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## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Charter Revision Commission Meeting held on Monday October 4, 2010 in the Council Chamber at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT.

Charter Revision Commission Chairman William Lavery called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**PRESENT:** Robert Duero, John Godin, Joseph Golden, William Lavery, Eric Paradis, Carey Shierloh, Peter Spanedda.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectwoman Pat Llodra, Board of Education Chairman William Hart, Board of Finance Chairman John Kortze, Legislative Council Chairman Jeff Capeci, Legislative Council Member and former Finance Director Ben Spragg, Finance Director Bob Tait, Registrar of Voters LeReine Frampton, Two members of the public, Two members of the press.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Golden made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2010 meeting. Motion seconded and unanimously approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Chairman Lavery distributed an email received from Tax Assessor Chris Kelsay for the Charter Revision Commissions review (Attachment A). The email refers to recent changes in State Statutes related to the appointment of Tax Assessors.

#### **INPUT FROM TOWN OFFICIALS ON SPECIFIC CHARGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:**

Pat Llodra, First Selectwoman

Mrs. Llodra distributed written comment she had prepared on the charges along with research from referendums from 1985-1997 when Newtown last had advisory questions on the ballot (Attachment B).

Mrs. Llodra indicated that she is not in favor of a bifurcated budget. She feels that it would separate the Town into two segments and create a cultural competition for precious Town resources. She feels that we should have a budget process that reflects that we consider ourselves one community and the budget should address all core values for the whole community.

In reference to advisory questions, Mrs. Llodra indicated that while she was on the Legislative Council she typically had a sense that if the budget was voted down it was because it was too high, however she could see the potential need for advisory questions so that the council will have data to act on after a failed budget.

Responding to a question from Chairman Lavery on her opinion of Charge #3, Mrs. Llodra suggested that the Commission first make the decision on whether to bifurcate, then consider the charge on advisory questions. If the Commission does feel that advisory questions are warranted, then they should select the model that best delivers data for the people having to make decisions based on the questions.

Responding to a question from Mr. Paridis regarding the potential for the Legislative Council to make changes on one side of the budget that may have already passed Mrs. Llodra stated that she is not in favor of any vote that is not binding.

William Hart, Board of Education Chairman

Mr. Hart is also not in favor of a bifurcated budget and stressed that the Town should be working to deescalate competition in parts of the budget as much as possible.

In reference to advisory questions Mr. Hart explained that a yes/no question can be inherently confusing and may make voters feel threatened. The Town needs a system to clearly get the intent of voters and advisory questions may be an excellent way to handle that as they could enhance the ability to understand the mind of the voter. He felt that charge #3 is a variance of advisory questions and either option could work, but the questions should be what is the most clear for voters on the ballot?

Mr. Duero asked Mr. Hart if advisory questions should key in on the two sides of the budget. Mr. Hart responded that he did not feel strongly one way or another but re-iterated the desire to minimize competition between the two sides of the budget. He also would like to see what the experience in other communities has been.

John Kortze, Board of Finance Chairman

Mr. Kortze indicated that he did not feel comfortable speaking for his board as a whole.

In reference to bifurcation Mr. Kortze asked what are we trying to accomplish as a Town? He felt that the commission needs to examine the outcomes of advisory questions seriously. He also pointed out that in a representative form of government people vote officials into office based on track record, platform, etc. and that the official will take the peoples issues in one way or another.

Mr. Kortze with the help of BOF member Joe Kearney did some research on the impact of bifurcation in other Towns. Their research indicates that if you bifurcate, you double your chance of failure on your first budget vote. From a BOF perspective, you always want to see a budget passed on the first time as Bond Rating Agencies also prefer a first pass, potentially affecting the cost of interest to the Town. In addition, their research indicates that 13 of 18

towns that bifurcate have a lower bond rating than the Town of Newtown. He stressed that what Newtown pays on debt costs is of universal impact to all citizens.

Mr. Kortze questioned how we could allocate costs like debt and other shared services like town plowing and mowing at schools, or the cost of school space that the schools provide for town services.

In regards to advisory questions Mr. Kortze stated that he would not want to complicate things as you need to know voters intentions. He is against anything that could hurt the integrity of a vote.

Chairman Lavery asked Mr. Kortze's opinion on charge #3. Mr. Kortze responded that he worries tremendously of the implications because of all the other moving parts. He stated that we need to make sure that whatever we're doing is discernable without debate and that we can't usurp the representative democracy that we have. We have to preserve the responsibility of elected officials.

Mr. Spanedda questioned if the town has the capability to separate out shared services. Mr. Kortze was not sure if we currently have the capability and added that his personal opinion is that we are one town and have to operate like one.

Chairman Lavery questioned if there were areas that the Town could lose State reimbursement funding. Mr. Kortze responded that he knows that the Town has to fulfill certain requirements when they seek State reimbursement.

#### Jeff Capeci, Legislative Council Chairman

Mr. Capeci agreed with Mrs. Llodra's letter to the commission and also agreed with Mr. Kortze's point on difficulties with shared services. He felt there could be an unintended consequence of being hesitant to provide in kind services.

He thought Mrs. Llodra's data was interesting noting that the 1<sup>st</sup> data set had a lot of yes/no votes but didn't say who was voting each way. The early 90's data seemed to address some concerns.

He felt that charge #3 could solve all of the problems. He stressed that he is not in favor of the questions if they are binding. The questions need to remain advisory and elected officials need to be entrusted to make decisions.

#### Ben Spragg, Legislative Council member and former Finance Director

Mr. Spragg distributed an email he sent to the commission summarizing his opinions on the charges (Attachment C). He does not support a bifurcated budget or advisory questions but thought that charge #3 may have helped in the budget deliberations the legislative council had last budget. He added that the questions should only be asked on no votes if a budget fails because at that point your goal is to convert the no votes to yes votes.

Mr. Paradis asked Mr. Spragg if he had a preference on if questions on the no votes would be advisory or binding. Mr. Spragg responded that it depends on how close a vote is and the turnout and that they should be a tool and good information.

Bob Tait, Finance Director

Mr. Tait noted that as a non-elected official his main point to the matters would be on the impact on operations. Mr. Tait provided an email from Connecticut Council of Municipalities (Attachment D) describing potential impacts on bifurcated budgets and advisory questions.

Mr. Tait indicated that having multiple votes would make it more difficult to get tax bills out on time and potentially impact the timing of receipt of tax revenues.

Chairman Lavery asked if the Town is on the right schedule with the State for budgeting based on income we receive from the State? Mr. Tait responded that the Towns in Connecticut are currently trying to get the State to change their timing as the State has the ability to change revenues to towns midyear anyways. Mr. Tait pointed out that last year the State changed a grant to the Town in May (the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the budget).

Mr. Godin asked if the Town has ever had to incur short term borrowings because of an un-passed budget. Mr. Spragg responded that his first year in Newtown in 1983 they did because the budget was not adopted until close to September. Mr. Tait added that the Towns fund balance could hold some delays in the budget.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

LeReine Frampton-Registrar of Voters-6 Pebble Rd.

Mrs. Frampton has spoken with the registrar of voters in Ridgefield and Bethel who both indicated that their voter turnout has been relatively unchanged since bifurcating. In Bethel both sides of the budget have either passed or failed together. In Ridgefield both sides have just been passing.

Mr. Godin asked how much voter turnout is impacted by multiple referendums. Mrs. Frampton responded that typically the first referendum has a turnout of approximately 3,500 then possibly 4,200 on a second vote. One year that the Town had four referendums she recalls turnout hitting 6,000 voters.

Ruby Johnson- Chestnut Hill Rd

Mrs. Johnson distributed materials related to housing and economic development at Fairfield Hills (Attachment E). She feels that Newtown is ready for a bifurcated budget. She stated that the Town public works department spent significant time and resources at Fairfield Hills but couldn't identify how much time was there. If you separate the budgets then the Town will have to justify expenditures the same way the BOE does. She feels that elected officials lose site of the fact that it is our Town and our decision.

Bob Merola- Legislative Council member, 22 Ashford Lane

Mr. Merola stated that he would be most interested in what the impact to voter participation would be if the Town considered a bifurcated budget or advisory questions. If turnout is only increased by 5%-10% you're really not learning a lot. He added that if you do bifurcate you have to go all the way and ask advisory questions so that you can get all the data.

Responding to a question from Mr. Paridis regarding the potential for the Legislative Council to make changes on one side of the budget that may have already passed Mr. Merola stated that once one side is passed it should be final and only the failed side should be changed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Lavery moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and unanimously carried. Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25PM.

Patrick M. Kelley, Clerk

A

**From:** Chris Kelsey (chris.kelsey@newtown-ct.gov)  
**To:** BillandJoanLavery@yahoo.com;  
**Date:** Mon, September 27, 2010 7:54:21 AM  
**Cc:** jgodin1312@charter.net;  
**Subject:** Charter Revision

Hello Bill,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Chris Kelsey and I am the assessor for the town. I got your contact info from John Godin. The reason for the email is to make the charter revision committee aware of a change in state law that affects the way I am appointed. I have attached a copy of HB 5059, basically it removes the requirement for the Assessor to be reappointed, and rather the assessor is appointed once at the beginning of his /her employment. The position no longer can be reappointed every four years like it is currently written in the charter. Other than that everything should remain the same. The board of selectman may still remove the assessor for cause in accordance of section 4-40.

Please let me know if I should formally bring this to a meeting or if it can be accomplished without me.

Thank you  
Chris

B

To: Charter Review Commission

From: E. Patricia Llodra

Date: September 19, 2010  
.....

I am sending this packet to you just for information purposes and am acting as a private citizen. The attached material is a record of the voting results from years past when we had advisory questions on the ballot. You may find this information relevant, or not, when considering the iterations in the charge under which you are conducting an inquiry.

Some personal thoughts as well...

I am a proponent of *one Town – one budget*. I fear that if we separate out too much the major elements, vis a vis bifurcation, that we create competition for scarce resources and end up with winners and losers. I envision a community that can fairly and respectfully consider all the needs and seek to fund those needs at the most affordable level. Quality schools, good roads, safe neighborhoods, open space, services for seniors, attractive and appropriate facilities, and more, make up the fabric of our community. Each element contributes to the overall esthetic and ethic of Newtown. Our major responsibility as community leaders is to ensure the fiscal health of this community while at the same time preserving and protecting its core values.

Some say that the 'one-ness' I hope for is increasingly impossible given the tenor and tone of discourse evidenced during this last budget season. I have not given up on that vision, however, and hope that we take very careful steps not to propel Newtown into a situation where the bottom line is fixed and the advocates of one side compete against the advocates of the other side for a larger share of the pie.

There are those who say that asking advisory questions invites voters to say "no" in the hope of gaining more for their special interests and/or less for the 'other' side. There are others, however, who say that the Council is unable to interpret the wishes of the voters without that advice being delivered through the ballot. I think the truth probably lies somewhere within each of those statements.

I wish you good luck in your deliberations. This is not an easy task. Your actions and the subsequent recommendation to the LC has the potential to significantly impact how we fund our Town.

B

# REFERENDUM

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### May 14, 1985

		QUESTION #1		QUESTION #2		QUESTION #3	
		1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$21,462,128 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1985-1986 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$14,273,419) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$7,188,709) appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
		YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED
District #1	Machine # 121411	259	223	221	190	132	252
	Machine # 121408 130164	217 47 (523)	148 28 (399)	182 46 (449)	132 18 (340)	96 23 (251)	186 35 (473)
District #2	Machine # 121451	277	211	236	180	168	227
	Machine # 121430	280 (557)	240 (451)	238 (474)	192 (372)	141 (309)	249 (476)
District #3 Property Owners	Machine # 121404	222	193	190	164	108	220
	Machine # 121426 121424	72 209 (503)	72 163 (428)	59 183 (432)	63 131 (358)	31 120 (259)	84 184 (488)
GRAND TOTALS		1583	1278	1355	1070	819	1437

*Idea Knight*  
Moderator

*May 15<sup>th</sup> 1985*  
Date

1583  
1278



B

# REFERENDUM

# May 12, 1986

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

		<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				INCREASED	DECREASED			INCREASED	DECREASED		
				INCREASED	DECREASED			INCREASED	DECREASED		
		YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED				
		1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$23,736,943 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1986-1987 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$15,512,228) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$8,224,715) appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?					
	Machine #										
District #1	121434	203	318	202	259	106	339				
	121423	254	247	227	204	129	288				
District #2	121451	257	337	244	242	138	348				
	121430	212	284	187	221	113	283				
District #3 Property Owners	121445	185	281	188	225	99	291				
	121408	224	224	209	174	129	246				
GRAND TOTALS		1335	1691	1257	1325	714	1795				

James J. Smith, Moderator

5

# REFERENDUM

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

May 13, 1987

Question #1

Question #2

Question #3

		1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$26,930,977 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1987-1988 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$17,557,895) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$9,373,082) appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
Machine Nos.		YES	No	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Decreased
Dist. #1	200014	279	283	269	248	119	373
	200010	273	204	246	186	134	280
Dist. #2	200020	259	218	238	207	156	275
	200018	245	273	232	241	154	301
Dist. #3 <small>Property Owners</small>	200013	205	209	199	190	96	272
	200021	231	210	225	184	130	257
Grand Totals		1492	1397	1409	1256	789	1758

95 property owners  
2804 registered voters

2889 votes cast

2879

B

# REFERENDUM

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

## May 16, 1989

		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INCREASED <input type="checkbox"/> DECREASED		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INCREASED <input type="checkbox"/> DECREASED		
		1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$33,416,188 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1989-1990 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$21,258,088) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$12,158,100) appropriated for general Town purpose other than education increased or decreased?		
Public Counter	MACHINE #'S							
550	District #1 and property owners	200013	166	384	161	336	096	383
477		200012	200	274	193	252	105	320
507	District #2	200010	161	344	163	286	084	358
585		200018	161	422	165	351	083	427
463	District #3	200016	165	295	163	253	080	319
453		200011	176	276	179	228	090	300
3035 45	Absentee Ballots		17	28	13	28	6	36
3080	GRAND TOTALS		1046	2023	1037	1734	544	2143

11,217 registered voters      approximately 27% voter turnout

B

# REFERENDUM

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

May 15, 1990

		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		YES	NO			YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED
		1. SHALL THE TOWN OF NEWTOWN BORROW THE SUM OF \$2,446,056 TO FUND A SPECIAL APPROPRIATION FOR FIRE TANKER TRUCK; HIGHWAY ROADS; BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPUTERS; HAWLEY SCHOOL REPLACE OIL TANK; MIDDLE SCHOOL REPLACE OIL TANK; and FINANCIAL ADVISORY FEE & LEGAL SERVICES?				2. SHALL THE SUM OF \$36,583,087 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1990-1991 FISCAL YEAR?		3. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$22,466,754) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		4. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$14,116,333) appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
MACHINE #'S											
DISTRICT #1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	200018	317	324	261	374	249	346	151	436		
	200017	313	188	271	227	240	214	162	284		
DISTRICT #2	200022	283	253	238	295	225	269	141	347		
	200013	314	306	253	362	237	319	153	406		
DISTRICT #3	200014	241	251	201	290	198	262	121	333		
	200019	274	179	232	221	223	188	117	282		
ABSENTEE BALLOTS		32	25	27	30	24	30	17	37		
GRAND TOTALS		1774	1526	1483	1799	1396	1628	862	2125		

10,786 eligible registered voters

3402 votes

21 6 0/10

# REFERENDUM

B

# Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

## June 14, 1990

DISTRICT #1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	MACHINE #1'S	1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$35,987,681 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1990-1991 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$22,366,754) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$13,620,927) appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
		YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED
DISTRICT #1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	200018	351	316	317	292	195	366
DISTRICT #2	200013	308	213	261	216	179	264
DISTRICT #2	200007	267	292	231	279	159	324
DISTRICT #2	200014	285	340	244	325	169	365
DISTRICT #3	200017	261	283	223	260	150	308
	200008	312	235	279	230	174	300
ABSENTEE BALLOTS		35	26	26	28	19	31
GRAND TOTALS		1819	1705	1581	1630	1045	1958

10,972 registered voters

32 of 10

3388 voters  
 62 absentee  
 86 grand list  
3536 total voted

# REFERENDUM B

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### May 14, 1991

DISTRICT #1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	MACHINE #1'S	1. SHALL THE SUM OF \$37,905,170 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1991-1992 FISCAL YEAR?		2. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$23,148,878) appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount (\$14,756,292) appropriated for general town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
		YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED
DISTRICT #1	200020	203	460	213	396	87	506
PROPERTY OWNERS	200006	212	312	184	285	98	352
DISTRICT #2	200010	193	404	190	351	109	420
	200018	215	398	205	352	118	414
DISTRICT #3	200017	216	337	220	297	78	416
	200019	228	297	225	253	93	375
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	57	21	36	20	36	14	39
GRAND TOTALS		1288	2244	1257	1970	597	2522

10,854 Eligible Voters

3,619 Total Voted

33% of Total Registry Voted in This Referendum

# REFERENDUM B

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### June 27, 1991

DISTRICT #1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	MACHINE #1'S		2. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount \$23,148,878 appropriated for education increased or decreased?		3. ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount \$13,813,142 appropriated for general town purposes other than education increased or decreased?	
	YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	INCREASED	DECREASED
200010	293	322	241	307	109	414
200017	255	207	194	215	116	278
DISTRICT #2						
200019	216	259	153	268	94	310
200012	271	296	194	301	123	350
DISTRICT #3						
200018	187	246	155	245	80	305
200006	250	226	225	214	97	325
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	78	31	71	32	38	57
GRAND TOTALS	1550	1587	1233	1582	657	2039

3208 total voted including 58 property owners  
 10837 eligible voters  
 29% voter turnout



10,830 registered voters  
 2,972 voted  
 27% total voted

# REFERENDUM

B

# Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

## April 28, 1992

 <b>YES</b>	 <b>NO</b>
SHALL THE SUM OF \$37,490,239 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1992 - 1993 FISCAL YEAR?	

DISTRICT	MACHINE #	48%		52%	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
# 1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	200006	236	258		
	200016	224	221		
	200018	240	269		
# 2	200013	268	262		
	200020	139	151		
	200021	131	159		
#3B	200012	165	195		
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	12 P.M.	23	20		
	6 P.M.	0	0		
TOTALS		1426	1535		



3277 total checked off as voted  
 10,912 names on registry  
 30% voter turnout

1st

# REFERENDUM

B

# Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

## May 20, 1992

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
SHALL THE SUM OF \$37,090,239 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1992-1993 FISCAL YEAR?	

DISTRICT	MACHINE #	YES		NO	
# 1 and PROPERTY OWNERS	200020	272	295		
	200006	283	216		
	200018	153	179		
	200021	111	107		
# 2	200012	320	299		
	200016	151	159		
	200014	143	179		
#3A	200007	192	177		
	12 P.M.	23	15		
#3B	6 P.M.	0	0		
	TOTALS	1648	1626		

# REFERENDUM *B*

# Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

12,430 registered voters  
 3,290 total voted  
 26.5% voter turnout

## April 27, 1993

MACHINE #	SHALL THE SUM OF \$40,342,635 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1993-1994 FISCAL YEAR?		ADVISORY ONLY If you voted "YES", would you prefer to see the proposed total budget increased, decreased or stay same?			ADVISORY ONLY If you voted "NO" would you prefer to see the proposed total budget increased, decreased or stay the same?		
	YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	SAME
200021	335	537	191	157	109	57	457	45
200018	322	548	175	107	112	41	365	38
200030	289	525	163	102	108	40	355	35
200064	231	448	149	91	67	36	305	31
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 12 P.M.	10	34	7	6	2	1	23	3
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 6 P.M.	4	8	2	0	1	0	6	0
TOTALS	1191	2100	687	463	399	175	1511	152

# REFERENDUM B

# Town of Newtown, Connecticut

12,430 registered voters  
 3953 voted  
 31%

## May 19, 1993

MACHINE #	SHALL THE SUM OF \$40,002,935 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1993-1994 FISCAL YEAR?		ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you want the budget amount Increased, Decreased or the Same?		
	YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	SAME
200064	373	439	227	400	109
200014	401	558	234	508	117
200006	437	523	273	489	130
200008	443	527	287	473	120
200030	60	45	32	44	18
200018	61	48	37	50	16
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 12 P.M.	26	16	20	16	4
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 6 P.M.	11	8	8	9	1
TOTALS	1812	2164	1118	1989	515

12,430 total registered voters  
 4210 total voted  
 33.8% voter turnout

# REFERENDUM B

## Town of Newtown, Connecticut

### JUNE 9, 1993

MACHINE #	SHALL THE SUM OF \$39,632,409 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 1993-1994 FISCAL YEAR?		ADVISORY ONLY - If the budget is defeated do you want the budget amount Increased, Decreased or the Same?		
	YES	NO	INCREASED	DECREASED	SAME
200016	516	447	330	428	108
200018	518	423	342	416	114
200008	500	457	323	443	107
200064	521	424	343	411	122
200006	100	65	53	68	31
200030	68	29	40	26	17
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 12 P.M.	48	30	38	30	7
ABSENTEE BALLOTS 6 P.M.					
TOTALS	2271	1875	1469	1822	506

# REFERENDUM B

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### APRIL 26, 1994

total # voters - 11,714  
 total # voted - 2,378  
 % voter turnout - 20%

DISTRICT	MACHINE #	YES		NO	
	200014	422		155	
	200008	415		180	
	200021	389		199	
	200064	421		164	
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	12 P.M.	24		9	
	6 P.M.	0		0	
TOTALS		1671		707	

16810

# REFERENDUM B

# Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

## April 25, 1995

*approx 15.5%*

TOTAL # VOTERS 11,732 (Registry List)  
TOTAL # VOTED 1,833 (inc. 23 Grand List)

	MACHINE #	YES		NO	
	200021	257		186	
	200006	237		209	
	200007	266		207	
	200018	245		174	
	TOTAL	1005		776	
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	12 P.M.	8		21	
	6 P.M.				
TOTALS		1013		797	

# REFERENDUM *B*

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### April 23, 1996

Total # Voted 2245 (2212 Reg Voters, 33 Property Owners)  
 Total Registered Voters 11,554  
 % Registered Voters Voted approx. 20%

	MACHINE #		YES		NO	
	200007		261		310	
	200064		302		333	
	200014		221		257	
	200016		280		248	
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	12 P.M.		14		15	
	6 P.M.		2		2	
<b>TOTALS</b>			1080		1165	

# REFERENDUM *B*

## Town of NEWTOWN, Connecticut

### April 22, 1997

Total # voted 1748  
 Total registered Voters 12,557  
 %Voter Turnout approx. 14%

	MACHINE #	YES	NO
		200007	262
	200015	272	181
	200016	239	194
	200006	245	175
ABSENTEE BALLOTS	12 P.M.	8	2
	6 P.M.	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		1026	722



B

**First Budget Referendum**

**Second Budget Referendum**

Budget Year	Education Questions*				Municipal Question**		Education Questions				Municipal Question**		
	Pass	Fail	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Pass	Fail	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	
1985	P			X		X							
1986		F	X			X		F		X		X	
1987	P			X		X							
1989		F	X			X							
1990		F	X			X	P		X			X	
1991		F	X			X		F	X			X	
1992		F	No Questions					P					
			Yes Vote Question***			No Vote Question****							
			Increase	Decrease	Same	Increase	Decrease	Same					
1993		F	687	463	399	175	1511	152					
1993		F				1118	1989	515					
1993	P					1469	1822	506					

\* If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount appropriated for education increased or decreased?

\*\*If the budget is defeated do you wish to see the amount appropriated for general Town purposes other than education increased or decreased?

\*\*\*if you voted YES, would you prefer to see the proposed total budget increased, decreased or stay same?

\*\*\*\*If you voted NO, would you prefer to see the proposed total budget increased, decreased or stay the same?

Charter Review Committee

Bifurcated Budget I can't think of a single instance in which a bifurcated budget would have helped. And, I don't think it is good for the Town.

It can lead to a manipulation of the budget by special interest groups on both sides.

Isn't it easy to conceive that the supporters whether a town or school special interest group would rally their group to approve their side of the budget and vote against the other side of the budget? They would figure that should the budget fail they want the cuts to come from the other side to protect their interests.

I think bifurcation encourages this type of thinking and is not good for the community.

Budget Ballot I do not support advisory questions. We tried advisory questions at one time, but they were subject to interpretation by everyone (The Board of Selectmen, School Board and Special Interest Groups) it didn't work then. The responses to the advisory questions were interpreted differently by each group, some using very fuzzy logic.

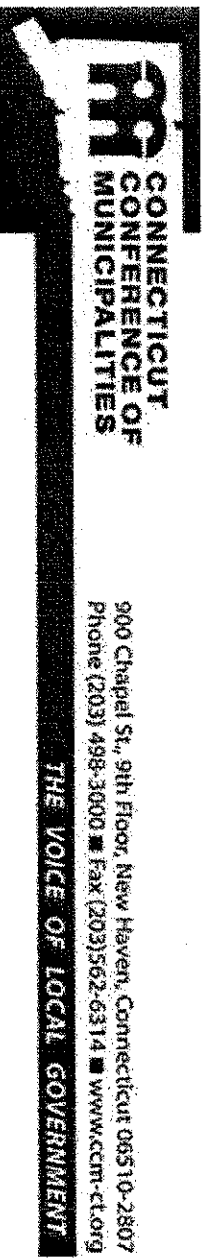
But, a budget ballot like number 3 of your charge would have been helpful last spring. It would have given us the numbers behind the no votes. (And we really only want to have the no voters participate) It was impossible to know if the budget was being rejected because it was too high or rejected because it was too low. The public participation at the Legislative Council budget deliberations supported increasing the budget but there was no way of reconciling that to the actual vote. I think budget ballot number 3 would have given us (The Legislative Council) the information we needed to formulate a budget during the budget deliberations last spring that would have met the town, school and tax payer needs and receive voter approval.

Ben Spragg....

D

Pat Llodra

**From:** ANTHONY BOCCAMAZZO [ABOCCAMAZZO@CCM-CT.ORG]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 23, 2010 3:38 PM  
**To:** Jeff@theCapecis.com  
**Cc:** first.selectman@newtown-ct.gov  
**Subject:** Your CCM Research Request (Bifurcated Budget and Advisory Questions)



September 23, 2010

Dear Councilmember Capeci,

The following is in response to your request for information regarding bifurcated budgets and advisory questions.

The following are responses that we have received from the Government Finance Officer's Association of Connecticut:

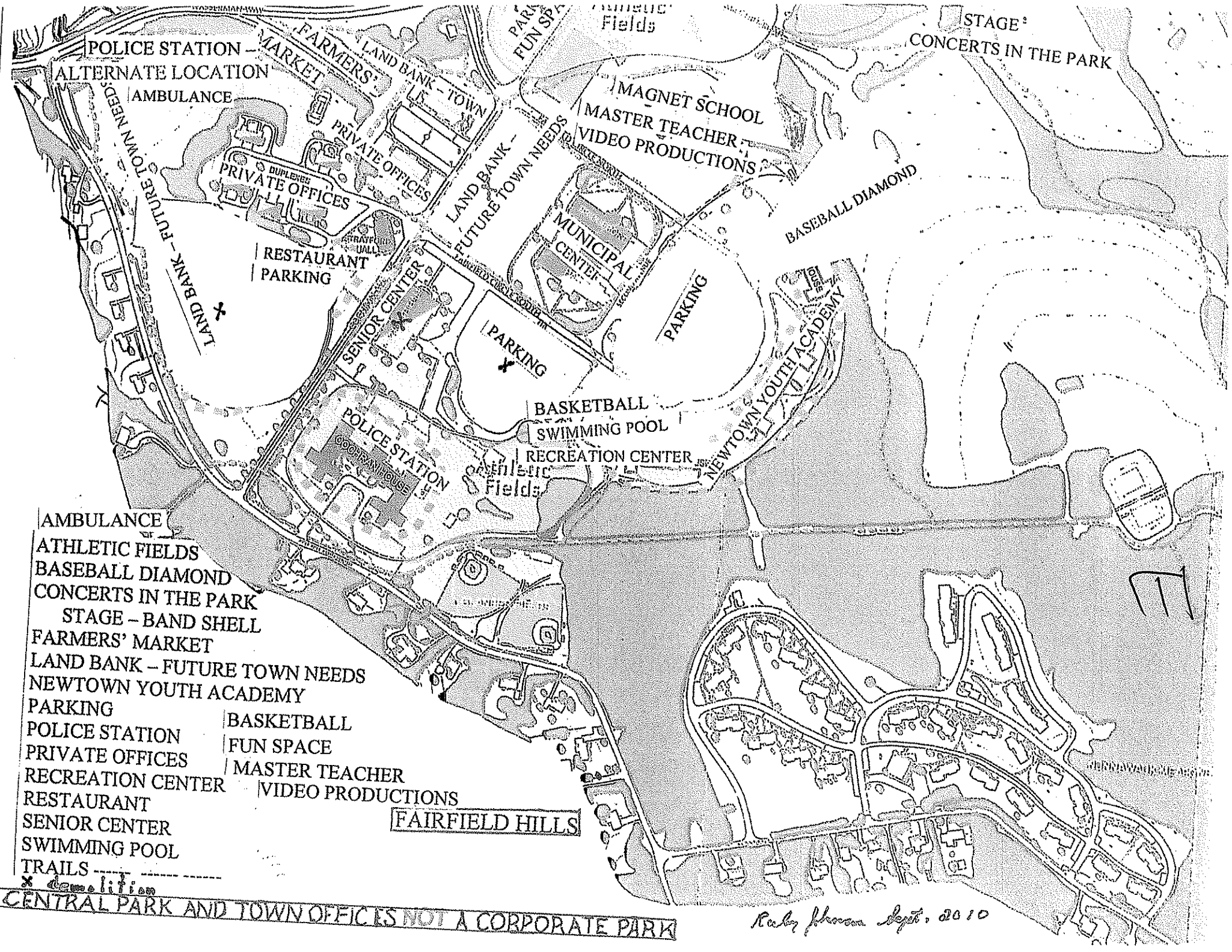
- One potential problem can be when one budget passes and the other does not. There needs to be some procedure in place to handle the mill rate calculation in order to get the tax bills processed.
- Sometimes referendums do extend out precariously close to July, and in some cases beyond. It does present problems with getting the tax bills out in a timely fashion. One solution would be to set the mill rate based on what is known and base the unknown on the previous year's level, then send out supplemental tax bills after the final outcome. This can be costly, though.
- A continuous failed referendum can become costly. One town estimates the cost at approximately \$2,000-\$2,500 per referendum.
- One advantage is that the administration can quickly determine where the concerns are - BOE vs. town - and can focus more closely on the appropriate budget. Both sides can make their case, and this allows the taxpayers/voters to express themselves by vote, as opposed to solely in a public forum.

We are still awaiting further responses and I will gladly pass along any other information that I may receive.

I hope that this information is helpful. Please feel free to contact me directly at (203) 498-3055 or by email at [aboccamazzo@ccm-ct.org](mailto:aboccamazzo@ccm-ct.org), should you have any further inquiries.

Regards,

9/23/2010



- AMBULANCE
- ATHLETIC FIELDS
- BASEBALL DIAMOND
- CONCERTS IN THE PARK
- STAGE - BAND SHELL
- FARMERS' MARKET
- LAND BANK - FUTURE TOWN NEEDS
- NEWTOWN YOUTH ACADEMY
- PARKING
- POLICE STATION
- PRIVATE OFFICES
- RECREATION CENTER
- RESTAURANT
- SENIOR CENTER
- SWIMMING POOL
- TRAILS
- x demolition
- 

**FAIRFIELD HILLS**

CENTRAL PARK AND TOWN OFFICES NOT A CORPORATE PARK

*Ruby Johnson Sept. 2010*

The Perplexing Case of Housing at Fairfield Hills

E

The developers and realtors want it, the citizens don't and every time we vote on it, it comes out the same: NO HOUSING AT FAIRFIELD HILLS. So why does the subject come up over and over again? It appears that we are going to be given this choice at every opportunity until we get it right. Some people believe that by adding large housing facilities and developing other commercial elements at Fairfield Hills that those facilities will reduce our property tax rate. So let me go through the numbers again and you decide if converting Cochran House into 160 apartments is a good idea.

A Method For Comparing Financial Advantage Or Disadvantage Of An Apartment Complex At Fairfield Hills

I. Total Town Side Budget For 2010-2011 \$ 37,089,881  
Latest First Selectman Population - 2010 estimate 27,679

II. Per Person Cost For Town Services:  
2010 Town Budget of \$37,089,881 ÷ 27,679. Cost Per Person = \$1,340

III. 160 Apartments @ Fairfield Hills

Assumptions:

- A. Current Population = 27,679
  - B. Current Student Population = 5,563 or 20% of Total Population
  - C. 100 single bedroom Apartments & 60 - 2 bedroom apartments
  - D. 20% of 1 bedroom apartments rented by singles. [(80 x 2) + (20 x 1)] = 180 people
  - E. 60 - 2 bedroom apartments will add 15' children for a total of 135 people
- Total increase in population = 315 people

IV. Additional Costs of Town Services (\$422,100)  
315 persons ( 180 + 135) @ \$1,340 =

V. Tax Revenue From Apartment Complex

Value of Completed Apartment Building = Est'd at \$28 Million<sup>2</sup>  
Mil Rate = 24.3 mils per \$1,000  
Taxable value of apartments (70% of \$28.0 Million) = \$19.6 Mil  
Tax Revenue To Town at 24.3 mils per \$1,000 = \$476,280

VI. Additional Cost of Student Population Increase  
15 students at \$11,151.91<sup>3</sup> = (\$167,279)

SUMMARY

Tax Revenue From Apartment Complex	=	\$476,280
Cost To Town For Additional Town Services	=	(\$422,100)
Increased Cost To Education Budget	=	(\$167,279)
Total Increased Costs to Town	=	(\$589,379)
Net Gain (Loss) to Town per year	=	(\$113,099)

E

Even after reviewing numbers like the ones above we find citizens and some government officials still interested in putting housing up at Fairfield Hills. The added net cost to the town of \$113,099 is based on only 15 students being added to the school population. Every additional student will add another \$11,151.91<sup>4</sup> to the deficit.

This analysis does not take into consideration additional parking, traffic that the housing would create, or additional congestion at FHH. Based on past experiences we can expect that our budgets will continue to escalate, which means increased costs per year. This can only translate into higher taxes. Limiting our expenditures will not solve all of our tax problems, but it is a move in the right direction.

1. 15 Additional Students estimated by Advantage Realty
2. Estimate from Newtown Assessor's Office
3. Supplied by Newtown Tax Assessor
4. From School Finance department.

**CURRENT EXPENDITURES AND PER PUPIL COST**

B

	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2009-2010*</u>
Current Expenditures		
Regular Education	\$57,293,179	\$57,682,339
Special Education	<u>\$12,006,992</u>	<u>\$12,659,100</u>
Total Current Expenditures	\$69,300,171	\$70,341,439
Revenue	<u>\$ 7,783,545</u>	<u>\$ 8,303,363</u>
Net Expenditures	\$61,516,626	\$62,038,076
Enrollment (Includes students sent out)	5,642	5,563
** Gross Cost Per Pupil	\$12,282.91	\$12,644.52
** Net Cost Per Pupil to Town	\$10,903.34	\$11,151.91

\* Unaudited figures.

\*\* Please note that in past school years the Newtown school system published comparative financial data for Newtown and other school systems. The statistics used in those reports were provided by the State and were based on their category of expenditure called Net Current Expenditure Per Pupil. Because that statistic does not include transportation cost and offsets expenditures by tuition revenue, it differs from the figures in this report.

*Prepared by the  
School Finance Dept,  
Sept. 2010*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

E

Economic development is often defined as structures, activities, businesses that pay more in taxes than the costs of municipal and school services they demand

The question before us is, "Does the presence of Commercial, Industrial, or Business Property in a Town lower the tax burden for citizens?"

The 1989 study done by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Ridgefield, CT, longitudinal study completed in 1978 and repeated in 1995 provide helpful information about the impact of economic development on a town. The graphs on the next page illustrate their findings.

The Ridgefield, CT Study: As a result of the 1978 study, Ridgefield decided to actively seek to attract businesses to Town in order to broaden the tax base. They knew from their study that commercial property pays more in taxes than it requires in services. Thus, commercial property would contribute excess tax dollars to fund Town government and schools.

But in 1995 it became obvious that in spite of new businesses coming into town, taxes had continued to rise steadily. To determine why, the 1978 study was repeated and completed in 1995. Several of the most obvious reasons for tax increases were:

1. The increase in population- some of the newly created jobs were filled by persons who chose to move into Ridgefield.
2. The second reason was the need to expand the number of multi-family housing units to house some of the new workers moving into town and
3. Multi-family units and single-family homes of the new residents caused a significant increase in school enrollment (Multi-family units sometimes housed fewer students than single-family homes)

Does this information apply to Connecticut? The 1999-2000 report of the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council (Hartford) shows similar results. The following chart shows Hartford and other large towns with significant business property, but also high mil rates.

BUSINESS PROPERTY VALUES AS PERCENT OF GRAND LIST  
COMPARED TO EQUALIZED MIL RATE  
RANKING OF LARGE CITIES-over 100,000

	Business Property as% of Grand List	Equalized Mil Rate	Mill Rate Rank In State
HARTFORD	66% <u>1st</u>	33.76	<u>1st</u>
NEW HAVEN	49.2% <u>2nd</u>	31.46	<u>4th</u>
WATERBURY	46% <u>3rd</u>	29.07	<u>5th</u>
BRIDGEPORT	40.9% <u>4th</u>	33.73	<u>2nd</u>
STAMFORD	37.7% <u>16th</u>	15.61	<u>121st</u>
NEW BRITAIN	30.8% <u>5th</u>	33.71	<u>3rd</u>

(CT Policy and Economic Council 1999-2000)

"Newtown could pave over Fairfield Hills and fill the landscape with office buildings and parking lots and still earn itself less than a mil in revenue. People flocking to town to populate those new office buildings would... want houses nearby, spurring residential growth even more... making our next revaluation an even bigger bombshell." THE BEE 3/28/03

"Rosenthal said the town would need the equivalent of eight Sand Hill Plazas to lower taxes by a single mil." NEWS-TIMES 3/28/03



Does this information apply to the Newtown area? Study the chart that follow. (file: book2)

E

**BUSINESS PROPERTY as PERCENT OF GRAND LIST  
COMPARED TO EQUALIZED MIL RATE IN NEARBY TOWNS  
(Connecticut Policy and Economic Council 1999-2000)**

	BUSINESS PROPERTY AS % OF GRAND LIST	EQUALIZED MIL RATE	# OF MULTI- FAMILY UNITS (5 Or More)
DANBURY	37.4 %	16.32	6,858
TRUMBULL	24.6 %	16.25	not given
BETHEL	24.2 %	18.56	583
BROOKFIELD	20.3 %	15.09	409
NEWTOWN	13.4 %	16.55	163
MONROE	12.4 %	17.2	240 (p&Z plan of Development p. 37)

How much do local businesses actually pay in taxes? The assessor's office recently listed the top ten taxpayers in Newtown. Three of these offer insight into the tax revenue situation.

Company	Rank	Assessed Value 2003	Taxes Paid In 2002
Sand Hill Plaza	#2	\$ 14,481,780	\$ 340,273
Barnabas Realty	#4	12,351,350	289,021
Newtown Shopping Village (Big-Y)	#6	7,665,440	179,370

**IS NEWTOWN PREPARED TO PROFIT FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?**

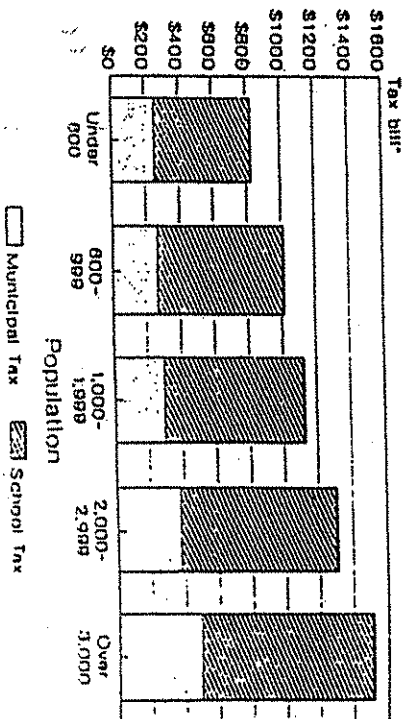
A yes answer means your community will receive more income from economic development than it will need to pay out in services.

1. Do you have a reservoir of unemployed workers? (HMA reports 2.4% 10/31/02)
2. Do you have appropriate housing available for type of workers anticipated?
3. Can the existing highways carry additional traffic?
4. Are their empty seats in the school classrooms to absorb more students?
5. Are municipal services adequately housed, equipped and staffed to accommodate more people?

(CT State Statues: Vol. 2 Sections 7 & 8)

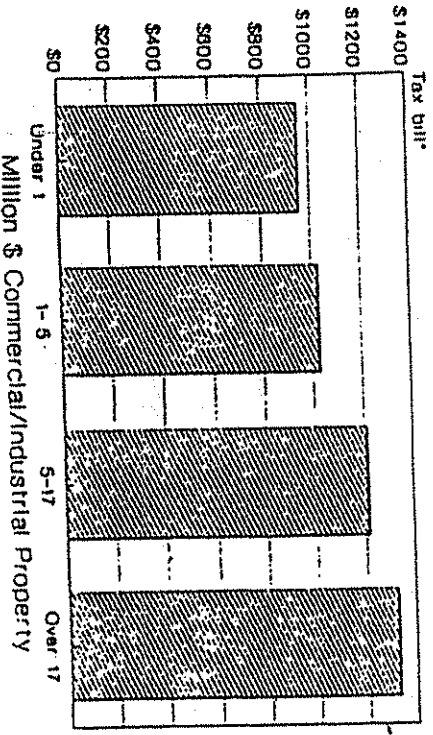
file: Eco Dev - book2

## 2. Population and Residential Tax Bills



\*Tax bill on the average-value house with less than six acres: 1980

## 4. Residential Tax Bills & the Value of Commercial/Industrial Property in Town



\*Tax bill on the average-value house with less than 6 acres: 1980

### VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES 1989 STUDY

"By now, it is fairly well accepted that residences cost the town money."

"...the general trend is that taxes increase with population"

"However, the general trend is: the more commercial and industrial property value in a town, the higher the total tax burden."