

## **Budget for Next Year**

The Town's 2020-2021 fiscal year will close out on June 30. Taxpayers unanimously approved a 2021-2022 budget at the Annual Town Meeting on May 17. After several months of preparation, presentations, reviews, and revisions, the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance finalized their budgets. Due to revaluation, the Grand List increased by close to 7% thereby increasing the value of a mill. Last year's mill rate was 26.76 and next year's mill rate is set at 25.73 -an apparent decrease of 1.03. The Board of Finance approved the use of \$300,000 from the undesignated fund balance to mitigate the mill rate and tax increase for taxpayers. However, due to increasing real estate values, most residents will see an increase to their tax bill of approximately .5 to .75 mill which is similar to mill rate increases in surrounding towns. The total 2021-2022 budget is \$13,345,252 with the BOS budget being \$2,979,002 and the BOE budget being \$10,366,250. As we strive to provide an excellent education, resident services, and maintain our infrastructure, there is always an effort to be cost conscious and restrain spending. As a result of Pomfret's desirability as a place to live, we have seen increasing pressure on our real estate market, as reflected the Grand List growth.

## **Fire District Budget**

Pomfret's Fire District is a separate taxing authority from the Town and holds a separate Annual Meeting to pass the Volunteer Fire Department budget. This year the Fire District mill rate was set at .78 mills which is added to the Town's mill rate when tax bills are sent out. The Fire Department maintains their facility, fleet of vehicles, firefighting equipment and trains the volunteer members. We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of firefighters willing to respond to calls whenever they may be needed.

## **Tri-Town Ambulance Contract Renewed**

Pomfret has signed on for a second year with the Tri-Town Ambulance agreement between Pomfret, Hampton, Eastford and KB Ambulance to provide 24/7 coverage with an ambulance staged at the recently completed Emergency Operations Center. The cost of this service is split between the three towns and Pomfret's share is paid by the Fire District. Residents can rest easy knowing we have this service available in town if the need should arise.

## **Air Line Trail to Open Soon!**

Air Line Trail upgrades are close to completion! The bridges are up, the tunnels are in, and the Trail will be open soon. After a year of construction, the upgrades to the Trail in Pomfret and Putnam are clearly visible. The Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and State DOT funds that made this project possible are an investment that will benefit Pomfret and the Quiet Corner tremendously. Although the Trail surface is unfinished and in rough condition, it will be open for use once the project is completed and the contractor, Brunalli Construction, is finished.

The next stage of the improvements to the Trail will take place once an engineering/design firm has been selected. Twelve companies submitted RFQs (Request for Qualifications) to be considered for this project. Five firms will be interviewed by the Selection Committee and once selected, the finalist will begin the design work for the clearing, grading, resurfacing, design and construction of a connection to the Putnam River Trail where the bridge washed out in 1955. This work will now begin until late 2021 and is not expected to be completed until late 2022.

## **Town Hall to Open on Wednesdays**

Town employees (Town Hall, Library, DPW) did an outstanding job throughout the rapidly changing pandemic environment of the past year and the Town is fortunate to have a dedicated, reliable, resilient workforce. Our facilities were closed to the public, but work went on as usual and every effort was made to accommodate residents.

As we emerge from the Covid shutdown, the Town Hall will open to the public one day a week on Wednesdays from 8:30am until 6 pm and will remain closed to the public on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. We will answer the bell on the front door and meet residents on the porch to allow entry as needed and to avoid congestion. The building was not designed as a public facility and does not lend itself well to a Town Hall and social distancing is difficult. The offices and meeting rooms are small, and hallways narrow. We will do our best to accommodate residents while providing a safe and comfortable work environment for employees. Please continue to wear a mask when coming into the building.

## **Community Center / TEEG Senior Programming**

Throughout the past year, TEEG programs for seniors have been cancelled although TVCCA meals have been distributed to seniors and other activities have been held outside. Currently there is a walking group and outdoor yoga is being held on the lawn behind the Community Center. TEEG will evaluate the situation and decide on when and how to reopen the facility.

## **“Pomfret Community Market” Grand Opening**

A grand opening will be held on Tuesday, June 1 from noon – 2 pm at the renovated food pantry, now the *Pomfret Community Market*. TEEG has assumed running the pantry which is open monthly on the first Tuesday from 10 – noon and the third Thursday from 1 -3pm. Along with non-perishables, the Community Market will offer fresh produce and meat/protein. Area residents are invited to use the pantry and Veterans are welcome and encouraged to stop by.

## **Board of Selectmen**

The Board of Selectmen works cooperatively, effectively, and efficiently to serve the citizens of Pomfret. All meetings are open, and the public is invited to join. Meetings are the first (7pm) and third (8am) Mondays of each month, one in the morning and one in the evening to provide opportunities for citizens to join. Town Hall is customer friendly and staffed by professionals to assist taxpayers, answer questions, and serve the public. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your concerns, suggestions, or questions. We are here to help.

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