



Financial Funds and Basis of Accounting

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the flow of current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when susceptible to accrual (i.e., measurable and available). Measurable means the amount of the transaction can be determined and available means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. Expenditures are recorded when the related fund liability is incurred, except for un-matured interest on general long-term debt which is recognized when due, and certain compensated absences, claims and judgments which are recognized when the obligations are expected to be liquidated with current expendable available resources.

The Town considers property tax revenues available if they are collected within 60 days after year-end. Investment income is susceptible to accrual. Other receipts and tax revenues become measurable and available when the cash is received and are recognized as revenue at that time.

Entitlements and shared revenues are recorded at the time of receipt or earlier if the susceptible to accrual criteria is met. Expenditure driven grants recognize revenue when the qualifying expenditures are incurred and all other grant requirements are met.

The following major governmental funds are reported:

- The *general fund* is the primary operating fund. It is used to account for all financial resources, except those that are required to be accounted for in another fund.
- The *capital borrowing fund* is a capital project fund used to account for the Town's annual capital appropriations that are budgeted to be financed through long-term borrowing.
- The non-major governmental funds consist of special revenue, other capital projects, and permanent funds that are aggregated and presented in the *non-major governmental funds* column on the governmental funds financial statements.

The following describes the general use of these fund types:

- The *special revenue fund* is used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes other than permanent funds or capital projects.
- The *capital projects fund* is used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets of the governmental funds.
- The *permanent fund* is used to account for and report financial resources that are legally restricted to the extent that only earnings, not principal, may be used for purposes that support the governmental programs.



Financial Funds and Basis of Accounting (continued)

Proprietary fund financial statements are reported using the flow of economic resources measurement focus and use the accrual basis of accounting. Under this method, revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when the liabilities are incurred.

Proprietary funds distinguish operating revenues and expenses from non-operating items. Operating revenues and expenses generally result from providing services and producing and delivering goods in connection with the proprietary funds principal ongoing operations. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as non-operating revenues and expenses.

The following major proprietary funds are reported:

- The *water and sewer enterprise fund* is used to account for the water and sewer activities.
- The *youth services enterprise fund* is used to account for the youth services activities.
- The *council on aging enterprise fund* is used to account for the council on aging activities.
- The *Ed Burns Arena enterprise fund* is used to account for the rink activities.
- The *recreation enterprise fund* is used to account for the recreation activities.

Fiduciary fund financial statements are reported using the flow of economic resources measurement focus and use the accrual basis of accounting. Fiduciary funds are used to account for assets held in a trustee capacity for others that cannot be used to support the governmental programs.

The following fiduciary fund types are reported:

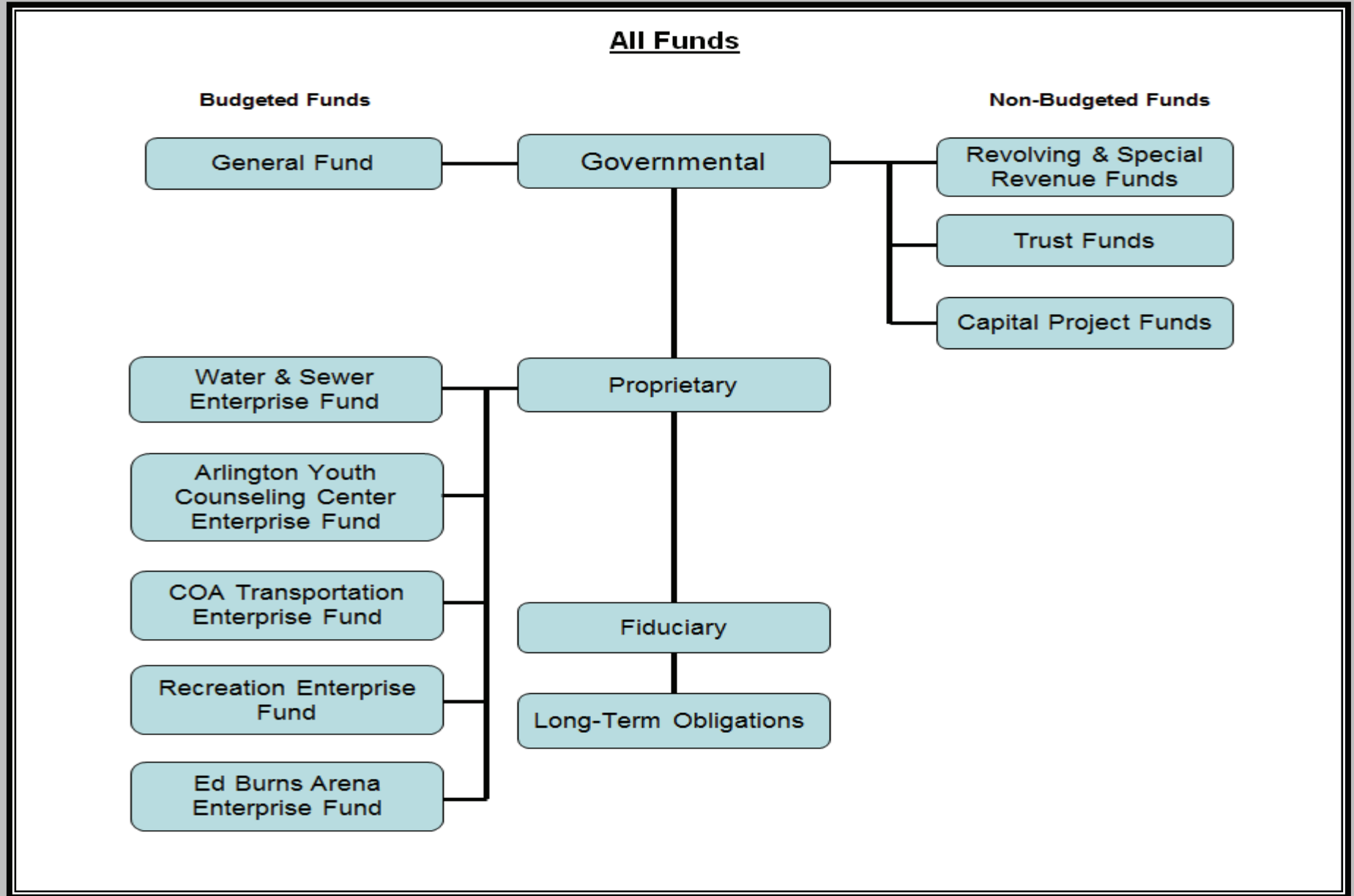
- The *pension trust fund* is used to account for the activities of the System, which accumulates resources to provide pension benefits to eligible retirees and their beneficiaries.
- The *other postemployment benefit trust fund* is used to accumulate resources to provide funding for future other postemployment benefits (OPEB) liabilities.
- The *private-purpose trust fund* is used to account for trust arrangements, other than those properly reported in the pension trust fund, other postemployment benefit trust, or permanent fund, under which principal and investment income exclusively benefit individuals, private organizations, or other governments.
- The *agency fund* is used to account for assets held in a purely custodial capacity.



Financial Funds and Basis of Accounting (continued)

An annual budget is adopted for the Town's General and Enterprise Funds. The Town's annual budget is adopted on a statutory basis, specific to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and it differs in some respects from GAAP. The major differences between the budget and GAAP basis are that:

1. Budgeted revenues are recorded when cash is received, except for real estate and personal property taxes, which are recorded as revenue when levied (budget), as opposed to when susceptible to accrual (GAAP).
2. For the budget, encumbrances are treated as expenditures in the year the commitment is made. Also, certain appropriations do not lapse and are treated as budgetary expenditures in the year they are authorized as opposed to when the liability is actually incurred (GAAP).
3. The depreciation of Fixed Assets is not recognized as a current expense on a budgetary basis, except to the extent that actual maintenance costs are included in departmental budgets.





Fund Balances

The Town defines a **fund balance** as the difference between assets and liabilities reported in a government fund. This is also known as fund equity. The Town classifies the funds as follows: General Fund, Enterprise Funds, Reserve Funds and Revolving Funds.

General Fund – The fund used to account for most financial resources and activities governed by the normal Town Meeting appropriation process.

Free Cash – “Free Cash” is a revenue source that results from the calculation, as of July 1, of a community’s remaining, unrestricted funds from operations of the previous fiscal year, based on the balance sheet as of June 30. It typically includes actual receipts in excess of revenue estimates and unspent amounts in departmental budget line-items for the year just ending, plus unexpended free cash from the previous year. Consistent with current practice, the Town appropriates up to 50% of its Free Cash balance from the prior year to as an operating revenue.

Enterprise Fund – An enterprise fund, authorized by MGL Ch. 44 Sec.53F ½ is a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods or services. It allows a community to demonstrate to the public the portion of total costs of a service that is recovered user charges and the portion that is subsidized by the tax levy, if any.

Revolving Fund – A revolving fund allows a community to raise revenues from a specific service and use those revenues without appropriation to support the service. For department revolving funds, MGL Ch. 44 Sec. 53E ½ stipulates that each fund must be reauthorized each year at annual Town Meeting and that a limit on the total amount that may be spent from each fund must be established at that time.

Urban Renewal Fund – An urban renewal fund is a fund set up to help a community meet the planning and implementation costs of urban revitalization and development projects.



Reserve Fund – An amount set aside annually within the budget of a town to provide a funding source for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures. In a town, the finance committee can authorize transfers from this fund for “extraordinary or unforeseen” expenditures. Other uses of the fund require budgetary transfers by Town Meeting.

Tip Fee Stabilization Fund – The Town of Arlington participated in a regional solid waste consortium, the North East Solid Waste Committee. Upon leaving the consortium in September of 2005, the Town was entitled to revenue derived from the regional agreement. Since then, the Town uses funds from the Tip Fee Stabilization Fund to offset solid waste disposal costs. The Town appropriated \$164,000 from the fund in FY2014.

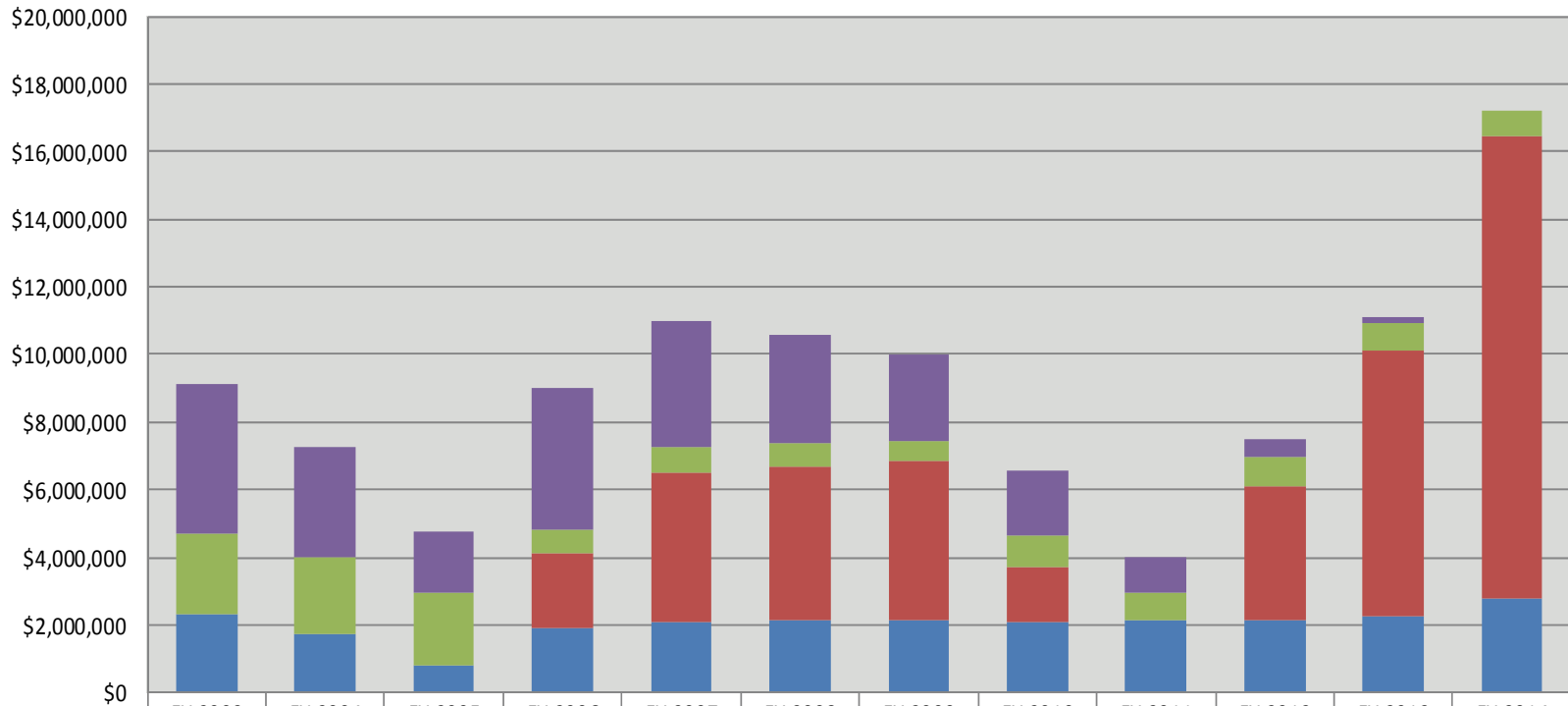
Municipal Buildings Trust Fund – In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40, Section 13, the Town established a Municipal Buildings Trust Fund for the purposes of offsetting the costs associated with significant property loss.

Override Stabilization Fund – The Override Stabilization Fund was created as a result of the 2005 Proposition 2 1/2 override. The Town makes annual appropriations to the fund until the time in which it is necessary to make withdrawals for the purposes of balancing the general fund budget. As the graph illustrates on page 205, the first appropriation to the fund was in FY2006 after the passage of an operating override and was depleted in FY2011. The Town passed another override leading into FY2012 which explains the increase of \$3,993,618. The Town does not expect to recommend an appropriation out of the fund until FY2017.

Long Term Stabilization Fund – In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40, Section 5B, the Town may appropriate in any year an amount not exceeding, in the aggregate, 10% of the amount raised in the preceding fiscal year’s tax levy. The Town may appropriate funds from the Long Term Stabilization Fund for any lawful purpose with a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.



Reserve Fund Balances



	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Tip Fee Stabilization	\$4,435,465	\$3,263,420	\$1,807,932	\$4,207,248	\$3,723,911	\$3,187,031	\$2,559,441	\$1,888,492	\$1,012,094	\$563,769	\$164,260	-
Municipal Trust Fund	\$2,410,771	\$2,263,962	\$2,187,797	\$714,029	\$736,575	\$702,689	\$613,717	\$963,451	\$853,710	\$835,406	\$816,559	\$796,870
Override Stabilization	-	-	-	\$2,180,289	\$4,479,519	\$4,531,174	\$4,687,515	\$1,581,292	-	\$3,993,618	\$7,888,721	\$13,663,949
Long Term Stabilization	\$2,294,235	\$1,709,454	\$788,805	\$1,924,215	\$2,052,009	\$2,138,449	\$2,157,451	\$2,105,456	\$2,114,858	\$2,121,897	\$2,227,631	\$2,768,663

For more information, please see fund descriptions beginning on page 213.



Revolving Fund Balances												
	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Ambulance/Life Support	\$124,871	\$194,253	\$299,910	\$73,325	\$109,742	\$264,069	\$376,291	\$446,194	\$396,176	\$256,610	\$298,672	\$405,815
Board of Health					\$38,162	\$41,927	\$45,106	\$79,163	\$91,253	\$103,800	\$86,284	\$65,529
Cemetery Chapel Rental												
Conservation Commission	\$3,060	\$2,106	\$2,106	\$2,726	\$2,937	\$2,937	\$2,847	\$2,897	\$2,907	\$3,221	\$3,312	\$2,742
Council on Aging Program												\$4,320
Field User Fees			\$5,174	\$21,539	\$10,769	\$76,974	\$52,865	\$88,845	\$62,975	\$49,757	\$72,820	\$64,848
Fox Library	\$2,443	\$798	\$3,262	\$6,365	\$8,978	\$12,347	\$14,241	\$13,463	\$16,523	\$17,891	\$13,690	\$15,068
Gibbs School Energy										\$25,688	\$27,730	\$36,459
Library PC Vendor								\$6,971	\$12,711	\$13,361	\$14,315	\$4,873
Private Way Repair	\$33,444	\$33,489	\$30,619	\$27,790	\$24,148	\$37,396	\$13,305	\$13,305	\$13,305	\$1,305	\$13,305	\$50,858
Public Way Repair	\$1,099	\$1,098	\$1,559	\$1,559	\$1,559	\$1,559	\$168	\$168	\$168	\$168	\$168	\$168
Robbins House Rental							(\$4,117)	\$19,927	\$22,958	\$33,938	\$35,312	\$31,893
Robbins Library Rental							\$6,492	\$9,187	\$11,658	\$17,892	\$16,751	\$21,696
Town Hall Rental					\$2,275	\$6,989	\$3,456	\$8,601	\$29,904	\$42,735	\$22,163	\$14,534
Uncle Sam							\$334	\$334	\$344	\$319	\$411	\$1,526
White Good Recycling								\$27,887	\$44,369	\$38,202	\$16,755	\$45,109
TOTAL	\$164,917	\$231,744	\$342,630	\$133,304	\$198,570	\$444,198	\$510,988	\$716,942	\$705,251	\$604,887	\$621,688	\$765,438

Urban Renewal Fund Balance												
	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Urban Renewal Fund	\$240,499	\$311,685	\$299,909	\$308,043	\$226,273	\$215,906	\$98,056	\$249,860	\$290,665	\$377,193	\$399,794	\$400,732



Fund Balances														
	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
General Fund	4,934,569	3,548,683	2,829,606	3,228,310	3,179,389	2,509,471	3,637,574	2,995,814	1,164,101	770,498	4,378,542	7,793,055	6,085,848	6,871,692
Enterprise Funds														
Water/Sewer Enterprise	(1,190,892)	3,163,996	1,129,935	759,501	984,115	2,377,515	5,110,456	4,718,828	5,550,844	3,117,257	4,422,651	2,551,390	2,497,966	3,718,958
Youth Enterprise	(6,163)	(3,942)	(2,867)	(16,219)	(13,208)	(33,228)	27,417	(20,345)	53,598	42,184	50,000	67,661	45,315	23,474
Council on Aging Enterprise	43,843	41,657	46,218	101,493	93,511	66,241	12,595	30,686	44,318	50,448	97,152	112,520	114,489	132,640
Rink Enterprise	104,153	54,537	N/A	(75,101)	13,043	(16,297)	13,690	38,620	58,412	27,702	91,325	78,992	90,435	74,503
Recreation Enterprise	35,129	3,312	N/A	(34,899)	(9,629)	(71,674)	78,221	85,392	68,360	77,200	101,380	105,452	120,887	132,023



Town of Arlington Standing Financial Policies & Practices

Balanced Budget: The Town defines a balanced budget as a budget in which receipts are greater than (or equal to) expenditures. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all municipalities to present a balanced budget each year as a basic budgetary constraint intended to ensure that a government does not spend beyond its means and its use of resources for operating purposes does not exceed available resources over a defined period of time.

Free Cash Practice: The Town of Arlington appropriates up to 50% of the prior year's Certified Free Cash Balance as an operating revenue with a majority vote of Town Meeting.

Capital Budget: The Town Manager shall present a Capital Budget equal to 5% of projected revenues. The Town has followed this practice since 1986.

Town of Arlington Override Policies & Commitments

As part of the Town's Proposition 2 ½ Override campaign in 2011, the Town made several financial commitments that would guide the Town's financial planning for future years. Below are those original commitments with updates in bold.

- Override funds will be made to last at least three years (FY2012-FY2014). No general override will be sought during this period. – **Current projections have extended the plan to cover FY2012-FY2020.**
- Town and School operating budget increases will be capped at 3.5% per year. An additional allowance of up to 7% shall be allowed for documented special education cost increases. Should actual special education cost increases exceed this amount, the remaining School budget shall be decreased by the difference. – **This commitment has been maintained and this year's Town operating budget is being held to a 2.95% increase. Due to continuing enrollment growth, a school funding increase above 3.5% is proposed and discussed herein.**
- Health care cost increases will be programmed at 7%. Should actual increases exceed this amount, the Town and School budget totals shall be proportionately decreased by the excess amount. Should actual increases be less than this amount as a result of negotiated health care savings, the extra savings will be:
 - ◊ Deposited into the override stabilization fund to extend the three year override period;
 - ◊ Used to preserve services; and



- ◇ To satisfy any and all negotiated items between the Town Manager, its employees, and its retirees. – **The override period has been extended to nine years from the original three-year period based to a large degree on health care savings and the first year health care savings also supported FY2012 wage settlements with employee bargaining units. For future planning purposes, health care premiums are projected to grow 5.25%, which more accurately reflects the historical average annual growth of Group Insurance Commission premiums.**
- An additional \$600,000 shall be appropriated for the School Department in FY2012 and \$400,000 shall be appropriated each year in addition to the amount currently appropriated in the capital budget for road improvements. – **This commitment has been met.**
- Reserves shall be maintained in an amount equivalent to at least 5% of the budget. – **This commitment is being maintained.**



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