

Dudley Proposition 2 ½ Override for Town Operations

Question 1 Fact Sheet

Prepared May 10, 2023



The June Town Election ballot places a Proposition 2 ½ Override question before voters:

Question 1: Shall the Town of Dudley be allowed to assess an additional \$2,668,797 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of operational expenses for the Town of Dudley in the amount of \$1,674,514 and for the purposes of operational expenses for the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District in the amount of \$994,283, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023?

If approved, the override would provide a “level-service” budget, which means no decrease to municipal services. The override would permanently raise taxes by adding \$1.84 to the tax rate starting in Fiscal Year 2024, which begins July 1.

Note: As of July 1, the debt payments for the Town Hall renovation are finished. This reduction of \$344,177 in debt will drop today’s tax rate of \$10.16 per \$1,000 of valuation by 24 cents to \$9.92 starting July 1.

Staff Reductions/Eliminations

Eleven positions have been laid-off, eliminated or vacated since 2019 and have not been replaced:

- Part-time Board of Health Clerk
- Part-time Personnel and Conservation Clerk
- Part-time Planning Board Clerk
- Part-time Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk
- Full-time Building and Grounds Laborer
- Full-time Building Department Clerk
- Part-time Treasurer/Collector Clerk
- Full-time Assistant Town Treasurer
- Full-time Assistant Town Accountant
- Full-time Public Health Nurse*
- Part-time Assistant Animal Control Officer

*The town has signed an Inter-Municipal Agreement with the Town of Webster for Health Agent services. However, the part-time coverage is insufficient to meet the health department needs in Dudley.

Staff Consolidations

A Highway Department truck driver was transferred to the Water-Sewer Department, and not replaced. An additional truck driver will soon be transferred to the Water-Sewer Department, and not replaced.

The Building & Grounds Supervisor position was reduced to a Building & Grounds Coordinator and placed under the Highway Department.

Five clerk positions were consolidated into two full-time positions: the part-time Board of Health clerk, part-time Personnel & Conservation clerk, part-time Planning Board clerk, part-time Zoning Board of Appeals clerk, and full-time Building Department clerk. They were consolidated into Code Enforcement, Licensing & Inspections clerk, and Land Use clerk. These two administrative assistants now run three departments full-time.

The Code Enforcement, Licensing & Inspections Clerk also serves as Assistant Town Accountant every Wednesday and performs the duties of an online permitting coordinator. The Land Use Coordinator also serves as an assistant in the Treasurer’s Office 1.5 days per week and as a Human Resources Assistant as needed.

The operational Proposition 2 ½ Override

If rejected by voters, additional staff cuts will be:

- Police Department Administrative Assistant
- The Animal Control Officer
- Clerk to the Assessor's office
- The Highway Department Foreman

Additionally, the reduced budget will provide funding for the Assistant Town Treasurer for six months only, and zero funding for the Assistant Town Accountant.

If approved by voters, two full time firefighters will be hired with monies freed up by not replacing the Building and Grounds laborer and the Highway Department truck driver. Part-time social services help will be added to the Police Department. The Assistant Town Accountant will be restored to part-time and Assistant Town Treasurer will be restored to full-time.

More About Staff Reductions and Consolidations

216 weekly payroll hours since 2019: The total weekly hours for all positions either laid-off or not replaced since 2019 is 336 weekly hours. All of those part-time, benefitted positions lost since 2019 were replaced with 120 hours. The adjusted net total of 336 weekly hours cut and 120 restored with two combined positions and having reduced the Building and Grounds Supervisor to Building and Grounds Coordinator under the Highway Department is a total net reduction of 216 weekly payroll hours since 2019.

If the override fails, we will cut four additional positions by the end of this year, which equals 138 additional weekly hours cut, for a total of 18,479 total payroll hours cut from the town's annual budget since 2019.

Added to the 216 hours adjusted and cut, the total weekly reduction in hours is 354 weekly payroll hours cut from the Town budget. To put that in perspective, since 2019, and still accounting for the creation of two combined positions in the Town Hall and the elimination of a supervisor position and re-assignment to the Highway, the Town has cut or not replaced a total of 11,275.2 annual payroll hours, across departments from its annual budget.

If the override passes, we will add 174 weekly payroll hours back into the budget: restore the Assistant Treasurer, Two Firefighters, social services for the Police Department and the Assistant Town Accountant. With these add-backs, the net will still be a reduction of 2,192.4 payroll hours annually.

If the override passes, we ensure...

- Health inspections and housing complaints through the Board of Health are responded to at an acceptable level of service.
- We can continue to issue permits and complete inspections with an acceptable level of service.
- We have an acceptable level of staffing in our finance departments, including the Town Treasurer/Collectors office and the Town Accountant's office.
- We can respond in an efficient and timely manner when fire and paramedic services are needed.
- We continue to be eligible for grant funding for bridges, roads and infrastructure and can meet our regulatory and compliance requirements. This includes environmental health mandates and social services mandates that will be included as part of our local law enforcement operation.
- We continue the convenience of online services, 24/7 and adequately protect the Town's servers, network and website.
- Our library will remain certified and eligible for state funding.
- Proper funding for our Senior Center.
- We have sufficient materials and manpower for annual maintenance and repair to our streets and facilities.

All of this, if the override passes, yet we will still be 2,192.4 hours lighter a year in payroll hours.