

# Rochester Taxpayers Coalition

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## TAXPAYER UPDATE

### MULTIPLE TAX INCREASES ON THE HORIZON

- **\$250 million New Old Colony building likely up for a November vote**
  - With interest: Rochester share ~\$45 million; Avg. Rochester home share: ~\$18,000 in new taxes
- **\$12 million ORR Debt Exclusion ‘Slush Fund’ rumored to be at May Town Mtg., again**
- **Town Officials Make Public (In)Feasibility Study for \$29 million shiny new Fire Station**
  - Even at half that, with interest avg. Rochester home share: ~\$11,000 in new taxes. But Town Officials push on
- **Town Admin & Finance Cmte predict Prop. 2½ General Override and/or Service Cuts**
  - Would be for Rochester’s FY27 basic Operating Budget, vote in May 2026

### New School for Old Colony

- Old Colony Regional Voc Tech High School is planning a new school building. The **cost is expected to be \$250 million, plus interest** paid over 30 years. Old Colony hopes that MA state taxpayers would cover 52% of *some of* that cost, with the rest paid by the taxpayers of Rochester, Lakeville, Carver, Acushnet, and Mattapoisett. Rochester’s share would be **approximately \$45 million in new, additional taxes**. Look for a Tax Override vote in November, but Rochester taxpayers could be forced to pay, even if Rochester votes NO.

### ORR SLUSH FUND Article reappearing?

- Background: The Old Rochester Regional School District put an Article on the Warrant for the May 2024 Rochester Annual Town Mtg. seeking \$12 million in a Proposition 2½ Debt Exclusion (for the 3 Tri-Towns). With interest, it would have cost \$19 million or more of new taxes. Essentially, it would have been a slush fund of \$12 million of taxpayer money. At the last minute, ORR withdrew the Article, because Rochester’s Select Board and Finance Committee, and one of Rochester’s ORR School Committee members, courageously pushed back. The Select Board & the Finance Committee recommended Town Meeting voters vote AGAINST that article. We thank them for making the correct decision.
- Now: We hear that **ORR’s Proposition 2½ tax increase slush fund is coming back**.

### Rochester Operating Budget Proposition 2½ General Override or Service Cuts on Horizon?

- Rochester’s Town Administrator and Finance Committee have begun contemplating a Proposition 2½ General Override and/or Service Cuts for the regular, basic Operating Budget, beginning in FY27. They would require a vote in May 2026.

**Update: Town Officials Push On with (In)feasible Fire Station despite Viable Alternatives**

- Thank you for your emails! A sampling of what we’ve heard in those emails:
  - “I know the fire department is a crucial part of our town but to have the taxpayers have to come up with that kind of money is crazy. I know I won’t be able to afford that kind of increase. It will drive people out of this town. But who would buy their homes with that kind of taxes?”
  - “We need a new fire station like I need hole in my head.”
  - “I was aghast at the proposed building costs for a “fire station.” Are the proponents insane? This is sheer madness!”
  - “It is not the station that is the life saver but rather the Firefighters and EMS personnel.”
  - “All I can say about the fire station is it [is] crazy and absurd and people will go into debt because of it. It is not fair. I can see that I have neighbors that could never afford to do this. Everyone needs to band together”
  - “I cannot afford any more money on top of the already expensive taxes in Rochester...”
  - “I am tired of the waste and abuse of our money.”

- Within a week of our last TAXPAYER UPDATE arriving in mailboxes, Rochester Town Officials finally posted the over-\$100,000 Feasibility Study on the town’s website!

- Screenshot from website: 

FIRE HEADQUARTERS PROJECT TOTAL	\$29,258,670
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- The posted Feasibility Study confirms key information in our last TAXPAYER UPDATE:  
Even the “Estimated Probable Total Project Cost” for just a “Fire Headquarters” would be \$29,258,670, plus interest. And “costs increase significantly” above that (due to inflation) if construction was not performed in 2024 / 2025, which, obviously, is not happening.

If your home is valued at (000s)	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700	\$800	\$900	\$1,000
Approximate amount you would pay in additional taxes*	\$5,760	\$8,640	\$11,520	\$14,400	\$17,280**	\$20,160	\$23,040	\$25,920	\$28,800

\*Assumes \$29,258,670 cost from Feasibility Study; debt is paid over 20 years; if financed over more years, your total cost would be higher

\*\*Approximate average assessed value of a single-family home in Rochester

- THIS IS NOT FEASIBLE FOR MANY ROCHESTER TAXPAYERS.
- Even if the cost were only HALF as much, ~\$15 million, it still would be unaffordable for many Rochester taxpayers.
- The Public Safety Building Committee is not pursuing simple, viable alternatives which would cost much, much less. Instead, they are still pursuing a shiny new building with a bunch of “wants,” not “needs.” Trying to “keep up with the Joneses”?

**CAN YOUR FAMILY AFFORD \$30,000 OR MORE IN NEW TAXES?**  
**Remember, your taxes increase 2½% annually anyway!**

Visit Our Website - [RochesterTaxpayersCoalition.Org](http://RochesterTaxpayersCoalition.Org)  
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