

Town of Needham Town Manager's Proposed Annual Budget Fiscal Year 2026

Needham Select Board

Kevin Keane, Chair

Heidi Frail, Vice Chair

Catherine Dowd, Clerk

Marianne Cooley

Joshua Levy

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

Daniel Gutekanst, Superintendent of Schools

Department Managers

Deb Anderson, Director of Conservation

Tom Conroy, Fire Chief

David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance

Matt DeMarrais, Solid Waste and Recycling Superintendent

Barry Dulong, Director of Building Maintenance

Tyler Gabrielski, Director of Streets and Transportation

Ellyse Glushkov, Treasurer and Tax Collector

Hank Haff, Director of Building Design and Construction

Katie King, Deputy Town Manager

Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works

Rob MacLean, Library Director

Shane Mark, Assistant Director of Public Works

Timothy McDonald, Director of Health and Human Services

Louise Miller, Town Clerk

Stacey Mulroy, Director of Park and Recreation

Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Community Development

Ed Olsen, Parks and Forestry Superintendent

Joe Prondak, Building Commissioner

John Regan, Fleet Supervisor

Michael Retzky, Water and Sewer Superintendent

Tom Ryder, Town Engineer

John Schlittler, Chief of Police

Sara Shine, Director of Youth and Family Services

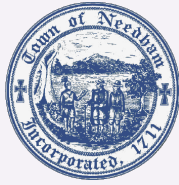
Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance

LaTanya Steele, Director of Aging Services

Tatiana Swanson, Director of Human Resources

Myles Tucker, Support Services Manager

Michelle Vaillancourt, Town Accountant



Name: Town of Needham

Incorporated: 1711

Total Area: 12.61 sq. miles

Elevation: The low elevation is 68 feet above sea level and the high is 298 feet above sea level.

Road Miles: 138

County: Norfolk

Population: 32,091
(2020 Census)

Form of Government:
Representative Town Meeting

School Structure: K-12

FY2025 Tax Rate:

\$10.60 Residential

\$20.91 Commercial

**FY2025 Average Single-Family
Home Value:** \$1,464,398

**FY2025 Average Single Family
Home Tax Bill:** \$15,522.62

Coordinates:

42° 16' 52" N 71° 14' 11" W

Town Hall Address:

1471 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492

Website: www.needhamma.gov

Facebook: Town of Needham

Instagram: TownofNeedhamMA

Town of Needham Community Profile

The **Town of Needham** is located on rocky uplands within a loop of the Charles River in Eastern Massachusetts. The town is bordered by Wellesley on the west and northwest, Newton on the north and northeast, the West Roxbury section of Boston on the east, Dedham on the southeast and south, and Westwood and Dover on the south. Needham is ten miles southwest of Boston, twenty-nine miles east of Worcester, and about 208 miles from New York City.

Needham is situated in the greater Boston area, which has excellent rail, air, and highway facilities. Principal highways are State Routes 128 (the inner belt around Boston) and 135, and Interstate Route 95, which shares the same roadway as State Route 128. Commuter rail service is available via four stations to Back Bay Station and South Station in Boston. Needham is a member of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), which provides fixed bus route service between Needham Junction and Watertown Square.



READER'S GUIDE TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET

The Proposed Annual Budget document is more than estimates of revenues and expenses; it is a reflection of the Town's values, priorities, and goals. The budget document serves as a policy document, a financial guide, and a communication device. This guide was created to help orient interested readers by providing a brief overview of the budget process, as well as an explanation of the organization of the budget document itself. Presented in distinct sections, this budget document provides both general and specific data, including line-by-line department spending requests.

THE BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS

The Town Manager, Finance Committee, Select Board, and School Committee all play different and important roles in the budget process. The General By-laws of the Town of Needham provide for the following process:

2.2.1 Operating Budget The Town Manager shall issue budget guidelines and instructions for all Town departments to submit their spending requests for the ensuing fiscal year. The Town Manager shall consult with the Finance Committee prior to the issuance of said guidelines and instructions. The Town Manager and School Superintendent will provide the Finance Committee with copies of their respective departmental spending requests on or before the 2nd Wednesday of December. Following receipt of these spending requests, the Finance Committee may begin its consideration of same, including the commencement of budget hearings. The Town Manager, after consultation with the Select Board and School Committee, shall not later than the 31st day of January, present to the Finance Committee a balanced budget recommendation in the form of an executive budget, which shall include the spending priorities of all Town departments for the ensuing fiscal year, including in addition thereto, the voted School Committee budget request if different than that contained in the proposed balanced budget. The Town Manager's executive budget recommendation shall not be binding on the Finance Committee. Said executive budget recommendation shall include the estimates of Town revenues and proposed expenditures of all Town departments, including debt service and other amounts required to be raised for the ensuing fiscal year. The Town Manager may amend or otherwise revise revenue estimates as may be warranted. All such revisions shall be provided in writing to the Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee.

The Legislative body of Needham's Town government is Representative Town Meeting. This is a unique form of government in New England that sets it apart from most other sections of our country. The Town is divided into ten precincts, and each precinct votes for 24 representatives to the Town Meeting. There are a total of 240 elected Town Meeting Members. In addition, there are the following at-large members:

- Moderator
- Town Clerk
- Members of the Select Board
- Chair of the Board of Assessors
- Chair of the Board of Health
- Chair of the Trustees of Memorial Park

- Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission
- Chair of the Planning Board
- Chair of the School Committee
- Any resident member of the General Court whose state legislative district is wholly within the Town

It is important to understand this structure, as no budget or fiscal appropriation can be made without the approval of Town Meeting Members at either the Annual Town Meeting, held the first Monday in May each year, or at a Special Town Meeting, held in the spring or fall of each year, or as otherwise needed. The Town Manager presents a proposed annual budget to the Finance Committee for its consideration, and the Finance Committee then forwards its proposed budget to the Annual Town Meeting for appropriation. The final budget voted by Town Meeting constitutes the legal budget authority which ultimately governs the manner and amount of local funding expended during the fiscal year. This document presents information on the General Fund, and two Enterprise Funds – each must be appropriated by Town Meeting in accordance with State law.

Readers should also obtain a copy of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, which contains the actual budget articles to be voted upon. The Warrant will be available in April at www.needhamma.gov under the Town Government / Town Meeting tab.

THE BUDGET PROCESS/CALENDAR

In order to be ready for the Annual Town Meeting vote, the budget development process begins a year earlier.

Budget guidelines were distributed to departments, boards, and committees on October 1, 2024, with spending requests due on October 25, 2024. The senior management team held budget review meetings with all departments during the month of November. Finance Committee and Community Preservation Committee liaisons were invited to attend these meetings in order to prepare for their own deliberations. Discussions with the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee continued during the fall and winter. The Town Manager's official budget consultation with the School Committee occurred on January 14, 2025.

BUDGET DOCUMENTS

The five-year Capital Improvement Plan is issued as a separate document. The following documents are available for viewing at www.needhamma.gov.

- FY2026 – FY2030 Capital Improvement Plan
- FY2026 Proposed Annual Budget

BUDGET CALENDAR

July/August

- Start of Fiscal Year

September

- Capital improvement plan guidelines are released
- Town Manager budget consultation with the Select Board
- Town Manager budget consultation with the Finance Committee

October

- Budget guidelines released
- Capital requests are due
- Town Manager budget consultation with the Select Board
- Special Town Meeting

November

- Department spending requests are reviewed
- Town Manager budget consultation with the Select Board

December

- Department spending requests are due to Finance Committee from the Town Manager and School Superintendent
- Select Board votes CIP recommendation

January

- Capital Improvement Plan is released
- Town Manager budget consultation with the School Committee
- Town Manager's Proposed Annual Budget is released

February

- Warrant articles for Annual Town Meeting are due to the Select Board
- Finance Committee's draft budget is due to the Town Manager

March

- Finance Committee's budget recommendations are due for inclusion in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

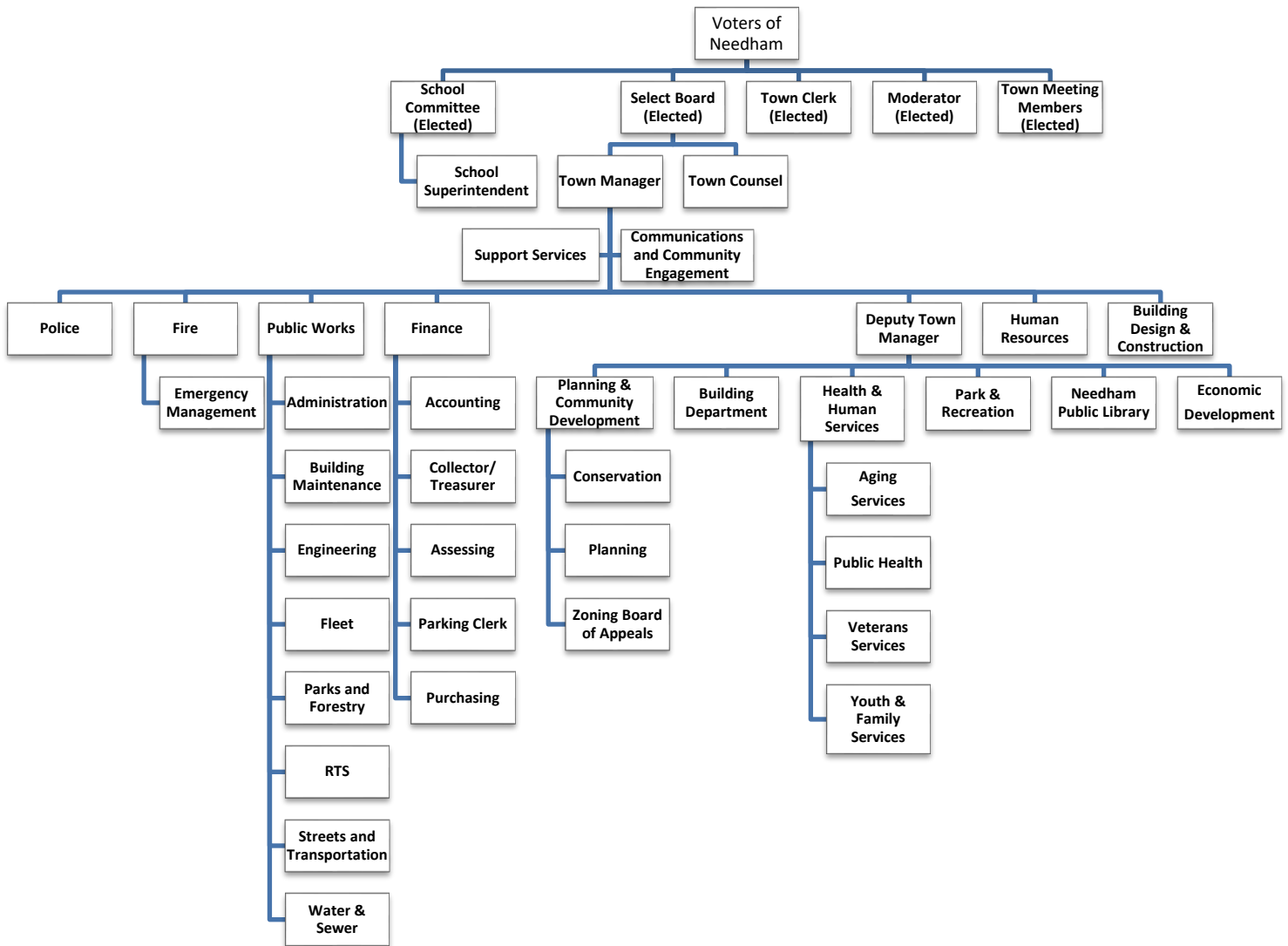
May

- Annual Town Meeting

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET

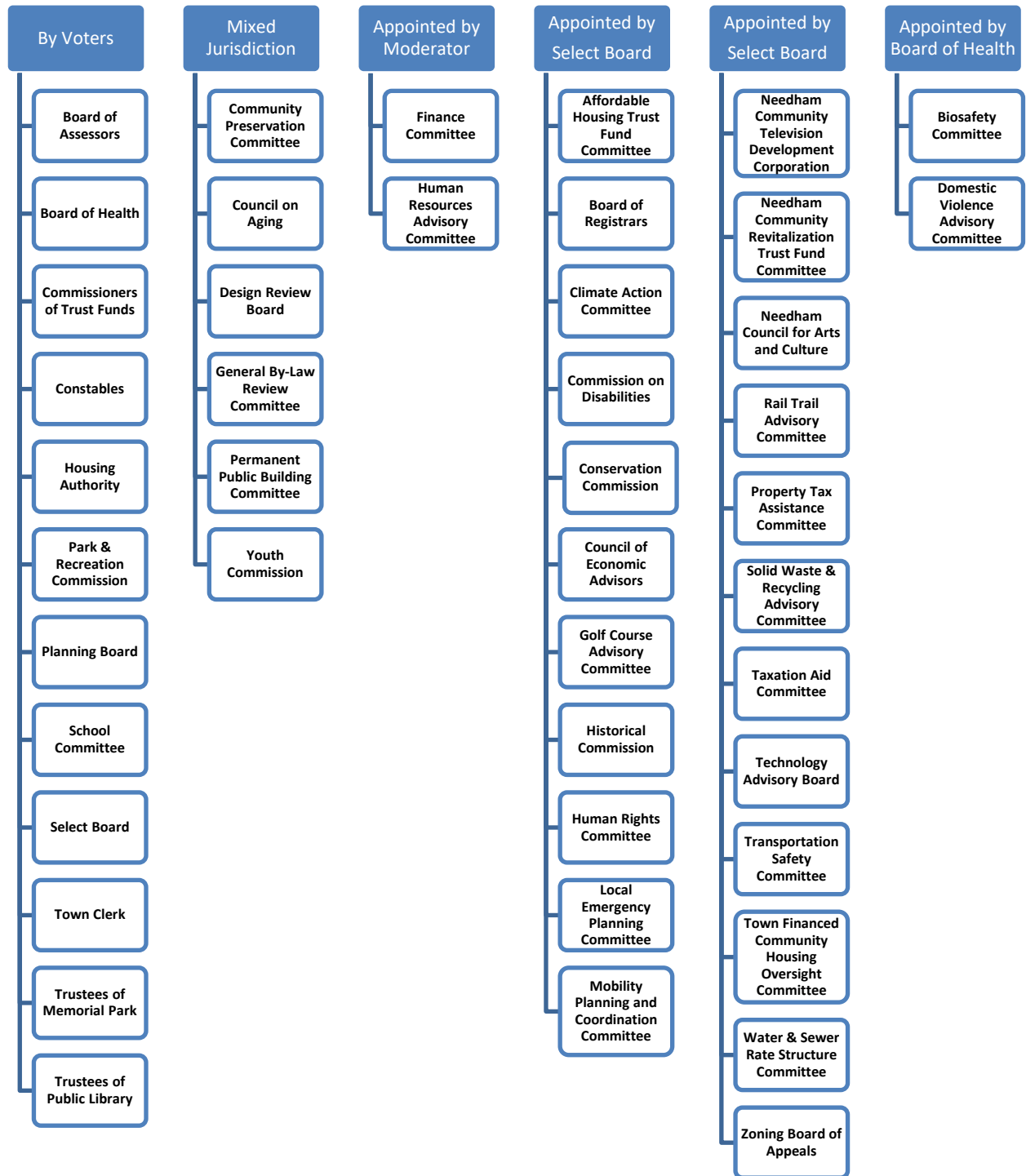
<u>Section 1</u> Town Manager's Budget Message	This section contains the overall philosophy upon which the budget was developed and provides an explanation of the budget process and any significant changes to the budget as compared to previous years. This section also covers the budget highlights and provides a summary of the balanced budget proposal.
<u>Section 2</u> Revenue Summary	This section identifies the sources of revenue to meet the proposed operational, miscellaneous, and capital expenses for the coming year. The section also provides the reader with an overview of historical and proposed revenue, including the assumptions used to develop the estimates.
<u>Section 3</u> Departmental Budget Submissions	This section contains budget submissions for General Fund, Enterprise Funds, and the Community Preservation Fund, as well as descriptions that identify the general purpose of each department and include a history of past year expenditures, the current year budget, and the recommended balanced budget.
<u>Section 4</u> Recommended Capital Improvement Plan Executive Summary	This section contains the executive summary of the recommended FY2026-FY2030 Capital Improvement Plan.
<u>Section 5</u> Financial Policies, Glossary, and Town Manager Budget Guidelines	This section contains a list of Town financial policies, a glossary of terms that may prove useful in reviewing this budget document, and the Town Manager's guidelines to develop the FY2026 Proposed Annual Budget.

TOWN OF NEEDHAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



- The Select Board appoints the Town Manager, Town Counsel, and many members of Boards and Committees that can be found on the following pages.
- The School Committee appoints the School Superintendent.
- The Moderator appoints the Finance Committee and the Human Resources Advisory Committee.
- The Town Manager appoints, subject to the approval of the Select Board:
 - Police Chief
 - Fire Chief
 - Director of Public Works
 - Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance
 - Deputy Town Manager
- The Town Manager appoints all other employees of the Town excluding the Executive Secretary to the Finance Committee and employees of the School Department.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES



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