

**Bucksport NEXT Survey 03**  
**RESULTS NARRATIVE 12/2/2015**



Results are in for the third Bucksport NEXT Public Opinion Poll. To date, there have been about 90 responses to each question. People filled out the online and newspaper surveys as well as paper forms made available on Election Day. Most responders are from Bucksport, but some are from other towns and states. All four questions involve the town's annual budget in the wake of losing 40% of the tax base with the closing of the mill. The question introductions explain that public education currently accounts for about 56% of local tax dollar spending, while the municipal portion is divided roughly into thirds by "public safety", "general government" and "other" (DPW, recreation, financial, social, cultural, etc.)

On the first question regarding public education, the largest responses were for finding ways to cut in this area (34%) and maintain public education just as it is (33%). Sixteen percent indicated that we should spend more on public education. School budget suggestions submitted include:

- Consolidate school and office buildings.
- Look at options for more efficient bussing.
- Promote tourism with an arts & science museum at the Performing Arts Center.

The second question asked about the public safety third of the municipal budget. More than half responded that these services should continue as they are. A quarter of respondents recommend cuts while eleven percent want to spend more. Public safety budget suggestions submitted include:

- Make changes as long as they do not adversely affect services.
- Close the local dispatch and use a regional center.
- Go to one full time fireman and go back to toning boxes.
- Fire/EMS pay for themselves and should expand services to include transfer and per diem EMS.

The third question asked about the general government third of the municipal budget. Forty-five percent of responses indicate spending in this area should be maintained while Forty-three percent think cuts are in order. Two percent see a need for an increase. General government suggestions submitted include:

- Look at consolidate Assessing, Code, Economic Development and/or Finance into one dept.
- Make employees more efficient, add volunteers for some tasks and freeze non-hourly wages.

The fourth question asked about the "other" third of the municipal budget. Fifty-one percent of responses indicate that spending in this area should be maintained while twenty-eight percent think cuts are in order. Ten percent see a need for an increase. Budget suggestions submitted include:

- Make Town Manager head of DPW with a working supervisor. Train others to do more tasks.
- Cut DPW positions by attrition and contract out more projects to save on staff/equipment needs.
- YMCA would likely cost more with fees needed to be paid directly by some who cannot afford.
- Look into zero-sort recycling, more recreation activities and using volunteers.

See forms and response data at <http://tinyurl.com/BucksportNEXT-Poll1>. We will use the final results to help build the goals and objectives section. The surveys will available until we are done with the inventory phase of the Comp Plan. It is not too late to fill out any of the polls you may have missed!

Jef Fitzgerald, Comprehensive Plan Committee Chair