

OPINION: Get ready New Bedford – higher property taxes are coming in 2021

According to **Mayor Mitchell's 2021 budget proposal**, costs to City government are going up, state aid is uncertain, and local revenue is in decline. This recipe ensures your property taxes will go up, likely a lot.

On average, homeowners in New Bedford saw an increase of \$220 in 2019 and \$114 in 2020 raising the total average increase to \$334 over the past two years. Unless significant federal or state aid flows to the city, the burden will fall on commercial and residential property owners. The mayor's revenue graph foreshadows an increase in property taxes, but how much is still to be determined:



The New Bedford City Council is currently reviewing the budget and votes on the final budget on August 24. The more they cut, the lower your property taxes increase will likely be – but an increase is coming. Cuts would also mean fewer government services. The biggest issue with municipal government is there isn't much discretionary spending to cut – most of the budget is mandated spending. Cutting services is also unpopular, even during a COVID-19 pandemic. Expect very little cuts, if any, and higher property taxes in the future.

The real fight will be later in the year when City Council and the Assessors office decide who takes it on the chin the most, commercial or residential property owners. Much of it will decide on state and federal aid amounts. Regardless, it will be a burden that will be a tough pill to swallow. Many businesses have either gone away or faced severe revenue shortfalls due to COVID-19 and the restrictions the State has

placed on them. Investment property owners are facing an indefinite rent moratorium. Many homeowners are feeling the pinch of reduced work hours. Higher taxes will be the final straw for a lot of people, but make no mistake, they are coming.