4,906,088	TOTAL
\$2,962,037	Balance to be allocated/committed by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026

Recommendations

\$238,385	Public Works: Full Size Dump Truck with Plow Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This vehicle will replace a 2000 Full Size Dump Truck With Plow Package in which the motor had a major engine block issue and was not repairable. Projected delivery is 350 days from award. 						
\$238,680	Four (4) Police Vehicles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This continues our annual practice of purchasing four (4) Police vehicles within each budget to maintain the condition of the frequently used fleet. Use of ARPA for the FY 2025 Budget will allow for the containment of expenses resulting in a "no tax increase" budget and will allow for the reboot of the annual lease program budgetarily instituted. 						
\$800,000	Yorktown Park Renovations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This much-anticipated renovation is much needed. We have unsuccessfully applied for grant funding in prior years, but again applied in 2024. This ARPA funding opportunity would guarantee this project would be forthcoming whether or not grant funding is successful. 						
\$1,668,980	Balance of Projected Funding for Wickford Waterfront/Streetscape Project (Municipal Parking Lot Project) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Projected Project Cost</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,950,745</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Less Grants Successfully Obtained</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(\$931,765)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Less Grant Matching Requirements</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(\$350,000)</td> </tr> </table>	Projected Project Cost	\$2,950,745	Less Grants Successfully Obtained	(\$931,765)	Less Grant Matching Requirements	(\$350,000)
Projected Project Cost	\$2,950,745						
Less Grants Successfully Obtained	(\$931,765)						
Less Grant Matching Requirements	(\$350,000)						
\$15,992	Contingency						

Other Projects That Will Need Funding

- Soft costs/design for Public Safety Complex Ballot Question
- Public Works:
 - Fuel Pump New Fleet System (\$40,000)
 - Mid -Size Dump Truck
 - Pick -Ups
- Signal Rock Renovation Work
- Allen Harbor Dredging (\$500,000)
- NKPD Simulation Training



Questions?

Thank you.

Mr. Mollis stated that during the upcoming budget discussions and adoption of the preliminary budget he will be asking the Council to vote on these recommendations.

20. CRS (Community Rating System) and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Director of Planning and Development Nicole LaFontaine stated the report the Council has been provided includes the updated goals and actions spreadsheet, as well as flood insurance information. These are required reporting tools that we need to give the Council as part of the Community Rating System Program (CRS) which is basically a flood plain management program that we are involved in. President Mancini stated that we have been given this update yearly. Ms. LaFontaine stated that is correct. Ms. LaFontaine stated the important thing the Council should know is that it is also an insurance vulnerability issue. Anyone who has a federally backed mortgage in flood prone areas are required to have flood insurance. In North Kingstown, it has been identified that there are 1,130 buildings in the Special Hazard area and currently there are 502 policies in place. It is important to note that if there are no mortgages on a property, we do not have data if they do in fact have flood insurance. It is important to note that all this data is coming from FEMA, and we use this in our everyday work.

President Mancini thanked Ms. LaFontaine for her extensive written report. (Clerk's note: a copy of Ms. LaFontaine's report is filed with the back-up materials for this agenda item).

In answer to Councilor Mandel's question how North Kingstown compares to other communities for our rating, Ms. LaFontaine stated that we currently are, and have been at 9. There are many factors in the rating system, and we are working toward obtaining an 8. Councilor Mandel asked if Ms. LaFontaine could provide a map, she stated she will forward one.

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To receive and file the Community Rating System and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

III. NEW BUSINESS

21. Arts Council – Appointments

The Council instructed the Clerk to advertise the vacancies of four (4) members to the Arts Council as there were no applicants.

22. Conservation Commission - Appointment

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To appoint David Feeney, 59 Jenkins Court, to the Conservation Commission to March 1, 2025.

23. Economic Development Advisory Board - Appointment

The Council instructed the Clerk to advertise the vacancy of one (1) Second Alternate Member to the Economic Development Advisory Board as there were no applicants.

24. Veterans Day & Memorial Day Parades Committee -Appointments

The Council instructed the Clerk to advertise the vacancies of three (3) members to the Veterans Day & Memorial Day Parades Committee as there were no applicants.

25. Zoning Board of Review – Appointment

Motion by Councilor Mandel, seconded by Councilor Anderson and unanimously

VOTED: To appoint John Lees, 11 Prospect Avenue, Second Alternate to the Zoning Board of Review to July 1, 2024, to fill the unexpired term of Edwin Andrews.

26. Correspondence

The following is a summary of the email correspondence received by the North Kingstown Town Council:

02/26/2024 – David Andrews – Subj: School Safety/Public Building Modifications or Repair

02/26/2024 & 02/27/2024 – Robert Jones – Subj: Veterans Scholarship Committee

02/26/2024 – Brett Mallory – Subj: Veterans Scholarship Committee

02/28/2024 (2x) – Rob Martone – Subj: Town Manager Response – SRO Discussion at 2/6/2024 NKSC Meeting

03/01/2024 – Bill Seymour (2x) – Subj: Media Inquiry

03/01/2024 – Jennifer Lima – Subj: Media Inquiry

*Note Information Cut-Off 7:00 AM, March 4, 2024.

President Mancini stated the following emails were also received:

03/04/2024 – Mary Ann Hackett – Subj: No tax increase

03/04/2024 – Noeline Thomson: - Subj: Holding tax rate at current level.

Councilor Mandel stated that he held office hours at the Library and Jim Roehm expressed concerns regarding protecting our water, concerns over the middle school bond, and inquired what the status is of the proposed Public Safety Facility.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward
Town Clerk