



# Town of New Shoreham

**DATE:** March 5, 2018

**TO:** Honorable First Warden Ken Lacoste and the New Shoreham Town Council

**FROM:** Edward L. Roberge, Town Manager

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Transmittal Letter

Herewith, I respectfully submit to you the Town of New Shoreham Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

The Town Council continues to implement its vision of New Shoreham as a vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, and growing community. Our Town finances continue to be strong and improving; we are seeing dramatic improvements to our public infrastructure and public spaces by maintaining a strong focus through an expanded capital improvement program; and we remain committed to assisting and protecting those that are most vulnerable in our community.

The Town Council has taken a strategic and long-term approach towards budgeting and projects which will allow the Town of New Shoreham to be very proactive in creating a sustainable economic climate. This proposed budget utilizes that same approach by strengthening core services and investing in initiatives, namely public safety and economic development, both elements to improve the quality of life for our residents, businesses, and visitors to Block Island.

The Fiscal Year 2019 budget builds on the Town's strong fiscal management record, implements thoughtful reforms that achieve savings and modernizes processes, and invests in targeted initiatives to achieve a thriving, healthy, and innovative community.

## **Fiscal Year 2018 Summary**

In Fiscal Year 2018, through continued long-term planning, conservative spending, and sound investments, the Town has made progress on a number of important fronts including:

- Completion and adoption of an award-winning Comprehensive Plan;
- Acquisition of the Bock Island Power Company and creation of a Utility District;
- Hired a new Town Manager;
- Hired a new Director of Public Welfare/Human Services
- Advanced the Broadband Committee's recommendation to implement a Town-owned fiber optic backbone for the Town's Community Anchor Institutions;
- Having identified over \$550,000 in exterior building envelope projects on 30 Town buildings, the Town completed roofing, window and painting projects at the Medical Center, the Thomas property, as well as the Library.

### **Fiscal Year 2019 Budget**

This proposed budget focuses on improving quality of life; achievable through a commitment to environmental stewardship, strengthening public safety, and improved Town services and public infrastructure.

Public Safety: In order to truly have quality of life, residents and visitors must feel secure in their homes and throughout their community. To help achieve these goals, the proposed budget accomplishes the following:

- Expands funding levels for Fire/Rescue including payroll, vehicle and equipment testing, and radio equipment costs;
- Carries forward funding for upgrades to Rescue 2 and significant partial funding to replace the Engine;
- Purchases equipment for Fire/Rescue including specialized washer/dryer unit to clean turn out gear;
- Expands seasonal Police staffing into May and October to match extended shoulder season activity;
- Maintains quality of life programs by Police targeting traffic safety and noise mitigation;
- Expands mooring replacements in New Harbor;
- Maintains the new Dinghy Dock in New Harbor;
- Continues replacement of Police vehicles; and
- Continues improvements to both Police and Fire/Rescue facilities.

Public Infrastructure: Proper maintenance of Town infrastructure is essential for a quality of life for the entire community. This budget maintains the Town Council's commitment to an expanded capital program in the following areas:

- Replacement of lights and light poles in Old Harbor;
- Replacement of No Anchor and Private Aid to Navigation buoys;
- Replacement of the water line serving the Coast Guard Station;
- Replacement of exterior trim, window and door work at the Motor Pool Building at the Coast Guard Station;

- Replacement of the emergency generator at the Coast Guard Station;
- Building improvements including partial shingling and painting of the Medical Center building;
- Safety improvements to the parking and walking areas at the Medical Center;
- Building improvements at the Davidson House;
- Replacement of Library server;
- Replacement of the Recreation vehicle;
- Expanded funding to support BI School upgrades including HVAC, drainage and exterior envelope improvements; and
- Phase II renovations at the Library including renovation and reconfiguration of the side door and side entrance area.

Economic Development: To attract and maintain a robust economy supporting businesses, residents, and visitors alike, the Town needs to remain committed to investing in economic development opportunities. Tangible efforts in this budget include:

- Development of a town-owned fiber optic network. The Broadband Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) deployment project includes design, permitting, and installation of a Town-owned fiber optic network to support municipal, public safety, medical, and education anchor institutions in the Town. This major economic development initiative meets the initial goals of supporting those anchor institutions while providing opportunity for further expansion including an island-wide deployment in the future;
- Further the sale of BIPCO assets to the Utility District. Significant progress has been made to acquire BIPCO and develop a local utility district. This action sets in play a new direction of utility independence and control and has significant direct economic benefits to the Block Island community as a whole; and
- Continued planning and zoning updates. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in late 2016, Town Council, through the diligent work of the Planning and Zoning Boards, continue to modify and improve land use codes. Processes can be streamlined and review and approval times potentially reduced offering development savings. Further land use code updates as directed in the Comprehensive Plan will be encouraged.

Other major developments considered in this budget include a comprehensive review of employee position classification, wages, and benefits, the development of Technology Vision Plan, as well as an affordable/attainable/reasonable housing strategy.

Given that it has been some time since a detailed position classification study has been considered, this budget will include a comprehensive organizational review including staffing levels, current personnel rules and regulations, employee wage, classification, labor grade, employee evaluation, and benefit programs. An organization strategy including recommended organizational structure and chart will be presented for Town Council consideration.

Based on an early review of the Town's technology systems and software, there is a clear need to inventory existing systems and develop a technology vision plan for the future. A technology

vision plan would include inventory of all hardware, network and application systems, a technology needs assessment, and the development of a clear and decisive implementation plan to carry out technology and innovation changes. System and processes innovation can offer the general public easy and quick access to information and is quite value added. Expansion in providing information to the community through a new website and link portals will be developed. The FY19 work program recommends the development of a technology vision plan with a detailed deliverables schedule outlining major system application implementation, new website launch, and technology vision plan for accountability.

There has been considerable discussion over the years related to affordable housing on the island. The Town Manager recently initiated a staff level conversation regarding issues and concerns, constraints and opportunities related to housing. The FY19 work plan will include efforts to engage the community and develop an affordable/attainable/reasonable housing strategy for Town employees and island residents alike. A full presentation will be prepared and presented to Council for consideration.

In conclusion, while the economy is improving, we must remain diligent in our efforts to maintain fiscal responsibility. The Town has an established history in achieving balanced budgets through strong fiscal discipline, sound financial policies, and critical leadership. These practices ensure the Towns' ability to preserve budgetary balance, maintain essential services, and address the future challenges of this community.

The Town Council's top priorities, including much needed strategic investments, are reflected in this budget. The Fiscal Year 2019 budget is balanced in both a fiscal and policy sense, to ensure that New Shoreham's future is bright.

I recommend this budget to the Town Council.