

TOPSHAM BUDGET SEASON

Community Participation Shapes Our Future

Every year in Topsham, budgets are proposed, hearings are held, and votes take place. Yet only a small number of residents attend these meetings.

Months later, tax bills arrive and many people ask: "Why did my taxes go up?"

The reason is simple: by the time tax bills arrive, the budget decisions have already been made. The opportunity for community input happens earlier—during the public budgeting process.

Understanding Your Property Tax Bill

Property taxes in Topsham are determined by three separate budgets. Together they combine to create the final tax rate paid by residents.

School Budget

Funds public education
Set through the school district process and public vote

County Budget

Funds regional services such as courts and the jail
Set by county government

Town Budget

Funds local services like roads, fire protection, and parks
Set by the Select Board and Town Meeting

The Select Board directly controls only the Town portion of the total tax bill, but all three budgets influence what residents ultimately pay.

Where Your Property Tax Dollar Goes

[Insert graphic here: Property Tax Breakdown]

This graphic should illustrate the approximate percentage of the tax bill coming from:

- School Budget
- Town Budget
- County Budget

(Replace with actual Topsham data.)

Why Public Participation Matters

A strong community depends on balance.

Young families starting out.

Working residents building their lives.

Seniors who helped build the town.

Long-time residents and new neighbors alike.

Budget discussions determine how resources are allocated and how the town grows over time. When residents participate in those conversations, the process benefits from a wider range of perspectives.

Looking at the Long-Term Picture

[Insert graphic here: 10-Year Budget or Tax Trend]

A simple chart showing the combined budget or tax trend over the past decade can help residents understand how spending and taxation have evolved over time.

(Replace with actual Topsham data.)

Engagement Strengthens the Process

Residents may have different viewpoints. Some may support proposed spending, while others may have questions or concerns. Both perspectives are valuable.

Public hearings exist so residents can:

- Ask questions
- Learn how budgets are structured
- Share perspectives
- Express priorities for the community

Participation helps ensure the budgeting process reflects the full voice of the town.

Your Voice Matters Before Decisions Are Final

Budget hearings and meeting schedules are posted on the Town of Topsham website and public calendar. Attending even one meeting contributes to the conversation.

You do not need to be a budget expert. Simply being present, listening, and asking questions helps strengthen community involvement in the process.

Upcoming Budget Hearings

School Budget Hearing: _____

County Budget Meeting: _____

Town Budget Hearing: _____

Be Part of the Conversation

Learn about the process.

Ask questions.

Share your perspective.

Community participation helps shape the future of Topsham.