

Deirdre Dillon
Mayor

Michael Gutwetter
Councilman
Finance & Administration

William Jones
Council President
Public & Governmental Relations

Peter Kilman
Councilman
Utilities, Building & Grounds



Joseph Verdone
Councilman
Building, Planning & Zoning

Harry Weber
Councilman
Public Safety

Jane Woods
Councilwoman
Health, Education & Social Services

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Budget hearing will be March 25, 2020, 7:45PM at Ramsey Borough Hall

Dear Resident:

Your 2020 tax bill is comprised of four separate parts: Ramsey Schools, Ramsey Public Library, Ramsey Municipal Services and Bergen County government. While we, the elected officials of the Borough, receive the majority of comments about taxes, it should be noted that **only the municipal services portion is administered by your Mayor and Council.**

YOUR PROPOSED 2020 TAX BILL IS DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

1% RAMSEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

69% SCHOOL SYSTEM

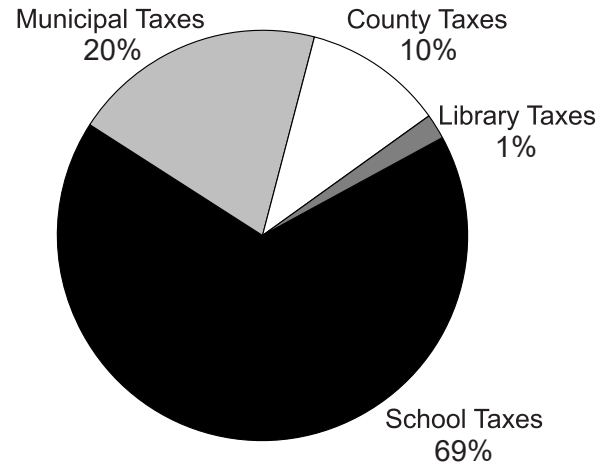
RAMSEY BOARD OF EDUCATION

20% MUNICIPAL SERVICES

RAMSEY POLICE, LOCAL ROADS, SANITATION, RECYCLING, RECREATION, TOWN ADMINISTRATION, VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES, HEALTH SERVICES, ETC.

10% BERGEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

COUNTY HIGHWAYS, HOSPITALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION, PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



The Borough portion of your property tax bill is approximately 20% of your total property tax bill as the chart above illustrates. The breakdown of property tax dollars by component is illustrated with the school tax levy representing the largest share of your tax dollars making up approximately 69% of total property taxes, with the County representing 10% and the Ramsey Library the remaining 1%. While the Borough handles billing and collection of property taxes as a whole, the Board of Education solely determines the school tax levy from the annual budget they set and incorporates any additional voter approved referendums or ballot questions. Similarly, the County is responsible for setting its budget and tax levy. The Ramsey Library funding is a formula mandated by State law.

The municipal budget for 2020 includes a modest tax increase over 2019 of 1.83%, which is below the State cap of 2%. The State provides municipalities the ability to budget above the 2% cap for increases in certain items such as pension costs, health insurance, debt service or capital improvements. While this budget increases Ramsey's debt pay-down, it does not utilize any State-authorized exceptions and remains under the cap due to reductions in other budget items. This year marks the tenth consecutive year the municipal budget increase has remained under 2%, despite state aid remaining flat at \$1,414,471 during that same time period.

For a home assessed at \$526,045 (the average Ramsey assessment), the 2020 annual increase would amount to approximately \$47 for the municipal services portion of your tax bill, or about \$3.95 per month. This does not include school taxes or county taxes because the Ramsey Board of Education and the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders, respectively, control those budgets and tax rates.

Of the 70 Bergen County towns, Ramsey has the 12th lowest municipal property tax rate. Nine of the eleven municipalities with lower rates also have significantly higher average residential assessments while the remaining two have significantly more commercial property than does Ramsey. We are utilizing \$2,050,000 in regenerated surplus in this budget, reflecting lower actual spending than budgeted in prior years, which is then recycled back into the budget as a credit towards 2020. Having an appropriate amount of surplus in the budget each year helps keep tax rate increases stable.

As your elected representatives, we face the ongoing challenge of making difficult choices in the provision of municipal services to ensure municipal government costs remain under control, while still maintaining a high level and quality of municipal services for our community. In order to provide budget stability with only minimal increases, we continually seek new revenue sources such as grants for various borough projects (future work coming up late spring/summer on Main Street Streetscape Phase II), income from use of Borough facilities (cell tower rent) while controlling costs by finding efficiencies where feasible (participating in joint purchasing agreements with nearby towns). We also continue, at Borough Hall and throughout our other points of service to residents, to use new technology, where applicable, to streamline and enhance our services in a cost-effective way.

We also put a high priority on investing in the Borough's infrastructure. Including our investment in 2020, we will have cumulatively dedicated over \$5 million for a five-year period towards much-needed road resurfacing. This investment has resulted in better overall conditions on our local roads. We also continue to make significant infrastructure investments into emergency service apparatus, roads and other projects such as the new pool house/community center/senior center project and drainage upgrades to the pool property. Even with these investments, Ramsey's debt level is the fourth lowest of the 13 Northwest Bergen County towns, as both a total number and when considered as a percentage of the overall budget size, and our overall debt will remain at less than 10% of the level the State allows for a community our size. In addition, the Borough is paying off about \$2 million in debt principal in this 2020 budget with approximately \$700,000 of this from grant reimbursements the Borough received on previously completed projects.

This budget also includes increased state-mandated pension funding for police officers. In 2018, the Borough negotiated new labor agreements with all of its unions which eliminated compensation for future accumulated sick leave. The 2020 budget includes funding for previously-accrued banked sick time prior to the negotiated elimination.

As your elected officials, we remain highly cognizant of our obligation to wisely manage residents' tax dollars, and we maintain our focus upon managing these expenditures as conservatively as possible without sacrificing long-term value. Through our careful long-term planning, which includes a history of stable budgeting and low debt levels, Ramsey is financially healthy and strong. Your Mayor and Council have worked diligently to produce a leaner, more efficient municipal government, yet one which remains able to deliver the essential municipal services which our residents have come to expect. Much credit continues to be due our dedicated and hard-working municipal employees, who have worked with the governing body to reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies, while maintaining high standards of performance.

The full budget is available for your inspection in several places. You may view the budget in its entirety on our borough website (www.ramseynj.com) along with a summary budget presentation. In addition, copies of the budget are on reserve at the Ramsey Free Public Library. Residents are invited to comment on any aspect of the budget at Mayor and Council meetings, or by letter or e-mail.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support,

Borough of Ramsey Mayor and Council

PROPOSED MUNICIPAL TAX DATA COMPARISON

	2019 Actual Total Tax Amount	2019 Actual Tax Rate	2020 Total Tax Amount	2020 Proposed Tax Rate
PUBLIC LIBRARY	\$1,179,692	\$0.034	\$1,228,207	\$0.035
MUNICIPAL SERVICES	\$17,162,556	\$0.493	\$17,506,140	\$0.502
TOTAL	\$18,342,248	\$0.527	\$18,734,347	\$0.537

The following information is a more detailed overview of the municipal budget:

MUNICIPAL REVENUE COMPARISON

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Alcoholic Beverage Licenses.....	\$34,000	\$34,000
Other Administrative Licenses.....	\$50,000	\$55,000
Construction Code Official Permits.....	\$560,000	\$580,000
Other Permits & Fees.....	\$35,000	\$35,000
Municipal Court Fines.....	\$125,000	\$117,000
Interest and Cost on Taxes.....	\$115,000	\$130,000
Energy Receipts Tax.....	\$1,474,471	\$1,474,471
Utility Operating Surplus.....	\$115,000	\$115,000
Interest on Investments and Deposits.....	\$115,000	\$135,000
Cable Franchise Fee.....	\$237,000	\$237,000
Municipal Occupancy Tax.....	\$175,000	\$175,000
Cell Tower Revenue.....	\$35,000	\$40,000
Life Hazard Use Fees.....	\$185,000	\$185,000
Reserve to Pay Bond Anticipation Notes (Grants).....	-----	\$771,772
Clean Communities Grant Program.....	\$28,387	\$31,645
Various Grants.....	\$30,505	\$15,701
Recycling Tonnage Grants.....	\$29,927	\$54,391
Governor's Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Grant.....	\$9,876	\$9,065
Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Fund.....	\$4,977	\$3,578
Recycling Revenue.....	\$20,000	\$5,000
Receipts from Delinquent Taxes.....	\$500,000	\$500,000
Utilization of Contingency Reserve (1).....	\$2,300,000	\$2,050,000
Amount of be Raised by Taxes for Support of Municipal Budget.....	\$17,162,556	\$17,506,140
Amount to be Raised by Taxes for Free Public Library.....	\$1,179,692	\$1,228,207
TOTAL GENERAL REVENUES.....	\$24,521,391	\$25,487,969

1. CONTINGENCY RESERVE – We anticipate utilizing \$2,050,000 of reserve/fund balance in the 2020 Municipal Budget. Fund Balance is generated by unused appropriations and unanticipated revenues through last year's Municipal Budget. This is then utilized to offset municipal taxes on a year-to-year basis.

MUNICIPAL EXPENSE COMPARISON

	2019	2020
GENERAL GOVERNMENT		
Administrative & Executive	\$429,000	\$436,000
Mayor & Council	\$51,000	\$51,000
Borough Clerk	\$282,000	\$294,000
Finance & Administration	\$257,000	\$272,000
Audit Services	\$50,000	\$50,000
Computer Maintenance & Data Services	\$131,000	\$134,000
Collection & Assessment of Taxes	\$363,000	\$358,000
Legal Services	\$260,000	\$275,000
Engineering	\$138,000	\$140,000
LAND USE ADMINISTRATION		
Planning Board	\$91,000	\$92,000
Zoning Board	\$12,000	\$12,000
INSURANCE	\$2,390,000	\$2,245,000
PUBLIC SAFETY		
Police, Prosecutor and Courts, and 911	\$5,755,000	\$5,937,000
Emergency Management	\$159,500	\$159,500
Fire and Fire Protection	\$442,500	\$444,000
First Aid Contribution	\$115,000	\$115,000
Construction Official	\$391,500	\$398,000
PUBLIC WORKS		
Road Maintenance, Resurfacing and Sidewalks	\$1,490,000	\$1,435,000
Shade Tree Commission	\$226,000	\$206,500
Recycling	\$555,000	\$610,000
Garbage & Trash Removal	\$615,000	\$625,000
Building & Grounds	\$720,000	\$705,000
Vehicle Maintenance	\$500,000	\$465,000
HEALTH SERVICES		
Board of Health	\$127,500	\$119,500
Visiting Nurses	\$18,000	\$18,500
Environmental Commission	\$7,500	\$7,500
Dog & Cat Regulation	\$20,500	\$20,500
Drug Abuse Program and Other Human Services	\$31,450	\$31,450
PARKS & RECREATION		
Board of Recreation Commission	\$138,800	\$142,800
Other Programs	\$187,000	\$182,500
PURCHASE VARIOUS DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT	\$250,000	\$250,000
UTILITIES AND LANDFILL FEES	\$1,445,000	\$1,400,000
CONTINGENCY	\$5,000	\$5,000
DEFERRED CHARGES AND STATUTORY	\$2,563,777	\$2,672,234
LIBRARY	\$1,179,692	\$1,228,207
GRANTS OFFSET BY REVENUES	\$103,672	\$114,380
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$522,600	\$550,000
DEBT SERVICE AND DEFERRED CHARGES	\$1,447,400	\$2,246,272
RESERVE FOR UNCOLLECTED TAXES	\$1,050,000	\$1,040,127
TOTAL GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS	\$24,521,391	\$25,487,969

Borough of Ramsey

33 N. Central Avenue
Ramsey, NJ 07446

PRSR STD
US POST AGE
PAID
RAMSEY, NJ
PERMIT NO. 239

*****ECR WSS*****

Residential Customer
Ramsey, NJ 07446