

# Town of Westford

**2009-2010 Town Budget  
Proposed by the Westford Selectboard**



The Selectboard would like to extend its appreciation to the ninety or so residents who were able to attend the budget presentation at the informational meeting, held on January 15, 2009. It was very helpful to receive your perspectives on the proposed budget, especially in a tough economic environment where difficult decisions had to be made.

The biggest change from the budget presented at the meeting to the budget proposed below is the inclusion of ambulance services from Fairfax Rescue in the town's operating budget. The Selectboard had initially proposed that the continuance, or discontinuance, of Fairfax Rescue's services in Westford be warned as a separate article. A healthy discussion ensued concerning Fairfax Rescue's service to our community and the expenses necessary for supporting them. At the end of the discussion a show of hands was requested to see what your fellow residents' pleasure was on the issue. The overwhelming majority of those in attendance indicated that the expenses related to Fairfax Rescue's services should remain in the town's operating budget.

Again, thanks to all of you who were able to afford us your vital feedback in this process.

## 2008 Highlights, Accomplishments, Changes:



Grants secured from *Help America Vote Act*, Regional Planning Commission, *Better Backroads*, VT Agency of Transportation

New on-line burn permits

Wheelchair-accessible ramp to Town Office

Town Center Committee safety improvements at Common Rd & 128

Change to a DRB and Planning Commission model

Voted to move to Australian Ballot for Town and School budgets

Hired three employees to fill vacant positions: Asst Town Clerk, Dog Warden, Rec Coordinator

Report completed by Solid Waste and Recycling Committee



Roads improved, Fire calls made, Plats reviewed, Games played, Books loaned...



And a new Town Sign! *Thanks to Janet and Rich Golden, Janet Jaffe, Denise Vaughn, and Steve Knight.*

# The Town's Budget is Reduced by approx. \$43,000 from 2008-2009

Line 178:

2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010 proposed
1,421,763	1,361,412	1,318,377

Anticipated Tax Rate 09-10:	.65
Last Year's Tax Rate 08-09:	.61
Increase:	.038
	or... 3.8 cents on \$100

For a home valued at **\$200,000** this would be a **\$76** increase in the annual tax bill.

**The Tricky Part:**

We are undergoing **re-appraisal** which will be completed April 1.

Therefore, we can calculate neither the Grand List nor individual property values accurately at this time.

## Why is the tax rate *going up* if the amount budgeted is *going down*?

Our anticipated income (line 179) and available cash on hand (line 180) are much lower:

- State highway funds budgeted at 10% less
- Interest revenue is much lower
- Less carry-over money from 2007-08
- Fewer incoming fees (recording fees, building permits, etc)

Lines 179 and 180

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
<b>Anticip. Income</b>	412,800	282,600	223,825
<b>Avail Cash on Hand</b>	143,098	101,901	50,000
<b>Comb 179+180:</b>	555,898	384,501	273,825

# Areas Reduced or Cut in the Budget

No Funds Added to Town Building Reserve

No Improvements to Town Buildings

Reduced Equipment Reserve Funds by \$13,000

Reduced Law Enforcement by \$5,000

Eliminated proposed part-time Road Crewmember

Reduced Newsletter Printing and Mailing by 1/3

Eliminated GIS Digital Mapping for planning and zoning

## **The Budget Includes or Retains:**

- ✓ Road maintenance
- ✓ Grant-funded work on Seymour Road
- ✓ Grant-funded research on salt shed
- ✓ Solid waste and recycling services
- ✓ Ambulance Services from Fairfax Rescue
- ✓ Library programs
- ✓ Town administrative and planning functions

# Re-Appraisal Methods

**'Drive-by'** appraisal to be completed by April 1

## Re-Appraisal Criteria:

- Area Sales (replacement cost tables)
- Land Tables (acreage, frontage)
- Home Additions
- Site Improvements (water and septic)
- Outbuildings (detached structures)
- Depreciation (age and condition)

## Re-Appraisal and Impact on Tax Rate and Tax Bills

The Appraisal company reports that **real estate values in Vermont have not dropped** but held steady, therefore,

Our overall **Property Values** are most likely to **rise**.

This means our **Grand List will increase**.

This means that the **Tax Rate may drop**.

However, **your tax bill** will depend on the value of your property, unknown at this time.

## Bottom Lines on Tax Rates\*:

Town Budget as proposed	.65
With the Library Parking Lot (if approved by the voters)	.66

*\* With the caveat, of course, that we don't know how Reappraisal will affect the actual Tax Rates for July 1, 2009*

# THANK YOU!

To the following people and committees who helped  
the Selectboard Members draft the 2009-2010 Budget

**Charlotte Vincent**, Treasurer

**Nanette Rogers**, Selectboard Administrative Assistant and Town Clerk

**Gary Estus**, Highway Foreman

**Melissa Manka**, Planning Coordinator

**Caroline Brown**, Lister

Library Trustees

Fire Department

Development Review Board

Planning Commission

Cemetery Commission

Brookside Cemetery Commission

Brick Meeting House Society

