BOROUGH OF CHAMBERSBURG: 2027 PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW

Detailed Summary of Revenues, Taxes, Utilities & Public Safety

TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET: Balanced & Ready for Approval

- Drawdown of cash reserves to complete major infrastructure projects
- One-time State & Federal grants for gas pipe and storm sewer replacement
- Operating expense increases: union wages (+2.25% to 5.5%), health insurance (**7.8%**), and annual cash set-asides for motor equipment depreciation

TAXES & PUBLIC WORKS COMPLEX (WAYNE AVE.)

- Zero tax hikes in 2026; only 1 tax increase in 2027 (previously pledged in Jan. 2026)
- Public Works Complex Bond Tax increases from 1 mil ($17.40/yr) to 2 mils ($34.75/yr), costing just $9.91/yr net to the average home
- Tax pays 24% of construction costs; utility departments and grants cover the remaining 76%, avoiding a 3rd tax increase

UTILITY RATES & "THE SECRET SAUCE"

- No electric or natural gas rate increases anticipated in 2027
- Necessary increases to water, wastewater, storm water, and trash/recycling fees (still lower than nearby townships)
- Combined utility **invoice** the lowest in Pennsylvania, saving average **homeowner per year** over $2,000

PUBLIC SAFETY & LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

- Over $3.7M combined Police and Fire shortfall covered by General Fund miscellaneous revenue (robbing Peter to pay Paul)
- State tax caps restrict revenue growth; unresolved deficits risk future cuts to Police, Fire, EMS, highways, paving, or recreation
- Only municipality in the region with 24/7 paid professional Police, Fire, and EMS; calls for regionalism and updating 1962 county property assessments

Borough of Chambersburg

Proposed 2027 Borough Budget Info

- On Monday, November 9, 2026, the Borough Manager presented the proposed budget at a public meeting.
- On Monday, November 16, 2026, Town Council to consider tentative approval of the proposed budget.
- On Monday, December 14, 2026, Town Council to consider final approval of the 2027 budget & local tax ordinance. State law requires Council to approve a fully balanced budget and tax ordinance by December 31 of each year.

Council kept its promise: the small tax increase pledged in January 2026 is the only one planned or needed.

When issuing the second Public Works Complex bond in January 2026, Council pledged to raise its corresponding tax rate from 1 mil to 2 mils—the 2027 budget's only tax increase. After zero tax hikes in 2026 and all other 2027 expenses fully funded, this 2027 tax adjustment costs just $9.91 net to the average home per year. That is all with half paying less.

Public Works Complex Project

The 2027 budget includes sufficient resources to finish the Public Works Complex project on Wayne Avenue. Construction on various buildings will continue into 2027.

In 2025, the Public Works Complex Bond Tax was set at the rate of 1-mil or $17.40 per year. Now it is going to be 2-mil or $34.75 per year. That will be your cost.

The tax pays 24% of the cost of construction; the rest is being paid by the utility departments and grants.

Average Tax Bill Drops

With respect to other taxes, the average assessed valuation of a single-family house dropped in 2026, making taxes slightly more affordable.

This is what the average single-family home inside the Borough actually pays per year, before discount. Commercial properties may pay more. Assessed value is not fair market value. Township properties pay no taxes to the Borough. Visit the Franklin County Tax Assessment Office to learn your property's assessed value at 272 N. Second Street, Chambersburg, 17201, or click:

https://fcgis.franklincountypa.gov/taxparcelviewer/

To check your home's assessed value, find your home on the digital map.

As you know, the Police Tax is almost at its mil limit. The Fire Tax is already at its limit. These issues need to be discussed throughout 2027. How to pay for Police, Fire, and EMS in the future?

Council is very concerned for public safety, fire, and EMS needs in the Borough.

Revenue Future

In the future, without a County-wide reassessment or a rise in the State tax caps, it is likely that other departments will need to explore creating new real estate tax categories (i.e., for recreation or streets), which currently are not funded by property taxes. Such a plan would allow more money to be shifted to Police, Fire, and EMS; the Borough's funding priorities.

Unlike taxes, there are utility rate increases in this 2027 budget.

Even after utility increases, Chambersburg will have the lowest or one of the lowest combined utility bills in Pennsylvania.

Chambersburg is the only town in Pennsylvania to have an electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, sanitation, and storm sewer utility. Utilities are not funded by local tax money. Council keeps the utility rates at the lowest or almost lowest in the State to help you pay for the real estate tax expenses listed below. There are five (5) types of real estate taxes collected by the Borough from Borough property owners. Each budget sets the mil rate and Franklin County sets the assessed value of your property. There is a 1-mil tax increase in the 2027 budget.

Police Tax 2027 – No tax increase to fund the operation of the Chambersburg Police Department.
Maximum rate per State law is 30-mil. 100% of this tax goes to support the Police Department only.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2026 Rate	2027 Rate
24	24	24	24	24	25	25	27	27	27		
Avg. Single-Family House in the Borough										Per Year	Down to
Police Tax (in Mil)										$477.90	$469.19 ↓

Fire/Ambulance Tax 2027 – No tax increase to fund the Chambersburg Fire Department & EMS.
There is no change in the Fire Tax, and none is permitted under State law. Further, State law requires a split of the Fire Tax with at least 2-mil for apparatus & 1-mil for firefighting. The Fire Department collects other fees including inspection fees, Ambulance patient fees, and the Ambulance Fee surcharge on water service invoices.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2026 Rate	2027 Rate
Fire	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3		
EMS	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Avg. Single-Family House in the Borough										Per Year	Down to
	Fire/EMS Tax (in Mil)										$53.10	$52.13↓

Recreation Bond Tax 2027 – No tax increase to pay off the 2016 Recreation Bond (Refinanced in 2021).
Started in 2018, this tax pays down this specific bond only and does not pay for any of the operations of the Recreation Department. This is the bond that helped build various Recreation Department facilities including the Aquatic Center, new tennis courts, new playgrounds, and a new roof on the Recreation Center.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2026 Rate	2027 Rate
3	3	3	3	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Avg. Single-Family House in the Borough										Per Year	Down to
Recreation Bond Tax (in Mil)										$44.25	$43.44↓

Police Station Bond Tax 2027 – No tax increase to pay off the 2022 Police Station Bond.
Started in 2022, this tax pays down this specific bond only and does not pay for any of the operations of the Police Department. This is the bond that helped build the newly reopened Police Station on South Second Street, the newly restored Clock Tower, and expenses related to the former temporary Police Station.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2026 Rate	2027 Rate
-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	2	2		
Avg. Single-Family House in the Borough										Per Year	Down to
Police Station Bond Tax (in Mil)										$35.40	$34.75↓

Public Works Complex Bond Tax 2027 – Council pledged a 1-mil tax increase for this project back in Jan.
Construction soon completed in 2027, this tax pays down the specific bonds associated with 24% of the cost of construction of the new Public Works Complex on Wayne Avenue. The utilities will pay their fair share of construction costs as well. Back in January 2026, Council pledged a 1-mil increase when the debt was issued.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2026 Rate	2027 Rate
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2		
Avg. Single-Family House in the Borough										Per Year	Up to
Public Works Complex Bond Tax (in Mil)										$17.70	$34.75 ↑

FULL BUDGET ONLINE

www.chambersburgpa.gov

Click on QR Code with your Camera

Borough of Chambersburg

2027 Budget

Small Tax Increase

No Police Tax Increase
No Fire/EMS Tax Increase
Only Tax Increase for Public Works Complex Bond
Total Cost: $9.91 per year
For the Average Single-Family House
Average Assessed Value Dropped
Lowering Average Tax Costs

Public Safety

Council Concerned with Future Costs
Almost At Maximum Tax Rate for Police Tax
At Maximum Tax Rate for Fire Tax
Costs Increasing
Volunteers Disappearing

Public Works Complex

Project Completed in 2027
On-time and Under Budget
Only part paid by taxes
$34.75 per year for the Average Single-Family House
Half Pay Less
Utilities & Grants kept costs down

Only 18¢ of every $1 paid in real estate taxes will go to the Borough of Chambersburg. The balance, 82¢, will go to support the school district, the county, and the library system. In fact, 67¢ of every dollar goes to the Chambersburg Area School District. They send their own tax bill each summer.

Chambersburg Borough has not raised taxes in 15 of the last 20 calendar years.

Taxing Burden on Borough Homeowners	2027			Per Dollar
Non-Borough Property Taxes	Mil Rate	Annual Avg. Home	Percentage	Rounded
Franklin County (2026)	29.10 mil	$505.68	14.07%	14¢
Library System (2026)	1.3 mil	$22.59	0.63%	1¢
Chambersburg Area School District (2026)	139.8793 mil	$2,430.71	67.65%	67¢
Borough Taxes				
Police Tax	27.0 mil	$469.19	13.06%	13¢
Fire Tax	3.0 mil	$52.13	1.45%	1¢
Recreation Bond Tax	2.5 mil	$43.44	1.21%	1¢
Police Station Bond Tax	2.0 mil	$34.75	0.97%	1¢
Public Works Complex Tax	2.0 mil	$34.75	0.97%	1¢
Borough Property Tax Total	36.5 mil	$634.26	17.65%	18¢
Total Tax Burden on Property Owners	206.7793 mil	$3,593.24	100%	$1.00
Median Assessed Value of a Single-Family Home inside the Borough Per Franklin County is Around $21,782				
Average burden on a single-family type home inside the Borough of Chambersburg based on assessed value as decided by County				

Chambersburg Utility Customers Have The Lowest Total Utility Rates in Pennsylvania And That Will Not Change in 2027

Chambersburg has outstanding utility rates. This is by design. In order to help property owners pay for Police, Fire, EMS, and debt service taxes, the Town Council has worked to reward utility customers with record low rates. In fact, those residential customers with Borough gas and electric will save over $2,000 per year in utility expenses, when compared to average natural gas and electric customers throughout the State of Pennsylvania. Borough natural gas, water, wastewater, electric, and sanitation rates are much lower than most other municipal and private sector utilities.

The Electric and Natural Gas utilities also make an annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes to support the Police and Fire departments.

Chambersburg Utility Rates Stay Low

While utility rate increases occur, from time-to-time they must be adjusted, for several reasons including the supply of energy, fuel, and chemicals, and the rising cost of personnel and professional services.

Staff's goal is not to prevent rate increases, but rather to maintain one of the lowest rates in our area or the State for all utilities provided. This budget meets that goal.

Borough Budget Has No Impact on Townships and Taxes May Be Deductible

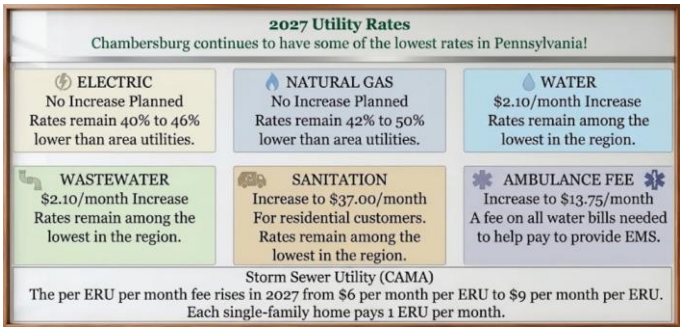
Township residents pay no taxes to the Borough unless they work inside the Borough limits and then only $1 per week. School taxes and County taxes are not decided by the Borough, but they get cheap utilities too if they build inside the Borough.

Real Estate Taxes are based on your assessed value. Tax discounts are available based on early payment.

Real Estate Taxes may also be deducted on your tax returns.

Available Taxes Under Law

The Borough receives no sales tax, liquor tax, business tax, or hotel tax; they are not options under State law. Township residents pay no taxes to the Borough other than the Local Services Tax, $1 per week, if they work inside the Borough. The Borough must split the earned income tax with the school district. State of PA sets a limit on different types of property taxes.



Why is there an Ambulance Fee on Water Invoices?

The Town Council-approved an Ambulance Fee is a surcharge on all water customer invoices. The fee helps defray the costs of the ambulance service being ready-to-serve. Each year, Federal rules require ambulance companies to write-off invoices for Medicaid & Medicare patients. In 2026, the Borough anticipates to write-off over $1.5 million in billing. Ambulance companies are in crisis as a result of low revenue and no volunteers. This is not a tax. It is a service charge collected only on Borough-water-customers and given as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the Fire Department to help pay for the EMS program. Approximately 24% of property owners are exempt from property taxes. Also, it is not the *Ambulance Club*. The *Ambulance Club* is a voluntary donation program mailed separately. This is a surcharge on water service invoices with payments shared with the Fire Department. **In 2027, the fee will increase to $13.75 per month per water service account.** Whoever pays the water bill, will pay this important fee.

Historically Low Utility Rates Expected – Not a Flex

Keeping utility costs lower than nearby public and private options gives a community a big advantage. For local businesses and residents, cheaper water, sewer, or power bills mean saving money, which keeps the local economy strong and attracts new businesses. Lower rates also prove the value of a publicly owned utility, showing people that running a service without corporate profit margins directly benefits the community. Additionally, low rates provide resources to property owners to pay for real estate taxes to support police, fire, and EMS. The key is keeping rates low through smart, efficient management and planning—addressing infrastructure, maintenance. and investment.

Storm Sewer Fee (CAMA)

Beginning in 2027, the Chambersburg Area Municipal Authority (CAMA) oversees the Borough's complex Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, an extensive network designed to manage stormwater runoff effectively across the community. The infrastructure encompasses 83.49 miles of pipe, 3,229 inlets, 139 outfalls discharging into the Conococheague Creek and Falling Spring Creek, 211 subsurface detention areas, 107 detention basins, 57 rain gardens, and 32.05 miles of open channels. Staff is recommending to CAMA, a significant rate increase for storm sewer services in 2027, after no change in 2026.

Billing for the system is calculated using an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) standard, with the per-ERU rate established annually by the CAMA Board. Under this structure, all single-family homes pay a uniform rate equivalent to 1 ERU per month based on the average single-family home. Since 2022, all non-single-family residential properties—including commercial, industrial, institutional, church, business, and multi-family sites—are billed based on the measured impervious area of their lot, paying a multiple of the base ERU rate. Non-single-family properties also have the opportunity to earn discounts to reduce their regular invoices.

For questions or additional information regarding the Borough's storm sewer system, please contact Storm Sewer System Manager Andy Stottlemyer at 717-251-2434.

In 2027, 1 ERU = $9/month.