



July 1, 2008

Dear Citizens,

This year, I am pleased to present the FY 09 Adopted Operating Budget to you. While finalizing the budget, I have remained steadfast in my commitment to improve the fiscal integrity of the Town. This budget, which is available on the Town's website, [www.townofstratford.com](http://www.townofstratford.com), preserves the current level of Town services while controlling the growth of spending and taxes. Since taking office in 2005, my administration has focused on fiscal responsibility and has carefully managed the funds allocated by the Town Council to achieve our shared objectives.

The Adopted FY 09 Operating Budget reaffirms my administration's vision of providing a high level and variety of municipal services while at the same time making Stratford one of the most affordable communities in Fairfield County. In the course of their work, the Town Department heads, along with the leaders at the Board of Education and on the Town Council, were able to identify significant cost savings in several areas of the budget. The end product is a fiscally responsible budget that reflects the economic times and provides important service improvements. This budget delivers on my promise to control property taxes while offering more to the residents of the Town of Stratford.

The Adopted FY 09 Operating Budget increases Stratford's mil rate by 1.3% to 30.51, and increases expenditures in the General Fund by \$2,611,220 or 1.5%.

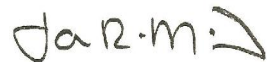
<b>Category</b>	<b>2008 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>2009 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>Amount Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Operating Budget	\$ 171,670,815	\$ 174,282,035	\$ 2,611,220	1.5%
Other Revenues	\$ 38,913,141	\$ 38,392,051	\$ (521,090)	
Grand List	\$ 4,527,621,341	\$ 4,569,672,962	\$ 42,051,621	0.93%
Collection Rate	98.25%	98.25%		
Mill Rate	30.12	30.51	0.39	1.3%
Tax Bill	\$ 5,587.88	\$ 5,659.88	\$ 72.62	

Throughout this budget process, all involved were challenged to make important decisions which included expanding our Public Safety services by increasing the number of community resource officers we will hire in FY 09 as well as establishing a trust account to begin funding accrued retiree health benefits. These budget decisions were made against a backdrop of a national economic downturn, skyrocketing gas prices, rising utility costs and a declining housing market while continuing the solid and responsible fiscal management practices that my administration has implemented over the last two years. I remain steadfast in my commitment to increase the General Fund balance, maintain the Town's credit rating, reinvigorate idle economic development opportunities, and utilize tight expenditure controls so that FY 08 fiscal year and beyond will end on a positive basis.

The FY 09 Adopted Operating Budget maintains a strong commitment to public education while continuing to fund the necessary services that the residents of the Town of Stratford have grown accustomed to and demand from their local government. I applaud the Board of Education for developing a plan to avoid the impact of rising health care costs in FY 09 so that the goal of providing a quality education for the children of Stratford can be realized for all while recognizing the economic realities that the residents in our community currently face. I am confident that my administration will manage the FY09 Adopted Operating Budget effectively, during this challenging economic cycle to provide excellent services and control costs for the Town of Stratford.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Town Council who took the time to attend the budget workshops in an effort to better understand Town finances, and to adopt a thoughtful and comprehensive budget for the upcoming fiscal year. As volunteer elected officials, I respect their commitment to the Town. I would also like to thank the members of our community who participated in the budget hearings. This input is an important and necessary part of the process.

Sincerely,



James R. Miron  
Mayor