

Town of Charlemont January 2024 Newsletter



A Note on Taxes and the Tax Rate

Many factors go into the Town's tax rate and can affect the total amount of your property tax bill and often many influences are at work at the same time. Historically, the annual cost of running the Town increases each year, much in the same way the cost of maintaining a household increases each year.

Most of the money needed to fund the Town's government must be raised through property taxation. The remainder of the revenue comes from other sources, such as state aid, local receipts and the Town's certified free cash balance.

Growth plays an important role in the calculations of the Town's tax levy. Growth is essentially property value eligible for taxation this year that was not there last year. The reason it is so important is that the addition of this new revenue assists in defraying the impact of budget increases on the overall tax levy. New building projects such as additions or new homes, new personal property accounts, a previously exempt property being returned to the tax rolls and value increases to existing accounts all contribute to the growth figure. The cumulative effect of growth on the Town's tax levy can often reduce a tax bill by a couple of percents over what it would have been had this growth not been picked up.

Of course, there are factors that contribute to increases or decreases in individual tax bills; the following factors could contribute to an increase: improvement to a property such as an addition, finished basement or other alteration that would increase the property's market value, the addition of a new outbuilding, discovery of incorrect property information, such as an additional bathroom, or finished basement, which was not recorded in the previous assessment. These factors could contribute to a decrease: the demolition of a building on the property, the deterioration of the property as a result of neglect, disaster, or accident, discovery of incorrect property information, such as an incorrect account of bathrooms being assessed. Every year the Assessors adjust all the Town's taxable property according to a procedure

outlined in Massachusetts General Law. The new assessed value is intended to reflect the property's full and fair cash value on the first day of

January prior to the December bill on which it appears (3rd quarter "actual" tax bill). It is important to note that your assessed value is not intended to be a reflection of the property's current value. The assessors then add up the total assessed value of all the Town's taxable property.

Then annually, the Assessors, with the assistance of the Town's financial team (Town Accountant, Treasurer, Town Clerk, etc.) determine the amount that must be raised, less receipts and revenues, through property taxation. This figure, divided into the total assessed value of the Town's taxable property, determines the basic equalized tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The Fiscal Year 2025 tax rate saw a decrease of \$2.40 from the prior year, as a result of several factors: a record amount of growth, including the installation of a new ski lift, three new homes and various other new construction throughout Town.

So, as you can see, many dynamics go into each year's tax rate and any single factor, but usually a combination thereof, can influence the amount of your tax bill. Remember, the Town's budget and the part of those funds that comes from property taxation determines the amount property owners are asked to contribute in the form of their tax bills. The property assessment and tax rate are the mathematics involved in determining that sum.

News From the Town Clerk

This was a busy election year! On November 5th we counted 744 ballots – 77.75% of our registered voters in town.

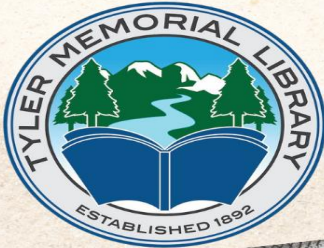
One of the questions I've gotten is, "how can I track my ballot?" Only if you vote early or by mail-in ballot can we track your vote. If you ever have a question about whether your vote was counted, call or stop in at the Town Clerks office and we can look it up for you.

Upcoming: Our annual census is coming at the end of January 2025. We will include applications for dog licenses which will be due by March 31, 2025. We'll remind you again in the January newsletter.

News from the Tax Collector **Tax Bills issued**

FY 25 Tax bills have been mailed. Note that they are in a different format than what we have been using for the last several years, due to a new program.

Please take note that if bills are not paid by February 3, 2025, interest will automatically be charged. Any question concerning your tax bill please contact the office at 413-339-5707. Concerns about assessment please contact the Assessor's office.



Ladies Moral Compass Quilt

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16
1:00 P.M.

Join local librarians Bambi Miller and Mary Boehmer as they share a contemporary quilt highlighting the political actions of local 19th century women. The afternoon promises to be an inspiring and thought-provoking step back in time.

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