

The 2012 Orangetown Tax Bill – Questions and Answers

Why have my taxes gone up 8% instead of 2%?

While the Town Board voted to stay within the 2% tax cap, including \$2.6 million in tax certioraris such as the Pfizer settlement, the County Legislature voted to exceed the 2% tax cap. For Orangetown, the tax rate for Rockland County government purposes has gone up 33%.

When I compare my 2011 and 2012 tax bill, it looks like my County taxes have increased 51%. The tax bill says that taxes have gone up 31%. Is this a mistake?

The 31% is the increase in the overall property tax levy to run the County government. This 31% percentage does not include the \$2.6 million tax certiorari levy to refund taxes to Pfizer and other entities. When you add in the “tax certs” to be paid by Orangetown taxpayers in County taxes, you get to 51%.

The fact that tax cert costs show up on the County tax line but count towards the Town’s property tax cap is confusing, but the New York State Comptroller’s Office has indicated these costs must be included in the Town’s tax cap limit.

The County is responsible for certiorari refunds, although the Town portion is paid for solely by Town taxpayers.

What are Town wide services?

Town wide services include general government, parks (excluding the golf courses), parks, Highway administration, sidewalk maintenance, snow removal, leaf collection, as well as debt service for parks and the Highway department.

What are Town Bldg Services?

These are Building Department or land use related services including building permits and inspection, code enforcement, land use boards and fire inspection. These also include recycling pick-up and street lighting. Residents of incorporated villages such as Nyack and Piermont do not pay this Town tax since they receive these services from their village.

Why did the tax rate for Building Services go up 9% and not 2%?

The reason for the tax increase is the Clarkstown landfill settlement which cost the town in excess of \$1.5 million. These costs were bonded over five years and the 2012 debt service is \$325,000.

The tax rate increase of 9% is offset by tax reductions for other Town funds. Overall town taxes and unit charges declined by 3% to offset the tax cert costs that are part of the County tax levy, but still part of the Town’s tax cap.

What are Town and Nyack Police? Don't we have a single police force?

This is the cost of the Orangetown Police Department which provides police services in unincorporated Orangetown as well as the Village of Nyack. The other river villages have their own police forces which are paid for through village taxes.

Why are Town and Nyack Police costs going up 3.6%?

Police salary costs are rising and we anticipate some additional cost associated with binding arbitration for the expired police contract.

What is Sewer Oper. and Maint?

This is the cost of maintaining and operating the Town's sewer system including all labor costs as well as routine repairs and electricity costs. The latter is in excess of \$600,000 per year since the sewer system is a 24 hour, 365 day a year operation like the Police Department.

Sewer Operation and Maintenance are funded primarily through sewer unit charges. In 2012 the unit charge is \$205.51, up from \$199.17. Each home or apartment counts as a single unit. Although total charges increased less than 2% in the 2012 budget, the unit charge increased 3.2 % because of the lower number of sewer units at Pfizer.

What are these two R C Solid Waste costs and the R C Transfer Station?

These are taxes and charges to fund the Rockland County Solid Waste Authority. The first line is for an ad valorem property tax that is \$0.5362 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2012, coupled with a \$27.28 green waste unit charge and a \$6.25 hazardous waste unit charge.

The second R C Solid Waste line is a \$12.36 unit charge for the materials recovery facility and a \$15.62 unit charge for the composting facility.

The R C Transfer Station charge is a \$30 unit charge for the solid waste transfer station where waste is brought and shipped out of the county, since there are no remaining landfills in Rockland County.

Are these unit charges covered by the 2% property tax cap?

The staff of the Solid Waste Authority has indicated that their unit charges are not covered by the tax cap.

What are hydrant costs and why are they going up so much?

This is the cost of maintaining water pressure for fire hydrants. The costs are set by United Water. We have assumed that they are part of the overall tax levy for the Town.