

Questions & Answers

When would the new Town Meeting and Town Referendum be held?

- The Town Meeting will be held on June 8th at 6:30 PM at Town Hall.
- The Town Referendum will be held on June 15 from 6 AM to 8 PM.

The current mill rate is 33.05 mills. What will the new mill rate be?

- 27.08 mills

What does a zero-mill rate look like in comparison to last year's budget?

- Without Grand List Growth, a zero-mill increase would have been 27.88 mills.
- The additional \$44.6 million dollars in additional Motor Vehicle and Private Property assessments reduce a zero mill increase to 27.08 mills.
- This information is based on calculating the current fiscal year 21-22 budget using the 10/1/21 grand list instead of the 10/1/20
- This data was approved by John Chaponis, the Town's Tax Assessor.

Has Town/School spending increased by an additional \$1.4 million (10% spending increase)?

- The town is proposing a \$163,080 spending increase from last year (1.04% increase)
- The school budget passed with a \$198,646 spending increase from last year (0.47% increase)
- The overall spending increase from both combined budgets is \$361,726 (0.63% increase)

Explain the \$1.4 million in new revenue

- The new revenue is factored into this year's overall grand list. The mill rate for the FY 22-23 budget is lower because of the new revenue being factored into the mill rate.
- This \$1.4 million does not represent the ability to spend an additional \$1.4 million dollars between the town/school.

What was the Town Budget Spending Increase last year?

- An increase of \$549,097 (3.62% increase)
- That increase passed on the third referendum
- The overall mill rate went up 0.21 (in combination with the school budget)

What does the new proposed Town budget include since the Board of Education budget has already passed?

- The proposed budget has a 27.08 mill rate. To achieve this, the Town budget would be reduced by \$170,402, there would be an increase in revenue projections and the use of unassigned fund balance.

How much in built in or fixed costs are contained in the current budget?

- Approximately \$320,000 – these costs include contractual obligations, vehicle (repairs, maintenance, and fuel), and the capital budget.

- This was based on estimated costs prepared in April. With inflation, the cost for items is anticipated to be more expensive and the same allotted dollar amount will not go as far.

How is Unassigned Fund Balance factored into the Budget?

- The Board of Finance have already recommended that over \$111,000 be utilized to reduce the budget to address capital spending priorities
- The Proposed Budget will also utilize \$90,000 as revenue

Will the Town Inheritance Money be utilized?

- Town Inheritance money will also be utilized to pay for three town cruisers for this year and next (over \$180,000)

What new additions or changes have been proposed in this year's budget?

- **Transparency Software**
 - Transparency software for financial accountability and review
- **Tree Removal Services**
 - Tree Removal funding to address overgrown or marked trees
- **Senior Services Part-time Bus Driver (20 hrs./week)**
 - To address medical transportation for our senior population
- **Human Resources Coordinator Position**
 - To assist our Human Resource Director on personnel matters related to the town and school
- **Town Finance Director**
 - Replaces the Chief Financial Officer Position and Deputy Finance Officer Position in managing town finances
- **Accountant**
 - To assist the Town Finance Department in managing the town finances

Does ARPA Funding Impact the Budget?

- The budget utilizes ARPA funding to address items included in the Capital Plan for this year, next year, and the following year

ARPA funds are being appropriated for the following items:

- Park & Recreation: Playgrounds, Tennis Courts, Pickleball Courts, Field Irrigation, and a Planner (to Review the Town's Recreation Needs)
- Fire Department: Parking Lot for the Fire Department, New Radios, New Equipment
- Youth & Social Services: New Youth Center (in place of current Senior Center), Old Youth Center Roof, social services programming, a school case manager, and a mental health counselor

- Police Department: Building Expansion of the Police Department
- Town Hall: Heat pumps, Oil Tank, Hybrid Meeting Room, ARPA Consultant, Small Business & Non-Profit Grant Program
- These Items and Other Proposed Items will need final approval by the Board of Selectmen

How can I calculate my property value based on the proposed mill rate of 27.08 mills?

<https://www.colchesterct.gov/2022-2023-budget-information/pages/tax-calculator>

The comparative mill rate from last year will see a zero mill increase, yet my property taxes went up. Why?

- Properties with increased taxes had additions/improvements done to the property since the last revaluation 5 years ago.
- It is also true that some properties may have done nothing at all, and the market treated them better than others. For example, smaller homes, built in the 1960's, that have been "well maintained" and may have had a new roof, siding, windows, shutters, gutters, doors, garage door in the last ten years might have gone from being worth \$190,000 in 2016 to being worth \$300,000 today. Properties cannot increase in value by \$110,000 and pay the same amount in taxes.
- The average property went up 25% but if your value went up more than that, your taxes would increase. However, you are also the benefactor of more appreciation, and equity, in your home than the average property owner.
- Most properties will see a tax decrease.

Where can I see the Town Budget Book?

<https://www.colchesterct.gov/2022-2023-budget-information>

****These questions and answers have been reviewed by the Town's Chief Financial Officer and Tax Assessor to ensure accuracy**