

WELCOME

2020/2021

Town of Wolcott

Mayor's Budget Presentation

MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2021



Presented to the
Wolcott Town Council
May 7, 2020

Mayor's 20/21 Proposed Budget Transmittal Letter to Wolcott Town Council

April 24, 2020

Dear Chairman Valletta,

In accordance with the provisions of the Wolcott Town Charter, presented herein is the Town's Fiscal Year 20/21 proposed Budget.

As always, our mission at the beginning of the budget process is to continue to provide cost effective, quality programs and services while keeping any increase to a minimum. We always strive to keep our proposed numbers as close to the previous year as possible. The primary objective in every budget is to preserve the current level of services provided to Town residents and taxpayers as we navigate decreasing non-tax revenues and increasing operating expenses.

As this year continues to prove, however, public safety and the components of it are the top priority. While public safety is always at the forefront of our minds, we are also faced with unseen challenges. As we protect our citizens' welfare and property from tangible encounters, it is also the intangible occurrences from which the Town must be guarded. While addressing these issues head on, we continue to provide quality services in a responsive and cost-effective manner.

I have included funding in this budget to address the operational needs in public safety, public works, community development and general government. As we move into the future, we must be committed to incorporating appropriate technological advancements in data security to ward off any potential breaches. As we strive to be on the leading edge of technology, we require an in-house IT Manager for the security of the Town's data, documents and history.

In Fiscal Year 20/21, the Town is expected to receive \$202,000 less than last year from the State of Connecticut. Yet, current obligations and the Town's essential need for services has not decreased. We must continue to honor the commitments made to our citizens. As we do every year, we have worked tirelessly to review each and every expenditure in the proposed budget while remaining both realistic and progressive. Therefore, my recommendation for the Fiscal Year 20/21 Budget is \$21,623,780, an increase of \$640,677.

The primary reasons for the proposed budget increase are for Ambulance Paramedic hours, contractual salary increases, the addition of an in-house IT Manager, refuse and recycling rates, and State mandated obligations for revaluation and heart and hypertension claims.

Major expenditure changes are as follows:

<u>ITEMS</u>	<u>COST CHANGE</u>
Salaries and Wages	\$ 603,539
Insurance and Benefits	\$ (154,429)
Public Safety Operations	\$ 107,660
Property Revaluation	\$ 45,000
Refuse and Recycling	\$ 59,810
Other General Government	<u>\$ (27,491)</u>
General Government Subtotal	\$ 634,089
Debt Service	<u>\$ 6,588</u>
Total General Government Increase	\$ 640,677 or 3.05%

Including this proposal, the General Government Budget has incurred an average annual expenditure increase of only **1.88%** over the last five years.

We are succeeding in our mission to maintain the Town's robust financial condition. Our credit rating was recently upgraded to AA+. Our infrastructure is well-maintained. We continue to be vigilant about public safety and security on all fronts. I am submitting a proposed budget that not only reflects our ability to preserve our financial standing, but also continues to provide our residents the services they desire and expect.

We will make modifications as necessary prior to the final proposal and adoption by the Town Council. This proposed budget continues the pledge to move Wolcott forward and not regress. As in prior Fiscal Years, I believe this budget demonstrates fiscal responsibility while preserving an excellent level of service. I remain confident that regardless of the challenges that face us, we have the experience and ingenuity to be successful in our mission to bring together a final budget to best serve the Town of Wolcott, its residents, and its businesses.

As always, I welcome your questions, comments, and recommendations and look forward to your cooperation in finalizing the 20/21 Fiscal Year budget.

Respectfully,

Thomas G. Dunn, Mayor

As Mayor, my commitment to Wolcott has always been to move Wolcott forward. My goals have been and continue to be:

- Investment in Town-wide safety
- Maintenance of quality public services to all Wolcott's citizens and taxpayers
- Continued investment in our Town facilities, infrastructure and open space
- Improvement and upgrading of public safety and public works vehicles and equipment
- Preservation of the financial health of the Town

Together we continue to accomplish these goals.

You may notice in this presentation some changes in the manner in which we display charts and figures and the information herein.

In preparation for our new financial system, we have reconstructed our Chart of Accounts. This is in accordance with the State of Connecticut's Uniform Commercial Chart of Accounts structure based on "function". This does not affect how we prepare or utilize our department's budgets, but we wanted to be clear about the way our figures are compiled and presented. All department accounts remain intact, but categories are based on function.

The State has strongly suggested this format to be adhered to by all municipalities. This offers more consistency and transparency in budgets and enhances the States' ability to compare and compile municipal data.

Public Safety

The Frontline of our Town

Total Cost: \$7,000,000



DISPATCH ~ 911 CENTER

The men and women that staff our Emergency Dispatch Center are truly the **first** in the Frontline of Public Safety.

In 2019, they fielded 3,536 incidents, with **numerous** calls **per** incident, while still responding to and communicating with Police, Fire and Ambulance personnel.



The Dispatchers are the first point of contact in an emergency and they handle each and every call with professionalism and courtesy. Under what is typically extremely distressing circumstances, they are calm, kind and compassionate while they gather crucial information to direct the Police, Fire and/or Ambulance to the party in need. Their shifts are every bit as challenging as those of the on-scene responders. Often, one incident can generate **SEVERAL** calls coming in at one time.

Between March 17, 2019 and March 17, 2020 the dispatchers answered 16,612 calls for service. *Source: Chief Stephens*

In 2019 there were 5,104 calls that came in on the 911 line.
Source: State of CT Telecommunications Division

The Dispatchers are remarkable multi-taskers with monitoring not only the MANY screens in front of them, but they are also

communicating and assessing the information they are being provided by the person on the other end of the phone. At the same time, the dispatcher is relaying the information to the First Responders so they are best prepared for the circumstance they will encounter.

The Dispatchers responsibility does not end when emergency personnel arrive on-scene. They are still in active communication with the responders as they determine what other personnel and equipment may be required in any given event, all the while juggling any other in-coming calls. Potentially, they could be communicating not only with additional callers reporting other emergencies (or in some cases the same emergency) but are exchanging and relaying information critical to the coordination of the departments for the best outcome of the situation.



“To Protect and Serve”

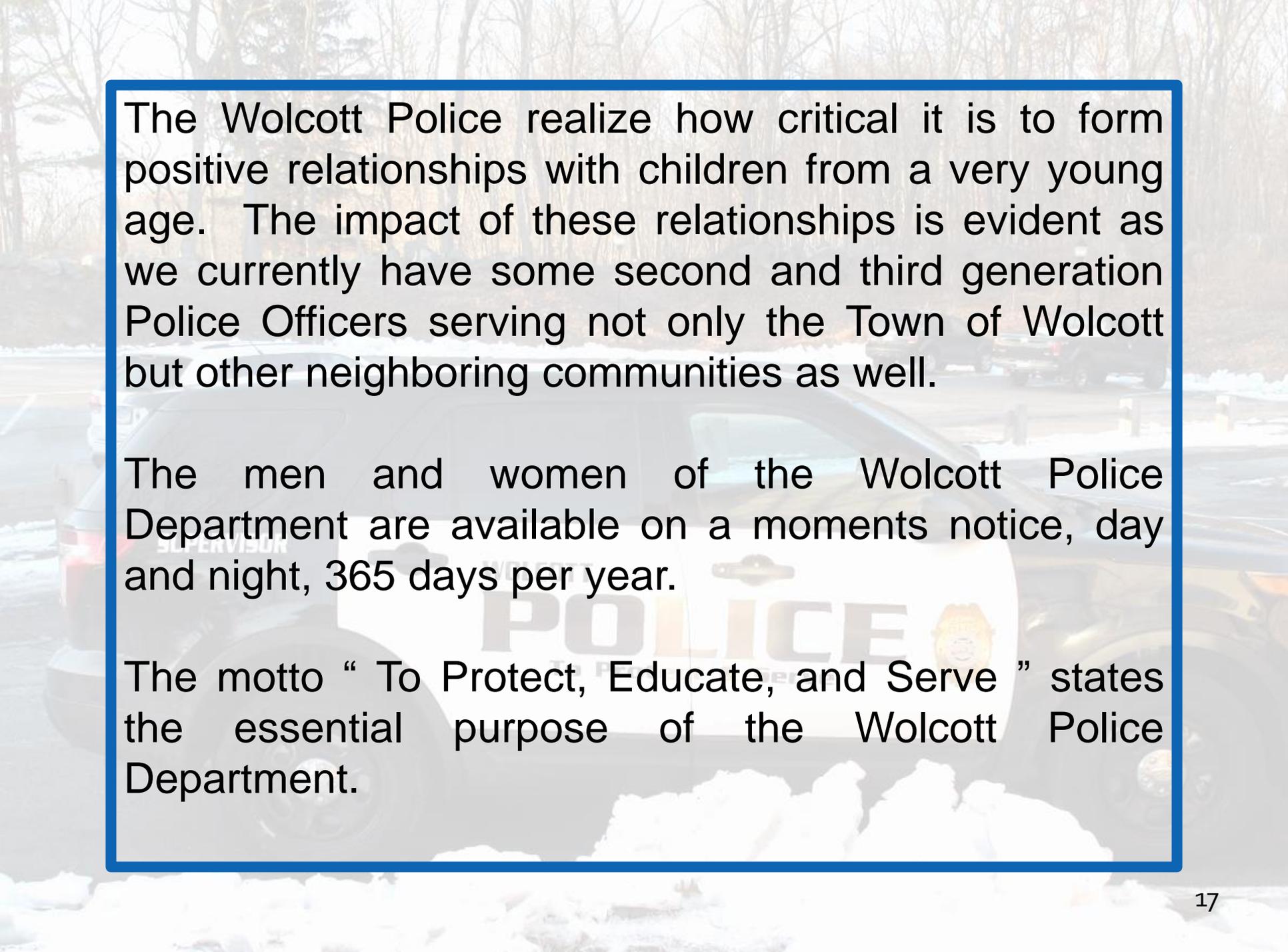
“The mission of the Wolcott Police Department is to deliver high quality police service, based upon the identified needs of diverse communities, in order to protect the safety, security, rights and freedoms of all individuals.” *Chief Ed Stephens*

POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES



Next in the Frontline of Public Safety is the Wolcott Police Department. These men and women work tirelessly to provide us with the safety needed to confidently feel protected in our community.

The police not only provide protection and assurance but are very active in personal community relations with citizens of all ages. They work along side other groups and associations in Town such as the prevention of substance abuse programs and the Police Explorers program. They are present in our schools and actively engage with children of all ages in recreational programs such as the Scarecrow making event in the fall.



The Wolcott Police realize how critical it is to form positive relationships with children from a very young age. The impact of these relationships is evident as we currently have some second and third generation Police Officers serving not only the Town of Wolcott but other neighboring communities as well.

The men and women of the Wolcott Police Department are available on a moments notice, day and night, 365 days per year.

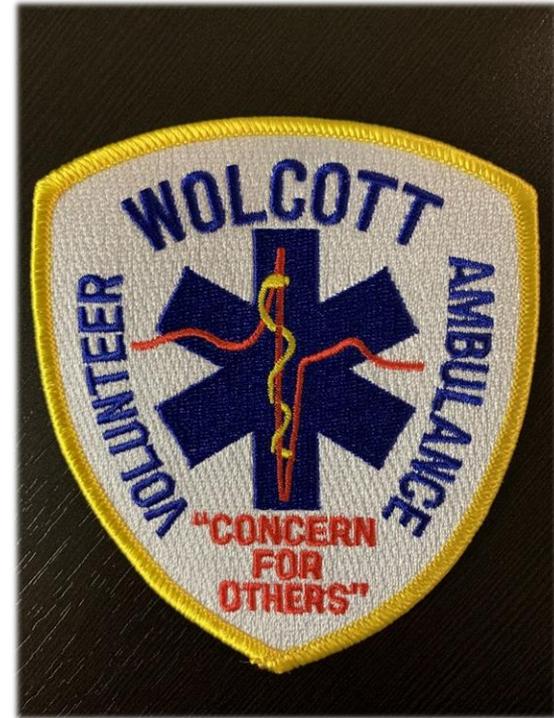
The motto “ To Protect, Educate, and Serve ” states the essential purpose of the Wolcott Police Department.

Animal Control is also a crucial function of the Police Department. We are very fortunate to have Officers who attend to the health, well-being and licensing regulations regarding the non-human members of our community.

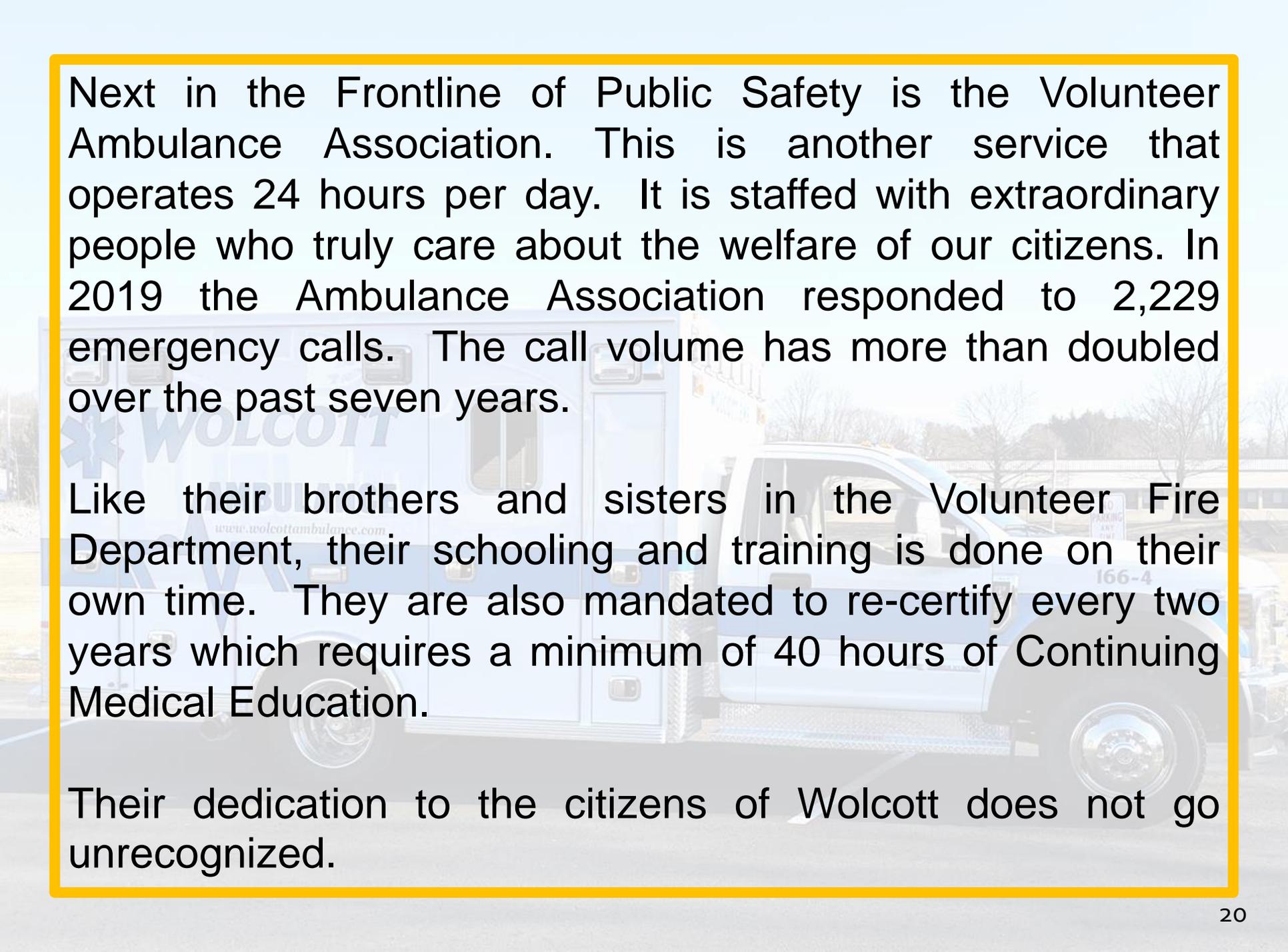
These officers are in place not only for the safety of the animals but the people with whom they may come in contact.



WOLCOTT VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION



“Our mission is to provide medical aid, health education and youth mentoring to the residents of the Town of Wolcott by responding 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year to emergency calls for medical assistance and by educating the public with free or low-cost CPR and EMS training programs.” *Chief Bill Barratt*



Next in the Frontline of Public Safety is the Volunteer Ambulance Association. This is another service that operates 24 hours per day. It is staffed with extraordinary people who truly care about the welfare of our citizens. In 2019 the Ambulance Association responded to 2,229 emergency calls. The call volume has more than doubled over the past seven years.

Like their brothers and sisters in the Volunteer Fire Department, their schooling and training is done on their own time. They are also mandated to re-certify every two years which requires a minimum of 40 hours of Continuing Medical Education.

Their dedication to the citizens of Wolcott does not go unrecognized.



The Town of Wolcott has three ambulances to service our community.

Actual camera footage of the empty ambulance garage.

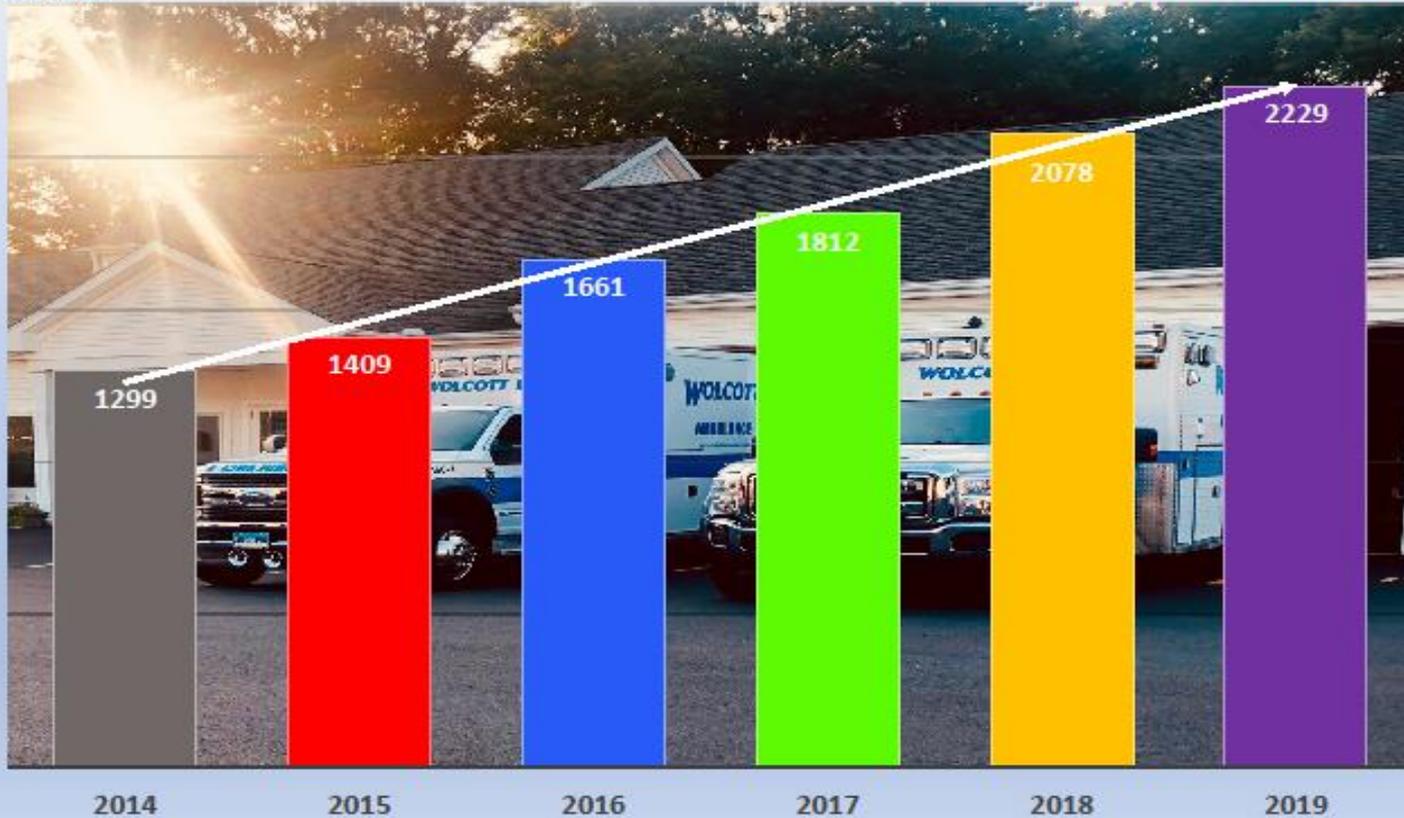
All three ambulances in service simultaneously. This is typical at least a dozen times per month.

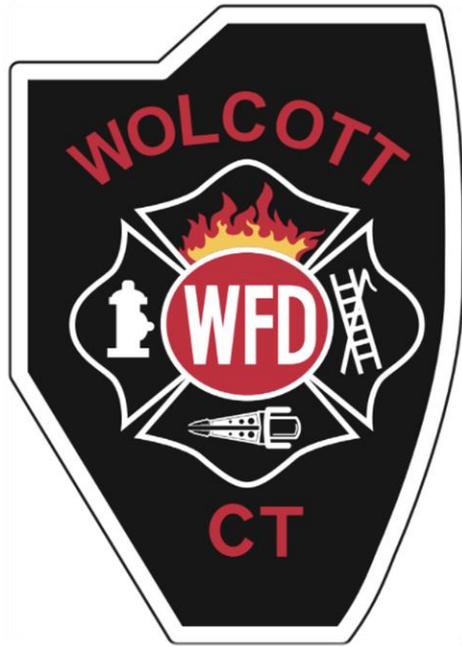




Year over Year EMS Volume 2014 - 2019

71.7% Increase last 6 years





WOLCOTT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT & FIRE MARSHAL

“The function of The Wolcott Volunteer Fire Department and its three companies is to respond to all fire and emergency calls in the Town of Wolcott. These emergencies include, but are not limited to; fire alarms, appliance fires, motor vehicle fires, brush fires, cellar pump-outs, chimney fires, CO alarms, dumpster fires, electrical fires, extrication, furnace fires, hazardous material calls, mutual aid to surrounding towns, motor vehicle accidents, water, ice, and other rescue calls, structure fires and all other circumstances where the fire department can be of assistance.” *Chief Kyle Dunn*

From their humble beginnings in a shed on the corner of Central Avenue and Samuelson Avenue, to the expansion in 1939 with the addition of Company 2 and Company 3 in 1950, the department has always provided emergency services to its community in the utmost professional manner.



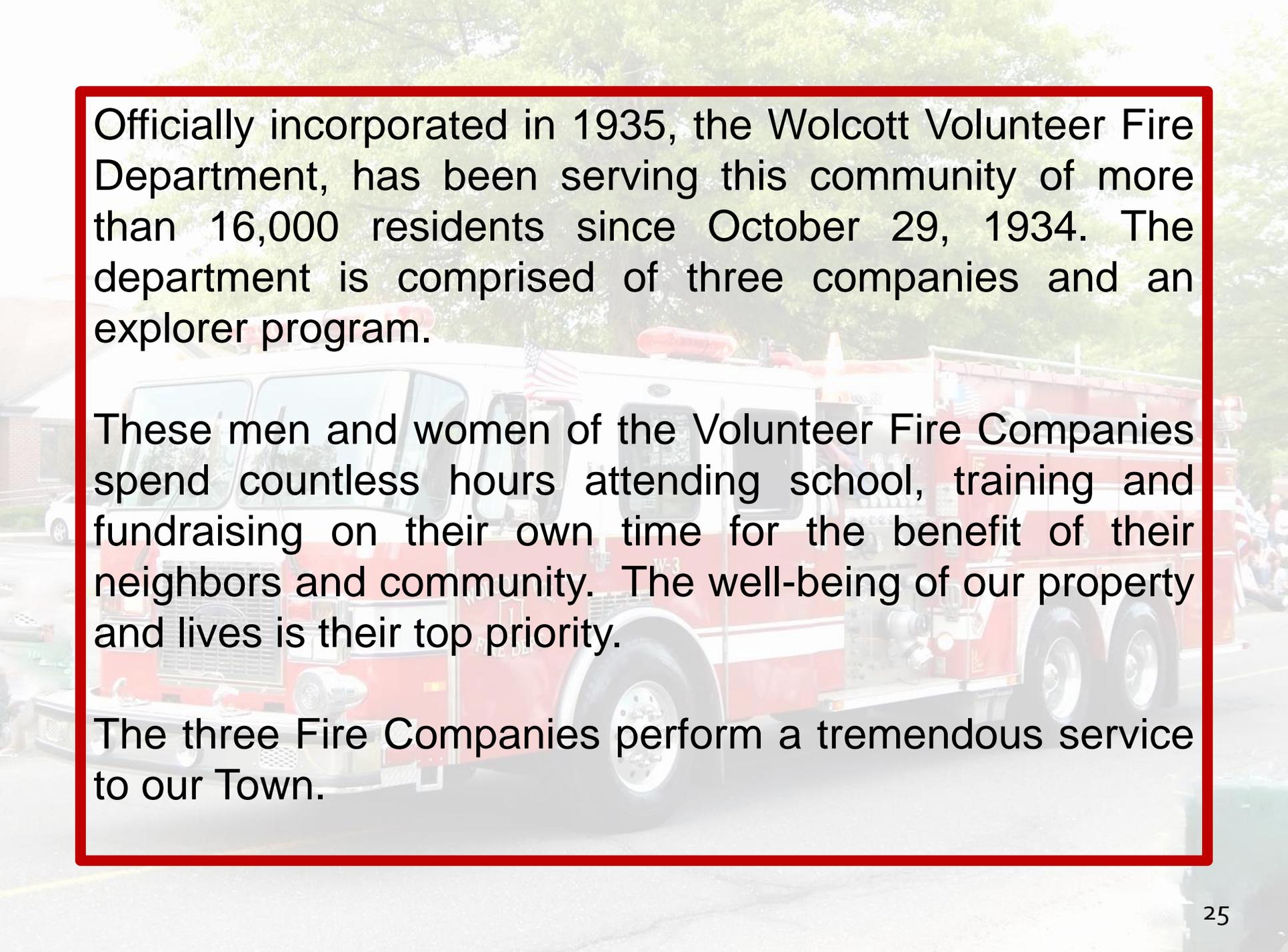
Company 1



Company 2



Company 3

A red and white fire truck is the central focus of the background image. It has an American flag mounted on its roof. The truck is parked on a paved surface, and there are trees and a building visible in the background. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing text.

Officially incorporated in 1935, the Wolcott Volunteer Fire Department, has been serving this community of more than 16,000 residents since October 29, 1934. The department is comprised of three companies and an explorer program.

These men and women of the Volunteer Fire Companies spend countless hours attending school, training and fundraising on their own time for the benefit of their neighbors and community. The well-being of our property and lives is their top priority.

The three Fire Companies perform a tremendous service to our Town.

CIVIL PREPAREDNESS & EMERGENCY PLANNING

Additionally on the Frontline of Public Safety are the Civil Preparedness and Emergency Planning Teams. These are departments that work quietly in the background alongside our Police, Fire and Ambulance divisions.



ALWAYS READY TO SERVE... POLICE AMBULANCE FIRE SERVICE



REFUSE AND RECYCLE

Total Cost: \$1,860,000



The Town is under contract with Gaudiosi Hauling for Refuse Collection, Recycling & Refuse Disposal for Town Residents, Town Public Buildings and Board of Education Buildings.

We also have a Town-staffed Recycle Center where residents can responsibly recycle and properly dispose of certain items.

PUBLIC WORKS

Total Cost is \$1,600,000

Our Public Works Dept. provides essential Town wide services such as road plowing, paving and repair, drainage construction, park maintenance, and grass cutting for all Town buildings, parks and sports fields. In addition to maintaining our roads, they also trim trees along roads and trails, in parks and at all Town owned facilities. The Public Works department continues to purchase trucks and equipment from the State of CT Auction Program whenever possible. These items are then refurbished and repaired saving the Town as much money as possible.





TREE TRIMMING

One specific cost saving measure employed by the Public Works Department is in-house tree trimming.

While most towns are paying exorbitant costs for tree trimming and removal, Wolcott's Public Works crew are properly trained and have the equipment to perform the task themselves. On average it costs approximately \$700 per tree.

Culture and Recreation

Total Cost \$611,000

The Town of Wolcott offers many cultural and recreational places to visit for ALL citizens. We have Peterson Park, Mill Pond Way Walking Trail, Woodtick Reservoir and Chestnut Hill Boating. Our Library is celebrating its 100 year anniversary. The Town also offers many programs for our citizens with special needs. We are extremely proud of the culture and recreational programs we have available and realize how fortunate we are to have them in our community.



**Wolcott Public
Library
Established 1920**

PUBLIC LIBRARY

“It is the mission of the Wolcott Public Library to provide and promote open and equal access to the resources and services of the library in order to meet the informational, educational and cultural needs of the community. The library seeks to encourage reading and the use of current technology for life-long learning and the enhancement of the individual’s quality of life. The library offers a welcoming public place for both community interaction and individual pursuits.”

Wolcott Public Library Staff

PETERSON PARK



Peterson Park has over 65 acres of open space and forests that are great for exploring. It is also the beginning of the Mattatuck Trail which joins up with the Appalachian Trail.

Some activities available are:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Rollerblading
- Skate Park
- Paved Walking Trails around the park's open space



HEALTH & WELFARE

Total Cost is \$254,000

COMMISSION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

*Special
Olympics
Connecticut*



This Commission advocates for, educates and supports the Special Needs citizens of Wolcott. There are recreational activities such as bowling, bingo, candy making and special holiday dances.

We offer Rainbow Day Camp in the summer months. Two Special Needs residents are selected each year to attend the ARC of New London County Camp.

SENIOR CENTER

The Charles Rietdyke Senior Center's mission is to provide a central location where older adults can receive information and participate in programs and activities which are essential for promoting health, independence, and well being. We are committed to doing our best to ensure that the Charles Rietdyke Senior Center is a safe and welcoming facility for seniors of all ages that wish to participate in our programming. *Staff, Wolcott Senior Center*



Other General Government

There are several facilities supported by the General Government budget: the Youth Center, the Resource Center and Food Pantry, and the Sports Complex.

YOUTH CENTER



There are many events and meetings take place at the Youth Center. For example, Drug Awareness and Prevention Programs, Karate and Yoga Programs, Birthday Parties and other happenings.



- **RESOURCE CENTER AND FOOD PANTRY**

The Wolcott Resource Center was established in 2011 with the mission of providing services and guidance to Wolcott residents in need. The primary focus of the WRC has been the collection and distribution of food through the Wolcott Food Pantry.

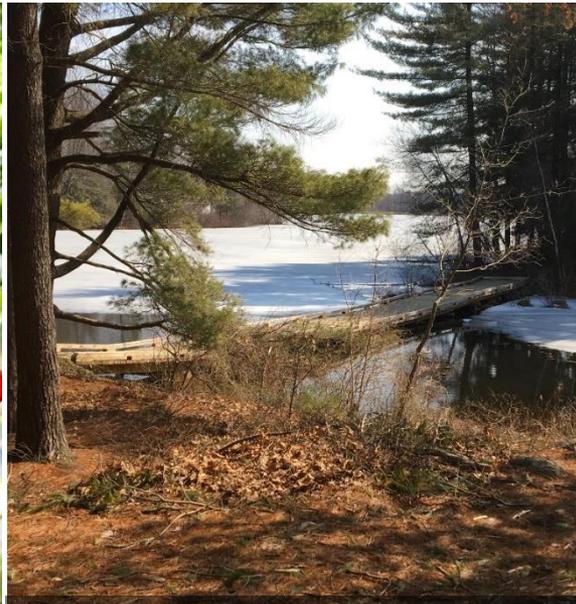
- **SPORTS COMPLEX**

The Sports Complex boasts 32 acres with three developed sports fields. The facility has meeting rooms, offices, restrooms and the availability for a concession stand. It is the latest addition to come under the Town ownership.





ROAD RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAIRS



Mill Pond Way Walking Trail



School Bonds

DEBT SERVICE

The Total Cost of \$4,567,000 with a \$357,000 reimbursement from the State of CT represents continued funding for schools, roads and capital projects.

The **NET COST** is \$4,210,000.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

This area in the budget supports **MANY** services.

- Tri Town Health District
- Northwest Regional Mental Health Board
- Veteran's Services
- Historical Society
- Fire Hydrant Charges
- Streetlights
- Memorial Day Parade
- Probate Court
- Regional Water Authority

The services listed total \$303,000 and are a benefit to all.

I would also like to call attention to the following departments:

- Mayor's Office
- Town Council
- Town Clerk
- Treasurer
- Finance
- Tax Collector
- Assessor
- Building Inspector
- Board of Assessment Appeals
- Planning and Zoning
- Inland Wetlands & Conservation
- Economic Development
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Registrar of Voters

All of these departments are essential to the operation of Wolcott's municipal government.

Collectively, these departments and commissions have a total proposed budget of **\$1,811,000** and provide services to **ALL** residents and taxpayers.

Challenges continue for 20/21

- COVID-19 and the economic impact
- Uncertainty of State Grant Revenue
- Reduction of School Projects reimbursements from the State (reduced Debt Service Revenue from prior projects)
- Additional State mandates

Over the years, we have faced many challenges. We have and continue to provide all necessary Town services. Currently, we await the re-opening of Town buildings and recommencement of programs supporting our youth, seniors and special needs citizens.

Cost Control Measures

This has been one of the most difficult budgets to put together. We continue to adjust to these financial circumstances and to focus on cost saving methods.

The initial requested budget was \$22,059,651 or a 5.1% increase. Working with departments and commissions we were able to cut \$137,375, down to a 4.5% increase. Again the budget was reviewed in depth and we were able to cut an additional \$298,496, a final increase of 3.1%

The budget before you represents these final reductions. Given the cost control measures we have implemented, the average annual expenditure increase over the last 5 years is **ONLY**

1.88%

GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

	PROPOSED	PERCENT
Salaries and Wages	\$8,007,773	37.0%
Debt Service	4,566,877	21.1%
Insurance and Benefits	3,922,114	18.1%
Refuse and Recycling	1,860,450	8.6%
General Government Operations	1,204,134	5.6%
Public Safety Operations	1,183,116	5.5%
Capital Outlay and Leases	356,664	1.6%
Public Works Operations	273,560	1.3%
Culture & Recreation Operations	249,092	1.2%
TOTAL	\$21,623,780	100%

EXPENDITURE CHANGES

	CURRENT	PROPOSED	CHANGE
Salaries and Wages	\$7,404,234	\$8,007,773	\$603,539
Debt Service	4,560,289	4,566,877	6,588
Insurance and Benefits	4,076,543	3,922,114	(154,429)
Refuse and Recycling	1,800,640	1,860,450	59,810
General Government Operations	1,157,780	1,204,134	46,354
Public Safety Operations	1,075,956	1,183,116	107,160
Capital Outlay and Leases	386,229	356,664	(29,565)
Public Works Operations	273,230	273,560	330
Culture and Recreation Operations	248,202	249,092	890
TOTAL	\$20,983,103	\$21,623,780	\$640,677

Major Expenditure Changes – Why?

- **Salaries and Wages: + \$603,539**
 - Ambulance – Additional paid Paramedic hours \$309,737
 - Police – Contractual Cost Change \$116,425
 - IT Manager – Additional Position \$70,000
(offset with \$42,325 reduction in Technology & Consulting)
 - Other Contractual and General Wage Increases \$105,971

- **Insurance and Benefits: - (\$154,429)**
 - Medical Benefits: - (\$200,000) The current Medical Fund balance is sufficient. However, this is a variable cost.
 - Workers' Comp and Liability Insurance: - (\$18,800)
This is due to lower claims and deductibles in recent years.
 - Pension: Defined Benefit Plan: + \$53,859
Defined Contribution Plan: + \$10,512

Major Expenditure Changes – Why?

(continued)

- **Refuse and Recycling:** + \$59,810
- **General Government Operations:** + \$46,534
 - \$45,000 increase due to revaluation
- **Public Safety Operations:** + \$107,160
 - \$45,000 increase in Heart and Hypertension (two new claims filed)
 - \$47,565 increase in Ambulance Support other than payroll

Costs That Benefit The School System

Additionally, the **GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET** includes costs that benefit the Wolcott Public School System.

COSTS	
Debt Service – School Bonds	
Refuse, Recycling Pickup & Disposal	
Winter Surface Treatment	
Police Monitoring	
Annual Audit Fee	
APPROXIMATE ANNUAL COST	\$2,390,975

11.1 % of the GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET

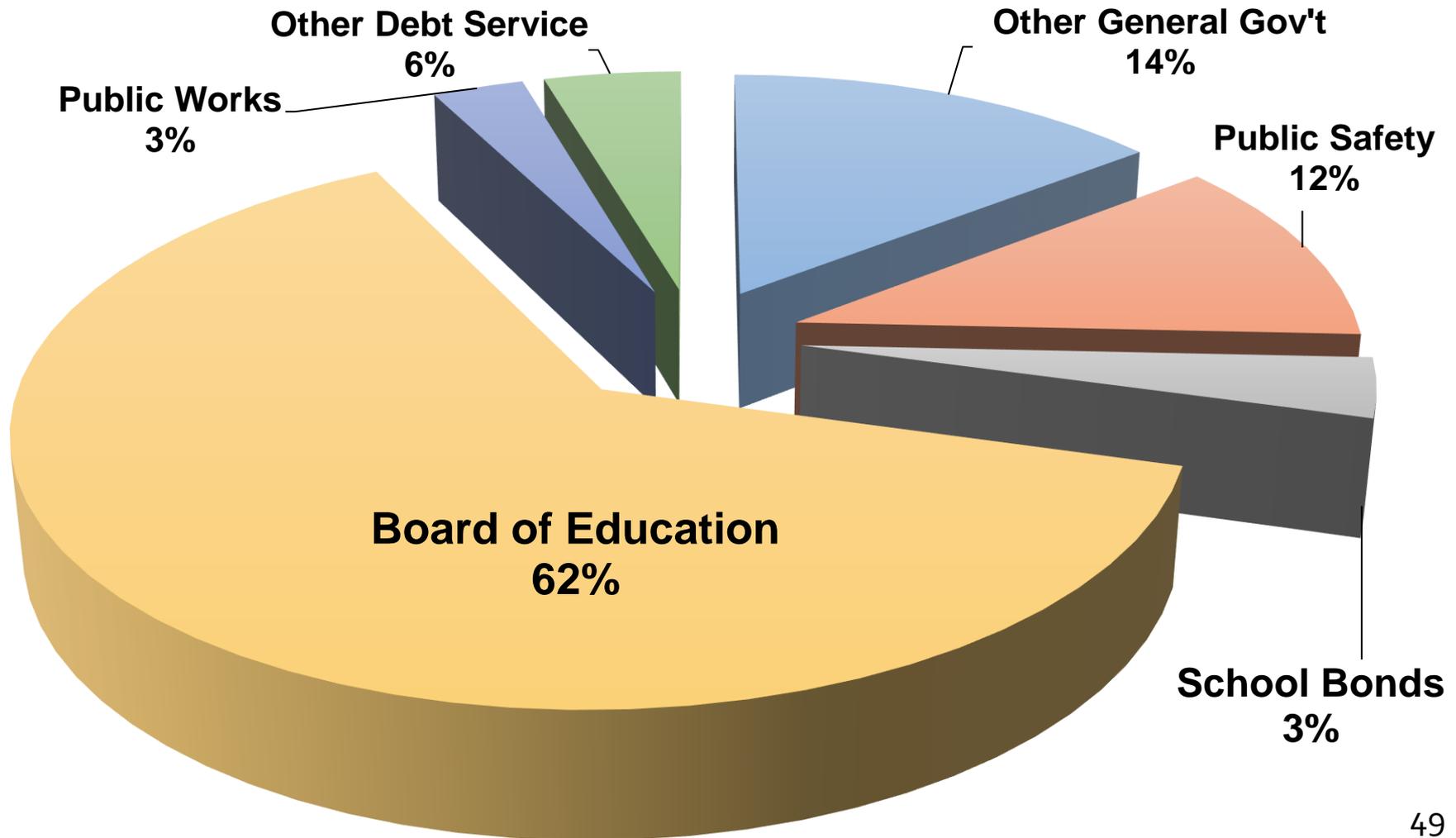
Town of Wolcott 20/21

TOTAL Proposed Expenditure Budget

	19/20 Adopted	20/21 Proposed	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Debt Service	\$4,560,289	\$4,566,877	\$6,588	.01%
Other General Gov't	\$16,422,814	\$17,056,903	\$634,089	3.9%
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$20,983,103	\$21,623,780	\$640,677	3.05%
Education *	\$35,524,031	\$35,524,031	\$0	0%
GRAND TOTAL	\$56,507,134	\$57,147,811	\$640,677	1.1%

Total Town Budget by Function Including Education

WHERE THE MONEY GOES



STATE GRANT REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS

Revenue Source:	19/20 Adopted	20/21 Governor's State Budget	Change
ECS	\$12,589,693	\$12,387,171	\$-202,522
Adult Education	4,545	4,826	281
Municipal Projects	234,916	234,916	0
Municipal Stabilization	136,938	136,938	0
Pequot-Mohegan Grant	16,939	16,939	0
PILOT - State Owned Prop.	1,140	1,140	0
Total State Grant Revenue	\$12,984,171	\$12,781,930	
TOTAL DECREASE			\$-202,241

REVENUE (continued)

Revenue Source	19/20 Adopted	20/21 Estimated	Change
State Grants (from previous slide)	\$12,984,171	\$12,781,930	\$-202,241
School Projects – State Reim.	368,697	356,983	-11,714
Other Education	60,000	60,000	0
Bond Revenue	716,569	555,980	-160,589
Interest and Lien Fees	240,000	240,000	0
Town Clerk Fees	235,000	245,000	10,000
Building Permits	115,000	120,000	5,000
Other Town	127,950	135,475	7,525
Interest Income	90,000	50,000	-40,000
Other Revenue	138,485	140,485	2,000
General Fund Balance	395,000	0	-395,000
Total Revenue	\$15,470,872	14,736,453	
TOTAL DECREASE			\$-785,019

Conclusion

This recommended budget maintains the current level of services to the citizens of Wolcott. Despite the current crisis, we cannot forget our goals and must keep our focus on the “everyday” running of the Town as well as the “immediate” urgencies that are still emerging.

The budget climate at the State and Local level is very uncertain. The proposed revenue budget is subject to change. We will closely monitor the State budget changes that will affect municipalities and provide updated information to the Town Council members.

One thing is certain; we are fortunate to have an extraordinary resource of dedicated citizens, volunteers, employees, managers and elected officials who have done their best to put “Wolcott First”. We have worked closely and cooperatively with all Town Departments, Commissions and Boards to prudently craft the proposed Fiscal Year 20/21 budget to meet our needs in what has been a very challenging time for us all. Let us always remain “Wolcott Strong”.

Thank you!

