



Incorporated 1787

1787 - 1800 The First Settlement

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Woody Bliss, First Selectman
SUBJECT: Recommended FY08-09 Budget
DATE: January 23, 2008

Attached are the recommended operating and debt service budgets for Town Departments for the upcoming fiscal year, FY08-09. The capital budget has not yet been voted by the Capital Advisory Committee. The listing of requests is provided for your information, and falls within the guideline established for these purposes last year. Both the capital and operating budgets are consistent with the guidelines established in the Town's ten year plan.

TOWN OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY

The **proposed \$10,667,410 operating budget represents a 4.98% increase (\$505,716) over the current budget.** This budget contains three significant new initiatives (Kids in Crisis, Full Time Zoning Enforcement Officer transition, and establishment of an OPEB liability account). Without these three new initiatives, the overall increase would be just 3.57%. Key provisions of this increase are as follows:

CATEGORY	\$ INCREASE	% OF TOTAL INCREASE
Salary	211,388	41.8
FICA/Pension	38,000	7.5
Energy	37,362	7.4
Paving	62,395	12.3
OPEB Account	54,000	10.7
Kids in Crisis	68,000	13.4
Prop/Liab/Auto Ins.	20,250	4.0
FullTimeZEOTransition	21,660	4.3
All Other Items	57,661	11.4
Health Insurance	(35,000)	(6.9)
Workers Comp.	(30,000)	(5.9)
TOTAL	\$505,716	100.0

SALARY ACCOUNTS

Funds have been included to provide a **3.5% increase for all employees**. Police, Highway and Dispatch are all under contract for that amount, plus step increases, for those who qualify for them. Non-union employees are budgeted for the same 3.5% increase.

Total projected salary costs for all departments and operations are increased by \$211,388, 41.8% the total budget increase. Of this amount, virtually all is for cost of living or step increases. Expanded personnel services over the current year budget include: additional hours in the positions of Social Worker Assistant (2 per week- \$1,598), Assistant to the Assessor (four key busy weeks per year- \$966), and \$7,292 to reflect the increase in the stipend of the First Selectman to \$45,000 for the full twelve months (the FY07-08 budget reflects this increase only for seven months).

HEALTH INSURANCE AND BENEFITS

The \$35,000 decrease in health insurance, reflects an estimated rate increase of 8.5% for medical premiums, and fairly level for all other items. The ability to decrease this budget number reflects the Town's switch to HSA accounts for all firefighters in 2007, as well as negotiated changes which will make this the only health plan option for Highway and Dispatch units as of July 1, 2008. The \$38,000 increases in FICA and pension costs directly reflect the payroll benefit cost of COLA adjustments, and provides for some salaries not previously included in the MERS plan.

ZONING ENFORCEMENT

While not reflected entirely in the salary accounts, a net cost increase of \$21,660 is carried in this budget to reflect the cost of transitioning to a full time Zoning Officer in FY08-09. This increase will pay for the consulting contract of the exiting Zoning Officer (\$36,047), a cost which is partially offset by actual salary reductions, and will sunset with the FY08-09 budget. This means that long term, the FY09-10 budget expense for zoning enforcement will decrease from the coming year.

This arrangement was devised after several years of budgeting for two part time positions, but never filling the second one due to a consistent lack of qualified applicants. The expense for these services is provided in the Planning and Zoning, and Conservation Commission budgets.

ENERGY

Overall energy accounts total an increase of \$37,362, or 13.9% over the current year. Not all energy line items were increased by this amount, however. Some were increased at different levels, or even reduced, based upon a review of year to date expense trends. The increases came from a review of year to date expenses, as well as the January consortium bid results for diesel and heating oil, which will become effective in September.

PAVING

A significant increase in the paving budget reflects the fact that the cost of this material has skyrocketed in the past two years, plus the need to mill this years road prior to paving (Steep Hill). We are playing a bit of catch up in this category, as past increases have not kept pace with the increased material cost.

KIDS in CRISIS

This \$68,000 program designed to assist Weston High School and Middle School students facing real life problems was a new initiative undertaken this year as a supplemental appropriation. While the program is now an established one in Weston schools, this is the first budget to include it.

REVENUE and GRAND LIST GROWTH

Non property tax revenue offsets the impact of increased expenses on the mill rate, as does growth in the Grand List. Preliminary indications are that the Grand List will grow an estimated 1.9%. This is down from the 2.2% growth of the current year, but still very good.

This slower growth trend is expected to continue into the following year, as building fees and conveyance taxes continue to trend down from a year ago. Projected building fees are decreased by \$35,000 next year. Continuing our past practice, revenues from the increased portion of the conveyance tax are not budgeted at all, as they are set to expire June 30. Town Clerk fees are reduced by \$75,000, which reflects an environment of slower property transfers and recording activity.

One bright spot is that State aid revenues are up \$332,271 in the Education category. This increase was realized this year, but was not reflected in the budget, as the Legislature did not pass the budget until two months after Town Meeting. All other State aid is flat.

In addition to these reductions, yesterday's 75 basis point reduction in interest rates has caused us to alter our interest income estimate significantly downward. The FY07-08 budget number for this revenue is \$900,000, and we are still expecting to beat that by \$150,000. For FY2008-09, we are carrying an estimate of \$700,000.

Finally, non- property tax revenues are reduced by the abatements the Town provides to certain qualifying residents. The Firefighter abatement expense is increased by \$15,000 to reflect increased recent activity. Also, a \$15,000 allowance is provided for the recently provided Veterans exemption. However, this is really no more than a place holder, as there is no track record or reliable basis to rely upon for this estimate.

At current request levels for the Board of Education operating budget, Town operating budget, Town and School capital budgets and debt service, the mill rate would increase by a projected 2.95% to \$24.08.

**Budget Summary by Department and Division
First Selectman's Budget**

	<u>Program Name</u>	<u>FY07 Actual</u>	<u>FY08 Approved</u>	<u>FY09 First Selectman</u>	<u>Amount Change FY08-FY09</u>	<u>Percent Change FY08-FY09</u>
100	Administration and Finance	568,965	612,348	642,096	29,748	4.86%
110	General Administration	2,942,554	3,075,800	3,236,200	160,400	5.21%
115	Information Systems	248,051	248,180	250,678	2,498	1.01%
120	Probate Court	3,543	4,900	5,050	150	3.06%
130	Elections/Registrars	34,445	36,990	34,442	-2,548	-6.89%
141	Board of Finance	46,466	48,000	49,000	1,000	2.08%
142	Treasurer	18,378	23,600	24,426	826	3.50%
143	Assessor	107,580	117,030	120,006	2,976	2.54%
144	Tax Collection	97,601	107,185	110,792	3,607	3.37%
145	Board of Assessment	90	500	885	385	77.00%
150	Legal Counsel	368,867	189,800	197,400	7,600	4.00%
160	Town Clerk	119,443	120,404	126,014	5,610	4.66%
165	Historic District Commission	0	450	450	0	0.00%
170	Planning & Zoning	52,947	100,145	129,396	29,251	29.21%
180	Zoning Board of Appeals	3,119	2,250	2,325	75	3.33%
185	Conservation Commission	67,769	72,099	68,819	-3,280	-4.55%
191	Building Inspector	101,917	109,954	114,201	4,247	3.86%
195	Building Committee	0	1,200	1,200	0	0.00%
General Government		4,781,735	4,870,835	5,113,380	242,545	4.98%
220	Volunteer Fire Department	198,026	203,245	212,174	8,929	4.39%
240	Fire Marshal	56,030	57,133	67,533	10,400	18.20%
250	Animal Control	63,856	67,056	69,058	2,002	2.99%
260	Communications Center	310,472	328,557	345,909	17,352	5.28%
263	SW Conn. Emerg. Med.	1,260	1,300	1,340	40	3.08%
264	Emerg. Med. Commun. Serv.	11,665	11,437	8,595	-2,842	-24.85%
266	Regional Paramedic	121,053	124,085	125,948	1,863	1.50%
280	Police Services	1,626,479	1,573,530	1,673,220	99,690	6.34%
Public Safety		2,388,841	2,366,343	2,503,777	137,434	5.81%
300	Public Works - Highway	1,661,256	1,633,380	1,745,464	112,084	6.86%
Public Works		1,661,256	1,633,380	1,745,464	112,084	6.86%
410	Solid Waste Disposal	113,557	109,823	109,823	0	0.00%
510	Westport/Weston Health	178,396	178,396	178,396	0	0.00%
515	SW Regional Mental Health	1,545	1,545	1,545	0	0.00%
530	Weston Water Utility	10,262	20,030	20,700	670	3.34%
550	School/Town Water Supply	32,549	36,480	37,600	1,120	3.07%
Sanitation, Health, Environment		336,309	346,274	348,064	1,790	0.52%

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600 Human Services	60,762	72,346	77,244	4,898	6.77%
700 Youth Services	-20,389	49,239	38,558	-10,681	-21.69%
750 Commission on Aging	94,630	80,668	88,056	7,388	9.16%
810 Public Library	332,292	372,362	387,791	15,429	4.14%
Human Resources &	467,295	574,615	591,649	17,034	2.96%
910 Recreation Department	163,038	171,385	177,191	5,806	3.39%
912 Parks and Fields	119,713	127,741	114,583	-13,158	-10.30%
913 Middle School Pool	62,247	71,121	73,302	2,181	3.07%
Parks & Recreation	344,998	370,247	365,076	-5,171	-1.40%
	9,980,434	10,161,694	10,667,410	505,716	4.98%