The Proposed FY21 Budget for The City of Portsmouth has many online enhancements to help you better utilize this valuable City document.
Bookmarks

The City of Portsmouth FY21 Features Bookmarks that will help you navigate through the document.

- Click on the Bookmark symbol to see the Tab list (this matches the Table of Contents and Tabs in the physical Document)
- The major “tabs” are your main bookmarks.
- Any bookmark with an arrow can be “expanded” by clicking on it (it will turn 90 degrees to face downward and a list should appear below it).
Look for the City seal at the bottom of each page!

CLICK on the seal to be brought back to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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Karen S. Conard
City Manager

To: Honorable Mayor Rick Becksted and City Council Members
From: Karen S. Conard, City Manager
Date: April 24, 2020
Re: Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Message

In accordance with Article VII of the City Charter, I hereby submit the Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Budget document for all appropriated City funds: General, Water, Sewer, Parking and Transportation, Community Development, Stormwater and Storm Park. This budget document also includes the City’s Rolling Stock Replacement Program, a summary of the Capital Improvement Plan, the FY21 Fee Schedule, citywide goals and accomplishments, an outline of priorities for the coming year, and a financial plan to achieve a level of services that meets our community needs.

As I present my first proposed budget for the City of Portsmouth, we are amid a world-wide Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) that has reached the United States. This virus which is so severe and serious, with no vaccine yet created, has the world at its mercy. Following the lead of other States in our Country making efforts to stop the disease from spreading and protecting our loved ones, Governor Chris Sununu issued a Stay-At-Home order limiting restaurants to take-out services only and closing all non-essential businesses in New Hampshire to the public.

For the first time in history, the City of Portsmouth’s buildings, playgrounds, fields, and programs are closed to our citizens and business owners. However, we are able to continue essential services to our Citizens such as public safety, emergency assistance, education, water and sewer supply, solid waste and recycling pickup to a few. With today’s technology, our online services are still available and we have enhanced these services to include virtual public meetings and meetings for our students, programs at our Public Library, as well as providing public health notices via the city’s website and other social media platforms.

Before I review my proposed FY21 budget, I would like to note that just a short time ago, the economic outlook for the Seacoast area remained strong and active, encouraging new development, businesses, and making it a desirable place to call home. The unfortunate closure of businesses has created financial uncertainty that we must address as we enter into the budget process. We must be cognizant that the current commercial industry in Portsmouth which accounts for 17% of all local properties but pays nearly 30% of the total tax levy, could be significantly impacted. We must also be mindful that Portsmouth will experience record unemployment rates and diminishing revenues. These unknown variables may have an impact on the tax rate at the time when it is set by the Department of Revenue.
Contact City officials by clicking on their name on the “Directory of Officials page.” This will bring you to their page on the City’s website.
Visit the City Department section of the budget by clicking on their Department on the City Organizational Chart.
City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2021

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Citywide Goals

The City of Portsmouth remains committed to establishing a diverse, fiscally sound, and harmonious community which offers a full range of housing, business, cultural, and recreational opportunities for its residents, businesses and visitors in a safe and attractive environment while preserving its ecological and historical treasures.

The following goals are developed in partnership with its citizens and businesses and are formalized through resolutions, committee, internal policies, and/or model plus documentation.

Promote and Support Sustainable Practices

The Portsmouth community expressed a strong desire to become more sustainable and ecologically friendly and in order to safeguard its future. It is a goal of the City to identify new opportunities which it can take to become a more sustainable community. The City’s commitments and goals are led by:

- A resolution signed by the City Council in 2007 declaring Portsmouth a Zero Municipal
- Becoming a member of ICLEI (International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives) an association of cities and counties committed to climate action, clean energy and sustainability
- In June 2017, the City Council unanimously authorized the Mayor to sign a letter promoting the Paris Climate Agreement’s goals calling for ongoing efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, create a clean energy economy, and stand for environmental justice
- In July 2017, a Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Renewable Energy Committee was appointed in charge of to report back to the City Council with a planned renewable energy policy
- Council Policy 2015-11 “Renewable Energy Policy” adopted March 5, 2018 was created to narrow Portsmouth towards becoming a “Net Zero Energy” Community
- In FY19 the City Council adopted a new Wind Power Energy System Evaluation in addition to the Solar Energy System Evaluation, already in place, and
- In FY19 the School Department officially adopted the “Farm to School Program Coordinator” position to run the “Clippers Farm to School Program”

**Remember**

Just hit the seal at the bottom of the page to return to the table of contents at any time.
The last page of the Table of Contents features many helpful (clickable) links to the City’s Website including:

* The FY2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

* The FY19 Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)

* The FY19 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)

and many more. . .
Click on any of the symbols on the side of the Citywide Initiatives or Accomplishments sections to learn more about that particular Citywide Goal.

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**Improve Public Outreach**

The City's public outreach objectives is to provide information about City initiatives, projects and public meetings to residents, while providing platforms for residents to provide input and feedback on important City projects and activities. The Public Information Office strives continuously to improve these lines of communication to the public to provide up-to-date information on issues that may affect a citizen's day-to-day activities.

- A Portsmouth Municipal Meetings Calendar and a Community Event Calendar are both provided on the City's Website.
- The City's website www.cityofportsmouth.com provides a “What’s New” section on the homepage, featuring the latest press releases from City Departments.
- The City publishes a weekly e-newsletter (sign up on the city's website at https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/ihowto/portsmouth-communications-newsletter).
- Click N’ Fax mobile application allows residents to communicate and report infrastructure concerns to the City’s Public Works Department in a reliable and convenient manner.
- Residents subscribe to the Code RED Community Alert System (https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/police/community-safety/code-red) mapping capability that provides telephone, email and text alerts about snow parking bans and similar urgent advisories.
- The City maintains an Interactive Project Map on the City website that provides updates and detailed information regarding infrastructure projects occurring throughout the City.
- The City of Portsmouth public access channel (Channel 22) provides live streaming of key municipal meetings which are then archived on the City YouTube Channel in one convenient location.
- Portsmouth’s Planning, Inspection, Health and Public Works Departments began to utilize ViewPoint Cloud Software on FYI, an online permitting center that allows customers to apply, monitor the status of their application online, and receive notifications when the applications are reviewed and processed.
- Several departments, including DPW, Fire, Police and Schools maintain social media accounts to post timely messages and information.
- The Public Information Office provides detailed information on City projects and initiatives to the media.
Click on any of the titles in the Citywide Initiatives Table and be brought to that initiative write up.

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**Citywide Initiatives**

The following Citywide Initiatives were submitted by city department heads as actions toward goals put forth by the City Council for the 2021 fiscal year.

- **Open Space Plan**

  During the winter of 2020, the City completed its first Open Space Plan. The Plan establishes a citywide strategy for land protection and preservation, establishing new or formalizing existing access to passive recreational areas and balancing public access and use of open space with sustainable management practices, and formalizes links to and between these assets to ensure access from residential and workplace areas citywide. The Plan will guide and prioritize capital investments and Identify funding opportunities including public-private partnerships, and will be a tool for coordinating citywide projects, policies, and programs related to open space and recreation.

  **Citywide Goal(s):** Addressed:
  - Promote and Support Sustainable Practices
  - Create a Livable and Walkable Community
  - Major City Departments Involved:
  - Portsmouth School Department

- **Public Library Sustainability Practices**

  The Portsmouth Public Library (PPL) employs every available opportunity to adopt new sustainability practices including:

  - The library maintains its own garden which was first started in 2019 growing vegetables, flowers and grass in raised beds. The library staff demonstrates and educates on small-scale gardening techniques that can be adopted by many Portsmouth residents. The library also offers youth programming to encourage new generations to be the stewards of gardens and the environment.

  - In FY18 a pollinator garden flourished, not only helping the garden at the library, but also demonstrated to residents that sustainable and organic gardening practices can be both beautiful and functional.

  - In FY19, the library planted a native wildflower garden to replace a fallen tree.

  - The use of 100% recycled paper in all staff printers and copiers.

  - A staff composting program was doubled in capacity since FY18.
Clicking on the same symbols in the Department Goals pages will also take you to that Goal’s explanation.
process; Parking and Transportation; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG), Senior and Person Park.

DEBT SERVICE: This document includes an analysis of debt service for the General, Parking & Transportation, Debt Service Fund, Water, and Sewer Funds. The analysis includes: calculation of debt service, long-term debt forecast model, projected long-term debt as a percentage of the general fund budget, and long-term debt outstanding balance.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP): The long-term planning for major capital projects is set forth in the six-year Capital Improvement Plan and adopted by the City Council. The capital projects are funded through capital outlays, state and federal and, revenues, public/private partnerships and bond issues. This document provides a summary of the Capital Improvement Plan in Appendix B; however, the city also publishes a more detailed long-term CIP under a separate cover as well as online. 

https://www.cityofportmouth.com/planning/Portsmouth-capital-improvement-plan

ROLLING STOCK PROGRAM: The Rolling Stock Program is intended to provide an overall schedule for the expenditure of City funds on replacement of vehicles and equipment necessary to carry out daily City activities. City departments with rolling stock requirements that participate in the program include the Public Works, Police, Fire, Schools, Parking/Transportation, Water, Sewer Departments and Person Park. Such a program serves to inform the City Council and the community that certain expenditures for updating the existing equipment are not to be expected in the years ahead. The Rolling Stock Program detail is located in Appendix I of this document.

FEE SCHEDULE: A City ordinance was enacted stating that all municipal fees shall be adopted and may be amended by resolution during the annual budget adoption process. Appendix II provides a detailed list of all City fees which are reviewed every year.

BUDGETARY FUND STRUCTURE: The City's budgetary fund structure (appropriated funds) which are included in this document are: the General Fund; the Community Development, Parking & Transportation; Stormwater; Person Park, and Economic Development Funds (Special Revenue Funds), and the Water and Sewer Funds (Enterprise Funds). The fund structure in the audited financial statements include all Governmental Funds (General, Special Revenue, Capital Projects, Debt Service Fund and Permanent Fund), Enterprise Funds (Water and Sewer) and Intergovernmental Funds (Private Purpose Trust and Agency Funds). The following chart shows the City's audited fund structure and highlights the appropriate funds in this document and Department/Fund relationships.

Tax Relief Programs

Veterans' Tax Credit

Standard & Ordinance Veterans' Tax Credit (ORD. Text 228-8, 411) 

- All properties shall be assessed in the armed forces of the United States in any qualifying year or served certified below:
  - "Veteran" means any person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States in any war or conflict as designated by the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth.
  - "Discharged" means either:
    - "Discharged" means discharged from the armed forces due to a discharge to disability, or the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran, and that the surviving spouse has remarried to another person who is not related to the veteran.
    - The surviving spouse of any non-registered veteran who is not related to the veteran.

All Veterans (RSA 72:28-b, 411) 

- 411 Any property owner who has a net income of less than $75,000 per annum shall be entitled to a reduction in the property's assessed value equal to 3 percent of the property's assessed value.
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Clicking on the Department Title will take you to the Department’s Website on the City Website.
In the Personnel section – click on the Department to be taken to that Department within the Book.
Click on the first section of fees (under the Revenues Section) will take you to the Appendix III – Schedule of Fees.
Click on the Capital Projects listed in the Budget Highlights section of the budget and move directly to that project in Appendix II.
Click on the Rolling Stock Department Requests (under the Budget Highlights Section) will take you to the appropriate page in Appendix 1 – Rolling Stock.