



TOWN OF STOUGHTON

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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Fiscal Year 2024 Objectives- July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

1. Centralized Purchasing

The objective is to reduce Vendor costs by 10% through negotiation, Contract management, Vendor relations and improved materials management.

Position will be posted December 15th. New Hire by January 1st.

2. Comprehensive Financial Policy

Establish a comprehensive financial policy and system of management control which formulizes our financial structure, reduces risk, increases free cash, strengthen our bond rating, reduces the cost of borrowing and eliminates the use of free cash in balancing our operating budget.

We received a \$30K grant to create a financial policies and procedures manual. Retained the Collins Center to manage the process. Work will begin on January 5th. Project will be complete by May 1, 2024. Voted by Select Board May 15th.

3. Net Zero FTE's

With better use of technology and information systems, maintain FY25 employee headcount at FY24 level.

Headcount analysis will be included in the FY25 operating budget. We will in fact enjoy a reduction in FY24 v. FY25 headcount (FTEs).

4. Stabilization Fund

Increase the Town's Stabilization Fund to a minimum of 20%, as required for communities with a double AA bond rating.

An article will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting to use surplus cash to bring the Town reserve fund up to 20% of revenues.

5. Economic Development

Explore the possibility of taking the Malcolm Parsons and State Theater properties. Once taken, determine the highest and best use for these downtown sites. Utilize accelerated permitting process to make them shovel-ready. Conduct public bid to accept offers from contractors who agree to the stipulated use of the property.

The appraiser has been retained and the motion is getting drafted by Town Counsel. A public information session is being scheduled to get feedback from Town Meeting reps with regard to the use of the State Theater.

6. Unutilized Equipment

Conduct a September equipment Auction. Sell, trade or scrap unutilized surplus equipment. Terminate insurance coverage and registration expense.

Complete. Raised \$160,000 and reduced insurance costs by approx. \$30K.

7. Tax Title Takings

Make meaningful progress in tax title takings. Return taken properties to the tax base.

Progress is being made. More to report next month.

8. Senior Housing

Develop and implement a plan for increasing affordable Senior Housing Units.

HSL made an application to the Community Preservation Committee for funding under the affordable housing category. The CPC will be reviewing it through their process and making a recommendation to Town Meeting for the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2024. HSL has also been working on the documentation and submittal requirements for a MassWorks project to help fund the infrastructure improvements necessary for the project. The actual applicant for MassWorks will have to be the town. HSL has also sent in a project eligibility to the state. This is the first step in the process for HSL's eventual Comprehensive Permit ("Friendly 408") application.

9. Regional 911

Adopt Reg 911. Reduce dispatch operating budget by \$600,000. Invest between \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000 in State funding to make Stoughton a leader in EMS technology.

The Fire Department is now part of Regional 911. The Police will join on March 1st. The dispatch staff has been reduced from 11 to 2 employees. Savings in FY25 budget reallocated to add key positions, i.e. Purchasing Coordinator, Payroll Coordinator for the Schools, Town Communications Rep., Library Outreach Coordinator, Parking Enforcement Officer, and Wellness Coordinator for Police and Fire employees.

10. Exit Civil Service

By achieving this objective, we will improve Labor Relations, remove poor performers, recruit highly qualified employees and improve overall performance of the Town's workforce.

We expect to have consent from Police and Fire to exit Civil Service by February 1st. An article to exit will be in the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

11. Trash & Recycling- Recycling Transfer Station

Complete site selection and facility design. Develop project Budget and present to Town Meeting. Begin permitting process and finalize Capital Plan.

The site selection and facility design will be complete by March 1st.

12. Continued Professional Development

Every employee will engage in a form of professional development in FY24. Training shall include but will not be limited to skills training, certification, licensure and internal training in Town accounting software system. In addition, Department Heads will become trained in the use of progressive discipline requirements, Project Management.

A 10-course program has been created and will be presented to all Department heads beginning in January. The program curriculum shall include conflict resolution, corrective action training, purchasing, ethics management techniques, MUNIS, budget management, DEI, and interviewing techniques.

13. Town Wide Beautification

It is our primary objective to beautify the Town by improving inspectional services, enforcing the new solid waste guidelines and by enhancing public spaces with landscaping and continuous maintenance.

The program is achieving the desired results. A beautification committee is planning a spring clean-up day. Money has been budgeted for beautification initiative and plantings. Community is providing positive feedback on improvements.

14. Community Center

We will continue to seek grant funding for maintenance and repair of the Train Station. It is our goal to host the first public event at the Community Center in FY24.

A Christmas event is planned for December of 2023. \$300k of public funding has been raised to replace the HVAC system. The project is going out to bid in February 2024. Once complete, private funds will be raised to remodel the building interior.

15. Transparency and Communication

Several measures will be taken in FY24 to improve transparency and communication with residents and Town Meeting members. Those measures include investment in the Town Website, Electronic billboards at DPW and Town Hall, frequent public Information Sessions, Monthly emails to Town Meeting members, On line permitting and improved Department Head quarterly reports.

The quarterly reports were well received. Public information sessions will be scheduled for the Town budget. Annual Town Meeting Warrant, land takings, and progress made on FY24 objectives.

16. Town Infrastructure

Our goal is to plan and promote further investment in water and sewer underground infrastructure which promotes economic expansion. Further, reconstruction and resurfacing of Town roads will be coordinated with underground projects. Articles will be presented at the Special Town Meeting so that services are coordinated in time for the following construction season.

Fall Town Meeting supported continued investments in water/sewer and road resurfacing. Approving those articles in the fall will allow us to begin our work in April 2024.

17. Collaboration With School System

After years of a them vs. us relationship, we plan to work closely and collaborating with the new Superintendent and the School Committee in support of common goals and objectives.

We meet regularly with Joe Baeta on issues of School Safety, shared cost allocation, South School Building project, capital needs, etc. The Superintendent will be including his 4-year capital needs with our 4-year capital plan document. It is a pleasure working with the School Superintendent and the School Committee.

18. Water Meters

Completing the water meter project in FY24 will increase revenues and reduce expenses. Further, we will save substantial time by eliminating the current billing system and converting all Water/Sewer financial activity to Munis. Meter readings will be done remotely and leaks will be detected immediately.

We will restart the water meters project in the Spring of 2024 and complete it in the Summer of 2025. The project cost is approx. \$1.6 million. It will be funded without borrowing. Once complete, all meters can be read from the Water Department office. Sudden and unforeseen water leaks will be detected and addressed immediately.

19. Fire Department

Complete construction of the new Fire Station on time and budget. Leave Civil Service. Coordinate the transition to Regional 911.

The fire station project construction is progressing on time and within budget. We expect to be in the building by Summer of 2024.

20. Solid Waste

Implement Solid Waste plan. Explore more advanced methods of Waste Management and source reduction. Engage the DPW staff in Town's beautification objective, #13.

The solid waste program is working as planned. We are making fewer trips to SEMASS, therefore saving money. Solid waste bulky items are picked up weekly. Alternative methods of waste management are being researched. Will report back to the community in November 2025. The staff is doing an outstanding job of plan implementation.

21. Water

Anticipate, plan and react to the upcoming federal PFAS Regulations.

We are searching for public funding sources to supplement the cost of PFAS regulation requirements. Hiring a law firm in December 2024 to join in class action lawsuit which has the potential to generate substantial funding

Thank you,



Thomas J. Calter,
Town Manager