

Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Options

This section describes three (3) options to raise additional revenues or reduce operating costs for fiscal year 2012. None of these options are included in the Town Manager's proposed budget. They are included for the Town Council to consider during their deliberations on this recommended budget.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Potential Budget Impact</u>	<u>Actual Budget Impact</u>
O-2	Private School Transportation		\$378,550	
O-3	Police Hiring Lag	Adopted	\$100,000-\$250,000	\$150,000
O-4	Hours of Parking Meter Operation	Adopted	\$65,000-\$327,000	\$130,000

Budget Option: Private School Transportation Services

Financial Impact: \$378,550

Connecticut General Statutes require the Town to provide equivalent transportation services to children attending nonpublic nonprofit schools within Town when a majority of the children attending the private school are residents of the State of Connecticut. For fiscal year 2011, the Town has budgeted \$669,757 for these transportation services and anticipates receiving a grant reimbursement from the State of Connecticut of \$94,068. The net cost to West Hartford taxpayers for private school transportation services is \$575,689. The Town has funded the equivalent transportation service to private schools for the entire school year even though the State statute provides the option of limiting the Town's cost to twice the per pupil cost of public school transportation.

In the 2009-2010 school year, the school district spent \$440.19 per student on regular transportation expense. An analysis shows a low of \$1,135 per student to a high of \$7,443 per student for transporting private school students and a total cost of \$695,487. The total statutory required expense (\$880 per student) for transporting private school students was \$316,937. For 2010-2011, the cost of transporting private school students above the statutory requirement was \$378,550 and is summarized by school in the following table. An option would be to eliminate the amount spent over the statutory requirement in one year or over a multiple year timeframe.

2010-2011 PRIVATE SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

<u>Private School</u>	<u>Excess Transportation Cost</u>
Hebrew High School	\$26,248
Kingswood Oxford	46,964
Northwest Catholic	21,415
Montessori	15,703
Renbrook	111,768
Solomon Schechter	47,701
Saint Brigid	27,884
Saint Thomas	44,467
Saint Timothy	<u>36,400</u>
TOTAL	\$378,550

Adopted

Budget Option: Police Hiring Lag

Financial Impact: \$150,000

Historically, the Police department has had difficulty filling all of its sworn officer positions (130) and has carried numerous vacant but funded positions in its annual budget. Recruiting for these positions is continuous, but terminations, retirements, etc. make it difficult to reach full staffing levels. As a way to recognize these unfilled positions and the resulting payroll savings, the department has recognized a “hiring lag” in its annual budgets. This amount is an estimate of the regular payroll savings achieved by having vacant positions, offset by the overtime required to cover these vacancies and maintain public safety. The annual hiring lag savings has varied from \$100,000 per year to \$300,000 per year. There are currently five (5) vacant positions in the Police Department and twenty-two (22) police personnel will be eligible to retire by the start of next fiscal year. The fiscal year 2012 budget includes a hiring lag of \$150,000.

Adopted

Budget Option: Increase the Hours of Parking Meter Operation

Financial Impact: \$130,000

This option would extend the hours of operation of the parking meters in the Town Center and Blue Back Square. The meters currently operate Monday through Saturday from 9:00am to 8:00pm, and are expected to generate \$740,000 in revenue next fiscal year. One option would be to extend the hours of operation to later in the evening. It is estimated that each hour of additional operation would generate \$65,000 in additional revenue. With the Town Center and Blue Back Square attracting visitors later into the evening, extending the hours of operation would equalize the parking experience for early and late visitors to the area. Another option would extend the hours of operation to Sunday from noon to 6:00pm, which would generate an additional \$67,000 in revenue. Enforcement will be a critical piece of implementing new hours of operation. Enforcement is the responsibility of the Police Department and the Parking Monitors in Public Works.

The fiscal year 2012 budget includes \$130,000 in additional revenue resulting from the extension of parking meter hours of operation by two (2) hours in the evening.