

Town Council Budget Policy Statement



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this budget policy statement is to provide guidance to the Board of Education, Board of Finance, and Town Manager during the creation and implementation of the Town of East Hampton Budget for fiscal year 2009-2010.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The overall position of the Town Council is to provide the residents of East Hampton with leadership during tough economic times. Our goal is to always plan for the future while managing the needs of today. We can not provide all things to all people, but rather seek to manage wants, needs, opportunities and necessities.

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.

TRI-BOARD MEETINGS

Throughout this budget process, the Town Council, in partnership with the Boards of Finance and Education, will conduct a number of Tri-Board meetings. Our first meeting was held on Monday December 8, 2008. These meetings offer open discussion and opportunity for residents to voice their thoughts and concerns about the budget. We ask that all elected members of these boards commit to attending these meetings in hopes of providing open communication to all regarding budget issues for this upcoming fiscal year.

GUIDELINES

To this end, we provide the following guidelines for the creation of the Town East Hampton Budget for fiscal year 2009-2010:

1. Provide a budget that is as clear and concise as possible and provides an explanation of the needs and goals of each Town department.
2. Include residents and taxpayers in the budget process as early as possible through numerous communication media outlets such as our Town website and local newspaper publications and ensure the budget process is presented in an easy-to-understand format.
3. Create a budget that will work within the available revenues and State funding shortfalls that are expected or anticipated for the next fiscal year, taking into account the current economic condition nationally.
4. Where applicable, the budget process shall incorporate both short and long-term cost-benefit analysis and priority of project principles.
5. All projected revenues and expenditures 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.

PRIMARY GOALS

- 1) Continue the current path towards the development of a Town Water System, including the pursuit of a water source for this development which will serve the majority of residents in the established economic development zone.
- 2) Continue to provide quality education to the children of East Hampton through support and funding of our Education Budget. Encourage appropriate (re)structuring to minimize educational costs and maximize benefits to students.
- 3) Support expenditures in the areas of new technologies to develop, purchase and maintain information and technology systems that are secure, efficient, and effective and will benefit the educational needs of our children.
- 4) Support and coordinate with the State, surrounding towns or other organizations, efforts to leverage residential and municipal services where appropriate in areas such as use of municipal equipment, vehicle purchase, transfer station, energy purchase, etc.
- 5) Commitment to Lake Pocotopaug and the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed Area. Our most precious natural resource should be protected and all plans and projects with this goal should be considered a priority. In addition, the Town Council pledges to work to develop actionable implementation plans for lake improvement.
 - Pledge to allocate not less than \$15,000 for projects which will benefit Lake Pocotopaug or the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed Area.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Ensure that Town social services and programs for Seniors are adequately funded to meet the needs of the community.
- 8) Consider the financial implications of applying the recommendations of the Town Facilities Sub-Committee. To support expenditures which will complete a community economic "master plan" to include current and future municipal needs for education, government, recreation, and housing diversity.
- 9) 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.
- 10) Incorporate long-term capital project considerations in fiscal year budgets.
- 11) Support expenditures to promote energy conservation and renewable energy development to strategically prepare the Town to decrease dependencies on non-renewable energy resources and consider following the lead of many Connecticut communities that have established energy goals such as 20% "clean energy" by 2010.
- 12) As a rule, the fund balance shall not be used to balance the budget.