

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON - FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013

Town Council Budget Policy Statement

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this budget policy statement is to provide suggestions and guidance to the Town Manager, Board of Finance, Board of Education and the Capital Expenditure Committee for the implementation of policy in creating the Town of East Hampton Budget for fiscal year 2012-2013.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The overall position of the Town Council is to provide the residents of East Hampton with responsible and effective fiscal leadership. With thoughtful investment in the Town, we can better address long-term challenges regarding school facilities, promote and adopt sustainable and progressive land use policies and invest in cost-effective solutions. The Town must also maintain its current municipal and safety services while continuing to provide for a quality public education system for our children.

We ask that when all responsible budget departments plan their spending requests for the upcoming fiscal year, they always consider the needs of the residents first and foremost.

GUIDELINES

To this end, The Town Council provides the following budget guidelines for fiscal year 2012-2013:

1. For the Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance to meet annually and discuss the budget and Town Council Budget Policy statement in a scheduled Tri-board meeting on an agreed upon date and time.
2. Include residents and taxpayers in the budget process as early as possible through numerous communication media outlets and to ensure the budget process is presented in an easy-to-understand format.
 - 2.1. Provide for the funding of a Town Annual Report to communicate to residents the services that they received in the prior fiscal year and the associated costs and expenditures.
3. For departments identified and considered appropriate by the Board of Finance and/or Finance Director, apply zero-based budgeting.
4. Create a budget that will work within the available revenues and State funds that are expected for the next fiscal year taking into account inflation and current economic conditions.
5. All projected revenues and expenditures, including anticipated financing costs, during the fiscal year shall be internally tested and reported by the Finance Director on a quarterly basis to the Town Council, Town Manager, and the Board of Finance.
6. Should any line item be reduced or eliminated from any Town Manager (submitted) budget prior to its submission to public meeting and then vote, the Town Manager and the Finance Director, in conjunction with the Superintendent of Schools, if applicable, shall prepare a written report for the Town Council, Board of Finance and Board of Education (if applicable) evaluating the short and long term impact on municipal services or initiatives of such proposed budget reduction.
7. The fund balance shall not to be used to lower the annual mill rate or pay for Town operating expenses.
8. Support and coordinate with the State, surrounding towns and organizations in an effort to regionalize and leverage residential and municipal services.

9. To review and consider the ongoing facility needs of the Town of East Hampton.
10. Continue to offer support to our quality public education system and to work with the Interim Town Manager, Board of Finance and Board of Education in an effort to move forward with and fund facility improvements to the East Hampton High School as prescribed by NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges).
11. Support expenditures in the areas of new technologies regarding Information Technology, updates in IT security and accounting and management procedures. The intent of such expenditures is to optimize efficiencies in our municipal operations, improve communication between Town government and Town residents, streamline and coordinate workflow, increase productivity and/or achieve meaningful cost savings in this fiscal year and in the future.
12. Recognizing the changes in our Town, allow for staffing increases that are necessary for effective Town governance and operations taking into due consideration the associated benefits in Town services, operations, and/or public safety (i.e. Police/Fire Departments) while seeking to minimize any increased tax burdens to the community.
 - 12.1. For the retention, on a contractual, as-needed or full time basis, of a certified and professional network engineer to provide more effective and much needed IT support for the processing, security, storage and dissemination of information.
 - 12.2. Review of current contracts for the purchase, lease, or rental of equipment and professional services for the purpose of achieving cost savings and/or improved efficiencies.
13. Support health and wellness programs and disease management initiatives to improve employee productivity, employee retention, and employee health to decrease employee absenteeism and costs related to health.
14. Provide support to our Public works department for preventative and general maintenance of town infrastructures.
15. Provide for the continued support of public safety services (i.e. Police/Volunteer Fire Departments) with regards to training and equipment.
16. To ensure public safety and health by providing support for Emergency Service initiatives for equipment, training, organizational development and planning.
17. Commitment to Lake Pocotopaug, East Hampton's Watershed Areas and to make improvements in storm water management practices. All precious natural resources should be protected and all plans and projects with this goal should be considered a priority.
18. Support expenditures and resource allocation for appropriate economic development that is consistent with the character of the Town, as is necessary and appropriate, as well as the allocation of municipal resources required for any development including fiscal-positive commercial tax-deferrals and incentives.
19. Ensure that Town social services and programs for seniors are funded to meet the needs of the community.
20. As part of our land-use environmental policy, allocate such capital expenditures as necessary for the purchase of property for town and/or open space use when opportunities arise.
21. Incorporate long-term capital project considerations in fiscal year budgets.