

Washington Times



www.WashingtonCT.org

"Your Town Newsletter"

April/May 2005

Volume 13 Number 2

A letter from your FIRST SELECTMAN

Dear Washingtonian:



This financial issue of the Washington Times is of critical interest to the Town! The Town Budget is the culmination of hundreds of hours of work, by dozens of people, over three months. This budget represents Town values and your money at work.

The enclosed Budget was discussed at the Board of Finance on April 18th. General Fund figures represent a 3.9% increase over last year's budget—primarily due to increased fuel, utility, materials and personnel costs. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the Town Budget goes for wages and benefits.

This Budget also represents the first year of implementation of the strategic planning discussed in public forums in Oct/Nov of last year ("Our Town-Our Future"). New initiatives from this work included in the Non-Recurring Capital Fund in this budget are \$50,000 for affordable housing, \$150,000 for the Open Space Acquisition Fund, \$35,000 for a Depot Study by the Planning Commission, and \$65,000 for emergency generator(s) as part of a plan to modernize the Town Hall. In addition, \$28,400 in payroll expense is included in General Fund Expense for a new

CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE WASHINGTON TOWN BUDGET

Citizens and property owners are invited to participate in determining an Annual Budget for the Town of Washington. This guide provides basic information about the budget process. It can help you take part in the ongoing conversation about taxes and the services they pay for.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET?

Washington's budget is first of all a statement of town values supported by our citizens. We believe in good public education, up to date municipal facilities, serviceable highways and public works projects. We also want to preserve our natural resources and rural character. We wish to provide town employees fair wages and needed benefits. We believe that we should get what we pay for. We believe in efficient, thoughtful and prudent use of our resources.

A LETTER FROM YOUR FIRST SELECTMAN CONTINUED

1/2 time position for a Town Building and Grounds Manager.

Changes in these figures may be made before you see the "Preliminary Budget" at the Hearing on May 5th. The "Proposed Budget" will be put before you for a vote on Thursday, May 19th at the 7:30 p.m. Town Meeting. The entire 2006 Budget is accessible on the Town's website: www.washingtonct.org.

Thank you for your interest. ★

The budget is a plan for spending for the Town's next fiscal year. It becomes a legal document when the voters approve it at a Town Meeting in the spring of each year. Beginning in January, The Board of Selectmen ask town employees, department heads and Boards and Commissions to carefully review their programs and estimate how much money they will need to spend in the 12 months beginning July 1. Money for the budget comes from property taxes, state and federal grants, and from fees paid to town agencies.

In February, the Board of Selectmen takes budget requests from staff and commissions and maps out a spending plan. They interview personnel, commissions and other agencies and thoroughly go over every category and request. They take into account on-going vendor contracts and the rising costs of utilities, fuel, materials and services. All this work goes into preparing the "General Fund Budget" which encompasses annual, on-going expenses. Additionally, the Board of Selectmen prepares a "Non-recurring Capital Budget" that includes larger, one-time capital expenses such as for building projects, vehicle purchases or road replacements. In April, after two months of work, the Board of Selectmen presents their Budget to the Board of Finance.

At the same time, the Region 12 Board of Education has prepared a School Budget. This budget is put to a three-town Referendum (Roxbury, Bridgewater, and Washington) in May. When adopted, each

THE FISCAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET IN BRIEF

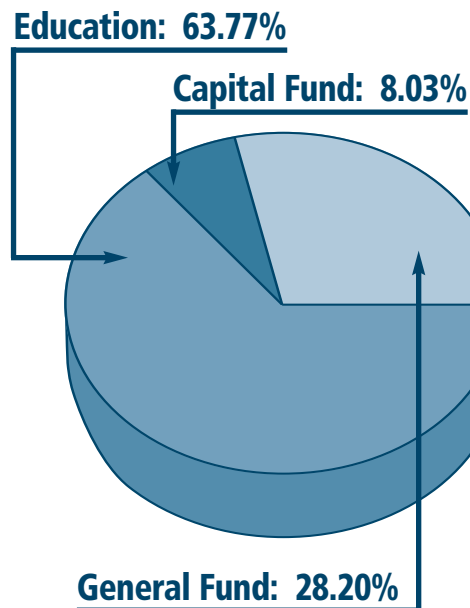
The FY 2006 Proposed Budget balances a number of goals, objectives and values. Emphasis this year, like in most budgets in the past, is upon maintaining the integrity of core services such as road maintenance and repair, ice and snow removal, police and volunteer fire services, supporting our volunteer commissions, recreational facilities and programs, and compensation for town employees. This budget also includes two new Town values identified through several planning processes in the recent past: funding for Open Space and Affordable Housing (\$150,000 and \$50,000 respectively, found in the Capital Budget.)

Below you will see that the budget is really three budgets: **The General Fund Budget**, the **Non-Recurring Capital Budget**, and **The Region 12 Education Budget**. The General Fund provides for on-going expenses for materials, equipment, salaries and services that make the town run during the year. The Non-Recurring Capital budget sets aside money for larger capital purchases such as highway or fire trucks, land purchase, municipal building improvements, etc. The third part of the Budget is the costs for Region 12 Education.

The following chart shows the Proposed Budget for FY 2006:

TOTAL TOWN BUDGET

General Fund:		
\$ 3,440,636	28.20%	
Capital Fund:		
\$ 980,005	8.03%	
Education:		
\$ 7,783,099	63.77%	
<hr/>		
Total:	\$12,203,740	100.00%



I. The FY 2006 Draft General Fund Budget

The General Fund Budget (\$3,440,636) shows a 3.9% increase over the FY 2005 Adopted Budget. Here is the breakdown:

General Government:
\$1,178,651 – 34%. Includes costs of the activities of Town Officials, Employee salaries and benefits,

Boards and Commissions, Town Attorney, Treasurer, Probate Court, Independent Auditor.

Public Safety:
\$429,633 – 12%. Support for the Fire and Police Departments, Emergency Management, Lake Waramaug Authority, and Fire Marshal.

Highway Maintenance:
\$802,917 – 23%. Expenses for both regular season and winter maintenance, including vehicles, equipment, materials, and salaries of the highway crew.

Sanitation:
\$449,556 – 13%. Costs to run the Transfer Station, hauling and ‘tipping’ of solid wastes and recycled materials.

Conservation of Health:
\$85,228 – 2%. Paramedic Services, Visiting Nurse Associations, Health Officials.

Recreation:
\$130,104 – 3%. Beach, Boat Launch, Summer Camp, Recreational Programs, Senior Center and Employee Salaries.

Other Expenses:
\$282,906 – 8%. Gunn Library, Council of Governments, Annual Repairs to Town Buildings, Animal Control, Newsletter and Website.

Social Services:
\$4,325 – .1%. Meals on Wheels, Susan B. Anthony Project, and General Support.

Debt Service on Firehouse:
\$77,316 – 2%. Annual Principle and Interest.

Total General Fund Budget:
\$3,440,636

II Non-Recurring Capital Budget Draft

Road Program:
\$335,000 – 34%. Paving, Drainage, Chip Sealing, Road and Bridge Repair and Engineering.

Vehicle and Equipment:
\$370,005 – 38%. Dump Truck and Fire Rescue Truck Purchases

Building and Property:
\$275,000 – 28%. (Open Space - \$150,000 & Housing - \$50,000), Building Repairs, Computers and the Depot District Study

Total Non-Recurring Capital Budget:
\$980,005.

Road Program: 34%

Vehicle and Equipment: 38%

Building and Property: 28%

I. The FY 2006 Draft General Fund Budget

34%	General Government:	\$1,178,651
12%	Public Safety:	\$ 429,633
23%	Highway Maintenance:	\$ 802,917
13%	Sanitation:	\$ 449,556
2%	Conservation of Health:	\$ 85,228
3%	Recreation:	\$ 130,104
8%	Other Expenses:	\$ 282,906
.1%	Social Services:	\$ 4,325
2%	Debt Service on Firehouse:	\$ 77,316
Total General Fund Budget:		\$3,440,636

III. Region 12 FY 2006 School Budget: \$7,783,099 (Washington's portion).

The Region 12 School Budget increased by 4.48%. However, the actual increase to the Town of Washington is 6.5% due to an increase in our student population raising our share from 43.66% to 44.52%.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If the town citizenry approves the School Budget at the Region 12 Referendum on May 3, 2005, and likewise approves the Town Budget on May 19th, the total cost to the Town of Washington to provide all services mentioned above will be \$12,203,740.

Following the Town Meeting on May 19th, the Board of Finance will meet to determine the Mill Rate for FY 2006. They will carefully consider the "Grand List" - the valuation of all real and personal property in the town - and the total budgetary needs and will set the Mill Rate accordingly. The current Mill Rate is 11.0. If the Proposed Budget as presented passes, taxpayers might expect a slight increase in the Mill Rate. ★

THE MILL RATE:

One "Mill" produces one dollar for each \$1,000 of property valuation. For example: Your house has a valuation of \$300,000. (That valuation is 70% of its market value.) The current Mill Rate is 11.0. $300 \times \$11 = \$3,300$ in tax. You can call the **Tax Assessor's office** to check the assessed value of your property. (868-0398)

CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE WASHINGTON TOWN BUDGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

town pays a percentage of the school budget according to the proportion of students from each town in the school district. The current percentage of Washington's share of the budget is 44.52%. This amount is factored into the overall Town Budget.

The Board of Finance scrutinizes the Selectmens' Budget and recommends changes to produce a "Preliminary Budget." The Board of Finance also prepares a plan to generate the revenue needed to support the budget. The public is invited to participate at any point in the process. Boards of Selectmen and Finance meetings are always open to the public. A "Budget Hearing" is held on the First Thursday in May (May 5, 2005) with a Town Meeting to consider the final Budget held on the Third Thursday that month (May 19, 2005). When the budget passes, it becomes law. If it fails, it is re-considered by the Board of Finance and presented to the public for another vote.

Complete FY 2006

Budget details are available on the Town Website: www.washingtonct.org, or may be picked up at the Selectmens' Office.

THE BUDGET IS ABOUT CHOICES

In making budget choices the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have to face realities. There are services, facilities, protection of open space, and affordable housing that we want the town to provide but we simply cannot afford all in one year. Town leadership takes a five to ten-year view in planning for capital expenses. However, certain expenses must be included every year. We must have police services, with well-maintained roads and highways, smooth-running commissions and municipal services.

The Town is obligated to pay certain 'fixed costs' in the budget that continue to rise. High on the list are worker's compensation, utilities, health insurance, fuel, electric and telephone costs. We respect and want to reward our dedicated and professional town employees.

The Town's revenues are managed responsibly. In the most recent year, the Town received 3% of its income from the State and Federal governments, but that money is not always guaranteed. We could—and have—received less than what we expected. The largest source of income is property taxes, nearly 90% of the budget. ★

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Bryan Memorial Town Hall

- ★ **May 3rd – Region 12 Budget Referendum 6:00 am - 8:00 pm.**
- ★ **May 5th – Town Budget Hearing 7:30 pm.**
- ★ **May 19th – Town Meeting to consider the Final Budget 7:30 pm.**

The Town of Washington Budget represents the values of our Town, and your tax dollars at work. Please be an active participant - attend the budget meetings and vote.

Washington Times

Board of Selectmen
Washington Depot, CT 06794

"Your Town Newsletter"



PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WASHINGTON DEPOT, CT
PERMIT NO. 22

POSTAL PATRON