



Town of New Shoreham

DATE: March 15, 2019

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

FROM: Edward L. Roberge, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Operating and Capital 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, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

New Shoreham is a vibrant and inclusive community. The Town is safe, our fiscal position is strong, the workforce is stable, and we continue to focus on maintaining critical public infrastructure assets through an expanded capital improvement program. The community shares a common interest in helping those that are most in need.

The Town Council has taken a measured and balanced approach towards budgeting which allows the Town to be proactive in promoting a sustainable economic climate. This budget proposal utilizes that same approach by strengthening core services and promoting community service excellence.

The Fiscal Year 2020 budget builds on the Town's commitment to its greatest asset; it's people. Comprehensive changes in our approach to classify and compensate our employees are underway and this budget recognizes the significance that our employees play in their role to provide excellent customer service. This budget looks at the organization as a whole and offers an employee base compensation and benefits package program that is designed to strengthen our capabilities for the future as we maintain and develop a thriving, healthy, and innovative community.

Fiscal Year 2019 Year in Review

In Fiscal Year 2019, through organized planning and controlled spending, the Town made significant progress on a number of important areas including:

- Constructed a new dinghy dock developed through a public/private partnership addressing a critical need on the Great Salt Pond;
- Completed deployment of Rhode Island's first municipally owned Broadband fiber optic network to the Town's Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) including BI School, BI Medical Center, Island Free Library, the Public Safety Complex, and Town Hall;
- Completed the West Beach Landfill Slope Repair project, an aging project that experienced continued environmental impacts to the community;
- Launched the Town Housing Initiative project identifying critical housing needs on the island with the first town rental home scheduled for completion on the Thomas site in mid- to late-2019 and the renovation of the Thomas site duplex to four units for occupation in mid-2020;
- Completed the Asset Purchase Sale Agreement between the Block Island Power Company and the Utility District;
- Replaced fleet vehicles and equipment for Police, Recreation and Highways; and
- Continued exterior building envelope projects including roofing, window and painting at the BI Medical Center, the Thomas property, Coast Guard Station, Town Hall, as well as the Library.

Fiscal Year 2020 Look Ahead

This proposed budget focuses on maintaining Block Island's unique character and quality of life by providing for a safe and livable community through responsible community planning, promoting smart and sustainable growth, maintaining fiscal responsibility and community service excellence.

Providing for a safe and livable community:

Block Island is a community of choice focused on maintaining a vibrant livable year-round island community that meets economic and social needs of its residents and makes public health and safety a top priority. To help achieve these goals, the proposed budget accomplishes the following:

- Expands funding levels for Fire/Rescue including payroll, vehicle and equipment maintenance, and focused training for its newest members;
- Expands seasonal Police staffing starting in May and through October to match a growing and extended shoulder season;
- Maintains quality of life programs through community Police targeting vehicle traffic, pedestrian, and beach safety;
- Continues replacement of Police fleet vehicles; and
- Continues improvements to Public Safety Complex.

Responsible Community Planning for the Future:

The Town will establish and maintain land use regulations and manage its public infrastructure investments for a strong, mixed-use community to meet the needs of a growing and diverse economy. Major investments considered include:

- Replacement and expansion of the Coast Guard Station Dock;
- Replacement of Highways Department equipment including a flail mover and dump body;
- Complete necessary Heinz Field drainage improvements for full use of the site;
- Continue funding for BI School building improvements including HVAC systems, drainage and exterior building envelope improvements;
- Maintain the new Dinghy Dock in New Harbor;
- Replace windows that are in disrepair at the Library;
- Complete the West Side Road Sidewalk project in cooperation with RIDOT; and
- Continue to fund various building, safety and site improvements to protect our infrastructure assets including roofing, shingling, painting, and site grading and landscaping at facilities throughout the community and direct staff to do so.

Smart and Sustainable Growth

The Town must exercise responsible stewardship for its natural and cultural resources and ensure that future growth is compatible with the island's traditional landscape while attracting new investment through a balanced plan that recognizes the significance of its residential neighborhoods, protection of its natural surroundings and commitment to long-term sustainability. Tangible opportunities include:

- Develop a community-wide fiber optic network. With the Broadband Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) project complete, we now turn our efforts towards the design and development of a community-wide system. The immediate and successful impact to critical services from the deployment of the CAI network demonstrates just how major the economic impact is to this community particularly as it relates to a year-round economy.
- Complete the Utility District's acquisition of BIPCO. Significant progress has been made by the Town and the Utility District to acquire BIPCO. Once this transaction is complete, the utility independence as a non-profit cooperative has significant direct economic benefit to the Block Island community as a whole. This transfer remains a top priority.
- Commission a New Harbor Vision Plan. With new investment in New Harbor, opportunities for improvement could present themselves. A vision plan is necessary to inform future investment through a comprehensive capital improvement plan and proactively guide the future of the neighborhood.
- Look to establish strong public/private partnerships for economic growth. Opportunities such as adaptive reuse of the Coast Guard Station, access to New Harbor for the Harbors Department, small business incubator space for local business opportunities, and cooperative efforts to improve Old Harbor Visitor Center and related facilities.

- Continue our focus on island-wide affordable, attainable, and reasonable housing. The Town Housing Initiative has identified housing needs island-wide and innovative projects such as the apartments at the Harbor Church demonstrate affordable opportunities for housing our people. We will continue exploring unique opportunities, public/private partnerships, and grant source funding for housing opportunities.

Fiscal Responsibility and Community Service Excellence

The Town must maintain its focus on continued excellence in the delivery of municipal services as well as its fiscally responsible approach to budgeting, growth and sustainability. The FY2020 work plan will continue to strengthen the community's ability to manage local affairs as well as motivate and enable upcoming generations to be part of the island's future and maintain Block Island's strong community cohesion. To do this, the FY2020 budget proposes to:

- Develop an organization that is strong and agile, based on performance and service level measurement and indicators, through thoughtful strategic planning to deliver the highest levels of service. The strength of a community is in its people. We will invest in our employees and develop an organizational structure for the future that provides for guidance, support, and opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Implement a Technology Vision Plan. With the advent of broadband, the completion of a new, modern website, technology promoting better communication and public access to information is critical to customer service excellence. The work plan will build on the findings of a technology vision plan guiding the future of service through maximizing performance.

In conclusion, while the economy strengthens, 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 and leadership. Our continued focus to work with community leaders to develop effective partnerships is critical to our future.

The Town Council's top priorities are reflected in this budget. The Fiscal Year 2020 budget is balanced and fair to ensure that New Shoreham's future is bright.

I recommend this budget to the Town Council.