



OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR

TOWN OF VERNON

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March 15, 2007

Vernon Town Council
Memorial Building
14 Park Place
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Dear Town Council Members:

I am pleased to submit my recommendations on the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. Along with my recommended budget, I forward to you the enterprise budget of the Water Pollution Control Authority for the operation of the Wastewater Treatment Facility. A copy of the Education budget as approved by the Board of Education was distributed to the Town Council under separate cover. Also included is my recommended six-year capital improvement plan.

Budget Format

- a) This message, budget highlights, and supporting documents.
- b) Recapitulation of actual **revenues** received in Fiscal Year 2005-2006; estimated revenues to be collected in Fiscal Year 2006-2007; and the estimated revenues to be collected in Fiscal Year 2007-2008.
- c) Recapitulation of budget accounts by total departmental **appropriations**, inclusive of departmental requests and mayoral recommendations, in three sections:
 - General Government operating budget
 - Education operating budget
 - Capital Improvement and Debt Service budget
- d) Budget comparison by object description showing dollar and percentage increases or decreases in each account.
- e) Statistical tables and graphs.

- f) Department narratives and a summary of budget accounts by appropriations, expenditures, departmental requests and Mayor's recommendation by sub-account.

At the back of this budget document are the following special revenue and enterprise fund budgets:

- i. **Ambulance Division Account** – This is a special account funded through revenue received from the service provided by the Town of Vernon Fire and Ambulance Department.
- ii. **Dog License Account** – This is a special account funded through revenue received from the sale of licenses, the Town of South Windsor, Town of Coventry, and funds appropriated in the general government budget under the Animal Control account.
- iii. **Vernon Cemeteries – Operation** – This is a special fund that accounts for the maintenance and operation of the five town cemeteries. Supporting revenue is derived through lot sales; investment income from the perpetual care trust fund; and from the general fund.
- iv. **Wastewater Treatment Facility – Operations** – This is an enterprise fund financed through sewer user charges.
- v. **Center 375** – This is an enterprise fund financed through payments received for the rental of space in the building.
- vi. **Data Processing Center** – This is an internal service fund, which is jointly financed by the Education budget and by the Town General Government budget.

Budget Message

Excerpt from The Connecticut Magazine, second quarter, 1908, on the Centennial of Vernon.

Vernon (Rockville), is set, not on a single hill, nor on seven hills, like ancient Rome, but upon a series of hills. Its situation is as picturesque as many of the historic Old World villages. Located in the highlands of Tolland County, it overlooks the famous Connecticut Valley and presents a panorama of some of the most charming landscape scenery to be found in New England. From the top of Fox Hill, which is six hundred and ninety-three feet above sea level, a magnificent view of the town and the surrounding country for miles can be obtained. It is one of the many spots no visitor should neglect. There are beautiful drives and good roads about the town. There are trolley lines running to Hartford, Springfield, and Stafford Springs. The town is half-way between New York and Boston. It has healthful drinking water and a modern gas and electric service. Its people are happy, because they are healthy, the place being one of the most healthful communities in the state. Vernon (Rockville), has indeed reason to be proud of her record at the end of her first century, whose achievements in all the pursuits of life and whose contributions to the state and the nation loom high in the estimation of the American brotherhood of municipalities.

This excerpt is illuminating on several fronts. The charm of the hills was mentioned not only for aesthetic purposes, but that a new feature of the weeklong celebration was the Automobile Hill Climb, as cars of all makes assembled at the foot of the hills and raced to the top. At the time, cheering onlookers could not have imagined the impact the automobile would have on the country, and our roads. They also did not imagine that seated on top of beautiful Fox Hill would be the construction of a memorial tower to our war veterans, built after the First World War and the depression, and on the eve of the Second World War. The tower also serves as the symbol of our town, for its strength, its pride, and its commitment to those generations past, present and future. The advancements of the past century in technology; economics; communications; transportation; social sciences; physics and medicine, has changed our daily lives from those attending the last centennial, yet we can further avow are pursuit of happiness and healthy well-being, in the same treasured landscape with historic charm. A community mixing long-standing and new neighborhoods, graced with some of the finest recreational facilities, the center in the area for the delivery of medical and judicial services, educational opportunities for all ages, and a wide array of civic amenities that compare with the best this state has to offer.

October, 2008, marks the bi-centennial of the Town of Vernon and preparations are well underway to commemorate the occasion. We have assembled a committee of residents to organize all the necessary events to embrace and preserve the historical significance of the day for future generations. These individuals represent another historic tradition in our town; the generous donation of personal time and resourcefulness by our residents to the continuing prosperity of our community. All our boards, committees, and task forces are populated by many with the same self-sacrificing gifts. With a great sense of appreciation and pride, I submit my fourth budget plan, dedicated to

preserving our unique characteristics of cultural, historical, and natural resources, for our diverse and balanced population and re-investing in our community for future generations.

This budget presents a financial plan to guide the Town through fiscal year 2007 – 2008. As in previous proposals, the following tenets were incorporated into the development of this budget:

- The budget provides that **current revenues are sufficient to support current expenditures.**
- **Funding of renewal and replacement items** will be continued so as not to defer the remedial needs of the Town into any one year.
- The budget **maintains all the quality of life programs** to which residents have been accustomed as well as addresses increasing needs based on demand.
- The budget maintains a competitive compensation and benefits package for town and school employees, and **continues to implement innovative methods to control those costs.**

Respective of those tenets, the primary objective in the development of this budget document is to maintain the high level of services desired by our residents and to plan the future needs of the Town of Vernon, consistent with the priorities recognized by the Town Council. Once again this budget focuses particular attention on capital improvements and the replacement of aging equipment; moving forward with the implementation and funding of both the public bond improvements; sewer system improvements; and school bond renovations; improving our public school system; meeting the elevated costs of energy; public works improvements and innovations; expanding economic and community development through capital projects; increasing public safety personnel to meet the demands of a diverse community; maintenance of our roads, parks, and buildings; and for those departments that provide direct services to improving the quality of life to citizens of all ages.

We continue to refine our programs and services in order to minimize the financial impact to residents. Our practice of setting fees at levels relative to the cost of producing that service lessens the use of tax dollars. Although we have made progress in establishing stability in all of our departments, the budget does not wholly address the severe limitation placed on town functions by the reductions of the prior year. This budget proposal attends to basic essentials and endeavors to change the course of past years, where we have under funded many areas, constantly striving to keep expenditures

at zero and relying on one-time revenues and reserves, as well as implementing hiring freezes to meet operating costs. This budget attempts once again to fully fund several of those neglected areas in an effort to manage our affairs in a sound fiscal manner.

All of these important services provided by the Town of Vernon including police and fire protection, utilities and transportation infrastructure, programs for our youth and disadvantaged, recreational parks, support for our public library, and a wide array of other services, promote and secure our identity as a community of strong civic and social ideals. To continue to provide these important services, **my proposed 2008 budget for the Town of Vernon is \$75,695,862.** Approximately 34% of the proposal is for services provided in the general government portion; another 59% is for our schools; and the remaining 7% is for capital projects and debt service.

Revaluation

The Town conducted a full revaluation as of the October 1, 2006 grand list that is effective for fiscal year 2007-2008. Across the community the values of residential property have risen 58%, while commercial and industrial property 30% and 16% respectively. This of course is the good news, the appreciation of property. The next question is how will this effect the taxes paid? After the last revaluation at October 1, 2000, property values did not rise commensurately as the Rockville section actually decreased overall, compared to an increase in the Vernon portion of town. The result was an increase in assessments and an increase in the mil rate to those property owners that experienced appreciation.

The preliminary numbers from this revaluation indicate a town wide increase in values of 56%. In turn, included with this budget proposal is **a decrease in taxes from 36.73 to 28.04 mils, a decrease of -8.69 mils or -23.66%.** The last time the mil rate was at that level was in fiscal year 1992-93, after the revaluation of the October 1, 1991 grand list.

As we proceed through budget deliberations, we will examine the various scenarios of the impact. The lower mil rate will decrease motor vehicle and personal property taxes, and that has also been calculated into this budget proposal.

From an analytical point of view, both the Assessor and the Finance Officer have offered assurances that the revaluation fits into all the industry indices in almost textbook fashion. That degree of confidence is an important first step as we proceed with this discussion.

State Aid

In most years, this proposal generally reports State aid as disclosed in the Governor's budget. But with the aggressive funding proposed for the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant; and the motor vehicle property tax exemption, it was more

complicated. My budget proposal does not address the motor vehicle property tax exemption, as it appears to require much more examination and analysis. The rest of the grants have been included as follows:

State Aid	Estimates FY 2006/07	Estimates FY 2007/08	Increase (Decrease)
Education - ECS	\$ 15,445,222	\$ 17,133,059	\$ 1,687,837
Education - Other	\$ 504,200	\$ 515,700	11,500
Town	2,124,478	1,738,277	(386,201)
School Construction	480,716	456,622	(24,094)
Combined Total:	\$ 18,554,616	\$ 19,843,658	\$ 1,289,042

As you can see, grants to the Town such as PILOT and Pequot grants have been reduced. As to the ECS grant, the State Department of Education passed legislation called the "non-supplant" rule, that in short, states that the increase in the local education budget must be at a minimum, equal to the increase in the ECS grant. Please take note, that in my proposal, the Education budget increases by \$1,687,837, the amount equal to the ECS grant increase of \$1,687,837 that appears in the shaded section of the chart.

The actual increase in the ECS as proposed by the Governor is \$1,987,837. The reduction of \$300,000 was done after carefully following the discussions in the General Assembly and the Office of Policy and Management. The non-supplant regulation is being contended, and in short, if the State approves the entire amount as proposed by the Governor, the likelihood of it being restricted for just educational purposes is doubtful. But if the \$300,000 is restored to the ECS amount as restricted to education only, **then my recommendation will be to add the \$300,000 to the Board of Education budget and to add it to the ECS revenue. It will not have any effect on the proposed mil rate. But if the \$300,000 is not restricted, (or an amount higher or lower), my recommendation to the Town Council will be to reduce property taxes.**

As a point of reference, prior to this year the non-supplant regulation was basically ineffective, as in the past four (4) years, the Town of Vernon increased the Education budget by \$5,119,619. The combined increase to the ECS grant was \$580,276.

General Government Operating Budget Features and Issues

Primary factors contributing to cost increases are:

Personnel:

- New police officer to add to our detective's unit and/or the State Narcotics Task force [\$52,479]
- Part-time zoning code compliance officer to enforce the housing code and blight ordinance, moved to full-time [\$31,175]
- Town Administrator administrative assistant to move from part-time to full-time. Increased demand for a variety of services, inclusive of human resources. [\$17,831]
- Assessment technician upgraded to GIS position. [\$8,591]
- Recreational programs and parks maintenance part-time and overtime requirements. [\$22,600]
- School readiness project manager, part-time. [\$8,840]
- Registrars of voters increase in wages and inclusion of one primary. [\$14,840]
- Police overtime and compensated absences. [\$116,738]
- Snow removal overtime restoration. [\$65,000]
- Other wage increases due to negotiated agreement, which average at 3.0%, amount to \$463,118. Considering the above items, the total wage change is \$801,212.
- The estimated increase in employee benefits is \$360,302, attributed to: social security [\$49,000]; medical insurance [\$145,352]; and pension [\$165,950]. In the prior year medical premiums were reduced by approximately 4%. This year, the blended rate increase is 6%. We are presently reviewing self-insurance of dental benefits to create more savings.
- Increased energy and fire hydrant costs **\$136,306** inclusive of electricity [\$23,500]; street lights [\$29,000]; natural gas [-\$15,000]; heating fuel [-\$2,000]; gasoline and diesel [\$25,806]; and fire hydrant rental [\$75,000].

- Increase contribution [\$45,000] to the workers' compensation self-insurance fund, as a result of claims experience; and an increase to other property insurance of [\$37,282]
- Increasing the contribution to the Rockville Public Library by \$50,000.
- Rents for Center 375 have been restored to the prior year level, an increase of \$19,810. By moving Social Services, their rent decreased by (\$2,559).
- Increase to snow removal budget for gravel/sand salt of \$49,400. An average of \$54,700 is spent from the Town Aid for Roads grant annually. If the snow budget can capture this cost, the grant can be used to pave roads. Also, \$27,720 has been added to the public works budget for asphalt, sidewalks, and a curb machine to better facilitate the road projects.
- Increased funding for police vehicles (3); laptops and computers; and safety equipment by \$71,606. One vehicle is to be strictly used for our police dogs.

Primary factors contributing to cost reductions are:

- Refining the leaf pickup program and street sweeping programs; and lowering storm water out-flow mapping costs (\$13,000). Amongst other scheduling benefits, this will allow our public works employees to continue working on road reconstruction, with savings far exceeding these costs.
- The timing and sizing of the bond and note issues, discussed in a previous section.

In the past three years I had the privilege of witnessing at close hand, the dedication and hard work of the Town team, and it is with great pride the employees of the Town take part in achieving the improvements to both the changing physical image of the community and its reputation as well. In all areas of service our goal is to train a professional workforce that is diverse, knowledgeable, and with the ability to multi-task. Conversely, it is our responsibility to maintain a competitive compensation package indicative of this dedication and expertise. At the onset of budget preparation, I asked department heads not to exceed a 1% increase in non-wage accounts; and not to propose any new full-time positions that were not self-sustaining. This was a problematic request, when considering past budget reductions, but the expectation of extraordinary increases in utility costs, coupled with the need to replenish the capital improvement program,

made this a necessity. With that understanding, and the exceptions in the list above, the response from our departments was commendable.

The residents of our community have requested that we maintain the traditional leaf pickup program and I remain attentive to those concerns. This budget fully funds the leaf pickup program along with appropriations for temporary help and equipment to improve collection and disposal methods, while shortening the time needed to cover our neighborhoods in a comprehensive approach. The result of refining this program is a slight decrease to the budget from the prior year. Also, the public works department has established a program of recycling our brush, rather than paying to have it disposed. This allows residents to pickup quality wood mulch that is used for landscaping, free of charge. The budgetary savings will be used to process leaves in much the same manner resulting in a valuable product that will be sold at auction. The revenue created will cover the cost of grinding the leaves and produce an estimated net profit of \$10,000.

In Emergency Management, there is an increase of just \$1,176, and that will be offset by a grant. This year we received a grant of \$21,000 from the State Homeland Security department for early warning siren repair; emergency equipment; and emergency response training. Without the grant, these items would have been part of the budget proposal. Next year, we will apply for an \$80,000 Federal Homeland Security grant and an \$18,000 State Homeland Security grant to further supplement our program.

Initiatives in other areas include continued support of the Rockville Public Library. Although the library is a separate entity from town government, it has served all of our residents for many decades utilizing an endowment fund for the majority of its' operating expenditures. They presently are addressing their financial dilemma with various improvisations. Understanding the contributions the library provides to the quality of life of our residents, the responsibility of continuing that standard for now and future generations, is an essential component of this budget. If this proposal is approved, the Town's contribution will have increased by \$125,000 in just the past four years, an increase of 82%.

Elderly Tax Credit

One other important initiative was the implementation of an elderly/disabled tax credit program for homeowners last year. A healthy community needs a wide mix of residents of all ages, and it is reasonable that the town establish a tax policy which, to the modest extent it is able, encourages the elderly members of the community to stay in town and share their wisdom and experiences with the young. The program is still in effect for the next fiscal year and the estimated amount of the overall credit is \$60,000.

Capital Improvements and Debt Service

Public Improvement Bond Authorizations

The Public Improvement bond approved by voters authorized \$19.1 million for reconstruction to several roads; the replacement of three bridges; and drainage improvements for the Bolton Lakes area. Improvements to the waste treatment plant of \$1.3 million; and to the sewer system of \$1.2 million were also approved; and \$68.3 million for public school improvements. Several projects are well under way and have made significant improvements to our community.

In February, 2007, I met with our Town Administrator and Finance Officer to engage in a rating review with Moody's Investor Services. The review was very favorable as we maintained our A1 rating for the forthcoming bond sale of \$12,815,000; and received a rating of MIG-1 for our \$20,986,000 one-year note sale, the highest rating awarded for this type of sale.

The result of the 20-year bond sale of \$12,815,000 was a rate of 4.1345%; and on the one-year note of \$20,986,000, a rate of 3.51%. These were very competitive rates, and more importantly, are considerably below the original estimates, producing interest savings of \$920,000. For fiscal year 2007-2008, the first bond payment due will be in the amount of \$1,028,413. Through careful planning, debt structure analysis and implementing "ladder-up" funding the debt service budget will increase by only \$233,637.

It is imperative that we continue to enhance our financial position as we embark on a series of bond sales in the next three years. Of the many items we discussed in the rating review, such as community development, tax collection rates, pension funding, and others, the number of budget referenda was a concern, as it has some implications on our ability to pay, as well as being able to re-invest in our community. We will continue to provide voters with information to make knowledgeable decisions and to educate our residents on the programs and services provided, as well as those proposed. As demonstrated by this bond and note sale, the Town continues to meet its responsibility for sound financial management.

Capital Improvements

Primary factors contributing to cost increases are:

- Replacement of equipment [\$740,001]
 - Public Works – skid steer loader
 - Public Works – vac-all catch basin cleaner
 - Public Works – street sweeper
 - Public Works – maintenance van
 - Public Works – recycling vehicle
 - Police – cruiser for Chief
 - Police – emergency generator
 - Parks Maintenance – ball field conditioner
 - Animal Shelter – Crematory

- Projects [\$954,882]
 - Horowitz pool – repairs to curtain drain & bathhouse: \$63,000
 - Community pool – replace pool filter system: \$16,000
 - Co.# 1 Firehouse – roof replacement & bathrooms: \$33,800
 - Town Clerk – vault renovations: \$60,000
 - Police – ID lab – photo lab – computer lab: \$31,000
 - Satellite receiver site – Fire Co. #3, Hartford Turnpike: \$132,060
 - Intermodal Transportation Center – phase 2 of 4: \$260,000
 - Pavement crack filling – various roads: \$64,350
 - Road repair; shim; & pave – Group # 3: \$294,672

- School Projects [\$63,000]
 - Talcottville School – foundation work: \$50,000
 - Transfer to capital and non-recurring account: \$13,000

In all sectors of town, other major projects are about to begin; are underway; or completed including the renovation of Central Park; the renovations of the recreation hall at Camp Newhoca; the replacement of rest rooms at Valley Falls Park; the revitalization of several of our old mills; the reconstruction of Vernon Avenue and the Vernon Avenue bridge; the reconstruction of the Spring Street bridge; the renovation of 55 West Main Street; the Village Street area reconstruction; a FHA grant to enhance the Talcottville village; and the renovation of the third floor of the Memorial Building. This reinvestment into our infrastructure allows us to use our valuable resources to their fullest advantage.

Included in my proposal is \$260,000 which represents the second of four installments of our local share for the Intermodal Transportation Center, funded by a U.S. Department of Transportation grant in the amount of \$5,400,560. Combined with the 20% local share, the project total is \$6,480,672. This project, proposed to be constructed in the Rockville section, has preliminary initiatives to provide for a bus stop; a bus depot; a parking garage; an elevated walkway connecting the transportation hub to Rockville General Hospital, a helipad, and a variety of street improvements. The funding represents a unique opportunity for the Town to expand upon its transportation program while simultaneously redefining downtown Rockville. This project remains a cornerstone to our efforts to bring outside developers to Town in order to achieve a much needed revitalization in the area.

Another item to point out is the crematory for the Animal Shelter. Recently, the Town of South Windsor vacated their agreement of utilizing the shelter which resulted in the loss of the \$20,000 annual fee. Those funds were used to operate the shelter and now are assumed by our general fund, and appear for the first time in the 2008 budget proposal. The crematory initiative is designed to accomplish two objectives. The first is to provide a facility for the Animal Control Officer to dispose of dead animals found on our roadways. The second is to generate revenue from fees charged to individuals and veterinarians for disposals. So this capital project is an example of an investment to ultimately offset operating costs.

The capital improvement budget suffers the most when budget deliberations are prolonged. The table below discloses the approved budgets for the last three years as opposed to the proposed FY 2008 amount. The time has come to realize that the amount proposed in FY 2008 is befitting to a community of our size.

FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
\$353,000	\$295,160	\$501,000	\$1,694,883

We will continue to be very aggressive in obtaining grants and alternate funding resources for many of our capital projects, as well as utilizing bond proceeds for the authorized improvements. In addressing our equipment needs, we can not utilized grants or bond proceeds. Our average cost of replacing equipment for each of the next six years is approximately \$1,003,228 and the current year budget is \$62,000. There is a direct relationship between the services we provide and the available equipment. My budget proposal allocates \$740,001 for major equipment, a positive step toward fully funding our rolling stock. The lease purchase of public works trucks from fiscal year 2006 allocates debt service in this budget of \$105,308.

Education

The school administration has undergone budgetary pressures as well, most significantly in wages, energy costs, tuitions, textbooks, equipment and transportation. Due to a change in health providers, the benefits portion of this budget was reduced by \$313,000. Careful deliberation was given to their original request and my recommendation for their budget includes both academic and fiscal considerations. Please refer to the State Aid section for further details concerning funding for our school system. The chart below indicates the level of support that I have recommended the past four years against the adopted change:

	Increase per	Increase as
Year	Mayor's Proposal	Adopted
*2008	\$1,687,837	\$1,687,837
2007	1,657,452	1,001,165
2006	1,415,840	1,199,109
2005	2,145,367	1,635,546
* Current year proposal		

I am very proud of the strong relationships we have forged with the school system, most notably the successful school improvement bond authorization and support for the Lake Street School playscape; our undertakings to control escalating health benefits have produced a positive result to the proposed budget, as well as those in the future. Ongoing collaborative efforts will continue to enhance both our school system and the entire community.

Summary of Budget Changes

On the appropriations side of the budget, I reduced General Government, Capital Improvements and Debt Service, and Education department requests by \$501,742, \$4,505,278 and \$443,600 respectively, for a total reduction of \$5,450,620. Overall, I am recommending an increase in the General Government budget of \$1,873,307; an increase in the Capital Improvements and Debt Service budget of \$1,427,520; and an increase in the Education budget of \$1,687,837. The combined budget amounts to \$75,695,862. The breakdown of dollars and percentages follows:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET

2006-2007	\$23,850,639
2007-2008	25,723,946

DOLLAR INCREASE: \$1,873,307

PERCENTAGE INCREASE 7.85%

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND DEBT SERVICE BUDGET

2006-2007	\$4,014,076
2007-2008	5,441,596

DOLLAR INCREASE: \$1,427,520

PERCENTAGE INCREASE 35.56%

EDUCATION BUDGET

2006-2007	\$42,842,483
2007-2008	44,530,320

DOLLAR INCREASE: \$1,687,837

PERCENTAGE INCREASE 3.94%

TOTAL BUDGET

2006-2007	_____	\$70,707,198
2007-2008	_____	75,695,862

DOLLAR INCREASE:	_____	\$4,988,664
PERCENTAGE INCREASE		7.06%



Pension

The estimate for the employer contribution to the pension plan is an increase of \$165,950. Traditionally the Mayor's budget does not include a change to the employer contribution, as the actuarial valuation report is not issued until March 31st of each year. However, the valuation as of January 1, 2007, for the police plan has been completed and the increase is \$89,127 or 9.6%. After reviewing investment performance; retirements; and plan amendments, the decision was made to also include as estimated amount to cover the anticipated increase to the non-police participant pension plan. This amount is \$74,823 or 10%.

Comments on Revenue Estimates

Other than current taxes, revenue estimates for fiscal year 2007-2008 increased by \$1,221,478. This is attributable to an increase of \$1,289,042 in State aid; \$89,540 in anticipated investment income; \$67,000 in non-current tax levies; \$32,920 in medical insurance reimbursements; recreation program fees of \$37,000; and Town Clerk recording fees of \$15,000. Offsetting those increases is a reduction of \$110,000 in reduced tuitions in special education and vocational agriculture; \$158,000 in supplemental motor vehicle taxes; \$20,220 in licenses and permits; \$13,000 in sewer assessment collections; and a decrease of \$7,804 in other revenue. The net growth to the grand list without revaluation is estimated at 1.37% or approximately \$15,000,000 in assessments to real property.

Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Proposed Budget Increase	\$	4,988,664
Net Revenue Increase - (Other than Current Taxes):		1,221,478
Current Tax Revenue Required	\$	3,767,186
Current Taxes Generated by Growth in the Grand List	\$	428,018
Current Taxes Generated by revaluation		3,339,168
	\$	3,767,186

THIS BUDGET, IF ADOPTED AS PRESENTED, REPRESENTS A DECREASE OF

8.69 MILS (-23.66%) ON THE TAX RATE

OR A DECREASE FROM 36.73 TO 28.04 MILS

(Following this message is a detailed compilation of the individual factors that comprise the increase to the mil rate.)

Vernon is a great place to live, work, raise families, visit, and to take immense pride in a rich history and a very promising future. The community involvement is demonstrated through civic responsibilities, to the Dickens Day committee, to the Gene Pitney commemoration committee, to the Rockville Downtown Association, to recreational league involvement, environmental and conservation groups; and a host of others that contribute their valuable time to our town, which signals a striking difference between government and community. At the heart of our progress is the collective spirit of our residents influenced with the knowledge of our past, encouraged by the present and welcoming a future that, well, how was it said in 1908, "Its people are happy, because they are healthy, the place being one of the most healthful communities in the state."

I will continue to focus on maintaining and nurturing our town's prosperity and health through reinvestment in the elements that produce that result. In serving your community, one also serves oneself. I take great pleasure in contributing to the improvement of our community and demonstrating the love I have for Vernon. In the past three years we have all looked at Vernon in a new light, reflecting on that rich history, and understanding the future of great promise and opportunity has arrived.

Council members, commissions, department heads, staff and residents have come together on a number of occasions to discuss ways to address the pressing needs facing our community. It is through the cooperation of all involved that we are able to develop solutions that satisfy our collective interests and promote a vigorous potential for continued growth. I believe this budget recognizes the importance of our existing services and stresses the need to continue the improvement of our financial position into the future. By working together we can realize our opportunities and remain the community we envision for years to come.

I look forward to a full discussion of this document at our upcoming budget meetings and hearings.

Council members, commissions, department heads, staff and residents have come together on a number of occasions to discuss ways to address the pressing needs facing our community. It is through the cooperation of all involved that we are able to develop solutions that satisfy our collective interests and promote a vigorous potential for continued growth. I believe this budget recognizes the importance of our existing services and stresses the need to continue the improvement of our financial position into the future. By working together we can realize our opportunities and remain the community we envision for years to come.

I look forward to a full discussion of this document at our upcoming budget meetings and hearings.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "E. Marmer", written in a cursive style.

Ellen L. Marmer, M.D.
Mayor