MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF FINANCE

Dear East Haddam Citizens:

We are entering the 2020-2021 budget season, and the East Haddam Board of Finance encourages our citizens to participate in the budget process. We publish this Citizens' Guide as a resource to assist you in understanding how our town develops its budget.

We have included a useful calendar on the back page of this Guide with key budget dates. Check out our website for workshop dates, times and locations, or try the QR on the back page of this guide for direct access. This year we kick-off the budget season with a Tri-Board meeting (Boards of Education, Selectmen and Finance) on Monday, December 9, 2019 at 7 pm at the Municipal Office Complex.

Last budget season the Board established a goal of presenting a budget that would pass at the first referendum. We were successful in this endeavor, and strive to do the same for the 2020-2021 budget.

This year the Board of Finance continues with the same spirit of cooperation, working with the Board of Education and newly elected Board of Selectmen, and we invite public input as the Board conducts its review and deliberation of the budget.

We strive to keep our citizens informed of the Town's finances. The Communications Subcommittee has published a series of articles in the East Haddam News on a variety of topics, to include the first quarter budget results, which are coming in the next couple weeks, and we will publish budget-status information quarterly going forward. You may also find these articles and budget reports on the Town's website.

The Board takes a long-term approach toward the vision of our community. As a result, we have made great progress adopting written financial policies to include budget, fund management, investment, debt management, cash, and capital.

In October the Board presented a written Capital Improvement Program Policy to the Financial Needs Roundtable Committee, providing guidance in their evaluation of future capital needs. There are two Board of Finance members serving in this capacity, and the work of this committee is vital to long-term planning for our community.

East Haddam is a town full of richness and beauty, and together we can maintain our rural community while encouraging responsible growth and improving public services.

The Board of Finance looks forward to hearing from you, the citizens, during the budget process!

William DiCristofaro
Chairman, Board of Finance

Members of the Board of Finance:
Bruce Dutch, Secretary
Joseph Corbett
Todd Gelston
Tracey Gionta
Harvey Thomas
UNDERSTANDING THE BUDGET

The annual budget process refers to the proposed plan of expenditures and revenues for a given fiscal year, starting each July 1st and ending the following June 30th, for the town’s main operating fund which is also known as the General Fund. The town budget is broken down into two categories:

Revenue (Income)
- Property Taxes
- Investment Income
- Licenses, Fees and Permits
- Federal Grants
- State and Local Grants
- Local Government Payments
- Endowment Funds

Expenditures (Spending)
- Education
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Recreation and Leisure
- Administration and Finance
- Health and Social Services
- Debt Service
- Capital Improvements

The General Fund budget process requires the involvement of many stakeholders in order to develop a responsible budget that provides essential services without imposing excessive costs.

Once complete, the annual budget serves as a policy document that prioritizes the quality and level of services that the town will provide. Likewise, it is a financial plan that authorizes how resources are spent.

The budget process benefits from public input. All budget meetings, workshops and hearings are open to the public and citizens are encouraged to attend.
THE BUDGET PROCESS

The budget process, which includes board meetings, workshops and public hearings, is an effort to balance how much is needed to operate the town with how much the town can afford to spend.

The annual process, which is typically finalized in April/May, begins many months before and includes a review of the town government and education expenditures and revenue.

The town’s budget begins with the First Selectman, working with the Finance Director, receiving budget requests from the various departments, boards and commissions and external agencies. The requests are reviewed and compiled and submitted to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for budget workshops. At the same time, the Board of Education (BOE) works with the Superintendent, Finance Director and administrative staff to develop a proposed budget for the schools.

The finalized BOS and BOE budgets are presented to the Board of Finance (BOF) at budget workshops. The BOF discusses and deliberates on the proposed budget and holds a public hearing to gather citizen input. After considering all input, the BOF recommends its proposed budget to Town Meeting and ultimately to referendum.

Upon adoption of the budget, the BOF holds a meeting to set the mill rate.

Preparing the budget October-February

- School administrators submit budget requests to Superintendent.
- Town Departments submit budget requests to First Selectman.
- The BOE, BOF and BOS hold a Tri-Board meeting to kick-off the budget process and solicit public input.
- Superintendent reviews budget requests and submits a proposed budget to the BOE.
- The First Selectman reviews all requests and submits a proposed budget to the BOS.
- BOS holds budget workshops, deliberates and approves a proposed budget.
- BOE holds budget workshops, deliberates and approves a proposed budget.

Reviewing the budget March-April

- BOS and BOE present budgets to BOF at budget workshops.
- BOF holds budget workshops and public hearings to gather citizen input.
- BOF deliberates and recommends a proposed budget to Town Meeting and referendum.

Adopting the budget April-May

- Annual Town Budget Meeting held on proposed budget.
- Taxpayers vote on budget at referendum.
- BOF sets mill rate.
The Boards of Education, Finance and Selectmen will hold several meetings throughout the budget review process. All meetings are open to the public.

Monday, December 9th
7 pm, Municipal Office Complex
TRI-BOARD BUDGET MEETING—BOARDS OF EDUCATION, FINANCE AND SELECTMEN

January, February and March
BUDGET WORKSHOPS
Please check the Town and Board of Education websites for workshop dates and locations (website information is provided on the right)

Saturday, March 7th
9 am, Municipal Office Complex
BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET FORUM

Tuesday, April 7th
7 pm, Nathan Hale-Ray High School
BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, April 21st
8 pm, Town Hall
ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING

Tuesday, May 5th
Municipal Office Complex
BUDGET REFERENDUM

You may use the QR codes below to access meeting calendars.

What is a QR code? A QR code (short for “quick response” code) is a type of barcode that contains a matrix of dots. It can be scanned using a smartphone with a built-in camera. Once scanned, software on the device converts the dots within the code into numbers or a string of characters. Scanning the QR codes below with your phone will open a URL in your phone’s web browser to view the calendar that you have selected.

The Town’s website is: www.easthaddam.org
(the calendar is on the home page)

The Board of Education’s website is: http://www.easthaddamschools.org/calendar