

## Just the Facts

In 1979 a group of Woodstock residents submitted a petition to the Town Clerk to call for a special town meeting to adopt an ordinance entitled Prop 46. It was called Prop 46 because 46 was the mill or tax rate for Woodstock in 1979 and people were angry that the tax rate was so high. This group wanted to enact a local law to limit how much the mill rate could increase each year. Prop 46 did this. The Town Ordinance reads:

*"PROPOSITION 46, Adopted: December 8, 1979, Effective: December 27, 1979*

*SECTION 1 Resolved, the Town shall limit the increase in the town's combined annual budget to revenue generated by growth in the Grand List, in State and Federal assistance, and in other income, except for increases, voted upon by town meeting, necessary to cover debt service on legal obligations, court judgements against the town, State mandated programs and emergency expenditures. In the event of property revaluation, the actual dollar increase in the combined town budget shall be limited to the dollar amount of increase in the preceding year's budget or the average amount of increase over the preceding three years, whichever is lower."*

### Repeal – Amend – Waive Prop 46 Vote History

4/26/1995 Vote to waive Prop 46: Yes 450, No 1,492  
5/12/2004 Vote to Repeal Prop 46: Yes 500, No 1,472  
4/7/2005 Vote to Amend Prop 46: Yes 1,200, No 1,333  
3/14/2006 Vote to Repeal Prop 46: Yes 499, No 1,329  
4/24/2006 Vote to Amend Prop 46: Yes 673, No 1,536  
10/6/2015 Vote to Repeal Prop 46: Yes 574, No 1,371

This ordinance is still in effect today. In a nutshell, the Board of Finance cannot recommend to the voters a Town Budget that is increased from the previous year more than the dollar amount of the increase in the Grand List from the previous year.

The Grand List is comprised of all Real Estate Values, Personal Property Values and Motor Vehicle Values in Woodstock and is produced by the Town Assessor. The Assessor closes out this list on October 1<sup>st</sup> each year and the Grand List is finalized by January 31<sup>st</sup> each year. That dollar amount is sent to the Town Treasurer and Board of Finance.

The preliminary Prop 46 calculations can now be done by the Town Treasurer who gives it to the Board of Finance for review. The calculations also get sent to Town Attorney for final review to ensure that it is being calculated properly and within the law.

In December/January each year the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen begin their respective meetings to formulate their budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. Our fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> thru June 30<sup>th</sup>. This is a long process that is comprised of many public meetings here at the town hall and at the school.

In March, the Board of Finance has its final Prop 46 calculation. They now know the maximum dollar amount that the budgets can increase. (Again based on the growth in the taxable Grand List) In March the Board of Education presents its budget, and the Board of Selectmen presents the General Government budget to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance meets another 3 to 4 times in March to discuss any changes that have to be made and informs the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen of these adjustments to be made in their budgets. The Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen then hold their respective meetings to make their budget adjustments dictated by the Board of Finance and they then submit their final budgets back to the Finance Board in early April.

The Board of Finance then holds a Public Hearing on the combined Education and General Government Budget in early April and meet the following week to discuss and vote on the final Education and General Government budgets that will go to Annual Town meeting. That Annual Town Meeting is always the second Tuesday in May and one week after that the townspeople vote at referendum to approve or disapprove the annual town budget.

The most effective time for townspeople to be heard on their wants in the Education or General Government budgets is during the meetings when each board is formulating the individual line items or departmental figures. Those meetings run from December through March. They are all posted in advance and all are open to the public. The Boards of Selectmen and Education have nothing to do with each other's budgets. It is the Board of Finance job to set the final budget figures.

Please go to [woodstockct.gov](http://woodstockct.gov). Under *From the Selectmen* is a link to a very informative power point called "The Budget Process".

Judy Walberg, Town Clerk of Woodstock