

# West Brookfield – For the Future of our Town!

## Why is the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee recommending an Override?

For years the Advisory Board has explained to citizens at the Town Meeting that the town's expenses are growing faster than the revenues we collect. The Town Meeting has been voting to utilize one-time town savings (Free Cash) to make up this difference. This situation must be corrected, or it will result in major cuts to Town departments. We all know that our departments are already providing minor services. The State requires our education system to be funded at the Minimum Education Requirement. This average increase over the last 3 years is over 5%. Since this cost is a state mandate the town has no choice. It is impossible to stay within Proposition 2 ½ when state education mandate requires a minimum of at least 5%. This and other factors require the Town to bring forward an Override Question.

## What happens if the Override is voted down?

The Town can no longer go into a deficit situation and major cuts to Town departments would have to occur. Since the state has Minimum Requirement Spending Levels for education once we cut our funding down to the minimum, we would not be able to cut it anymore. Do we want to fund education at the state minimum? Town Departments would have to make drastic cuts which means police, fire, highway, library senior center, town hall, and all departments would have to reduce staff, hours, and services to the community. As of now, the Town already provides very limited services, so the impact would be drastic. Every year we would have to continue to decrease Town services to meet the state requirements.

## What is the cost to citizens to vote in favor of the \$1,000,000 Override?

The cost of Override is \$146.74 each quarter or \$1.60 per day for the average single - family home assessed at a value of \$336,413. Properties valued at a higher assessment may result in a higher amount. Properties valued at a lower assessment may result in a lower amount.

**Are there any new services in the Override Question?** – While this Override mostly keeps current services in place it does do 3 additional things. It adds one new police officer to protect citizens and to make it safer for the officers themselves. It helps fund ambulance service to our citizens, and it will help fund salary study recommendations by the University of Massachusetts to help us retain employees.

# West Brookfield has one of the lowest Tax Rates in the State of Massachusetts.

## How does West Brookfield compare to other Towns regarding Tax Rates in FY 2024?

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Residential</u>
Barre	13.98
Brimfield	14.62
Brookfield	15.20
East Brookfield	12.77
Hardwick	12.62
Holland	13.55
North Brookfield	13.13
Oakham	11.08
Wales	14.77
Ware	16.33
Warren	15.07
<b>West Brookfield</b>	<b>11.23</b>

Town Ranking for the lowest Tax Rate is

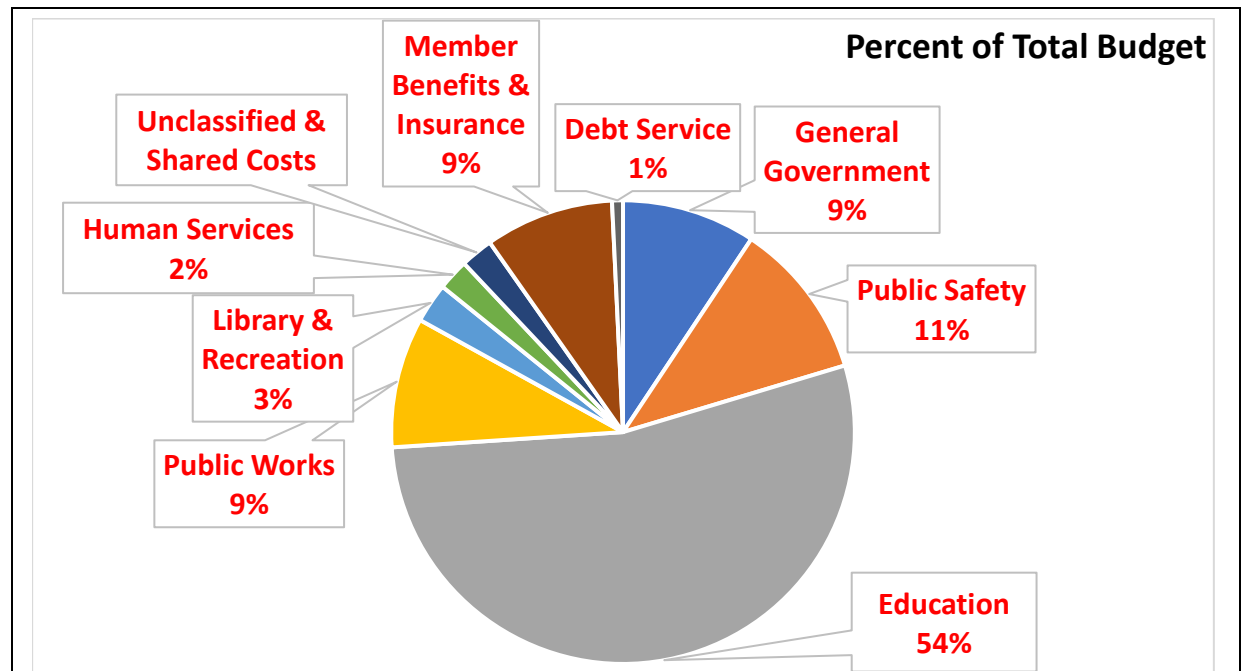
250 out of 342 Towns.

### What is Proposition 2 ½?

The proposition's namesake comes from the fact that the initiative puts a 2.5% ceiling on total property taxes annually and a 2.5% limit on property tax increases by Massachusetts municipalities.

### What is an Override?

Overrides are used to raise money to address annual operating costs. In other words, if the voting community decides that they need to raise the levy limit because the costs of operating the local government have increased, they can vote to do so.



Contact Town Officials for the facts. Don't rely on posts on social media that are designed to scare you.

**Our Town's future is at stake! Together we can protect the quality of life that we all enjoy!**