



County property taxes in Hudson going up, if proposed budget adopted next month

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By

Property taxpayers in Hudson County are going to have to fork over more money to support county government if a proposed budget is adopted next month that is, unless you live in East Newark or West New York.

The owner of an East Newark property assessed at \$77,000 would see their annual property taxes shrink by \$33 this year. The owner of a West New York home valued at \$102,000 would see a \$36-a-year cut, according to budget figures released by the county last month.

The biggest hikes as part of the proposed \$475 million county spending plan would be in Guttenberg and Weehawken.

A taxpayer who owns a property in Guttenberg with an average assessed value of \$253,000 would pay \$208 more in county property taxes this year, a 16 percent hike from last year. And a Weehawken taxpayer with a property assessed at \$239,000 would face a \$217 hike, a 10 percent jump.

County officials say rising fuel, pension, health care, and salaries have forced them to increase the amount of money to be raised from local taxpayers in this year's budget from last year's \$279.7 million to \$292.7 million.

Hudson County Executive Thomas DeGise declined to comment on the budget until it is finalized. Other county officials explained that the amount residents pay in county taxes is entirely determined by a straightforward formula: owners of properties with high assessed values pay more.

The proposed budget is simply the starting point for negotiations between municipal officials and the county, said county spokesman Jim Kennelly. "Last year we worked with (municipalities) to lower the tax levy by about \$2 million," he said.

County taxes will account for a "large portion" of increase in property taxes in his town, said Weehawken Mayor Richard Turner, noting Guttenberg recently underwent a townwide revaluation and property values in Weehawken remain buoyant.

Elsewhere in Hudson County county taxes are set to increase by less than 1 percent in Jersey City and North Bergen. County taxes for a property in Bayonne with an average assessed value of \$132,000 would increase by \$117, or 7.8 percent.

"Obviously any tax increase is not desirable but when it is a small, stable amount from year-to-year, like we have seen in both the municipal and school budgets here in the township, it is much more acceptable," North Bergen Mayor Nick Sacco said.

A public hearing on the proposed county budget is scheduled for 6 p.m., May 22, at the County Annex, 567 Pavonia Ave. in Jersey City.

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