

FY18 Budget Summary

The total appropriations in the Town's upcoming FY18 budget come to \$1,633,744. This is a net increase in the town's budget of \$30,167 (1.88%) over FY17, slightly more than last year's increase over the previous.

Our CRBSD school operational assessment went down slightly this year: -1.76%. We are one of only two towns in the district that will get a decrease. (Last year, we were the only town to see an increase.) Even with the recently approved Wahconah H.S. Feasibility Study, CBRSD capital assessments continue to decline slowly for now as notes are paid off. Total Education costs, including Vocational Ed., account for 44% of the Town's overall budget.

The FY18 budget incorporates a 2.5% cost-of-living-allowance increase for most town wages, with a few exceptions. The Board has recommended no increase in Elected Officer's salaries. The Finance Committee has recommended a greater increase for Highway Department wages, intended largely to bring our pay scale into closer parity with regional averages compared to similar towns. Health insurance premiums will remain flat for next year, while retirement contributions will increase by 4.8%.

Beyond the increase in wages and retirement allocation, the Highway department budget contains a 5.5% increase in operational accounts — primarily Winter Roads, but also Engineering Consultation and a cost increase for Tree Work due to prevailing wage law. There are some offsetting reductions in Road & Bridge Maintenance (where engineering costs were previously accounted) and Fuel. The Highway Dept. makes up 32.5% of the overall budget.

Recently, the Town of Becket asked us to reconsider our contributions for shared Fire and Ambulance services. Becket also cited a growing increase in expenses for the shared Becket Beach. As a result, the FY18 budget includes a new appropriation of \$8,215 for Ambulance Services (a percentage of Becket's net operating costs based on a 5-yr average of actual use by Washington residents) and an increase of \$1500 for the use of the beach.

The largest single increase in the FY18 budget falls under Debt Service. Next year we will need to start repaying principal, in addition to interest, on the note for the Cross Place Rd., Eden Glen/Frost Rd., and Middlefield Rd culverts. The projected payment for FY18 is \$35,000. We will also be paying a little more in short-term interest than recent years, for a construction loan to provide cash flow for the portion of the Eden Glen/Frost Rd. culvert project this summer that will be reimbursed by our federal grant.

The Finance Committee is currently projecting 1.23% growth in the Town's assessed value, based on the trends of the last four years. If this holds true, along with current estimates for state aid and local revenue, then the tax levy will be at 98.5% of our levy limit and the tax rate will be about \$14.42, an increase of \$0.38 (2.71%) over FY17. This equates to an estimated increase in the Average Single Family Home annual tax bill of about \$90.

Kent Lew, Finance Committee chair