



TOWN of MONROE
MUNICIPAL OFFICES • LIBRARY • POLICE DEPARTMENT

2025-2026 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BY THE FIRST SELECTMAN

TERRENCE P. ROONEY, FIRST SELECTMAN

FEBRUARY 10, 2025



FIRST SELECTMAN'S BUDGET DISCUSSION

Pursuant to Chapter VIII, Section 3 of the Monroe Town Charter my budget for fiscal year 2025/26 was timely submitted to the Town Council by February 8, 2025. As a result of the 2024 Revaluation, Monroe's overall residential property assessment total increased by 50%, while the commercial and industrial assessment total increased by only 16%, shifting a greater share of the tax liability to our homeowners. The combined growth of our residential and commercial real estate has resulted in a net grand list increase of \$877,640,833 for the fiscal year 2025/26. While this office cannot control the outcome the state mandated revaluation, we can certainly mitigate the impact it will have on our taxpayers. Communities all across Connecticut are sharing the impact caused by the dramatic increases in housing prices on property assessments. A comprehensive analysis by the First Selectman, Finance Department, and Assessor's Office has resulted in a proposed mill rate reduction from the current rate of 38.27 to a mill rate of 28.61 for fiscal year 2025/26. My budget proposes an overall increase in expenditures of 2.84%, which is .06% lower than the national inflation rate of 2.90%. This budget is the best-case scenario to satisfy the lowest level of taxpayer impact while considering the increase in housing values and emphasizing community needs. Motor vehicle taxes are expected to decrease as a result of this proposed mill rate and will offset a portion of the residential tax impact. The Town of Monroe had a surplus in fiscal year 2023/24, therefore I am requesting that \$4,000,000 be returned to the taxpayers by assigning fund balance in this budget, which will offset the impact of the revaluation. Using fund balance is not optimal, however, after returning this surplus to the taxpayers of Monroe, our projected unassigned fund balance will remain above the high end of our established range and should help maintain Monroe's AAA bond rating.

The Board of Education has requested an increase of \$4,303,370 from which I am requesting a reduction of \$1,850,000, lowering the increase to \$2,453,370 or 3.43%. As I understand the challenges education is currently facing, the trajectory of these increases is not sustainable. In recognizing the rising costs of education, my administration has modified the grant writer position in this budget to assist the Board of Education. This initiative promotes working together to lower the impact of education costs in Monroe.



FIRST SELECTMAN'S BUDGET DISCUSSION

When preparing this budget proposal, it was paramount to control the tax impact on our residents while allocating appropriate funding for goods and services to maintain operations and address community concerns. It is imperative to recognize that this budget was influenced through input from the community, trending costs, the property revaluation, and the overall performance of town services. This budget is an ecosystem where all town citizens have a vested benefit and our employees are given the tools to perform at the level expected by our residents. The aforementioned concerns were identified by the population of Monroe through public meetings, open door discussions in my office, and feedback from various sources relevant to addressing the needs of our taxpayers.

This budget includes the following initiatives of mine, along with budgeted allocations and contingencies, needed to address citizen concerns and town operations:

- **Proposed tax benefits for seniors by increasing the income ceiling to \$75,000 and broadening credit brackets for the local homeowner program.**
- **Grant writer/Special Projects Coordinator under the First Selectman's Office which will be utilized on both the municipal side and Board of Education side to ensure Monroe is doing its absolute best to find grant opportunities town wide.**
- **Online services (OpenGov) with both mobile and PC user interface for permitting in the Land Use Departments.**
- **Homeowner tax credit for 100% service-connected permanent and totally disabled veterans.**
- **Funding allocations for two new police officer positions to enhance overall neighborhood and traffic safety**
- **Negotiated collective bargaining agreements for the Highway and Clerical Unions.**
- **Added two Cyber security positions, shared with the Board of Education, to mitigate daily technology concerns.**
- **Added two maintainer positions in Department of Public Works to help with overall maintenance and back fill people who will be operating our recently purchased roller and paver (grant funded – no budget increase).**

The following summary of my budget gives a good overview of the expenditures by department.



BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT

| DEPT # | DEPT NAME | FY2023 | FY2024 | FY2025 | FY2026 | \$ INC/(DEC) | % INC/(DEC) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | | ACTUALS | ACTUALS | APPROVED BUDGET | PROPOSED BUDGET | | |
| 5 | FIRST SELECTMAN | \$181,739 | \$215,775 | \$228,227 | \$272,914 | \$44,687 | 19.58% |
| 7 | TOWN ATTORNEY | \$179,585 | \$233,776 | \$280,500 | \$280,500 | \$0 | 0.00% |
| 10 | TOWN COUNCIL | \$1,988 | \$4,525 | \$4,700 | \$4,700 | \$0 | 0.00% |
| 20 | BOARD OF FINANCE | \$51,176 | \$60,000 | \$327,525 | \$301,384 | (\$26,141) | -7.98% |
| 30 | REGISTRAR OF VOTERS | \$114,387 | \$112,096 | \$175,440 | \$156,400 | (\$19,040) | -10.85% |
| 40 | TOWN CLERK | \$182,210 | \$185,698 | \$202,428 | \$199,725 | (\$2,703) | -1.34% |
| 50 | TAX COLLECTOR | \$194,767 | \$203,149 | \$218,623 | \$225,079 | \$6,456 | 2.95% |
| 60 | TREASURER | \$12,345 | \$12,365 | \$13,515 | \$13,515 | \$0 | 0.00% |
| 70 | BOARDS & COMMISSIONS | \$3,555 | \$2,898 | \$13,070 | \$12,600 | (\$470) | -3.60% |
| 80 | SENIOR CENTER | \$279,021 | \$288,010 | \$319,661 | \$317,482 | (\$2,179) | -0.68% |
| 90 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | \$102,192 | \$122,791 | \$150,000 | \$124,950 | (\$25,050) | -16.70% |
| 110 | HUMAN RESOURCES | \$4,941,238 | \$4,827,889 | \$5,609,883 | \$6,248,243 | \$638,360 | 11.38% |
| 120 | FINANCE | \$333,255 | \$344,891 | \$375,283 | \$376,931 | \$1,648 | 0.44% |
| 125 | IT | \$708,962 | \$720,590 | \$759,561 | \$959,231 | \$199,670 | 26.29% |
| 130 | ASSESSOR | \$247,599 | \$256,369 | \$289,461 | \$289,981 | \$520 | 0.18% |
| 150 | BUILDING | \$159,182 | \$193,827 | \$223,327 | \$226,241 | \$2,914 | 1.30% |
| 155 | PLANNING & ZONING | \$294,883 | \$286,703 | \$374,994 | \$385,604 | \$10,610 | 2.83% |
| 160 | FACILITY MAINTENANCE | \$560,178 | \$547,566 | \$581,595 | \$494,163 | (\$87,432) | -15.03% |
| 161 | COMMUNITY CENTER SITE | \$- | \$- | \$125,000 | \$128,848 | \$3,848 | 3.08% |
| 200 | SPECIAL PROGRAMS | \$131,473 | \$144,045 | \$166,536 | \$167,600 | \$1,064 | 0.64% |
| 250 | REGIONAL PROGRAMS | \$56,421 | \$57,713 | \$58,052 | \$59,237 | \$1,185 | 2.04% |
| 300 | POLICE-ADMINISTRATION | \$444,312 | \$447,739 | \$487,466 | \$488,789 | \$1,322 | 0.27% |
| 305 | POLICE-PERSONNEL | \$5,086,050 | \$5,474,582 | \$6,127,647 | \$6,284,729 | \$157,082 | 2.56% |
| 310 | POLICE-OPERATING | \$452,970 | \$482,238 | \$508,261 | \$414,545 | (\$93,716) | -18.44% |
| 315 | ANIMAL CONTROL | \$97,084 | \$95,935 | \$136,823 | \$141,910 | \$5,087 | 3.72% |
| 400 | MONROE FIRE DEPARTMENT | \$285,209 | \$299,475 | \$305,279 | \$314,174 | \$8,895 | 2.91% |
| 410 | STEVENSON FIRE DEPARTMENT | \$214,389 | \$224,275 | \$227,643 | \$233,903 | \$6,260 | 2.75% |
| 420 | STEPNEY FIRE DEPARTMENT | \$288,361 | \$300,012 | \$304,693 | \$314,474 | \$9,781 | 3.21% |
| 430 | FIRE HYDRANT SERVICE | \$631,316 | \$627,907 | \$676,586 | \$676,586 | \$0 | 0.00% |
| 440 | FIRE MARSHAL | \$106,119 | \$107,450 | \$121,572 | \$123,883 | \$2,311 | 1.90% |
| 450 | EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT | \$27,905 | \$23,365 | \$26,475 | \$27,350 | \$875 | 3.31% |
| 460 | EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE | \$944,261 | \$1,049,297 | \$1,095,035 | \$1,107,523 | \$12,488 | 1.14% |
| 500 | PUBLIC WORKS-ADMINISTRATION | \$397,790 | \$466,044 | \$486,579 | \$497,821 | \$11,242 | 2.31% |
| 510 | PW-HIGHWAY GENERAL MAINT | \$1,247,674 | \$1,621,056 | \$1,690,438 | \$1,707,352 | \$16,914 | 1.00% |
| 520 | PW-HIGHWAY SNOW REMOVAL | \$241,497 | \$235,322 | \$477,720 | \$478,520 | \$800 | 0.17% |
| 530 | PW-ROAD AND BUILDING | \$1,172,911 | \$1,298,338 | \$1,671,130 | \$1,349,192 | (\$321,938) | -19.26% |
| 600 | PW-SOLID WASTE | \$12,695 | \$10,306 | \$41,746 | \$43,379 | \$1,633 | 3.91% |
| 610 | PW-RECYCLING | \$428,281 | \$441,386 | \$522,155 | \$507,035 | (\$15,120) | -2.90% |
| 700 | MONROE HEALTH DEPT | \$234,883 | \$268,414 | \$350,000 | \$335,814 | (\$14,186) | -4.05% |
| 710 | SOCIAL SERVICES | \$82,119 | \$89,220 | \$115,587 | \$115,090 | (\$497) | -0.43% |
| 800 | LIBRARY | \$862,974 | \$897,121 | \$964,597 | \$987,248 | \$22,651 | 2.35% |
| 810 | PARK & RECREATION | \$974,127 | \$569,485 | \$621,047 | \$660,389 | \$39,342 | 6.33% |
| 900 | BOARD OF EDUCATION | \$63,991,960 | \$66,568,513 | \$71,464,259 | \$73,917,629 | \$2,453,370 | 3.43% |
| 950 | DEBT SERVICE | \$5,643,808 | \$5,802,296 | \$4,692,989 | \$4,629,877 | (\$63,112) | -1.34% |
| 999 | OTHER APPROPRIATIONS/TRANSFERS | \$1,619,254 | \$5,001,868 | \$496,586 | \$466,593 | (\$29,993) | -6.04% |
| TOTAL | | \$94,224,104 | \$101,222,321 | \$104,109,694 | \$107,069,131 | \$2,959,437 | 2.84% |



GRAND LIST GROWTH

Current Projected Grand List Growth *as of 1/31/2025*

| CATEGORY | CHANGE IN GRAND LIST ⁽¹⁾ | % OF INCREASE |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Residential | \$ 849,223,634 | 96.43 |
| Commercial⁽²⁾ | 71,554,213 | 8.12 |
| Vacant Land | 3,717,400 | 0.42 |
| Motor Vehicles | (31,640,806) | (3.59) |
| Exemptions | (12,194,025) | (1.38) |
| NET INCREASE IN GRAND LIST | \$ 880,660,416 | 100.00 |

(1) Change in Grand List - 2023 GL as of 5/1/2024 to the 2024 GL as of 1/31/2025.

(2) Includes commercial, industrial, public utilities and personal property.



KEY DRIVERS OF MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES

| Driver | Dept. | Description | Impact |
|----------------------------|-------|---|--------------|
| Wages Adjustments | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police, Clerical and Highway collective bargaining agreements in negotiations along with non-union increases. Impact of minimum wage increase on certain part-time and seasonal positions. | ↑ \$ 420,818 |
| Insurance | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical (projected a 12% increase) Liability-Auto-Property (LAP) Worker's Compensation | ↑ \$ 270,948 |
| Salaries | Tech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal to add 2 new positions General Wage Increase | ↑ \$ 90,726 |
| Contracted Services | Tech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New OpenGov Contract Projected annual increases | ↑ \$ 77,941 |

Total Net Increase in Municipal Operating Expenditures: 1.77%



MUNICIPAL & BOE HEALTH INSURANCE

ADDITIONAL COST OF HEALTH INSURANCE

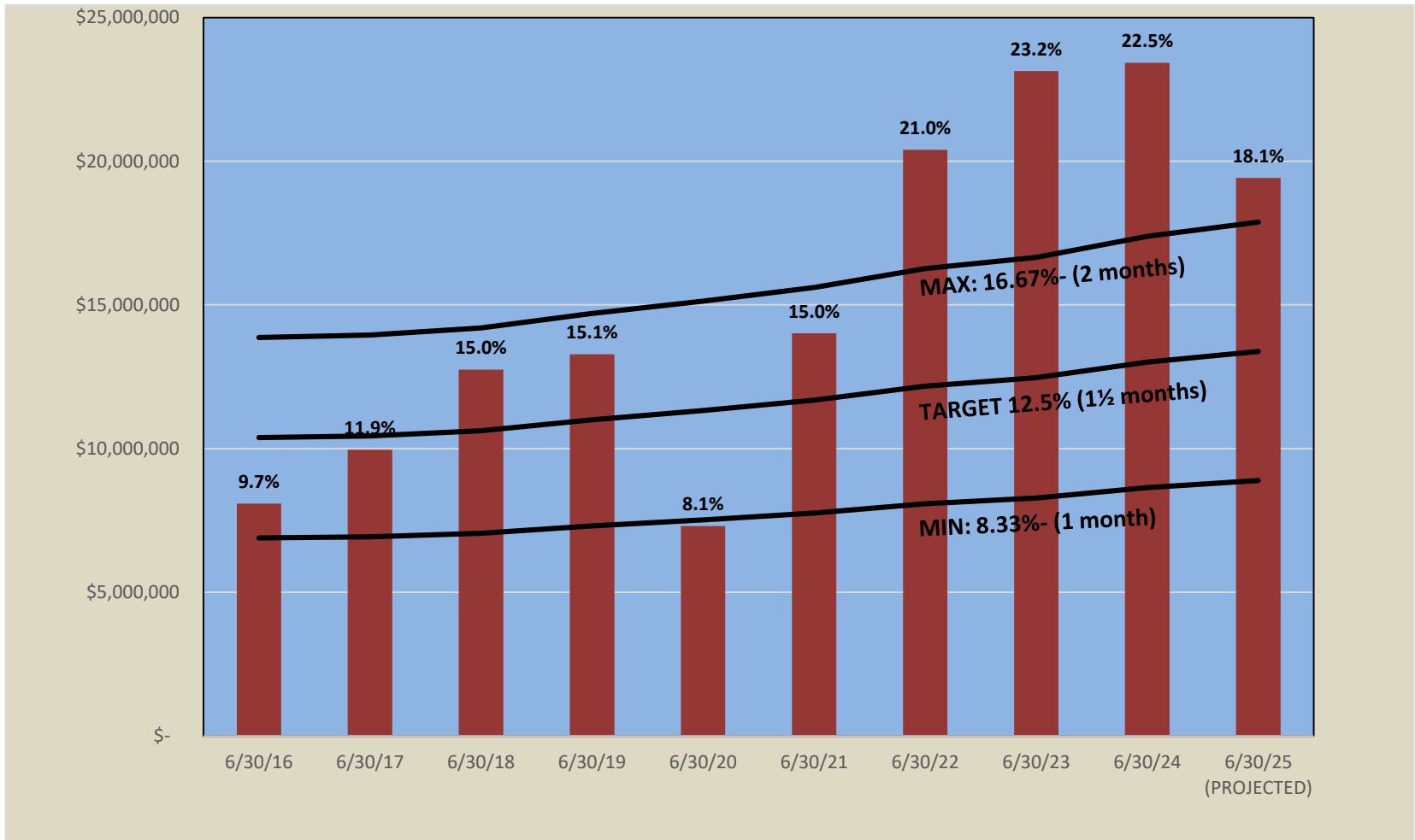
RESULTING FROM THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PLAN'S PROJECTED INCREASE FOR FY2026 COMING IN HIGHER THAN THE EXPECTED INCREASE THAT WAS CONVEYED TO THE TOWN LAST YEAR

(4% VS. 12%)

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| MUNICIPAL | \$ 230,500 |
| BOARD OF EDUCATION | 791,100 |
| TOTAL | \$ 1,021,600 |



UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE





ACTION TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON THE TAXPAYERS

First Selectman Adjustments

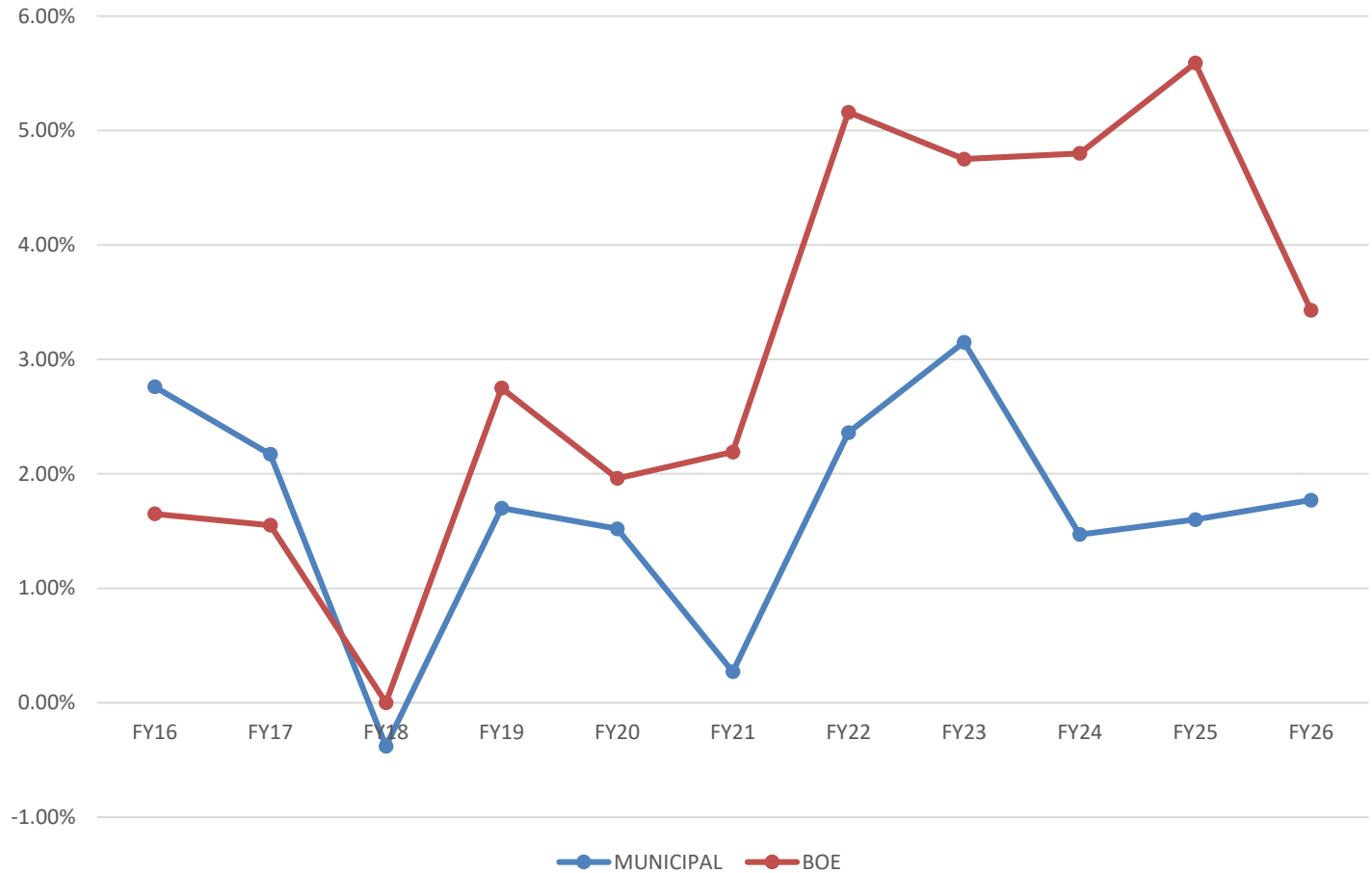
| Board of Education | Increase | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Board of Education Proposed Budget | \$4,303,370 | 6.02% |
| First Selectman Adjustments | <u>(1,850,000)</u> | <u>(2.59%)</u> |
| Proposed Increase | \$2,453,370 | 3.43% |

| Municipal | Increase | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Department Submissions | \$1,770,984 | 5.56% |
| First Selectman Adjustments | <u>(1,207,798)</u> | <u>(3.79%)</u> |
| Proposed Increase | \$563,186 | 1.77% |

Total Proposed Increase in Expenditures – 2.84%
(Below the Current Rate of Inflation of 2.9%)



Municipal vs. BOE Operating Expenditure Increases





PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET

The Town Council Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) started its review of the Proposed Capital Budget on Monday, January 27th. This process will continue with further review by SPC, followed by their annual collaboration with the Board of Finance.



FURTHER REFINEMENT

- Town Council Review of Municipal Departments - submitted to Board of Finance by March 15th.
- Board of Finance Review, including Board of Education Budget - submitted back to the First Selectman by April 20th.
- **Annual Budget Referendum (town-wide vote) on Tuesday, May 6th.**



CLOSING STATEMENT

In closing, the message to Monroe taxpayers is that the main focus of this budget is to deliver the lowest tax impact possible as the state mandated revaluation created serious concerns for our residents and taxpayers. My administration believes this budget provides the best path forward, while keeping efficient town services and education well-funded.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the presentation of the Fiscal Year 2025/26 budget specifically the Director of Finance, Ron Bunovsky, Assistant Director, Heidi Meade, Tax Assessor Justin Feldman, and First Selectman Office Administrator, Kerry McAndrew. Special appreciation is in order for the Municipal Department Heads and their staff for being considerate and understanding during this challenging budget.

Thank you everyone for your attention,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terrence P. Rooney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terrence P. Rooney
First Selectman



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THANK YOU