

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON
FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

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

- Include taxpayers in the budget process as early as possible utilizing Tri-Board meeting(s), public hearings, 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.
- 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.

2020-2021 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 budget parameters.
- All new personnel requests should be quantifiably justified.

- The Public Works budget should include a plan to continue ongoing road repairs, sidewalks, tree removal and maintenance, lake watershed protections and road improvements.
- 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 state funding.
- Support investment in new technologies, updates to IT security and improvements for enhanced fiscal and network controls.
- Funding should be allocated to address ongoing town facility needs.
- The budget shall include funding to direct and enhance economic development and grand list growth.

- The Council for its part, will:
 - Seek out cost savings by pursuing regional sharing of services.
 - Identify and implement opportunities to "share" services between and among Town departments and the Board of Education
 - Support the implementation of those elements from the Lake Pocotopaug 9 Point Plan that will preserve and improve the condition of the lake and its watershed.
 - Aggressively pursue grants to fund the Lake Pocotopaug 9 Point Plan.
 - Continue to support the Town Manager's labor negotiation efforts to realize efficiencies and savings for taxpayers.
 - Ensure social services and programs for seniors are adequately funded.
 - Provide continued support of public safety services, training and equipment.
 - Commit to continually replenishing and augmenting our mill rate stabilization fund and not appropriating such funds for non-designated uses.
 - Continue to support programs and efforts to help those addicted to opioids.
 - Continue efforts that maintain and plan for the redevelopment or sale of excess Town owned facilities.
 - Continue support for the East Hampton Library.

Approved by Town Council: November 26, 2019