

City of Dover

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Narrative

Following is a general overview of the various responsibilities and functions of each city department as included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget. This overview includes the department's mission, key strategic plan objectives and highlights of significant adjustments reflected within each department's budget for the coming year:

City Council:

The City Council, as a body, establishes policies and sets forth the long-term direction for municipal services. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and seven City Councilors comprise the City Council and together serve as the governing and legislative body of the municipality. The ultimate aim of the City Council is reflected in the community's vision "To be a city with an emerging urban vibrancy guided by a small town sense of community."

The City Council consists of nine elected officials, a Mayor and eight City Councilors, all elected at the same time to serve a two-year term. Voters within each of the City's six voting wards elect a person residing in their respective ward to serve as the Ward City Councilor. In addition, voters across the City elect two persons residing in the City to serve as At-Large City Councilors. Voters across the city also elect a person to serve as Mayor. One of the eight elected City Councilors is subsequently chosen by the Mayor and Council to serve as Deputy Mayor.

In addition to legislative responsibilities in adopting local ordinances and regulations, a key task of the City Council involves authorizing a careful plan of appropriations deemed necessary for the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services. The Mayor and Council work together in keeping communication open with and between the citizens of Dover, various boards and commissions of the City and the City Manager in delivering services meeting the needs of the community. The City Council function is funded within the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed City Council budget for FY2027 maintains the funding necessary to support the governing and legislative function performed by the Mayor and Council. This includes funding the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilor wages as required by the Dover City Charter along with providing funding for various supplies and services utilized by the City Council. The proposed City Council budget also allocates funds for grants and subsidies made to non-profit organizations delivering services within the Dover community. In this area, there is an increase in funding for FY2027 being requested for COAST public transit services. The amounts previously budgeted for the Dover Veterans, Seacoast Shipyard Association and Woodman Institute are campaigns are proposed to be maintained at current year amounts.

Executive Department:

The Executive Department is comprised of six executive offices responsible for specific functions supporting operations across all municipal departments. These offices and an overview of their responsibilities and proposed budget highlights include:

Office of the City Manager (OCM): The OCM’s mission is “To provide effective leadership and direction in the administration of policies established by the Mayor and City Council as well as to supervise and guide the efficient operation of all city departments.” Comprised of the City Manager and Executive Assistant to the City Manager, this office is responsible for coordinating the development and analysis of policy recommendations presented to the Mayor and City Council. And, in turn, the OCM directs and ensures the implementation of the policies enacted by the Mayor and City Council. The OCM is funded within the General Fund portion of the City’s Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed OCM budget for FY2027 maintains funding necessary to support the Mayor and Council in fulfilling their governing and legislative responsibilities and for the management of the overall administrative affairs of the City.

Office of Human Resources (OHR): The OHR’s mission is “to support the goals and challenges of the City of Dover, NH, by providing services that promote a work environment characterized by fair treatment of staff, open communications, personal accountability, trust and mutual respect. The OHR seeks to provide solutions to workplace issues that support and optimize the operating principles of the organization.” In fulfilling this purpose, the OHR is responsible for recruitment, payroll processing, benefits administration, labor relations, employment law compliance, risk management and employee safety for nearly 463 employees occupying 313 FTE positions across all non-school departments. OHR also provides consultation to assist the School Department, as needed. The OHR is funded within the General Fund portion of the City’s Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed OHR budget for FY2027 maintains funding for the personnel, services, and supplies required to support the human resources function necessary for the effective performance of management and employees. Funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City’s Merit Plan. Notable planned funding changes include a contractual Cost of Living and merit wage adjustment for staff consistent with other employees and an increase in labor relations and negotiations related expense for labor contract negotiations with all 7 collective bargaining units representing regular full and part-time employees across all non-school departments. There is a significant reduction in software subscription expense due to implementation of a new online employee advertising and applicant screening service. Lastly, funding is maintained for the administration of the National Citizen/Employee Surveys used for performance benchmarking across the municipal organization.

Office of Media Services (OMS): The OMS “develops and manages the City of Dover’s communications tools and resources, helps improve stakeholder relationships, public engagement, and community outreach, and delivers accessible and responsive communication and public information about government operations and services.” This is accomplished by OMS through a variety of communications platforms and resources, including the city’s governmental and educational cable access channels, the public-facing website, electronic newsletters, social media, public information, media releases, special alerts and notifications, and public service announcements. OMS also maintains internal and external communications standards, ensures consistent messaging across all departments and services, and provides a wide variety of multimedia technical assistance to city and school operations, public bodies, and the public. OMS also oversees the city’s cable franchise agreements with Comcast and Breezeline. The OMS is funded within the General Fund portion of the City’s Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed OMS budget for FY2027 maintains funding for the personnel, services, and supplies required to support a comprehensive communications plan and access to information for all stakeholders and employees. Funding increases include personal services costs consistent with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan. Funding of a portion of the Director of Media Services position is no longer offset by grant funds. Notable budget adjustments reflect the continuing equipment replacement and upgrade of the citywide broadcast system. Also included is funding for continuing improvements to the city's website and e-commerce platforms in support of an ongoing commitment to transparency and open/accessible government. This will involve a forthcoming change in service providers to coincide with a significant redesign of the City's website. Planned work in FY2027 also includes pursuing new delivery methods for some publications and new communications tools. OMS will also continue to allocate staff time and resources to help inform the public about its public schools and educational system.

Office of the City Attorney (OCA): The OCA's mission is "to provide proactive, high-quality, efficient, timely and cost-effective legal services, advocacy and advice to the City of Dover and its City Manager, City Council, subsidiary bodies, and City staff, delivered with a focus on the client, integrity, innovation, accountability and stewardship." This is accomplished by representing and advocating for the municipal corporation in Court and administrative proceedings; assisting Boards, Commissions and Committees with procedures and laws; drafting and reviewing contracts, deeds, leases and other documents; conducting research and rendering legal opinions to support the City's decision-making; drafting and reviewing ordinances and resolutions; assisting with risk management activities and pursuit/resolution of claims; and, assisting with code enforcement. The OCA also provides legal services to the Dover School Department on a variety of issues important to helping it achieve its goals and defray expenses on use of outside legal counsel. OCA is funded within the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed OCA budget for FY2027 maintains funding necessary for provision of the legal services needed to support the operations of municipal government. Funding increases include a necessary market adjustment previously implemented for recruitment and retention along with other personal services costs consistent with the City's collective bargaining agreements and Merit Plan. Funding is also maintained for contracted services for the continued publishing and update of the Dover Code (when new ordinances or regulations are enacted), and required continuing education courses for our legal professionals.

Planned for FY2027, the OCA will continue to monitor changes in the law that do or could affect the City or its interests or operations; assist with and provide in-house counsel concerning environmental compliance; prosecute and defend litigation actions in the interests of the City that may arise over the course of the year, including code enforcement; provide ongoing training and compliance monitoring on RSA chapter 91-A and other legal issues to City staff and public officials; provide staff support for the Municipal Records Committee, Ethics Commission and City Council Ordinance Committee; assist with major policy initiatives, and, assist with furthering City interests involved in development projects, public-private partnerships, and the management and disposition of City-owned real estate.

Office of Business Development (OBD): OBDs mission is to sustain and grow Dover's vibrant business community and high quality of life by providing leadership and resources that support business creation, expansion, retention, recruitment, and broader community development. OBD supports the Dover Business and Industrial Development Authority (DBIDA) in engaging with the

business community and advancing industrial and commercial growth citywide. The office coordinates with the City Manager on the development and monitoring of public-private partnerships recommended by DBIDA and approved by the City Council. Additional responsibilities include marketing Dover's business climate and quality of life, administering the City's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, and managing programs that advance targeted economic growth. OBD is funded through the General Fund within the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed FY2027 OBD budget maintains staffing necessary to coordinate ongoing development initiatives, including the Deputy City Manager for Strategic Initiatives, a Business Development Coordinator, and a Business Development Specialist. Beyond general administrative support to the City Manager, the Deputy City Manager oversees the City's overall business development strategy. The Business Development Coordinator focuses on engagement with larger employers and development entities and supervises the Business Development Specialist, who concentrates on small business outreach and support. Together, these positions provide responsive service and proactive problem-solving to help Dover's businesses grow and succeed. Budget increases reflect personal services costs consistent with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan.

In FY2027, OBD will continue its business visitation program launched in 2023 and advocate for Dover initiatives within the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The office will further reinforce its role in the code compliance process as an information resource and advocate for the business and development community. OBD will continue its partnership with University of New Hampshire, developing a market analysis and business development plan. Staff will continue project management responsibilities supporting the TIF Districts, and overseeing associated public improvements. OBD will also collaborate with DBIDA to implement its strategic plan guiding the Authority's continued support and advisory role to the City Council on economic growth.

Office of Information Technology (OIT): OIT "is a trusted partner in creating solutions and by consistently providing accurate and responsive data to support decision making. OIT leadership deploys forward-thinking and accessible technology for use by both municipal staff and the Dover community. OIT safeguards resources, actively listens at all levels of the municipal operation, transparently communicates and prioritizes OIT work." OIT is responsible for the management and security of a comprehensive municipal voice and data network, referred to as "DoverNet", that spans across all City departments. DoverNet, referring to the overall Municipal Information Technology Systems and Services (MITSS) essential to providing municipal services across all departments, involves the full spectrum of networking from the physical to application layers.

OIT performs an essential function that supports critical operations across the entire municipality. There are approximately 350 "connected" employees and user client systems, 90 physical and virtual servers and related applications, 230 cellular lines supporting cell phones, tablets, and internet hotspots providing information accessibility in the field, nearly 300 total VoIP phone numbers (i.e. desk or soft phones, conference room phones, call queues, fax lines), 40 alarm lines, and roughly 240 board and commission members' municipal mailboxes that are managed and supported by OIT. Additionally, OIT is responsible for supporting the management of all municipal infrastructure through the use of a municipal geographic information system (GIS), operation of enterprise applications that interface with GIS, and administration of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems that are necessary to properly monitor and operate the public water and sewer utilities, traffic control systems, and building HVAC. OIT also supports administration and

management of the municipal Public Safety server and application systems. The OIT is funded within the DoverNet Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

In FY2027, the City's cybersecurity posture remains a priority and continues to be enhanced in accordance with federal standards and industry best practices. Notable budget adjustments include funding ongoing security enhancements to provide for monitored access controls in critical facilities and increases in application hosting services. The proposed budget also reflects increasing costs for the continuing management and ongoing maintenance of in-house client devices, servers, network equipment and enterprise applications. The budget funds all fiber optic and broadband voice and data services that support an enterprise-wide area network. It also accounts for wireless services that are publicly available in most municipal buildings and a few adjacent public spaces. Lastly of note, the proposed budget eliminates a vacant part-time IT Technician position.

Finance Department:

The Finance Department is the trusted safeguard of the City's financial resources and public records. The department is comprised of four divisions responsible for functions supporting the financial and recordkeeping operations across all municipal departments. These divisions and an overview of their responsibilities and proposed budget highlights include:

Finance, Accounting and Purchasing Division (FAP): This division's mission is "to handle the financial resources of the City in a safe, fair, accurate, efficient and professional manner to meet all areas of responsibilities, including compliance with Federal, State and local laws and generally accepted accounting principles, and to timely report the financial position and performance of the City to the City Council, management, debt underwriters, rating agencies and the public". It is responsible for the accounting and management of the overall financial resources of the City by administering all the cash management, accounting/financial reporting and purchasing and accounts payable functions across the municipal corporation. This division provides administrative support to the Board of Trustees of Trust Funds. This division is funded in the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed FAP budget for FY2027 maintains funding necessary for provision of the financial management, accounting and purchasing services needed to support the operations of municipal government. Notable planned funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan. There are increased software maintenance costs for the City's enterprise-wide financial resource management system relied upon by all municipal departments inclusive of the School Department.

The costs for a comprehensive Electronic Public Procurement platform (EPP) were reflected in FY2026 budget. A comprehensive Electronic Public Procurement platform (EPP) for solicitation of bids and bid submissions would replace the current manual system. The goal of an EPP platform would be streamlining the submission and review process while also aiding with increasing bid responses. The EPP platform utilized over the past year, although effective for tracking bid solicitations, has seen minimal acceptance by vendors and has not resulted in increased levels of bid responses. In FY2027 the FAP will continue to utilize the existing EPP platform for tracking bid solicitations and evaluate other EPP platforms with the goal of having a fully functioning EPP platform. The debt management software, utilized by FAP, will continue to be utilized to provide the necessary tracking and reporting on leases to meet the financial

reporting standard of Governmental Accounting Standards Boards (GASB) Statement 87. The tracking and reporting of subscription based technology services are also being maintained in the debt management software to comply with the reporting requirements of GASB Statement 96. The City implements GASB requirements to ensure the City's award-winning Annual Comprehensive Financial Report meets professional standards.

Tax Assessment Division (TAD): This division's mission is "to increase the quantity and quality of professional appraisal and assessment services to the taxpayers and the public at large, through the application of advanced technology and modern management practices." Responsibilities include maintaining annual assessments of properties at market value; administering tax exemptions and credits; conducting field inspection of all properties on a cyclical basis; maintain the Computer Aided Mass Appraisal (CAMA) database; processing and resolving abatements; administering the assessment of timber and excavation taxes; and administering current use assessment and land use change tax. This division is funded in the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed TAD budget for FY2027 maintains the funding necessary for the proper assessment of property taxes and other related services required by State law. Notable planned funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan.

In FY2027, TAD will be entering Year 3 of a new CAMA software system. There are increased software maintenance costs for the City's legacy CAMA system and the City's new CAMA system. FY2027 (Tax Year 2026) will be the first year the new CAMA system will be utilized as the system of record. The updated and fully functioning CAMA system is essential for ensuring fair and equitable taxation of property throughout the community and will be utilized for FY2027 tax assessments. Also included is the cost for a sales data subscription service to provide additional data for non-residential sales.

City Clerk/Tax Collection Division (CC/TC): This division's mission is "to serve all our customers in a timely and professional manner; which includes the governing body, legislative body, residents and city staff; to dutifully record and preserve the Vital Records of this community for historical continuity as mandated by New Hampshire Statute and support the City Clerk/Tax Collector serving as the election official for all elections held in Dover; and, to ensure the safe and accurate collection and timely deposit of city moneys while serving customers in a professional and courteous manner." Responsibilities include recording and issuing vital records; receiving and recording water/sewer bill payments; collecting property tax payments; processing State of NH motor vehicle registrations; accounting for and depositing daily collections received from all other municipal departments; archiving official city records; and, administering local, state and federal elections. This division is funded in both the CC/TC and Elections cost centers of the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed CC/TC budget for FY2027 maintains the funding necessary for the administrative and clerical operations needed to fulfill the statutorily required responsibilities of City Clerk, Tax Collector and conduct of elections. Funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan. There are increased software maintenance costs for computerized motor vehicle registration/dog licenses relied upon by

CC/TC for processing annually 36,000 motor vehicle registrations and 3,400 dog licenses. Also addressed is the funding necessary for conducting the city municipal election.

Utility Billing Division (UBD): This division’s mission is “to administer the metering system for the water and sewer utility in order to accurately process invoices for the residential and industrial water and sewer customers as well as conduct timely review and process of utility abatements.” Responsibilities include interfacing with the Community Services Department to coordinate meter repairs/replacements and periodic readings required for billing; produce and deliver usage and service invoices for water and sewer utility customers; and review and process utility bill abatements. This division is funded in both the Water Fund and Sewer Fund portions of the City’s Annual Operating Budget.

The proposed UBD budget for FY2027 maintains the funding necessary for the proper and timely administration of the City’s water and sewer utility billing, as well as backflow testing compliance. Funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City’s Merit Plan, increased postage for bill mailings and backflow notices, along with funds for continued meter upgrades and replacements that maintain the accuracy and timeliness of meter reading as well as allow customers to access and monitor their own billing and usage information.

Planning and Community Development Department:

The Planning and Community Development Department mission is “to be a trusted provider of innovative solutions and collaborate with stakeholders to pursue the community’s vision”. The Planning and Community Development Department consists of a Planning (Land Use, Resiliency, and long-range planning) Division, Community Development Division, and Inspection Services Division.

Through the highest ethical and professional standards, demonstrating respect for customers and the public, the Planning Division works to develop, implement and enforce land use changes. This is done in support of Master Plan goals and objectives, in coordination with long range strategic planning initiatives. This work helps to ensure our community develops responsibly. In order to pursue this workplan, responsibilities include: providing customer service to residents, business owners, and potential newcomers; supporting the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment in managing the growth and impacts of development of the community; assisting all municipal departments inclusive of the School Department with program development and long-range planning, including capital infrastructure investment; priorities in regional and state projects such as the State Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan and COAST public transit services; fostering opportunities for public art installations in support of the Arts Commission; addressing climate change and resiliency in support of the Energy Commission; and promoting the preservation of open space and historical community features by supporting the efforts of the Open Lands Committee, the Conservation Commission and the Heritage Commission.

The Community Development Division is responsible for administering the City’s Community Development Block Grant from the federal Housing and Urban Development Department.

The Inspection Services Division is dedicated to safeguard the public’s, health and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress components, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy

conservation, and safety for life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment, and to provide safety to first responders during emergency operations. Inspection Services is responsible for issuing building construction related permits in accordance with City Ordinances and adopted NH Building and Fire Codes. Building codes apply to the construction, design, structure, maintenance, and use of all buildings or structures to be erected and the alteration, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, removal or demolition of all buildings and structures previously erected shall be governed by the provisions of the state building code. (RSA 155-A:2)

Permits that are issued and related inspections include building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, fire alarm, sprinkler systems, and kitchen hood suppression systems. Building permits are required for all residential new building, addition, renovation, rehabilitation, alteration, to include decks, pergolas and porches or addition of Accessory Dwelling Unit or repairs. The Inspection Services Division also issues demolition permits for any type of structure. All building permits receive a plan review prior to issuance. Issuance of annual Place of Assembly permits as required by state statute and the adopted State of NH Fire Code. Annual Health Licenses and inspection of food service establishments are completed in accordance with State of NH rules and City Ordinance for safe food handling for the protection of the public. Inspection of family daycare homes, daycare group homes, daycare centers and/or nurseries, and inspection of Foster Care homes are also completed. The division also administers and investigates Housing Standard complaints and works with tenants and landlords for resolution; administer and investigate Fire Code and Life Safety concerns; and, reviews plans for new residential, nonresidential and mixed-use projects for Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting prior to being presented at Planning Board.

The Building Official overseeing the Inspection Services Division is responsible for maintaining the official street listing throughout the city and also serves as the primary 911 coordinator for the city by assigning numbers and street names as well as any number and/or street name changes in accordance with RSA 231:133-a, and 231:133. This position is also responsible for inspections of public and private schools biannually and provides reports to the NH Fire Marshal's Office. Inspection staff perform four fire drills annually for all public and private schools annually within the city

The Planning and Community Development Department is funded through the General Fund and CDBG Fund portions of the City's Annual Operating Budget along with an allocation provided from the Conservation Commission's Fund and with grant funding previously awarded by the State of NH in recognition of the City's commitment to encourage increased housing opportunities.

The proposed Planning and Community Development Department budget for FY2027 maintains the funding necessary for fulfilling the City's statutory obligations in establishing and administering land use regulations and all other identified department responsibilities. One significant funding change is the reduction in funding needed for the planned update for the Master Plan. A significant increase is due to Inspection Services vehicle replacement needs. Other notable funding changes include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan, and other additional expenses associated with staff development in maintaining certifications and competencies in the various building trades and code compliance areas.

In FY2027, the department plans to continue advancing initiatives for a variety of housing, resiliency, and responsible development within the City along with timely inspections, permits, and licenses through Inspection Services.

Police Department:

The mission of the Dover Police Department is to “enforce laws of society, maintain order, protect life and property, deliver quality services to the community and to assist the public at large in a manner consistent with the rights and dignity of all persons as provided for by law and under the constitution of the United States and the State of New Hampshire.”

The proposed FY27 Police Department budget reflects the department’s continued commitment to provide high quality public safety services to the community through the use of nationally recognized best practices and in compliance with the standards of national accreditation identified by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Additionally, it allows for the ongoing implementation the Dover Police Department’s Strategic Plan, the City of Dover’s Master Plan, the goals of the Dover City Council and an understanding of the challenges and needs of the greater community.

The police department’s responsibility of ensuring public safety is multi-faceted. During calendar year 2025, the department handled nearly 32,000 calls for service, including more than 9,200 motor vehicle stops, and made over 800 arrests. The department also handled over 1,200 motor vehicle crashes. Additionally, detectives conducted more than 350 felony level criminal investigations, 43 death investigations (including 9 fatal overdose investigations) and tracked 6,000 items of evidence.

Dispatchers received over 85,000 telephone calls, more than 206,000 radio transmissions, and more than 5,700 emergency 911-calls. The department’s Community Outreach Bureau continued to operate the Dover Teen Center and Dover’s youth were provided with drug and alcohol prevention strategies through Dover Youth to Youth, DARE, and other prevention presentations by our prevention personnel. Nearly 300 individuals were referred to the department’s social workers, nearly 250 cases were referred to the Division of Children Youth and Families and officers made over 400 mental health related referrals to non-law enforcement services. The department’s Records Unit ensured all police cases were appropriately processed, defendants were provided discovery, and records requests were met. The department’s Professional Standard’s Unit ensured appropriate training for all staff, as well as compliance with nationally recognized best practice standards to maintain national accreditation through CALEA.

The police department’s budget is divided into five cost centers. Administration, which accounts for approximately 3% of the overall budget, Field Operations Division is 45%, Support Services is 39%, Police Facility is 2%, and Dispatch is 11%. The department’s budget is funded in the General Fund, Parking Activity Fund and Special Details Fund portions of the City’s Annual Operating Budget. Additionally, the department will receive \$772,140.00 in grant funding in FY27, with an additional \$275,000 in pending grant applications.

The increases in the proposed FY27 budget are due to: increase in contractually obligated personnel costs; funding the City share of grants; a new body camera contract and other technology needs; and, staff Development. The most significant single impact on the department’s budget is not surprisingly costs related to personnel as the service delivered by the department depends upon the people that are hired, trained and retained to provide those services. Our people are our greatest resource and it is the staff of the police department that meets the public safety needs of the community. The increase in personnel costs are predominantly due to contractual obligations. These costs help to ensure that we

recruit and retain a workforce that is paid within the acceptable range for positions within the department.

It is imperative that the City of Dover remain competitive with other municipalities to successfully recruit and retain a professional police staff. Over the course of the last year, the department has employed numerous strategies to attract and retain qualified candidates for vacant police officer positions. This includes attendance at job fairs, taking on more interns, and a greater social media presence. Additionally, the department is in the final planning phase of an annual recruitment event at the police department for UNH seniors graduating with criminal justice degrees. The event will feature the 9 sworn officers that are UNH graduates of various levels of the department speaking to the prospective recruits.

In addition to a significant decrease in the number of overall candidates applying for police officer positions in recent years, the numbers that are actually able to meet the department's minimum acceptable standards has also decreased. This, added to the time it takes to hire and properly train a police officer, which is on average 10 to 12 months (approximately 3 months to complete hiring process, 16 weeks to attend the police academy, and 16 weeks of on-the-job Field Training) has placed significant strain on existing staff.

As identified by the police department's strategic plan, the volume and variety of services provided by the Dover Police Department to a growing community requires the use of industry accepted best practices. Poor police services will lead to unsatisfied customers, an increase in distrust and crime, a decrease in quality of life for residents, and more expense for the City. The ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels has specific and direct impacts on the ability to deliver professional police services while adhering to the City of Dover's core values and the City Council Goal of providing for public safety, resident well-being, and commercial activity in a trusting partnership with the community.

Through the use of a federal COPS grant, the department is able to fund a portion of two additional police officer positions, increasing the department's sworn strength from 54 officers to 56 officers. The budget request associated with these positions is the City's share of the grant. Although an increase, the total number of officers remains considerably below what is required to keep pace with the public safety needs of a growing community and is at a level significantly below what is provided by any of the City of Dover's comparable communities. For purposes of perspective, in 1998 the population of Dover was approximately 26,000 residents, the department responded to approximately 20,000 calls for service, and had 54 officers. In 2025, the City has a population of 34,320 residents, the department responded to approximately 31,000 calls for service and the police department is authorized to have 56 officers. We currently have 49.

A common tool to compare police department sworn staffing levels across various communities is the ratio of sworn officers to residents in the community. The FBI Uniform Crime Reporting program reports a national average of 2.3 officers per 1000 residents, a New England average of 1.9 officers per 1000 residents, and a New Hampshire average of 2.2 officers per 1000 residents. With 56 sworn officers, the City of Dover's current officer per 1000 residents is 1.63 officers. Dover would need to have 79 officers to meet the national average, 65 to meet the New England average and 73 to meet NH average. For the City of Dover to provide the same police to population as Portsmouth, Dover would need 105 sworn officers, 81 officers to match Somersworth and 66 to be even with Rochester.

The department's strategic plan recommends a minimum of 57 officers to meet existing needs.

It is imperative that those officers remain highly trained. The training not only provides the officers with the latest in policing concepts and keeps the staff on the cutting edge of this ever-changing profession, it is also a valuable recruitment and retention tool. Over the years, many previously certified officers that have come through the hiring process in Dover have cited little or no training opportunities as one of the reasons they chose to leave their prior agency. Dover currently has a relatively inexperienced department with the average tenure of officers assigned to patrol is roughly 4-5 years. The more training those officers are able to get, the better services they will provide.

In 2021, in an effort to better respond to issues facing the community, the department started its police social work unit. The unit began with one social worker but quickly grew to three. The department's social workers are liaisons with various social service agencies and clinical providers to provide more direct follow-up referrals for individuals and families. The overarching goal, in sync with the Dover City Council Goal 2-B is to provide referral assistance to individuals and families when they are no longer experiencing a crisis in order to reduce the number and frequency of those crises requiring officer response. Police social workers work closely with police officers, firefighters, community mental health agencies, recovery centers, anti-poverty agencies, the school department, other city departments, and other social service agencies to coordinate the wrap-around care individuals and families need.

The social work unit had nearly 300 referrals in calendar year 2025, resulting in a significant decrease in police contacts for those individuals that were helped. The proposed FY27 budget funds 100% of the costs of the three police social worker positions through the use of grant funds, one of which will expire at the end of the fiscal year.

Also in 2021, the department began using body cameras and cruiser cameras. At the time, the City entered into a 6-year contract to begin the project. That contract ends during fiscal year 2027. The cameras have provided the expected documentation and accountability and have proven to be an invaluable resource. The department has been able to use the footage as evidence in criminal cases and in training scenarios. That would not have been possible before the program.

This budget also includes funding for necessary server replacements. It is clear that data storage and redundancy are imperative and remaining current with respect to the servers used to store that data is part of an overall strategy of data protection.

The proposed police department budget works to address the necessary focus on providing professional police services accounting for the needs of the community while increasing efficiency, transparency, legitimacy and trust. It does so while ensuring that Dover remains a safe and welcoming community.

Fire & Rescue Department:

The Fire & Rescue Department's mission is "to be a quality-of-life resource for anyone in need, and to assist community members in achieving health and safety through community risk reduction." The department is an all-hazards response organization that is responsible for protecting life, property and the environment. This is accomplished in part by providing emergency services including: advanced life support emergency medical services (EMS), paramedic-level ambulance transport, fire suppression, wildland firefighting, search & rescue, water mitigation/removing water from buildings, technical rescue services (vehicle extrication, disentanglement, confined space, high angle rescue, water and ice rescue), pet and wildlife rescue/mitigation, tactical rescue-EMS task force operations (providing emergency

medical services in active threat situations i.e. active shooter), hazardous materials mitigation, response to electrical and natural gas distribution system hazards, and radiological emergency response.

The Fire & Rescue Department's budget is divided into three cost centers. Administration, Fire Suppression, and Buildings. The department's budget is funded in the General Fund and Special Detail Fund portions of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

In addition to emergency fire, rescue and EMS responsibilities, emergency management services are also provided by the department. This involves coordinating preparedness and responses to natural and human-caused disasters, including public health crises, pandemics, homelessness, opioid/drug use, and mental health; domestic and international terrorism, civil unrest, mass-casualty incidents, among others. The increasing frequency and severity of weather events continues to increase demands on Fire & Rescue services as well as emergency management services (before the event-preparedness & mitigation, during the event-response, and after the event-recovery). The department coordinates and/or provides local, regional, state, and federal engagement in risk and disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery in accordance with the Department of Homeland Security's national emergency management preparedness missions.

The Fire & Rescue Department is also responsible for fulfilling the City of Dover's obligations as an evacuation reception site for the state of New Hampshire Radiological Emergency Preparedness program for radiological emergencies involving the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. All department personnel are trained and equipped to conduct radiological monitoring and decontamination to federal standards.

In providing non-emergency public services, the Fire & Rescue Department assists persons with motor vehicle lock-outs, residential lock-outs, lift-assists (assisting citizens who are non-ambulatory or have mobility difficulties), home safety inspections, smoke detector installation/battery replacements, well-being checks. Department personnel also conduct public education that includes CPR, fire extinguishers operations, fire & life safety presentations to high-risk populations and early childhood education.

The Fire and Rescue Department operates out of three fire stations with 24/7 staffing provided by 4 shifts referred to as A, B, C and D Shifts. Each shift has 17 certified Fire/EMS personnel. The North End Fire Station serves as the City's fire department headquarters where the fire administration offices are located. Along with the Chief and the Deputy Chief, seven Firefighters work out of the North End Station. 5 members are stationed at the Central Station and 5 members stationed at the South End Station. This model allows for a rapid response to all areas of the city.

The Fire & Rescue Department command staff consists of two administrative chief officers: the Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director and the Deputy Fire Chief. There are four Battalion Chiefs who each work on an assigned shift. The Battalion Chiefs each have a designated area of responsibility that is assigned to them, as well as the task of overall command on the incident scene and supervision of their shift. The four areas of responsibility include the Battalion Chief of EMS, Battalion Chief of Suppression, Battalion Chief of Training and Safety, and the Battalion Chief of Logistics. Adding Chiefs to each shift provides a chief officer's immediate response on the initial dispatch to complex incidents such as

building fires, large-scale/critical incidents, technical rescues, and all mutual aid fire responses. Large-scale incidents receive multiple Chief Officers who fill roles in the Incident Command System.

All personnel hold International Accreditation for Fire Service Organizations Pro Board Firefighter Certifications (Pro Board): 100% Pro Board Firefighter Level I, 100% Pro Board Firefighter Level II. Every company officer and chief officers within the department hold Pro Board certifications in Fire Officer Level I, and Fire Officer Level II. Everyone within the department holds Pro Board Hazardous Materials Decontamination/Operations while just over half of personnel are certified at the higher level of Pro Board Hazardous Material Technicians. Ten members are on the regional hazardous materials team. Four paramedics are members of the regional SWAT team serving as tactical-medics. All members hold National Registry EMS certifications and all hold NH Bureau of EMS Patient Care Provider Licenses. Two members are EMT's and are currently in class to achieve the next level EMS certificate, 31 members are Advanced-EMT's, and 36 members are Paramedics. Six personnel are currently enrolled in an accredited Paramedic Program, and 3 personnel are in an Advanced EMT program. Over half of the Fire & Rescue personnel hold at least one college degree: eighteen Associate's degrees, thirteen Bachelor's degrees, and four Master's degrees.

The Fire & Rescue Department was a co-founder and remains an active supporter of the Dover School Department Career Technical Center's Firefighter & EMT programs. Numerous Fire & Rescue personnel serve as instructors for these programs and mentor the high school students. Several of the students have been certified through the program and have been successfully hired by Dover Fire & Rescue in recent years.

The Fire & Rescue Department FY27 budget proposal requests funding to achieve strategic plan objectives and maintain emergency response operations. The budget aims to increase staff development, ensure needed supplies for both fire and emergency medical supplies are replaced on a needed basis, and provide for early detection and prevention of disease for our members. Dover Fire & Rescue's proposed FY27 budget includes the funding requests necessary to contend with increasing costs for emergency vehicles maintenance, as well as personal protective equipment and uniform costs.

The emergency services workforce market has changed considerably over recent years, and as a result, recruitment of experienced firefighters and paramedics has become a sustained challenge (nationally). This has precipitated the need for the department to enhance its ability to support the professional development and training of its personnel which remains an organizational priority. Fire & Rescue has adopted the U.S. Fire Administration National Professional Development Model for the development and delivery of the department's training, education, and professional development standards. To allow for best distribution of funds and factoring in the topic being taught, information may be brought to the department as a whole from an outside instructor, individual members may go to an outside lecture or class and return to teach the department their acquired skills, or teaching materials may be purchased and members self-learn specific topics.

Notable increases to the proposed FY27 operational budget include an increase to overtime pay. This line item has been underfunded for several years and this increase will bring the line item to a much closer approximation of needed funds based on past experience. Our current staffing numbers are based off NFPA 1710, at 17 firefighters per shift. This overtime budget is a direct representation of costs needed to keep shifts fully staffed at 17 members. The administration has looked at ways to reduce overtime. One such example is over hiring and overstaffing the shifts, allowing them to drop to 17 members when there is someone on scheduled leave. Due to the cost of salaries, healthcare and

benefits, training, uniforms and personal protective gear, we find that level staffing and filling vacancies with overtime to be the most cost-effective option to maintain staffing.

Due to the exposure to toxic chemicals in smoke, firefighters have a 9% higher chance of cancer than the general public and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general population. Deaths from cardiac issues constantly rank amongst the highest cause of Line of Duty Deaths for firefighters. The FY27 proposed budget includes funding for NFPA 1582 Physicals for all employees, conforming with national standards. The departments' goal is to give each member a solid understanding of their current health status, as well as allow employees to trend their health markers throughout their career. NFPA 1582 Physicals can be paired with cancer screenings to give full head to toe coverage, giving our employees the best opportunity to find and treat an issue early allowing them to have a long and healthy career at Dover Fire and Rescue.

Lastly, planned for FY27 is the replacement and expansion of equipment used on the emergency incident scene. Items to be replaced include: cold water/ ice rescue suits, a forestry pump for wildland fire firefighting and battery-operated vent fans. New equipment to assist in the always changing environment we operate in include nozzles and tools to extinguishing fires in electric vehicles, equipment to safely handling lithium-ion battery fires, and a portable mass casualty tent to be used in the event of a large-scale incident.

Community Services Department:

The Community Services Department mission is "to provide continuous, reliable, cost-effective and high-quality public works service to the community. We strive to protect and enhance the community's public health, infrastructure, public assets and environment." The department is responsible for the essential services that residents and businesses rely on day-by-day. The Community Services Department directly impacts people's lives on a daily basis whether it's through the provision of safe, reliable potable water; collection and treatment of sanitary sewer waste; management of stormwater and flood controls; or maintaining a network of safe roads, bridges, sidewalks, along with their corresponding signs, street lights and traffic signals. The department serves as a steward of the both the natural and built environment, including responsibilities for public sanitation, snow removal, solid waste and recycling collection. Engineering and Administration staff manage capital improvement projects to ensure the department is properly maintaining, operating, and sustaining critical public infrastructure. The department is also responsible for monitoring and caring for all City buildings, parks, grounds, cemeteries, and vehicles.

The proposed FY2027 Budget supports the Department's continued provision of critical services and utility functions, while also assuring public infrastructure is being appropriately monitored and managed to help guide cost-effective and sustainable reinvestment. The operational nature of Community Services means we rely extensively on vehicles and equipment, and also on purchased services such as electricity, chemicals, road salt, and fuel. The current replacement value of all Community Services vehicles and equipment is over \$9 million. To illustrate the reliance on equipment, during a winter storm event Community Services will deploy more than 30 vehicles, loaders or tractors.

The Community Services Department makes up the largest portion of the City's annual operating budget. The department's budget is funded in the General Fund, Water Fund, Sewer Fund, and the Fleet Services Fund portions of the City's Annual Operating Budget. Across these funds, Community

Services is divided into 7 distinct divisions that operate over 15 budget costs centers. The divisions (and number of related cost centers) are: Facilities, Grounds & Cemeteries – 3; Engineering – 1; Highways & Drainage – 4; Solid Waste & Recycling – 2; Utilities (Water & Sewer) – 3; Administration – 1; and, Fleet Services – 1.

By the nature of its work, public works related operations are heavily reliant on purchased services such as electricity, chemicals, fuel, piping, pavement, equipment, etc. There are also related Capital Improvement investments that are reflected in the General Fund budget for sidewalks, drainage, traffic signals and annual paving program. With such a wide range of operational responsibilities and related infrastructure needs, a more detailed discussion of each operations division and budget cost centers follows.

Facilities, Grounds & Cemeteries Division (FG&C): The FG&C Division operates over three budget cost centers which includes General Government Buildings; Cemeteries; and Facilities & Grounds. They are responsible for 30 parks, 20 buildings, 12 sports fields, and 100's of acres of public space utilizing a crew comprised of 9 full-time staff, 1 part-time office support staff and a varying number of full-time and part-time seasonal staff, depending on the time of year. General Government Buildings had a very modest increase of 1.63%, or just over \$5,000. While purchased services such as electricity, fuel oil and natural gas remain relatively stable, there are cost-of-living wage adjustments for the custodial staff, which was an increase. The Cemetery has an increase of about \$17,000 to account for more hiring and implementation of seasonal workers to help mow grass and maintain the facility. There is a similar increase for seasonal workers also attributed to the Facilities & Grounds Division. Collectively bargained wages and benefits impact both the Cemetery and Facilities & Grounds Divisions. Within Facilities & Grounds there are also some reductions as the FY 27 Capital Improvements Plan included an allowance of \$25,000 specifically dedicated for street trees, so this allowed for a reduction in the operations budget. There were also reductions in vehicle repairs and electricity (based on recent, historic consumption).

Engineering Division: The Engineering Division operates within a single budget cost center, overseeing all infrastructure capital improvement projects. This includes technical guidance and inspection for development projects, as well as permitting related to the City's rights-of-way and public properties. Over the past couple of years, the division has spearheaded new engineering initiatives focused on improved infrastructure management, informed by ongoing studies. These initiatives encompass a range of areas, including traffic signal planning for annual upgrades, sidewalk reconstruction, pavement management, and pedestrian improvements. These efforts are designed to enhance the city's infrastructure and improve the quality of life for residents.

The division's largest budget increase is additional funding for technical services related to the City's obligation at the former Tolend Road Landfill site. This single line item increases the budget by \$189,324, and pushes the percentage increase from FY26 to FY27 to 21.22%. However, without the landfill-related expense, the percentage increase would only be 1.84%. Unfortunately, the Tolend Road Landfill is an EPA-regulated Superfund Site, and extensive remediation and control work will be ongoing over the next two years. The goal remains to control the spread of groundwater contaminants. Currently, this involves expanding the network of groundwater collection wells. EPA has jurisdiction over the site, and they are reviewing plans for the installation of additional extraction wells and upgrading the system to year-round operation.

Other budget drivers are increases in personnel services due to collectively bargained wages and benefits, and software & support for various drafting and design packages that allow internal staff to manage, administer, or provide design services related to tasks such as the EPA-mandated Lead Service Line Inventory, MS4 monitoring and reporting, and general support for the various construction projects. These projects include the nearing-completion of the public improvements related to the Waterfront Redevelopment, as well as major infrastructure improvements like the reconstruction of Court and Union Streets, Henry Law Avenue and Payne Street, and finalizing water system improvements at Garrison Hill. The division is also embarking on the calibration of a citywide water and sewer model to better assess demand on existing municipal systems and plan for future needs.

Highways & Drainage Division: The Highways & Drainage Division operates over four budget cost centers which includes Streets; Snow Removal; Storm Water; and Street Lighting. Personal Services have increased for both Streets and Storm Water due to wage increases via collectively bargained contracts and along with insurance costs. Snow Removal and Street Lighting don't have any significant personnel-related impacts. Streets has relatively little change for purchased items or contracted services. There were a few decreases, such as a reduction for line-stripping and pavement hand markings due to competitive pricing and scope reduction and also vehicle repairs, as older equipment is being methodically retired, helping to reduce maintenance costs. Within Streets, the primary increases outside of personnel, are for Capital Improvements Plan funding for items such as annual street pavement maintenance (+\$21,000), traffic signal maintenance (+50,000), sidewalk repairs (+\$20,000) and general bridge maintenance and repairs (\$25,000). These items are noted in the Capital Outlay line items, as per the recommended, long-term CIP. For the traffic signals, a comprehensive assessment of the 35+ signalized intersections was conducted and the final report noted that repairs/replacement of the structural mast-arm components needed to be implemented. Historically, efforts had been focused on upgrading the signal controls, but the structural supports holding up the signals also need attention. Similarly, a City-wide sidewalk assessment was conducted to determine priorities along with recommendations for a funding program to ensure sufficient repairs and replacements occur to sustain safe and reliable pedestrian traffic.

Stormwater has similar personal services increases as that of Streets. Stormwater also has a \$75,000 increase in the Capital Outlay line related to additional funding of various general drainage improvement projects. As an example, when the Hough Street culvert collapsed, the general drainage improvement funds were used to replace the old system with an updated unit that could accommodate sufficient flow, but also allow passage of aquatic organisms. General drainage improvement funds are also needed to retrofit and upgrade old BMP's with more effective treatment measures. Similar to Streets, there is also a reduction in the heavy vehicle maintenance and repairs.

Up until this current winter, Snow Removal had been trending lower each year based on 5-year and 10-year running averages of actual precipitation, event activations, staff hours, fuel and salt. Last year the budget was actually decreased, so this year an 11% increase is being requested, which reflects and added appropriation of just over \$64,000. Operationally, the City is committed to optimizing brine for roadway treatments, along with enhanced, composite plow blades, which has helped reduce the amount of annual road salt required.

The Street Light budget is essentially flat, with only a 1.61% increase related to the actual cost of purchased electricity. This is based on recent billing cycles. The prior conversion to LED light fixtures saved the City approximately \$100,000 annually, but although electricity supply rates are increasing, the street lights are not a “metered-service” and have seen relatively flat price changes.

Solid Waste & Recycling Division: The Division oversees and manages two budget cost centers as the names imply, Solid Waste (SW) and Recycling. FY27 will be the last and final year of operation with manual loading of bagged, solid waste and single-stream recycling. Up until FY26, SW had historically been operated as a Special Revenue Fund with sale of the pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) bags and bulky tags intended to generate enough revenue to support the curbside collection and final disposal costs (tipping fees). But while revenue continues with PAYT bags, SW is now under the General Fund, with the intent to prepare for a transition away from the PAYT bags and implementation of automated-collection with WM trucks using mechanical arms for collection of 64 gallon-bins (toters) beginning in FY28 (starting July 1, 2027). The Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) recommended the addition of a new staff position to both assist at the recycling center, but also to help deal with illegal dumping and various violations that occur throughout the year that challenge the capacity of the limited staff. SWAC felt the addition of new staff would help create a dedicated position for monitoring and more timely enforcement of code-compliance issues, such as illegal dumping. The expectation is that another Operator can help lead to additional coverage or extended hours at the Recycling Center, and help with illegal dumping or compliance violations.

Regarding the specifics of the two budgets, the SW budget is essentially flat, with a 0.32% increase, or an amount of just over \$5,000. However, recycling is experiencing contracted increases for both the curbside collection costs, and the processing and tipping fees for sorting, aggregating and selling any accumulated commodity materials. The processing and tipping fees are projected to go up over \$120,000 for FY27. FY27 will be the 7th and final year with a manual collection contract with Waste Management. When transitioning to automated collection in FY28, there is potential to save about \$80,000 due to automation.

Utilities (Water & Sewer) Division: The Utilities Division operates over three budget cost centers which include Water, Sewer and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. FY2026 is the second full year of operation of the new Pudding Hill Water Treatment Plant. Going from FY25 to FY26 there were projected cost increases of about 15% attributed to the complexities of the new treatment plant. Much of the increased operational costs were offset by an O&M contribution paid by the responsible, contaminating party. Staffing remains an ongoing challenge, with a shortage of licensed water treatment operators. Currently there are only 2 personnel on staff that have the required level of licensure to run the City’s water treatment plants. A Lab Technician position exists to try and develop a potential candidate to become a licensed water treatment operator. Personal expenses increases are resulting from collectively bargained wages and benefits. Looking at the expenditures, there were decreases for outside technical services, disposal of filter backwash waste, and repairs to vehicles and equipment. However, there were increases for additional well-cleanings and maintenance, water treatment chemicals, and a CIP allocation for the vehicle replacement program. Water staff are responsible for 11 wells, 3 treatment plants, 4 storage tanks, 2 pressure zones and approximately 165 miles of buried distribution system piping. A goal will be to clean and rehab 3 supply wells each year. This helps sustain capacity and ensures no fouling of the intake screens.

Sewer is divided into 2 separate budgets. There is one budget center for the collection system, which has over 120 miles of piping and over 3,500 individual manholes and 23 mechanical pumping stations. The other budget center is the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that is tasked with treating over 1 billion gallons of wastewater, which in turn generates about 3,200 wet-tons of accumulated bio-solids. Together, the 2 budgets are showing a combined increase of 1.9%. The largest budget driver is related to personnel services, as staffing was needed to help operate the new catch basin screening & washing facility. To help offset the wages and benefits, there was a significant decrease in contracted disposal for biosolids disposal. There is a projected savings of over \$140,000 from FY26 to FY27, as the contracted per ton disposal cost dropped from about \$200 per ton down to about \$158 per ton. Due to some stability in regards to the NPDES permitting, there was a reduction in outside technical services and possible legal services. There were some adjustments in electrical supply as the wastewater plant is expected to reduce electric energy purchases as much as \$50,000, but conversely, the sewer pump stations are expected to increase by just over \$20,000. The combined electricity costs are expected to be around \$680,000.

Administration: Administration operates within a single budget cost center, and is tasked with providing oversight and support for all Community Service functions. The personnel costs reflect an increase in wages, and the conversion of a part-time administrative position to a full-time position to help manage the EPA-mandated Lead Service Line Initiative. The corresponding increase in wages and benefits for the full-time position are offset by grant proceeds from a \$5,940,000 funding package administered by the State Revolving Loan Fund. In addition to collectively bargained personal service costs, this budget accounts for the main public works facility at 271 Mast Road, to include purchased utility services for electricity, heat, water and sewer. In turn, Administration charges out the various other divisions for a pro-rata share of the facility.

Fleet Services Division: Fleet Services operates within a single budget cost center to provide preventative maintenance services to approximately 135 City vehicles, along with another 170+ external vehicles related to the Dover School Department and other municipal or non-profit entities such as the Dover Housing Authority, Town of Rollinsford, and Strafford County. The FY27 budget shows no change. While there are personnel related increases for wages and benefits, there is a reduction in overall parts for both internal and external vehicles. This adjustment results in no net change to the budget.

Environmental factors continue to have a significant impact on the department's budgets across the board. EPA continues expansion of its Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, and aquifers are routinely monitored for the presence of any emerging PFAS compounds. Exploratory work will remain ongoing for additional sources of potable water. In regards to stormwater, the general Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit is due to expire, and expectation is that it will be updated and reissued in FY27. In regards to wastewater, the EPA-issued Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit has expired, but remains in effect until revision or reissuance, and recently EPA also issued a supplementary General Permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for medium sized wastewater treatment facilities, which requires development of a capacity, management, operations & maintenance plan, along with additional sampling and monitoring for various PFAS compounds. Commitments to fully fund non-toxic turf management and weed control help protect and sustain the environment, but have a corresponding budget impact. These environmental initiatives or opportunities put Dover in a leadership role,

helping guide regional responses and developing initiatives to find creative means of compliance and funding in these areas remains critical. The City has been proactive and recognized with awards for environmental leadership, asset management proficiency, and stormwater creativity. Other New Hampshire municipalities typically reach out to Dover for advice and guidance. This supports another strategic initiative to be seen as industry leaders, which embraces the “Dover-First” mentality.

Recreation Department:

The Recreation Department mission is “to provide affordable, high quality recreation facilities and programs in collaboration with other City departments and local organizations, ensuring participants have access to a variety of recreational opportunities, thereby enhancing their quality of life”. The department is responsible for the operations of several major public recreation facilities and provides/facilitates a comprehensive list of recreational programs for all ages and abilities. The department is also responsible for the operations and maintenance of the McConnell Center facility supporting a variety of municipal and social service related agencies. The Recreation Department’s budget is funded in the General Fund, McConnell Center Fund, and Recreation Programs Fund portions of the City’s Annual Operating Budget.

The Dover community is very fortunate to have a legacy of investment in what it takes to provide high quality recreational experiences for area residents. The basis of this investment, both in infrastructure and human capital, is the view that one of the measures of the quality of a person’s life is what they share with others around them. Recreation by design brings people together in various settings to develop community, build relationships and give back to others through volunteerism and sponsorship opportunities.

The mechanisms in place in Dover to build the enjoyable lifestyles recreational activities can bring include: Sports Leagues for all ages and competitive and instructional levels, Special Events, Lessons for all sports, Cultural and Arts Events, Parks and gathering places for individual and group activities, Senior Center Trips, Community Recreation and Fitness Center, Indoor and Outdoor Pools, Twin Sheet Ice Arena, Disc Golf Course, Skatepark, Sledding and Snowboard Hills, Dog Park, Walking Trails, Playgrounds, Tennis and Pickleball Courts, Basketball Courts, Performing Arts Venues and, Trails, Natural and Conservation Areas for Passive Recreation.

The Recreation Department is involved with the operation and provision of most of the community recreational activities to varying degrees. The facilities operated by the department host much of the programming available to the community. Our staff either run those programs or coordinate the reservations and/or rentals of those community venues with private leagues/ groups or individuals.

The public parks and athletic facilities are managed by the Recreation Department in cooperation with the Community Services Department and the Dover School Department. The integral role that the Dover Recreation Department plays creates and enables athletic and recreational opportunities for tens of thousands of people every year whether a participant or spectator. The FY2027 budget proposal provides the resources for the department to operate the recreation facilities and support the programming that serves the community every day.

The Recreation Department also manages and operates the McConnell Center. This major facility serves as a Recreation Center, Senior Center, Teen Center, Community Center, Multi-Tenant Nonprofit Center and also is the city's primary Emergency Shelter. The Recreation budget supports the consistent, safe and efficient operation of the McConnell Center and provides the community with many uses and resources to take advantage of over the course of their lives in Dover.

The Strategic Plan of the Recreation Department focuses significantly on the delivery of quality services to our community and customers. This focus is articulated in the areas of marketing and customer communications specifically. The needs in those areas are addressed in many ways through the hiring and training of qualified staff who can best represent those intangible traits that demonstrate public service. The number of front-line positions in the Recreation Department that need to be hired and trained on an annual basis is significant. This has been a challenge in the current economy however due in large part to talented and dedicated full time staff the department has been able to navigate this especially important issue over the last few years. The solidifying of our full-time staff positions at all facilities has really given the department a firm foundation from which to recruit and train the people that deliver services day by day. The FY2027 budget funds the continuance of this very important aspect that is clearly connected to the level and quality of service we deliver to our community.

In order to account for the many services that the Recreation Department provides, the department's budget is broken into several cost centers including: Administration, Recreation Programs, Indoor Pool, Jenny Thompson Pool, Ice Arena, McConnell Center and several other Recreation Special Revenue Fund programs. There are consistent areas of impact across all these cost centers in the FY2027 budget.

The Recreation Department's General Fund operating revenues traditionally cover 60 to 70% of the General Fund expenses and the McConnell Center and other Special Revenue Funds cover 100% of their respective expenses. The result of this is that the net cost of the Recreation Department to the Dover taxpayer is typically 1% of the total City General Fund accounts translating into an annual cost to the individual residential taxpayer of approximately \$80. The inherent value to the residents of the investment that the City of Dover has made in public recreation facilities and services over the years and is currently supporting through the budget process has consistently exceeded the level of recreation services provided by any community in northern New England.

Public Library:

The Dover Public Library's mission is to support lifelong engagement in reading, discovering, learning, and creating. The Library prides itself on being responsive to the needs and desires of the population it serves. It serves as both a physical space and virtual portal for the curation and discovery of ideas, the convening of community, and the power of information.

The Dover Public Library responsibilities include: promoting reading, learning, and creative activities for youth and teens through story times, summer reading programs, homework help, and enriching and entertaining STEM, Family Place, and Makerspace experiences; providing research assistance, readers' advisory services, technology and maker classes, and tutoring in the use of electronic, online, and e-reader resources; allowing access to digital, electronic, and streamed content via website and through outreach on popular, customer-focused social software platforms; filling patron requests for books and materials through inter- and intra-library loan; and serving as a community repository, preserving, making accessible, an extensive collection of historical materials about Dover, the seacoast region, and

NH; and supporting libraries in the five Dover public schools by providing system administration and collaborative services within a shared library automation system.

The Public Library is funded in the General Fund and Library Fines Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

The Dover Public Library budget for FY2027 maintains funding to support the collection, programming and materials needed to maintain the services our community relies upon. Funding increases include personal services costs associated with collective bargaining agreements and the City's Merit Plan. An increase in funding can also be found in staff development so that staff can attend conferences and trainings to learn about new and relevant services for the community. This is a key objective with the strategic plan for the Library.

The Dover Public Library looks forward to the reopening of the expanded and renovated library in early June of 2026. The demand for programming and community events at the library has been strong and we expect this to surge with our reopening. The budget for FY2027 proposes an increase in Special Programming to meet the demands of our community. This budget line is offset by generous donations from the Friends of the Dover Public Library.

Dover Public Library patrons still borrow physical books at double the rate of digital ones—however, demand for our digital books rose by 16.2 % in 2025. The budget for FY2027 proposes an increase in Software Subscriptions & Licenses which encompasses many of our digital products. The Dover Public Library is a member of the New Hampshire Downloadable Book Consortium which the NH State Library manages for participating libraries. The program receives funds from all participating libraries and from grant funding through the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the NH State Library.

Public Welfare Department:

The Public Welfare Department mission is “to provide a general assistance program to meet the genuine needs of all eligible residents in compliance with NH State Law (NH RSA 165) and the City guidelines, in a respectful and fiscally responsible way which fosters dignity and self-sufficiency.” The department is accessible to and serves Dover residents in their times of need. Responsibilities include: providing General Assistance program for Dover residents as required by State law; maintain accurate case plans/records; investigate/verify eligibility for all applications for public assistance; coordinate opportunities for workfare program; and, make referrals and work with State and local agencies to coordinate services. This department is funded in the General Fund portion of the City's Annual Operating Budget.

Welfare is mandated in New Hampshire by the state government yet it is paid for by local tax revenue. It is intended to be temporary, emergency assistance that will stabilize or minimize a crisis situation allowing people to regain independence. Dover Welfare addresses “Basic Needs” such as housing, food, heat, utilities and medical issues. Staff are dedicated to providing the most assistance allowed for their clients yet remain constantly aware of the fiscal responsibilities to the Dover taxpayer whose money is being expended. All laws that govern Local Welfare as dictated by state statutes are adhered to including following the adopted “Guidelines” that define the who, what, where, when and how of what may be provided.

Each person who contacts the Public Welfare Department is offered polite, respectful and professional service. This is not always an easy task to accomplish as many of those seeking “Assistance” are anxious, frightened, confused and often upset. Some arrive having substance use disorders or mental health issues. If they cannot be helped directly, efforts are made to refer to other programs and agencies that can. While personal identifiable information is protected by law the data about how many we serve, in what way and how much it costs is available on the City of Dover Website. Department staff are regularly researching the available services in our area and throughout the state, keeping current with regular trainings and remaining active in all groups that are relevant to concerns addressed by this department.

The current fiscal year to date has seen no increase in spending for General Assistance. While costs for basic needs; housing, food, heat, electricity and medical expenses continue to rise, department staff have been investing significantly more time during appointments with clients verifying eligibility, increasing case management to implement solutions and making further efforts to refer clients in need to appropriate service providers. These procedures and additional attention to identify and appropriately address client needs has proven effective in controlling expenditures while still providing for the genuine needs of our clients. Assistance for rent and emergency shelter has remained the most requested area of need yet costs have remained stable despite increasing concerns regarding housing affordability. The proposed Public Welfare Department budget for FY2027 will allow for the continuation of compassionate, quality service in providing general assistance for Dover residents in need during the coming year.