

Town Administrator's Budget Message

Consolidated Revenues

The Town Council met with the School Committee in January 2021 to review projected revenues at the annual Pre-Budget Consultation. The forecast remains mostly unchanged and is summarized below:

- General Fund:
 - Proposed tax rate decrease of 9.30%; estimated residential property tax rate is \$12.48/\$1,000 assessed value, an decrease of \$(1.28); estimated commercial tax rate is \$16.81/\$1,000 assessed value, an decrease of \$-1.40
 - Town requests a 3.1% or \$591,162 a increase for non-education programs
 - The School Committee requests 4% or a \$1,077,160 increase for educational programs

Sewer Fund:

- Proposed sewer maintenance rate of \$16.89/1,000 gallons, an increase of \$0.11
- Proposed City of Newport meter charge of \$38.57/meter, an increase of \$2.17
- Proposed I&I Charge of \$13.71, resulting in a decrease

• Parks & Recreation Fund:

- Season pass fees remain unchanged
- \$10 daily parking fee as part of the Capital Replenishment Program has been reinstated.
- Campground season extended

• Refuse & Recycling Fund:

- Fees remain unchanged

Priorities in the upcoming year include:

General Fund

- Continue to expand community policing and firefighting programs
- Continue to invest in public works infrastructure projects
- Continue to plan for the redevelopment of the West Main Road/Coddington Highway properties, Shoreline Park and Lower Aquidneck Business District
- Continue to work collaboratively with the School Committee and Library Board of Directors
- Maintain the level of operations of general governmental services and contain associated costs

Sewer Fund

Sewer Maintenance revenues are budgeted to increase 2% in FY2022. The rate is anticipated to increase by 0.7%. The average number of gallons assessed increased by 3,772 gallons, or 9.0%, while the number of connected users increased from the prior year. The net effect is that the forecasted sewer maintenance rate will be \$16.89/1,000 gallons. Factoring in all charges associated with the sewer maintenance charge, the average user will see their net billing increase by \$49.93, or 6.5%.

Parks & Recreation Fund

Maintain the existing rate structure for beach season passes, moorings and dinghy space rentals and increase campground fees per Chapter 36 of the town ordinances.

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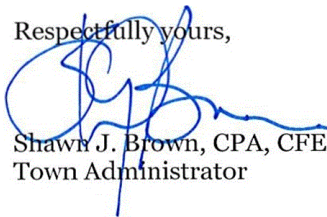
Refuse & Recycling Fund

- Maintain the highest level of service and customer satisfaction
- Recruit new customers
- Maintain the existing rate structure for the annual permit and bag fees
- Maintain an 'adequate' level of undesignated reserves to ensure continuity of operations to include managing program fees and capital replacement

The Town's department heads and their staffs have worked assiduously to address the Town's operational and capital needs in a thoughtful, cost-effective manner. While the economic environment prohibits us from addressing all of the challenges the Town faces, this budget is presented with minimal service reductions to residents and businesses.

This budget proposal continues a measured and deliberate approach in order to realize efficiencies and cost control. The proposal addresses priorities of the Town Council in a balanced manner, maintains reasonable expenses, and promotes improved economic development opportunities and quality of life within the community.

Respectfully yours,



Shawn J. Brown, CPA, CFE
Town Administrator