

# TOWNSHIP OF WYCKOFF

For Immediate Release

## Wyckoff Municipal Budget Adopted Limiting Increase to Less Than 3/10 of 1 Percent

The Wyckoff Township Committee introduced the 2022 municipal budget on March 22, 2022. The Township Committee, led by Finance Committee members Melissa D. Rubenstein and Thomas J. Madigan, worked diligently to limit the growth of the budget and provide a stable tax rate despite requirements to address uncontrollable expenses such as state mandated pension costs and employee health care costs. The impact on the average home (assessed at \$801,100) is \$17.98 for 2022. The tax rate increases 2/10<sup>th</sup> of 1 cent per \$100 of assessed valuation. The 2022 budget totals \$21,229,875 with a tax levy increase of \$104,174. The municipal budget is within the budget cap and the 2% allowable tax levy cap.

*The Municipal Budget accounts for only 14% of a resident's tax bill. The schools and county elected officials establish their own budgets and their own tax levies.*

### Service and Safety Investments

In 2022, the budget reflects a decision to invest in the Township's infrastructure. It includes funds allocated for road resurfacing and replacing DPW rolling stock which has reached the end of its useful life. To comply with State and Federal mandates, firefighter safety equipment such as personal protective gear and self-contained breathing apparatus for search and rescue are funded. Additional pedestrian safety improvements and traffic calming devices will be deployed in 2022 for enhanced pedestrian safety. They include solar powered flashing signals at the following crosswalks located near our elementary schools: 1) Franklin Avenue & Crescent Avenue 2) Wyckoff Avenue & Monroe Avenue 3) Grandview Avenue & Ravine Avenue. Traffic calming signs which display, "Please Slow Down", when a vehicle exceeds the speed limit and/or, "Thank you for Driving at or Below the Speed Limit" message signs will be installed at five (5) additional locations identified by Chief David V. Murphy.

In addition, the 2022 budget begins the process of providing police officer radio and software upgrades which will improve public safety in the event of an active shooter, crime scene, or motor vehicle accident.

### Holding the Line on Costs

The Finance Committee held flat the standard operating expenses, as compared to last year's levels, to compensate for service and safety investments. The Township Committee appreciates the efforts of our Department Managers who worked with us in reviewing every line item of the budget to justify their need for taxpayer money to provide services to our community. Our Department Managers worked hard to minimize expenditures and assisted the Township Committee to hold down operating expenses.

Once again, the Finance Committee reviewed every line item of the budget to justify each proposed line item of expense to help control the growth of expenditures. No changes to the current Township provided services are planned.

### **Maintaining Priorities**

The Township Committee continues its efforts to control the increase in expenditures, pursuing positive fiscal operation such as seeking grants from all levels of government and reducing operating costs through competitive bidding and shared services. Cost reductions and enhanced technology have been realized by regionalization with the Township's many Shared Service Agreements, which include: 9-1-1 dispatch services, Board of Health services with the Bergen County Health Department, fuel facilities and vehicle maintenance services to the Wyckoff Board of Education, strategic purchasing through Northwest Bergen Cooperative Purchasing Consortium and the Wyckoff, Oakland, Franklin Lakes (WOLF Group) shared services group. Our cost saving, successful shared service for Court Administrator and Violations Bureau Services with Glen Rock, has also been renewed for an additional two-year term.

### **THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE ONLY ESTABLISHES THE MUNICIPAL PORTION OF TAXES**

Diana McLeod, the Township's Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector, also points out that municipal taxes represent only a portion (14%) of a Wyckoff property taxpayer's obligation. Three separate governmental entities adopt their own budgets which are then funded by taxes. They are the Bergen County government, the K-8<sup>th</sup> Local Public School District and the Ramapo-Indian Hills Regional High School District. Two tax levies, the Bergen County Open Space Tax and the Municipal Open Space Tax are approved by voter referendum. The Wyckoff Free Public Library Tax is a separate tax levy; however, it is included in the municipal budget total and represents 8% of the municipal budget. The county taxes, K-8<sup>th</sup> local grade school taxes and regional high school taxes have not yet been determined. **Although a resident's tax bill reflects all seven separate taxes, the Township Committee is involved in the municipal budget and tax levy portion ONLY and has no involvement in determining the other budgets nor the determination of the six other tax levies. State fiscal laws require the Township's municipal government to serve as the billing and collection agency for all six separate taxes including the Wyckoff Free Public Library tax.** Ms. McLeod states that the sum of all seven of these tax rates ultimately determines the total property tax rate for the year.

### **Additional Parameters That Guided Finance Committee Members, Melissa D. Rubenstein and Thomas J. Madigan**

- The 2022 budget was developed with the taxpayer in mind.
- We worked diligently through approximately 8 meetings to deliver this budget with a focus on delivering residential services at a marginal tax increase of \$17.98 on an average residential assessment of \$801,100.
- Technology investments, including investing in Cyber Security have been made where we can demonstrate efficiency and/or economic gains.
- The budget is being introduced within the State mandate deadline.

## 2022 TAX LEVY – WHERE YOUR TAXES ARE GOING

