



FYI SALEM

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From the Mayor's Desk



Hooray for summer-like weather in May! With the warm weather arriving, we are working hard to ready parks and playgrounds for more active use and beautifying public spaces. While city crews are working hard outside of City Hall, inside staff have wrapping up work on the budget for the next fiscal year. The proposed budget was formally submitted to the City Council last week. A budget is as much about our values and priorities as a community, as it is about facts and figures.

The budget focuses on making Salem a **working City** – with investments in streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure – a **safe City** – with support for added police, traffic calming, and a new initiative targeting opiates – and a **Level 1 City** – with expanded funding for continuing the forward progress in our public schools.

The proposed budget of \$150.9m is a 4.3% increase from last year and includes a

3.6% increase in public school spending. Of the \$6.2m increase, about half (\$2.8m) are due to fixed costs increases.

With this budget we hope to maintain Salem's dedication to fiscal responsibility while also leading the City forward. Over the last decade, we have worked hard to curb tax increases for property owners. During this time, the average single family tax bill in Salem rose by 3.5% on average per year - the second lowest increase among the eight municipalities on the North Shore. This is possible due to our attentiveness to City finances, as well as ongoing efforts to identify efficiencies in the delivery of services.

Our fiscal stewardship has led to a AA bond rating-the highest bond rating in our city's history-and regular receipt of awards from the Government Finance Officers Association.

We are always mindful of the impact of taxes on property owners and for this reason, place a high value on new growth. Salem is witnessing a large number of public and private investments in our community. These enhance our short and long term economic growth, add to our tax base – thereby lessening the impact on resident homeowners – and generate revenues and jobs that improve our overall community.

We will continue to work to

exceed your service level expectations, while also ensuring fiscal prudence. We see the **mission of Salem City government as providing open, honest, and proactive services effectively and efficiently, focusing on the needs of today, with a vision for the future.**

In order to accomplish this, the budget aims to align operations with short-term and long-term strategic goals and objectives, while maintaining stringent fiscal controls and a careful attention to our financial forecasts in our budgeting. This is a challenging balance to strike, but I believe the proposed budget accomplishes just that.

You can read the budget's executive summary and get links to more at www.salem.com/FY17.

For more information about the budget and other city happenings, we've also launched a podcast version of FYI Salem. This free audio version comes out twice a month and is available free on iTunes, Stitcher, TuneIn, or directly at www.salem.com/mayors-office/pages/fyi-salem-podcast.

The podcast contains short snippets and features interviews with city officials, community leaders, notable residents, and others, as well as a brief update on the latest news and information from inside City Hall and across the community. I hope you'll check it out!

Kim Driscoll, Mayor

FY2017 City Budget

The FY17 budget invests in public infrastructure, safe neighborhoods, and Salem's schools, while displaying the fiscal discipline that has been the hallmark of Salem budgets for the last decade.

The budget includes a nearly 600% increase for street and sidewalk repairs, two new police officers, two social workers to begin an opiates intervention program, added staff in DPW and Inspectional Services, a new bilingual staffer in our Elections Office, and a full-time staffer in Veterans Services.

This year presents a number of budgetary challenges, including increases in costs outside of the City's direct control. These include state charges, health insurance costs, Medicare, worker's compensation costs, snow amortization, debt payments, and municipal insurance. The increase in fixed costs totals \$2.8m.

There is also no shortage of service demands on City departments. Since SeeClickFix launched in 2014 we have received and responded to over 7,100 service requests submitted by the tool. These are in addition to the thousands of calls, emails, and walk-in requests our departments field every year. In order to

improve service delivery, we will make operational adjustments in public services, parking and inspectional services.

Helping to cope with rising costs are savings on streetlight electrical bills from the recent conversion to LED fixtures. We have, as we do every year, aggressively pursued grant opportunities whenever possible and have prioritized capital projects on the basis of both need and availability of funding sources besides bonding. We also continue to maximize the use of Community Preservation Act funds to add to our ability to make improvements to parks and open spaces and meet historic preservation and workforce housing needs in our City.

New growth is critical to our ability to meet growing costs for City government to provide essential services to residents. Not only do new commercial developments and redevelopments add to local jobs, but by growing our commercial tax base they can help lessen the burden on residential property taxpayers. With \$2.8m in fixed cost increases, new growth alone will not meet these pressures, but it will go a long way to mitigating their impact on residential taxes.

Private development is important. There is an essential role for the permitting and design review process, for community input, and for careful review of private sector projects. But for Salem to be able to provide the level of services that our residents rightly demand, to be able to meet the rising cost pressures on our government from sources beyond our discretion or ability to control, and to be able to lessen – as much as possible – the tax burden on residents, new mixed-use growth is critical.

We continue to identify opportunities for efficiencies with SalemStat, our data-driven performance management program, and look to technology to help improve the delivery of services. In the year ahead we will use technology to improve service delivery, with the implementation of CityNexus, a new tool that will serve as a data dashboard for inspectional services and problem properties, and to share information, through the Visual Budget. We believe this transparency is a way to share information and generate ideas to improve city government service delivery.

We also leverage outside partnerships to better serve the community. CityNexus is a free program developed by the Innovation Field Lab at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and customized for Salem. Another program at the Kennedy School worked with our Council on Aging in studying better models for delivering senior transportation services. Other outside partnerships, such with the Eos Foundation around breakfast in the classroom and summer meals, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the By All Means education innovation initiative, AARP MA with our Age-Friendly Salem initiative, and the Collins Center for Public Management's role in SalemStat, all help bring outside expertise to municipal operations and policies.

Salem turns 400 years old in 2026. Now is the time to think about what we want Salem to be and look like in the next decade. This budget is a reflection of that goal. Salem is a working City, a safe City, and a level one City. It is all of these today, and we need to ensure it will continue to be all of these on our 400th birthday.



Salem Summer Meals



The Food & Nutrition Services Department of the Salem Public Schools will host a family kickoff event on Saturday, June 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., to promote the Salem Summer Meals Program.

The program will begin July 11 and run through August 12. The Salem Summer Meals Program provides lunches and breakfasts at various sites in Salem to all children ages 0-18 at no charge. No registration is needed. Enrichment activities for children will be offered at most meal sites.

The kick-off features carnival games, face-painting, a bouncy house, gardening activities, a basketball tournament, story-time

with the library, cooking demonstrations, a bike safety class, and a performance by Salem High School's a cappella group, WitchPitch? Activities are sponsored by the Salem YMCA, Salem Parks & Recreation, Boys & Girls Club, Mass in Motion, Project Bread and the Salem Public Library.

Healthy snacks and beverages will be provided by the Food & Nutrition Services department, the primary sponsor of the Salem Summer Meals Program.

The Salem Summer Meals Program is part of the Summer Food Service Program, which follows USDA nutrition guidelines and is paid for by the USDA.

Meal site locations will include Forest River Park, Rainbow Terrace, the Salem Public Library (new this summer!), On Point center, Mary Jane Lee Park, Salem High School,

Saltonstall and Bentley Academy Charter School.

Detailed meal site schedules for Salem will be provided at the event and can also be obtained by texting 617-863-6325 or by calling 866-3HUNGRY.

The Salem Summer Meals program is made possible through funding by Project Bread and the USDA. The USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



Salem Arts Festival

The 8th annual Salem Arts Festival runs June 3-5. This free event features over 80 artists and performers, with a variety of art, music, dance, and theatre performances. The family-friendly festival also includes art-making for all ages, artisan vendors selling their creations, and a temporary public art installation.

The Festival is at Old Town Hall, Derby Square, Front Street, and Artists' Row. A Juried Art Show will be held in Old Town Hall throughout the festival, with an artisan street fair in the area around the building on Saturday and Sunday. Live performances

are on Derby Square and Artists' Row. The event is rain or shine, with a rain location upstairs at Old Town Hall and on Artists' Row. The full schedule is at www.salemartsfestival.com.

The Festival kicks off with an opening reception at Salem's Old Town Hall on Friday, June 3rd at 6 p.m. The free event allows visitors to enjoy beautiful art work while being entertained by renowned local and regional performers North Shore Chamber Music, Gretchen and the Pickpockets, Siren of the Circle, and headliners Picante Soul.

Don't miss "Move With Me", a collaborative public art project led by artist and architect Claudia Parashiv, is an installation of pinwheels over Front Street.

This year, the Salem Arts Festival also celebrates the very first "Mural Slam" on Artists' Row, organized by the City's Public Art Commission. Murals will be painted throughout the weekend by 12 selected artists. The Festival marks the return of vendors to Artists' Row, with both new and returning tenants for the 2016 season.

The Festival is a collaboration with Salem Main Streets and a team of dedicated volunteers, including representatives from Creative Salem, Salem State University, the Peabody Essex Museum, and many more.

For information, please visit www.salemartsfestival.com. To volunteer, contact Kylie Sullivan at kylie@salemmainstreets.org.



Artists' Row 2016

Four stalls in Artists' Row have been home to many artists in the past 12 years. This year features Linda Mullin of Grace and Diggs, Kajetan Nowakowski and Aleksandra Nowak of Kay's Stained Glass Studio, and returning artists Sibel Alpaslan of Ceramics by Sibel, Karen Scalia of Salem Food Tours, and Tommy Gagnon of Boston Woodturning.

Grace and Diggs founder Linda Joy Mullen, while an architect, has always loved to sew, knit, draw, and glue things together. From paper-bag hats and burlap wreaths, to aprons and throw-pillows, Grace and Diggs' workshops and pre-made works invite the public to experiment in design of small things.

Kay's Stained Glass Studio is the locally owned and operated glass studio of Kay and Aleksandra Nowak. With years of experience in stained glass industry, Kay's Stained Glass Studio offers unique designs and quality craftsmanship with great attention to details. Their work can be seen in locations throughout Europe as well as the U.S. They provide many services including consultation, design, restoration, renovation, repair, and fabrication.



Ceramics by Sibel is the working pottery studio and gallery of Sibel Alpaslan, a Turkish ceramic artist who loves the organic feeling of clay, knowing that it comes from the earth. She focuses on creating amphora, vases, and covered dishes that are inspired by ancient forms, and then combining them with modern whimsical surprises. Sibel will also host pottery wheel demonstrations and workshops.

Joining Sibel in her stall is Karen Scalia of **Salem Food Tours**. Karen believes that sharing Salem's past with a 'taste' of the culinary present is the perfect way to understand and appreciate this much-loved city. Take a tour with Karen and learn more about the local food scene in Salem.



Boston Woodturning creates unique handcrafted fine art, as well as usable pieces, from a variety of local wood. Discover demonstrations in woodturning and various workshops throughout the season. Learn and observe the process of woodturning or book a lesson. In the gallery space find practical and sculptural wooden works of art.

This year the creative entrepreneurs are participating in **"Watch Art Grow on the Row"** bringing an educational component to Artists' Row. Artisans will host classes in ceramics, woodturning, hat and wreath making, demonstrations, and fine art classes for adults and children. Please contact individual artisans for their schedules.

Artists' Row is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday-Sunday, noon-6pm and Thursdays, 11am-7pm For details visit www.facebook.com/ArtistRowSalemMa.