

Stoughton Town Crier

TOWN OF STOUGHTON UPDATED MARCH 3, 2025 ROBERTA HARBACK



All information taken from various Town of Stoughton pages



Selectboard Agenda

Monday March 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Great Hall Town Hall 3rd floor & virtually with Google Meets

OFFICE OF
THE TOWN CLERK
In accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, which extends the Governor's March 12, 2020 "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.C. 30A § 20", until March 31, 2025, this meeting will be conducted both in person and virtually via Google Meets.

To Join via Google Meets: vvi-cwdb-zgs
PHONE: 559-931-1605
PIN: 146 776 834#

The meeting will be recorded by SMAC cable television and broadcast live and may be livestreamed at www.stoughtontv.org. A recording of the meeting, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceeding will be posted on the Town's website and/or SMAC as soon as possible after the meeting if the live broadcast or livestreaming is unsuccessful. Times are approximate and items may be taken out of order at the Chair's discretion.

1. 7:00 p.m. **OPEN SESSION**
Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance
2. 7:05 p.m. Citizens' Comments (2 minutes each)
3. 7:15 p.m. Select Board Comments
4. 7:25 p.m. Town Manager Comments
5. 7:30 p.m. To consider and discuss Noise By-law (Votes may be taken)
6. 7:50 p.m. Stoughton Reads Together book for 2025
7. 8:00 p.m. Call for the April 8, 2025 election/ballot
8. 8:05 p.m. Open the Warrant for Special Town Meeting within the Annual Town Meeting
9. 8:10 p.m. **Consent Agenda:**
 - a. Approval of In-Person Early Voting for the April 8, 2025 Election
 - b. License agreement between the Town of Stoughton and Asplundh Construction, LLC of approximately 1.2 acres of parcel 053_166
 - c. 30 Freeman Street Electric Easement

Christopher McGhee
Library Director



Stoughton Public Library*84 Park Street*Stoughton, MA

MARCH MADNESS

SMASH BROS TOURNAMENT

1ST PLACE - \$20.00
2ND PLACE - \$15.00
3RD PLACE - \$10.00
GIFT CARDS

REGISTRATION BEGINS
MARCH 10 :



FOR TEENS

Practice
Tues 3/18 & Wed 3/19

Tournament
Thurs 3/20
Starts at 1PM



TEEN SILENT BOOK CLUB

Official SBC Chapter!

MARCH 13TH | AT 2:30pm



Thursday

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

84 Park Street * Stoughton, MA * 02072

781-344-2711



THE SUN ALWAYS RISES

Harnessing solar power provides economical energy solutions!

**CHOOSE RENEWABLE SOURCES THROUGH STOUGHTON'S
COMMUNITY CHOICE POWER SUPPLY**

Go to: Colonialpowergroup.com/form-stoughton
choose "Optional"

or

INSTALL SOLAR PANELS AT YOUR HOME

Go to: [the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](http://theMassachusettsCleanEnergyCenter)
at goclean.masscec.com

STOUGHTON RECREATION



SPRING/SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM GUIDE

ADULTS

Stoughton Runs Together with Dave Guglia **NEW!**
Mondays 4/7-5/12 | 5:30-6:30 pm | Ages 16+ | \$50
Location: Denison Athletic Complex | 5k included!

Pottery Wheel Workshop with Beeble Art Studios
Friday 5/2 | 5:00-7:00 pm | Ages 16+
Location: Recreation Department | \$75

Spring Watercolor Workshop with Laurice
Thursday 5/15 | 5:30-7 pm | Ages 16+
Location: Recreation Department | \$20

Paint Night with Beeble Art Studios
Friday 4/4 | 5:15-7 pm | Ages 16+
Location: Recreation Department | \$25

Easyfit Exercise with Mary
Tuesdays and Fridays 10:30-11:30 am | Ages 18+
Location 3/15-4/30: First United Methodist Church
Location 5/3-6/28: Halloran Park | \$3 per class

Jigsaw Wizards with Winny **NEW TIME!!**
Friday 4/18 | 6-8pm | Ages 16+
Friday 5/16 | 6-8pm | Ages 18+
Location: Recreation Department | \$15 per team

CPR and First Aid
Thursday 6/5 | 5 pm | Ages 16+
Location: Recreation Department | \$85

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Once a Knight, Always a Knight Memorial 5k Walk/Run
Saturday 5/17 | 9 am | Halloran Park | \$25
The proceeds of this race will help fund scholarships to swim lessons and summer programs for Stoughton families.

Town Wide Beautification Day with DPW
Saturday 4/12 | 8 am | Council on Aging
Join your neighbors to help clean up and beautify town!

Town of Stoughton Fireworks
Tuesday 7/1 | 9 pm | Denison Athletic Complex

July 4th Parade
Friday 7/4 | 10 am | Town Center

NOW HIRING

Join our team!! Looking for summer playground counselors!
https://stoughtonma.myrec.com/forms/5990_fillable_job_application.pdf

Return completed application to the Recreation Department,
15 Pleasant St. Stoughton MA 02072

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Ames Pond Beachfront passes available in June!

Pre-Playground
6/30-8/8 | 8:30-2:30 pm | Ages 4-5
Location: South Elementary School | \$120 weekly

Open Playground
6/30-8/8 | 8:30-2:30 pm | Entering Grades 1-6
Location: South Elementary School | \$120 weekly

After Playground (Open Playground registration required)
6/30-8/8 | 2:30-4:00 pm | Entering Grades 1-6
Location: South Elementary School | \$45 weekly

Teen Extreme **NEW!**
6/30-8/8 | 8:30-2:30 pm | Entering Grades 7-11
Location: South Elementary School | \$180 weekly

Street Hockey Clinic with Coach Jay
Mon-Thurs 7/21-7/24 | 9:30-11:00 am | Ages 7-14
Location: Halloran Park | \$45

Summer Golf Clinic with Coach Donahue
Session 1: Mon-Thurs 7/28-7/31 | 9-1 pm | Ages 7-15
Session 2: Mon-Thurs 8/4-8/7 | 9-1 pm | Ages 7-15
Location: Cedar Hill Golf Course | \$65

Family Fishing Clinic with MassWildlife
Thursday 7/24 | 5:30 pm | All Ages
Location: Ames Pond Causeway | \$10 per family

Tennis Clinic with Coach Jay
Mon-Thurs 7/7-7/10 | 9:30-11:00 am | Ages 7-14
Location: Stoughton High School Tennis Courts | \$45

Baseball Clinic with Coach Kilday **NEW!**
Monday-Thurs 8/11-8/14 | 9:30 am - 12 pm | Ages 7-14
Location: Denison Athletic Complex

To sign up or for more info, visit
www.Stoughtonrec.org

All dates, times and locations are subject to change. For the most up to date info, please visit our website or contact the office recreation@stoughton-ma.gov or 781-341-1300 x9244. Prices listed are for Stoughton residents, non-resident rates may apply.

STOUGHTON RECREATION



SPRING/SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM GUIDE

KIDS & TEENS

Craft & Play with Rec Staff

Wednesdays 3/26-4/16 | 10-10:45 am | Ages 2-5
Location: Recreation Department | \$25

Tiny Tykes Soccer with Challenger Sports

Sundays 9-9:45, 10-10:45, 11-11:45 am | 4/27-6/8
Location: Halloran Park | Ages 2-5 | \$100

Little Sports Stars with Rec Staff *NEW TIME!!*

Thursdays 5/1-5/22 | 11:15-12 pm | Ages 4-5
Location: Halloran Park | \$25

Mini Knights Lacrosse with Rec Staff

Thursdays 3:30-4:15 | 5/1-5/22 | Ages 4-6
Location: Halloran Park | \$35

Culinary Creations with Rec Staff

Wednesday 4/2 | 3-4:30 pm | Ages 6-11
Tuesday 5/20 | 3-4:30 pm | Ages 6-11
Location: Recreation Department | \$15

Kids Night Out with Rec Staff

Friday 4/11 | 5-9 pm | Ages 6-12
Location: Recreation Department | \$12

Slime Workshop with Rec Staff

Wednesday 3/26 | 3:30-4:30 pm | Ages 6-12
Tuesday 5/7 | 3:30-4:30 pm | Ages 6-12
Location: Recreation Department | \$10

Rock Climbing with Central Rock Gym Randolph *NEW!*

Session 1: Saturdays 3/29-5/3 | 11:30-1:30 PM
Session 2: Saturdays 5/10-6/14 | 11:30-1:30 PM
Ages 7-12 | \$175
Location: Central Rock Gym Randolph

Archery with On The Mark Archery

Session 1: Sundays 4/27-5/18 | 5-6 pm
Session 2: Sundays 6/1-6/22 | 5-6 pm
Grade 4-Adult | \$170
Location: Pequitside Farm, Canton

Ceramic Bunny Workshop with Rec Staff

Monday 4/14 | 3:30-4:30 pm | Ages 5-8
Wednesday 4/16 | 3:30-4:30 pm | Ages 8-12
Location: Recreation Department | \$12

Spring Golf Clinic with Matt

Tuesdays 4/8-5/6 | 3:00-4:30 pm | Ages 9-15
Mondays 5/12-6/9 | 3:00-4:30 pm | Ages 9-15
Location: Cedar Hill Golf Course | \$40

Teen Chefs with Rec Staff

Monday 3/31 | 3-4:30 pm | Ages 11-17
Wednesday 5/21 | 3-4:30 pm | Ages 11-17
Location: Recreation Department | \$15

APRIL VACATION PROGRAMS

Lego Club with Winny

Tues-Thurs 4/22-4/24 | 10-11:30 am | Grades K-3
Location: Recreation Department | \$40

Create-Your-Own Music Video with SMAC

Tues-Thurs 4/22-4/24 | 1:00-4:00 pm | Grades 5-9
Location: SMAC, 421 Page St #2, Stoughton | \$25

Street Hockey Clinic with Coach Jay

Tues-Thurs 4/22-4/24 | 9:30-11:00 am | Ages 7-14
Location: Gibbons School Basketball Court | \$45

Babysitter Training Course with SYC

Tues-Thurs 4/22-4/24 | 10 am - 12 pm (CPR Wed 10-12:30)
Location: Stoughton Youth Commission | Ages 12-18 | \$30

To sign up or for more info, visit
www.Stoughtonrec.org

All dates, times and locations are subject to change. For the most up to date info, please visit our website or contact the office recreation@stoughton-ma.gov or 781-341-1300 x9344. Prices listed are for Stoughton residents, non-resident rates may apply.



Town of Stoughton

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COLLECTOR

10 Pearl Street • Stoughton, MA 02072 • (781) 341-1300 • FAX (781) 341-1032

The Water, Sewer, Trash Department has issued the **FY25 3rd quarter Water, Sewer, Trash bills** to the Town of Stoughton water, sewer, and trash customers. The 3rd quarter Water, Sewer, Trash bills were **mailed on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, and are due Thursday, March 13, 2025**, and must be received in the Collector's Office or the PO Box in Medford on or before this date. **A postmark date is not acceptable as payment made if the payment is not received in the Collector's Office or the PO Box in Medford by March 13, 2025.**

When sending payment(s) to the Lockbox address in Medford, checks, AND water, sewer, trash remittances MUST BE SENT. PLEASE do not mail checks only to the Medford address. If there is/are no remittance(s) with the check(s), the payment(s) cannot be processed and will be returned to Town Hall for processing. This will delay the payment(s) from being applied to your water, sewer, trash bill(s).

When processing a payment online through your bank's Bill Pay, you MUST include the bill number, and the year and type in the Memo field (for example, Bill #25, 2025 water, sewer, trash) so your payment will be properly applied. When paying multiple bills, you must include each bill number. If this information is not included on your check, your check may be returned to you, and interest/charges may accrue due to a late payment. **Online bank payment checks must be mailed to** Town of Stoughton PO Box 9108 Stoughton MA 02072.

The Water, Sewer, Trash bills may be paid online at [HTTPS://WWW.STOUGHTON.ORG/428/ONLINE-BILL-PAY](https://www.stoughton.org/428/online-bill-pay), at Town Hall with cash, checks and credit and debit card with a 3% fee and for your convenience, there is a secured payment drop box outside of Town Hall on Pearl St. The payment drop box is emptied two to three times a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, and if needed, once before leaving for the day.

All unpaid water, sewer, trash bills will accrue interest at 14% from their respective due dates, a \$15.00 demand fee will be added to the bill, and the Senior Discount will be forfeited if this quarter's balance is not paid in full.

The Collector staff members are available by phone Monday through Wednesday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Thursday from 8:30 AM to 7:00 PM, and Friday from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Please call 781-341-1300 X 9222 if you need your bill number(s) and or amount(s) due.

STO REE

SPRING & SUMMER 2025

Registration opens March 3rd! Over 40 program offerings available, new programs added regularly!



www.StoughtonRec.org | recreation@stoughton-ma.gov | 781-341-1300 x9244



Like



Comment



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STOUGHTON RECREATION 2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Open Playground Summer Program Entering grades 1-6 · 6/30-8/8 · 8:30-2:30 PM · \$120/week

Open Playground is Stoughton's most affordable summer program and includes a variety of activities like sports tournaments, arts and crafts, on-site entertainment and more in an open-play format at the South School. After Playground, an extended day option until 4 pm, is available weekly with an additional registration.

Pre-Playground Summer Program Age 4 - entering Kindergarten · 6/30-8/8 · 8:30-2:30 PM · \$120/week

Pre-Playground is our summer program designed with little ones in mind that focuses on the power of play! Kids will enjoy different games, crafts, and special events designed for ultimate fun! There is no extended day option.

Teen Xtreme Summer Program Entering grades 7-11 · 6/30-8/8 · 8:30-2:30 PM · \$180/week

Teen Xtreme is our new summer program where participants have the opportunity to venture on a variety of field trips throughout the area and gain leadership experience along the way - all while having fun!

Little Sports Stars Ages 4-5 · 4/30-5/21 · 11:15-12 PM · \$25

Join us as we introduce the fundamentals of sports from soccer, to baseball, and even football! Each week will incorporate games and drills developing coordination, agility, and playing as a team! Located at Halloran Park.

Once a Knight, Always a Knight Memorial 5k Walk/Run Saturday, 5/17 · 9 AM · \$25

Our 5k welcomes athletes and walkers alike to rally together as a community for a good cause. Proceeds of this race will help fund scholarships towards swim lessons and summer programs for Stoughton families.



Stoughton Public Library

JOURNALING WORKSHOP

*Learn the art and value of journals
"to capture the events and texture of ...
lives and find that they are extraordinary."*

Adult workshop:
Thursday March 20th 6:30pm

Teens workshop:
Tuesday March 25th 3pm

Stoughton Public Library
84 Park St., Stoughton, MA

Registration required
(Journals & Spaces are Limited)



KNIT/CROCHET CIRCLE

TUES. 3/11

Starts at 2:45PM

FOR TEENS



Join us for knitting or
crocheting w/ special pop
up monthly by local artist
Becky!!

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

84 Park Street * Stoughton, MA * 02072
781-344-2711





Annual Town Election * April 8, 2025

If you want to plan to Vote by mail

for the April 8th Town Election you will need to fill out an
Application either in person or online.

The State will not be sending out postcards for the Local Election.
Please visit the Town Clerk's page under Voter Information
for additional details.

**Last day to apply for
Ballot by Mail
Tuesday April 1, 2025**

**Last day to register to vote
Saturday March 29, 2025**

Campaign Finance Reports - Important Dates

Pre-election report- Monday March 31, 2025

Post -election Report -Thursday, May 8, 2025

Stoughton High School & POPS present:

EVENING OF JAZZ

PERFORMANCES BY:

SHS Jazz Bands | Oliver Ames
Jazz Band | OMS Jazz Band



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*Grammy® Award-winning
BIJON WATSON*



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- *La La Land*
- *Stevie Wonder*
- *Michael Jackson*
- *Michael Buble*
- *Despicable Me 2*
- *The Tonight Show*
- *Prince*
- *Lady Gaga*



MARCH 19, 2025 AT
5:30 pm

TICKETS
\$12 ADVANCE
\$14 DOOR



STOUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL CAFE
232 PEARL STREET | STOUGHTON



Stoughton Public Library Pajama Drive

February 1-March 15, 2025

The SPL has partnered with the Boston Bruins and Cradles to Crayons for their annual pajama drive. Please help us collect NEW pajamas sizes 0-3 months - Adult Medium so we can reach our goal of 100 pairs to benefit children in need in Massachusetts.

Thank you for your support!



Stoughton Public Library

84 Park St.
Stoughton, Massachusetts 02072 | 781-344-2711
www.stoughtonlibrary.org



It's time to register!

your dogs for their 2025 license!

Dog Licenses

Licenses are granted through the Clerk's office at Town Hall or can be registered online.

Please note any dog not registered by April 30th will be charged a \$25.00 late fee.

Please visit the Clerk's page on the Town website for additional information.

please make sure to bring your current rabies certificate.



Trash & Recycling Frequently-Asked Questions

Stoughton Department of Public Works

950 Central Street, Stoughton, MA, 02072

Monday - Friday, 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Does the town provide trash and/or recycling bins?

Residents are responsible for purchasing trash barrels. The DPW will provide one free recycling bin per household as well as free "recyclables" stickers to place on said bins.

How often is recycling taken?

Recycling is picked up curbside twice per month on the same day as trash.

How do I dispose of cardboard and pizza boxes?

Cardboard and pizza boxes, including with grease, can be recycled.

How do I dispose of large items like furniture and appliances?

You may schedule a bulk item pick-up at www.stoughton.org or call the DPW (781)341-1300 x9410.

How do I recycle if I live in a building that does not offer the service?

The recycling center at 100 Page Street is open every Saturday 8-4 to Stoughton residents. They accept paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and yard waste.

When is household hazardous waste day?

Typically held in autumn, a date and time will be posted online once available.

Why must I place bins out by 7 AM if pickup occurs later that day?

Routes and drivers are subject to change without notice for a variety of reasons, such as construction or truck maintenance.

How do I apply for a senior discount on my trash bill?

You may bring your license to the DPW or the Town Hall Collector's Office during business hours. It will be applied to the next issued bill.

STOUGHTON TOWN HALL IS PROUD TO PRESENT THE

SENIOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

HOSTED BY TOM CALTER AND JOSEPH MOKRISKY

Learn about tax reduction options that may benefit you at our upcoming series of informational sessions. Renters and homeowners alike can find options that benefit their bottom line.

COUNCIL ON AGING

- Wednesday, March 5, 11 AM - 12:30 PM
- Thursday, March 13, 10 AM - 11:30 AM

AHAVATH TORAH CONGREGATION

- Thursday, March 20, 11 AM - 2:00 PM

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Tuesday, March 25 at 6 -7:30 PM

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

Questions?

Contact Janiece Bruce at the Stoughton Council on Aging at 781-344-8882 or jbruce@stoughton-ma.gov.





TOWN OF STOUGHTON

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

10 Pearl Street – Stoughton, MA 02072 (781) 341-1300 Fax (781) 297-2879

Budget Deliberations Introduction February 26, 2025

Good evening Mr. Chairman and through you to the Finance Committee members.

This evening marks the beginning of many hearings needed to publicly vet the FY26 operating budget and capital plan. While appearing to be the beginning of the budget process, it is actually near the end of a 6-month process that began in October and ends with an affirmative vote of Town Meeting members at the conclusion of our Annual Town Meeting.

The FY26 budget process began on October 15, 2024 with the budget committee's recommendation of budget guidelines to the Select Board. A copy of that document appears as **Exhibit A** in your packet. With input and guidance provided by the Select Board, Mr. Tisdelle created a calendar and schedule running from October 24, 2024 to the Annual Town Meeting on May 5, 2025. That detailed schedule appears as **Exhibit B** in your packet. In strict conformance with our budget guidelines and schedule, the School Committee voted a 3.8% FY26 operating budget on December 30, 2024 and the Select Board voted a 3.37% municipal departments operating budget on December 30, 2024. The total Select Board FY26 budget is \$139,956,816, which is a 3.59% increase over FY25. As required by Charter, the consolidated Town FY26 operating budget was transmitted to the Finance Committee on January 21, 2025. Since its submission to the Finance Committee, we have responded through your Chair to many requests for information from members. We appreciate that level of collaboration.

I would like to take a minute to present some key data from the Select Board's FY26 operating and capital budgets.

- As you recall, we had a 7-year plan to stop the use of free cash and one-time funds to balance our operating budget. Now, in year two of that 7-year plan, we have balanced the budget without the use of free cash or one-time funds.
- In accordance with DOR guidelines, local receipts have been conservatively estimated at 90% of FY24 actuals.
- The Department of Education, DESE, calculated the Stoughton School foundation budget at **\$65,412,011**. Stoughton net school spending is **\$22,756,152**. Therefore, the Town's total financial support of its schools is **\$88,168,163**. This investment in education represents 63% of the Town's total budget.

- Through the consolidation of positions and use of technology, the Municipal Departments FY26 budget includes 4.47 fewer employees than FY25 and 18.67 fewer employees than FY24.
- As stated, there is no use of free cash in the FY26 operating budget. On February 7, 2025 the Town of Stoughton's "free cash" of \$12,722,449 was certified by the Mass Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. That notice of DOR certification is included as **Exhibit C**.
- Cost of living adjustments of 3% were budgeted for employees not subject to collectively bargained agreements (CBA's).
- The employee health insurance trust fund is solvent and budgeted at a 3.7% increase in FY26.
- General liability insurance is budgeted at a 10% increase.
- Merit increases are budgeted for employees who consistently perform above expectations. Market comparisons are provided in the budget book before you. The cost of replacing valued employees has proven to be 10% – 20% more expensive.
- Wages have been adjusted for employees who are paid below market or who are impacted by systemic pay parity inequities.
- Because of job consolidation and the effective use of technology, water and sewer rates are budgeted at FY25 rates.
- Because of operational efficiencies which have saved the Town approximately \$500,000, rubbish and solid waste rates are budgeted at FY25 rates.
- The VNA enterprise fund is not a self-funded service organization. Discussion and public input is needed to determine its organizational viability.
- A budget account has been created and funded in our HR Department in order to fund a yet to be settled labor contract.
- The budget committee is proposing that our stabilization account (savings) be increased to \$10,000,000, a level never achieved in Stoughton history. This decision to strengthen our savings account is made in recognition that we operate in uncertain times and that our savings account provides insurance against unforeseen socio/economic conditions. Our conservative actions have been favorably noticed by the DOR and by Moody's. The Moody's report appears as **Exhibit D** in your packet.

Mr. Chairman, I am certain that the members are struck by my announcement of one-time certified free cash of \$12.7 million. Before starting our deliberations, it's important that I explain this "great news".

As the committee knows, we have completely restructured our Finance and Accounting Department over the past 24 months. Learning soon after I arrived in 2023, that our balance sheet had not been properly managed since as far back as 1998, we recruited a seasoned Finance Manager with Forensic Accounting expertise. In addition, we recruited 2 certified municipal accountants with significant experience in the creation and implementation of best administrative and accounting practices. Together, they have done an extraordinary job of cleaning up the past while training staff to work more effectively in the future. Training on best practices is well underway. The Forensic Accounting project will require another 12 to 18 months to complete. A considerable portion of the \$12.7 million in free cash has been realized by the closing of balance sheet accounts. The work done by our Finance and Accounting staff, in collaboration with Assessing and Treasury, is truly remarkable. Under the leadership of Elizabeth Zaleski, the Town is compliant with laws relating to municipal finance and taxation. Our entire accounting staff is on a first name basis with the staff of the Division of Local Services, which is the external support team of DOR. We speak with them often and they visited with us in early February, congratulating our team on a job well done. I am extremely proud of this team and grateful for the important work they have done and continue to do each day. Stoughton now stands on a strong financial footing. Combined with impressive economic development, smart growth and our conservative budgeting strategy, the Town's financial future is bright.

Mr. Chairman, you and the members will note several changes to the look, structure, clarity and detail provided in the FY26 operating and capital budgets. Under the leadership and management of Mr. Tisdelle, the print is larger, the confusing columns have been deleted, footnotes have been added and backup material is included in the budget attachments. Our expectation is that with greater clarity and documentation, the examination of the budget has been made more transparent, which allows for greater financial control.

Mr. Chairman, while we appreciate feedback, I would suggest to those who hold the opinion that financial guardrails don't exist in Town government, that they purchase a copy of the Department of Revenue Municipal Laws Relating to Municipal Finance and Taxation. That body of laws, policies and guidance provides the north star for municipal leaders. The Division of Local Services (DLS), is the division of DOR which is committed to supporting the needs of municipalities with respect to its interpretation of laws, guidance on government rules, and recommendations on best financial practices. The DLS is a valued partner with the Town of Stoughton.

On March 13, 2024, in a memorandum from a first year Finance Committee member, it was recommended that each member read the **Finance Committee handbook** and that it would "be helpful in shaping our discussions". As the former Vice Chair of a Finance Committee, I agree that the handbook provides valuable guidance on the role of Finance Committee members. A section from the handbook stated that:

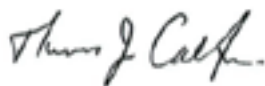
"The Finance Committee report is the extremely critical end product of the

"The finance committee report is the extremely critical end-product of the budget development process. The finance committee report provides analyses, explanations, and justifications for its recommendations. Although the level of detail varies from town to town, more informative reports include financial and statistical data, often trace historical trends and specific appropriations. However, there is no need to duplicate information already presented in a comprehensive budget document. The town's financial condition, the issues posed by the budget, local bylaws, customs and traditions, and the interests and skills of the committee members will shape the finance committee report."

I find that citation from the finance committee handbook to be very instructive. Therefore, may I respectfully suggest that rather than having a handful of members repeatedly criticizing or chastising presenters with unsubstantiated opinions, that those members of the finance committee draft the finance committee report, present it to the full committee and ask for a vote on the report. I believe that the finance committee report is the most professional way to express input from this esteemed body. That report would elevate the level of fact-based debate, civility, awareness and communication.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the budget committee which includes myself, Mr. Tisdelle, Ms. Zaleski, Ms. Chatsko and Ms. Shropshire, we look forward to taking the committee's questions.

Thank you,



Thomas J. Calter

