

Town of Essex



Fiscal Year 2025

Proposed Operating Budget

Selectboard Budget Goals

- Limit the operating budget increase to a 5% tax rate increase at the most
- Maintaining & improving the pedestrian and trail network and connectivity in the Town
- Increased community outreach & engagement
- Finding ways to increase revenue streams including grants
- Additional attention to the Capital needs & budget
- Looking ahead to development of municipal site at 80 & 90 Upper Main Street

General Fund Highlights

- The proposed budget will keep municipal services intact
- Challenges:
 - Health insurance premiums are increasing approximately 12.8 % - 14.2% depending on selected plan
 - Over the past couple years, inflation has driven up many costs, from contractual raises to staff, to construction supplies, gasoline, heating costs, road salt, vehicles and more
 - Supply chain issues have extended the time period for major equipment and vehicles to arrive after ordering
 - Police patrol officers are budgeted at 90% to better approximate historical spending, primarily due to staffing shortages. Dispatch services are budgeted at 100% now after being at 90% for FY24
- Cost savings and efficiencies:
 - Essex Junction will continue to pay towards Police Department and Assessing services
 - Capital transfers out of the operating budget were level-funded from FY24 at \$470,000

General Fund Highlights

(continued)

- A variety of **staffing changes** are proposed, including the following:
 - Essex Free Library is proposed to have 15 additional hours per week to be allocated between two current part-time employees and substitute hours which will help with programming & coverage
 - The Library budget also includes funding for an Assistant Library Director, which would be a promotional opportunity for existing staff
 - The FY25 budget proposes the addition of a part-time Administrative Assistant to the Manager's Office and a part-time Trails Coordinator within the Parks and Recreation Department.
 - Allocations of personnel costs between the General Fund and the Enterprise Funds have been updated, especially for Parks & Recreation
 - The position of Senior Center Coordinator is no longer needed with the Town not staffing the Essex Area Senior Center.
 - The budget includes a reduction from three to two Senior Van Drivers for FY25
 - The Finance Department no longer needs part-time staffing or consulting in FY25

General Fund Highlights

(continued)

- The Fire Department budget includes stipends for volunteers to be on call for evening and weekend shifts. FY25 also aims to increase the pay rates for the per diem firefighters by \$1/hour to better match market rates. Additionally, the budget proposal seeks to incentivize volunteer coverage by including stipends of \$40 per evening and weekend shift for four volunteers per shift
- The Utilities Clerk in Finance had 10% of salaries and benefits move into the General Fund from the Water/Sewer Fund
- In Public Works, two part-time staff have had their full salaries and benefits moved to the Water/Sewer fund
- The Police Department budget includes an elimination of a Seasonal Records Clerk and the Records Clerk/Dispatcher will become solely a Records Clerk
- Stormwater summer interns both fully paid by Town General Fund
- A 10% portion of the GIS Coordinator position in our Information Technology Department has been reallocated to the Assessing Department

General Fund Highlights

(continued)

- Fund balance of \$398,100 will be used to offset the tax rate, as follows:
 - \$325,000 from General Fund balance for FY25 tax reduction
 - \$ 40,000 for Economic Development Report
 - \$ 25,000 for First Responder Study
 - \$ 5,000 for Information Technology expenses
 - \$ 3,100 for MainTrac tablets for Parks & Facilities

Summary of Changes in Operations

Proposed FY 2025 Budget

The tax rate increase differs from the budget increase because:

1. Non-tax revenue sources have increased with the sharing of Police and Assessing services with the City of Essex Junction and with the budgeting of higher interest revenue.
2. An estimated increase in the grand list of 0.75% has been included in the tax rate, which is slightly lower than the three-year average of 0.89%

Estimated Tax Impact

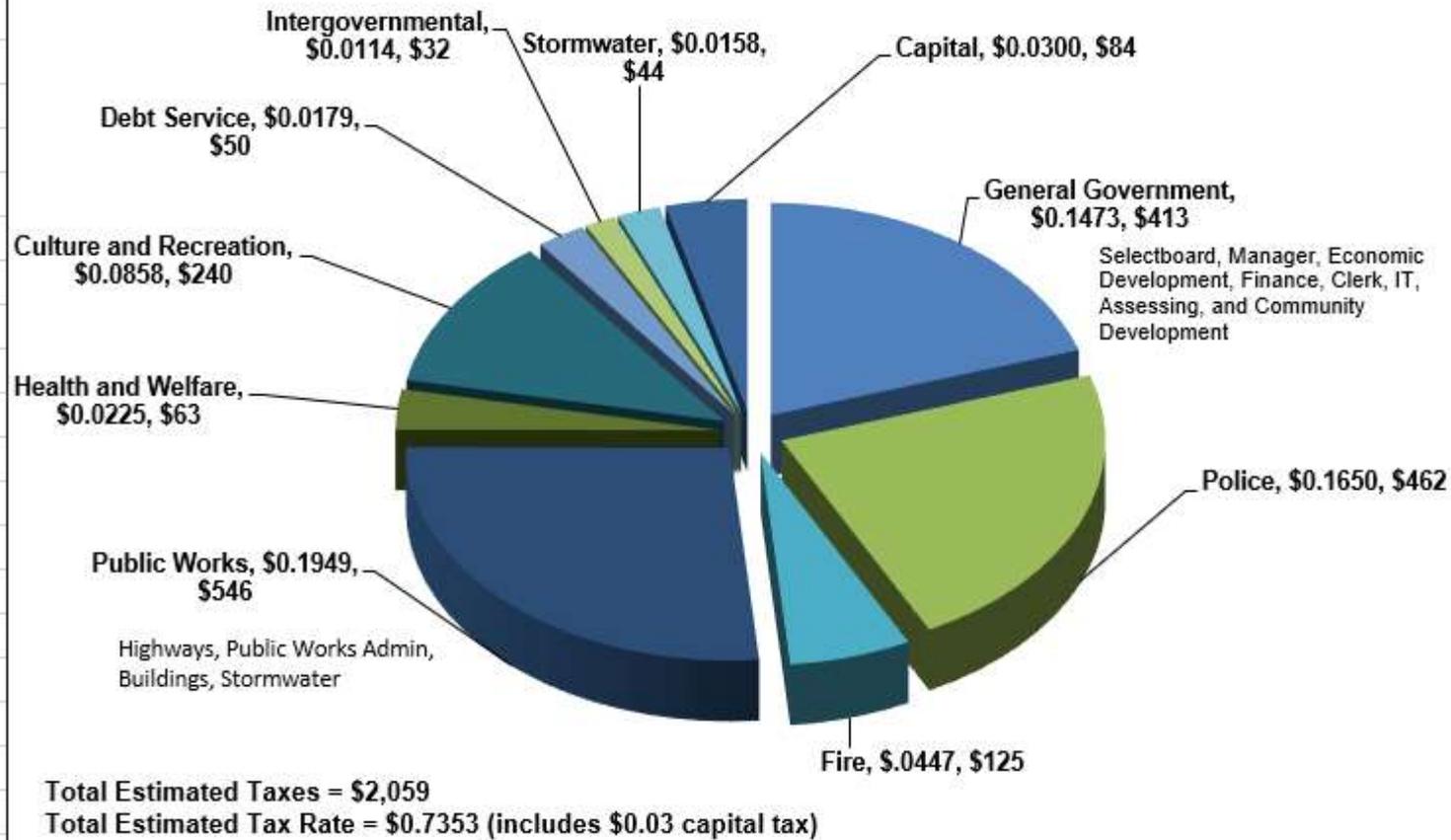
Town Property	FY24 Rate	FY25 Est. Rate	% Change	\$ Change
Town General Tax	0.6766	0.7053	4.24%	\$80.36

- **Assumptions**

- Average residence value \$ 280,000
- Grand List growth of 0.75 %
- Use of \$ 398,100 from Fund Balance
- Tax rate above does not include Capital Tax Rate of .03 or Local Agreement Rate of typically around .002 cents

Essex Tax Dollars at Work

FY2025 Estimated Town Tax Rates and Taxes on \$280,000 Assessed Value Home



Town of Essex



Thank you