



# TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

*Yvette M. Aguiar, Town Supervisor*

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***Post Press Conference Press Release:***

***Supervisor Proposes Zero Percent Property Tax Increase for 2022 Budget and a 1% decrease in the Highway Budget:***

***If approved, it would be the first town budget in 20 plus years to not increase property taxes, with a 1% decrease in the Highway Budget.***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2021**

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Supervisor Yvette Aguiar proposed her Tentative 2022 Town of Riverhead budget this morning that will not increase property taxes. If adopted by the Town Board, the budget would be the first one in more than 20 years to provide residents relief in the form of a 0% increase in taxes and 1% decrease in the Highway Budget.

“The year 2021 has proven to be a year of progress for the Town of Riverhead,” Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said. “Our plans and vision for our great Town are advancing, despite the ongoing financial challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.”



Supervisor Aguiar said her administration instituted proactive measures to reduce spending town-wide as outlined in last year’s budget. These measures were successfully implemented with the assistance and support of the entire Town Board, department head and town employees. “As a result, I am proud to be able to provide our residents and business owners a proposed tentative budget that will hold the line on taxes,” she said. “Sound financial planning in 2021 paved the way for the stable fiscal position we find ourselves in today. It is these fiscal efforts that have enabled me to

reduce taxes in the Highway Fund, while keeping taxes in the General Fund and in the Street Lighting Fund to the same level as 2021. This will benefit every taxpayer in the Town of Riverhead and will be the first time in 21 years that property taxes will not increase, and, in fact, will decrease because of lower highway taxes.”

Supervisor Aguiar’s 2022 Tentative Budget provides the Town with the ability to enhance critical Information Technology infrastructure, supply body cameras for police officers, further the expansion of the Code Enforcement Department, continue the updating of the

Comprehensive Master Plan, and continue the development of our new Town Square along the Peconic Riverfront in Downtown Riverhead. The use of Community Benefit Funds and American Rescue Funds will be used in part to purchase or upgrade much of this critically needed equipment and vehicles, and will also provide additional training and equipment for the Town's first responders. "These funds, as well as unanticipated revenues received in 2021, have enabled me to offset inevitable spending increases including contractual expenses and higher health insurance premiums," she said.

Supervisor Aguiar said, "the primary purpose of this budget was to create a stable road map for fiscal responsibility and future planning. My administration, the Town Board, our department heads, and all town employees will continue to battle the pandemic-fueled fiscal challenges, as the pandemic recovery phase continues. Subsequently, my administration has proven that it is indeed possible to exercise fiscal discipline, while continuing to achieve the momentum to move forward towards the betterment of our entire town."

According to the Supervisor, the 2022 Tentative Town Budget "reflects my continued commitment to provide fiscal stability with the highest level of services, while continuing to fortify the Town's infrastructure, increasing public safety, and improving the quality of life for our residents, our businesses, and our visitors."



Supervisor Aguiar Presents 2022 Tentative Budget to the Town Board, which would not increase taxes

The deadline to submit the 2022 Tentative Budget is Tuesday, October 5, at which point it will become the 2022 Preliminary Budget. The Town Board will have until November 20 to discuss or amend the budget. If no changes are made by the Town Board, the budget will become the 2022 Final Budget.

As a result of the Town Board making difficult choices, Aguiar also noted that in June 2021, after a random review of 20 New York State municipalities, the New York State Comptroller's Office released a report, determining the Town of Riverhead "adequately assessed the impact of the pandemic on financial operations while developing estimates for significant revenues and

expenditures in the 2021 adopted budget.” Furthermore, for the first time in over two decades, Moody’s Investors Service upgraded the Town of Riverhead’s bond rating, from Aa3 to Aa2, a significant sign of fiscal stability, similar to an individual credit score, and a reduction in long-term interest rates.