

**From: Representative Zlotnik
Second Worcester District
Ashburnham, Gardner, Templeton, Winchendon
June 3, 2024**

The Budget is the big item in the legislature right now. Below are some snippets from that.

General Budget Information

Massachusetts Fiscal Year runs July 1st to June 30th.

The budget process is somewhat a year round process but formally begins in January when the Governor files her budget bill with the legislature. After statewide public hearing, the House takes up the budget for debate at the end of April. The Senate follows in May. Once each branch has passed a version of the budget, a committee is formed to resolve differences between them. That final budget is brought back to each branch for a final up or down vote before it is sent to the Governor. In Massachusetts, the Governor has a line-item veto meaning that the Governor can veto in part, or in entirety a line-item's funding or language. The legislature then has the opportunity to override any such vetoes. In practice, the House and Senate routinely override any budgetary vetoes from the Governor near unanimously irrespective of the partisan makeup of the government at the time.

The budget is supposed to be ready by July 1st, however it has become common for the budget to not be ready until the end of July and sometimes later. This does not result in any meaningful impact as the previous years' budget is extended one month at a time until the new budget is ready.

Statewide Highlights

- The budget does not raise taxes or fees
- The budget does not make any withdrawals from the Stabilization Fund
- \$193.5 million for Substance Addiction Services
- \$130.5 million for child and adolescent mental health services
- The House budget passed 153-4

Local Impact

Education and Local Aid

- Funding from state to cover schools lunches for all students
- \$6.68 billion for Chapter 70
 - My district receives a majority of k-12 funding from Ch 70 program
 - Other public school funding programs including Circuit Breaker Special Education reimbursement and Charter School reimbursement, as well as Regional School Transportation reimbursement
- Local Aid Transfers
 - Ashburnham
 - \$960,002 Unrestricted General Government Aid
 - \$15,928,887 Chapter 70
 - Gardner
 - \$5,116,463 Unrestricted General Government Aid
 - \$29,677,210 Chapter 70
 - Templeton
 - \$1,683,719 Unrestricted General Government Aid
 - \$12,479,169 Chapter 70
 - Winchendon
 - \$960,002 Unrestricted General Government Aid
 - \$14,135,502 Chapter 70

Healthcare and Seniors

- Funding support for healthcare access for children, mental health services, and suicide prevention through grants to Heywood Healthcare
- \$28 million for Grants to Councils on Aging
 - These funds support local senior centers

Veterans

- \$68.2 million for financial support to low income veterans
- \$86.5 million for the operation of the Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke
- \$8.3 million for Veterans' Outreach Centers
 - Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center in Gardner
- \$7.7 million for Veterans housing counseling

Local Highlights

- \$150,000 to support civic engagement and community service activities at Mount Wachusett Community College
- \$1,500,000 for On-Site Academy, located in Westminster, to provide post traumatic incident stress counseling to first responders and corrections officers
- \$125,000 for the Operation of "Cathy's House" in Winchendon by Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center for female veteran's housing
- \$25,000 for GAAMHA in Gardner to support capital improvements to their residential substance use disorder facilities
- \$100,000 for the operation of the Gardner CAC
- \$50,000 for the operation of the Wachusett Business Incubator
- \$100,000 for Growing Places for the Operation of the North Central Food Processing Center

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