



FY 25 Budget Proposal – First Selectman

Serving a growing town

“Fairfield is a charming, thriving town featuring five miles of shoreline on the Long Island Sound. Fairfield has more than 61,000 residents but maintains a small-town feeling -- diverse neighborhoods with their own character and flair, top-notch neighborhood-based schools, and many active civic associations. Beaches, marinas, parks, open space, and plenty of shopping and fine dining, all within 50 miles of New York City, make Fairfield a top community in the Northeast.”

[Home - Town of Fairfield, Connecticut \(fairfieldct.org\)](http://fairfieldct.org)

First 90 days: notable gaps

Area	Descriptions / Examples	Status
Legal oversight	Utility companies' infrastructure plans need to be challenged when necessary. Bidding practices, contract reviews and purchasing procedures must be consistent and adhere to policy.	<i>Significant</i> improvement
Communications	Important info – e.g. UI monopolies – must be communicated to stakeholders and outreach coordinated. Residents should have forum to address town/gown issues. Residents should understand roles of essential town departments. Single PR/comms point of contact for department leaders, staff, press, & residents.	<i>Significant</i> improvement
Constituent services	Town needs an efficient tracking/resolution system for the hundreds of stakeholder complaints and suggestions received weekly.	Priority - Starting discussions on systems.

First 90 days: notable gaps (cont.)

Area	Descriptions / Examples	Status
Cash flow projections & money mgmt.	Cash flow projections are required for risk management and to optimize investment returns.	Priority - Starting discussions.
Capital planning	A reliable and transparent system is needed to track capital projects (including cost estimates, bonding authorizations, funding sources, expenditures to date, and excess on completed projects).	Priority - Starting discussions on systems.
Human Resource policies and training	Consistent and updated policies, with appropriate training, will lead to greater and more consistent success in hiring, conflict resolution, commitment of town assets, and ethical behavior.	Priority - Material progress on some items. Starting discussions on others.

First 90 days: notable gaps (cont.)

Area	Comments and examples	Status
Staff performance reviews	Formal staff performance reviews will lead to better training, counseling and productivity.	Priority – In progress
Human Resource systems & processes	Modern payroll/time/attendance systems and processes will reduce errors and delays of wage payments, benefits deductions, and retiree benefit calculations (and make post-contract settlement calculations smoother).	Priority - Starting payroll discussions. Progress on benefits.
Ethics	A system for independent tracking of whistleblower complaints and resolution will increase comfort for reporting issues. Thorough definitions and expansion of permitted behavior, as well as consequences, will improve performance.	Priority - Starting discussions
Flood resiliency / DEI / Energy policy / Complete streets		Priority – Early stages

Administration priorities

Priorities:

Long Term Transformation:

- Complete streets
- Sewer system
- Flood resiliency
- First responder facilities
- Town admin efficiency
- Commercial development
- Housing options
- Diversity, racial equity, justice, inclusivity
- Arts destination
- Town/gown opportunities
- Ethics

To achieve a more vibrant community, we need to be more strategic about our planning and investments

First 90 Days:

Immediate Attention:

- ✓ Legal representation
- ✓ Monopoles
- ✓ Penfield Pavilion
- ✓ Finance leadership
- ✓ Human resource policies and procedures
- ✓ Communications

Require review & prioritization

- Capital planning, cash flow, cash management
- Payroll/ time & attendance
- Purchasing, credit cards
- Pensions & other benefits
- Website / constituent services tracking
- Town Charter

First Selectman Team:

First 90 Days

- ✓ Deputy Chief of Staff
- ✓ Chief of Staff
- ✓ Legal Counsel
- ✓ Communications Director
- ✓ Constituent Relations
- ✓ Eliminated Chief Administration Officer
- ✓ Add Operations leadership

Education supports residential real estate values and will always be a priority

Town budget: investments

- **Leadership to implement transformations of operations, finance, legal, policy and communications**
- Wages – collective bargaining “catch-up”
- Firefighters – initial right sizing of staffing & structure
- Conservation Department – Natural Resource Specialist
- Librarian –additional Teen Librarian
- Regional 911 Center – New Director

Town budget: excess surplus

- Commitment not to overtax residents; looking to avoid large budget surpluses created in past years, and to apply excess surplus
- Use of \$1.1m from debt service reserves to service debt in FY'25
- Reduction of \$1.0 million from internal service fund (for self-insured medical benefits and various other self-insured risks) after unsuccessfully attempting to reduce the balance by not funding it in prior years
- Large current year surplus and excess reserves expected to be used for essential capital projects

Proposed expenses, taxes, history

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expense Budget	\$332,341,651	\$345,100,092	\$356,775,787	\$370,129,270
<i>Increase</i>	4.78%	3.84%	3.38%	3.74%
LESS:	Non-tax revenues (interest income, fees collected, grants, etc.)			
Tax Dollars Required (Curr Yr)	305,135,907	314,954,814	322,701,688	330,183,560
<i>Increase</i>	5.08%	3.22%	2.46%	2.32%

- Expenses and tax dollars both in line with recent history.

Proposed expenses: a different look

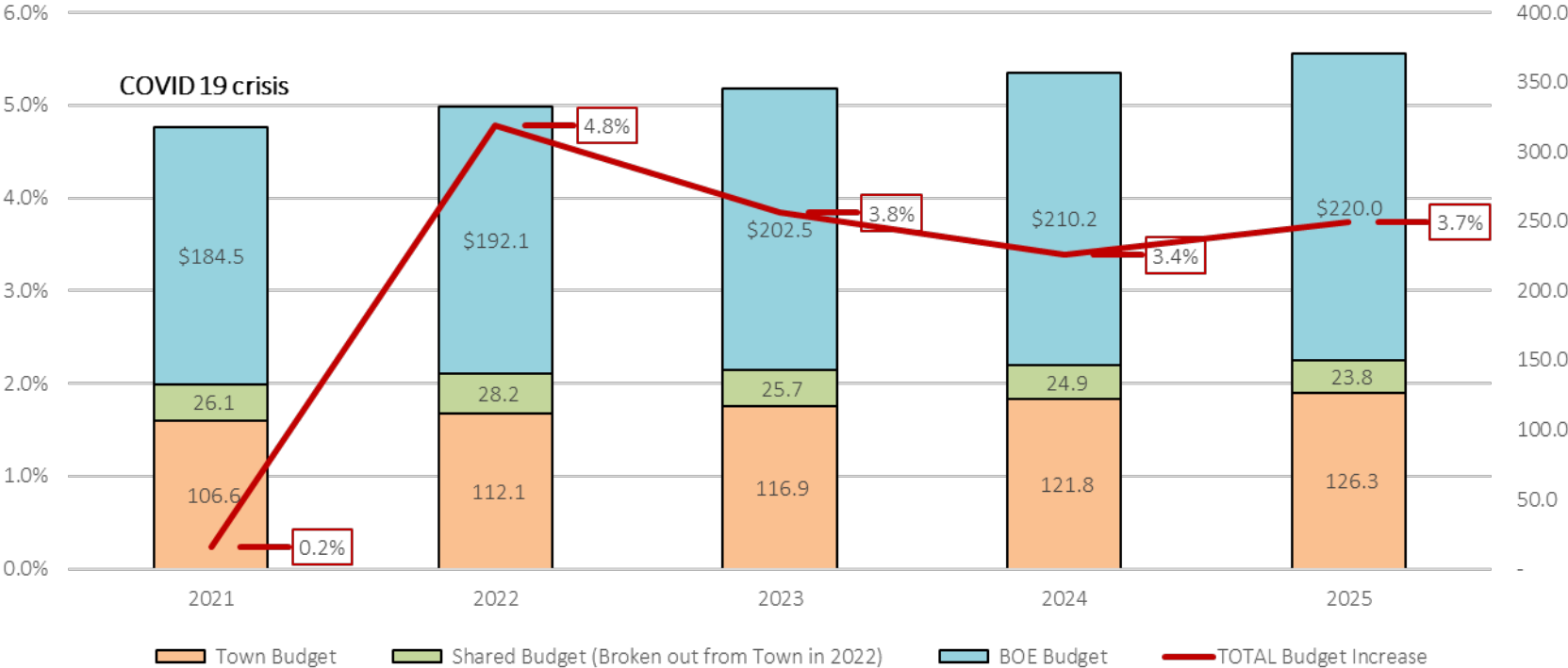
	2022 Approved	2023 Approved	2024 Approved	3 Yr Average	2025 Proposed
Spending Increase	4.8%	3.8%	3.4%	4.0%	3.7%
Board of Education	4.1%	5.4%	3.8%	4.4%	4.7%
Shared Expenses	7.9%	-8.9%	-3.2%	-1.4%	-4.3%
Town	5.2%	4.3%	4.1%	4.5%	3.8%
Revenue Increase					
Non-Tax Revenue	1.5%	10.8%	13.0%	8.4%	17.2%
Tax \$ (Curr Yr)	5.1%	3.2%	2.5%	3.6%	2.3%
Grand List Growth	4.35%	2.02%	1.22%	2.53%	0.37%
Mill Rate Increase	0.71%	0.96%	0.99%	0.89%	1.81%

- Spending in line with 3-year average.
- No additional contribution to surplus reduced Shared Expenses
- Revenue continued to benefit from higher interest rates.
- Grand list growth slowed significantly, eliminating most of the tax dilution benefit for taxpayers.

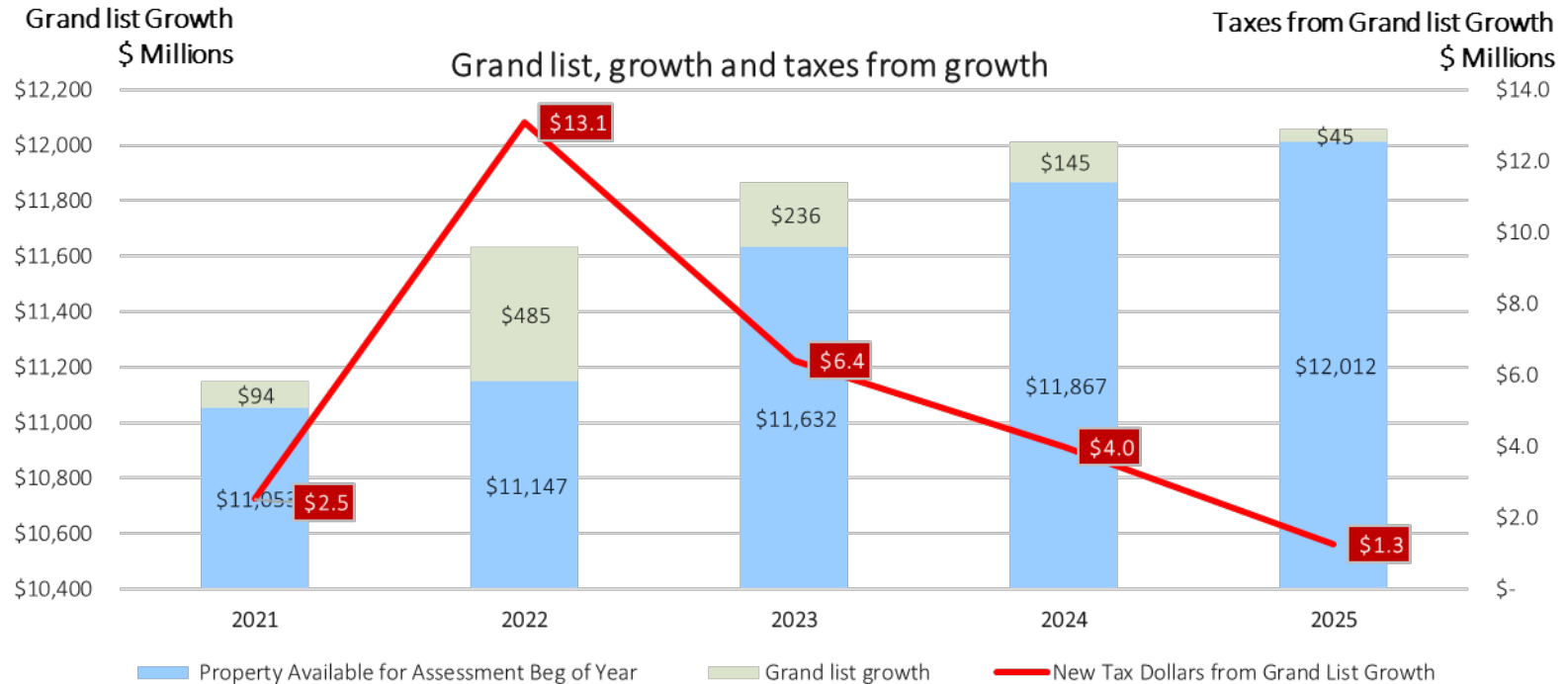
5 years of budgets

Budget Increases Prior 4 Years and Current Year Proposed Budget

\$ millions



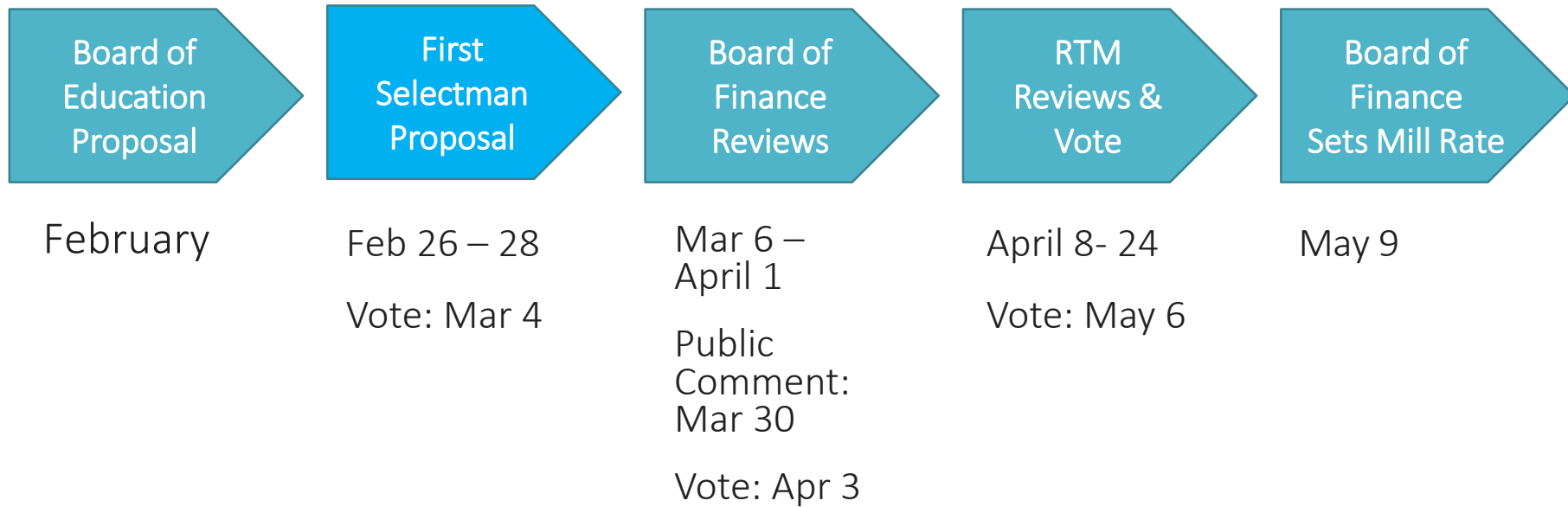
New tax revenue from grand list growth



Budget drivers

	3 Yr Average	2025 Proposed	Increase Amount (\$mm)	Drivers
Spending Increase	4.00%	3.74%	\$ 13.4	
Board of Education	4.40%	4.68%	9.8	Salary/benefits \$10.5, includes final collective bargaining agmt; FTE incr. 38.15; FS cut \$1.5m expected to be covered by lower healthcare cost increase than budgeted
Shared Expenses	-1.40%	-4.27%	(1.1)	Contribution to surplus \$(1.2)
Town	4.50%	3.76%	4.6	Salary \$2.9/Contingency \$(1.1), includes finalized collective bargaining agreements and FTE increase of 7 (4 contractual for Fire, 1 Police, 1 Conservation, 1 Teen Librarian); Pension \$1.1
Revenue Increase			\$ 13.4	
Non-Tax Revenue	8.40%	17.20%	5.9	Interest income \$3.2; State PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) grant \$0.8; Weigh station fees \$0.7; Prior year tax interest \$1
Net Current Yr Tax \$	3.60%	2.32%	7.5	
Grand List Growth	2.53%	0.37%		
Mill Rate Increase	0.89%	1.81%		
Impact of Grand List Growth on Mill Rt: Apply PY Grand List Growth		0.97%		2021 to 2024 Grand List Growth = \$1 billion, including 2024 \$145mm; 2025 only \$45mm

Fairfield Budget Process & Timeline



Thank you to Fairfield's staff, elected officials and volunteers

Our interim CFO, budget director, finance department, First Selectman's office team, department heads and staff spent an enormous amount of time and effort developing this town budget.

Our elected officials and volunteers who serve on boards, commissions, committees and task forces make Fairfield very special.

THANK YOU!