



FYI SALEM

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 10

JUNE 8, 2021

CONTACT THE MAYOR'S OFFICE:

Phone:
(978) 619-5600

Fax:
(978) 744-9327

Email:
mayor@salem.com

Web:
salem.com/mayor

Facebook:
City of Salem MA

Twitter:
@CityofSalemMA



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilient Together | 2 |
| Free Rides to Salem Willows | 2 |
| Fire Chief Al Dionne | 2 |
| FY22 Budget | 3 |
| School Updates | 4 |

From the Mayor's Desk



Dear Salem resident,

Earlier today I had the pleasure of swearing in our new Police Chief, Lucas Miller, and officially welcoming him to Salem.

In Salem, we celebrate our past, but never shrink from looking toward the future. Salem's police department, just like our city, has never been afraid to innovate, to improve, and to seek out strategies that will make our community safer and stronger – for everyone.

The Salem Police Department has made use of technology, training and tactics that help make our police work more effective in nearly every respect. We have had – for years – the use of force policies that most other American police departments are only now coming to recognize the value of. We've had the on-staff mental health clinicians, the community policing and engagement programs, de-escalation training - to name just a few initiatives. The Department has positioned Salem to be at the fore-

front of responsible policing measures, and I believe that Chief Miller possesses the acumen, experience and leadership to continue that work, aimed at helping ensure we are protecting and serving everyone in our community in an equal and just manner.

The fact that we have been a leader in responsible policing doesn't mean there isn't work to do and I believe Chief Miller can build trust within our community and within the department and lead with transparency, accountability and safety in mind, safety of our officers and of our diverse array of community residents. In short, I am confident that our commitment to excellence and equity in policing will continue under Chief Miller's leadership.

As a 30-year veteran of the New York Police Department, Chief Miller has served as a detective squad commander in both the NYPD Detective Bureau and the Intelligence Bureau, as well as homicide supervisor, patrol supervisor, narcotics investigator, and community policing officer. Chief Miller was also a counterterrorism instructor for the NYPD Police Academy and has served as a task force manager for the NYPD and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. He has extensive experience with large scale events and with community policing, both especially necessary here in Salem. I certainly do not want to overlook his "on-the-streets" police work, the nuts and bolts of community policing being key in a community our size.

In the years ahead there will be many new issues in Salem that will confront the department, as our City continues to grow and thrive. With these opportunities also come challenges, of course. But Salem has never been a community that could get by with just a caretaker Chief. I've had the privilege of working with three Chiefs so far who were far from that. They aspired for continuous improvement, not just for our community but to tap into the full potential of the men and women in the department.

We're a bustling, diverse, and exciting city (much like we've been throughout our history) – and that's what we want to be. We're a city that faces our challenges, whatever they are, head on. We're a city with people - in our neighborhoods and in public service – who are engaged, thoughtful, and collaborative. That's what makes Salem the special place that it is – a place that works for and welcomes everyone. That spirit is and should be exemplified by our police department: a respect and deference for the past, without being afraid of change, an enthusiasm for new challenges and new ideas, and a deep commitment to our community, its neighborhoods, and its people.

I was honored to appoint Chief Miller to this important role in our community and I know that his dedication and experience will serve our City well in the years ahead.

Kim Driscoll
Mayor, City of Salem

Resilient Together

The draft Resilient Together plan, Beverly and Salem's Climate Action and Resilience plan, is now open for public comment. Through Resilient Together, the cities strive to exceed Massachusetts' commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050 while also enhancing the economic, environmental, and social resilience of both communities.

Access the plan at www.resilienttogether.org and submit comments through June 20th. After receiving comments from the community, the Cities will finalize the plan and shift focus toward its community-wide implementation. While the plan is nearly complete, the process for tracking progress and prioritizing actions is ongoing, and the Cities invite community members to stay engaged now and into the future on our collective climate action.

"I encourage all Salem residents to provide their feedback on the draft plan," said Mayor Kim Driscoll. "Resilient Together is working to develop an action plan to ensure a safe and thriving region, better prepared to face the challenges of climate change. Now it needs your input to be complete. Here in Salem, we're committed to acting on the plan's action items through the creation of a new Department of Sustainability, Energy, and Resiliency."



Free Rides to Salem Willows

The Salem Skipper, the City's low-cost public ride-sharing service, will provide free trips to and from the Salem Willows on Fridays and Saturdays throughout the summer. The service operates Fridays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Salem Skipper does not run on Sundays and only operates within the City

of Salem. Please note that masks are still required on board the Skipper. To book a free trip to the Willows, riders must set up an account using the Salem Skipper app. Find out more at www.salemskipper.com

Fire Chief Al Dionne

Mayor Kim Driscoll has appointed Acting Salem Fire Department Chief Alan Dionne to serve as the department's next full Chief. Chief Dionne joined the Salem Fire Department in 1993 as a firefighter with Engines 1 and 4. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 2000 for Engine 1 and Ladder 2 and then Captain on Ladder 2 in 2004. He has served as Deputy Chief since 2016, before being elevated to the rank of Acting Chief earlier in 2021 on the retirement of Chief Gerry Giunta. Chief Dionne graduated from the Massachusetts Fire Academy in 1993 and has been a licensed EMT for the last 25 years. In addition to fire services, Chief Dionne has extensive training and background in emergency management, hazardous materials operations, and labor management.

"I am so pleased to appoint Al to this important position," said Mayor Kim Driscoll. "He has been a steadfast and consciousness member of the department for nearly three decades, serving our community selflessly and with dedication for all those years. I am certain he will continue to be a strong leader for the Salem Fire Department into the future and I am so grateful that he is willing to serve in this vital role."



FY22 Budget

Mayor Kim Driscoll has filed the proposed FY22 City budget with the City Council, which has begun their budget hearings this week. The budget is available online at www.salem.com/fy22. "The proposed FY2022 budget represents a strong commitment to the people we are fortunate enough to have been elected to serve," said Mayor Kim Driscoll in her message to the City Council. "It continues our balanced and responsible approach to City finances. It invests in the critical services that make Salem a vibrant city and one with schools in which we can all take pride – in short, a stronger, more livable city for all."

The proposed FY22 general fund budget is \$160,410,557, a change of 4.6% over the FY21 adjusted general fund budget. Fixed costs, such as health insurance, pension and retirement payments, insurance, debt payments, and state assessments, will increase by about \$2.2 million in FY22, accounting for about one-third of the general fund budget increase. The budget for Salem Public Schools will increase by \$2,296,177, or 3.6%, over the FY21 adjusted school budget. This does not include school-related costs that appear elsewhere in the budget, such as school employee health insurance increases, unemployment costs, debt for school building projects, and so forth. The enterprise fund budgets will increase by \$426,967, or 2.2%, over the FY21 adjusted enterprise funds budget, due to increases in assessments for these services and the need for maintenance and upgrades.

Included with the budget is the City's five year capital plan. The FY22 investments in the plan include \$2.4 million in roadway and sidewalk work, new school building repairs, major water and sewer system enhancements, seawall and climate change resiliency projects, more than a half-million dollars in ADA repairs and projects, a new Fire engine, funding for playground and athletic court improvements, and body-worn cameras for police officers, among many other capital projects. The FY2022 budget proposes two new initiatives: the establishment of a new Sustainability, Energy, and Resiliency Department focused on climate change and the creation of a new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In her message, Mayor Driscoll also highlighted Salem's ongoing efforts to recover from the pandemic and the impact of the ensuing economic slowdown on the City's fiscal condition.

The FY2022 budget continues the City's stable financial management practices and sustainable and transparent budgeting. Professional financial management standards have allowed the debt payment as a share of the budget to be reduced by 42% over the last 15 years, during which time the average single-family tax bill in Salem increased by half as much as it did in the 15 years before 2006. Salem's average tax bill change over the last decade has been below the average for the region and bolstered by the adoption of as many exemptions and abatements as practical, particularly focused on the community's neediest taxpayers,



including lower income residents, seniors, veterans, and those living with disabilities. Salem has never sought a Proposition 2-1/2 override and for FY22 will continue to tax below the allowable levy limit. For FY22, Salem's excess levy capacity will increase by 32% to \$6,104,855, the highest that it has ever been and a further demonstration of the City's prudence and care with taxpayer dollars. Salem's fiscal practices have resulted in an affirmation of the City's historic high AA bond rating for the last eight years in a row and also regular receipt of recognitions and awards from the Government Finance Officers' Association.

New growth has been estimated at \$1.5 million, which represents \$1.5 million less tax burden on existing property owners. "Another key factor in enhancing our local economy and contributing to new revenues to help meet the projected budget deficit are the public and private investments we continue to see in our community," explained Mayor Driscoll. "These projects enhance our economic growth, create much needed housing, add to our tax base, and generate jobs. Without responsible new growth we cannot provide the services and improvements that our constituents rightly demand and deserve. Given the reliable increase in fixed costs to the City and the financial challenges of the past year, a reflexively anti-growth position is equivalent to endorsing substantial tax increases on Salem homeowners and reductions in critical City services like public safety and public works. With appropriate new growth comes much needed housing, commercial enterprises with jobs, and new revenues to support the needs of Salem taxpayers and local government."

School Updates

2021-2022 School Calendar

The 2021—2022 Salem Public Schools calendar has been approved and released, with start and end times for the eleven schools in the district for the upcoming school year, as well as the early dismissal times for each school.

| 2021-2022 School Arrival and Dismissal Times | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| School Name | School Year 21-22 Hours | Early Release |
| Bates | 7:45am - 1:50pm | 11:25am |
| Bentley | 7:30am - 3:05pm | 11:20am |
| Carlton | 8:20am - 2:25pm | 12:00pm |
| Collins | 7:30am - 3:00pm | 12:30pm |
| ECC | 8:30am - 2:30pm | 11:00am |
| Horace Mann | 7:50am - 1:55pm | 11:25am |
| New Liberty | 9:00am - 3:45pm | 1:30pm |
| Salem High | 7:45am - 2:35pm | 12:45pm |
| Salem Prep | 8:00am - 2:25pm | 12:00pm |
| Saltonstall | 8:00am - 3:00pm | 11:35am |
| Witchcraft Heights | 8:20am - 2:25pm | 12:00pm |

Pandemic EBT Update

Massachusetts has received federal approval to continue providing Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits to families through summer 2021. P-EBT is a federal program, administered by the state, that promotes increased food security for families whose children receive free or reduced-price school meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program.

All students who have received P-EBT will be eligible for summer P-EBT, except for those who graduated in 2020 or moved out of Massachusetts. Eligible students will receive a total of \$375 in P-EBT benefits in two equal payments of \$187.50 this summer. The first payment will be issued on July 1, and the second payment will be issued on August 1. Summer P-EBT will supplement the Summer Food Service Program, a program that provides nutritious meals to children without charge at more than 1,400 sites statewide. As in past years, meals will be provided, at a first-come, first-served basis at the sites and times as available in the following online resource: <https://meals4kids.org/summer>.

