



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING – TOWN COUNCIL'S TENTATIVE BUDGET
2015 - 2016
Council Chambers/Auditorium – Town Hall
7:00 P.M.**

April 2, 2015

The public hearing was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Woods, gave an overview of the proposed budget for 2015- 2016, which is attached. He stated it met the needs of the community without affecting services. He indicated there was a proposed increase of 1.06 or 3%. The new mill rate as proposed would be \$35.83. The education budget was increased by 3.5%, which allowed for priority maintenance, bus purchase and technology needs.

I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hannah Siegal, 57 Meadowview Court: She stated her support for the BOE budget and felt any cuts would curtail the gifted program in the middle schools. While attending the gifted program she felt she was learning at a higher level than in her regular classes and felt if struggling students were pulled from classes, gifted students should as well. Budget cuts would lower the schools rating and encourage mediocrity. Ms. Siegal also commented that staff could be cut and class size increased as well as supplies cut. Education should be the Town Council's top priority.

Mary Houle, 253 Dix Avenue: She was in support of the Board of Education and asked the Town Council to restore the budget to the full requested amount. Mrs. Hull stated the parents were supportive of the schools and their children and while not attending meetings, they were home attempting to repair all the things the budget shortfalls would bring. PTO's work to cover items associated with chairs for visitors, science and enrichment programs, per class stipends to defer the cost of field trips, headphones for Ipads and students themselves have raised almost \$20,000 through the sponsorship of a Math-A-Thon fundraiser. She understood the Council had no say in how the BOE spent money but also understood that chairs for visitors, etc. were not Dr. Collins priority when the budgeted dollars barely covered the minimum necessary to meet mandated cost increases. She stated the school system was one of the reasons families moved to Newington and felt most families would be willing to pay a little more in property taxes to ensure their children had a better chance of achieving their educational goals.

Jennifer Win-Johnson: (letter read by Mary Hull) – She supported the BOE budget and urged the Council to increase the amount so the BOE could be in tip top shape. Ultimately people want to be able to sell their homes to people who want to move to Newington and the top notch education system is what draws young

families to Town. Newington will continue to attract people who value education, spend money in the community and contribute to the community.

Gail Slusarski, 40 Grandview Avenue: She thanked the Town Council for their time spent on the budget as well as their families for allowing you the time. She was proud of the school system but as a fiscal conservative she had to give up things she would like to have or do and felt the Town had to do the same thing. There was an agreement between the Council and the Board of Ed and it was up to Dr. Collins and staff as to how the money would be spent. Mrs. Slusarski reminded the public of the \$588k added from the CIP and supported no additional increase in the budget. Services had to be maintained for all in Town and the Town could not spend an unlimited amount of money.

Kim Dorman, 43 Ivy Lane: She had lived in Simsbury but moved to Newington for the diversity, multi-cultural environment and the schools. Cutting the Board of Education budget by reducing staff size should not be a topic for discussion. Additional housing should be a bigger concern. Any cuts in the budget would mean less money for technology, books, aids and nurses. If fees were increased to participate in sports, it might discourage students to join.

Amy Alexander, 16 Brentwood Road: She stated she had two children in school and supported the Board of Education budget. Her son's third grade teacher had received a pink slip last week and felt strongly the teacher had worked very hard and should be rewarded and not given a pink slip. There was no reason to let any of the 78 teachers go. Class sizes should not be increased or the Explorer Program cut since they were important to the quality of teaching. She was willing to pay a little more and felt strongly the system needed to progress to be successful in the future.

Third grade student at Ann Reynolds School: He loved his school thanks to his teachers, felt he got an excellent education and did not want that to change. He encouraged the Council to increase the BOE money to what it needed to give everyone a quality education.

Christopher Kerr, Manchester: He stated he was one of the teachers who might be reduced at the end of the year and was a product of the Academy hiring process. He taught technology at the high school. Dr. Collins had a big vision with big numbers and the Town had to maintain a certain budget, which he understood. Perhaps there were things in the educational budget that needed to be moved, perhaps more needed to be spent to flourish the investment but hoped it would not be abandoned.

Peter Arbur, 133 Tremont Street: He stated he was concerned about the Town's fiscal picture and wanted everyone to take into account the Town had little or no available land for future development. In past years the Town and grand list grew every year and the tax rate was stabilized. That was not the case currently. According to information from the assessor the current mill rate of \$34.77 and a collection rate of 98% would provide approximately \$77k of additional funds. This was based on an increase of the grand list of \$2.3 million. The needed money would have to come from taxes. During the past eight years the grand list had decreased by .5 percent. Newington did not have the benefit of new development yet over the last eight years taxes had increased by 29 percent. The Town needed to live in reality and not utopia. Mr. Arbur supported the projected budget since he felt it was realistic. He wanted to remind everyone that \$588k was added to the BOE budget for needed maintenance projects.

Kurt Larson, 32 Magnolia Street: He congratulated everyone involved in the budget process for their hard work. He wanted to comment on the surplus, and he thought there was too much attention paid to retaining it since it was well above surrounding towns. He asked why Newington had to have a 3% increase if so much money was in this fund.

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive: He stated the Board of Ed was not getting a cut but getting \$1.8 million in addition to \$588k from the CIP, and the STEM Academy was being supported by \$1.8 million. He was confused with all the numbers in the press, at meetings, etc. He thought the CIP cap was \$6.3 million but it appeared to be \$6.84. On the school website it indicated the budget was \$68k short and in the paper recently it stated there would be ten layoffs. He indicated on Facebook administrators stated they would give up their raises instead of teacher layoffs; however, he did not see that adjustment to the salary amounts in the budget. He said that if the teachers had gotten a 2% increase instead of 3% the budget would be \$446k lower and 1% carried over to the next year would mean \$900k lower. A lot of money was proposed to be spent on education. He appreciated all the parents, teachers and BOE who came to the meeting but wanted to hear from parents what specifically drew them to the Newington school system since the numbers from

the Mastery scores were not good. Other parents told him they were going out of Town where it was more culturally diverse, the school system better, and the Mastery PSAT scores were better.

Cynthia Mathieu, 68 Pepper Bush Lane: She strongly supported the education program in Newington and believed the technology budget was very important especially the STEM curriculum. Companies were looking for individuals with STEM backgrounds and Newington needed to continue this program. She was concerned about the proposed cut to the French curriculum in which her son participated. Chrome books purchases should not be delayed since many schools already had these in classes.

Gary Bolles, 128 Burdon Lane: He stated \$588k was restored to the BOE budget, which came from three different accounts. One of the accounts was public safety and appreciated the Acting Chief's delay on the public address system. He knew the Council would like to give everything to everybody but it couldn't be done. He supported the proposed budget and thanked the Councilors for reaching across the aisle in developing the budget.

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Drive: The proposed budget included something for everyone but satisfied nobody, especially those who had to foot the bill. He questioned why there was almost \$500k for Town computer equipment and how this item would benefit the average resident. Taxes were being raised, greater financial burdens were being imposed and wanted the Council to remember that many in Town found it difficult to pay the increase.

Andrew Cucinella, 58 Francis Drive: He and his wife decided to move to Newington and expected to expand their house to stay in town. He compared other towns' schools system in the area before moving. As a teacher, everyone he knew worked 100% and were stretched thin. He encouraged the Council to increase the budgeted amount to the Board of Education.

Emily Guion, 20 Kirkham Street: She felt Dr. Collins and the Board of Education had done a great job in trying to set the children up for the future in technology. Computers were very important for children to do research and do homework. Going to the library to research through an encyclopedia and then type a paper, was not how a person would get a job in the future. She was in strong support of the school budget since by cutting the budget there was less available to the students. Newington competed with the magnet schools and needed to entice children to stay in Town since once they left, the residents would have to pay for the magnet tuition.

Mathew Rossi, 17 Franklin Circle: He was a teacher in Town and was concerned about competing with the magnet schools. The Town had to pay for each child who went to a magnet and was an amount that could not be cut from the budget. By supporting education in Town he felt it actually saved the Town money in the long term. He asked the Council to think about the effect of education cuts that would be felt for years to come.

Jonah Cohen, 135 Webster Court: He thanked the Town Council for the hard work put into the budget. He had no children in the system but was concerned about the number of teachers who had received pink slips. He felt the teachers he had worked with from Newington at the Children's Museum in West Hartford were very good, hardworking, worked long hours and did not get the support they should. Education was a long term investment and a reason why people moved to Newington.

Brenda Morales, 143 Williamstown Court: As a teacher in Town, it was very disheartening to see that 78 teachers got pink slips. She strongly supported the Board of Education budget and asked the Council to reconsider the cuts.

Steven Silvia, 45 Basswood Street: He stated the speakers had made good points about why the Board of Education should be given \$78 million. He was troubled that the system gave out 78 pink slips to teachers and felt the first individuals who should have gotten them were the administrators. He felt they should lead by example. He felt there was redundancy on both the Board of Education and the Town side of government that should be eliminated in order to save money for the taxpayers. He mentioned the possibility of renting busses to other Towns and any money raised would be kept for the Board of Education.

Nancy Petronio, 44 Centerwood Road: As a Board of Education member, parent and curriculum committee member, she wanted to comment on 1) there were comments about the original request being 5% but it was actually 4.87% 2) the requested amount included contractual obligations like health benefits, salaries and special ed needs, which made up 3% of the requested 4.87 percent. 3) Many items that would make Newington a great 21st century school system were not included in the budget 4) Redundancies were an item that could be reviewed and other items could be looked at. She was in full support of the Board of Education budget and asked the Council to reconsider the budget request.

Mary Irwin, 44 Kirkham Street: As a lifelong resident it was a dream to become a teacher in Town. She felt they needed to support the schools as a long term investment so that children could stay in Newington for years to come.

Peter Arburr, 133 Tremont Street: He asked about the surplus fund in Town and hoped an answer regarding it would be brought up by the Council.

Peter Kemp, Music Teacher at Paterson School: He stated 1) it was very important for Newington to be competitive and was also important fiscally to be the best they could be since Newington paid for every student that left Town. 2) One out of five teachers received notices the other day and wondered what that would do to the Town.

William Lanza, 82 Allston Road: He stated he felt the teachers were overpaid.

The Public Hearing ended at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk
Att.



Town of Newington

March 10, 2015

Public Hearing

Town Manager's

Proposed Budget

Fiscal Year 2015-2016

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Mill Rate Calculation

| | Proposed |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| General Government | 33,336,226 |
| Board of Education | 69,828,928 |
| Debt Service & CIP | 6,840,000 |
| MDC | 3,404,400 |
| Employee Leave Liability Fund | 92,900 |
| Total Appropriations | 113,502,454 |
| Non-Tax Revenue | -21,505,217 |
| Applied Fund Balance | -2,250,000 |
| Amount to be Raised by Taxes (A) | 89,747,237 |
| Net Adjusted Grand List (B) | 2,505,920,404 |
| Mill Rate (A/B) | 35.81 |

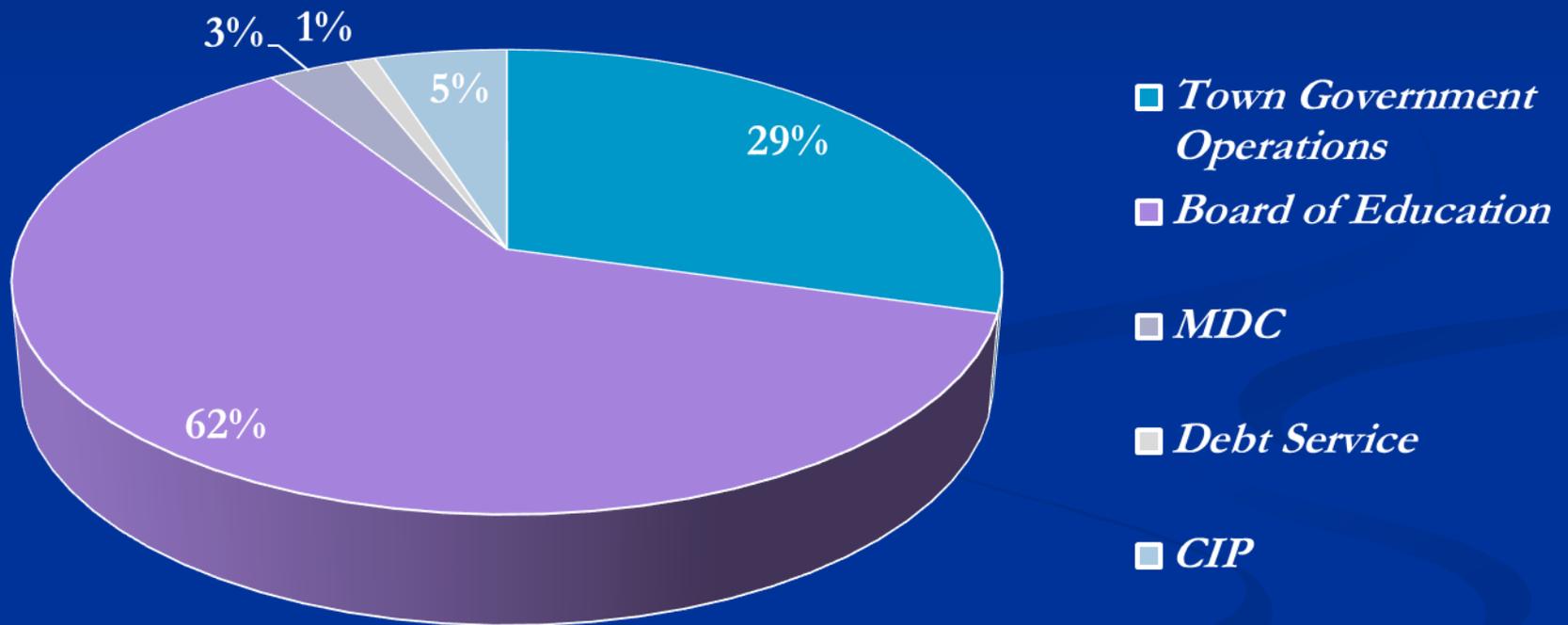
Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Overview

| | Proposed | \$ Change | % Change |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Total Appropriations | 113,502,454 | 3,419,162 | 3.1 |
| General Government | 33,336,226 | 1,010,364 | 3.1 |
| Board of Education | 69,828,928 | 1,789,457 | 2.6 |
| Debt Service & CIP | 6,840,000 | 431,741 | 6.7 |
| MDC | 3,404,400 | 187,600 | 5.8 |
| Non-Tax Revenue | 21,505,217 | 828,877 | 4.0 |
| Applied Fund Balance | 2,250,000 | -150,000 | -6.3 |
| Amount to be Raised by Taxes | 89,747,237 | 2,740,285 | 3.2 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

General Fund Appropriations



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

General Government – Major Changes

| Appropriation | \$ Change |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Medical Insurance | 464,274 |
| Wage Increases | 377,608 |
| Retirement | 333,220 |
| Total | 1,175,102 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Capital Improvement Plan Funding Policy

■ Maximum future debt service ■ \$ 3.8 million

+

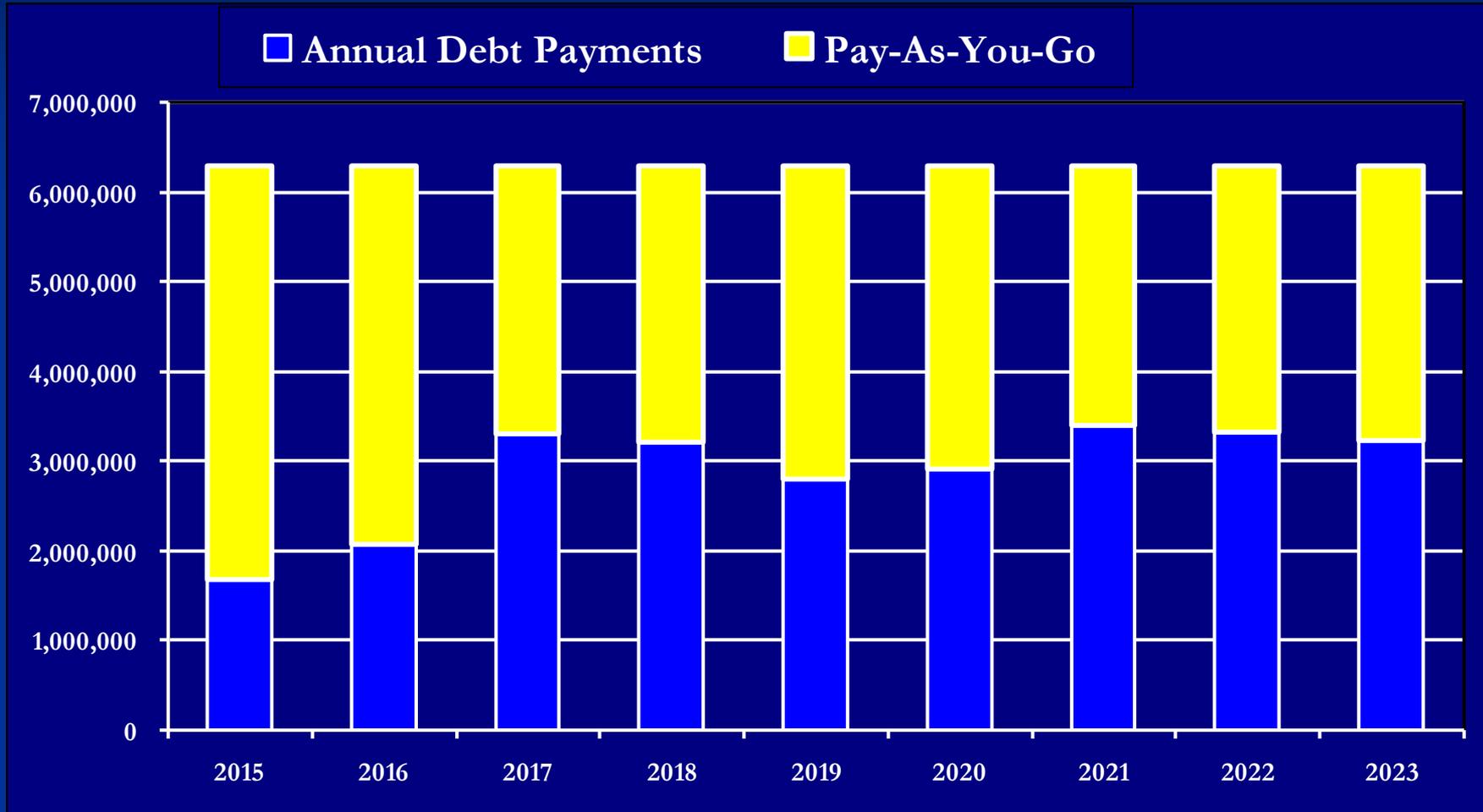
■ Annual Depreciation ■ \$ 2.5 million

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■ Total Debt + Pay-As-You-Go ■ \$ 6.3 million

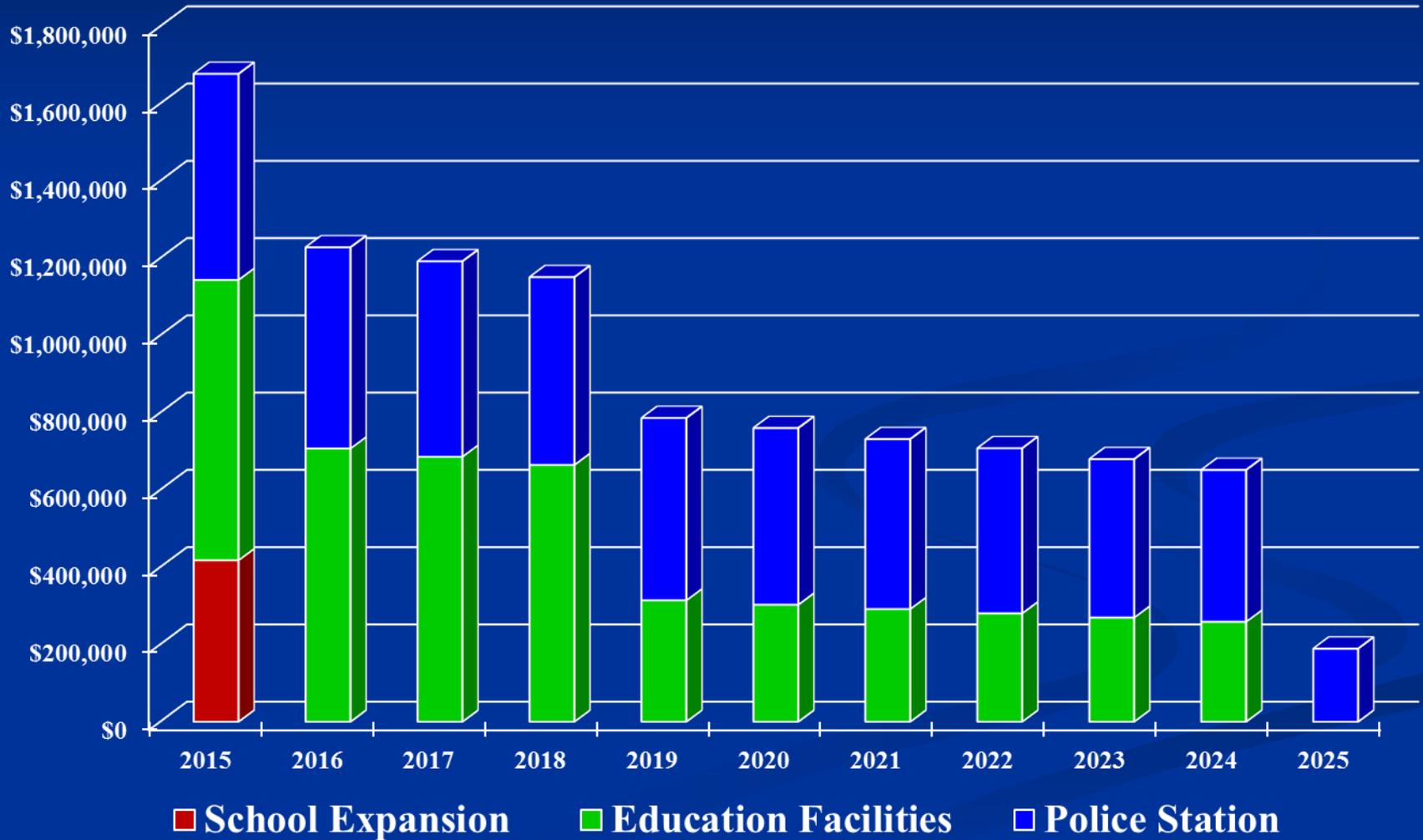
Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2014-15

Debt & Capital Improvement Plan Funding Policy



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Debt Schedule



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Capital Improvement Plan Funding

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total Debt Service | 1,227,831 |
| Total PAYG | 5,612,169 |
| Total CIP | 6,840,000 |
| Offset by: | |
| School Construction Grants | 932,000 |
| Cell Tower Rent | 40,000 |
| Net Cost | 5,868,000 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Capital Improvement Plan

| Project Title | \$ |
|--|-----------|
| NHS Career Tech | 1,869,500 |
| Marcap Property Acquisition | 536,200 |
| Information Technology Reserve | 438,900 |
| Equipment Replacement Reserve | 415,000 |
| Highway Garage Oil to Gas Conversion | 271,578 |
| Fire Dept SCBA Replacement Phase I of II | 237,500 |
| Public Safety Radio System Enhancement Phase I of II | 217,250 |
| Road Resurfacing and Reconstruction | 170,000 |
| General Property Improvements | 150,000 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Capital Improvement Plan

| Project Title | \$ |
|--|---------|
| Mill Pond Playscape Replacement | 150,000 |
| Fire Apparatus Lease Purchase Payments | 138,241 |
| Fire Department Breathing Air System Replacement | 130,000 |
| Public School CIP Reserve | 125,000 |
| Revaluation 2015 | 116,000 |
| Drainage Improvements | 100,000 |
| Park, Pool and Playfield Improvements | 100,000 |
| Library Boiler Replacement | 60,000 |
| Town Buildings Mechanical Reserve | 50,000 |

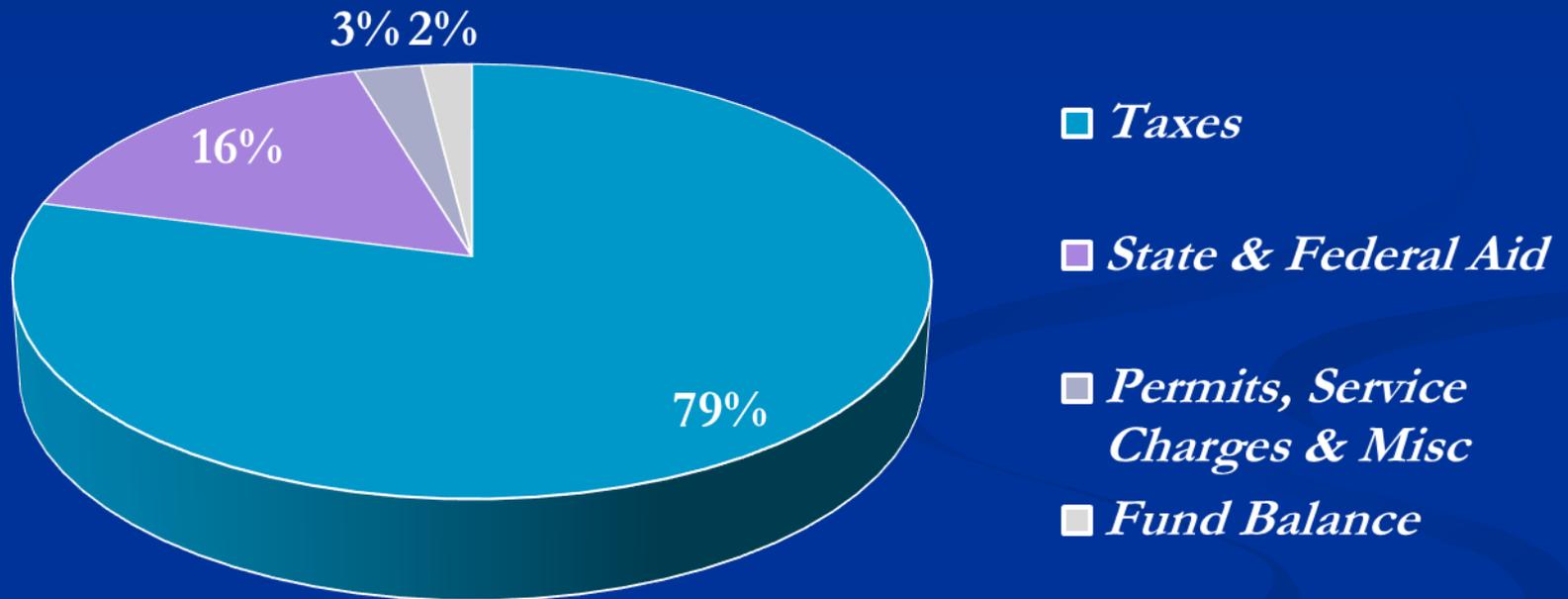
Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Capital Improvement Plan

| Project Title | \$ |
|--|--------|
| Sidewalks and Stonewall Repair | 50,000 |
| Landfill Conversion to Transfer Station | 50,000 |
| Fire Company 2 & 3 – Heating System Replacement | 47,000 |
| Fire Company 2 & 3 – Emergency Generator Replacement | 45,000 |
| Radio Replacement Reserve | 40,000 |
| Fire Company 2 & 3 – Window Replacement | 30,000 |
| Public Building Resurfacing Program | 75,000 |
| Traffic Signal Repair & Replacement Reserve | 25,000 |
| Synthetic Turf Replacement Reserve | 25,000 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

General Fund Revenue



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

General Fund Revenue

| Non-Tax Revenue Category | 2015-16 | Net Change from <u>Adopted</u> 2014-15 |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Prior Year/Prorated Taxes | 1,611,350 | 26,350 |
| State & Federal Aid* | 18,520,270 | 986,218 |
| Permits, Rentals & Fines | 449,600 | -39,872 |
| Interest Income | 68,500 | 22,150 |
| Service Charges | 566,075 | -16,375 |
| Refunds & Miscellaneous | 162,710 | 54,852 |
| Transfers from Public Building & Other Funds | 126,712 | -204,446 |
| Total | 21,505,217 | 828,877 |

* Includes Payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT).

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Fund Balance (000's)

| | | Expenditure Level | % |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-------|
| Available Fund Balance 6/30/14 | \$15,067 | \$110,083 | 13.7% |
| Estimated Excess Revenues | \$850 | | |
| Assigned to 2015-16 | -\$2,250 | | |
| Projected Fund Balance 6/30/15 | \$13,667 | \$113,502 | 12% |
| Retention @ 10% | - \$11,350 | \$113,502 | 10% |
| Remaining | \$2,317 | | |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Fund Balance



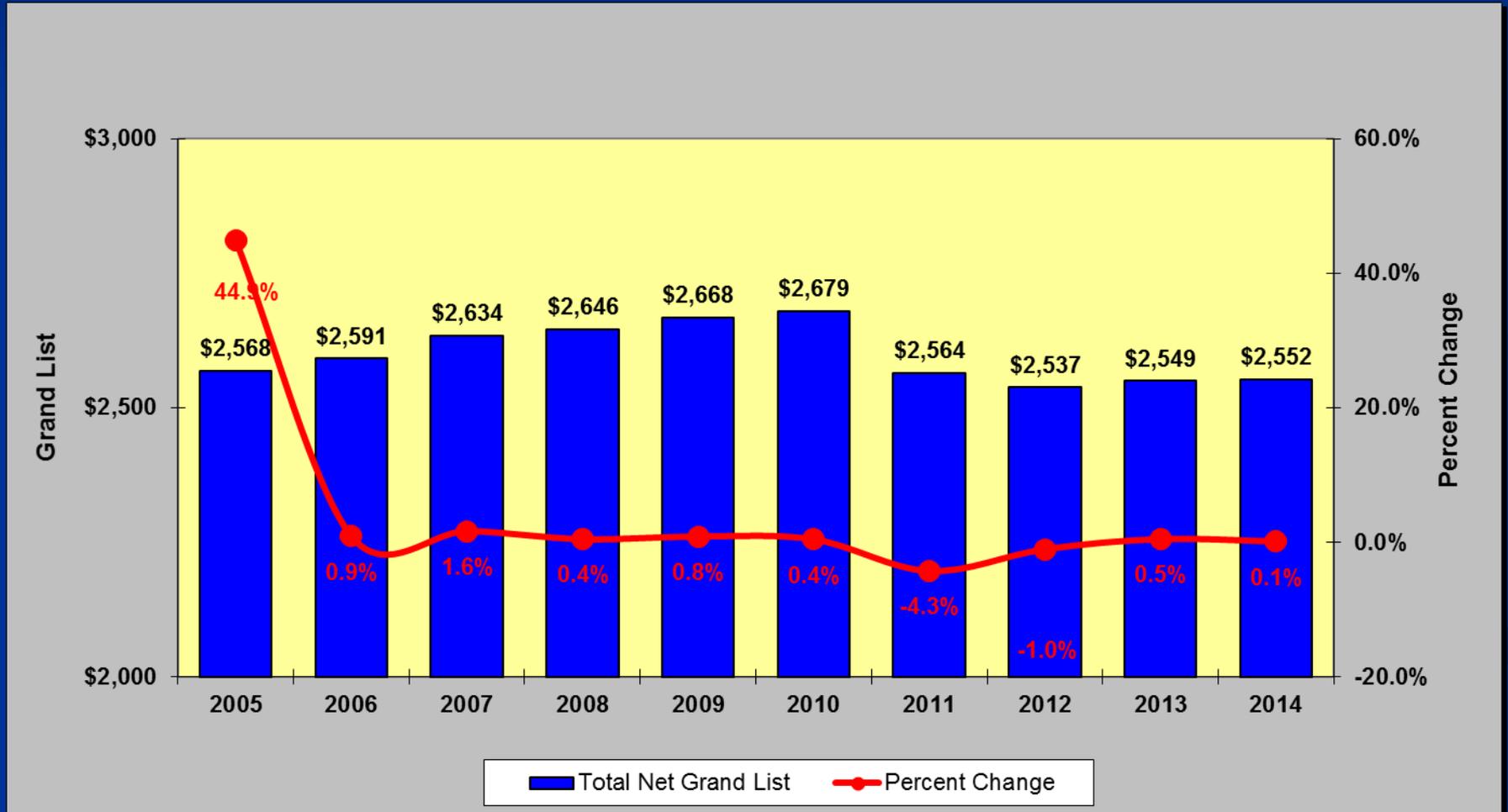
Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Net Grand List

| CATEGORY | 2013 | 2014 | % CHANGE | \$ CHANGE |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| REAL ESTATE | \$2,197,055,035 | \$2,198,497,030 | 0.1% | \$1,441,995 |
| PERSONAL PROPERTY | 136,146,200 | 136,180,879 | 0.0% | 34,679 |
| MOTOR VEHICLE | <u>216,032,070</u> | <u>216,823,515</u> | <u>0.4%</u> | <u>791,445</u> |
| TOTAL | \$2,549,233,305 | \$2,551,501,424 | 0.1% | \$2,268,119 |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Net Taxable Grand List Growth (000s)



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Summary of Significant Real Estate Changes

| Changes to 2014 Grand List | \$ |
|---|-------------------|
| HARVEST VILLAGE | 3,469,120 |
| PROPERTIES WITH BUILDING PERMITS | 3,413,848 |
| BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS | -1,190,708 |
| COURT & OTHER REDUCTIONS | -1,459,016 |
| INCREASE IN EXEMPTIONS | -2,791,289 |
| NET CHANGE | 1,441,955 |

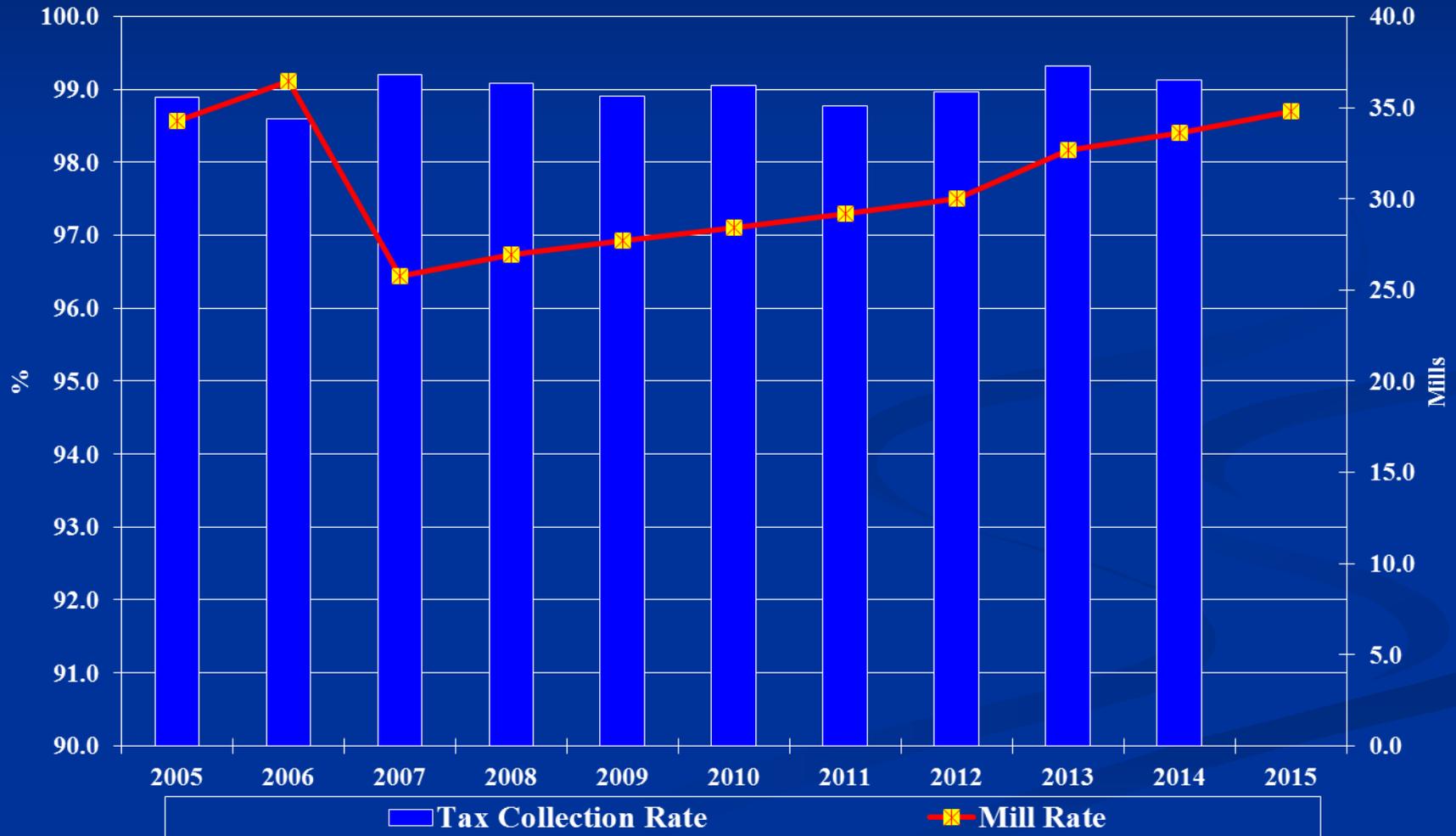
Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Effect of Manufacturer's Equipment Exemption on Personal Property

| | TOTAL ASSESSMENT | EXEMPTION | NET ASSESEMENT | % EXEMPT |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| GKN AEROSPACE | 24,315,170 | 24,184,220 | 130,950 | -99% |
| MANDELL PROPERTIES | 15,718,530 | 8,706,350 | 7,012,180 | -55% |
| SAPUTO DAIRY FOODS | 14,587,360 | 11,730,900 | 2,856,460 | -80% |
| RENO PROPERTIES II | 9,898,336 | 1,408,740 | 8,489,596 | -14% |

Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Tax Collection & Mill Rate



Town Manager's Proposed Budget – FY 2015-16

Mill Rate – Residential Taxpayer Impact

| Fiscal Year | Mill Rate | Average Assessment | Tax Amount | \$ Change | % Change |
|-------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| 2014-15 | 34.77 | 158,368 | 5,506 | | |
| 2015-16 | 35.81 | 158,368 | 5,672 | 166 | 3% |



Town of Newington

March 10, 2015

Public Hearing

Town Manager's

Proposed Budget

Fiscal Year 2015-2016