

TAX COLLECTOR

The tax rate for Fiscal Year 2004, set at \$17.44, is up just a bit from FY2003's \$17.00. Still, not a bad rate when you compare it to a number of other local communities. But a lower rate doesn't necessarily mean lower taxes. After all, your tax is based on the value of your house and property and the same house in a different community may not have the same value. Hampden is a great little town and it seems more people are beginning to notice that. People are drawn to the laid back, rural setting..... no traffic lights, quiet neighborhoods, plenty of open space..... And that's just for starters! That could explain the hike in property values over the past several years. That hike can make it especially difficult for a number of our elderly residents or families experiencing unforeseen health or financial problems, such as a lengthy illness or the loss of a job. I'd like to encourage anyone who's found himself in just such an unfortunate situation to contact this office. These may be circumstances that qualify you for special considerations and, believe it or not, we may be able to help.

Total 2003 calendar year tax collections:

Real Estate	\$6,305,067
Community Preservation Act	\$ 35,831
Personal Property	\$ 182,341
Motor vehicle	\$ 596,782
Total	\$7,120,021

Anyone who thinks that eliminating the motor vehicle tax is a good idea may want to take another look at that figure. We're still trying to conduct "business as usual", such as it is with the cuts Town departments have already had to make. The additional loss of revenue would be yet another blow to the budget for cities and towns still dealing with last year's shortfall.

Respectfully submitted,

Eva A Wiseman, Tax Collector