

The Tax Levy

Proposition 2 ½

Proposition 2 ½, passed in November 1980, places a limit on the property taxes a community can levy each year. The taxing capacity of the Town is limited to a 2.5 percent increase of the prior year's levy limit. In addition, the total levy may increase by taxes attributable to new growth. Therefore, without any overrides, the total levy limit is increased by 2.5 percent and a new growth amount certified by the Department of Revenue.

Overrides

What is a General Override?

A general override can be passed to obtain additional funds for any municipal purpose. A general override permanently increases the Town's levy limit. An override question may be placed on the ballot by a majority vote of the Board of Selectmen and must be passed by a majority of voters.

What is a Debt Exclusion?

What is a Capital Outlay Expenditure Exclusion?

Proposition 2 ½ allows communities to raise funds for certain purposes above the amount of their levy limits or levy ceilings. Subject to voter approval, a community can assess taxes in excess of its levy limit or levy ceiling for the payment of certain

capital projects and for the payment of specified debt service costs. An exclusion for the purpose of raising funds for debt service costs is referred to as a *debt exclusion* and an exclusion for the purpose of raising funds for capital projects costs is referred to as a *capital outlay expenditure exclusion*.

The additional amount for the payment of debt service is added to the levy limit or levy ceiling *for the life of the debt only*. The additional amount for the payment of the capital project cost is added to the levy limit or levy ceiling *only for the year in which the project is being undertaken*. Unlike overrides, exclusions *do not* become part of the base upon which the levy limit is calculated in future years.

The history of Westwood's total tax levy is presented on the following chart. In addition, the history of Westwood's override questions is presented.