

State aid chopped by \$176,000

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Maynard -

MAYNARD — The recently released House and Senate budget resolution has cut Maynard's local aid for fiscal 2008 by about \$176,000, compared to the budget Gov. Deval Patrick recommended in March.

Although Town Administrator John Curran said the decrease is “not the end of the world” cuts will have to be made.

“There will be some pain because these cuts will come from somewhere and we’ll have to figure out a way to make it work,” said Curran.

The house and senate resolution actually adds about \$20 million in statewide local aid to Gov. Patrick’s budget, but a recalculation of the governor’s funding formula means that several towns will actually receive less than the governor allocated.

Despite the decrease, the state’s current fiscal 2008 budget still gives Maynard an increase of about \$404,000 in local aid over 2007.

“We were planning our budget as the governor’s being the worst-case scenario,” said Curran. “Unfortunately the house and senate is worse than the governor’s.”

School Superintendent Mark Masterson said the cut is “obviously disturbing,” but he could not predict how it would affect the schools because he did not know how the cut would be divided between the town and the school department.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Sally Bubier said that the burden will be divided in the coming weeks.

“We don’t have a sense yet of what’s the split — how much the town is going to take and how much the schools are going to take,” said Bubier.

Relying on the governor’s March numbers, Curran said the town’s fiscal 2008 budget draft was running a \$38,000 surplus. The house and senate cut creates a deficit of about \$138,000. Curran said it is possible that a fiscal 2007 snow and ice budget deficit will add about \$50,000 to that, bringing the total deficit to about \$188,000.

“That’s where we start, without making any cuts,” said Curran.

Curran said about \$63,000 could be saved if the town was able to join a regional transport authority, thus avoiding a transportation assessment from the state. Possibilities are being investigated, but Curran said he was unsure if it could be accomplished in time for the fiscal 2008 budget.

The town’s current fiscal 2008 budget draft puts about \$30,000 into stabilization — a budgeted item Curran said he knows town officials will consider cutting. But, Curran said, adding money to stabilization is important because it helps preserve the town’s bond rating, which will be vital if the proposed \$4.82 million debt exclusion override, to fund school repairs and convert the old library into a police station, passes at Town Meeting and the ballot box.