



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

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September 1, 2026

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for August 19, 2026, through September 1, 2026

1. At this week's Town Council meeting, Finance Director Mark Milne shall provide a comparison of two potential revenue generating options for the Town Council's consideration. They are a Water Infrastructure Investment Fund (WIIF) and a debt exclusion override vote. At the July Town Council meeting, Finance Director Mark Milne and I reviewed with the Town Council several balancing measures to address future budgetary challenges, including reducing public services, increasing local fees, or pursuing tax overrides and debt exclusions as potential future strategies. This is a continuation of that discussion. The Town of Barnstable is currently navigating a significant fiscal challenge requiring a shift from the annual use of reserves for operating budgets - as this is not a sustainable strategy - and the need for generation of additional revenue to create a sustainable fiscal budget strategy. A sustainable operating budget strategy, coupled with the need to proceed with priority capital projects, has resulted in the need for the Town Council to examine its fiscal policies and revenue strategy as we proceed with the priorities of our community. While the Town relies heavily on property taxes, state-mandated caps under Proposition 2½ prevent revenue from keeping pace with rising operating and capital costs. We anticipate monthly discussions with the Town Council as we work toward fiscal policy and revenue strategies that allow us to maintain our community's priorities.
2. The Town Manager has issued instructions to municipal departments for the creation of the FY 2028 operating and capital budgets along with the budget action calendar. The budget action calendar is attached. The Town Manager's Calendar Year Fee Hearing is planned for mid-November. A workshop with the Town Council is anticipated in October to continue the discussion on user fees for programs, services and events. A workshop on Asset Management is also planned with the Town Council as we continue to discuss fiscal policy and revenue strategy. For information on our fiscal year budgets, please view the Town's Open Budget website at <http://budget.townofbarnstable.us>.
3. Barnstable will have lifeguards at Craigville Beach this Saturday, Sunday, and Monday for Labor Day weekend. Other locations will have gate staff, and facilities will be open through Monday, September 7, 2026.

4. As a follow-up to the Town Manager communications from August 20th, I wanted to provide an update on the progress and implementation of several items as they relate to pickleball. With school back in session, new hours are now in effect for the Marstons Mills pickleball and tennis courts.

September 2nd – June 28th the hours are as follows:

Monday – Friday: 9:30am – 7:00pm

Saturday: 8:00am – 7:00pm

Sunday: 9:00am – 7:00pm

Additionally, the Town has planted 25 trees to help mitigate noise, installed new signs at the site with updated rules, regulations and hours of operation, and we are exploring other signage and methods to improve traffic flow and safety. We will continue to meet with all stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of these changes and monitor operations at the facility and recommend additional improvements.