



# The Town of Barnstable

## Office of Town Manager

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October 22, 2024

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for October 9 through October 22, 2024

1. An updated budget calendar for the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Plan is attached. We have begun our Capital and Operating Budget preparation with budget instruction scheduled issued to staff in September. Town Council is scheduled to conduct a joint meeting with the School Committee on October 24, 2024 in accordance with the Town Charter to review financial conditions and financial policies of the Town. Mark Milne, Director of Finance, has provided an update on the Town's Financial Condition for the Joint Meeting of the Town Council and School Committee. It is available on Video on Demand: <https://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/show/11358?channel=1> and YouTube: <https://youtu.be/0krYFHuC9E0>. There is also a link to the PowerPoint on the Town Council webpage: <https://tobweb.town.barnstable.ma.us/TownCouncilCommunications/2024-10-24%20FY25%20Update%20on%20the%20Financial%20Condition%20of%20the%20Town.pdf>.
2. At the November 7<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting the Finance Department will present the FY 2025 tax levy shifting options. The objective of the presentation is to illustrate the impact on tax bills when deciding on a minimum residential factor, commonly referred to as splitting the tax rate, and the adoption of a residential exemption. The Fiscal Year 2025 property values are currently being updated and the presentation will include the proposed values, subject to the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) review and approval. The proposed values could change slightly but should not have a significant impact on the tax rate or tax levy. Property values must be approved by the DOR before the Town Council can vote on these two options. We anticipate the approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 property values before the November 21<sup>st</sup> Town Council meeting. We anticipate including these two votes on the November 21<sup>st</sup> agenda for Town Council action.

3. As previously reported, on September 10, 2024, I sent two letters regarding the recent Vineyard Wind turbine blade failure. One letter was sent to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) expressing concern about the impacts of the turbine failure on the marine environment and the lack of information provided to date on the impacts by regulatory agencies overseeing the project. The other letter was sent to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) asking questions regarding many areas of concerns including state jurisdiction on the matter to public safety risk on our beaches. On October 7, 2024 I met with State officials regarding the letter sent to EOEEA and on October 11, 2024, I received a letter from BOEM (attached) regarding the letter sent with an offer of a “virtual briefing to discuss processes for off shore wind development and actions in response to the Vineyard Wind blade incident”. I am coordinating a response to the offer of a virtual briefing with Town Council leadership and Town legal staff. I will keep you advised as this matter progresses.
  
4. On July 18, 2024 Town Council voted to approve item 2024-240 APPROPRIATION ORDER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,150,000 IN COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FUNDS AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 211 CEDAR TREE NECK ROAD, MARSTONS MILLS, FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PURPOSES. It was ORDERED: That, pursuant to the provisions of the Community Preservation Act, G. L. c 44B, the amount of Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000) be appropriated from the amount set-aside for Open Space and Recreation and the amount of Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$700,000) be appropriated from the Undesignated Fund within the Community Preservation Fund for the purpose of acquiring property located at 211 Cedar Tree Neck Road, Marstons Mills, Assessors’ Map 076, Parcel 025 (the “Property”), for open space and recreation purposes. It was further ordered that the Town Manager, on behalf of the Town, is hereby authorized to expend the amounts appropriated and to take or acquire the Property, through a negotiated transaction, subject to oversight by the Community Preservation Committee, and to negotiate, accept, approve, execute, receive, deliver and record any written instruments to effectuate this Order and complete the transaction. Prior to the Town making an offer to purchase the seller(s) accepted another offer to purchase. Therefore, the funds will not be used for the purchase of the Property and will be returned to the Community Preservation Act Fund.
  
5. Sara Ahern, Superintendent of the Barnstable Public Schools, will provide an update on maintaining healthy indoor air quality at Barnstable United Elementary School and throughout Barnstable Public Schools.
  
6. Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant for the Department of Public Works, will provide an update on Water Resource Management Planning including the Comprehensive Water Management Plan.