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As First Selectwoman of the Town of Seymour, it is my privilege to present this budget for your consideration.

2020 was a challenging year for everyone. Starting with last year's budget process, we have been working with COVID and its impact on our community constantly on our minds. We began the 2020-21 fiscal year with a budget freeze and have delayed filling several positions until restrictions are eased and demand for services returns to normal levels. While there were savings as a result of COVID, there were also substantial costs and drops in revenue elsewhere. Fortunately, as we approach the end of the fiscal year we hope to end the year with a near-net zero position.

This was a difficult budget to produce. The process began in the middle of a revaluation and with uncertain financial conditions as a result of the pandemic. We tried to create as lean a budget as possible while still continuing to make progress on the Town's long-term goals. We are continuing to invest in our infrastructure while finding efficiencies to reduce operating expenses while improving resident services wherever possible. This budget includes continued planning and investments through our proactive road program, our commitment to technological advancement and our long-term capital program to name just a few.

The Town's fund balance remains strong at 11% and our debt ratios have been stabilized at around 6% and will be decreasing steadily over the next several years. Most importantly, Standard and Poor's most recent rating in the early days of the pandemic reaffirmed our AA+ rating, its second highest. This rating puts us just one level below towns like Darien and Greenwich. We have spent a great deal of time working to improve our financial foundation and this is proof we are headed in the right direction.

I began this year's budget process in December and challenged all departments and committees to come in at zero increase. We have tried to minimize the impact on our residents without kicking the can down the road and deferring vital investments. The documents enclosed are the Board of Finance's best attempts to stay within these admittedly difficult constraints. Following the direction of the Town's Strategic Plan, we continue to move forward in a systematic and organized fashion. By maintaining steady progress, we will achieve our goals and create a better future through proper planning.

This document represents what the Board of Finance thinks is our best course forward but now we need to hear from you, the residents of Seymour. This document is still subject to change and we need your feedback to let us know whether and how it should be changed. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you

Annmarie Drugonis