

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2024

Moderator: George Miller
Attendance: 189

Town Clerk: Heather Almy

Called to order: 7:15 PM

Moderator started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

Moderator, George Miller made a motion and it was seconded to read the warrant as printed in its entirety, so moved

Article 1 Selectman McCrohan made a motion and it was seconded to hear the report of the Finance Committee.

Report was read by Michele Hamilton, Chairman of Finance Committee

Finance Committee

Town of Berkley FY25 Annual Report

Good Evening,

Tonight, the Berkley Finance Committee presents the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. It represents the efforts of the members of the Berkley Finance Committee, the Berkley Board of Selectmen and the input of department heads, town officials and citizens. Producing a budget is never an easy process, but this year's was especially trying. The Town of Berkley remains in a difficult situation moving forward and was forced to cut positions for the first time in recent memory.

Fiscal Year 2025 will mark the final year that Berkley can use pandemic era related assistance in the form of Federal and County ARPA. These items have thrown the Town a lifeline for the previous three years, supporting the purchase of capital items and projects and the operating budget itself. The budget presented tonight produces little or no room for capital spending and the situation is not likely to reverse in the near future without aid.

Town revenues grew by a relatively weak **2.1%** or \$491,698, even with the addition of the recently passed debt exclusion. Costs and backcharges continued to outpace revenue at **3.3%** or \$790,955, even after significant trimming. Revenue will always be an issue as the Town remains dependent on the local levy and grows more so each year. The structural deficit has grown to **\$735,542** and is forcing the Town to use the majority of its certified free cash within the operating budget. Any additional aid from the State is unlikely to arrive in time to help Berkley in the near future, and while

future planning should include advocating for Berkley on Beacon Hill, the Town will likely have to chart its own future.

The debt exclusion for **Bristol-Plymouth Regional High School** enters the budget for the first time. Initially, the FY2025 budget was built without the debt exclusion in mind. Earlier versions of the budget included the potential for using general stabilization, which is generally reserved for emergencies. The debt exclusion allowed for those items to be removed and the budget to balance on its own. The issue of the growing debt problem has been solved and the biggest threat to the budget averted for future fiscal years. Finance Committee supported the debt exclusion and is grateful to the citizens of Berkley, both those “for” and “against”.

Budget impact: \$239,782

While **Bristol-Plymouth High School**’s debt is being handled, its **operating assessment** is not. Enrollment in the local schools has begun to shift. Whether it is the popularity of vocational education or the allure of a new school, more Berkley students are heading to Bristol-Plymouth. More students and a 6% increase in costs has lead to a large jump in Berkley’s bill from BP. The shift can also be seen in Somerset-Berkley’s assessment declining this year and a stagnant assessment from Bristol Agricultural.

Budget impact: \$267,968

Berkley’s K-8 was the center of focus for much of the budget cycle this year. The local schools suffered the loss of eight positions, in part through the loss of operating grant funding. The Finance Committee remains committed to supporting the local schools, but even the allocation of additional funding could not sustain level services. The loss of the grant funding and large increases for out-of-district special education created a challenging budget for the school district and Town alike.

Budget impact: \$388,172

Health Insurance premiums rose for the Town by 7.21% this year. While the Town is committed to searching for more robust insurance options for FY2026, rising premiums are an item that will likely be the norm moving forward. This benefit is exercised by over one hundred employees, so any change will result in significant cost.

Budget Impact: \$101,813

The final major item to mention is the conclusion of contract negotiations for six of the collective bargaining units in Town. Many of the agreements run through FY2026, which should provide some stability in costs going forward. Berkley remains behind a lot of its neighbors in compensation, but made

improvements where it was able. These are the largest ticket expense increases for Berkley's FY2025 budget with a more comprehensive list included in the supplemental sheet.

Other notable impacts include:

- Unemployment compensation rose to \$75,000. It is our hope that this item will not recur in FY2026.
- Bristol County Retirement saw a significant increase of \$47,926 or 5.68% year-over-year.

Aside from the items mentioned above, the FY2025 budget is truly bare, with many expense line items level funded from FY2024.

The recommended budget of the Finance Committee differs slightly from the final accepted budget that appears tonight. The Finance Committee had produced a slightly leaner budget with the reduction of a position in Town Hall and further tightening in the Highway Department.

In conclusion, Berkley Finance Committee supports *warrant articles 2 through 7*. I would like to thank the other members of Fincom, the Select Board, department heads and elected officials who presented their budgets through the spring and provided valuable feedback throughout the process. We appreciate the input of the people of Berkley and the participation tonight. These are tough times for Berkley, but the community will find solutions together. As a yearly tradition, we'd like to remind the public that there are four available seats on the Finance Committee at this time, so if you have an interest in helping your community this is a fine place to start.

It has been an honor to serve the town of Berkley.

Michele Hamilton, Chairman

Eric Wu, Clerk

Nancy Gajoli, Member

**Certified Free Cash Year-over-year
FY 2023**

Certified Free Cash	\$1,019,894
November Town Meeting	-\$174,892
Free Cash Balance for June ATM	\$845,002
Balance for Replace Engine 1	-\$367,281
Snow and Ice	-\$81,806
OPEB Contribution	-\$22,444
Voting Tabulators	-\$15,500
Operating Free Cash	-\$225,000
Balance Rollover	\$132,971
Balance	\$0

FY 2024

Certified Free Cash	\$1,144,750
Bristol/Plymouth Interest	-\$27,742
OPEB Contribution	-\$35,000
Snow and Ice	-\$17,258
All Contractual Allocation	-\$250,000
Dump Truck	-\$80,000
Operating Free Cash	-\$256,834
Stabilization	-\$477,916
Balance	\$0

FY2025 Free Cash	\$ 856,780
Snow and Ice (Article #3)	\$ (33,838)
Past Due Bills (Article #3)	\$ (12,600)
Library Application (Article # 14)	\$ (75,000)
Operating Free Cash (Article #6)	\$ (735,342)
Balance	\$ (0)

FY2025 Town ARPA (Proposed)	\$ 138,673
Highway Smoke Alarm	\$ (10,000)
Fire Alarm Station #2	\$ (22,000)
Fire Alarm Receiver	\$ (79,984)
Balance	\$ 26,689

Growth of Selected Items FY 2025

	ATM FY2024	Pct. Change	\$ Change	ATM FY2025
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	\$ 5,000	1400.00%	\$70,000	\$ 75,000

BRISTOL COUNTY RETIREMENT	\$ 843,669	5.68%	\$47,926	\$ 891,595
---------------------------	------------	-------	----------	------------

Health Insurance				
BLUE CROSS/ BLUE SHIELD HEALTH	\$ 444,765	7.21%	\$32,068	\$ 476,833
K-8 HEALTH INSURANCE	\$ 967,340	7.21%	\$69,745	\$ 1,037,085
Subtotals	\$ 1,412,105	7.21%	\$101,813	\$ 1,513,918

Berkley K-8				
K-8 OOD SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$ 177,388	83.39%	\$147,922	\$ 325,310
SCHOOL SPENDING	\$ 8,464,018	2.62%	\$221,606	\$ 8,685,624
Subtotals	\$ 8,641,406	4.28%	\$369,528	\$ 9,010,934

Emergency Medical Services				
SALARIES- PERMANENT POSITIONS	\$ 300,200	21.59%	\$64,800	\$ 365,000

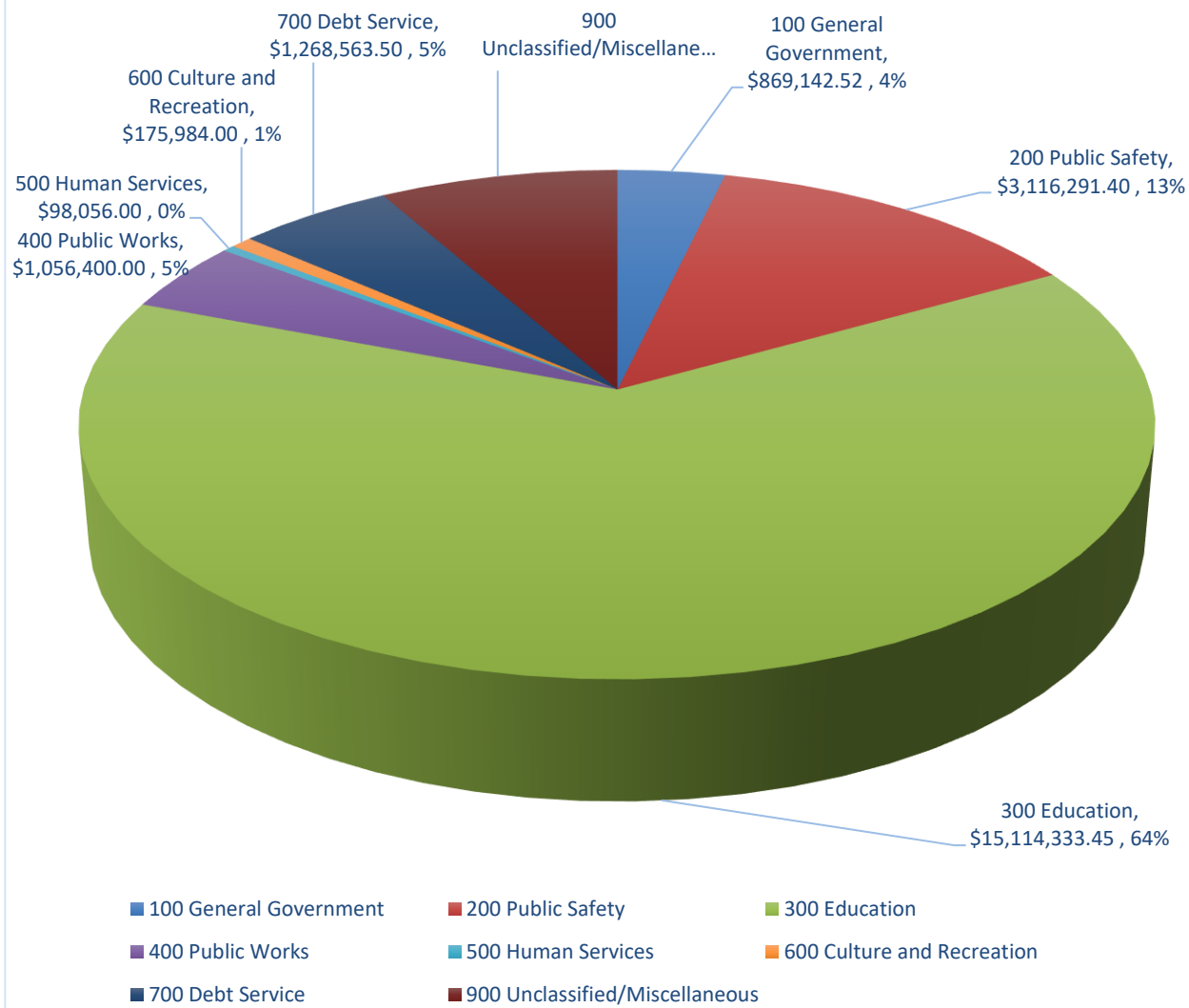
Police Department				
SALARIES- PERMANENT POSITIONS	\$ 795,805	10.60%	\$84,372	\$ 880,177

Highway Department				
SALARIES- PERMANENT POSITIONS	\$ 513,132	9.13%	\$46,868	\$ 560,000

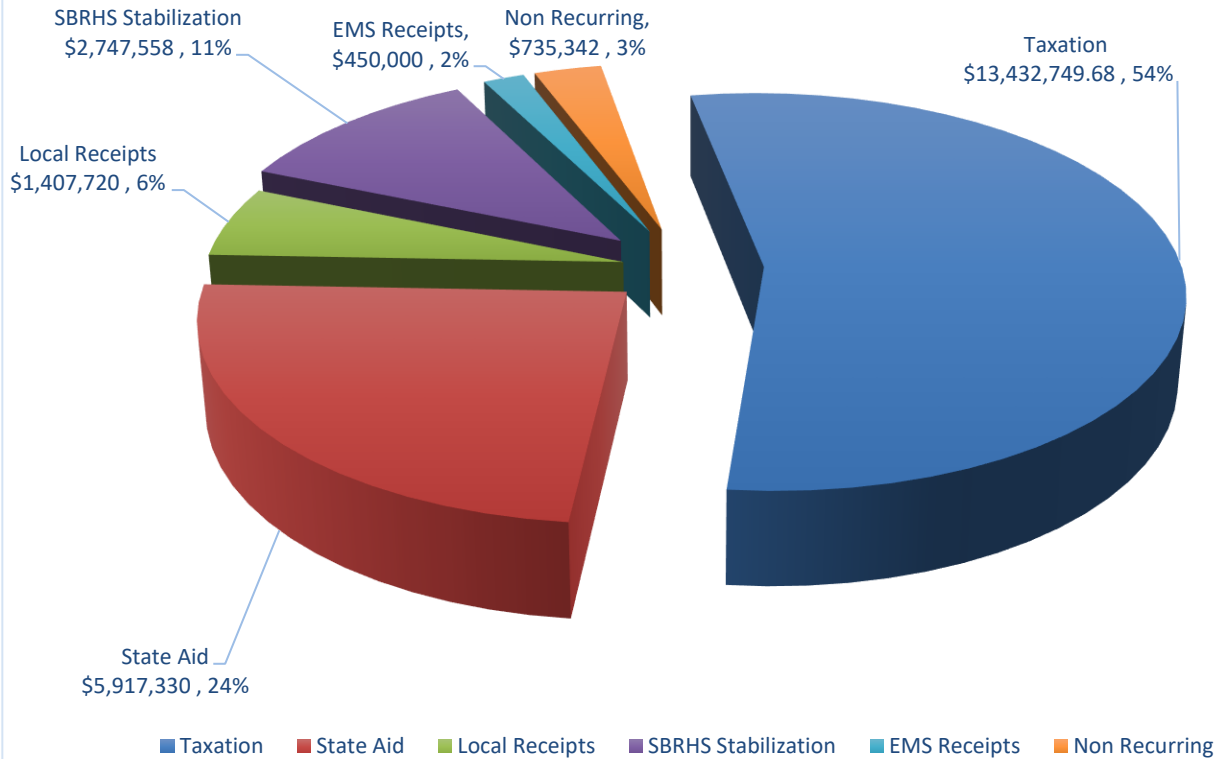
Selected Items Growth	\$ 785,307
*Total Expense Growth	\$ 790,956

*Several large budget items were less than the prior year

FY 2025 Budget Distribution



FY2025 Town Of Berkley Revenue Sources (Based on Senate Ways and Mean Estimated Budget)



Article 2 Selectman Freitas made a motion and it was seconded to hear the report of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee.

Explanation: The Capital Improvement Planning Committee lacks quorum and the report required by the Town of Berkley’s bylaws, doesn’t need to be produced. The report would serve to larger one-time purchase that do not appear within the operating budget.

A motion was made to table the report of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 3 Selectman Vincent made a motion that the Town transfer and appropriate from available FY24 funds the following amounts:

Appropriate from Free Cash to:	
1. Snow and Ice Account	\$ 33,838
2. Unpaid Bills	\$ 12,600
Totaling:	\$46,438

Explanation: This appropriates available FY23 funds for the Snow and Ice deficit, pays past due bills for the use of Veterans Agent office in the Town of Dighton, and pays for the purchase of three capital items to protect the Town’s existing equipment and buildings. The article will require a four-fifths vote for the motion to pass.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 4 Selectmen McCrohan made a motion that the Town fix salaries and compensation of elected officials, appointed officers and employees and that the Town vote to raise and appropriate, and transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide for the payment of said salaries and compensation, a reserve fund, and for the charges, expenses and outlays of the several Town departments for the twelve (12) month period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, all as set forth in the budget presented by the Finance Committee, and summarized as follows:

from taxation of	\$6,801,801
from Ambulance User Fees	\$ 450,000
Totaling	\$7,251,801

Explanation:
This article will fund all town departments, board, commissions, for the fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
(All Figures Are Estimates)

REVENUE	FY 2024	FY 2025
FY 2024 Levy	\$ 11,210,458	\$ 11,711,401
FY2024 Amended New Growth	\$ 62,492	\$ -
2 1/2 Tax Increase	\$ 280,261	\$ 292,785
New Growth	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000
Debt Exclusion	\$ 1,035,625	\$ 1,268,564
State Aid Chap. 70 (SWM's estimate)	\$ 4,151,920	\$ 4,222,848
Charter Tuition Reimbursement	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid Local (SWM's estimate)	\$ 727,374	\$ 749,194
Veterans Benefits	\$ 23,650	\$ 22,214
Exempt Elderly	\$ 33,362	\$ 32,948
State Owned Land	\$ 59,262	\$ 60,685
Public Library	\$ 16,493	\$ 16,449
School Choice	\$ 768,825	\$ 812,992
Motor Vehicle Excise	\$ 850,000	\$ 875,000
Rentals Solar	\$ 158,970	\$ 158,970
Meals Tax	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,000
Pen. & Int.	\$ 55,000	\$ 60,000
Other Charges	\$ 80,000	\$ 83,000
Fees	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
License & Permits	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000
Fines	\$ 10,750	\$ 10,750
Invest Income	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
E.M.S. Receipts Reserved Account	\$ 684,500	\$ 450,000
Overlay Surplus - ATM	\$ 100,000	\$ -
High School Stabilization	\$ 2,779,717	\$ 2,747,558
Operating Free Cash	\$ 256,834	\$ 735,342
Federal ARPA	\$ 208,742	\$ -
General Stabilization Fund	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 23,929,233	\$ 24,690,700

BACKCHARGES

	FY 2024	FY 2025
State and County Charges & Deficits	\$ 197,047	\$ 204,967
Abatements and Exemptions	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Library	\$ 16,493	\$ 16,449
Charter School Sending	\$ -	\$ -
School Choice Sending/Receiving	\$ 709,006	\$ 734,585
	\$ 1,022,546	\$ 1,056,001

EXPENSES

	FY 2024	FY 2025
Local Government General Cost	\$ 7,031,166	\$ 7,251,801
Reserved for Debt Exclusion	\$ 1,035,625	\$ 1,268,564
Local Schools-Net School Spending	\$ 9,739,985	\$ 10,179,258
Local Schools-Non Net School Spending	\$ 617,680	\$ 636,324
Regional Vocational H.S.	\$ 1,272,974	\$ 1,332,200
S/B/HighSchool Assesment	\$ 2,779,717	\$ 2,747,558
S/B/HighSchool Taxation	\$ 246,504	\$ 79,040
Regional Aggy.	\$ 153,547	\$ 139,953
	\$ 22,877,198	\$ 23,634,698
REVENUE	\$ 23,929,235	\$ 24,690,700
EXPENSES	\$ 22,877,198	\$ 23,634,698
BACKCHARGES	\$ 1,022,546	\$ 1,056,001
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 29,492	\$ 0

Appropriations			
FY2025 Free Cash	\$ 856,780	\$ 6,801,801	From taxation
Snow and Ice (Article #3)	\$ (33,838)	\$ 450,000	EMS Receipts
Past Due Bills (Article #3)	\$ (12,600)	\$ 7,251,801	Subtotal (Article #4)
Library Application (Article # 14)	\$ (75,000)		
Operating Free Cash (Article #6)	\$ (735,342)	\$ 1,268,564	From taxation (Article #5)
Balance	\$ (0)		
		\$ 735,342	From free cash
FY2025 Town ARPA	\$ 138,673	\$ 11,552,393	From taxation
Highway Smoke Alarm	\$ (10,000)	\$ 12,287,735	subtotal (Article #6)
Fire Alarm Station #2	\$ (22,000)		
Fire Alarm Receiver	\$ (79,984)	\$ 2,747,558	from HS Stabilization
Balance	\$ 26,689	\$ 79,040	From taxation
		\$ 2,826,598	subtotal (Article #7)
		\$ 23,634,698	total budget

FY 2025 Revenue less Free Cash	\$ 23,955,358
FY 2024 Revenue less Free Cash	\$ 23,463,659
Revenue Growth	\$ 491,698
Revenue Growth as percentage	2.10%

FY 2025 Expenses and Backcharges	\$ 24,690,699
FY 2024 Expenses and Backcharges	\$ 23,899,744
Cost growth	\$ 790,956
Cost growth as percentage	3.31%

FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET (BY DEPARTMENT)

REQUEST
FY2025

BOS
FINAL

ARTICLE #4

DEPARTMENT NAME

Reserve Fund

ACCOUNT NAME

Expense	25,000	25,000
Total	25,000	25,000

DEPARTMENT NAME

Moderator

ACCOUNT NAME

Stipends	102	102
Expense	3,200	3,200
Total	3,302	3,302

DEPARTMENT NAME

Selectmen

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries Elected	12,000	12,000
Salaries	110,434	110,434
Expense	14,800	10,600
Total	137,234	133,034

DEPARTMENT NAME

Finance Committee

ACCOUNT NAME

Expense	1,330	1,330

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Accountant

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	84,500	84,500
Expense	36,600	36,600
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	121,100	121,100

DEPARTMENT NAME

Board of Assessors

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries Elected	12,240	12,240
Salaries	47,388	46,353
Expense	51,815	51,315
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	111,443	109,908

REQUEST
FY2025

BOS
FINAL

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Treasurer

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries Elected	34,198	35,198
Salaries	47,302	50,342
Expense	23,900	20,200
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	105,400	105,740

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Collector

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	35,198	35,198
Salaries	26,302	26,500
Expense	16,500	16,500
Capital Outlay	1,000	1,000
Total	79,000	79,198

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Counsel

ACCOUNT NAME

Expense	75,000	55,000
Total	75,000	55,000

DEPARTMENT NAME

Data Processing

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	0	0
Expense	90,618	90,618
Capital Outlay	5,000	8,000
Total	95,618	98,618

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Clerk

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries Elected	36,000	35,198
Salaries	27,350	27,350
Expense	8,000	8,000
Capital Outlay	1,000	0
Total	72,350	70,548

REQUEST
FY2025

BOS
FINAL

DEPARTMENT NAME

Elections

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	9,500	7,500
Expense	9,600	9,600
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	19,100	17,100

DEPARTMENT NAME

Planning Board

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries Elected	1,200	1,200
Total	1,200	1,200

DEPARTMENT NAME

Town Buildings

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	18,304	18,305
Expense	30,760	29,760
Total	49,064	48,065

DEPARTMENT NAME

Public Safety Building

ACCOUNT NAME

Expense	80,400	77,400
Capital Outlay	6,000	0
Total	86,400	77,400

DEPARTMENT NAME

Police Department

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	1,438,402	1,438,402
Expense	119,840	113,927
Capital Outlay	8,145	2,145
Total	1,566,387	1,554,474

REQUEST

FY2025

BOS

FINAL

DEPARTMENT NAME

Fire Department

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	194,270	186,577
Expense	85,760	83,760
Capital Outlay	12,000	12,000
Total	292,030	282,337

DEPARTMENT NAME

Emergency Medical Services

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	692,900	596,528
Expense	90,600	89,500
Capital Outlay	13,500	4,000
Total	797,000	690,028

DEPARTMENT NAME

Building Department

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	48,340	48,340
Expense	3,250	1,790
Capital Outlay	1,000	1,000
Total	52,590	51,130

DEPARTMENT NAME

Communications

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	389,778	385,778
Expense	25,431	22,431
Capital Outlay	700	0
Total	415,909	408,209

DEPARTMENT NAME

Animal Control

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	23,900	24,990
Expense	2,570	2,723
Total	26,470	27,713

DEPARTMENT NAME

Forestry

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salary Elected	4,000	4,000
Expense	25,000	21,000
Total	29,000	25,000

DEPARTMENT NAME

Highway Department

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries Elected	77,800	81,000
Salaries	567,546	564,000
Expense	396,450	391,550
Capital Outlay	5,000	5,000
Total	1,046,796	1,041,550

DEPARTMENT NAME

Veterans Graves

ACCOUNT NAME		
Expense	1,750	1,750
Total	1,750	1,750

DEPARTMENT NAME

Street Lights

ACCOUNT NAME		
Expense	4,000	4,000
Total	4,000	4,000

DEPARTMENT NAME

Cemetery

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries	600	600
Expense	8,500	8,500
Total	9,100	9,100

DEPARTMENT NAME

Board of Health

ACCOUNT NAME		
Salaries Elected	3,000	3,000
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	3,000	3,000

REQUEST

FY2025

BOS

FINAL

DEPARTMENT NAME

Council on Aging

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	31,954	31,954
Expense	10,115	10,115
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	42,069	42,069

DEPARTMENT NAME

Veterans Benefits

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	8,487	8,487
Expense	4,500	4,500
Veterans Benefits	40,000	40,000
Total	52,987	52,987

DEPARTMENT NAME

Public Library

ACCOUNT NAME

Salaries	135,652	134,152
Expense	48,132	40,132
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total	183,784	174,284

DEPARTMENT NAME

Celebrations Committee

ACCOUNT NAME	ACTUAL EXPEND	ACTUAL APPROP
Expense	1,500	1,500
Total	1,500	1,500

DEPARTMENT NAME

Historical Commission

ACCOUNT NAME

Expense	200	200
Total	200	200

REQUEST
FY2025

BOS
FINAL

DEPARTMENT NAME

Miscellaneous

ACCOUNT NAME

Town Fuel	100,000	100,000
SRPEDD	1,399	1,399
In-LINE OF DUTY INJURY FUND	3,000	3,000
Unfunded Liability	20,000	20,000
Stormwater Testing and Reporting	1000	1000
Total	125,399	125,399

DEPARTMENT NAME

Pensions

ACCOUNT NAME

BRISTOL COUNTY RETIREMENT	891,595	891,595
MEDICARE	195,000	195,000
Total	1,086,595	1,086,595

DEPARTMENT NAME

Health Insurance

ACCOUNT NAME

BLUE CROSS/ BLUE SHIELD HEALTH	476,833	476,833
FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN	0	0
Total	476,833	476,833

DEPARTMENT NAME

Liability Insurance

ACCOUNT NAME

INS. PR. DIS.-FIRE-POL. ACC. H	67,556	67,556
LIABILITY INSURANCE	84,545	84,545
Total	152,101	152,101

DEPARTMENT NAME

Worker's Compensation

ACCOUNT NAME

FRINGE BENEFIT/CHARGES	20,000	20,000
Total	20,000	20,000

DEPARTMENT NAME

Unemployment Comp.

ACCOUNT NAME

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	175,000	75,000
Total	175,000	75,000

REQUEST	BOS
FY2025	FINAL
from taxation:	\$ 6,801,801
from Ambulance User Fees:	\$ 450,000
Totaling:	\$ 7,251,801

Article #5

DEPARTMENT NAME

Retirement of Debt

ACCOUNT NAME

TOWN OFFICE BLDG	170,000	170,000
SBRSD HIGH SCHOOL	354,624	354,634
Bristol Plymouth High School	20,434	20,434
Multiple Use of Equipment	250,000	250,000
Total	795,058	795,068

DEPARTMENT NAME

Interest

ACCOUNT NAME

TOWN OFFICE BUILDING	69,600	69,600
SBRSD HIGH SCHOOL	169,585	169,585
Bristol Plymouth High School	219,348	219,348
Multiple Use of Equipment	14,963	14,963
Total	473,496	473,496

from taxation: \$ 1,268,564

Article #6

DEPARTMENT NAME

School Department

ACCOUNT NAME

Berkley School* (March 18th Revision #4)	8,733,445	8,685,624
Salaries Elected	1,200	1,200
K-8 Out of District Special Education	325,310	325,310
K-8 Transportation and Insurances	1,803,448	1,803,448
S/B/ High School Assessment	2,747,558	2,747,558
B.P. Regional High School	1,332,200	1,332,200
Bristol Aggy. Assesment	139,953	139,953
SBSRD Taxation	79,040	79,040
Total	15,162,154	15,114,333

from free cash: \$ 735,342
from taxation: \$ 11,552,393
Totaling: \$ 12,287,735

Discussion: Margaret Moroff, resident voter put a “Hold” on the Treasurer Clerk position. Fire Chief Scott Fournier put a “Hold” on the Emergency Medical Services Budget. Marc Thibault, resident voter stated he would like to make a motion all elected & appointed positions should have their salaries cut by 10%. Atty. Adam Costa stated that would be very difficult to do, the motion to amend would need to be in writing. M. Thibault stated thank you. Stated our Treasurer is only going to work 1hr. per wk. Selectman McCrohan explained the Treasurer Clerk has always been a position. Ms. Moroff asked why the Treasurer wasn’t expected to come into work more hrs. Selectman Freitas said he is concerned about the work flow that needs to get done and the man hours. He also said the Selectman do not have the authority to tell and elected official how many hours they need to work. Selectman Vincent gave her thoughts and asked to give the Treasurer more time. Ms. Moroff said she would like to make a motion to not agree with the Fin Com to fund the Treasurer Clerk position. Eric Wu from Fin Com explained the funding for the Treasurer Clerk position. Barbara Miller, resident voter asked what the amount was for the Treasurer Clerk position, Mr. Wu answered \$19,000.00. Jacob Kress, resident voter asked what percentage is the budget for this position. Town Admin. Chabot answered less than 1% which wouldn’t solve the budget issue. A motion was made and seconded to amend the budget by taking out the Treasurer Clerk’s position. No further discussion, Motion defeated unanimously, Failed. Fire Chief Scott Fournier asked to speak about the EMS budget & showed a slideshow explaining the situation they are in. He requested that an extra \$100,000.00 not be taken out of the Ambulance User Fee, but was not honored by the Fin Com. Deputy Chief Jason Perry spoke about the same and further explained. Asst. Deputy Chief Kevin Partridge stated taking from the Ambulance User Fee would hurt the Fire Dept. and it should be taken out of the Stabilization Fund. Selectman Freitas said he did not agree with taking the \$100,000.00 from Stabilization Fund. Edward Harmon, resident voter said he does not agree with using the Ambulance User Fee for other things, it is not set up for that. Selectman Freitas stated other accounts have been used for Fire Dept. funding. Selectman McCrohan explained the Ambulance User Fee account and what was being used from it. Edward Harmon, resident voter made a motion to take \$100,000.00 from Stabilization Fund and put it in the Ambulance User Fee. Dean Larabee, resident voter asked why the budget changed so much since the last BOS/Fin Com mtg, he is concerned about funds being used for other purposes. Town Admin. further explained and both discussed. Selectman Vincent asked how much was in the General Stabilization Fund. Town Admin. stated about 2.1 million is in the General Stabilization Fund, further discussion was made. Selectman Freitas stated they try not to use the General Stabilization Fund for operational uses, not a good process. Fire Chief Scott Fournier stated should just put Ambulance User Fee into his account instead of balancing the budget then there would be no money taken out of the General Stabilization Fund, he then made a motion and it was seconded to move the question. A motion was made to move the question, motion passed unanimously. Moderator explained the vote would be to amend \$100,000.00 from General Stabilization Fund to EMS, which would increase the EMS budget to \$790,028. Motion to amend EMS budget carried unanimously. Amendment motion was made by Selectman

McCrohan In total removing \$100,000.00 from General Stabilization Fund, from Taxation \$6,801,801.00, and from Ambulance User Fee \$450,000.00 for a total of \$7,351,801.00. No further discussion, Amendment motion was passed unanimously. No further discussion Motion to approve Article 4 with amendments was carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 5 Selectman Freitas made a motion that the Town raise and appropriate, and transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide for the payment of, the outlays of the following Town governmental accounts for Debt Service for the twelve (12) month period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, all as set forth in the budget presented by the Finance Committee, and summarized as follows:

RETIREMENT OF DEBT	
Town Office Building	\$170,000
SBRSD High School	\$354,634
Bristol Plymouth High School	\$20,434
Multiple Use of Equipment	\$250,000
TOTAL	\$795,068

INTEREST	
Town Office Building	\$ 69,600
SBRSD High School	\$ 169,585
Bristol Plymouth High School	\$ 219,348
Multiple Use of Equipment	\$ 14,963
TOTAL	\$ 473,496

from taxation of \$ 1,268,564
Totaling \$ 1,268,564

Explanation: This article will fund the obligation of the Towns borrowing debt, and interest.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 6 Selectman Vincent made a motion that the Town vote to raise and appropriate, and transfer from available funds, the payment of the outlays of the following Town School related costs and expenses for the twelve (12) month period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025:

<u>School Departments</u>	
Berkley School Spending	\$ 8,685,624
Salaries Elected School Committee	\$ 1,200
K-8 Out of District Special Education	\$ 325,310

K-8 Health Insurance	\$ 1,037,085
K-8 Transportation	\$ 636,324
K-8 Workers Compensation Insurance	\$ 47,307
K-8 Liability Insurance	\$ 82,732
Bristol Plymouth Reg. Voc. H.S.	\$ 1,332,200
Bristol Aggie. H.S. Assessment	\$ 139,935
For a total from free cash of	\$ 735,342
For a total from taxation of	\$11,552,393
Totaling	\$12,287,735

Explanation: This article provides the funding necessary for the Berkley K-8, Bristol Plymouth H.S., and Bristol Aggie H.S. for the fiscal year.

School Committee Chair Tara Weber put a “Hold” on Berkley School Spending line, there was a discrepancy of \$30,000.00. Town Admin. stated it was not a typo, \$8,685,324.00 was read at the BOS mtg. Superintendent Melissa Ryan explained \$8,685,624.00 was not the same number that was read at the BOS/ Fin Com Mtg. it was \$30,000.00 higher. Selectman Vincent cont. reading Article 6. Tara Weber, School Committee Chair made a Motion to amend \$8,685,624.00 of the Berkely School Spending amount to \$8,715,624.00 with the additional \$30,000.00 from the Stabilization Fund. Selectman Freitas further discussed for understanding. Superintendent Melissa Ryan also further explained. Somerset Berkley School Committee Member Jen Andrews, explained the schools’ position of 8 teachers being cut from the budget, directly impacts services to the children, the school getting the \$30,000.00 is very important to the school. Motion to amend the Berkley School Spending carried unanimously. No further discussion, motion to approve Article 6 with amendments carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 7 Selectman McCrohan made a motion that the Town approve and raise and appropriate and transfer funds for its assessed share of the Somerset/Berkley Regional School District Budget for fiscal year 2024, as follows:

From High School Stabilization of	\$ 2,779,717.00
From taxation	\$ 246,504.00
Totaling	\$ 3,026,221.00

Explanation: This article will provide funding for the SB Regional High School District for the upcoming fiscal year.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 8 Selectman Freitas made a motion to move that the Town authorize expenditure limitations for the following revolving funds pursuant to G.L. c.

44, § 53E½, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, to be expended in accordance with Article 35 of the General Bylaws: wiring inspector, \$10,000; gas inspector, \$10,000; plumbing inspector, \$10,000; Board of Appeals, \$5,000; Planning Board, \$10,000; Soil Conservation Board, \$5,000; Board of Health, \$60,000; Police Department, \$200,000; and School Department, \$60,000.

Explanation: This article provides for the authorization of expenditure limits for the listed department accounts for the fiscal year.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 9 Selectman Vincent made a motion to move that the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept and enter into contracts for the expenditure of any funds allocated by the Commonwealth and/or federally aided programs for the construction, reconstruction and improvements of Town roads.

Explanation: The article allows for the Board of Selectmen to accept and enter into contracts for any funds received from the Commonwealth and or any federally aided programs for the construction, reconstruction, and improvement of town roads. The town regularly receives Ch 90 funding for roads which the Selectmen need to accept.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 10 Selectman McCrohan made a motion that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Assessors to hire one or more of its members to do annual tax maintenance on real and personal property and to set the fee paid to said members at \$15.00 per parcel, said funds to be paid from the Annual Tax Maintenance Account.

Explanation: The article will allow the Assessors to appoint one or more of its members to do the annual tax maintenance on real and personal property that needs to be completed during the year.

Discussion: Frank Larkin, resident voter asked how many years the inspections are done. Selectman McCrohan answered every 10 yrs. Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 11 Selectman Freitas made a motion that the Town vote to accept the provisions of Ch. 126 of the Acts of 1988, amending Sec. 4 of Ch. 73 of the Acts of 1986, to allow an additional exemption which shall be for all exemptions and none of which shall exceed 25% of said exemption for which they qualify in Fiscal Year 2025.

Explanation: The article provides for an increase in the property tax exemptions for certain classes

of individuals, including surviving spouses, low-income elderly, the blind and disabled veterans. The proposed increases must be reauthorized annually and have appeared on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant for many years.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 12 Selectman Vincent made a motion that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Health to appoint one or more of its members as agents(s) of the Board of Health as well inspectors and sanitation inspectors and to set the dollar amount for said agents' Inspector fees as follows: \$75.00 per perc hole, \$100.00 per well inspection, \$150.00 per sanitation inspection, \$75.00 per food service inspection, \$75.00 per pumper truck inspection, \$75.00 for other miscellaneous inspections when a license or certificate is required.

Explanation: This will set the rate of pay for each inspection that the Board of Health Inspectors are required to complete.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 13 Selectman McCrohan made a motion that the Town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 53, Section 18B, which requires the Town to print certain information relating to each question that shall appear on the Town ballot, as further specified in said statute, and, not later than seven days before an election at which such question shall be submitted to the voters, send such information to each household wherein a person whose name appears on the current voting list for the Town resides.

Explanation: The acceptance of State statute will obligate the Town to send a mailer to each household prior to the posing of a ballot question to give a one sentence summary of the question and the effect of a "yes" or "no" vote. Included in the communication will be written arguments for and against the question of not more than 150 words.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

ARTICLE 14 Selectman Freitas made a motion that the Town apply for, accept and expend Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program grant funds if approved, and that it transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide for the payment of, a sum not to exceed \$150,000.00 if said MPLCP grant is approved, said sum to be expended by the Town for library assessment, planning, feasibility and/or design, as follows:

from Free Cash	\$75,000
from the Library Gifts and Donations account	\$75,000

Totaling

\$150,000

Explanation: The approval of this motion will allow the Library to use Town funds and its donations to apply for, accept, or expend grant funding and, in the event that the grant is approved, that the money can be used for planning, design or feasibility studies. Should the grant fail to be approved, no Town funds will be expended.

**Library Director Carol Buote showed a slideshow presentation explaining the article.
Motion carried unanimously**

ARTICLE 15 Selectman Vincent made a motion that the Town accept Ridge Street, from the intersection of Shore Road to the intersection of Dillingham Ave., as a public way in the Town of Berkley, as shown on the Definitive plan for Pierce's Point Estates; and that the Town accept Shore Road from the intersection of Bayview Ave. to the intersection of Ridge Street, as a public way in the Town of Berkley, as shown on the Definitive plan for Pierce's Point Estates.

Explanation: Given that the statutory requirements for street acceptance have not been met, this warrant article, while obligated to appear tonight, will not allow the acceptance of the following streets. Further, the warrant article does not address the transfer of ownership of the referenced streets, which would need to be addressed before the streets received the services of the Town.

Discussion: Selectman Vincent made a motion to table, but open discussion to any residents. Motion carried unanimously. Joseph Marchetti, resident voter stated this has been approved in land court since 2009. Atty. Adam Costa explained further the owners of the roadway need to propose this to the BOS/PB and further discussed. David Patrick, resident voter & Con Com member said the plans also included a deep-water dock at the end of Riverside Dr. if accepted the public will have access to the location. Selectman McCrohan stated BOS are setting up a mtg. with the PB & Con Com to discuss everything on this issue. Manuel Coelho, resident voter stated this has been going on a long time everything has been done, plan in place that has been signed off, all further discussed. Moderator said the road does not meet the statutory requirements. Town Admin said the town needs the funds. Selectmen Vincent said hopefully things will be resolved by Nov. Town Mtg. Carol Lucey, resident voter stated the project was never finished, there is no Homeowner's Assoc., it should be a public rd. and the BOS needs to fix the issue. Amanda Pearson, resident voter explained the situation further, she is a tax payer it is developer issues. Motion was made to table Article 15, motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 16 Selectman McCrohan made a motion that the Town vote to amend the Berkley Zoning By-law as described on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and within the Annual Town Meeting Handbook.

Explanation: This article makes several changes. The first change makes the Planning Board the special permit granting authority for home occupations. The second resolves a clerical error in the table for the bylaws. The third change adds the definition for an adult use marijuana establishment which had been omitted prior. The fourth and final change simply adds the word “or” after each item in 10.6.2 to ensure that each item would require site plan approval on its own.

Planning Board Member M. Oliviera stated this is just a clerical error, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend this article. Marc Thibault, resident voter asked who has the authority to approve Special Permits on Home Occupations and what was the reason to switching it over to the Planning Board. M. Oliviera stated the Planning Board has the authority, that was already approved. Just amending the wording. Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 17 Selectman Freitas made a motion that move that the Town vote to amend the Berkley Zoning By-law to conform with the Office of the Attorney General’s recommendations, as described on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and within the “Annual Town Meeting Handbook”.

Explanation: The Attorney General disapproved text included in the Zoning Bylaws adopted at Annual Town Meeting in June of 2023. The text, which can be found in the June 2023 version of the ZBL provided today, will be struck and new language included to define a “reasonable accommodation”.

Planning Board Member M. Oliviera stated this is just a clerical error, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend this article. Daniel Mclaughlin, resident voter asked if these changes have anything to do with the housing for the MBTA. Selectmen McCrohan stated this has nothing to do with the MBTA. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made to adjourn and it was seconded.
Time adjourned 9:33PM

A True Copy Attest

Heather J. Almy
Town Clerk