

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget

Status Report
to the
Board of Selectmen

Feb 20, 2024

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY2025 Budget Goals

- Provide departments of public safety and first responders with adequate resources to respond to emergencies and protect the community
- Create responsible budgets that protect the taxpayers investments school and town facilities, maintenance and repairs
- Provide the high quality of services Wilton residents and businesses expect at the lowest possible cost.
- Provide assistance to those in need and the recreational and cultural activities that residents deserve while staying within budget
- Focus on cost savings opportunities, increased use of technology and maintaining appropriate staffing levels.
- Pursue grant opportunities to reduce the taxpayers' share of the funding of infrastructure and other initiatives.
- Provide the oversight required to bring in building projects on time and within budget
- Modernize town government functions to provide better taxpayer experience

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
 February 2024
BUDGET OVERVIEW

Original Presentation

**The FY2025 BOS Requested Expense Budget is \$35,324,748 (5.72%)
 Including Operating Capital, increase is \$2,455,505 (7.12%)**

(Thousands)

	2024 Adopted Budget	2025 Budget Request	FY'24 vs. FY'25 \$ Change	FY'24 vs FY'25 % Change
Expenses	\$ 33,413	\$ 35,325	\$ 1,912	5.72%
Operating Capital	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,604	\$ 543	51.18%
<i>Exp+Op Capital</i>	\$ 34,474	\$ 36,929	\$ 2,455	7.12%
Debt Service	\$ 9,961	\$ 9,976	\$ 15	0.15%
<i>Total</i>	\$ 44,435	\$ 46,905	\$ 2,470	5.56%

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
 February 2024
BUDGET OVERVIEW

Proposed Reductions: \$259,852 from Expenses

\$543,552 from Op. Capital

The FY2025 BOS Requested Expense Budget is \$35,064,896 (4.94%)

Including Operating Capital, increase is \$1,652,101 (4.79%)

(Thousands)

	2024 Adopted Budget	2025 Budget Request	FY'24 vs. FY'25 \$ Change	FY'24 vs FY'25 % Change
Expenses	\$ 33,413	\$ 35,068	\$ 1,652	4.94%
Operating Capital*	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,061	\$ -	0.00%
<i>Exp+Op Cap</i>	<i>\$ 34,474</i>	<i>\$ 36,126</i>	<i>\$ 1,652</i>	<i>4.79%</i>
Debt Service	\$ 9,961	\$ 9,976	\$ 15	0.15%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$ 44,435</i>	<i>\$ 46,105</i>	<i>\$ 1,667</i>	<i>3.75%</i>

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
 February 2024
BUDGET OVERVIEW

The FY2025 BOS Requested Expense Budget is \$35,064,896 (4.94%)

With Addition of Op Capital for Repairs, increase is \$2,195,653 (6.37%)

(In thousands)

	2024 Adopted Budget	2025 Budget Request	FY'24 vs. FY'25 \$ Change	FY'24 vs FY'25 % Change
Expenses	\$ 33,413	\$ 35,065	\$ 1,652	4.94%
Operating Capital*	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,604	\$ 543	51.18%
<i>Exp+Op Cap</i>	\$ 34,474	\$ 36,669	\$ 2,196	6.37%
Debt Service	\$ 9,961	\$ 9,976	\$ 15	0.15%
<i>Total</i>	\$ 44,435	\$ 46,645	\$ 2,210	4.97%

Factors Directly Affecting This Budget Request

- Urgent need to address conditions of Town facilities and space needs
- Contractual increases in labor rates per CBA's
- Increase in cost of health benefit of 5%
- Necessary increase in staffing due to work load
 - Finance Dept. payroll position expanded, increased to full time.
 - Increase use of part time and contracted inspectors for Building and Health Depts.
- Increases due to state mandates
 - Increase in part-time help to comply with Early Voting law.
 - Additional training costs for CERT volunteers.
 - Additional training for fire fighters

FY2025 Budgeted Employee Costs

■ **Wages Rates**

- Nonunion: GWI increases TBD, subject to annual performance reviews.
- Police: Current contract expires 6/30/24 - to begin negotiations.
- Salary contingencies are held in reserve pending CBA agreements.
- Fire and Teamsters 2.50% increases per current contract.

■ **Staffing**

- Annex: Part-time land use receptionist/clerk increased to full time.
- Registrars of Voters: Increase in temporary help due to Early Voting Act.
- Finance Dept: Part-time position increased to full time.

Additional Short-Term Risk Factors

- Ongoing cost of addressing deferred maintenance and space needs of Town and School building maintenance and repairs.
- Uncertainty concerning shifts in tax burden due to state-mandated property revaluation.
- Expected drop in vehicle values following the pandemic spike could reduce personal property tax revenue.
- Expected drop in conveyance tax following pandemic related spike in real estate sales due to lack of inventory.
- Expected increase in demand for essential services as new development increases Wilton's population.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Budget Risks, cont.

General Risks

- Continued uncertainty over inflation.
- Litigation.
- Major Weather Event or Natural Disaster.
- Continued Nationwide and Statewide Police Officer Shortage.

Legislative Initiatives

- Transfer of Responsibility for funding for Teacher Pension Fund.
- Potential expansion of 8-30(g) applications and resulting litigation.
- Potential for reductions in state ECS and SPED funding.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN COUNSEL, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***
 - **First Selectman's Office**
 - Identify grant opportunities to address facilities and service costs.
 - Support current and prospective business entities in their need for expansion and development.
 - Work with area municipalities to identify joint or regional opportunities.
 - Long-term capital and debt planning.
 - Support expansion of technology to reduce costs and improve online services.
 - Support improved resident and business access to information and processes.
 - Support economic development.
 - Enhance employee capabilities through training and enrichment opportunities.
 - **Town Counsel**
 - Proactive engagement to minimize litigation risk.
- ***Risks to Budgets***
 - Board of Selectmen: None.
 - Town Counsel: Unexpected Litigation Not Covered by Insurance.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN COUNSEL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- **Economic Development**

- Continued engagement with development community.
 - Continued work with area municipalities and state and regional economic development organizations to drive initiatives to maintain and attract businesses.
 - Continued funding of initiatives to support Wilton businesses and Wilton Center.
 - Continued partnership with the Wilton Chamber of Commerce.
 - Continued funding and partnership with the Garden Club on the Wilton Center beautification initiative.

- ***Risks to Budget***

- **None**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

▪ ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- Complete the restructuring of the Information Technology Department; identify opportunities to consolidate services for cost savings.
- Identify and implement solutions to improve the efficiency of the Land Use departments to support economic development.
- Identify and implement solutions to reduce the the Town's cost of waste management and encourage recycling.
- Expand risk management initiatives to reduce insurance costs.
- Ensure professional and responsive operations at the lowest cost possible.

➤ ***Risks to Budgets***

- **None**

HUMAN RESOURCES, BENEFITS & REGISTRAR

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- **Human Resources**

- Ensure effective collective bargaining negotiations.
 - Implement updated technology within the department.
 - Expand employee access to online information.
 - Expand management/supervisor and employee training.

- ***Risks to Budget***

- Collective bargaining negotiations
 - Employee related litigation

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
February 2024

HUMAN RESOURCES, BENEFITS, TOWN CLERK, REGISTRARS

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- **Town Clerk's Office**

- *Increased online access, as available.*
 - *Efficient implementation of new early voting regulations.*

- **Registrars' Office**

- *Increased use of technology.*
 - *Ongoing recruitment and training of election workers.*
 - *Efficient implementation of new early voting regulations.*

- ***Risks to Budgets***

- **New Legislative Requirements**

FINANCE, TAX COLLECTOR, ASSESSOR

▪ ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

▪ **Finance**

- Implementation of Munis ERP core finance system and ClearGov budgeting application by 7/1/2024.
- Increase staff training and recruitment.
- Fill open position in Town Hall finance office to

▪ **Tax Collectors & Assessor's Office**

- Seasonal support, as needed.
- Ongoing employee training towards certification to allow for cross management between departments.
- Expansion of online access to records.

➤ ***Risks to Budgets***

- **Litigation**
- **Shortage of Certified Staff.**

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
February 2024
Information Systems

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- Ongoing cybersecurity upgrades and increased monitoring to protect taxpayer assets.
- Complete department restructuring; eliminate redundant outside consultants; bring essential network administration “in house.”
- Modernized network architecture for improved performance and security and lower costs.

- ***Risks to IS Budget***

- Possible costs of replacing outdated servers and network equipment.
- Possible “one-time” costs of restructuring network and communication capabilities.

- ***Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals***

- **Planning and Zoning**

- Continue to support amenities master planning.
 - Continue to support economic and grand list growth.

- **Building and Health**

- Provide additional staff training opportunities.

- ***Risk to Land Use Budgets***

- **Litigation**

- **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- **Environmental Affairs**

- Continue public private partnership initiatives to improve town-owned open spaces and the Norwalk River.
 - Additional upgrades and continued maintenance of Schenck's, open spaces and town-owned trails.

- **All Departments**

- Ensure adequate personnel to meet the sustained rise in land use departments' workload.
 - Identify ways to streamline processes.
 - Increase communication of processes.

- ***Risk to Land Use Budgets***

- **Litigation**

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
February 2024
POLICE

▪ **Initiatives to Meet Budget and Operational Goals**

- Collaborate with Police HQ construction project to ensure a smooth transition.
- Increase recruitment efforts to ensure adequate professional staffing.
- Continue to maintain Wilton's reputation as a safe community in which to live and work.
- Proper and adequate training to ensure the safety and health of all officers.

➤ ***Operational Risks***

- Statewide and nationwide police officer shortage.
- Despite proactive measures, hiring is difficult as all municipalities are competing for the same small number of applicants.

➤ ***Risks to Budget***

- **Overtime due to injury, illness or major event**
- **Unfunded mandates**

FIRE

▪ **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- Continued focus on the health and safety of all department employees.
- Continued management of overtime.
- Increased focus on training.
- Provide training to CERT volunteers for increased safety.

➤ ***Risks to Fire Budget***

- **Retirement or resignation of a Firefighter, Lieutenant or Captain**
 - Additional overtime
 - Recruitment costs
 - Lost time to Academy
- **Injury**

FY 2025 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget
February 2024
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

▪ **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- Successful completion of new police headquarters facility.
- Formulate long-term plan to address deferred maintenance of municipal facilities.
- Efficient and cost-effective oversight of on-time repairs and maintenance.
- Effective management of highway department resources.
- Continued focus on worker safety and risk management strategies.

➤ ***Risks to Budget***

- Costly major weather events
- Worker injuries

TRANSFER STATION

▪ **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- Install credit/debit card payment system for on-site use..
- Investigation of Pay to Dispose initiatives.
- Identification of successful programs to reduce waste and increase recycling.
- Conversion to 100-yard containers to reduce annual operating costs.
- Continue to work with surrounding communities to address our shared issues.

➤ ***Risks to Budget***

- Possible mid-budget increases in MSW and recycling tipping fees.
- Reduced disposal capacity within the State.

▪ **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- Expand necessary counseling services for community members in need.
- Increase opportunities for social engagement within the senior community through increased events and senior luncheons.
- Continue to meet financial assistance needs.
- Continued partnership with surrounding towns to provide onsite counseling services.
- Continued partnership with donors.

➤ ***Risks to Budget***

- None

PARKS AND RECREATION

▪ **Initiatives Meet Budget Goals**

- Efficiently address possible legislative-driven changes to camp offerings.
- Maximize new registration software to improve efficiency and resident experience.
- Maximize resources to improve appearance of parks, fields and area surrounding municipal-owned building.
 - *Engage professional landscapers to maintain plantings around buildings.*
- Support approved field drainage projects at WHS sports complex and Middlebrook.
- Complete installation of new playgrounds at Merwin Meadows and Schenck's Island.

▪ **Risks to Budget**

- Injury
- Major weather events

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

- **Initiatives to Meet Budget Goals**

- In-house oversight of the police headquarters construction project to completion on time and within budget.
- Function ends upon the completion of the police headquarters project.

- **Risks to Budget**

- Weather delays; potential for additional costs due to unknown conditions at the site.

OTHER EXPENSES AND GRANTS

▪ **OTHER EXPENSES**

Ambler Farm

- Complete new partnership with FOAF.
- Continue to seek a grant funding for the Yellow House and Raymond Ambler projects.

Paramedics-Wilton/Weston Advanced Life Services

- Review contract with regard to Wilton's share of costs.

Georgetown Fire District

- Payment of District property taxes for Wilton property owners taxed and served by the Georgetown Fire District.

Probate Court

- Mandated support of the cost of the Norwalk/Wilton probate court.