



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

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 of our community and reflect the taxpayer's ability to pay for those needs.

GUIDELINES

- Incorporate all contractual needs as the starting point of a zero-based top-down approach with a cap of a 1% - 2% increase of wants, if justified.
- Support and maintain ongoing programs.
- 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.
- The budgets presented should reflect the guidelines presented herein as well as projected available revenue, anticipated State funding shortfalls and potential impact of current economic conditions including special 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 and Boards of Finance and Education.

2023-2024 BUDGET GOALS & FUTURE PLANNING

- The fund balance shall NOT be used to lower the annual mill rate or pay for Town operating expenses, except if the fund balance exceeds an amount above generally recognized stable municipal budget parameters.

- The town should strive to maintain its “AAA” bond rating which includes maintenance of fund balance at levels generally recognized under stable municipal budget parameters.
- Any new personnel requests must be quantifiably justified.
- The Public Works budget should include a plan to continue ongoing road repairs, sidewalks, tree removal, equipment maintenance, lake watershed protections.
- General Government and the Board of Education should make every effort to only limit budget increases to meet contractual obligations.
- Maintain and enhance the school district accreditation.
- Enhance the quality and competitiveness of our students, including adequate investment in technologies.
- Maintain emergency communications equipment between all departments.
- The Capital Committee should 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. Such costs will be appropriated from operating, not capital, budgets.
- Funding should address ongoing town facility needs.
- The budget shall include funding to enhance economic development and grand list growth consistent with the character of the Town and quantifiably justified.
- The Council for its part, will:
 - Schedule a workshop with the Town Manager to discuss budget priorities for the 2023-2024 year prior to beginning the budget process.
 - Request the Town Manager investigate with surrounding town cost saving measures regionally.
 - Investigate the need for a regional grant writer.
 - Review "shared" 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 and aggressively pursue grants that will preserve and improve the condition of the lake and its watershed.
 - Continue to support the Town Manager's labor negotiation efforts to realize efficiencies and savings for taxpayers.
 - Ensure our Public Library, social services and programs for seniors are adequately funded.
 - Provide continued support of public safety services, training and equipment.
 - Strive to replenish our mill rate stabilization fund from available operating surpluses.
 - Continue to support programs and efforts to help those addicted to opioids.
 - Continue efforts that maintain and plan for the redevelopment or, if in the best Town’s best interest, 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 and not ongoing expenses or personnel.

Approved by Town Council: November 8, 2022