

**TOWN OF THORNTON**

**2024**

**PROPOSED BUDGET & WARRANT ARTICLE QUICK SHEET**

The purpose of this document is to provide taxpayers with commentary on items in the budget and warrant articles that are noteworthy. In the budget itself you will find line-item notes as you go along.

In general, the budget is up \$301,000 over last year.

- \$249,000 of this increase is due to COLA, salary adjustments, increases in health care and increases in state retirement requirement.
  - To determine COLA the board used the Social Security annual COLA adjustment and the CPI as guidance. This chart shows a historical tracking of all three.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Thornton COLA %</b>	<b>SS COLA %</b>	<b>CPI %</b>
2014			1.6
2015	1.70	1.70	0.1
2016	2.00	0.00	1.3
2017	2.00	0.30	2.1
2018	2.00	2.00	2.4
2019	2.80	2.80	1.8
2020	2.00	1.60	1.2
2021	2.00	1.30	4.7
2022	4.00	5.90	8
2023	6.00	8.70	3.5
2024	3.00	3.20	
<b>Cumulative</b>	27.50	27.50	26.70

- You will note significant decreases and increases in salary lines for the Municipal Agent and Tax Collector line, respectively. This reflects the decision of the board to reorganize staff positions in the front office. Instead of having two positions, a part time municipal clerk and a part time deputy tax collector with no benefits, the board combined those positions in one full time Deputy Tax Collector/Municipal clerk position with benefits. The board found it exceedingly difficult to fill the part-time positions, especially without benefits being offered. The likelihood of filling and keeping a full-time benefited position is far more likely and sustainable.

- This year the Board of Selectman included a potential tax impact notation in the warrant articles. Though not required, the Selectmen committed at last year's town meeting to include this information moving forward. It is important to understand that this is only a **POTENTIAL** tax impact to the municipal tax rate. There are numerous variables that go into the final tax rate that include municipal revenues, property valuation changes, budget surpluses and the use of unassigned fund balances all of which will affect the final tax rate. The final 2024 tax rate will not be set until quarter 4 of 2024 and is set by the NH Department of Revenue Administration.

### **Warrant Articles:**

- Articles 2-6 fund the various capital reserve account in the needed amounts to achieve the purchase of capital items for the town according to the Capital Improvements Plan. This plan is a multi-year plan that is maintained by the CIP committee in conjunction with the BOS. For more information, please see the CIP information in the town report.
  - Articles 3,4,5 are proposed to be funded with funds raised by new taxation.
  - Articles 6 and 7 are proposed to be funded with funds from the town unassigned fund balance not from taxation.
- Article 7 is the funding for the overall budget that was prepared by the BOS, reviewed at the budget hearing, and approved by the BOS for presentation to the voters.
- Article 8 proposes to update the town's elderly exemptions. With the upcoming townwide revaluation it is highly likely that property assessments will increase significantly. To keep ahead of these changes the BOS is suggesting updating the elderly exemption requirements and benefits. The elderly exemption has an asset and income requirement that needs to be met to receive the exemption. Last updated in 2020, the BOS is proposing an increase of to these requirements of 20% in line with the cumulative rate of inflation since 2020. If a property owner meets the asset and income requirements, they are eligible for the exemption benefit. The exemption is a reduction of the assessed value of the property for tax calculations based on age. The proposed 40% increase to these amounts reflects the potential increase of property assessments based on guidance from the NH Department of Revenue Administration.
- Article 9 proposes to update the Exemption for the Disabled for the same reasons and using the same rationale for the monetary increase in requirements and benefits as explained in the explanation for Article 9.
- Article 10 proposes to update the Exemption for the Blind for the same reasons and using the same rationale for the monetary increase in requirements and benefits as explained in the explanation for Article 9.
- Petition Warrant Articles 11-13: The Board of Selectman do not offer rational or explanation for the petition warrant articles. It is incumbent on the petitioners to offer explanations in the way they best see fit.