



WEST TISBURY SPACE NEEDS COMMITTEE REPORT MARCH 2007

A Final Report to the Town Voters

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**Please attend our 3rd Public Forum:
Wednesday, April 4th @ 7:30 PM
at the Public Safety Building**

I. Introduction

The West Tisbury Space Needs Committee was asked to research and organize the specific space needs of the Town by department and function and prioritize them. It would prepare one or more models and timelines of how to effectively and efficiently satisfy the Town's total space needs by creatively using, renovating, adding onto, or leasing existing available assets within the Town or building new assets.

We were asked to recommend a comprehensive ten to fifteen year Town Space Planning Program for all Town functions. The recommended timing of each project is based upon the functional urgency of the space need, and the impact of its estimated planning cost on the Town's debt service payment schedule and our taxes.

The goal is to satisfy the Town's space needs while avoiding significant "spikes" in annual debt service payments and real estate taxes. Adding projects and debt as the Town retires debt will do this. The projected cost, timing and impact of this plan on the Town's debt service schedule and our real estate taxes are at the end of this report.

II. April 10, 2007 Annual Town Meeting

We urge voters to read this report and approve the proposed warrant article. It requests voter approval to execute a town administration space solution, have the Selectmen form a building committee and appropriate \$150,000 for architectural, engineering and other related needs to produce construction drawings for competitive contractor bidding.

III. Key Steps and Dates

June 26, 2006: Space Needs Committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

November 2006: Mailed Report # 1 to all Town voters.

November 28, 2006: Voter appropriation of \$20,000 to hire a professional construction cost estimator and issue this final report.

December 13, 2006: Public Forum # 1 to receive resident feedback on the various space options by Town function.

February 21, 2007: Public Forum # 2 to receive resident feedback on the estimated planning costs, projected timing and impact on the Town's long-term debt service schedule and the debt service portion of our annual real estate taxes.

March 2007: Publish this final report with recommendations and mail it to all town voters before the April 10, 2007 Annual Town Meeting.

April 4, 2007@ 7:30 PM: Public Forum # 3 at the Public Safety Building to discuss the recommendations, contents of this report and receive resident feedback.

April 10, 2007: Annual Town Meeting.

IV. Recommendations – Town Administration

After examining all the data pertaining to the current and future role of each town function and the projected resources and needs, receiving public feedback, and analyzing the detailed planning cost estimates for a variety of options, this committee recommends the following. The rationale for this recommendation, rejected options, projected costs and impact on our taxes are discussed with supporting charts at the end of this report.

Several town hall concepts and options were prepared for the professional cost estimator, A. M. Fogarty of Hingham, MA. They included different ways of building a new town hall and renovating the current historic structure. Our goal was to obtain comparative data to help identify the cost differences among the various options. For consistency all of the concepts provided approximately 7,000 square feet of gross space. The Committee fine tuned the space requirements and concepts and determined a town hall renovation of between 6,000 to 7,000 square feet would suffice. Similarly a 6,000 to 7,000 square foot new two-story building and a new 5,000 to 6,000 square foot one-story building would provide sufficient space. Once the Town agrees upon a direction a building committee can identify the best way to execute that solution. The cost estimates were adjusted to the revised area estimates for analyzing the data and forming our recommendations in this report.

The following is our recommendation for Town Administration:

- The Town's administrative function and needs are the most critical and should receive first priority.
- The Town's administrative offices should remain at their current location in the historic district and town center.
- The current town hall building – with the use of all three floors – has sufficient space for this function and should be renovated, made energy efficient, and brought up to municipal and state building codes. A modest addition would be required to house an elevator, second stairway and possible new entrance.
- The estimated total project cost for a 6000 to 7000 sq. ft. renovation – including the cost for temporary town hall facilities during two years of construction – is between \$4.9 million to \$5.2 million. This cost is inflated + 8 percent from today's estimated costs because we assume it will take about two years to get to a final design and obtain firm contractor bids.
- A building committee should be appointed and charged with refining and selecting the best, most energy efficient solution from several renovation options, hiring an architect to draft construction drawings, and getting bids for this renovation to be carried out in the most cost effective way. The Space Needs Committee will assist the Selectmen in developing a clear and concise mission for the building committee.
- Bonding should be sought at the Spring 2008 Annual Town Meeting to authorize construction.

V. Other Town Functions and Recommendations

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- The next highest priority is to build a new, 2200 square foot police station at the public safety building's site. A review of this committee's work with the Police Chief would begin in 2012, a building committee formed in 2013 with construction beginning in 2014 to 2015.
- The estimated project cost, inflated + 4 %/year is \$2.0 million to \$2.2 million.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Currently has no space. Needs a workstation, temperature controlled storage and general storage space for equipment. Consider renting trailer storage space for the public safety building site and sharing office space with the Tri-Town Ambulance Service and Fire Department until the new police station project is initiated.

TRI-TOWN AMBULANCE SERVICE

- Currently uses the public safety building year-round and the Chilmark Fire Station seasonally. May need + 500 square feet of space at a future date. This extra space may or may not be located in West Tisbury. Determine future growth, space needs and the location with the Towns of Chilmark and Aquinnah.

LIBRARY

- The Library needs approximately 5,500 square feet of additional space and will need the systems in the current space renovated when the addition is built. The Library Trustees and the Town should plan for this construction to begin in 2016 at an estimated total project cost of \$5.1 million to \$5.3 million.
- A local fund raising campaign should be organized and launched now with the goal of raising at least one half of the estimated total project cost by 2016. This averages to raising between \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year for eight years.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

- The Parks and Recreation Department currently has a shared desk in town hall and seasonal use of the Old Courthouse Road firehouse to sell beach stickers. Parking space is needed for this function. There is also a storage shed at the beach.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee shared its desire to have a year-round Community Center offering an array of services and programs. They proposed renovating and using the Old Courthouse Road facility for this purpose.
- Based upon our research, the Space Needs Committee does not think this facility is suitable for a Community Center because of limited parking space and insufficient septic and water capacity.
- For the short term, the Committee recommends increased collaboration with the school and other departments to identify possible space solutions for new programming.

- Long term, we recommend developing a needs assessment and pro-forma business plan for the Community Center with projected operating costs and sources of start up and sustaining funds for public discussion. We also suggest organizing a local fund raising campaign such as the Friends of the West Tisbury Community Center to help subsidize the cost of the project.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

- This department has an expressed need for garage storage space for the Town's 5-ton dump truck, sander and miscellaneous equipment.
- If necessary, we recommend using the Old Courthouse Road firehouse for nine to ten months/year – when the Parks and Recreation Department is not using the facility to sell beach stickers.
- The highway department's ongoing capital needs for road maintenance should be coordinated with the Town's Capital Improvements Planning Committee and the Town's long-term debt service plan.

ANIMAL CONTROL DEPARTMENT

- Currently uses the Tisbury facility. Needs an occasional workstation, year-round animal storage facility and a horse trailer. There are noise considerations.
- Short term: Continue negotiations with Tisbury for sharing the use and maintenance of their facilities.
- Long Term: Identify a regional or island-wide solution for Animal Control facilities. The estimated cost to build a freestanding 760 square foot facility was \$940,000 – inflated to start in 2009. There are specific animal control building and health codes that add to the cost of such a facility.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- The Fire Department has no expressed space needs at this time. Its current facilities provide a combined total of 9,730 square feet of space. These facilities are in good condition. The Town should provide additional funding as needed for ongoing maintenance.

COUNCIL ON AGING

- The Howes House provides 3320 sq. ft of space. There is 400 sq. ft. of available second floor space for conversion to possible office or conference room use for this or other Town functions. The Council on Aging has no expressed additional needs at this time.

SCHOOL

- The school has no expressed needs at this time. In the long term, pending enrollment trends, there may be available space at the school for other town functions. The space created by the current lower enrollment has been redirected to better serve current and new functional needs that were previously not available or, in very cramped quarters.

CEMETERY

- The Cemetery has no expressed new space needs at this time.

PATHS BESIDE THE ROAD

- This committee was evaluated because of their future capital needs that will affect the town's long-term debt service schedule. The Space Needs Committee recommends presenting a total plan to the Capital Improvements Planning Committee and Town and to consider spreading out the installation and cost of the various paths over time. The use of Community Preservation Act – Open Space Preservation funds should be considered as a source of capital.

VI. Town Administration Discussion

FINANCIAL COST: The following were considerations that led us to recommend renovating town hall on the current site.

- We recommended a 6,000 to 7,000 sq. ft. renovation of the current historic town hall building at the current site.
- The option of building a new, two-story 6,000 to 7,000 square foot facility on this site was considered and rejected. The estimated cost premium for renovating the historic structure versus building a new, two-story structure in the historic district is between + \$700,000 to + \$1 million. This option would also require demolishing the historic structure.
- The Committee also considered and rejected building a new, 5,000 to 6,000 square foot one-story facility on the Town-owned land at Lambert's Cove Rd. and State Rd. This was the cheapest option with an estimated cost savings of \$800,000 to \$1.3 million versus the \$4.9 million option for renovating the current town hall—**Page 8, Chart # 1.**
- Renovating the historic structure is eligible for CPA Historic Preservation funding, which has already been levied and raised. CPA statute requires a minimum 10 percent appropriation of its total annual revenue for historic preservation. CPA funds cannot be used for building a new town hall.
- The projected annual debt service cost impact on our annual taxes over 17 years between renovating the town hall at a total cost of \$4.9 million to \$5.2 million or building a \$3.8 to \$4.1 million new, 5,000-6,000 square foot, one-story town hall at the Lambert's Cove Rd. site is negligible. The added tax impact of a \$4.9 million renovation ranges from + \$6.00 to a high of + \$43 per year per \$1 million of fiscal year 2007 assessed value – versus building a one-story, 5,000 square foot new town hall. This assumes CPA funds are used.—**Page 8, Chart # 2.**
- If the Town chose to build a new town hall at Lambert's Cove Rd., the current town hall building would become a vacant liability, as the committee has not found another suitable municipal use. Therefore, we would probably recommend the Town sell the abandoned current town hall building and land to relieve it from the liability. However, the committee does not recommend liquidating assets at this time for the reasons sited in the following “social cost” discussion.

SOCIAL COST: The Committee recommends keeping the town administrative function at its current site for several additional Town development considerations and social reasons:

- It keeps the historic district and town center alive.
- It has close proximity to other Town services and features: Library, Council on Aging, Grange Hall, Alley's General Store and the VTA transfer station that serves all of these town center features.
- It has adequate parking space, septic and water capacity.
- If the Lambert's Cove Rd. & State Rd. parcel was developed for town administration use, it could motivate or accelerate further development and "sprawl" in the surrounding area. There is a great deal of development pressure throughout Town. We believe this is a larger issue for the Selectmen, Planning Boards and Town to discuss and consider when determining the use of this – and other vacant lots it owns.
- The committee further recommends a larger discussion among the Town's planning boards, leaders and residents before liquidating Town assets as a source of funds for this or any other Town need.

VII. Total Town Space Planning Program

The construction for all of the town's expressed space needs would be completed or under way by fiscal year 2016 – within the next eight years—if this total space planning program were executed as recommended in accordance with the projected timeline.

If the projected planning costs that include + 4 percent inflation per year of delay prove to be accurate through fiscal year 2016 the following would happen to the projected debt service portion of our taxes. All estimates are based upon each \$1 million of assessed value in fiscal year 2007.

- Debt service is 8 % of our annual fiscal year 2007 taxes – **Page 9, Chart # 3.** This is \$365 per \$1 million of assessed value—**Page 9, Chart # 4.**
- The debt service portion of our taxes would increase in only four years -- in fiscal years 2010 through fiscal year 2013. This assumes the town initiates debt service payments for a town hall solution in fiscal year 2009—**Page 10, Chart # 5; Page 10, Chart # 6.**
- The projected annual debt service tax cost per \$ 1 million of assessed value is \$490 in fiscal year 2010 and declines to \$405 per \$ 1 million in fiscal year 2013—**Page 9, Chart # 4.**
- Debt service will increase to 10 % of our total taxes in fiscal year 2010 and gradually decline to a 5 % share of total taxes within the next six years – by fiscal year 2016 – assuming the base Town budget increases at a compounded rate of + 2.5 percent per year—**Page 11, Chart # 7.**
- The estimated debt service portion of our taxes are projected to be less than in fiscal year 2009 from fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2024 or beyond—if no significant unplanned debt is added during this period—**Page 9, Chart # 4.**

VIII. Supporting Charts

Chart # 1: Town Hall Total Project Cost Comparisons.

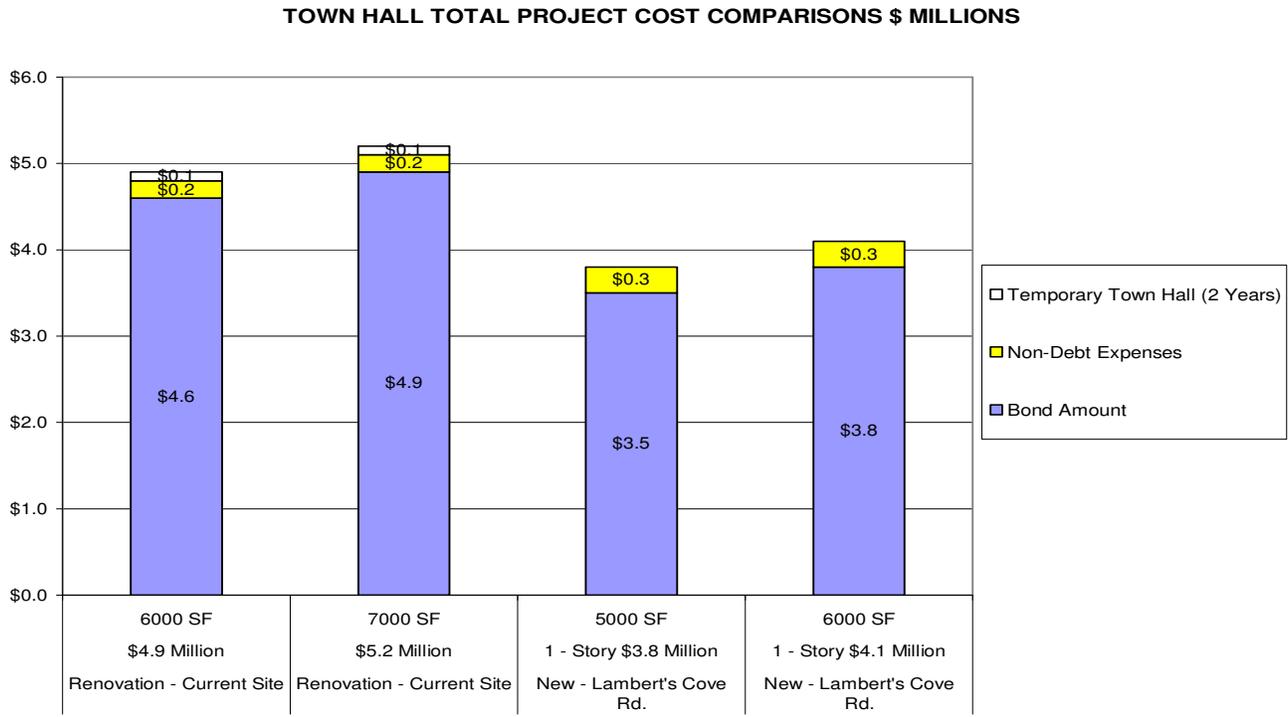


Chart # 2: Projected Debt Service Tax Difference – Renovation vs. New Town Hall.

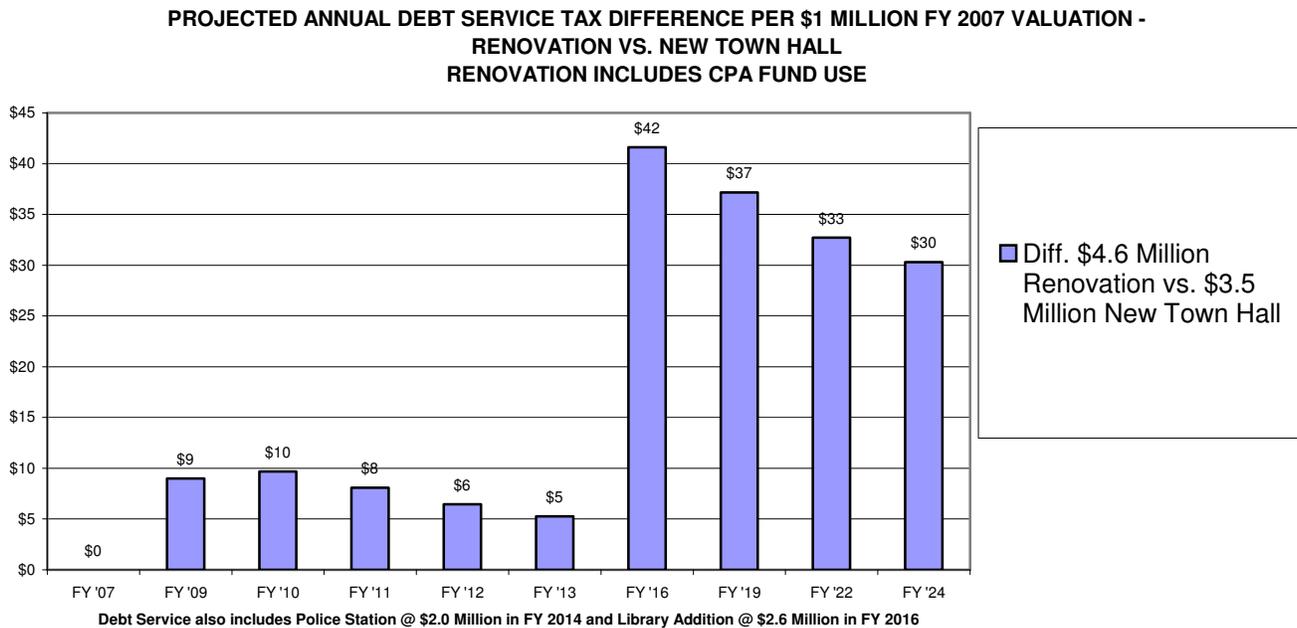


Chart # 3: Fiscal Year 2007 Debt Service % Share of Total Taxes.

FISCAL YEAR 2007 % SHARE OF ANNUAL TAXES

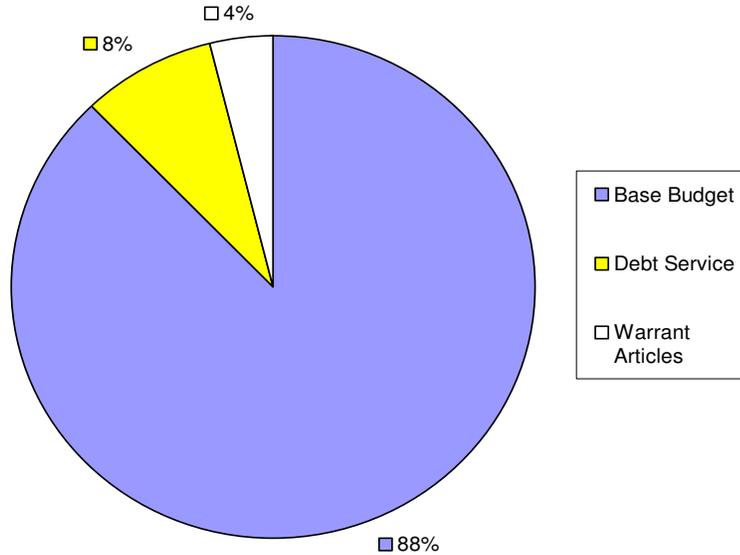


Chart # 4: Projected Annual Debt Service Tax Cost Per \$ 1 Million of Assessed Value (FY 2007).

PROJECTED ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE TAXES PER 1 MILLION @ FY 2007 VALUATION

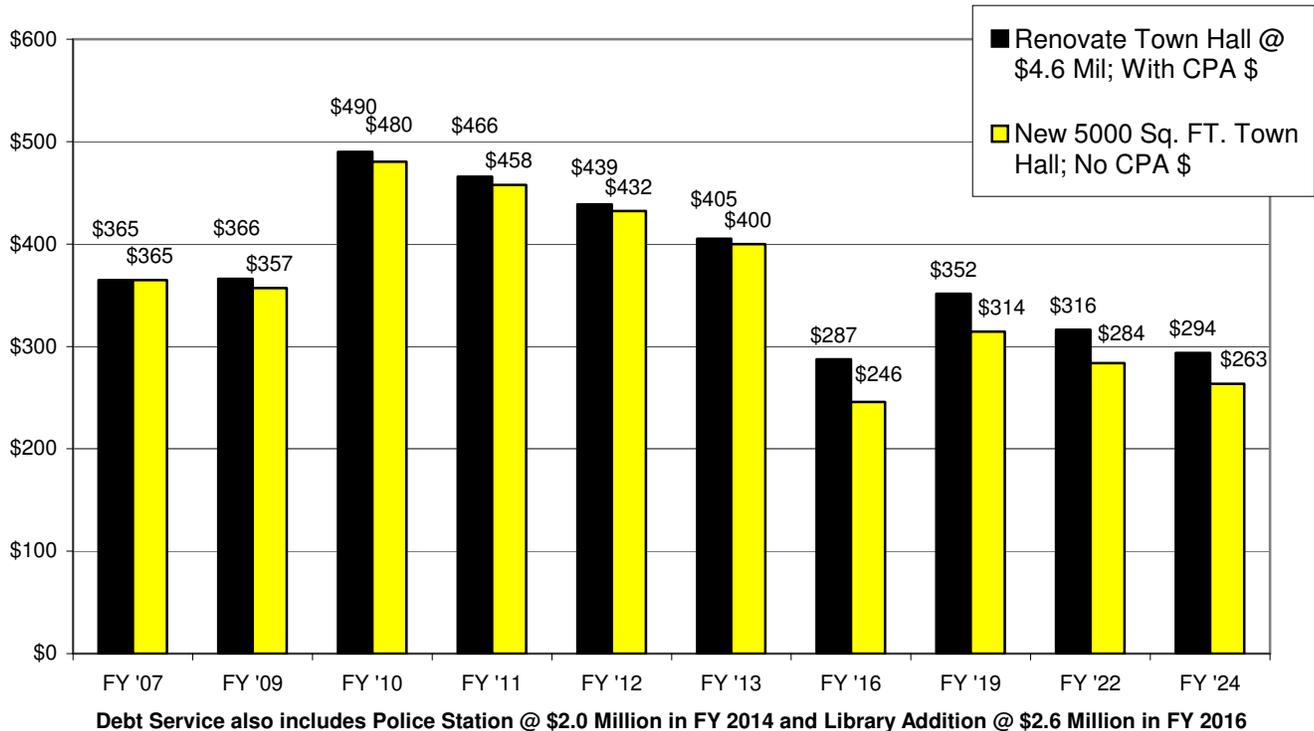


Chart # 5: Projected Total Debt Service Tax Cost Fiscal Year 2007 – 2024.

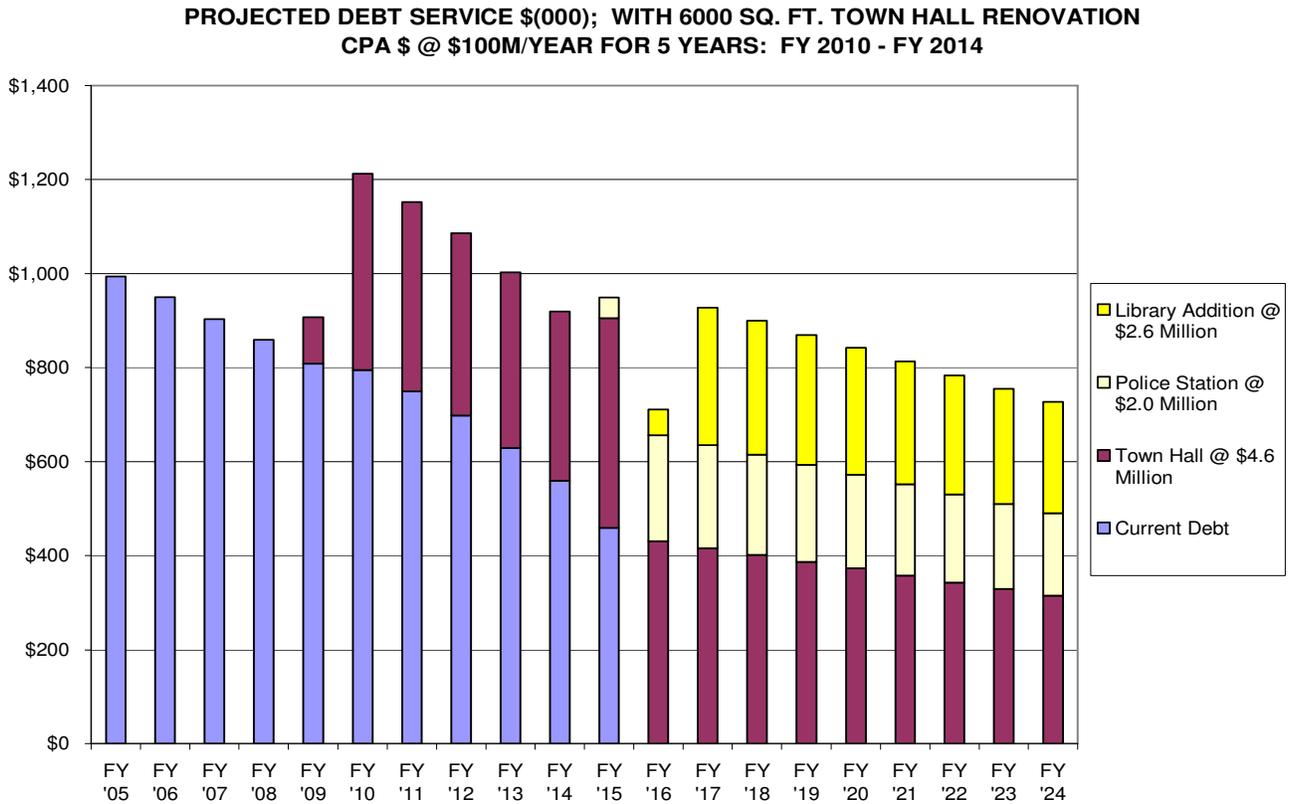


Chart # 6: Projected Total Town Budget with + 2.5 % Base Budget Increase/Year.

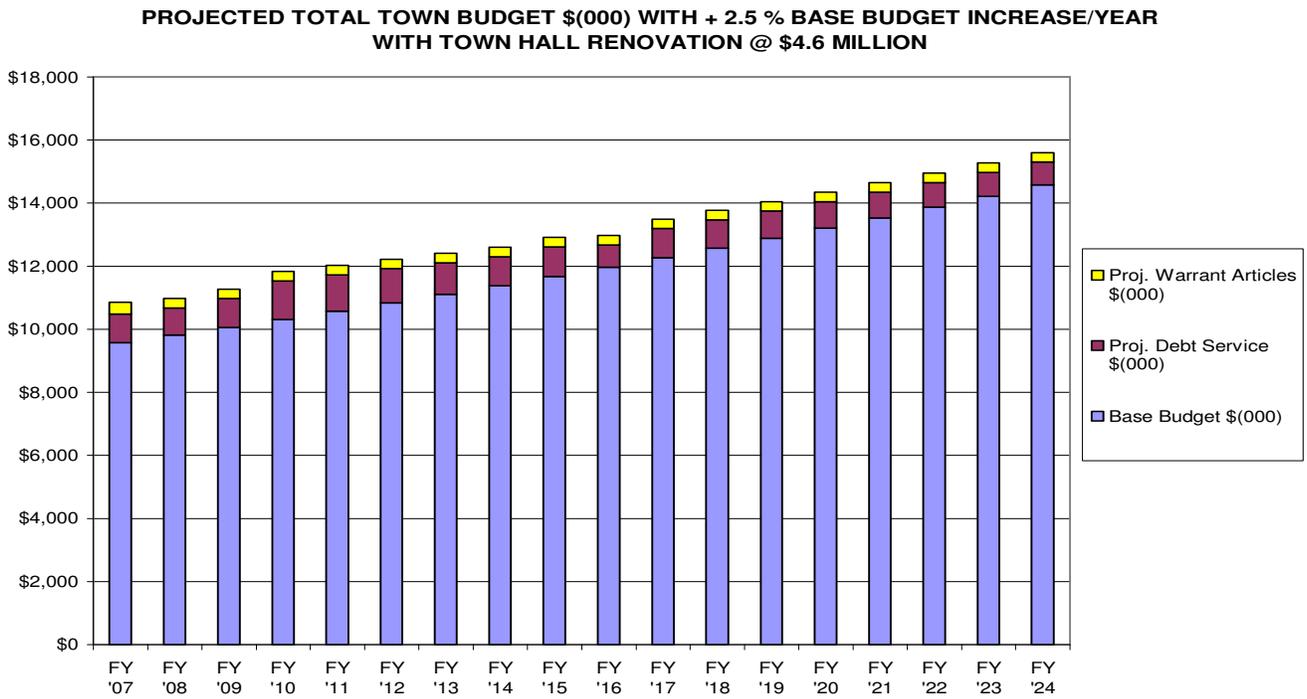
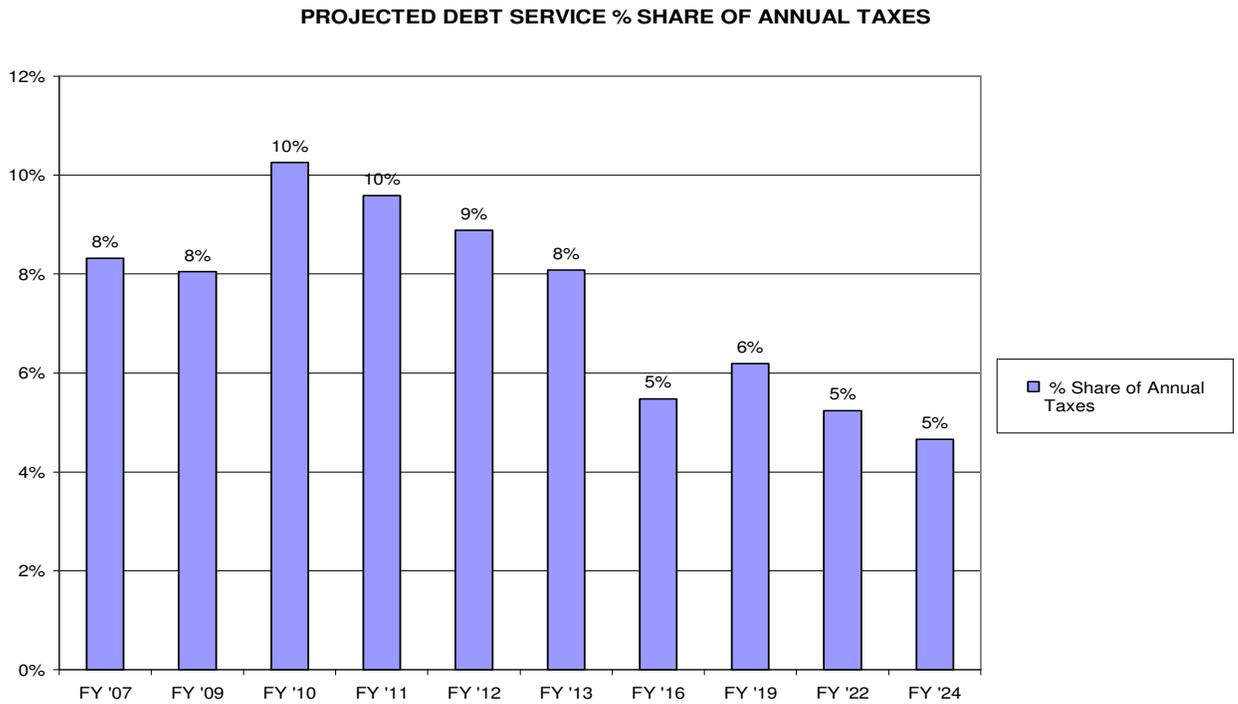


Chart # 7: Projected Debt Service % Share of Total Annual Taxes.



IX. Next Steps

- Discuss these recommendations and proposed warrant article at a third public forum that will be held on Wednesday, April 4 @ 7:30 PM at the Public Safety Building.
- Discuss and approve the proposed warrant article # 38 authorizing an expenditure of \$150,000 at Town Meeting on April 10.

Lastly, the Space Needs Committee would like to thank you for all of your support over the past nine months. It has been a privilege and honor to serve you and the Town.