

## Office of the Town Supervisor

The Honorable William W. Moehle

September 27, 2023

To Brighton Residents and Taxpayers:

Tonight, Town of Brighton Finance Director Earl Johnson, Assistant Finance Director Marcia Adams, and I present the 2024 Town of Brighton Tentative Operating Budget to the Brighton community. Each year we have four primary goals that guide us in developing the Town of Brighton budget. Our first goal is to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Brighton by making investments in our community's future and funding important Town operations. Our second goal is to control the cost of government for our taxpayers. Third is to maintain the fiscal strength of Brighton, to ensure that we have sufficient reserves to guide us through unexpected crises, and to allow us to borrow as needed at the lowest possible interest rates. Finally, we take measures to ensure that our budget development process is transparent and open to the public. As we approach this process, while the rate of inflation has fallen, we continue to face cost increases in certain mandated expenditures and in materials needed to maintain and construct much needed infrastructure, many of which are rising far above the rate of inflation. In addition, while sharp rises in home prices reflects the desirability of Brighton for families, as was recognized last year when the 14618 zip code in Brighton was named the hottest zip code in America, rapidly rising home prices also impact our budget in several ways. I will discuss these and other issues in this budget message, so that you, the public, can intelligently participate in the development and approval of our budget.

The open and transparent process that the Town of Brighton uses to develop and approve the Town's budget started months ago and that open process far exceeds the State's mandated procedures for public access to Town budget development and approval. We strive to ensure that the public has access to the budget process and the ability to give input throughout. Each year, the development of the Town Budget begins in the spring, when Department Heads prepare a

three-year Capital Improvement Plan for their Departments, so we can plan for important Town projects and significant capital expenditures. The New York State Comptroller recommends that municipalities prepare a Capital Improvement Plan or CIP, and the Town of Brighton does this every year to help us plan and fund capital expenditures in advance. We do so in a very public way, with review of the CIP in public meetings of the Finance and Administrative Committee of the Town Board, before action is taken to consider and approve the CIP in public by the full Town Board, which was done at our last Board meeting. The Capital Improvement Plan anticipates continued maintenance and improvements to our streets, sidewalks and sewers, purchases of vehicles and heavy equipment and technology and sustainability advances for the Town, among other important needs. Many of these expenses are funded through grants, borrowing or as incentive zoning amenities, but over \$3.3 million dollars of capital improvements are directly included in the Tentative Operating Budget for 2024, down from \$3.5 million in the 2023 Budget. Going forward, projects like the planned renovation of Town Hall, driven largely by the need to replace our HVAC system, as well as plans for our Community Center, will create significant new capital expenditure requirements, but will also ensure that we maintain important Town infrastructure, promote sustainability by using renewable energy, and enhance the quality of life for Brighton residents.

One new item included in the CIP for 2024-2025 is a proposed Town-wide revaluation of property values for property tax purposes, made necessary by the rapid increase in property values, particularly residential property values, in Brighton. County, Town and School taxes are property taxes, and for those taxes to be imposed fairly, it is important that homes and other properties be assessed at their fair market values. Revaluation does not increase taxes; the tax levy is established through the budget development process. Revaluation simply ensures that the taxes that are levied are assessed fairly. To maintain equity in our assessments, we will begin the revaluation process next year, with completion in 2025. We anticipate the cost of revaluation to be approximately \$150,000-\$200,000, with much of the work being done by Town staff. We have already begun planning for this expense by funding a Town reserve that will mitigate the short-term financial impact of revaluation.

The State Comptroller annually rates the fiscal stress level of every municipality and county in New York State. While we have always received strong scores on this evaluation, in 2022 for the first time, Brighton received a perfect score for low fiscal stress. We anticipate receiving a perfect score again for 2023. That perfect score reflects the prudent and careful financial and budgetary planning we have maintained even during the uncertain pandemic times, which is also reflected in the Town's high Moody's credit rating. We are proud of this recognition and are committed to working to maintain a strong fiscal stress rating from the State, because it not only helps reduce the cost of borrowing, but it also ensures that sufficient resources are available in case of a natural disaster, pandemic or other future unforeseen crisis.

As a result of double digit increases in mandated expenditures for personnel costs like State retirement contributions and employee health insurance premiums, as well as drastically increased construction costs, we are projecting larger increases in many of our expense lines in the 2024 Tentative Budget, as compared to 2023. The 2024 Tentative Budget for the Town's Operating Funds proposes an increase of \$643,755 in the property tax levy for 2024, slightly less than the increase for 2023. The Operating Budget tax rate would increase 3.87%, or by just under \$0.22 per thousand dollars of your home's assessed valuation, from 2023 to 2024. Your own tax bill may increase more or less, depending largely on the impact of special districts, like sewer, water, sidewalk snow plowing and refuse districts, under which the Town ensures that only those who receive the services in question have to pay for them. It is also important to note that while the increase in the tax levy is slightly lower than last year, the increase in the tax rate is slightly greater than last year, because the Town-wide assessed valuation of real property fell slightly this year from the year before. This decrease in assessed valuation was due primarily to the fact that continued frivolous litigation funded by Wegmans delayed the completion of Whole Foods and other retail buildings in the Whole Foods Plaza, the increase in the senior income eligible tax exemption, which reduced assessments on homes owned by income eligible seniors, and the sale of the former Paychex facility on Westfall Rd. to the Golisano Institute for Entrepreneurship. While the Golisano Institute is a tax-exempt educational institution, it continues to make amenity payments in lieu of Town taxes, under the terms of the incentive zoning approval for the project. A mix of residential and commercial uses is important to mitigate property tax increases for our residents, and therefore incentive zoning projects like

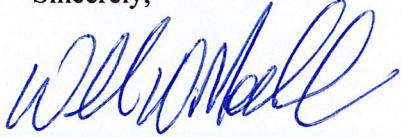
Whole Foods Plaza and the proposed Top Golf not only provide new jobs and economic activity in Brighton, but they also shoulder a greater portion of the cost of providing necessary government services, thereby reducing tax increases for residential properties. However, due largely to these mandated cost increases, the tax levy increase proposed in this 2024 Tentative Budget exceeds the New York State tax cap, and we will hold a public hearing to consider a local law permitting the Town to exceed the cap in its 2024 Budget at our next Town Board meeting in October.

Property tax receipts are the largest source of Town revenues, but they are not the only source. The Town also receives revenues from mortgage and sales taxes, fees for programs and services, and cable television franchise fees, among other sources. The Town of Brighton, like other towns in Monroe County, receives a portion of sales tax revenues generated from retail sales throughout Monroe County under an agreement among Monroe County, local municipalities and school districts. Given the uncertainty about the economy, we are making conservative estimates of sales tax growth in 2024. Mortgage tax revenues have been the most volatile source of Town funding, tied to the economic and homebuilding cycles as well as interest rate cycles. Home prices remain extremely strong in Brighton, but sales are down because of a lack of supply of available homes. In addition, the significant increase in interest rates over the past year will have had a severely negative impact on mortgage tax receipts in 2023. As a result, we will continue to budget very conservatively for mortgage tax receipts in 2024. Of course, increasing non-property tax revenues is important to offset the need for property tax increases, and we also look to control costs where possible through operational efficiencies.

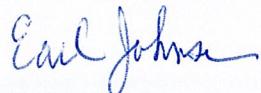
I want to again thank everyone involved in the preparation of this Tentative Budget, particularly our new Finance Director, Earl Johnson and Deputy Finance Director, Marcia Adams. I also want to thank our previous Finance Director, Paula Parker and Deputy Finance Director Suzanne Zaso. Both Paula and Suzanne retired earlier this year, after many years of incredibly valuable service to the Town, and they deserve much credit for our strong financial condition and for making the transition to new Finance Department leadership as smooth as it has been. Developing the Town's budget is never easy, but the 2024 Budget will maintain and enhance services, while finding new ways to control the cost of government. We look forward to your

input during the two budget hearings in October and we appreciate the efforts of every community volunteer and Town staff member who assisted in the preparation of this Budget.

Sincerely,



William W. Moehle  
Town Supervisor



Earl Johnson  
Finance Director

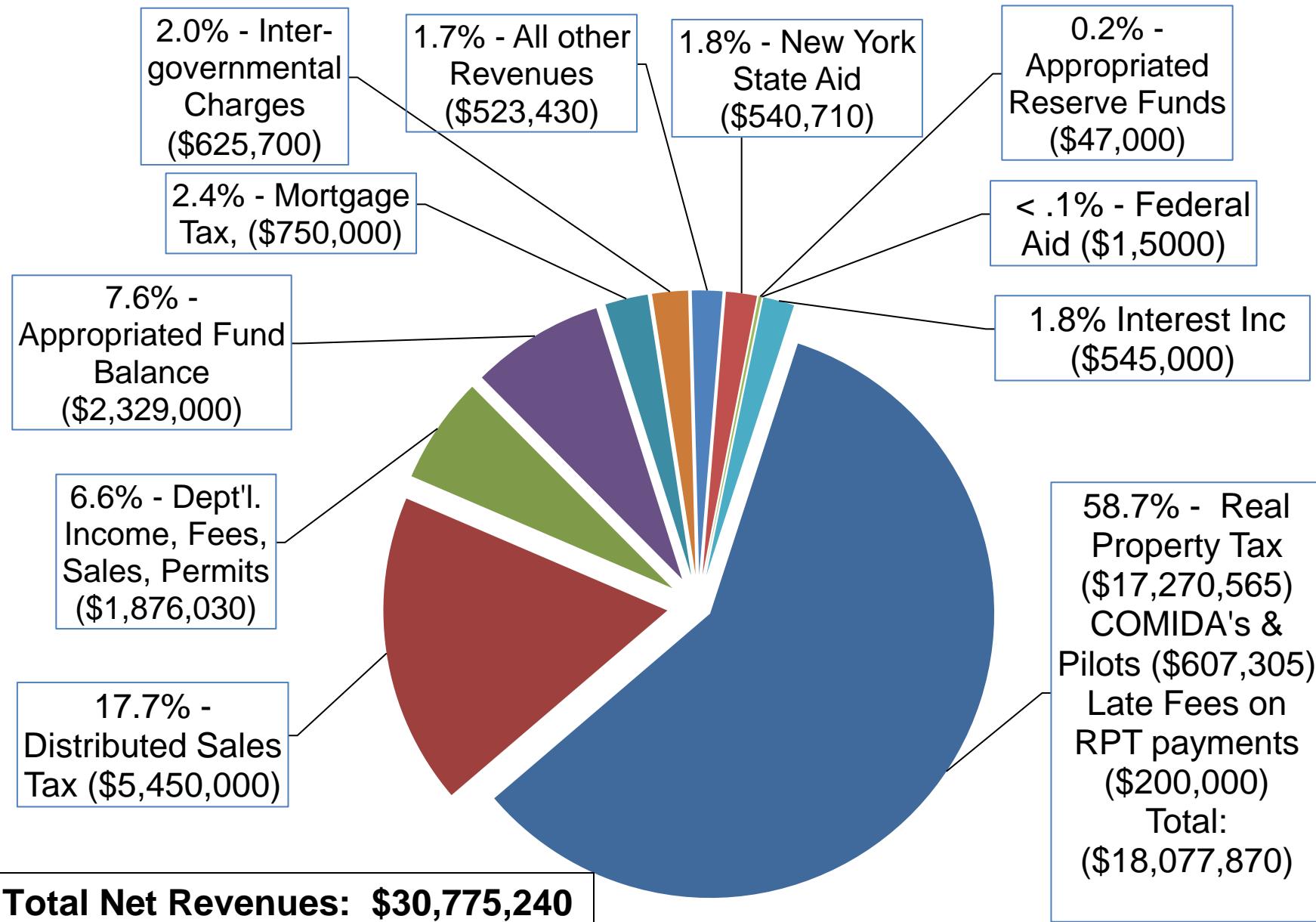


Marcia Adams  
Deputy Finance Director

# TOWN OF BRIGHTON – 2024 BUDGET

(09/27/2023)

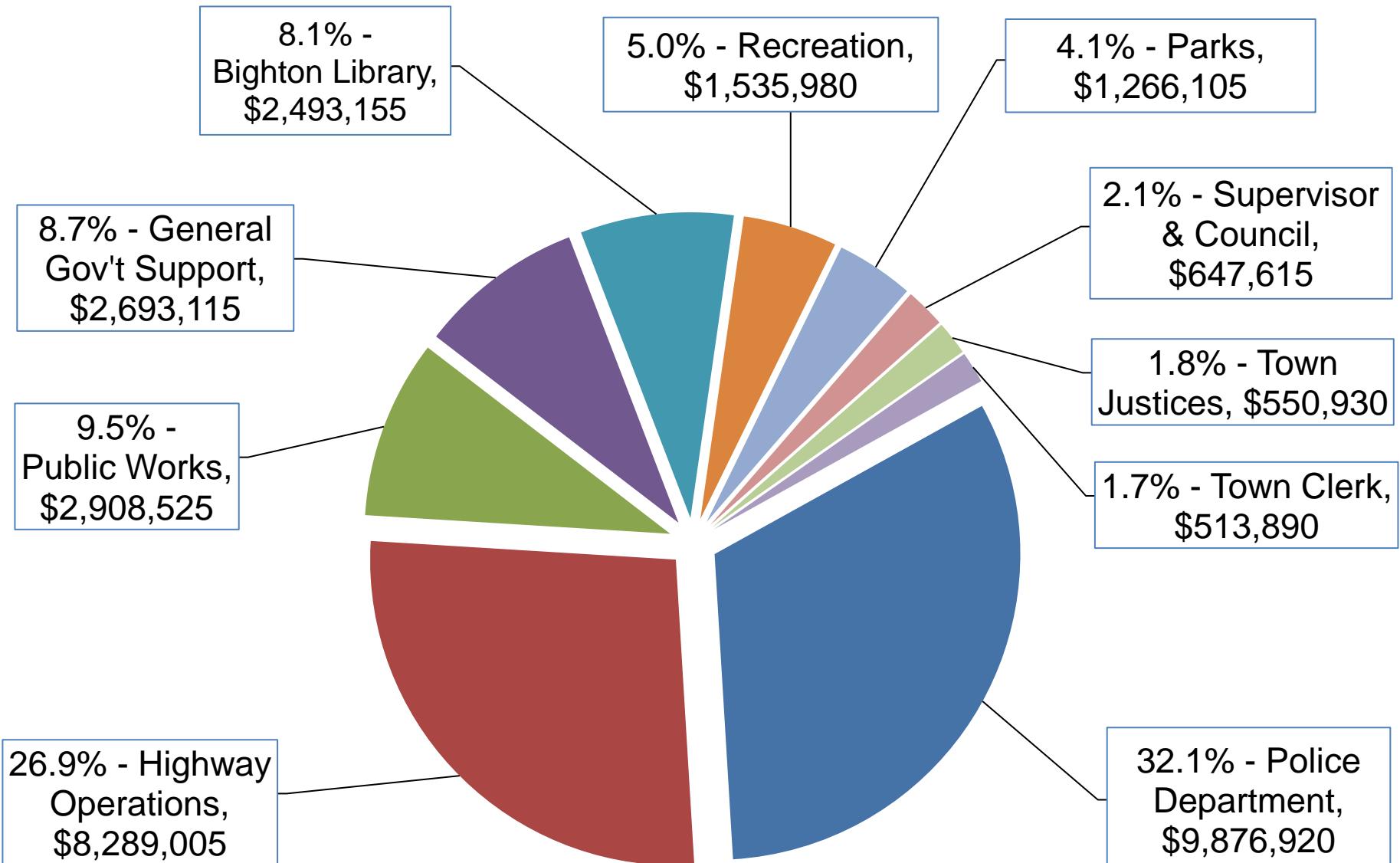
## WHERE TOWN BUDGET DOLLARS COME FROM



# TOWN OF BRIGHTON – 2024 BUDGET

(09/27/2023)

## HOW TOWN DOLLARS ARE SPENT

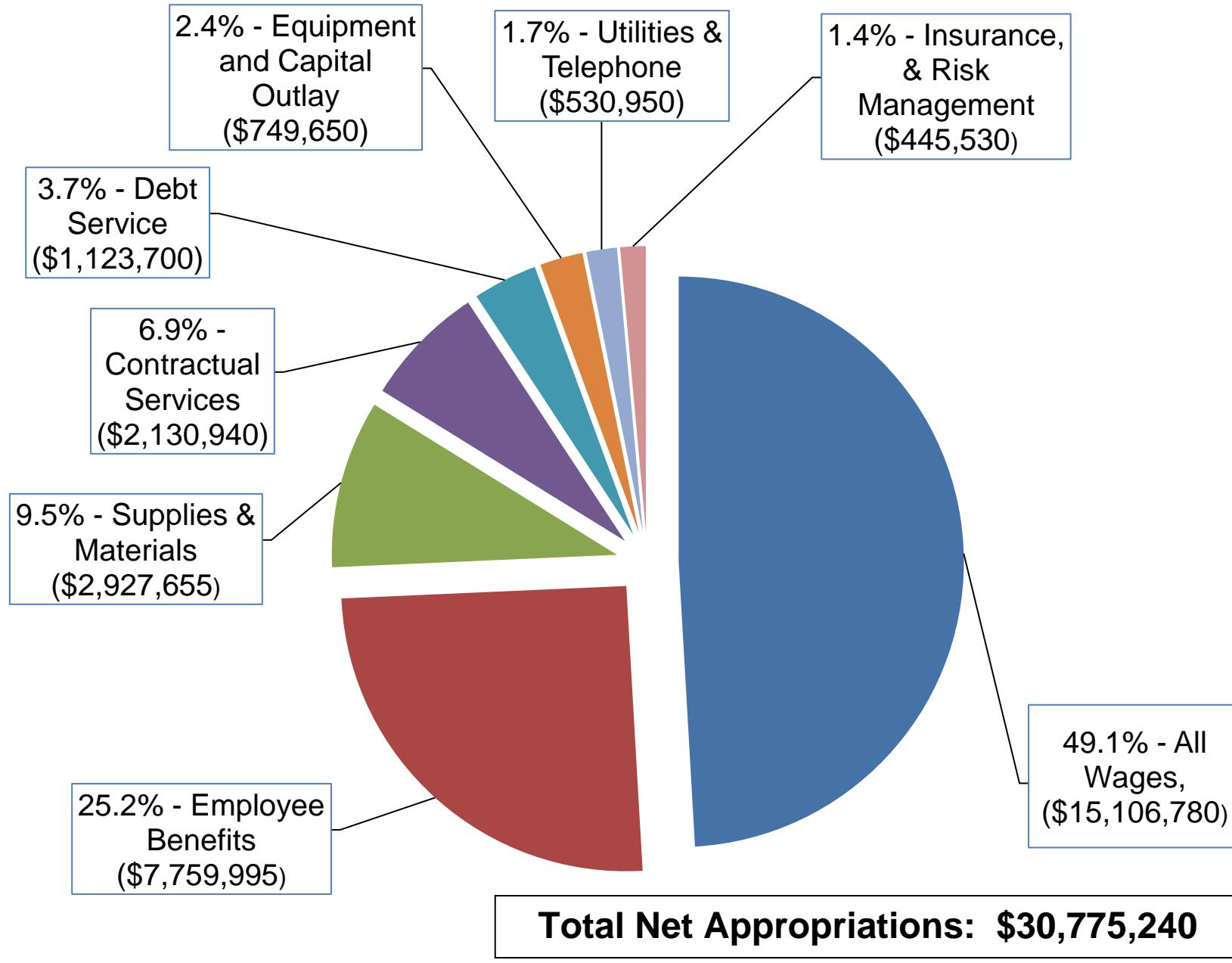


**Total Net Appropriations: \$30,775,240**

# TOWN OF BRIGHTON – 2024 BUDGET

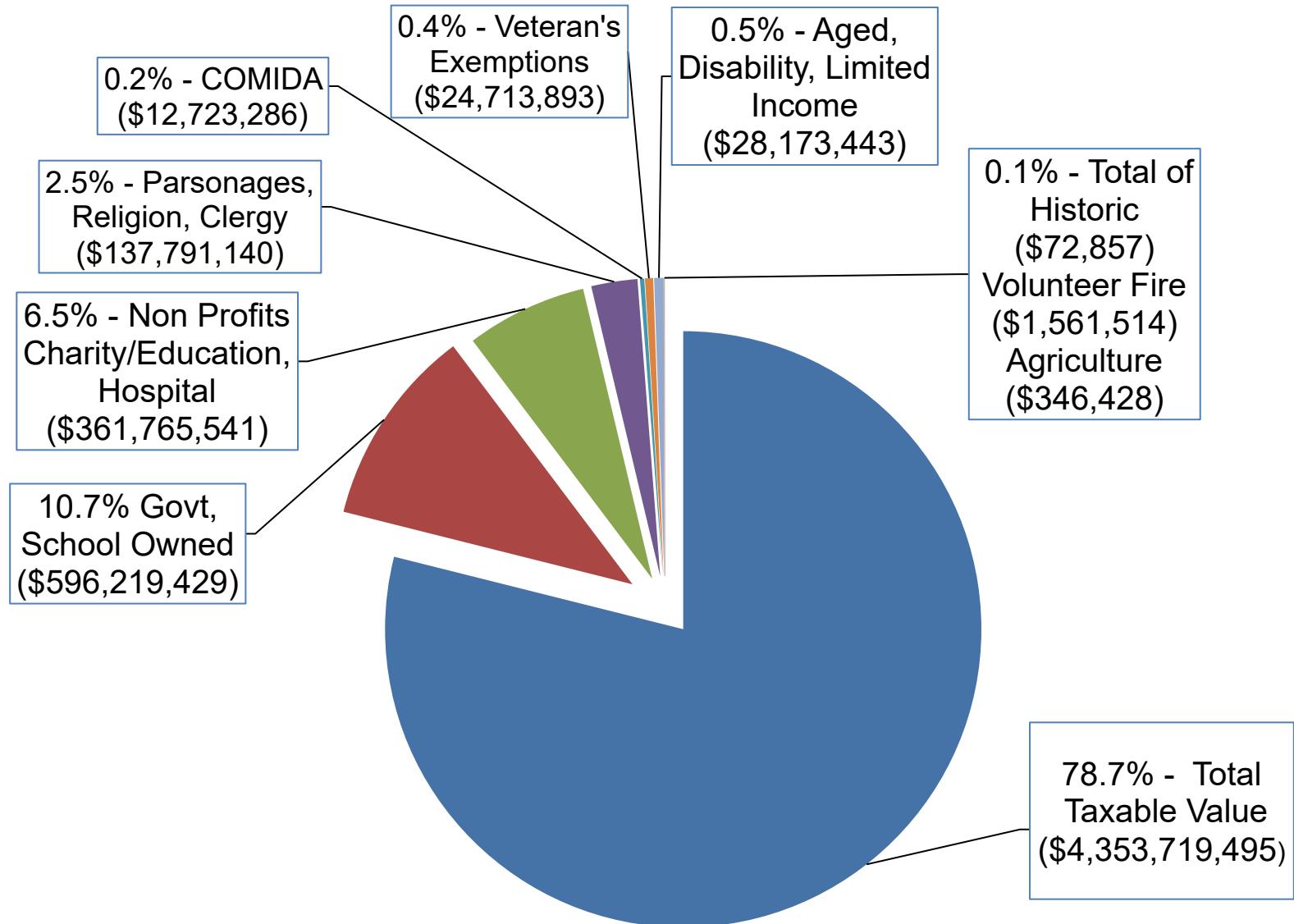
(09/27/2023)

## NET APPROPRIATIONS BY EXPENDITURE TYPE



# TOWN OF BRIGHTON – 2024 BUDGET

## DISTRIBUTION OF ASSESSMENT EXEMPTIONS (for illustration only 70% Equalization Rate)



**Total Assessed Value: \$5,517,087,026**

**Exemptions: \$1,163,367,531**

Equalized Total Assessed Value 5,517,087,026

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXEMPTION IMPACT AND PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT) SUMMARY**

Exemption Code	Exemption Name	Statutory Authority	Number of Exemptions	Total Equalized Value of Exemptions	Percent of Value Exempted
12100	NYS - GENERALLY	RPTL 404(1)	9	67,121,286	1.22
13100	CO - GENERALLY	RPTL 406(1)	178	296,533,714	5.37
13500	TOWN - GENERALLY	RPTL 406(1)	267	36,325,000	0.66
13800	SCHOOL DISTRICT	RPTL 408	14	175,515,000	3.18
13870	SPEC DIST USED FOR PURPOSE ES	RPTL 410	11	7,953,000	0.14
18020	MUNICIPAL INDUSTRIAL DEV AGENC	RPTL 412-a	3	12,723,286	0.23
18180	UDC OWNED NON-HOUSING PROJE	MC K UCON L 6272	1	12,771,429	0.23
21600	RES OF CLERGY - RELIG CORP OWN	RPTL 462	2	650,000	0.01
25110	NONPROF CORP - RELIG(CONST PR	RPTL 420-a	37	137,104,714	2.49
25120	NONPROF CORP - EDUCL(CONST PR	RPTL 420-a	12	112,800,071	2.04
25210	NONPROF CORP - HOSPITAL	RPTL 420-a	3	32,132,636	0.58
25230	NONPROF CORP - MORAL/MENTAL IM	RPTL 420-a	17	9,457,571	0.17
25300	NONPROF CORP - SPECIFIED USES	RPTL 420-b	22	184,742,547	3.35
25500	NONPROF MED, DENTAL, HOSP SVC	RPTL 486	3	4,400,286	0.08
25600	NONPROFIT HEALTH MAINTENANCE	RPTL 486-a	1	893,429	0.02
26250	HISTORICAL SOCIETY	RPTL 444	1	547,286	0.01
26400	INC VOLUNTEER FIRE CO OR DEPT	RPTL 464(2)	2	419,857	0.01
28110	NOT-FOR-PROFIT HOUSING COMPAN	RPTL 422	1	849,286	0.02
28520	NOT-FOR-PROFIT NURSING HOME C	RPTL 422	1	15,942,429	0.29
41001	VETERANS EXEMPTION INCR/DECR	RPTL 458(5)	53	5,514,257	0.10
41121	ALT VET EX-WAR PERIOD-NON-COMI	RPTL 458-a	308	6,909,257	0.13
41131	ALT VET EX-WAR PERIOD-COMBAT	RPTL 458-a	195	7,236,607	0.13
41141	ALT VET EX-WAR PERIOD-DISABILI	RPTL 458-a	95	4,820,629	0.09
41151	COLD WAR VETERANS (10%)	RPTL 458-b	20	200,486	0.00
41171	COLD WAR VETERANS (DISABLED)	RPTL 458-b	1	32,657	0.00
41400	CLERGY	RPTL 460	17	36,429	0.00
41640	VOL. FIRE & AMBULANCE WORKERS	RPTL 466-c, 466-f, 466-j, 466-	33	1,141,657	0.02

Equalized Total Assessed Value 5,517,087,026

Exemption Code	Exemption Name	Statutory Authority	Number of Exemptions	Total Equalized Value of Exemptions	Percent of Value Exempted
41700	AGRICULTURAL BUILDING	RPTL 483	1	85,714	0.00
41720	AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT	AG-MKTS L 305	1	260,714	0.00
41800	PERSONS AGE 65 OR OVER	RPTL 467	117	12,004,440	0.22
41801	PERSONS AGE 65 OR OVER	RPTL 467	163	14,862,217	0.27
41930	DISABILITIES AND LIMITED INCOM	RPTL 459-c	10	1,078,857	0.02
41931	DISABILITIES AND LIMITED INCOM	RPTL 459-c	4	227,929	0.00
41963	HISTORIC PROPERTY	RPTL 444-a	2	72,857	0.00
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Total Exemptions Exclusive of System Exemptions:					
			1,605	1,163,367,533	21.09
Total System Exemptions:					
			0	0	0.00
Totals:					
			1,605	1,163,367,533	21.09

Values have been equalized using the Uniform Percentage of Value. The Exempt amounts do not take into consideration, payments in lieu of taxes or other payments for municipal services.

Amount, if any, attributable to payments in lieu of taxes: \_\_\_\_\_

**PILOTS SUMMARY**

Industrial Development (COMIDA)	\$ 47,065
County Owned	19,725
Non-Profit Charitable, Mental, HCP	5,610
Non-Profit Community Services	368,875
Non-Profit Educational	67,660
Non-Profit Nursing Homes	51,755