



# BUDGET Revealed

**YOUR GUIDE TO  
THE BUDGET  
PROCESS AND  
COMMUNITY  
FINANCES**

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No. 1 | Thursday, March 19, 2015



**City of Dover**  
New Hampshire

*Proposed Budget*  
Fiscal Year 2016

As submitted to the City Council  
By City Manager J. Michael Joyal, Jr.

## UPCOMING BUDGET MEETINGS:

**Wednesday, March 25**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
Budget presentation by  
the City Manager

**Wednesday, April 1**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Workshop  
Budget review

**Wednesday, April 8**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
School budget  
public hearing

## Welcome to Budget Revealed

Welcome to the first edition of Budget Revealed: Your Guide to the Budget Process and Community Finances. This newsletter is intended to provide you with a closer look at the City of Dover's budget process, including important information about the how the budget is prepared, how budget priorities are determined, how the budget is funded, and the role of the City Council in deliberating and adopting a budget each spring.



**J. Michael Joyal, Jr.**  
City Manager

Each year, at the end of March or beginning of April, I present a proposed fiscal year budget to the City Council. That initial budget presentation is followed by additional budget meetings, workshops and public hearings, all leading up to the City Council's vote on the budget in late May or early June. Our fiscal year budget spans July 1 to June 30.

Because the adoption of the budget is the single-most important policy decision before the City Council, and among the most significant interests before the community, it is my goal with Budget Revealed to explain this process in greater detail so our elected officials and the public are informed and involved in shaping budget priorities.

The budget I submit to the City Council each year is the culmination of a process that includes many components, including the City's Master Plan, Capital Improvements

**Wednesday, April 15**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Workshop  
Budget review

**Wednesday, April 22**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
City budget public hearing

**Wednesday, April 29**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Workshop  
Budget review

**Wednesday, May 6**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Workshop  
Budget review  
and  
Special Meeting  
Budget adoption

**Wednesday, May 13**  
**7 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
Budget adoption, if not  
adopted on May 6

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION:**

**Budget Revealed**

**Note to Dover  
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Plan, administrative staff requests, the education budget adopted by the School Board in February, consultation with the citizens who represent the City's boards and commissions, and a thorough review of all municipal services.

In preparing the budget, I adhere to an approach that considers the following:

- No proposed across-the-board cuts. These cuts are irresponsible and scatter resources without focus;
- Budgeted operating services should reflect the community's priorities;
- The quality of the City's basic, core programs and services should be maintained, not jeopardized;
- Reductions made to programs and services may affect some City functions more than others;
- Fees may be considered for programs or services that primarily benefit individuals and not the "greater good" of the community;
- Budget adjustments must be sustainable;
- Recognize that services are provided by people.

These are among the factors that help shape the proposed budget each year. As a result, the budget I submit to the City Council prioritizes and supports efficient, core municipal services, such as public safety, education, and infrastructure maintenance.

I will present the budget to the City Council on Wednesday, March 25, at 7 p.m., in Council Chambers at City Hall. The meeting will be televised live on Channel 22, as are all City Council meetings, and available for on-demand viewing on the City's website.

In addition to this newsletter, the City also maintains a Budget Revealed website, which includes updated information about the upcoming budget, previous budgets, and additional information about the budget process. The fiscal year 2016 budget, once presented to the Council on March 25, can also be found online at Budget Revealed. The website can be [accessed here](#).

Hard copies of the proposed budget will also be available to review at the City Clerk's office at City Hall and the Dover Public Library.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and informative. More importantly, I hope it helps you navigate the significant, but complex, budget process.

Sincerely,

**J. Michael Joyal, Jr.**  
**City Manager**

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## DID YOU KNOW?

### What's the difference between public and private finances?

Government finance is notably different than private-sector finances. Perhaps the most significant difference is transparency.

By design, the municipal budget and governmental finances are open and transparent, which allows public access to all aspects of the City's finances, including reports that track spending and revenue. This transparency allows the City to communicate the financial health of the City to its stakeholders, including taxpayers and elected officials. The City follows rigorous governmental accounting standards to track and report financial performance. These practices have resulted in numerous awards of excellence in accounting for the City.

Another key factor in public financial practices is how priorities are determined. The City's priorities are articulated, debated and decided upon by involved citizens and the community's elected representatives who serve on the School Board and City Council.

The School Board first adopts its budget in January or February, which is included in the overall proposed budget before the City Council in March or April.

## EFFICIENCY AND COST-SAVINGS INITIATIVES

Each year, City staff implements and follows budget initiatives and best practices that help reduce costs and improve efficiency across all services and operations. The cost-savings initiatives have saved the City millions of dollars over the last several years. Many of these efforts will or have the potential to reduce costs for years to come.

These savings are largely the result of the hard work and creativity of City staff and department heads, in concert with the funding decisions made by recent City Councils. Each edition of Budget Revealed will highlight some of these cost-savings initiatives.

### **Legal expenses drop significantly**

In November 2005, the position of City Attorney was

reconfigured as General Legal Counsel to provide full-time legal counsel to the City. In previous years, those duties were shared with an attorney also responsible for police prosecution, which is now handled by the Police Department.

The savings from that decision were almost immediate. Prior to the change, the city spent more than \$200,000 annually on private attorneys and legal counsel. Since that time, that figure has been reduced by half or more. The current budget for outside legal services is \$90,000. Because the City now has immediate, in-house legal services, legal bills have plummeted, particularly on matters related to telecommunications and land-use.

Outside legal counsel is required less frequently and only in specialized fields, such as environmental and employment law.

In addition to those savings from what would have been billable hours for legal counsel, the Office of the City Attorney has saved Dover other, uncalculated expenses, including the value of immediate consultation on legal matters, current and constant review of legal issues pertaining to the city, and persistent efforts to avoid or limit litigation.

Dover's legal staff - one City Attorney and one part-time paralegal - compares favorably with communities of similar size. Portsmouth, Keene and Concord, for instance, have legal staffs of two or more attorneys and a corresponding number of support staff. Dover's use of electronic filing and electronic agenda review has allowed the city to maintain a smaller legal staff.

This change has saved the City over \$1 million in the 10 years it's been in place.

### **At A Glance: General Legal Counsel**

#### Mission Statement:

The mission of the General Legal Counsel is to provide quality, efficient, timely and cost effective legal services, advocacy and advice to the City Manager, City Council and all departments. The Office of General Legal Counsel seeks to provide proactive legal services grounded in research of the cases, laws and regulations to keep all recipients informed of developments in the law.

#### Major Services and Responsibilities:

- Represent and advocate for the City and all departments in District/Superior Courts in matters not covered by insurance-including enforcement actions and collections.
- Drafting ordinances and resolutions.

- Update the City Manager, City Council, Department Heads and Board, Commission and Committee members on legislation and recent legal decisions.
- Draft and review contracts, deeds, leases and other documents.
- Conduct legal research.
- Render legal opinions.
- Attend City Council meetings.
- Assist Boards, Commissions and Committees with procedures and laws.
- Key Fiscal Year Objectives:
- Keep outside legal costs to a minimum
- Collect debt due the City for city services which are not paid upon demand.

### **Cost-effective vehicle replacement program**

For years, the City's Vehicle Replacement Program consisted of purchasing a varying number of new police cruisers each year and handing down the used cruisers to detectives or other City departments. Police cruisers are typically retired at 60,000 miles, and in the past, they would be shipped over to Fleet Services, the specialized equipment removed and the vehicles repainted, then migrated back into the fleet, primarily for police detectives. The City's revised Vehicle Replacement Program meets two goals: It saves the City money and is far more attentive to fuel efficiency.

When a police cruiser is retired under the new program, the vehicle is still stripped of equipment and markings, but instead of being shuffled back into the fleet, it is sold on the open market. For example, the City recently sold two retired Ford Taurus Interceptors on the open market for \$11,256 each. This is a far better investment than the work and resources required to maintain the vehicles for an extended period of time.

A new, internal service account was created for this purpose. Now, instead of refitting older, less economical vehicles, the City uses that revenue to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles, including the Ford Focus for City departments and the Ford Fusion for police detectives. Not only are the vehicles cheaper to purchase, the savings from fuel efficiency will continue to compound for years. Based on a recent assessment of the past year, fueling up the Ford Fusions in the fleet saved the City more than \$2,000, compared to fueling up older vehicles at the same mileage. Maintenance is also less expensive. Maintaining the Ford Fusions over the same period has saved the City nearly \$1,200

In addition, the City is not saddled with the cost of converting a line cruiser to a detective vehicle, which saves about \$2,500 per vehicle.



In total, the City has realized nearly \$6,000 in savings per vehicle by converting to the purchase of new fuel-efficient vehicles in lieu of retaining and reusing retired police cruisers for non-emergency transportation needs.

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## BUDGET RESOUCRES

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Want to know more? Check out this Budget Revealed session, hosted by City Manager J. Michael Joyal, Jr. In this video, the city manager details the budget process.

This session can also be seen on Channel 22. For upcoming times, tune in to DNTV Channel 22.

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