



News About Town

A Message From Our Town Manager

Greetings, Gray friends and neighbors,

This edition of *News About Town* details the proposed July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (FY24) budget, which after months of review at public Town Council budget workshops was presented to the Town Council and residents in early April. I encourage you to take time to learn how Town government plans to responsibly use your contribution of property taxes to maintain a high level of local services and invest in a financially sustainable future for the Town of Gray.



Nate Rudy, Town Manager

Because we are dedicated to government transparency, the newsletter also details recently discovered irregularities in the Town's FY22 financial audit, which was delivered to the Town Manager on April 11, 2023. The Town Council and I want to assure residents that we take these irregularities seriously and have already taken steps to address them. A thorough review of our practices has been underway since last fall, and corrective measures have been implemented to ensure a higher standard for the Town's financial management systems and methods.

Please know with the exception of corrections to two erroneous reports presented at the April 11 Town Council workshop, the proposed FY24 budget is unaffected by the issues discovered in the audit. The Town Council will soon send out their FY24 Budget Summary Flyer for your review.

As always, I encourage you to review our updated documentation about the [FY24 budget](#). All information about the FY24 budget, budget process, and [FY22 audit](#) is available for review on the Town's website. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on June 13, 2023.

Thank you,
Nate Rudy



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Proposed FY2024 Budget Addresses Key Improvements, Initiatives

When residents go to the polls on June 13, 2023, they’ll be asked to vote on candidates for elected office along with the Town of Gray’s FY24 proposed budget. The path to create this year’s budget was extensive, including over twelve meetings between Town Council and staff, working together to craft a fiscally responsible budget that supports key areas of Gray’s operations, advances long term plans, and addresses Council goals and priorities.

Anyone can access the Town’s budget-related documents, workshop video, and other recordings on our website.

Budget Item	FY23 Council Budget	FY23 Proposed % Incr. vs FY22	FY23 Proposed \$ Incr. vs FY22	FY24 Proposed Budget	FY24 Proposed \$ Incr. vs FY23
Market Rate and COLA Wage Adjustments	\$215,000	169%	\$208,175	\$308,686	\$93,686
Employee Medical Insurance	\$902,253			\$963,493	\$61,240
Transfer Station Tipping Fees	\$341,750	15%	\$43,680	\$393,793	\$52,043
IT Department Technical Support	\$27,153			\$68,057	\$40,904
Cumberland County Sheriff Contract	\$264,691			\$303,141	\$38,450
Public Works Road Salt	\$235,000	15%	\$30,000	\$273,000	\$38,000
GWD Hydrant Service Charge	\$224,064	5%	\$10,680	\$254,364	\$30,300
Private Roads Plowing/Sanding Contract	\$150,000			\$177,500	\$27,500
Sick and Vacation Time Payout	\$35,000	40%	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
Workers Compensation Insurance	\$97,698	322%	\$12,573	\$116,244	\$18,546
Staff Computers and Technology Updates	\$16,473	322%	\$12,573	\$34,300	\$17,827
Town Staff Personnel Development Program	\$0			\$17,750	\$17,750

As detailed above, the Town of Gray is addressing key areas of improvement around town, including road work; market rate wage adjustments for Town staff; technology upgrades to help keep the Town secure, improve teamwork, and increase and efficiency; covering rising insurance costs; and furthering our Townwide service resiliency initiatives.

Please visit the Town’s [website](#) to learn the details and development process of the Town’s annual budget. Budget information is also published on the Town’s [Facebook page](#) and [newsletter](#).

Please note that some information presented on April 11, 2023 about budget revenue and expenses was recently labeled “for historical reference only,” and updated information is posted on our website.

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Upcoming Events

- June 1
- 5 p.m.: Town Council Workshop/Public Forum— 24 Main Street and Zoom
- June 6
- 7 p.m.: Town Council Meeting— 24 Main Street and Zoom
- June 8
- 7 p.m.: Planning Board Meeting— 24 Main Street and Zoom
- June 13
- 8 a.m.: Election Day— 24 Main Street
- June 24
- 10 a.m.: Gray Community Day —24 Main Street
- Wednesdays + Fridays
- 10:30 a.m.: Kids Story Time — Gray Public Library
- Saturdays
- 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.: Movie Time—Gray Public Library



Four independent budgets determine the mill rate used to set property taxes for the total commitment for Gray: municipal government accounts for 33.3% of the total tax commitment, the county accounts for 4.5%, the TIF shelter accounts for 4%, and the MSAD #15 school system accounts for 58.2%.

If you have questions about our budget, or are seeking clarity on any expense or revenue figure, please contact us via email at admin@graymaine.org and we will be happy to help.

Town of Gray FY2022 Financial Audit Finds More Available Funds Than Expected, and Some Inconsistencies

As is standard practice, the Town of Gray contracts annual audit to assure the Town's finances are in order. The July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 (FY22) audit began in July 2022, and in August 2022 the auditor alerted the Town about certain inconsistencies that required further review.

The Town Manager received the final FY22 audit report on April 11, 2023. The report is published on the Town's [website](#). The audit identified the need to enhance financial management practices. The audit also identified some unauthorized payments.

"We are extremely troubled by these findings and take them very seriously," said Town Manager Nate Rudy and the Gray Town Council in a shared statement. "Our goal is to be as transparent as possible about these issues and we have taken steps to ensure they do not occur in the future."

The auditor and the Town's Finance Director corrected errors and omissions that were identified in the audit, and the audit and cumulative account reconciliations resulted in an increase to known available funds and did not negatively impact FY23 or FY24 finances.

"We recognize this is a fortunate outcome and it could have turned out differently. We do not want to see this situation repeated and are committed to ensuring it does not happen again," said Town leadership in the written statement.

Regarding the unauthorized payments, the Town is consulting with legal counsel and referred the matter to state and local law enforcement. The Town will issue updates about this matter once new information is authorized for release. You can read Town leadership's full statement [here](#).



Voters Will See LD1 Again, Must Pass to Approve Proposed Town Budget

Voters will see a familiar article on the ballot this year. Like last year, Voters will be asked whether they support increasing the Town of Gray's property tax levy limit to \$810,033 for FY24, as the municipal budget approved under the warrant articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than that property tax levy limit under a State law. This law, which Town Council refers to as "LD1" since it was legislative bill LD1 when it was passed, places a cap on the municipal tax levy over which municipalities are required to have a separate vote to approve the budget. The formula for calculating the property tax levy limit was set almost 20 years ago, and has not been adjusted to address the kind of market fluctuations we have all experienced in recent years. Because of this requirement, voters will need to approve **both** the proposed Town budget articles **and** override of the LD1 limit (Warrant Article 12) for the Town budget to pass.

That means voting in the affirmative on separate articles on the ballot.

If the "LD1" Article 12 does not receive voter approval, the proposed Town budget will not pass.

Volunteer Award Nominations Available

In every town, large or small, volunteering connects people and efforts to meet community needs. Gray is fortunate enough to have many people who volunteer their time and effort to make our town a better place. Does somebody come to mind when you think of volunteerism in Gray? Why not nominate that person for an award?

Each year, Gray recognizes and celebrates the folks who are the backbone of the community. **The Gray Town Council encourages and welcomes nominations from Gray citizens who wish to recognize other community members for their volunteer contributions** as they relate to the seven categories of awards. An awards reception in the summer will honor the winners. The awards are:

- Landowner Appreciation Award
- Spirit of America Award
- Volunteer of the Year
- Committee of the Year
- Organization of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Evelyn Morrill Durgin Award

To learn more about nominations for the Town of Gray's various volunteerism awards, including how to submit nominations, please visit our [Nomination](#) page.



Upcoming MSAD #15 Events

MSAD #15 invites students, parents, and family members to enjoy the following events in May and June.

Russell School:

- **Art Show/Book Fair**, May 11th, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
- **Spring Concert**, May 24th, 5:30-7:00 p.m. at the Middle School Gym

Memorial School:

- **Outdoor Spring Concert**, May 23rd, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Memorial Courtyard

Dunn School:

- **Spring Concert**, May 10th & 11th, 5:30 p.m., at Dunn School
- **Family Barbeque**, June 10th

Middle School:

- **Spring Concert**, May 9th, Middle School Gym

Adult Education:

- **Graduation**, June 12th, 6:00 p.m., High School Cafetorium

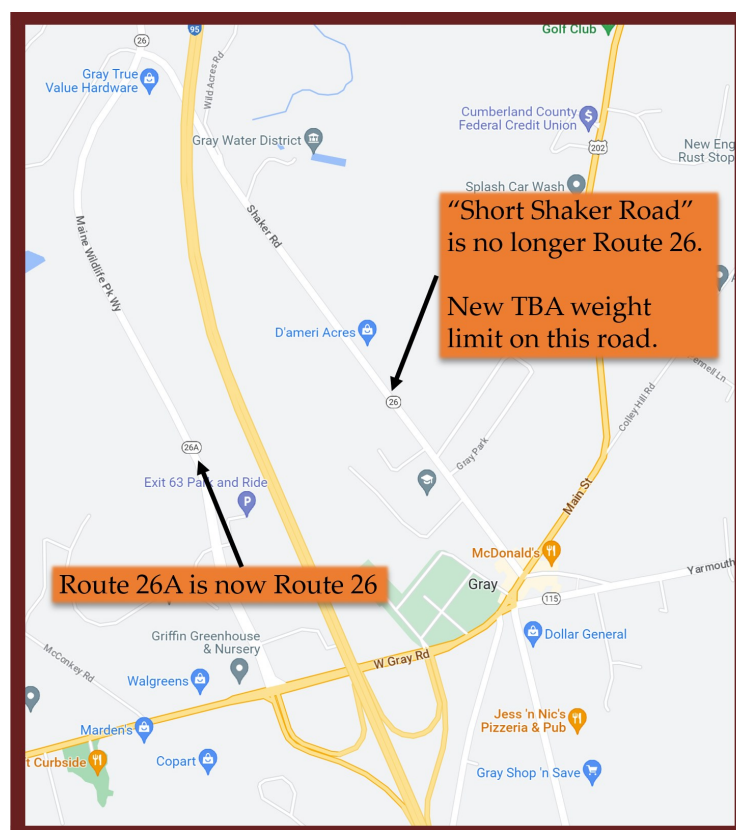
Shaker Road Relabeled to Alleviate Trucker Confusion

The highway signs that used to direct traffic through Gray via part of Shaker Road between Main Street and the bypass — known colloquially as Short Shaker Road — have been changed to reflect a better route.

The former Route 26A, the turnpike bypass, has been renamed to Route 26. Likewise, Short Shaker Road is no longer labeled Route 26. Maine DOT has posted signs reflecting the new route identifications.

There is also a vehicle weight limit in force on Short Shaker Road.

These changes will redirect heavy vehicle traffic traveling through Gray, and make Gray Village roads and intersections safer for residents and pedestrian visitors.





The Longest Day 5K

The logo for Libby Hill Forest Recreation Area, featuring a circular emblem with a sun, trees, and a path, with the text "LIBBY HILL FOREST RECREATION AREA" inside.

Wednesday ~ June 21st ~ 6:30pm
Libby Hill Forest, Gray, ME

5K Trail Run/Walk on The Longest Day of 2023!

When:	Wednesday, June 21, 2023	Awards:	Top Male & Female Finishers
Where:	Libby Hill Recreation Area Libby Hill Rd, Gray, Maine		Door Prize Drawings
Start:	1K Kids Fun Run 6:15pm 5K Trail Race 6:30pm	Fee:	\$15 Before 6/18. \$20 at Race Fun Run - Free
<i>* Dogs not allowed at race</i>			

GNG Students Run for Free!

For More Information and to Register online: www.LibbyHill.Org

Post Race Meetup at Birchwood Brewing in Gray





A vibrant poster for Gray Community Day. The background is a green field with a large yellow sun in the center. The sun contains the text "GRAY COMMUNITY DAY". Surrounding the sun are several orange starburst shapes, each containing text about different activities. At the top left, a yellow box says "SAVE THE DATE". At the top right, a yellow box with an orange border provides the date, time, and location. At the bottom center, a yellow box with a black border provides contact information. The activities listed in the starbursts include a chili cook-off, volunteer award ceremony, prizes, open mic for dad jokes, hot dogs and popcorn, music and activities for everyone, a scavenger hunt, and sharing ideas with town committees.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday
June 24
10am-1pm
PENNELL PARK
24 Main St., Gray

Enter OUR
**CHILI
COOK-OFF**

Prizes!

**GRAY
COMMUNITY
DAY**

Town of Gray
**VOLUNTEER
Award
Ceremony**
1:30 p.m.

Hot Dogs,
Popcorn,
Ice Cream

Music,
Activities,
Fun for
EVERYONE

SCAVENGER
HUNT

SHARE YOUR
IDEAS
WITH TOWN
COMMITTEES

For more info
gcd@graymaine.org
or text 609-576-3884



Gray is Looking for Committee Members

Serve your town by volunteering for these committees!

- **Wild Blueberry Festival Committee**: Celebrates and promotes local businesses, community and school organizations, and the Pennell Complex.
- **Community Economic Development Committee**: Promotes community and cultural connections in Gray and supports established businesses.
- **Community Television Advisory Committee**: Makes recommendations regarding broadcast options for Gray, and recommends improvements to public, educational, and governmental programming.
- **Dry Mills School House Committee**: Preserves the rich history of the Dry Mills School House.
- **Open Space Committee**: Makes recommendations to the Town Council to help secure access to land/corridors through acquisitions, easements, land swaps, and other forms of agreements.
- **Planning Board**: Reviews and approves subdivision plans, site plans, conditional uses, and Shoreland Zoning applications in accordance with State Statutes and Town Ordinances.
- **Resiliency Committee**: Promotes climate action planning and influences the path our community will take toward climate resilience, energy efficiency, waste management and renewable energy.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals Committee**: Hears and decides administrative appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination by the Code Enforcement Officer.
- **MSAD #15 School Board**: Shapes the functioning of the Gray-New Gloucester school system.
- **Recreation Committee**: Advises and recommends to the Town Council on recreational and public parks matters, such as: programs, policies, development, and leisure time activities.



Mary volunteers on the Recreation Committee, and leads a walking group she started.

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."

- Sue Premo, Volunteer Coordinator, Green Bay, WI

To apply to any of these committees, go to graymaine.org/volunteer.



The Town of Gray is Hiring!

We hire great people from a variety of backgrounds to do the town's important work. If you are looking for a career opportunity, check out our [Employment page](#) to see if there's an opening that's right for you! We are currently seeking to hire a Finance Director, Firefighter/EMTs, and seasonal positions, among others.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- You can now request materials be added to the Gray Public Library's collection if they don't already have it. More information [here](#).
- You can request the *News About Town* newsletter mailed to you every month. Just fill out this request [form](#)!
- You can watch the first episode of a brand-new local community television series now! *Hard Tellin' Not Knowin'* is available to watch [here](#), and introduces viewers to the Nordic walkers and the Gray Transfer Station.
- You can watch a recording of the recent Public Office Candidates Forum [here](#).

If you have an idea for a newsletter submission, please fill out this [form](#).

Questions can be directed to:
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