

## FY2025 Budget Narrative: PUBLIC WORKS

### **Salaries and Benefits Budget Changes/Retention Dynamics:**

Will you hire or add employees next year – replacements, retirements, leaves of absence, etc.?

What contract obligations or changes impacted this year's budget, if any?

What employment challenges does your department face in this area – succession plans, early retirements, the ability to hire and retain employees?

### **SALARIES AND BENEFITS: Budget Changes/Retention Dynamics**

Due to current hiring constraints and a 'no new hire' directive imposed by the Select Board, there are no plans to increase staffing for FY2025. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is presently fully staffed in both the Highway and Government Buildings Divisions. However, there remains one (1) open position for an Administrative Assistant to the Public Works Director, for which applications have been received and are currently under review.

Securing part-time assistance in the Highway and Transfer Station Divisions remains a consistent challenge. Currently, one part-time Transfer Station employee is on long-term disability following a work-related injury. The town's insurance provider, Primex, is actively addressing this matter and working toward a resolution. Coverage for this part-time Attendant position is presently managed by assigning overtime hours to full-time employees. Furthermore, the department anticipates the retirement of the Transfer Station Senior Attendant in 2026.

Several step increases, as stipulated by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), were implemented for employees during FY2024, which will impact the FY2025 budget. Additionally, the CBA-mandated cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will also contribute to an increase in the wages portion of the FY2025 budget.

The projected rise in health insurance premiums is expected to further impact the FY2025 budget significantly.

In the long term, the DPW has goals to increase staffing levels to provide operational redundancy, support succession planning, and allow employees to take paid leave without disrupting services. A key goal is the establishment of a Deputy Director of Public Works position in the near future. Additionally, an additional Laborer position within the Highway Division would enhance support across all DPW divisions, thereby reducing the reliance on overtime to cover shifts. The creation of this non-CDL Laborer position is warranted by the increasing demand for services and would greatly benefit department efficiency and service reliability.