

Town of Somers
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TOWN of SOMERS

ANNUAL BUDGET

FY2025-26

An Open Letter Regarding MIL-Rate Increase to the Citizens of Somers

The Town of Somers has NOT raised its Mil-Rate above 1 mil since 2012. The reason is sound fiscal management from the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance. However, this year, to balance the budget and meet the demands of our education system and town operations, the Board of Finance is recommending a 1.25 mil increase. Your elected officials strongly encourage you to accept and pass this budget during May's referendum. Why such a large increase to the taxpayers of Somers?

The State of Connecticut has repeatedly, over the last decade, reduced the grant funds to cities and towns resulting in several million dollars in reduced revenue during this period. Connecticut currently has a surplus of \$4.1 billion in reserves and is on track to increase reserves by another \$1.2 billion at the end of this fiscal year on June 30, 2025. Additionally, this past year, the state legislature changed the law on property tax depreciation for motor vehicles, reducing town revenues by \$543,000.00. Further, the legislature enacted a law eliminating town property tax on veterans who are 100% disabled, reducing town revenues by another \$101,000. These changes provided relief to motorists and our disabled vets, but the legislature failed to supplement the lost revenue to cities and towns. There was no fiscal impact analysis completed on either initiative. The State did not even consider an extended timeline for towns to implement the changes to reduce the immediate effect on local taxes. Finally, there is a growing crisis in education funding, both for traditional studies and the more expensive program required for disabled children. Neither are keeping pace with inflation. The results are draining school budgets to meet state requirements. Some of these issues have been recently addressed, in part, by the legislature, however the underlying and major cost burden has not been resolved. These so-called "unfunded mandates" from the legislature and Governor are forcing local tax increases across all 169 cities and towns in Connecticut. Our neighboring towns have proposed increases of between 2 and 3 mils to balance their budgets.

The high quality of our school district and exceptional town government operations helps to maintain the value of your homes and personal property in Somers. As citizens of Somers, we should all be proud of the work done by town employees. Our neighboring towns, supportive senators and representatives, along with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, have pressed the legislature to understand in detail the impact these unfunded mandates have on local budgets. Nevertheless, the current budget proposed by the governor continues the trend of flat or reduced funding for Somers.

The second week of June is our deadline. Should the legislature add more funding to Somers' grants and State aid and the governor approves, the Board of Finance may be able to add that funding to our reserves, thereby reducing the pressure for increases next year. In the alternative, additional funding may allow us to reduce the proposed mil rate for 2026.

Somers Board of Finance

Michael Parker, Chairman
Kathy Devlin, Vice Chair
Joseph Tolisano, William Salka
Bruce Devlin, Paul Hart

DATA:

Revenues				
	FY2024/25 Adopted	FY2025/26 Proposed	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
Property Taxes	\$28,505,131	\$29,606,168	\$1,101,037	3.86%
State Aid	\$9,316,097	\$9,301,097	(\$15,000)	-0.16%
Use of Fund Balance	\$420,000	\$1,167,855	\$747,855	178.06%
Interest & Premium	\$500,000	\$600,000	\$100,000	20.00%
Other Revenue Sources	\$1,085,500	\$1,141,000	\$55,500	5.11%
Total	\$39,826,728	\$41,816,120	\$1,989,392	5.00%

Expenditures				
	FY 2024/25 Adopted	FY2025/26 Proposed	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
Town Government	\$8,939,357	\$9,289,798	\$350,441	3.92%
Board of Education	\$28,838,833	\$30,476,322	\$1,637,489	5.68%
Debt Service	\$1,698,538	\$1,700,000	\$1,462	0.09%
Capital Improvements	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$0	0.00%
Total	\$39,826,728	\$41,816,120	\$1,989,392	5.00%

Somers Residents:

The 2025-2026 Fiscal Year’s Proposed Budget is \$41,816,120 which represents an overall increase of 5% from last year’s adopted budget of \$39,826,728. Regarding expenditures, the Board of Selectmen approved a budget of \$9,289,798 for a 3.92% increase. The Board of Education approved a \$30,476,322 budget for a 5.68% increase. The use of the Debt Service Fund has been budgeted and along with the transfer to the Capital Fund, it remains flat.

This budget proposal requires a 1.25 mill increase and uses \$1,167,855 of fund balance reserves.

Important Dates

Budget Public Hearing –

April 22, 2025

7:00 PM, Town Hall Auditorium

Annual Town Meeting –

May 6, 2025

7:00 PM, Town Hall Auditorium

Budget Referendum –

May 20, 2025

6:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium