

Dear BOS, BOE, BOF, RTM members,

Thank you for listening and responding to the concerns of the many taxpayers in Fairfield who decided to speak out this year on the budget instead of remaining part of the “silent” majority.

Your actions to reduce the 2013-14 mill rate increase to 2.4% have sent a message of hope to many residents that love our town and want to remain here, but who had become increasingly discouraged by spending and tax increases at more than 2.5 times the rate of inflation over the last 14 years, and by the initial proposal to raise taxes next year by 6.4%.

We all know there is still much work to be done to address the upward pressure on town and education spending, including the need to:

- Reduce personnel costs, with particular focus on overly generous and unsustainable current and post-retirement benefits and overly restrictive work rules;
- Benchmark BOE spending against best practice in other districts and against clear performance goals that make sense for Fairfield – with a particular focus on reducing administrative overhead;
- Benchmark Town spending against best practice in other towns and against clear performance goals that make sense for Fairfield, and identify opportunities to increase user fees where appropriate;
- Work with our State representatives to reduce the impact of unfunded mandates from Hartford;
- Work with Town officials to attract more commercial property development, and to provide an affordable and supportive environment for seniors, who generally consume a smaller share of Town and Education services; and
- Inform and engage our residents on these and other important issues.

While there are still many challenges, your hard work to reduce the increase in our taxes is an important step in the right direction of preserving Fairfield as a desirable and affordable community for all of its residents.

Fairfield Taxpayer hopes to continue to provide a forum for constructive and informed debate on the important issues affecting Fairfield’s future. We also want to remain a trusted resource for you as Town officials. We know that you need rigorous, rational, objective, non-partisan analysis in support of any policy recommendations that you consider, and we will do our best to continue to respond to any requests from you for information and independent analysis on any issues you would like us to address. We also welcome your active collaboration in our work.

Meanwhile, we understand that Fairfield Taxpayer’s value as a community resource rests on demonstrating our ongoing dedication to serving the best long-term interests of our town and all of its residents in all of its districts. Our membership numbers continue to grow, and we regularly update the information on the size and breadth of our support on our website.

Your individual and collective leadership made a real difference this year. Thanks again for your dedicated service to our town.

Sincerely,

Fairfield Taxpayer