



# Canton Community Connection

## Town of Canton & Canton Public Schools | 2024 - 2025 Town Budget Mailer



### From the First Selectman,

My fellow residents,

Two notes of concern as I deliver you this budget message. Your Board of Selectman dutifully went line by line and questioned every expense in the budget. We have embraced efficiency and consolidation whenever and wherever possible.

This budget proposes to add ½ year police officer (starting in January 2025) and an operator/maintainer position at the Dept. of Public Works. Town of Canton staffing levels are minimally maintained while providing the best customer service possible. Many of you have asked for increased police presence and better road maintenance.

Part two, the tough part. The revaluation has shifted more of the tax burden to residential property owners from commercial real estate, personal property and motor vehicles. While residents enjoy the increased value of their homes, it comes with a price. The revaluation is statutorily required every 5 years. We will be impacted by the increased value in our homes.

The Board of Selectmen is exploring ways to lessen the impact of this revaluation while maintaining the current level of services that you have come to expect. We must understand the growth in our town and the needs accompanying that growth. We will plan for the future by budgeting responsibly and taking the town in the direction that continues to maintain the town's character and charm. A place we all call home.

Respectfully,  
Kevin Witkos



Kevin Witkos  
First Selectman

### From the Board of Finance Chair,

This year, two unusual circumstances made it especially challenging to balance maintaining town services and excellent schools with reducing the burden on Canton taxpayers.

First, state law required revaluation of all taxable property. Due to dramatic and uneven increases in property values driven by market factors, the tax burden in Canton shifted toward residential properties. Residential real estate increased by 47%, compared to 21% and 5.58% for commercial and personal property, respectively, while motor vehicles decreased 5.55%.

Second, Canton faced unavoidable capital expenses, including modular classrooms for Cherry Brook School and environmental cleanup of PFAS contamination. In the initial administrative budget presented to the Board of Selectmen, these two items accounted for a 93% increase in the capital improvement budget.

The Board of Finance worked hard to reduce the impact of these extraordinary circumstances. Most importantly, we advocated phasing in the revaluation over 4 years and bonding for appropriate capital expenditures to spread out costs. Together, these changes would reduce the increase for the median house from over \$1,200 to under \$700.

We encourage residents to vote at the Town Meeting on April 18 to phase in the revaluation over four years. Please also attend the Budget Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 23, to share your views on the proposed budget. Following the hearing, the Board of Finance may alter the budget in response to residents' testimony or propose that the budget presented in this mailer be put before voters as-is at the May 7 referendum.

Sincerely,  
Katie Kenney



Katie Kenney  
Board of Finance Chair

### From the Board of Education Chair,

Dear Community Members,

As Chair of the Board of Education, I'm thrilled to endorse the proposed budget for the 2024-2025 academic year. Having seen firsthand the profound impact of a well-funded educational system, I'm passionate about ensuring every student, educator, and community member receives the support they need to thrive.

This budget reflects our unwavering commitment to providing top-notch education for all, regardless of background or circumstance. It prioritizes investments in our dedicated educators, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping students' lives. By empowering them with training, resources, and fair compensation, we aim to cultivate an environment where every student can excel.

Moreover, our budget channels resources into enhancing curriculum and instructional programs to equip students with the skills and knowledge essential for success in today's world. We're also committed to fostering equity and inclusion, ensuring every student receives a quality education irrespective of their zip code or socioeconomic status.

I urge you to stand behind this budget for the betterment of our community and nation. Together, let's invest in our future by investing in education today. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our students and schools.

Warm regards,  
Lou Daniels



Lou Daniels  
Board of Education Chair

## CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

TOWN OF CANTON, CONNECTICUT  
PO Box 168, Collinsville, CT 06022-0168  
[www.townofcantonct.org](http://www.townofcantonct.org)

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Budget FY24	\$ 31,746,091	Percent of Increase		
Salaries (Certified & Non-Certified General Ed Only)	912,826	2.88%	} 11.85%	} 5.36%
Transportation & Fuel	19,703	0.06%		
Health & Benefits	436,302	1.37%		
Liability & Insurance	12,549	0.04%		
Oil/Natural Gas/Electricity	(19,936)	-0.06%		
Contracted Services	10,080	0.03%		
Special Education net of excess costs (850,000)	1,540,378	4.85%		
Dues/Fees/Inspections	1,553	0.00%		
Supplies	41,109	0.13%		
Maintenance & Upkeep of Facilities	15,662	0.05%		
Furniture & Equipment	266,827	0.84%	} 2.67%	} 2.67%
Educational Technology, Instructional Materials, Ref Books	290,190	0.91%		
Tech Services, Professional Devel, Travel/Meetings, Postage	190,183	0.60%	} -5.67%	}
Small Capital Items	43,169	0.14%		
Open Choice	(950,000)	-2.99%		
Anticipated Hartford Revenue for Special Education Services	(850,000)	-2.68%	-2.68%	-2.68%
Revenues to Town of Canton: Increase in Education Cost Share Revenue	(258,943)	-0.82%	-0.82%	-0.82%
<b>BOE Budget Net Increase After Add'l Revenues to Town</b>	<b>\$33,447,742</b>	<b>5.36%</b>		

Postal Customer  
Canton CT

SOURCES OF REVENUE	
<b>Intergovernmental Revenues</b>	Education Cost Sharing (ECS) - The ECS formula is the method the State of Connecticut has established to distribute annual state education funding. The ECS formula is used to provide proportional state funding to local and regional school districts.
<b>District Revenues</b>	Excess Cost Grant - The Excess Cost grant is Connecticut's method for sharing in the expense for students who have extraordinary special education needs and associated costs.
	Open Choice - The Open Choice Grant, supported through the district's longstanding participation in the Open Choice program, provides financial support for initiatives aimed at enhancing educational opportunities and overall district improvements.
<b>Reimbursement for services</b>	Pay to Participate fees - Canton collects Pay to Participate fees from students in grades 9 through 12. These fees are used to directly offset expenses related to athletics.
	Building use - Occasionally, a for-profit entity requests use of an area within our school buildings. When this occurs, Canton charges back if there is a need for a custodian to be on the premises during non-scheduled working hours.
<b>Grant Revenues</b>	Title I - A federal grant used to support students by providing additional para-educator support.
	Title II - A federal grant used to provide certified staff additional professional development that would not otherwise be provided.
	Title III - A federal cooperative grant to support English as a second language learners.
	Title IV - A federal grant used toward digital teaching and learning.
	Adult Education - This is a cooperative grant with the Farmington Board of Education which provides adult educational opportunities as required by law to the residents of the town of Canton.
	IDEA - the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal Special Education Grant provides funds to ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education which includes special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs in the least restrictive environment.
	ESSR III - ESSR III funds will be used to offset custodial and custodial supply costs.

### BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

- 1. STUDENT GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT**  
Improve student achievement through rigorous, supportive instruction to ensure students are college and career ready.
- 2. PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  
Enhance communication pathways for students, staff, and the community to build responsive, supportive connections for all.
- 3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & EFFICIENT OPERATIONS**  
Maintain a strong financial management structure to ensure financial sustainability to maximize financial resources available.
- 4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND BELONGING**  
Foster a safe and positive learning environment in which students and adults engage to develop compassionate, resilient citizens of a local and global world.
- 5. EMBRACING EQUITY**  
Strive to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that celebrates diversity, fosters a sense of belonging and prepares students for a global society.
- 6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**  
Continuously invest in the development of skilled staff through hiring, retention, and development to promote continuous growth.

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Year	PK-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	PK-12 Total
2023-2024	450	338	240	455	1483
2024-2025	446	349	222	458	1475
2025-2026	474	343	223	455	1495
2026-2027	483	322	245	440	1490
2027-2028	480	324	237	432	1473
2028-2029	487	318	228	436	1469

District enrollment is projected to fluctuate over the next five years, with growth projected primarily at the primary grades.

### ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET PRIORITIES

1. Student achievement in all areas across the district.
2. Maintain class size according to the Canton Board of Education policy.
3. Focus on teaching, learning, professional development and social-emotional well being of students and staff.
4. Focus on creating an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.
5. Provide a safe and healthy school environment.
6. Propose a fiscally responsible budget that aligns with the Canton Board of Education Goals.

To view all Board of Education budget documentation, visit the Canton Schools website [www.cantonschools.org](http://www.cantonschools.org), or scan the QR code to



be directed to the budget webpage.

## Annual Town Budget Meeting

Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.  
Canton Community Center, 40 Dyer Ave. Canton, CT 06019

The annual town budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Canton Community Center to receive comments on the budget recommended by the Board of Finance for the July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025 fiscal year. The Board of Finance will then adopt a final proposed Town Budget which will be brought to referendum on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, with voting from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. in the Canton Community Center. Absentee Ballots will be available from the Town Clerk.

- |                                     |                                   |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Board of Finance Members:</b>    |                                   | <b>Other Elected and Town Officials:</b>              |  |
| Katie Kenney<br><i>Chair</i>        | Thomas Blatchley<br><i>Member</i> | Kevin Witkos<br><i>First Selectman</i>                | Louis Daniels<br><i>Board of Education Chair</i>           |
| Sarah Faulkner<br><i>Vice-Chair</i> | Kenneth Humphrey<br><i>Member</i> | Robert Skinner<br><i>Chief Administrative Officer</i> | Jordan Grossman, Ed.D.<br><i>Superintendent of Schools</i> |
| Peg Berry<br><i>Member</i>          | Brian Miller<br><i>Member</i>     | Nathan Amos<br><i>Finance Officer</i>                 |  |

### General Fund Budget Summary

	Approved FY 23/24	Proposed FY 24/25	\$ Change	% Change
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Board of Selectmen Operating	\$11,805,621	<b>\$12,504,271</b>	\$698,650	5.92%
Capital Improvement	\$1,174,643	<b>\$1,208,416</b>	\$33,773	2.88%
Board of Education	\$31,746,091	<b>\$33,447,742</b>	\$1,701,651	5.36%
Board of Finance	\$2,021,579	<b>\$2,365,865</b>	\$344,286	17.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$46,747,934</b>	<b>\$49,526,294</b>	<b>\$2,778,360</b>	<b>5.94%</b>
<b>Revenue</b>				
Anticipated Non-Tax Revenue	\$6,335,230	<b>\$6,853,355</b>	\$518,125	8.18%
Balance Raised from Local Tax	\$40,412,704	<b>\$42,672,939</b>	\$2,260,235	5.59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$46,747,934</b>	<b>\$49,526,294</b>	<b>\$2,778,360</b>	<b>5.94%</b>

**Why did the assessment on my house change, and how will that affect my taxes?** The state requires all towns to conduct a revaluation of real property every five years. Canton's revaluation took place last year, affecting this year's tax numbers. Throughout the nation, market forces have contributed to a housing shortage that drove home prices higher over an unusually short period of time. In Canton, residential real estate increased in value by 47% over 5 years.

In the past, the Town has implemented the entire change in home assessments in the budget year after the revaluation took place. This year, because the increase is so large, the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen recommend using a state statute that allows towns to phase in their revaluations. At a Town Meeting on Thursday, April 18, Canton residents can vote to spread the impact of revaluation over a 4-year period.

### How would it change my taxes if the revaluation is phased in over 4 years?\*

		FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28
No phase-in	Mil rate	28.50	29.24	30.12	31.04
	Median tax increase	\$1,084	\$257	\$300	\$315
	Tax on median house	\$8,016	\$8,273	\$8,574	\$8,888
4-year phase-in	Mil rate	34.85	33.44	32.40	31.60
	Median tax increase	\$641	\$407	\$443	\$466
	Tax on median house	\$7,573	\$7,979	\$8,422	\$8,888
Median tax payer's savings in the current year		\$443	\$294	\$152	(\$0)
<b>Median tax payer's cumulative savings from phase-in</b>		<b>\$443</b>	<b>\$737</b>	<b>\$889</b>	<b>\$889</b>

\*Note: For FY 2025-26 through 2027-28, budgetary increases in expenditures are unknown. The projections above are only for illustrative purposes to demonstrate the relative impact of immediate implementation of the new assessment vs. a 4-year phase-in.

### How are local taxes determined each year?

Local taxes are determined by applying the local tax rate, known as the mil rate, to the total assessed value of all property in town. The value of all property in town—including commercial and residential buildings, vehicles, and some personal property—is called the Grand List.

By state law, property is assessed at 70% of its market value. Thus, if a residential property had a value of \$310,418, the assessed value would be \$217,293. The tax on this property would be the assessed value multiplied by the mil rate, divided by 1,000 (a mil).

Under a 4-year phase-in of the revaluation, at this year's proposed mil rate of 34.85, the tax on this property would be \$7,573.

If the revaluation were fully implemented this year, the mil rate would be 28.50, but the same house would have an assessed value of \$281,260, and the tax would be \$8,016.

Canton offers property tax abatement programs for eligible taxpayers including veterans and seniors. Information about tax abatement programs and eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting the Assessor's Office (860-693-7842) and the Senior & Social Services Office (860-693-5811).

### What do I need to know about the proposed budget?

This budget will require local property taxes of \$42,672,939. The total proposed budget calls for spending of \$49,526,294, an increase of 5.94% compared to the 2023-24 adopted budget. Note that 99% of this increase is caused by increased costs to maintain the Town's current levels of services and not to add any new or expanded services.

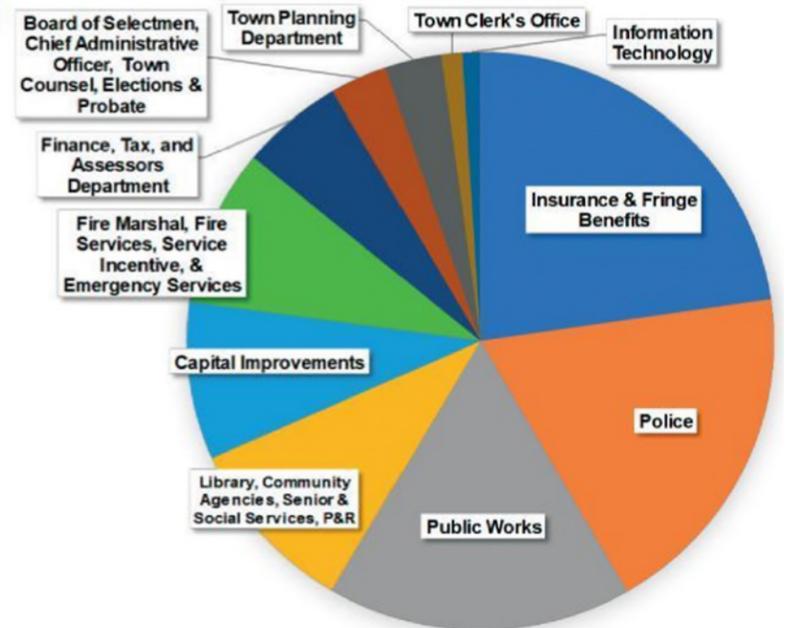
### What role does the Board of Finance have in the budget process?

The BOF is responsible for managing both the short-term financial needs of the town and its long-term capital planning. In its decision-making process, the BOF tries to balance town services, a strong school system, upkeep of nearly \$120 million invested in the town's infrastructure, the town's AAA bond rating, and the impact of these decisions on the taxes imposed on residents and businesses.

To learn more about Canton's budget, scan the QR code to be directed to the budget page of the town website, [www.townofcantonct.org](http://www.townofcantonct.org)



### BOARD OF SELECTMEN FY 2024-2025 BUDGET



### What are the major drivers of the budget increase?

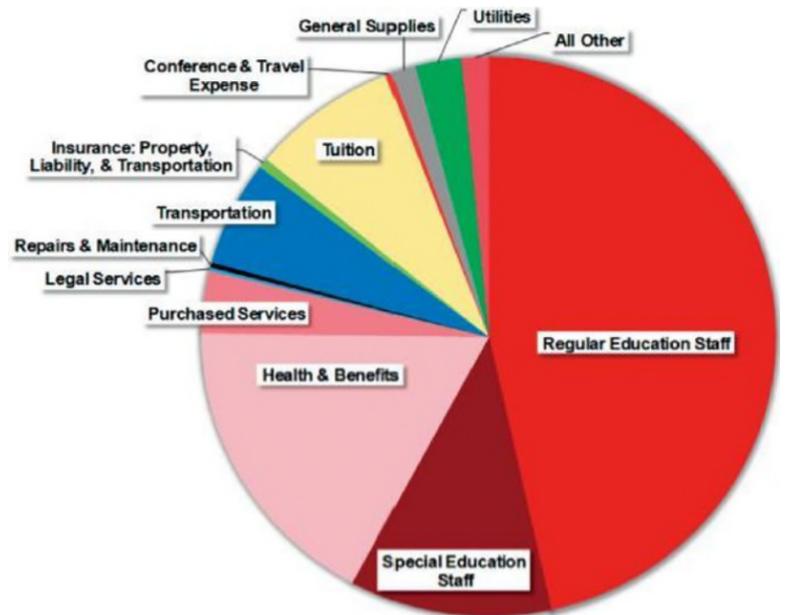
#### Largest Increases in Town Budget:

- Fire and Emergency Services
- Wages & Benefits
- Public Works—General Highway

#### Largest Increases in School Budget:

- Special Education
- Health & Benefits
- Contractual Salaries

### BOARD OF EDUCATION FY 2024-2025 BUDGET



### Understanding the Canton Public Schools Budget

The budgeting process for Canton Public Schools is a crucial aspect of ensuring effective financial management and the delivery of high-quality education to students. The administration employs a strategic and comprehensive approach to budgeting, with a major focus on zero-based budgeting and forecasting for the future. Every department and program within the school district must justify its entire budget. This process involves a thorough review of each line item in the budget, requiring administrators and department heads to provide detailed justifications for all proposed expenses. By examining the necessity of each expense, the district can identify areas for cost savings and allocate resources based on current needs and priorities.

The school district recognizes the importance of anticipating changes in enrollment, economic conditions, and educational trends to make informed financial decisions. The forecasting process involves analyzing demographic data, enrollment projections, and other relevant factors to predict future resource needs. This forward-looking approach enables the district to plan for potential challenges and opportunities, ensuring that the budget remains flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.

The next page highlights the Canton Schools' sources of revenue, student enrollment, and a breakdown of the increase to the total operating budget. ►