

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON  
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025  
Town Council Budget Policy Statement

CHARTER - GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES

As specified in Section 2.4 of the Town of East Hampton Charter: "each year the council shall submit to the Board of Finance a policy statement outlining its annual budget goals and objectives for the ensuing fiscal year."

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this budget policy statement is to provide guidance from the Town Council to the Board of Finance during the creation and implementation of the annual Town of East Hampton Budget. Although not specifically named in the Charter, the intent of this Budget Policy Statement is to also provide guidance to the Town Manager and the Board of Education who are charged with proposing and presenting respective general government and education budget recommendations to the Board of Finance.

GENERAL STATEMENT

**The Town of East Hampton's annual budget should consider the needs and aspirations of our community and reflect the taxpayer's ability and willingness to pay for those needs.**

GUIDELINES

- Include taxpayers in the budget process as early as possible utilizing Tri-Board meeting(s), public hearings, Zoom meetings, our Town website, local newspaper, town notices, Citizens Guide to Budget and meetings.
- Construct the Budget utilizing a hybrid budgeting process, incorporating all contractual needs and obligations as its starting point, with a cap not to exceed the latest annualized increase in the consumer price index as determined by the Federal Reserve Board as of December 31, 2023.
- The budgets presented should reflect the guidelines presented herein, as well as projected available revenue, anticipated funding shortfalls and potential impact of current economic conditions including special grants, American Rescue Plan grants and Federal or State Infrastructure grants.
- The Town Manager and the Board of Education will present their respective budgets at a Town Forum. Their budgets must include all proposed spending presented in a format that is easily read and understood by our citizens.
- The Town Manager's budget will incorporate the recommendations of the Capital Committee composed of representatives of the Town Council, Board of Finance and Board of Education.

2024-2025 BUDGET GOALS & FUTURE PLANNING

- The fund balance shall NOT be used to lower the annual mill rate or pay for Town operating expenses, except in accordance with the Town's General Fund Balance Policy.
- The town should strive to maintain its "AAA" bond rating which includes maintenance of fund

balance at levels delineated in the Town's General Fund Balance Policy.

- New personnel requests must be justified.
- The budget should include a plan to continue ongoing road repairs, sidewalks, tree removal, equipment maintenance, lake watershed protections and road improvements.
- Enhance the quality and competitiveness of our students, including adequate investment in technologies.
- Maintain emergency communications equipment between all departments.
- The Capital Committee will update the Town's long-term Capital Improvement Plan to ensure the future financial discipline and funding stability of the Town.
- Conservatively estimate state revenues, to be prepared for changes or shortfalls in tax collection rates and state funding.
- Support investment in new technologies, updates to IT security and improvements for enhanced fiscal and network controls.
- Funding should address ongoing town facility needs.
- The budget shall include funding to enhance economic development and grand list growth.
- The Council, for its part, will:
  - Schedule a workshop with the Town Manager to discuss budget priorities for the 2024-2025 year prior to beginning the annual budget process.
  - Request the Town Manager to investigate cost saving measures with surrounding towns.
  - Identify and implement opportunities to "share" services between and among Town departments and the Board of Education.
  - Support the ongoing implementation of those elements from the Lake Pocotopaug 9 Point Plan, aggressively pursuing grants that will preserve and improve the condition of the lake and its watershed.
  - Continue to support the Town Manager's labor negotiation efforts.
  - Ensure our Public Library, social services and programs for seniors are adequately funded.
  - Provide continued support of public safety services, training and equipment.
  - Continue to support programs and efforts to help those addicted to opioids or other drugs.
  - Continue efforts that maintain and plan for the redevelopment or, if in the Town's best interests, the sale of excess Town owned facilities.
  - Ensure that the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds be used for one-time expenses in accordance with Federal guidelines.

Approved by Town Council: November 28, 2023