

CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE GUILFORD TOWN BUDGET

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026-2027

MARCH 27, 2026



THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET

The Annual Town Budget is the proposed revenues and expenditures for both the Town and Board of Education for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from July 1 – June 30. When voting on the annual budget, Guilford taxpayers are approving a Town budget that includes the total cost of services provided to them by the Town and Board of Education according to the process outlined in the Guilford Town Charter.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The BOE comprises 60.84% of the total budget, the Town comprises 31.31% of the total budget, and the combined BOE/Town debt service comprises the remaining 7.85% of the budget request.
- Prior to reductions by the BOF, the Superintendent reduced the requested school department budgets by \$565K, which was then further reduced \$655K by the BOE. This total reduction of \$1.22M brought the year-over-year increase to 6.25%. The BOS reduced the requested Town department budgets \$1.33M, resulting in a year-over-year increase of 6.15%, including debt service (which remained flat).
- At their budget workshop March 5, the BOF took local, State, and federal factors into consideration, reducing the combined budgets \$750K. This reduction was allocated \$450K from the Town budget and \$300K from the BOE budget. The BOF reductions resulted in a BOE budget increase year-over-year of 5.84%, and a Town budget increase year-over-year of 5.22%.
- A key cost driver in both the Town and BOE FY2026-27 budgets is a substantial medical insurance increase for a second year in a row.
- The BOE budget experienced non-discretionary increases in contractual salary obligations, medical benefits, transportation, electricity, and contracted services which exceeded the overall budget increase, and required the BOE to limit or reduce instructional investments and classroom positions.
- The Town budget increase, beyond medical benefits, includes additional department staffing requests by Health/Building, Public Works, and Fire to improve Town services, generate revenue, and implement approval process efficiencies.
- The proposed Mill Rate will increase 4.08% (27.65 to 28.78) if the BOF-recommended budgets are adopted by voters at referendum, and may be set lower by the BOF if the State Legislature revises the ECS formula in May.
- From FY2020-25, mill rate increases were below both the U.S. inflation and COLA rate increases.
- One bond authorization for \$1.83M will be requested by the BOE at referendum for partial roof replacement at Adams Middle School, safety bollards at four schools, and design services for future school facility projects. The Town will not be requesting a bond authorization this year.

THE TYPICAL BUDGET PROCESS

October – February

- Town/School departments submit budget/capital requests for review by Boards of Selectman (BOS) and Education (BOE)
- BOS/BOE hold public meetings, hearings, and workshops to seek input before finalizing respective budgets
- Board of Finance (BOF) receives BOS and BOE budgets/bonding requests at mid-February regular meeting (**February 12, 2026**)

March – April

- BOF conducts public hearing/workshop(s) on BOS and BOE budgets first week of March (**March 3 & 5, 2026**)
- Final Budgets published in local newspaper (**end of March**)
- Annual Town Budget Meeting in early April (**April 7, 2026**)
- Annual Budget Referendum in early/mid-April (**April 21, 2026**)
- BOF sets Mill Rate within ten (10) days of budget passing

**The Annual Town Budget Meeting will be held at Guilford High School on April 7, 2026 @ 7:30PM.
The Annual Budget Referendum Vote will be held April 21, 2026 at all polling places, 6AM – 8PM.**

This document was created in partnership by the Office of the First Selectman and the Guilford Public School District.