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QUEENSBURY PASSES BUDGET IN CLOSE 3-2 VOTE



Queensbury Town Hall.

FILE PHOTO

Tax rate stands at \$0.649 per \$1,000 of assessed home value

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QUEENSBURY – In a tight 3-2 vote at Monday’s meeting, the Queensbury Town Board passed its 2026 budget of \$30,729,600 for general operations, up over \$4.1 million from last year. The town board also adopted a tax rate at \$0.649 per \$1,000 of assessed home value.

Queensbury has an average assessed home value of \$399,000; with a tax rate at \$0.649, that averages to about \$258 per residential household in annual town tax. Over the past few years, Queensbury Town Supervisor John Strough has touted how the town has one of the lowest tax rates in Warren County and the Capital Region.

“This is the 12th year of running a good, solid budget. There’s nothing excessive. We provide the services that the town residents expect at a minimum cost; \$260 for all those services is what the average house pays. I think we do a pretty good job,” Strough said.

With the approved tax rate, Queensbury is estimated to raise about \$3.3 million in town taxes, with an additional \$12.2 million in sales tax revenue.

The two votes against the town’s budget came from Ward 2 Councilman Scott Gushlaw and Ward 3 Councilman Michael Dixon, both of whom wanted to conduct a deeper dive into the town’s spending, with total appropriations in 2026 estimated at over \$47 million.

“We’ve only met an hour with the budget officer. We had a one-hour workshop. That was it. I’ve done some diligence on my own. I’ve asked questions. I’m still waiting for some answers, but I’m only bringing that out from my perspective as a board member,” Gushlaw said during Monday’s meeting.

“From a town tax, it’s pretty low. There’s a lot of other taxes that are also part of what we pay as taxpayers. I am going to

continue to focus on the appropriations and push on those. Are we over expending within the budget?” Gushlaw continued. “I think there’s a lot of things we can do without jeopardizing the services that we provide and challenge the appropriations, and hopefully that then trickles down into giving taxes back to the taxpayers. That’s my focus.”

Strough added that costs are up across the board that are impacting insurance rates, wages and salaries needed to maintain a reliable workforce, as well as rising inflation that has increased heating and electrical bills, to go with much more. Strough also explained how Queensbury is the economic hub in Warren County with 30,000 of the county’s 66,000 residents living in the town.

“Our stores, restaurants, and entertainment/recreation businesses create costs, especially for our emergency services providers and our highway department,” Strough said. “Our consumer and tourism economy produces impacts that need to be addressed, like traffic management and accidents. Impacts that have to be addressed and serviced by the town; that vitality produces costs.”

An additional point of contention in the 2026 budget was the amount of money set aside in the town’s Capital Reserve Fund, which the town feeds through excess revenue to go toward highway department vehicles and large capital projects that are sometimes brought on by emergency situations and events. The town has about \$8 million in its Capital Reserve Fund, according to Gushlaw.

“I feel like we’ve got an enormous amount of reserves, and we always say we’re going to allocate them at some point at the end of the year that we need for capital projects or

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Walmart employee dies after being struck by alleged shoplifter last month

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WILTON – A Walmart employee who was struck by a vehicle in the Wilton Walmart parking lot last month by an alleged shoplifter has died as a result of his injuries.

New York State Police announced November 4 that Michael Bushey, 69, of Saratoga Springs had died November 3 at Albany Medical Center. Bushey had been in the hospital since being airlifted there after he was struck by a vehicle driven in the Wilton Walmart parking lot by Timothy W. Besaw, 34, of Gansevoort, October 16.

Bushey’s daughter, Brittany Sanders, made a post on her father’s GoFundMe page Monday night reporting that her father had died after going into cardiac arrest.

“My father was healthy and very active, nobody could have ever seen this coming,” Sanders said in her post. “If it wasn’t for the coward who decided to hit him with his vehicle, he would still be here with us!”

Sanders said that doctors discovered a massive blood clot in her father’s artery which restricted proper blood flow. She said that Bushey coded multiple times while doctors worked for about two hours to get his heart rhythm back.

Besaw was arrested and initially charged with first-degree assault, second-degree assault, first-degree vehicular assault, second-degree vehicular assault, petit larceny, driving while intoxicated, and with leaving the scene of an accident without reporting. As of Tuesday afternoon, Besaw has not

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Washington County’s tentative budget released

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FORT EDWARD – Following extensive deliberation and multiple responses from concerned local residents during its recent budget meeting, Washington County published its tentative 2026 budget on Oct. 31.

In his budget statement, County Budget Officer Brian Campbell said, “No one will be happy with this tentative budget as a percentage of increase.” Campbell had told The Post-Star that the county was initially looking at a 45% tax levy increase, but with careful cuts and debates among the Board of Supervisors over several months, the tax rate in the tentative budget now stands at an increase of 16.97%, or \$6,430,310.

Using the example of a home valued at \$300,000, he said the tax increase would amount to an average increase of 36 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, which in turn would equate to a \$108 increase to the homeowner’s county portion of their tax bill, or \$9/month.

“The hardest part in the whole process is to first acknowledge the position you are in and then figure out how to get out of it. Make no mistake, this is not a one-year fix...,” Campbell said. He noted the ongoing issue with unfunded state mandates, which are essentially directives that the state gives

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