

ROME BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

The Town's Budget Committee has been active in budget preparation this year. The seven members (5 full and 2 alternate) want to thank the Select Board for their involvement with the Budget Committee during late January and early February to review and understand the warrant articles in this year's annual report.

The Budget Committee is an advisory committee and each of the five full members have a vote on each warrant article with funding components. That recommendation is attached to each warrant article so the voter can see how the committee voted. The committee received the proposed budget in late January and met with the Select Board, Town Treasurer, and other municipal employees to make both editorial and substantive funding revisions. During this process, the committee made suggestions, addressed changes proposed by others, and advised the Select Board.

Members of the Budget Committee work as good stewards of Town funds and to ensure monies are spent as the Town has specified during the annual meeting. We take our role very seriously and want to work closely in partnership with both administrators and residents of Rome. Committee members understand that we must consider inflation and rising costs, but also the implications of assessed values, project priorities, and the end result: the impact on taxpayers.

Two examples of committee work:

- We spent time discussing the proposed increases in funding requests to support the area lakes groups. While this increase may appear substantial, the committee and select board both support improving water quality and understands the tremendous value of our lakes (both in terms of tax base and tourism). Additionally, it is our hope that funds allocated for these causes, as well as the increase in Code Enforcement Officer time be used to support the implementation of the watershed-based management plans.
- The warrant seeks the Town's approval to appropriate funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) under Article 67. The Budget Committee strongly recommends developing a well-defined plan for fund expenditures with ongoing input from members of the public. The Budget Committee looks forward to its role in reviewing proposed project expenditures utilizing these funds.

This year's process has been exceedingly challenging due to varying project priorities, staffing, and capital needs. At the start of budget review, the proposed budget (expenses and revenues) represented an increase of 5.90% versus last year. The Annual Report reflects our best efforts to present a balanced budget of expenses and income for residents to review at the Annual Meeting. *After concluding the Committee's work, the Select Board budget proposal represents a 3.10% increase over previous year, while the Budget Committee's recommendations represent a 0.55% decrease.*

We hope you will view our recommendations with care and consideration for the best outcome for the town balancing need with potential tax increase. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Rome Budget Committee

Alice VanDerwerken—Chair

Richard LaBelle

Lincoln Nye

Joan Orr

Hillary Schultz

Langdon Adams, Alternate

Trent Shute, Alternate