

**IMPACT OF PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS
GENERAL GOVERNMENT OPERATING BUDGET
February 27, 2008**

This narrative and the attached spreadsheet summarize the Town Administrator's recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding the FY 2009 budget reductions that will be necessary should the proposed Proposition 2 ½ Override not be approved by voters. Note that these proposals have not been voted by the Board of Selectmen or the Finance Committee. These proposed budget cuts total \$1,135,376.

Department of Public Works - \$438,120 in budget cuts

Reductions in this budget will be achieved largely through reductions in personnel and in contract services. Throughout the department, 8.5 positions will be eliminated. In addition, the following divisional cutbacks are proposed.

Land, Facilities and Natural Resources

One skilled laborer position would be eliminated. Contract mowing services would be eliminated, leaving all mowing operation to town crews. The contract mowing covers, on a weekly basis, 15 sites (approximately 45 acres); municipal personnel maintain another approximately 15 sites and 45 additional acres. Contract tree maintenance would also be eliminated. Both services would not be completed as timely as is possible under the current combination of contract and town personnel.

Highway/Sanitation

Four laborer positions would be eliminated, impacting the effectiveness and timeliness of all roadway and sidewalk operations including street sweeping, street striping, pothole repair, curbing repair and replacement, and repaving. Snow removal operations will be affected as 7 of the 8.5 positions to be eliminated department-wide participate in these operations.

Building Maintenance

One skilled laborer position would be eliminated, affecting the timeliness of building repairs.

Equipment Maintenance

One mechanic position would be eliminated and the police vehicle maintenance worker would be relocated to the DPW facility, affecting the timeliness of smaller routine police vehicle repairs in particular. Response time overall would be reduced due to less personnel.

Engineering

One Engineering Aide position would be eliminated, impacting the ability to do in-house design and engineering. This could necessitate further use of scarce "Chapter 90" state highway money for contract design services. Continued compliance with the federally-mandated stormwater management program could be jeopardized.

Council on Aging/Human Services - \$17,000 in budget cuts

These budget reductions will significantly affect the level of service that can be offered. Specifically, the number of programs that will be offered at the Senior Center will likely be reduced and new programs are unlikely to be developed. These programs offer opportunities for education, information, recreation, exercise and socialization and there is always demand to offer new programs to service the diverse needs of residents. The transportation program, which provides taxi vouchers and mileage reimbursement to volunteer drivers, would be reduced by 30%. Within the Human Services budget, contracted mental health services would be reduced by about half.

Fire Department - \$168,411 in budget cuts

To achieve the necessary budget reductions with the least amount of impact on public safety, the Fire Chief has proposed the elimination of the Training Officer position, thus enabling this individual to be returned to shift duty. Further, one administrative assistant position would be eliminated. In addition, overtime reductions totaling \$43,107 would be required. Station closings may still result on a sporadic basis during FY 2009.

Police Department - \$135,412 in budget cuts

To accomplish the necessary budget reductions, the Police Chief has proposed to eliminate the 14 school crossing guard positions. The balance of the cuts (\$16,182) will be achieved through reduction of overtime. These budget reductions will enable the department to fill the two remaining vacancies on the police department, bringing the department back to staffing levels maintained since 1990.

Morse Institute Library - \$164,000 in budget cuts

To meet the requested budget reduction, the Library would be closed on Sundays and programming would be reduced by about one-third. In addition the currently vacant Community Outreach Coordinator position would not be filled; this position has been highly successful in accessing grants for the Library. We believe that a waiver from the state funding requirements can be obtained in the first year of budget cuts; if these cuts are sustained into future years our certification becomes less certain.

Bacon Free Library - \$11,000 in budget cuts

The budget reductions would result in a reduced number of the highly popular story hours and other programming. Sporadic reduction in library hours may be necessary due to reduced personnel schedules. The reduction in spending for books and periodicals is exacerbated by continuous cost increases in these items.

Recreation and Parks Department - \$43,056 in budget cuts

The reductions in the Recreation and Parks Department would be met primarily through the elimination of administrative support staff. These positions are critical to ensure the timely and accurate processing of the thousands of program applications (and associated fees) received annually. The Director and Recreation Commission have significant concerns regarding the elimination of this position

Natick Community Organic Farm - \$91,577 in budget cuts

The budget reductions for the Organic Farm are achieved through elimination of funding for all salaried Farm positions. Previously, the Town funded the Farm Director's salary and part of the Assistant Farm Director's salary. The balance of the Assistant's salary and all of the Office Administrator's salary were funded by the Farm's Board of Directors. The Town would continue to fund the benefits for these positions, but funding for the salaries has been eliminated in the "cut" budget.

Board of Health - \$30,800 in budget cuts

A new Environmental Engineer/Inspector position was approved for this department in the FY 2008 budget. The department had difficulty filling the position in the beginning of the year and, as the extent of the anticipated budgetary challenges for FY 2009 became clearer, the Health Director was advised to not fill the position. The budget reduction proposed for the Health Department is to reduce funding for this position to a part-time (non-benefited) level. After a detailed review by the Finance Committee last year, the position was determined to be needed to keep pace with plan reviews and inspections associated with septic systems; residential sewage ejector pump systems; external grease traps; subdivision, building permit and site plan review and food establishment layout and construction.

Assessors' Office - \$15,000 in budget cuts

As the Assessors must meet Department of Revenue guidelines to be certified each tax year, and timely revaluations produce significant revenues, these critical functions cannot be jeopardized. No staff reductions are feasible.

A \$10,000 reduction is proposed in the Tax Mapping line item. The Town has done an excellent job with respect to our development and maintenance of our tax mapping program in coordination with the DPW's Engineering Division's Geographic Information System mapping program and personnel. The Department of Revenue requires that the Town's assessing maps be kept current; a reduction in this line item cannot be sustained over time.

The proposed \$5,000 reduction in the revaluation (consulting) line item may be sustainable. A substantial effort has been made over the past couple of years for on-site visits to ensure the most accurate real and personal property valuations; the resulting appropriation of \$75,000 should be sufficient to maintain the valuations.

Town Collector - \$8,000 in budget cuts

The overtime budget in the Tax Collector office would be reduced from \$7,500 to \$5,000 which could impact service levels in this department during peak collection periods. Postage would be decreased by \$5,500 (from \$48,300 to \$42,800) which could impact the frequency of collection notices being mailed. As is the case with most other budget reductions, these cuts cannot be sustained over time without noticeably jeopardizing service levels and potentially revenue generation.

Parking Enforcement - \$4,500 in budget cuts

The funding for replacement equipment would be reduced by \$2,000 (from \$13,000 to \$11,000). A reduction in funding for parking collection is also proposed from \$17,500 to \$15,000. Efficiencies instituted in the mid-late 1990s saved about \$30,000 in the costs associated with this operation. However, further sustained reductions in these areas are likely to impact revenue generation.

Selectmen - \$8,500 in budget cuts

This budget reduction will not be problematic as it reflects the actual salary for the Deputy Town Administrator; a mid-range salary had been budgeted but the position is being filled at the starting step.



**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS GENERAL
GOVERNMENT - FY 2009**
February 27, 2008

Town Departments	GENERAL GOVERNMENT - FY 2009	Original FY 09 Budget Request	Cuts as % of Budget Request
Assessor's Office	\$15,000	\$440,843	3.40%
Bacon Free Library	\$11,000	\$116,928	9.41%
Morse Institute Library	\$164,000	\$1,780,357	9.21%
DPW	\$438,120	\$6,023,590	7.27%
COA/Human Services	\$17,000	\$342,690	4.96%
Police	\$135,412	\$5,391,303	2.51%
Fire	\$168,411	\$6,430,440	2.62%
Recreation and Parks (2)	\$43,056	\$478,404	9.00%
Community Organic Farm salaries (3)	\$91,577	\$91,577	100.00%
Selectmen	\$8,500	\$660,416	1.29%
Public Health	\$30,800	\$428,007	7.20%
Collector	\$8,000	\$319,863	2.50%
Parking Enforcement	\$4,500	\$125,555	3.58%
Totals	\$1,135,376	\$22,629,973	12.53%

(1) No fee increases are included in this scenario; Recreation and Parks had proposed raising \$27,311 in fees and DPW had proposed raising \$253,338 in fees

(2) Original FY 09 Budget Request shown herein is net of Community Organic Farm salaries

(3) Note that the NCOF had already agreed to fund an additional \$25,500 beyond their prior years' contributions toward farm staff salary.