

# **TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

## **Board of Selectman/Board of Education Public Hearing**

**Tuesday, February 2, 2021**

**7:00 p.m.**

**East Windsor, Connecticut**

Meeting held via ZOOM Teleconference

Meeting ID: 332 683 3563

Town Hall closed to the Public by

Executive Order of First Selectman Jason E. Bowsza

Due to Coronavirus pandemic

### **Meeting Minutes**

*\*\*\* These Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting\*\*\**

#### **Board of Selectmen:**

Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman

Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman

Alan Baker, Selectman

Sarah Muska, Selectman

Charlie Nordell, Selectman

**ATTENDANCE:** **Board of Selectmen:** Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman; Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman; Alan Baker, Selectman; Sarah Muska, Selectman; Charlie Nordell, Selectman

**ABSENT:** All Selectmen were present this evening.

**GUESTS/SPEAKERS:** Christine DeBarge, Superintendent of Schools, presenting the Board of Education Budget; Elyse Spielberg, representing the Warehouse Point Library; Deputy First Selectman DeSousa; Tom Turner; Joe Chaisson, Journal Inquirer; Jennifer Brooks; Michelle Mallarky, Hollis Burt; Noreen Farmer.

**Public (as identified in the Meeting participation list):** **Town Treasurer:** Amy O'Toole;  
**Board of Education Members:** KCate Carey-Trull, Fran Neill, William Raber, Randi Reichle, David Swaim, Courtney Sevarino, Cathy Simonelli, Heather Spencer; **Board of Finance Members:**

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Jerilyn Corso, Noreen Farmer, Tom Lansner, Bill Syme; **DPW, Operations Manager:** Joe Sauerhoefer; **Warehouse Point Fire Department:** Jim Barton, Chief; Allison Anderson, Barbara Kaminski, Chris & Mark, Barbara & Dick Sherman, Galaxy Tab S2, Laura, Karen, MM, Ana-Maria Davis, Darryl Rouillard, Karen, Clark, Jennifer, Steve, Laura Foxx, Dad's iphone, Patrick T.

**TIME AND PLACE OF REGULAR MEETING:**

First Selectman Bowsza called the February 2, 2021 Board of Selectman/Board of Education Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. First Selectman Bowsza indicated the Public Hearing is being held in accordance with Section 8-4D(1)(a) of the East Windsor Town Charter. The Meeting is being held via teleconference due to closure of the Town Hall to the Public as the result of the coronavirus epidemic.

**ATTENDANCE:**

First Selectman Bowsza noted the Board has established a quorum with five members present via video conference.

First Selectman Bowsza noted this is the first presentation of the budget proposals for the Town and the Board of Education. After this Public Hearing the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education will hold their separate budget workshops and ultimately make recommendations to the Board of Finance for their consideration. Once the Board of Finance makes their recommendation as to what the joint budget shall be, that will be presented to the voters at a referendum to be held in May.

First Selectman Bowsza thanked the Department Heads for putting together thoughtful budget recommendations, as their consideration makes this process much easier. He also thanked Treasurer Amy O'Toole for the assistance she offers to himself, the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance. He suggested she's a key piece to the success of the Town.

**Board of Selectman Budget Presentation – First Selectman Bowsza - (see Attachment A)**

**Board of Education Budget Presentation - Christine DeBarge, Superintendent of Schools – (See Attachment B)**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

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**Elyse Spielberg, 244 Rye Street:** Mrs. Spielberg indicated she is speaking on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Library Association of Warehouse Point. Mrs. Spielberg indicated the Library Association appreciates the support indicated in the proposed budget, she suggested the recommended increase is badly needed. She noted the Warehouse Point Library is the principal library for East Windsor. They're looking to increase services, especially technology, online services, and expanding the collection, as COVID has increased the demands for these additional services. Mrs. Spielberg suggested the Board's additional support is greatly appreciated.

**Marie DeSousa:** Mrs. DeSousa indicated she is speaking as a resident. She's encouraged by the 3.42% increase in the Grand List. It's a win for East Windsor and a win for our budget.

Mrs. DeSousa indicated she had a couple of questions on the Board of Education side, but Superintendent DeBarge answered them when she said the translation was mandatory; Mrs. DeSousa wasn't aware of that part.

Mrs. DeSousa also likes the process of backing the money for the Broad Brook Fire Department out of the budget and passing it to the Fire Department and not reallocating it out; that's a win for the town. Mrs. DeSousa asked if there might be any increase the Broad Brook Fire Department might be looking to do, or has First Selectman Bowsza talked to them regarding what's being transferred over for this year?

First Selectman Bowsza indicated that was done in communication with the Town Treasurer and the Broad Brook Fire Department. First Selectman Bowsza indicated they believe that they've identified everything that will be covered but as the process goes along if there's something else that pops up that was overlooked our Finance Director will flag that for us and make sure we're aware of that before moving forward. First Selectman Bowsza indicated the intention is for all of that funding to be removed from the Town's General Fund budget prior to the Board of Selectmen recommending that to the Board of Finance. First Selectman Bowsza reiterated the funding for the Broad Brook Fire Department is included in the budget currently. He noted his intention is to ask the Board of Selectmen to take that funding out prior to the Board of Selectmen sending the budget to the Board of Finance. First Selectman Bowsza indicated the reason for that is because we want to be able to show in a transparent way to the voters in town that we're maintaining our commitment from the Fall that that money wouldn't be repurposed. First Selectman Bowsza suggested the best way he can think of is to show that money in there and for the Board to make a conscious motion to remove that funding that has been identified.

Mrs. DeSousa had no further questions.

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**Tom Turner, 89 Rockville Road:** Mr. Turner reported his daughter attends the Suffield VoAg Program, and is half-way through her first year. Mr. Turner believes there is an initiative to cease transportation for the students going to Suffield. He questioned the status of that initiative, and what the resolution is? Mr. Turner indicated he understands some students prefer Rockville, but he questioned what can be done for the students who prefer Suffield with regard to transportation? What will it take to secure funding to make sure these kids can get to school?

First Selectman Bowsza deferred to Superintendent DeBarge, who indicated funding is not presently in the budget, but suggested that's a topic the Board of Education and she will be discussing at the Board of Education budget workshops and the upcoming Board of Education meeting.

**Joe Chaisson, Journal Inquirer reporter:** Mr. Chaisson questioned Superintendent DeBarge if it's been difficult to come up with a proposed budget knowing the unknowns of COVID? Superintendent DeBarge suggested that having covered Board of Education meetings in the past Mr. Chaisson probably knows there are a lot of unknowns in Board of Education budgets. She felt that between tonight and when the Board of Education votes on this budget the Board of Education budget has the potential for significant change. The Town has had to deal with substantial changes in Special Education services in past years so that's a real and constant factor with Board of Education, and that is not just related to COVID.

**Hollis Burt:** Mr. Burt was having communications problems; First Selectman Bowsza suggested he'll return to Mr. Burt later in the meeting.

**Jennifer Brooks, via Chat:** First Selectman Bowsza indicated her question related to the transportation for the VoAg program, which was answered by Superintendent DeBarge.

First Selectman Bowsza called on Hollis Burt again; Mr. Burt continued to have audio problems. First Selectman Bowsza suggested he offer his comments in a Chat.

**Michelle Mallarky, 43 Graham Road:** Mrs. Mallarky indicated her support for the Board of Education funding for transportation to Suffield AgroSciences. She suggested the Board of Education is well aware of her support for this program over the last several years. But, as there's a wider audience here tonight Mrs. Mallarky wanted to emphasize how good a fit this program is for our overall town. One of the things that came up in maybe the last election cycle, or the Charter revision, or some documents she's been reading, there seems to be a theme that even though the individual boards have their individual mandates and focus that to move forward as a town we want to consider the over-arching goals of the town. And one of the themes that is clearly apparent in our town is an historical respect for our agricultural roots. Mrs. Mallarky

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indicated she gives the town a lot of credit for being very forward thinking about agricultural, and not just relegating it to some quaint something of yesterday.

Mrs. Mallarky suggested there are lot of kids from East Windsor who are attending Suffield AgroScience, and they're going there because they're interested in agricultural. They are the future, and it's forward thinking to support them. Mrs. Mallarky indicated they are just asking for continuation of transportation – one bus – it's a very small amount of the overall budget. Mrs. Mallarky would like to see it continue because, legally, the children of East Windsor have the right to attend Suffield AgroScience; without transportation – that's closing the door for a number of students. Mrs. Mallarky also suggested she personally knows a number of students in the Suffield AgroScience program whose families moved to town specifically so they would be in a sending town for that program. She also knows of a family who moved out of East Windsor for that reason; they also had children who would have attended Broad Brook Elementary. Mrs. Mallarky suggested that was something to think about when discussing property values. East Windsor is one of the few affordable towns in this corridor where you can buy a house at an affordable price that has land; we're a right-to-farm town. That's a great fit for families. You throw in access to the AgroSciences and all the resources the Suffield AgroScience Program has – that's a really good asset for the town. Mrs. Mallarky wanted to make sure the community understands that, beyond her immediate family needs. Mrs. Mallarky hoped the Board of Education overall budget would be supported, and certainly enough to support that one bus.

First Selectman Bowsza asked if Hollis Burt was able to communicate now? Mrs. Mallarky indicated Hollis Burt is her son; she'll share her computer with him.

**Hollis Burt, 43 Graham Road:** Mr. Burt indicated he's part of the first group of East Windsor students who have attended the Suffield Regional AgroScience Program. He's a senior who will be graduating next year, however, he would like to ask for transportation funding for next year for the future kids. The program is excellent; it has a lot of resources and facilities – a large animal facility, a greenhouse, an agricultural lab, a showing rink, and a large tract of land right near the school. Mr. Burt is able to network with kids every day from the many other towns who attend the program. Many of the towns are agricultural based, so every day he goes to school literally networking with the farmers of tomorrow. If we don't provide transportation for simply one bus it won't be equitable; only families who have the resources to transport their kids to Suffield day to day will be able to attend the program. Mr. Burt felt that's not fair, or equitable.

Mr. Burt would like to ask for funding for just one bus so other kids will have this excellent opportunity.

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**Noreen Farmer, 247 South Water Street:** Mrs. Farmer noted there isn't any increase for Capital Improvement funding over last year, yet the Capital Improvement Committee had asked for another \$530,000. She noted it hasn't gone up for a few years. Mrs. Farmer questioned if there were projects we're delaying, or are becoming a problem – why no increase?

First Selectman Bowsza indicated he didn't have the CIP list in front of him, so he deferred on the first part of Mrs. Farmer's question. What the proposal is intended to do, and if it's successful – if the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance approve the \$3 ½ million appropriation that goes to the voters, there is included in the Town's budget \$94,688 for lease/purchase payments that could then be repurposed within that same department for additional capital purchases. Effectively, in our capital outlay there would be a roughly 10% increase without raising the department budget at all. He's trying to use the money in a smarter way. And, if we were to pay down that \$3 ½ million of outstanding bond debt we could accelerate when we could issue new bonds, also without increasing our debt service.

First Selectman Bowsza indicated it's a several step process which he and Treasurer O'Toole have worked diligently trying to line those pieces up but we're not quite there yet. We do understand that the first piece of that is going to be whether or not the voters approve the added appropriation to pay down existing debt. If the voters reject that then we're back to step one, but if they do approve it ... First Selectman Bowsza suggested he finds it somewhat unlikely that a reasonable voter would say I don't want to pay down debt and I rather incur ¾ of a million in interest rather than foregoing it. He reiterated it's step one of a process that he and Treasurer O'Toole have been working to develop to put the Town into a better position to do some long-term capital improvement projects.

First Selectman Bowsza called for additional questions or comments; no one else requested to speak.

First Selectman Bowsza indicated the next step is initiating the workshop process; the Board of Education starts that process tonight. The Board of Selectmen will begin their workshops in two weeks. Both Boards will begin deeper dives into the sides of our respective budgets before making our recommendations to the Board of Finance. First Selectman Bowsza suggested he hopes to have the Board of Selectmen's budget to the Board of Finance by March 4<sup>th</sup>

Hearing no additional requests to comment First Selectman Bowsza concluded the Public Hearing at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

  
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen

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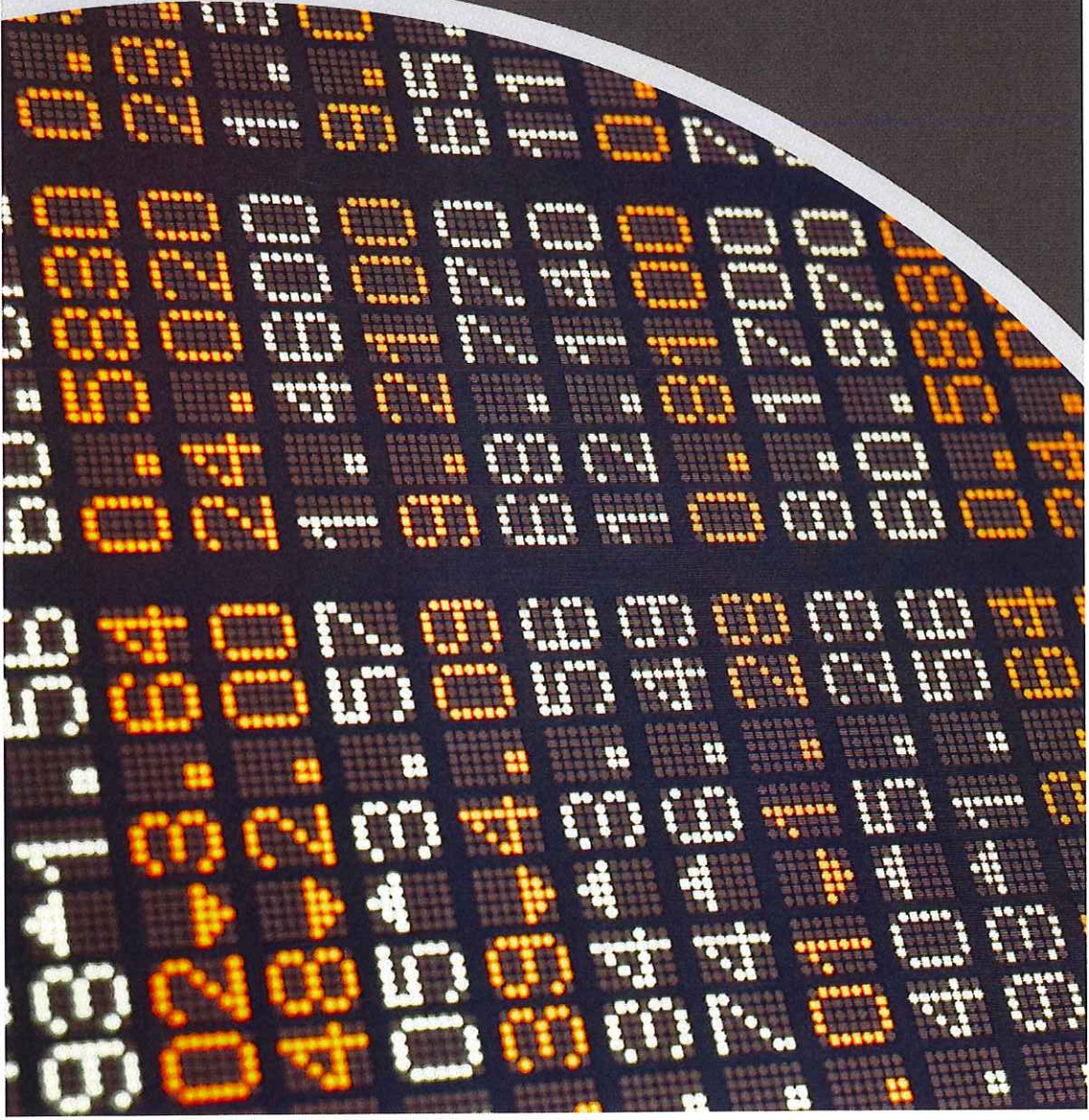
**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A – Board of Selectman Budget Presentation
- B - Board of Education Budget Presentation



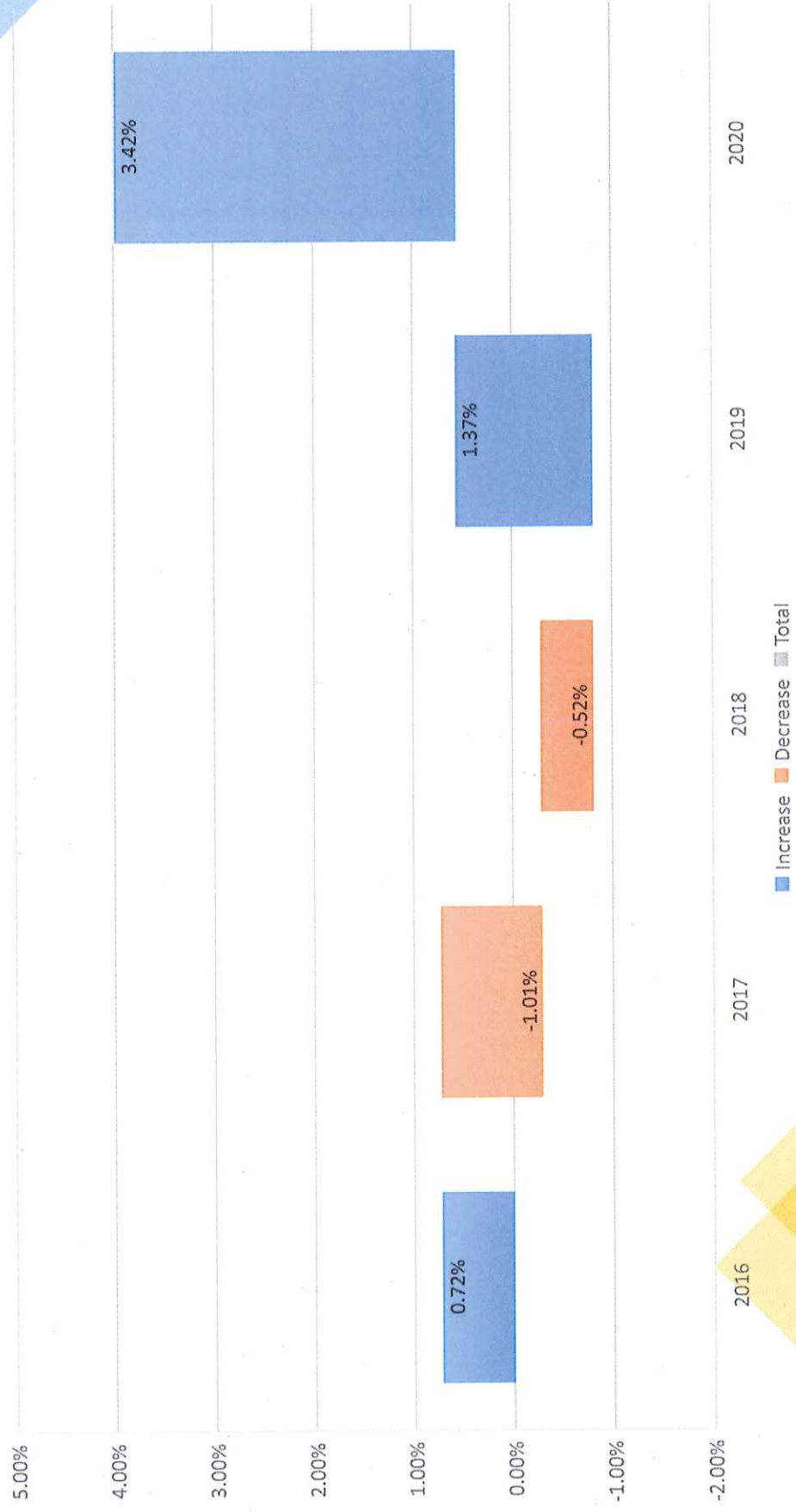
# FY 21/22 Budget Recommendation

Recommended increase for FY22:  
3.89% or 0.57%





Five-year Grand List Trend

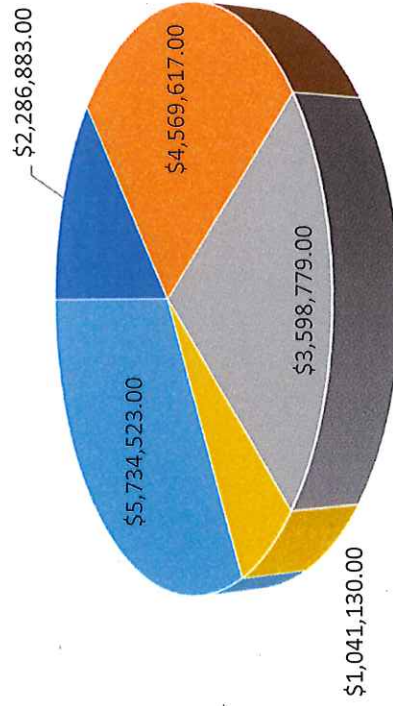


# Fire Service Funding Explanation

- Funding for Fire Protection
  - When Town Ordinance 20-1 was presented, we committed to showing our residents that the existing funding supporting fire protection was not being repurposed, as had been done previously. This budget does that.
  - We've identified \$549,854 in expenses used to support the fire district, including department funding, the Fire Marshal, workers' compensation costs, communication costs and employee benefits.
  - With funding for the Broad Brook Fire Department still counted in the Town budget, my budget increase would have been 3.89%.
  - WITHOUT the Broad Brook Fire Department funding in the Town budget, my budget is an increase of 0.57%, or \$94,000 over the current year's adopted budget.

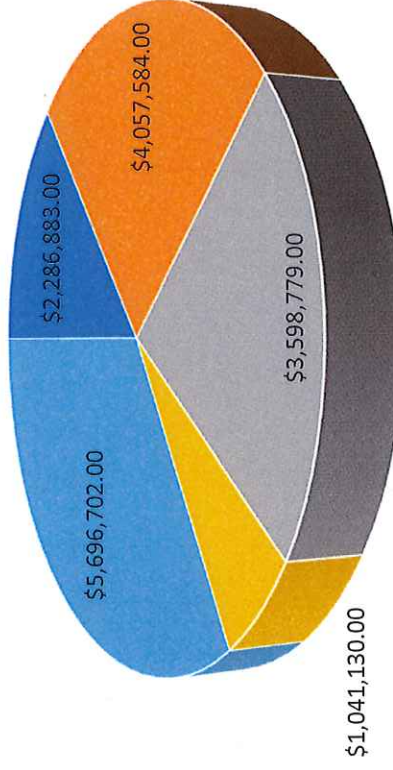
# First Selectman's Budget Allocation Recommendation

With BBFD funding included



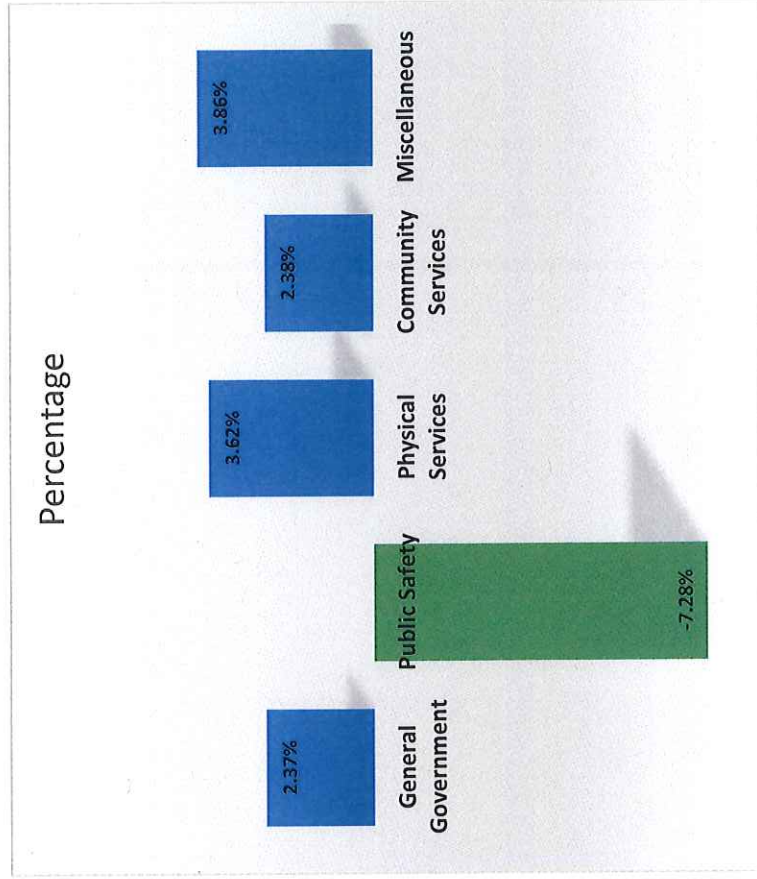
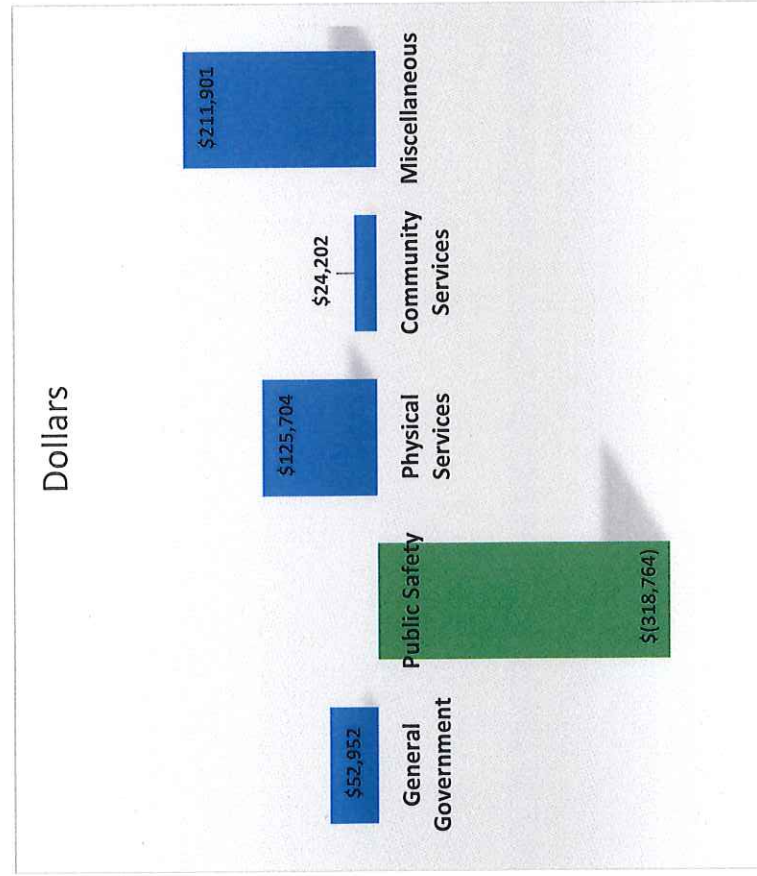
- Gen Gov TOTAL
- Public Safety Total
- Physical Services
- Community Services
- Misc

Without BBFD funding included



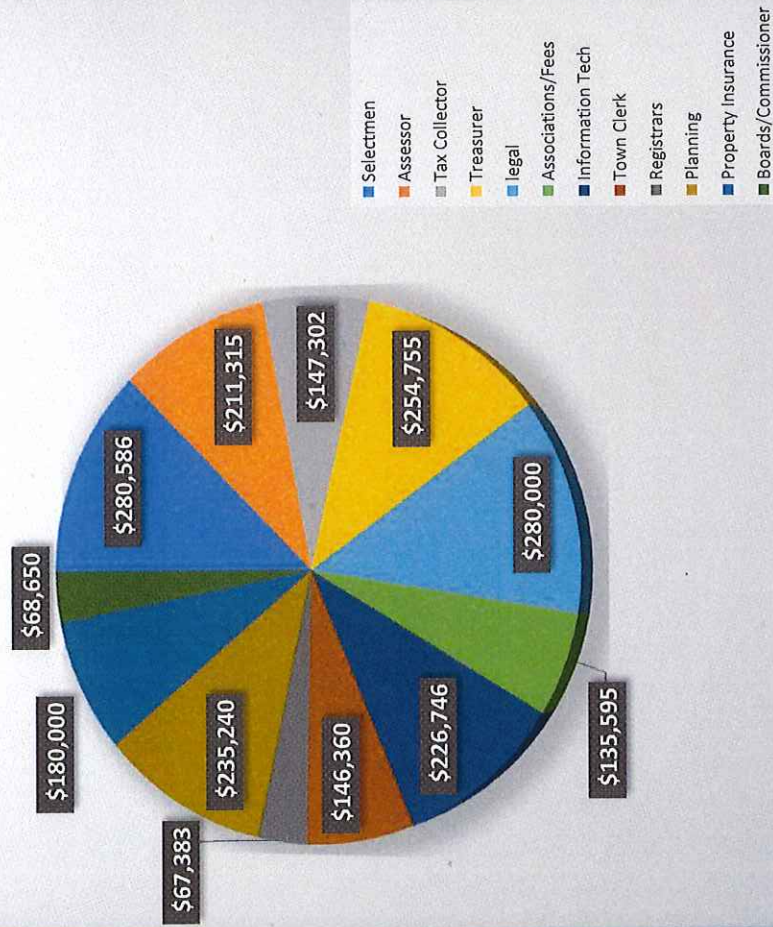
- Gen Gov TOTAL
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# Change by Grouping

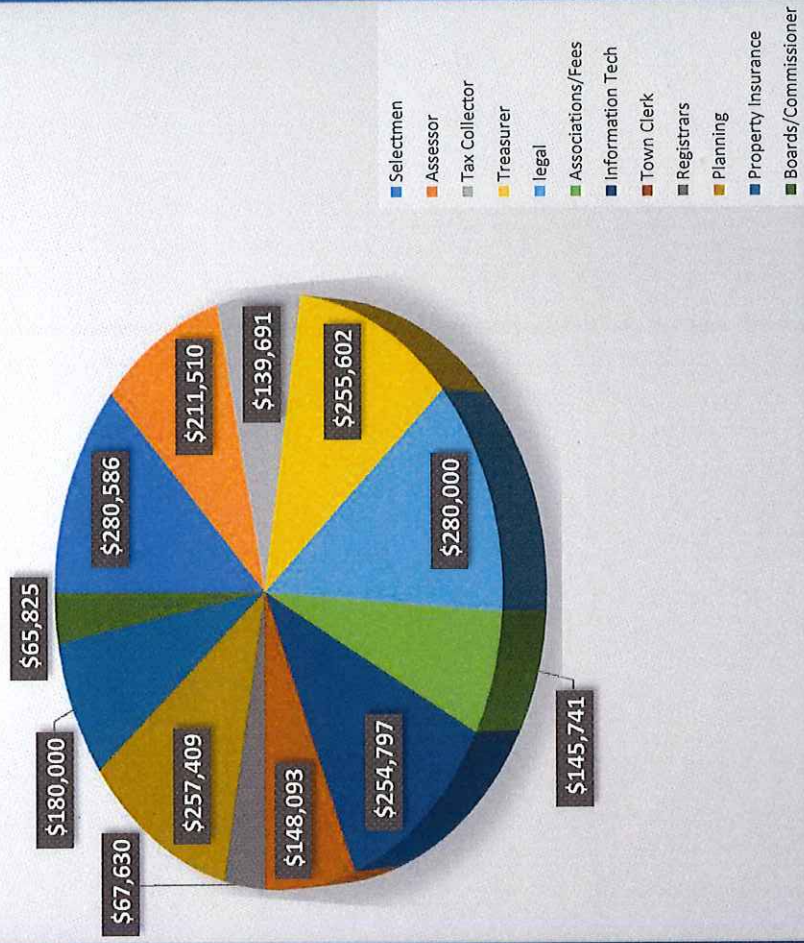




General Government - current

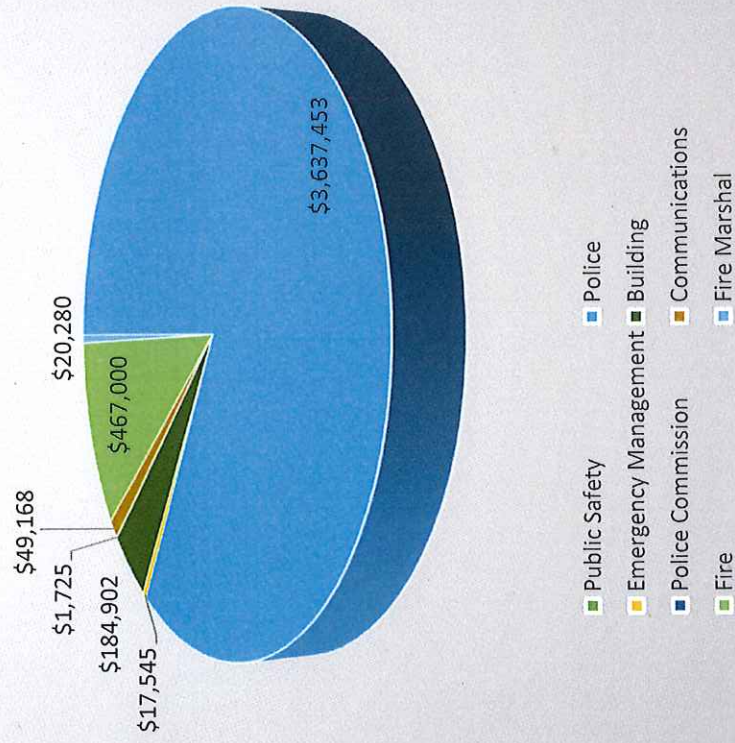


General Government - proposed

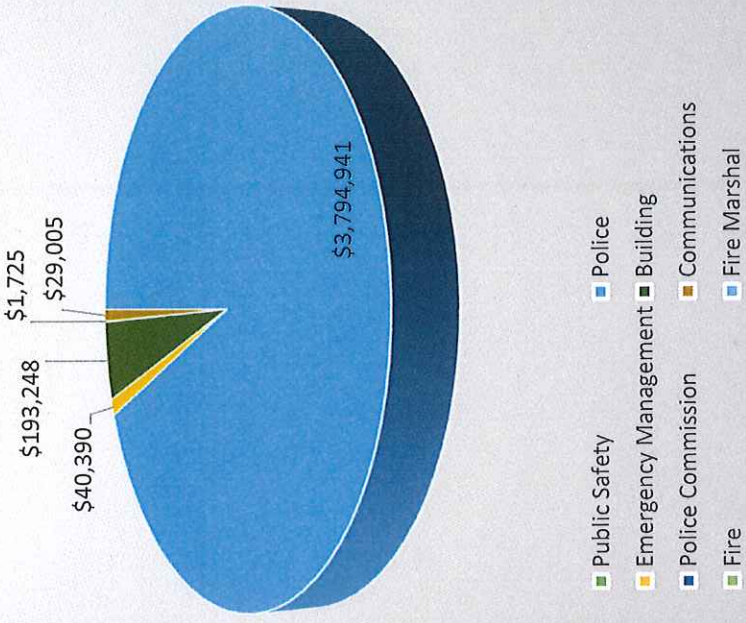




**Public Safety - Current**

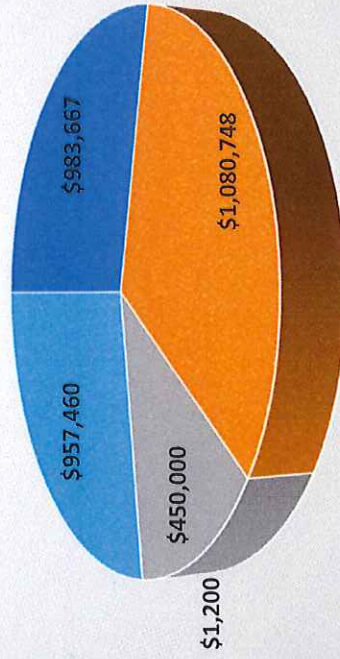


**Public Safety - Proposed**



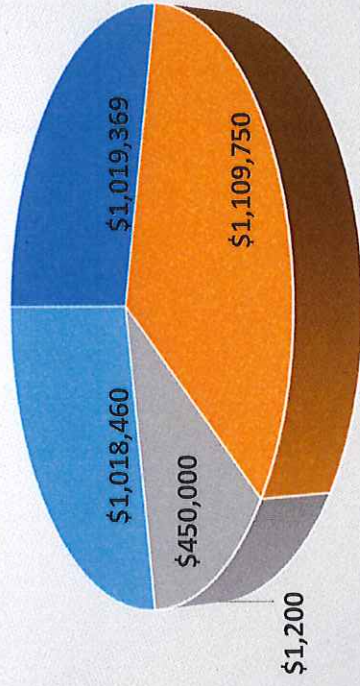


## Physical Services - Current



- Public Works
- Town Properties
- Road Maintenance
- Building Committee
- Sanitation

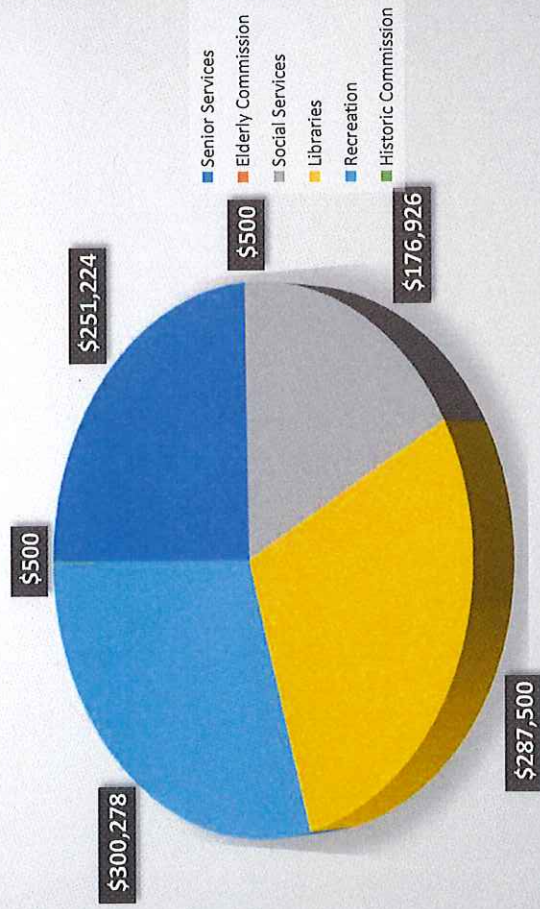
## Physical Services - Proposed



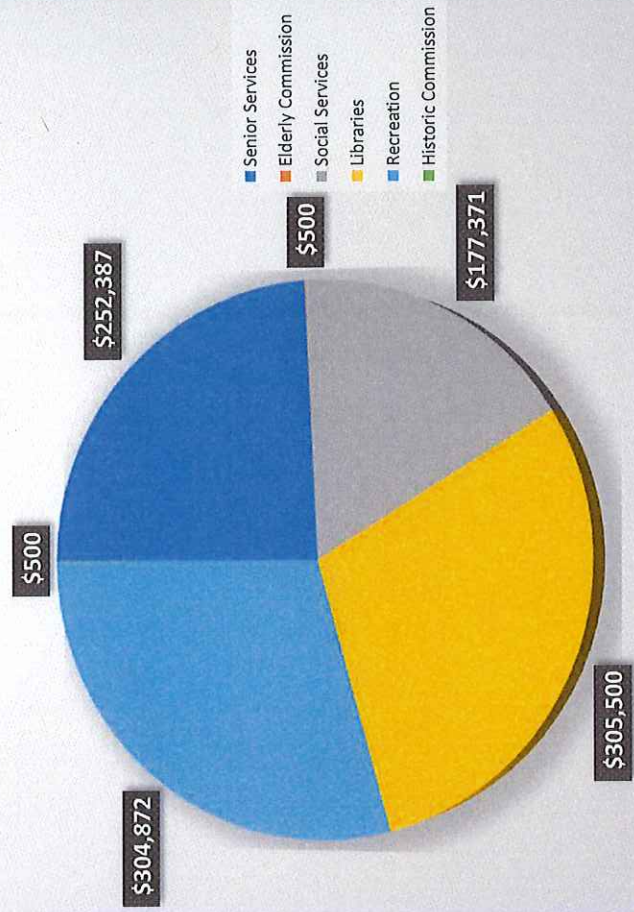
- Public Works
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## Community Services - Current

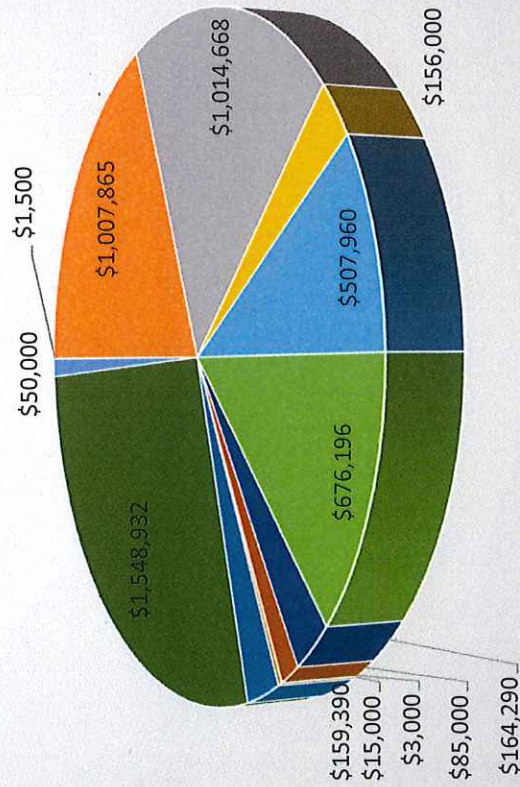


## Community Services - Proposed



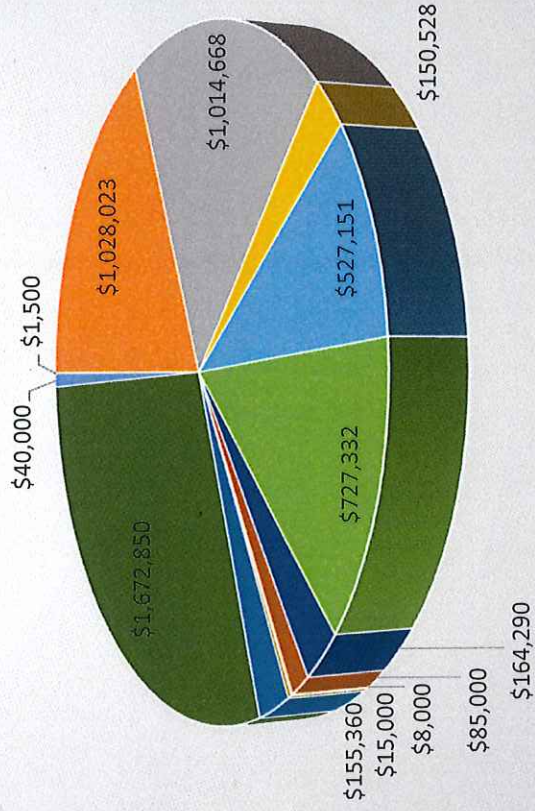


## Miscellaneous - Current



- Miscellaneous
- Debt Service
- Capital Outlay
- 27th Payroll
- FICA
- DB Pension
- 401a/457 match
- OPEB
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Unemployment Comp
- workers' Comp
- heart & hypertension
- physicals
- health/life insurance

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# New Initiatives Included



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Preventative policing social work position

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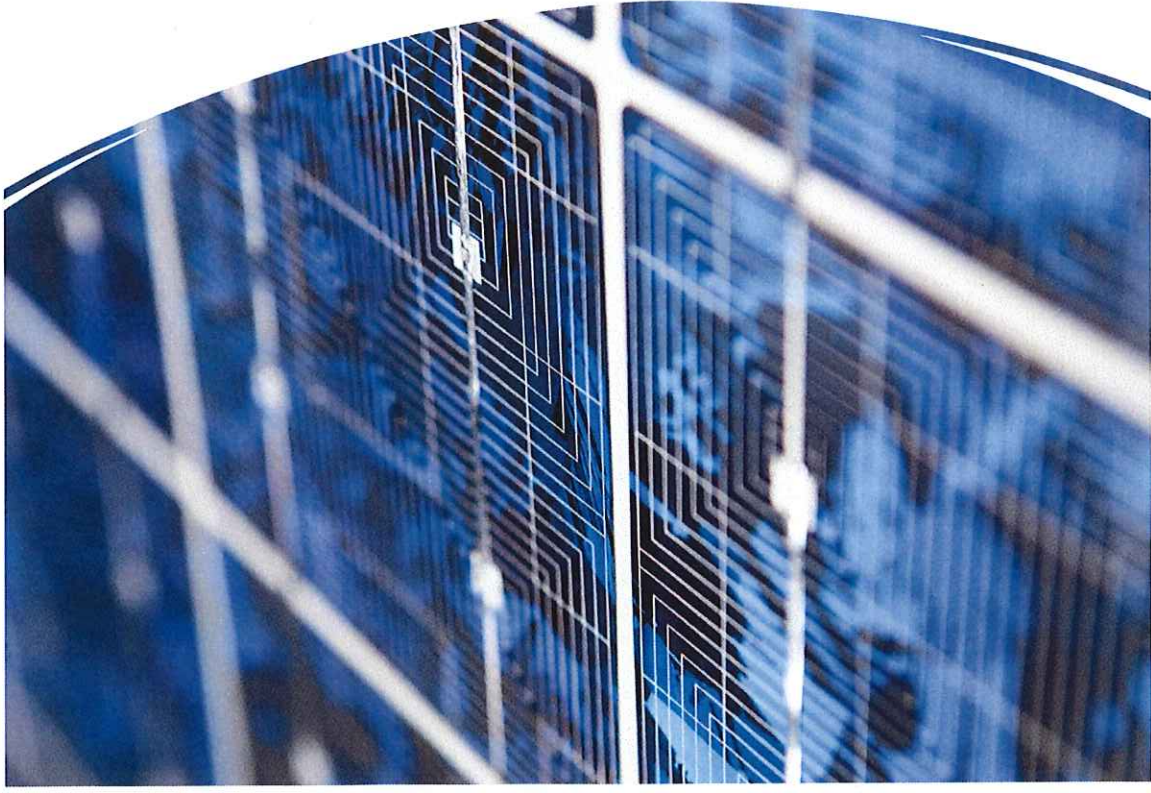
Economic development/grants consultation

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Additional funding for Building Department inspection services

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Increased support for Town library associations and the Cemetery Association



# Opportunities that should be considered



Hazardous Waste Collection



Staffing level in the Building Department



Youth Services Bureau Coordinator –  
Full-time funding



Town Property – HVAC upgrade at East  
Windsor Senior Center



# Bonding Proposal

- The Town is in excess of our Fund Balance cap by more than \$3.5 million
- I am recommending that the Boards of Selectmen and Finance approve an added appropriation in the amount of \$3.5 million to pay down existing debt.



# EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET FY22





# TOWN AND BOE PRIORITIES

## STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2016 - 2021

## PORTRAIT OF THE GRADUATE 2021

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### Five Priorities

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - Professional Learning
- Family and Community Engagement
  - Physical Plant
  - Operations

### Three Priority Qualities

- Informed Life- Long Learners
- Self Aware Individuals
- Responsible Citizens





## ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

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Since the March move to off site instruction, student needs in these areas have been highlighted. These were considerations in how the Superintendent developed the budget and intends to utilize additional grant funding, specifically that for Covid 19 relief and recovery

- Summer School – provide additional support for students who were disengaged or had academic challenges during remote learning
- Academic Intervention – maintain and increase academic interventions for struggling students
- Middle School and High School athletics – support engagement and physical health of students
- Technology – need to maintain and replace technology hardware broken or lost during remote learning





# STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PRIORITIES

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- School safety and social emotional well being of the whole student
  - Remote learning, staff development and the digital divide
  - Addressing learning loss
  - School facility repairs and improvements to reduce risk of virus
- 
- These priorities align with our Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate when prioritizing budget use for our students.





## NOTABLE CHANGES IN SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET

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- Replace unfilled math tutor position with certified math teacher for intervention at EWMS
- Increase time for our Family and Consumer Science teacher from .8 to full time
- Add PPT Facilitator – special education position needed to ensure we address the needs of students and families accessing special education services



# PRIORITIES MAINTAINED

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- Middle School Sports
- High School Sports
- Social Workers
- Interventions
- Nursing
- Late Bus

These services and programs help students with academic needs, sense of belonging, health and social emotional needs.

These needs were previously identified and highlighted during COVID 19.





## SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST SUMMARY

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- **Superintendent's Local Budget Request is \$25,620,420, a \$920,420 requested increase to the local budget – 3.73%**
- Superintendent's All Funds Budget Request is total \$28,481,262 for FY22 or a 5% increase
- BOE revenue is projected at \$2,860,842
- Grants and other revenue cover the cost difference between the All Funds budget and the requested increase to the locally funded allocation



## WHAT MAKES UP THE INCREASE?

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- Salaries – 63%
- Benefits/Insurance – 14%
- Contracted Services – 6%
- Transportation - 6%
- Tuition - 6%
- Supplies – 2%
- Utilities – 2%



THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR CONTINUED  
SUPPORT OF OUR  
STUDENTS AND  
STAFF

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