

**Town of Chester**  
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2007- 2008 Budget

Last year all departments did a workman like job focusing on *value*. As a result we posted a net *decrease* in the town operating budget of -\$337,000 or -2.94%. **Chester was the only town in the State to post a year to year decrease in their town operating budget.** This was accomplished without decreasing services, deferring scheduled maintenance or otherwise adversely affecting town operations. I expect a focus on value to continue in this year's budget process.

Identified objectives of the 06/07 budget have been implemented during the first half of the fiscal year. These include technology upgrades in the Assessors office, library, emergency management and building department. Upgrades to the website, aggressive road improvement, and a review of emergency service vehicle needs and projections have all been undertaken and are in various stages of completion. Looking forward, we want to continue this progress within the parameters of the expressed concern of the town tax base.

This fiscal year will present a new set of budget challenges. The grand list grew approximately 1.9%. Last years growth was 2.01%. Several new collective bargaining agreements will be in place, and we will continue to see pressure on utility costs. Financing of the proposed sewer project should be completed in the upcoming fiscal year as well.

As a result, I believe this year we need to focus on three objectives; clearly prioritize need, focus on value and hold our legislators accountable to improve the rate of return on funds the residents and businesses of Chester contribute to State and Federal revenue.

Our revenue history indicates that Chester receives approximately **\$950,000** in various State funds each fiscal year. By comparison Chester residents contribute about \$5,000,000 in personal income tax to the State coffers. Chester businesses collect about \$2,000,000 in sales tax. In round numbers that means Chester contributes a minimum of **\$7,000,000** to state revenues. This does not include Chester Corporate Income Tax! So, in essence for every **\$1** Chester sends to Hartford we get, at most, **13 ½ cents** in return! Keep that in mind as you hear debate about raising State taxes to help relieve property tax burdens.

I encourage you to stay informed. Visit the website, attend meetings and submit ideas. Remember your tax rate is the result of three distinct operations, town services, elementary education and regional education. All are important to the fabric of our community.

Kind Regards,

Tom