



TOWN OF STAFFORD



Budget Information Packet

FISCAL YEAR 2024 -2025

CITIZENS GUIDE TO THE BUDGET

What is the Budget?

The budget serves as a strategic resource allocation plan, intricately aligned with community goals, preferences, and needs. It functions as a comprehensive policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communication device all rolled into one.

The annual budget process delineates the proposed plan of expenditures and revenues for a given fiscal year – commencing on July 1st and concluding the following June 30th – for the Town’s primary operating fund, known as the General Fund. This process necessitates the involvement of numerous stakeholders to craft a responsible budget that delivers essential services without burdening taxpayers with excessive costs.

The General Fund budget encompasses the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, Stafford Public Library, and Debt Service. Additionally, the Water Pollution Control Facility and Service District Commission operate as distinct user-taxing districts. In essence, the town’s operating budget serves as its annual fiscal plan and roadmap, detailing the anticipated revenues and expenditures during the regular course of business throughout the fiscal year. This includes allocations for salaries, benefits, utilities, supplies, and debt payments.

Comparing “Household” Budgets

Your Household		The Town
Income	→	Revenue
Expense, Spending	→	Expenditures
Taxes	→	Mandates, required services
Savings account	→	Fund balance
Utilities, food, fuel	→	Utilities, fuel, salaries, benefits
Home maintenance	→	Facilities maintenance (roads, buildings, parks)
Car purchases, home improvements	→	Capital Projects
Mortgage or rent	→	Debt service
Loans	→	Bonds
“Nice-to-have” items	→	Enhanced services/programs

The Mill Rate

Calculating your taxes: One “mill” produces one dollar for each \$1,000 of property assessment. The assessment is 70% of the properties’ current market value as of the last revaluation date(10/1/2020).

The FY 2023-2024 mill rate for Stafford is 36.76. Therefore, a property with an assessed value of \$150,000 would generate $\$150 \times 36.76 = \$5,514$ per year in property tax.

One mill for FY 2024-2025 equates to \$874,461.

Grand List

FY 2024-2025 Budget based on the 2023 Grand List Figures:

1. The total 2023 Grand List stands at \$927,562,777. There's been an overall net increase of \$3,459,694, constituting a 0.40% rise.
2. Real estate reflects an increase of \$1,640,909, marking a 0.24% uptick. This rise can be attributed to the addition of 8 new residential dwellings in various construction stages, along with 6 permits reaching completion, including Walgreens. Additionally, numerous small-scale projects such as garages, additions, decks, inground pools, sheds, renovations, and complete rehabs have contributed to this increase.
3. However, the 2023 Grand List saw only 3 additional dwellings due to PA 16-45 (*an Act Concerning Concrete Foundations*) with a reduction of \$119,590 in assessment. Nonetheless, 9 residential foundations have been repaired, leading to an increase of \$575,170 in assessed value. To date, 89 residential foundations affected by PA 16-45 have been repaired, restoring their value. The total reduction due to PA 16-45 now stands at \$5,528,240, affecting 87 residential dwellings.
4. Personal property increased by \$8,897,070, representing a growth of 16.52%. This growth is attributed to the addition of new personal property and equipment to businesses.
5. The motor vehicle list decreased by \$7,078,285 or 5.64%. The market driving values, which had surged to over 25% in 2021 and into 2022, are now experiencing reductions due to changes in supply and demand dynamics.

What does this budget entail, and why is there a requested increase of \$1,377,918 in the Board of Selectmen's budget?

Board of Selectmen Budget Explained

A substantial portion of this increase, \$850,000, is dedicated to new funding for paving. Taxpayer feedback consistently emphasizes road conditions, with inquiries such as "When will you pave or fix MY road?" This added funding represents a modest beginning to tackle the extensive road network within the Town of Stafford. It's imperative to take meaningful action now rather than delay further. If not now, then when?

On February 29, 2024, First Selectman Morrison and Public Works Director Devin Cowperthwaite delivered a presentation at the Community Center, which was also live-streamed, focusing on paving. Historically, the proposed paving budget has hovered around the level we are currently recommending, aiming to effectively address the dire needs of our road system. While we acknowledge the significance of this increase, we believe it should have been implemented long before this Fiscal Year 24-25 proposal. By proposing this funding level, we have maintained fiscal discipline with minimal spending increases

across various departments, prioritizing the community's welfare, for the greater good. Previous budget defeats have always resulted in a reeducation of the paving budget to attain a passable budget.

We ask you to consider our current road conditions and the feedback many of you give us each day. Should this budget face defeat and further cuts be required, we fear the paving budget will once again bear the brunt of reductions.

The Public Works Department is committed to improving our roads, but without adequate funding, their efforts will be limited to patching, allowing our roads to deteriorate further.

Other notable allocations include:

- \$125,000 to replace the leaking roof of the Parks Department garage.
- An increase of \$91,624 in new expenses for the Stafford Ambulance Association.
- \$50,000 for a Capital Improvement Plan, recommended by the Auditors, to prepare for the future.
- \$20,000 for a new roll-off container for the Transfer Station, crucial for hauling trash out of town.
- A \$30,000 increase in the costs of Workers Compensation and General Liability insurance.

Historical Budget Comparison

A side-by-side analysis of budgetary data from previous fiscal years.

Fiscal Year	Town	Debt Service	Schools	Total Adopted Budget	% Change	Taxes	All Other Revenue	Mill Rate
FY 2023-2024	12,172,418	3,018,352	30,252,862	45,443,632	1.59%	32,395,042	13,048,590	36.76
FY 2022-2023	12,444,930	2,408,276	29,879,413	44,732,619	3.66%	30,953,845	13,778,774	35.78
FY 2021-2022	11,638,301	2,426,810	29,086,761	43,151,872	3.51%	29,065,589	14,086,283	34.93
FY 2020-2021	11,141,165	2,256,675	28,289,798	41,687,638	1.09%	28,017,469	13,670,169	34.93
FY 2019-2020	10,896,637	2,288,850	28,052,217	41,237,704		27,712,302	13,525,402	34.93

Town of Stafford Board of Selectmen FY24/25 Budget Detail Document

REF #		APPROVED EXPENDITURES FY 2022-2023	APPROVED EXPENDITURES FY 2023-2024	APPROVED EXPENDITURES FY 2024-2025	<i>Difference</i>	<i>%</i>
100	Board of Selectmen	692,494.00	246,450.00	233,354.00	-13,096.00	-5.31%
105	Grants & Community Develop		94,837.00	115,151.00	20,314.00	21.42%
110	Probate Court	6,000.00	6,000.00	5,000.00	-1,000.00	-16.67%
115	IT Technology	150,267.00	224,438.00	222,482.00	-1,956.00	-0.87%
120	Registrars	66,152.00	77,674.00	100,319.00	22,645.00	29.15%
125	Human Resources	5,905.00	63,127.00	70,953.00	7,826.00	12.40%
130	Board of Finance	87,300.00	87,300.00	85,100.00	-2,200.00	-2.52%
140	Assessors	102,345.00	223,461.00	227,877.00	4,416.00	1.98%
150	Board of Assessment Appeals	6,361.00	6,848.00	6,985.00	137	2.00%
160	Tax Collector	91,280.00	207,190.00	197,001.00	-10,189.00	-4.92%
170	Finance Department	108,306.00	357,352.00	361,368.00	4,016.00	1.12%
180	Town Counsel	46,500.00	50,000.00	40,000.00	-10,000.00	-20.00%
190	Town Clerk	93,592.00	288,973.00	292,165.00	3,192.00	1.10%
200	Buildings	632,462.00	650,172.00	670,903.00	20,731.00	3.19%
205	Fuel Oil	89,000.00	90,000.00	83,000.00	-7,000.00	-7.78%
210	Fixed Charges	2,474,405.00	1,292,483.00	1,322,627.00	30,144.00	2.33%
220	Capital Outlay	60,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	0	0.00%
230	Judgment & Losses	3,000.00	0	0	0	0.00%
240	Safety & Protection	86,430.00	149,493.00	172,792.00	23,299.00	15.59%
241	Police Protection	922,940.00	839,745.00	904,780.00	65,035.00	7.74%
245	Emergency Services	1,170,930.00	1,101,939.00	1,193,563.00	91,624.00	8.31%
248	Fire Marshals	80,601.00	136,192.00	0	-136,192.00	-100.00%
270	Building/Zoning Department	216,866.00	381,430.00	517,462.00	136,032.00	35.66%
280	Transfer Station Operations	623,570.00	691,205.00	710,650.00	19,445.00	2.81%
300	General Highways	2,315,695.00	2,229,256.00	3,240,790.00	1,011,534.00	45.38%
310	Town Aid	396,978.00	0	0	0	0.00%
320	Recreation Commission	138,320.00	84,107.00	85,159.00	1,052.00	1.25%
330	Parks	434,380.00	587,733.00	589,624.00	1,891.00	0.32%
345	Holidays	29,000.00	34,050.00	34,050.00	0	0.00%
370	Economic Development	2,000.00	0	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.00%
380	Conservation Commission	2,000.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	1,000.00	100.00%
450	Arts Commission	4,000.00	2,000.00	4,000.00	2,000.00	100.00%
490	Pollution Abatement	5	-	0	0	0.00%
500	Health District	57,000.00	56,000.00	56,000.00	0	0.00%
505	Community Center	172,931.00	231,545.00	233,587.00	2,042.00	0.88%
510	Stafford Family Services	406,033.00	514,975.00	494,860.00	-20,115.00	-3.91%
670	Transfer Out Fund	95,425.00	145,000.00	177,000.00	32,000.00	22.07%
790	Capital Projects/Leases		397,483.00	475,774.00	78,291.00	19.70%
	TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	11,870,473.00	11,599,458.00	12,977,376.00	1,377,918.00	11.88%
*	DEBT SERVICE	2,408,276.00	3,018,352.00	3,015,033.00	-3,319.00	-0.11%
440	PUBLIC LIBRARY	574,457.00	572,960.00	587,180.50	14,220.50	2.48%
	TOTAL BOARD OF SELECTMEN	14,853,206.00	15,190,770.00	16,579,589.50	1,388,819.50	9.14%