Lucienne Bango, MPH, RS/REHS
Director of Health

BUDGET PROPOSAL FY2026-2027

Approved by Board of Directors 4/13/2026

Our Mission

The Aspetuck Health District is committed to promoting health and well-being, preventing disease, and ensuring a clean and safe environment for all residents. AHD provides environmental health, community health, and emergency preparedness services. We are guided in this work by the 10 Essential Public Health Services.

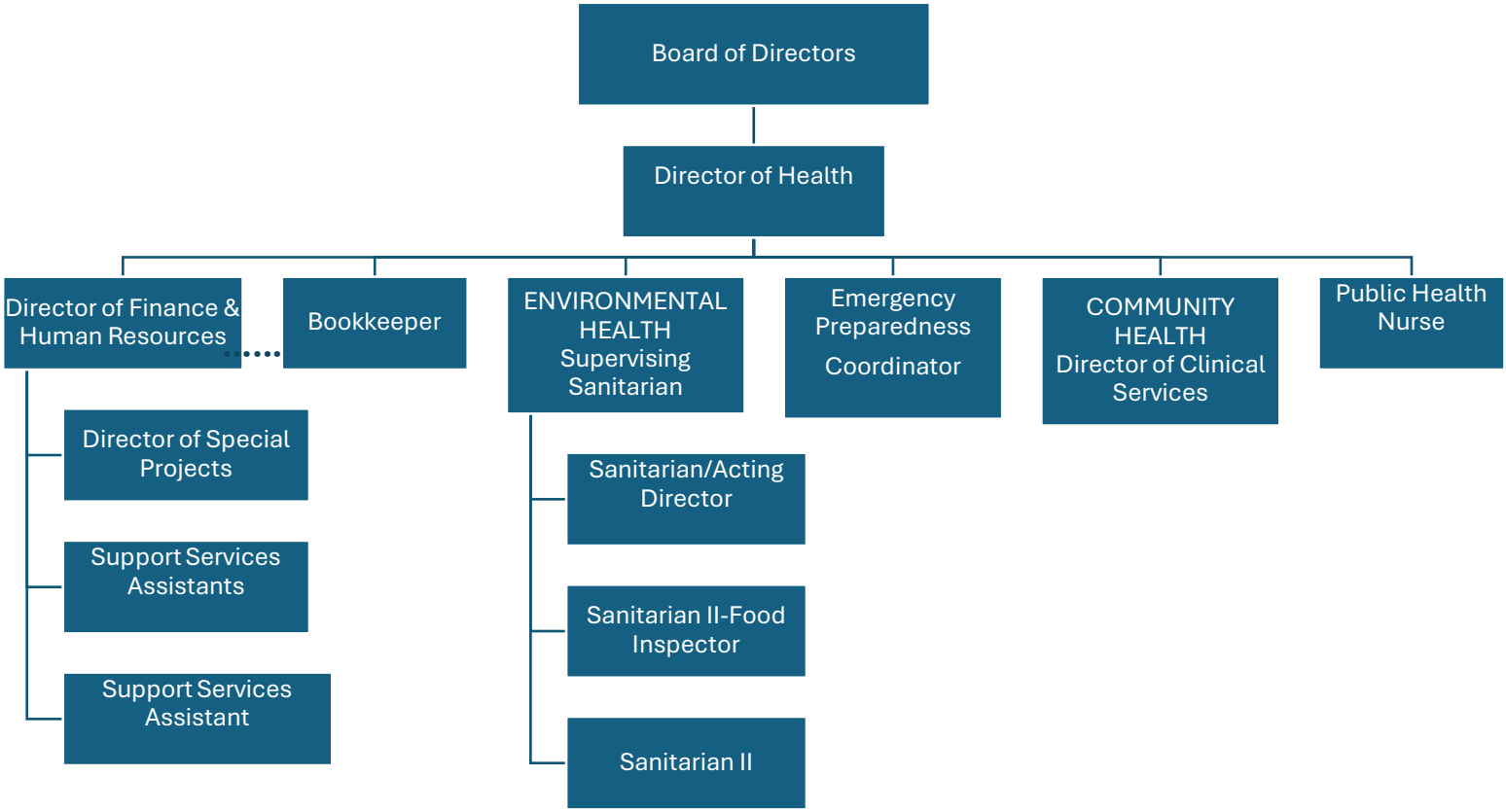
Background

Aspetuck Health District is a regional public health agency serving the towns of Westport, Weston, and Easton, working to protect and improve community health through education, prevention, and responsive services. Originally comprised of Westport and Weston, the Aspetuck Health District was the first organized and recognized health district in the state of Connecticut in 1965. In 1983, the Board of Directors changed the district's name to the Westport Weston Health District for the purpose of easier identification since it was only serving those two communities. In 2021 the Health District expanded to include the town of Easton providing greater efficiency through scale economies and to qualify the Health District for available state grant funding allocated to public health entities serving three or more towns. On January 1, 2022, Easton joined the multi-town agency, and the district was officially renamed the Aspetuck Health District (AHD).

About Us

The Health District is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of representatives appointed by the first select person of each member town. Although District staff work closely with each town's administrative and other staff, ultimately the responsibility for the overall protection of the public's health in Connecticut rests with the State Commissioner of Public Health. In accordance with State Statutes, local Health Directors are considered assigned agents of the Commissioner and are required to provide the state mandated services that must be provided in each Connecticut community. The state and local public health agencies have a broad scope of responsibilities set forth in Connecticut General Statutes.

ASPETUCK HEALTH DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
FY 2025-2026



2025-2026 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Reviewed plans and applications for 248 food establishments, temporary food establishments and events
2. Conducted more than 430 inspections of food establishments, farmers markets, temporary events and food establishment complaint investigations
3. Conducted 69 cosmetology inspections, 99 garbage truck inspections and investigated 136 public health complaints
4. Reviewed and approved 237 generator and demolition applications, 295 house additions, 283 soil tests for septic plans
5. Reviewed and approved 43 B100a's, 496 septic installs, 238 septic plan revisions and issued 294 subsurface sewage disposal system permits
6. Enforced local and state public health codes, ordinances and regulations
7. Decreased permit review time by half with the onboarding of new staff and procedural changes
8. Worked with Westport IT to begin the process of uploading all environmental health applications to Accela to improve application review time and process
9. Reviewed and updated the district's personnel policy, along with other policies and procedures
10. Utilized grant funding to hire a communications firm to develop a rebranding proposal of the district, including a new logo, new website and new social media pages
11. Utilized long-term relationships with local universities to attract and hire interns to conduct outreach, develop outreach publications and enhance social media platforms
12. Filled a vacant, full-time Administration Support staff position to replace retired staff
13. Filled a vacant, full-time Sanitarian position that was vacant for more than 3 years
14. Utilized grant funding to purchase office supplies, equipment, and hire contractors
15. Updated the phone system, financial software and other internal database systems to enhance external and internal communication
16. Cleaned and organized the building to effectively utilize space
17. Contracted with Vaxcare, a vaccine procurement, inventory management and billing company to maximize availability of vaccines and insurance acceptance
18. Leased three vehicles for staff fleet to retain staff and attract new hires
19. Attended trainings and conferences for staff enrichment and education
20. Offered and participated in community meetings and health events
21. Updated environmental health fee schedule which hadn't been updated for more than 6 years
22. Offered tick and rabies exposure consultations and testing submissions
23. Offered blood pressure and STI/HIV screenings
24. Participated and attended monthly Nuvance and Health Improvement Alliance meetings discussing and planning the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan required by state statute
25. Vaccinated adult and child residents
26. Monitored community disease trends to prevent the spread of communicable diseases
27. Conducted travel consults and vaccinated residents for travel
28. Evaluated and assessed vendors, contractual services and organizational redundancies to streamline financial and organizational needs.

2026-2027 GOALS

1. Strengthen relationships with town departments and agencies to promote the district's services and programs
2. Increase the number of flu and other vaccination clinics offered
3. Utilize university and college students for internship projects
4. Continue to decrease application and permit review and approval time
5. Continue to review and update all policies and procedures
6. Continue to improve and enhance social media platforms, including Facebook, and Instagram
7. Evaluate insurance billing processes to maximize revenue from vaccinations and other community health services
8. Encourage staff development through professional trainings and conferences
9. Continue to monitor and evaluate service delivery and efficiency
10. Continue to seek and apply for grant funding opportunities
11. Develop a succession plan for staff retirements and potential vacancies
12. Continue to evaluate and assess organizational redundancies and needs
13. Assess and connect database management systems to align and stream organizational functions and procedures

Aspetuck Health District Budget Narrative

In response to the challenges faced by public health agencies due to the recent federal administration's funding cuts and health agency shifts, emphasis on responsible fiscal and workforce planning has become crucial to local health budget forecasting. The abrupt cessation of funds that local health departments/districts have become reliant upon to continue to operate their departments/districts and provide essential public health programs and services have had lasting impacts, resulting in workforce shortages and threatening the provision of critical public health services. Although several years have passed since the COVID-19 pandemic, local health departments/districts are still grappling with its fallout, including staff shortages, increased workloads, and financial constraints that limit their ability to serve their communities effectively.

Local health departments/districts are statutorily mandated to deliver vital services, some of which include food establishment inspections, salon inspections, public pool inspections, daycare inspections, and review and approval of well and septic system repairs and installations. Due to limited staffing at the CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) local health departments/districts are experiencing a backlog of training for Certified Food Inspectors (CFI's). Some local health departments/districts have been waiting for mandated staff training for more than five years. This backlog and gap in training have resulted in a significant burden in conducting required inspections in a timely and efficient manner. Additionally, the shortage of Registered Sanitarians (RS's), licensed professionals authorized to enforce subsurface sewage disposal regulations exacerbates local health departments/districts staffing crisis. The lengthy training requirements and extensive field experience necessary for licensure only compound this issue, making recruitment and retention exceptionally challenging.

The local construction market in Connecticut, particularly Westport, has seen a notable uptick, with a 1.5% increase in real estate assessments in the Assessor's Grand List for 2023 driven by new developments. This economic growth brings additional revenue but also significantly increases the workload for our health district staff. A comparative analysis reveals our staffing levels are not adequate to meet these demands. For instance, while the Aspetuck Health District serves a population of over 46,000 with only four sanitarians, similarly sized departments/districts such as Stratford and Danbury have staffing levels of three and five-and-a-half, respectively. Moreover, despite the influx of new applications- over 89 for septic-related inspections during the typically slower month of November 2025, AHD struggles to keep pace with its obligations.

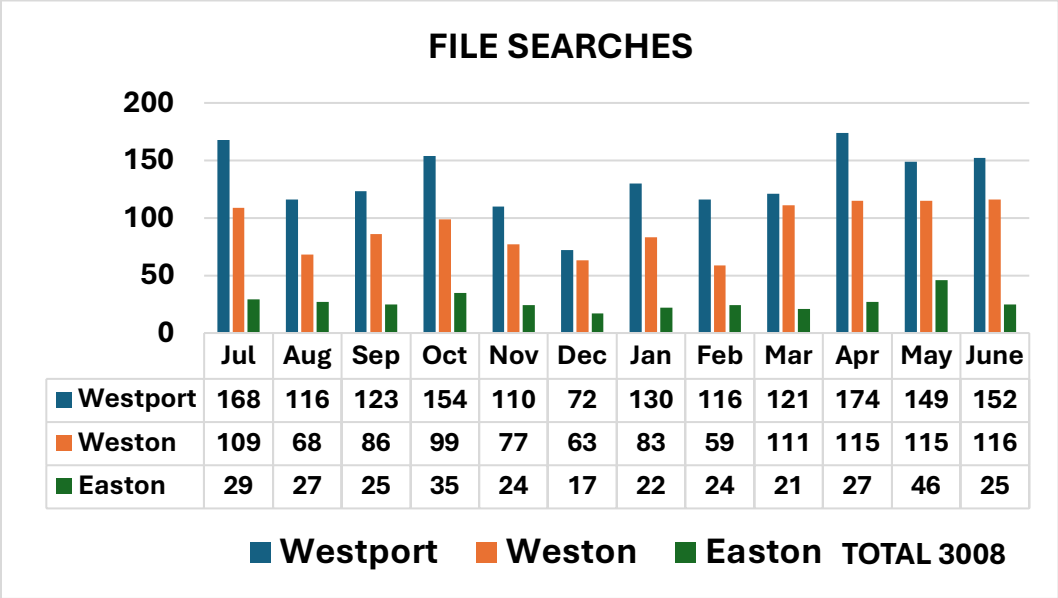
In the past decade, state and local health departments/districts across the US have lost an estimated 15% of their essential staff. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a 3-fold surge in permit volume, exacerbated by staff shortages and the inability for trainees to obtain required certifications from the State. Intense wage competition for certified staff has driven up costs and made it harder to recruit, leaving AHD vulnerable to service disruptions due to a shallow depth of personnel.

In summary, to continue meeting the community's health and safety needs effectively, there is a pressing requirement for additional funding and staffing to manage the increase in workload and ensure compliance with mandated programs and services and enforcement of health regulations. This workload not only emphasizes the operational strain but also the necessity for an increase in staffing resources to manage the functions of the Aspetuck Health District efficiently.

Organizational Structure

Administrative Division

The Administrative Division is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the office and responding to requests from clients and residents. They are committed to providing exceptional customer service, addressing inquiries and resolving issues. The administrative staff organize documents, facilitate communication, and schedule meetings. They are also responsible for processing applications and permits and responding to FOIA and file search requests. During FY24-25, the administrative staff processed 3008 file searches, which require lengthy reviews of large files dating back several years. They also processed hundreds of permits and responded to hundreds of phone calls.

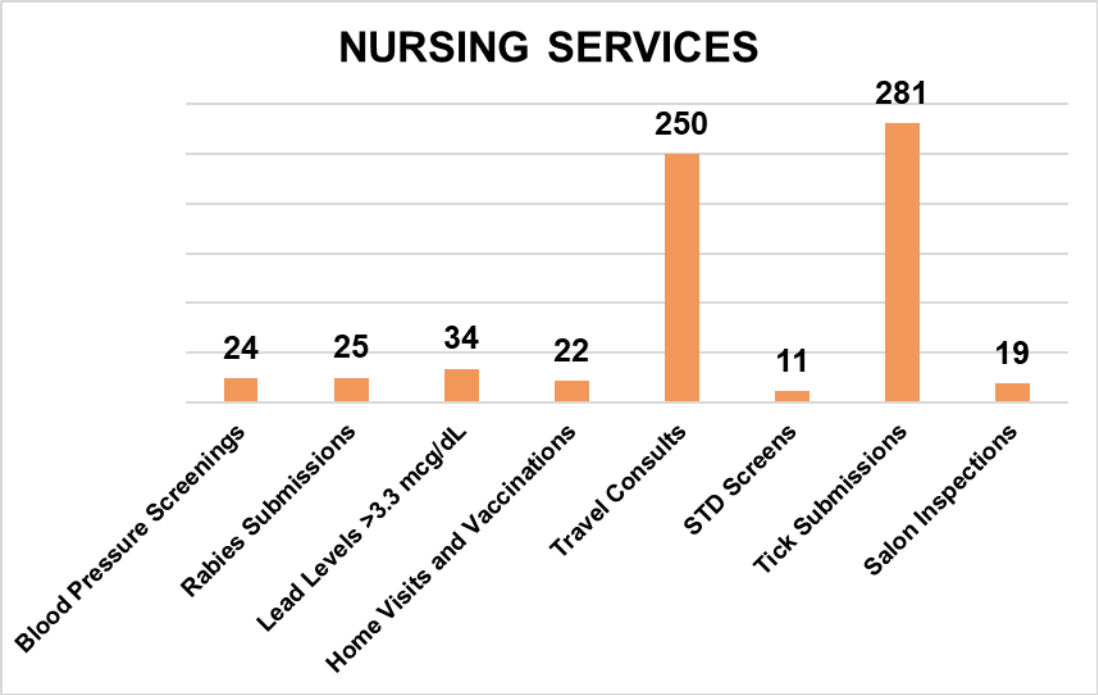


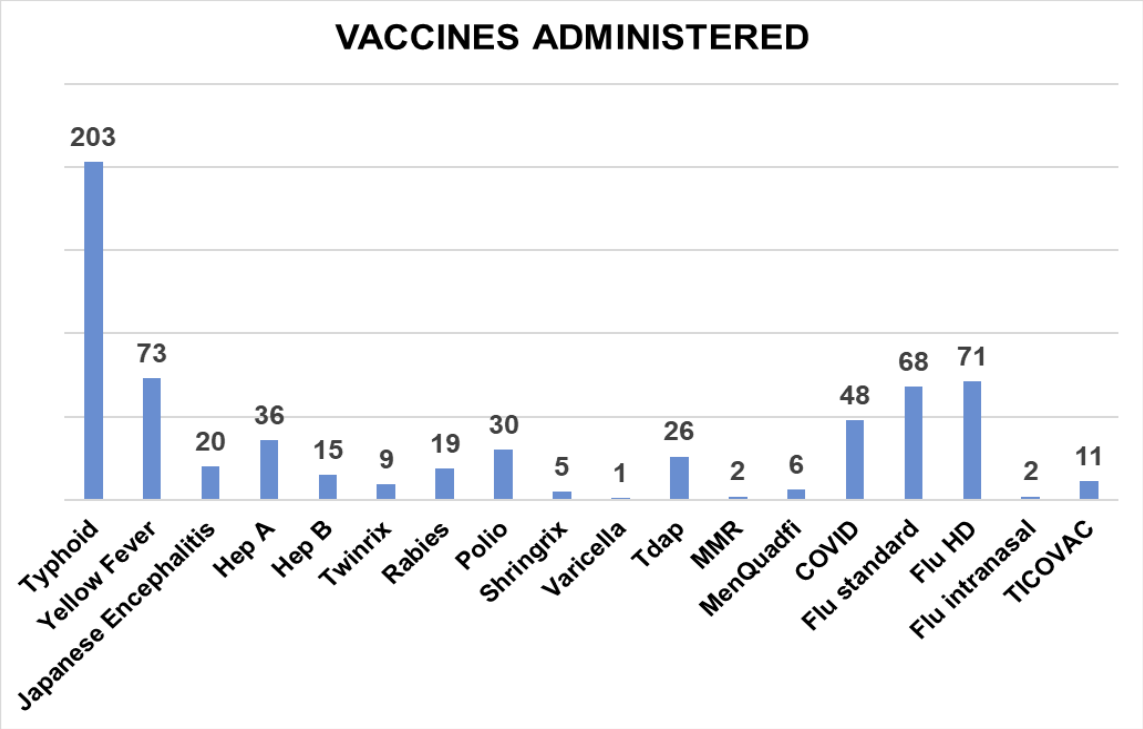
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Westport	168	116	123	154	110	72	130	116	121	174	149	152
Weston	109	68	86	99	77	63	83	59	111	115	115	116
Easton	29	27	25	35	24	17	22	24	21	27	46	25

Community Health Division

Community Health provides health promotion and disease prevention through education, screenings, immunizations and surveillance. The community health staff investigate, monitor, track and implement control measures to address communicable diseases to reduce their spread in the community. They work closely with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), town officials, and other health agencies to prevent and control the spread of disease. The Health District provides preventative programs/screenings for early prevention, detection and control of chronic diseases. Community Health staff offer rabies and tick exposure consultations, various health screenings and inspect salons.

The Community Health Division also provides vaccinations for a wide variety of preventive diseases for children and adults. Community Health also offers a travel immunization program for clients who require vaccination for travel abroad. Staff can provide consultations about travel vaccine needs. AHD is an authorized Yellow Fever Center and can provide travelers with the Certificate of Yellow Fever Vaccination, which is required to enter some countries. Community Health staff administered a total of 645 routine and travel vaccines in FY24-25.





EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Preparedness conducts planning activities to prepare for and respond to emergencies, such as threats of pandemic influenza, biological terrorism, and natural disasters. Public health prepares for response to emergencies such as disease outbreaks, contaminated food or water, chemical releases, insect-borne diseases, and other health hazards. The Aspetuck Health District works to ensure that the towns of Easton, Weston and Westport respond effectively to natural disasters, bioterrorism and other emergencies that could affect the health of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental Health works to prevent and control the spread of disease in the environment and responds to local environmental emergencies. Sanitarians perform health inspections, investigate and resolve nuisance complaints, respond to public health hazards and educate the public about communicable disease prevention. The sanitarians protect public health and the environment by ensuring conformance with local, state and federal ordinances and laws pertaining to a wide variety of environmental health programs. Much of this work is accomplished by performing routine inspections and investigations and taking enforcement action when warranted. The Health District's environmental health division is responsible for mandated enforcement of the Public Health Code of Connecticut and the local Aspetuck Health District Sanitary Code. It does so through the issuance of permits, plan reviews and regular on-site inspections.

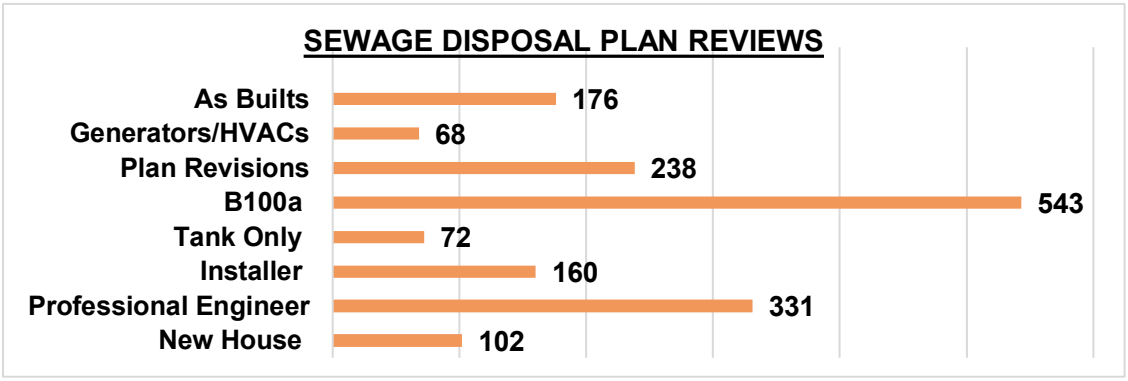
SOME SERVICE INCLUDE:

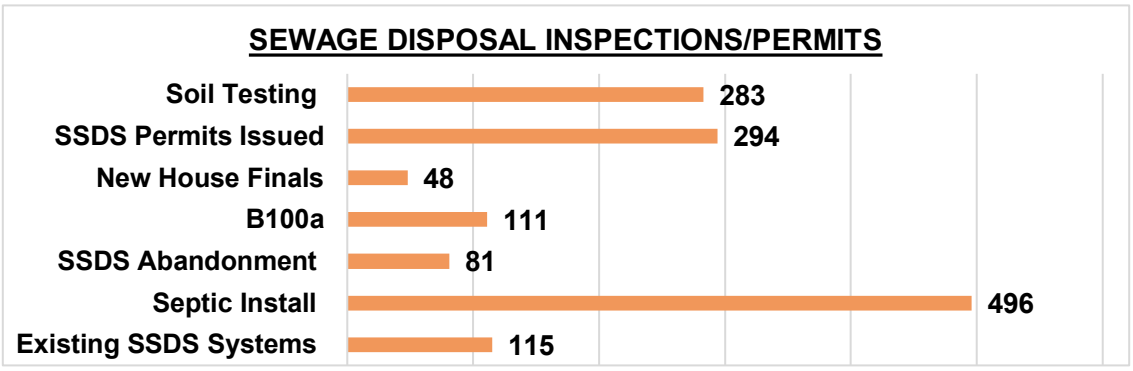
- Permitting food service establishments, salons establishments and daycares
- Approval of septic systems and private wells
- Enforcement of state public health codes and regulations
- Investigations of public health nuisances and code violations

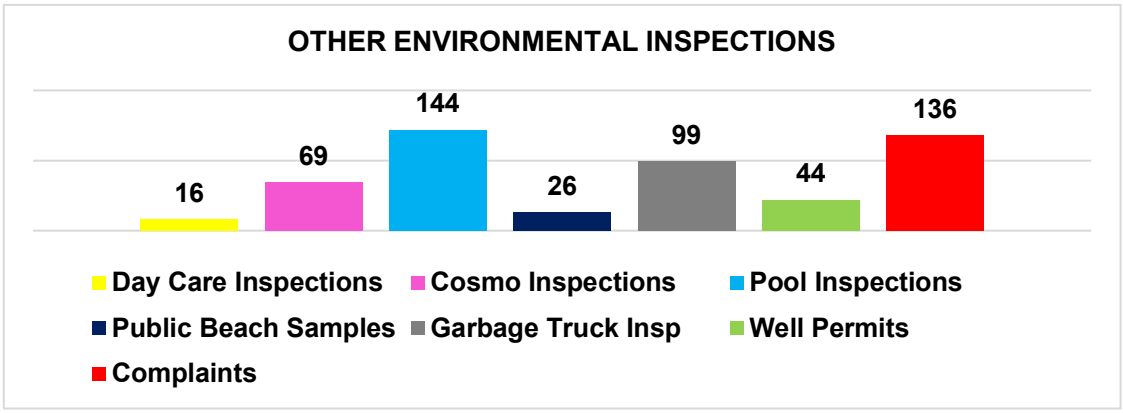
APPLICATIONS BY TOWN FY24-25

	EASTON	WESTON	WESTPORT	TOTAL
LOT LINE CHANGES	7	0	6	13
SEPTIC CODE COMPLIANCE	12	27	47	86
TENNIS COURTS	0	0	8	8
WATER TREATMENT WASTE DRAINAGE	3	9	0	12
CHANGE OF PLANS	5	13	38	56
ACCESSORY DWELLINGS	1	2	2	5
GENERATORS/DEMOLITIONS	42	91	104	237
NEW SEPTICS	13	12	43	68
NEW HOUSES	4	7	38	49
HOUSE ADDITIONS	42	82	171	295
SEPTIC ALTERATIONS	11	12	14	37
SEPTIC INSPECTIONS	15	27	57	99
SEPTIC REPAIRS	17	25	37	79
TEST HOLES	45	50	106	201
TANK ABANDONMENTS	2	0	67	69
SWIMMING POOLS	1	8	21	30
SUBDIVISIONS	1	1	0	2
WELL ABANDONMENTS	1	1	5	7
WELL PERMITS	10	15	12	37
COSMETOLOGY PERMITS	0	0	123	123
DAYCARES	3	0	13	16
YEARLY FOOD PERMITS	9	16	230	255
FOOD PLAN REVIEWS	1	1	29	31
TEMPORARY FOOD INSPECTIONS	7	23	57	87

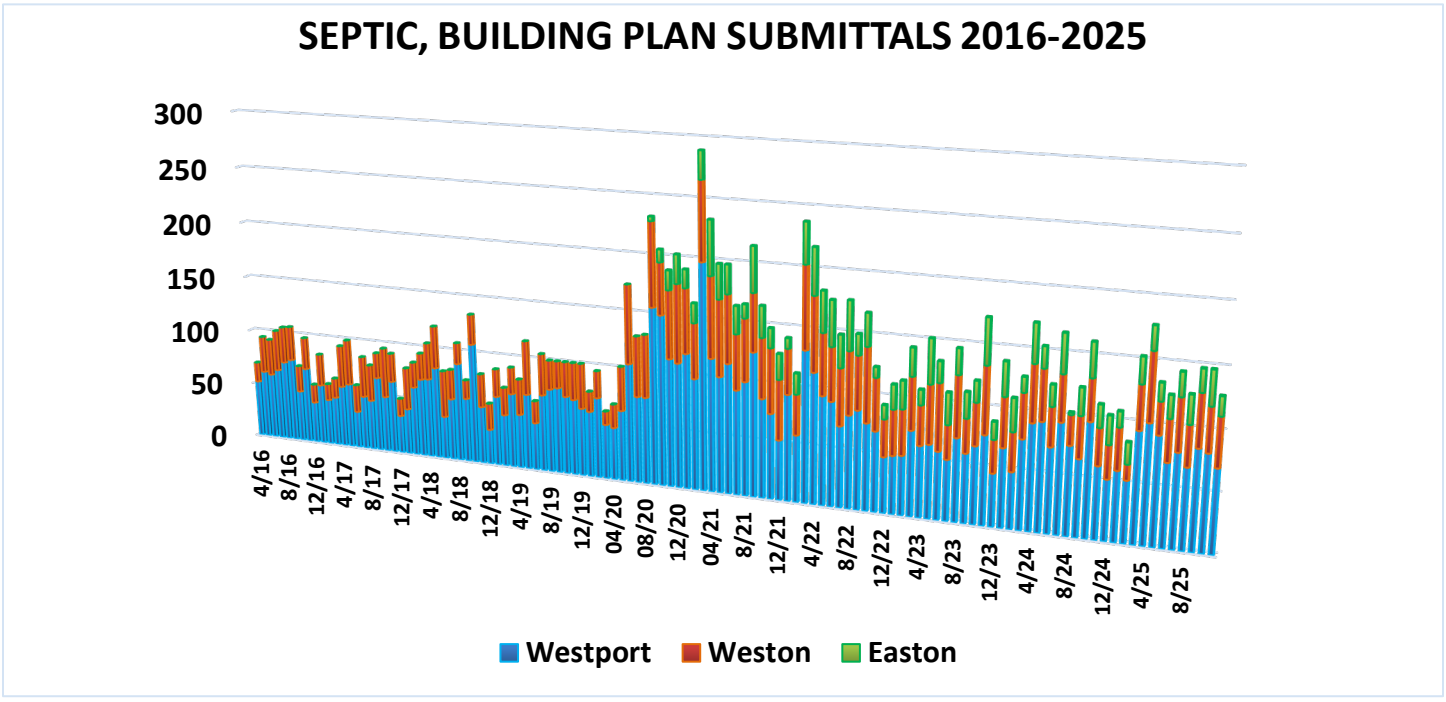
The charts below highlight some of the septic inspections, permits, plan review, food inspections and other data for fiscal year 2024-2025.

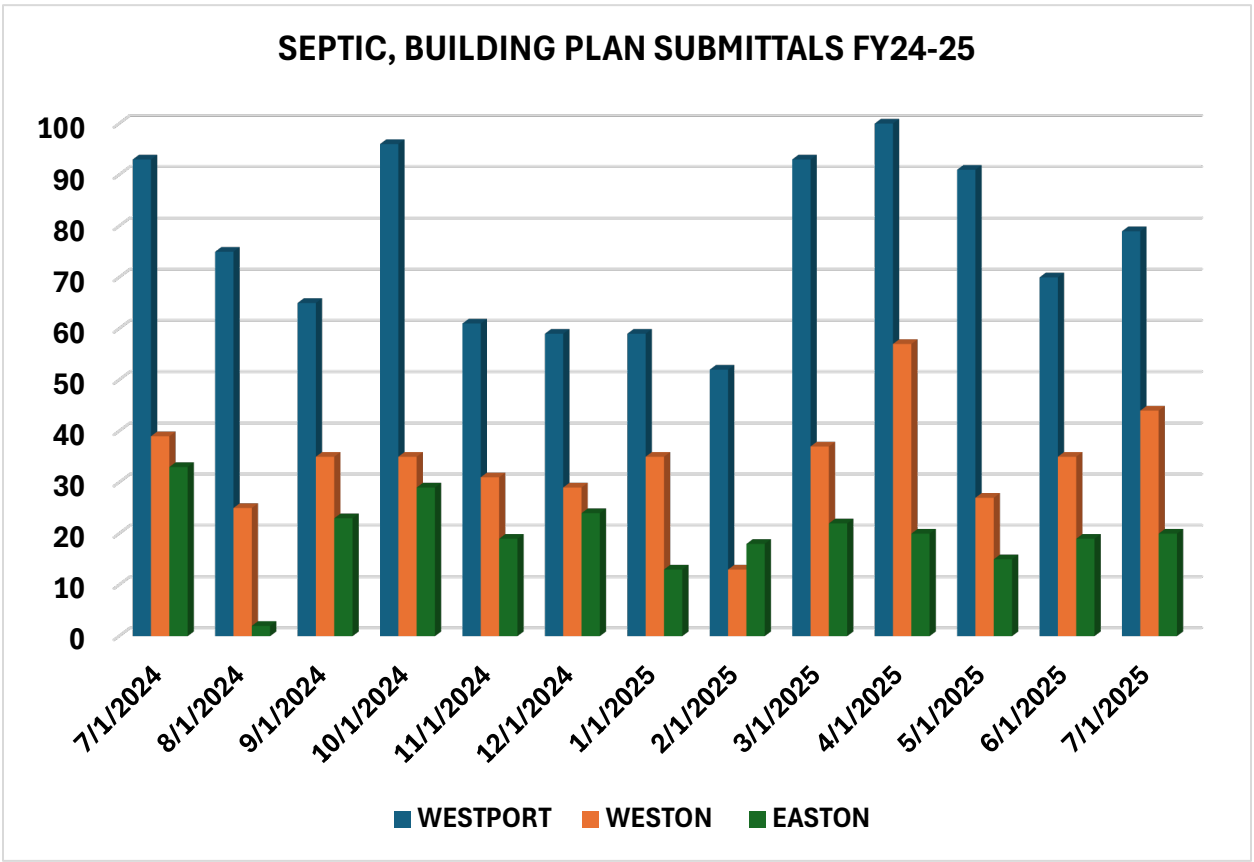




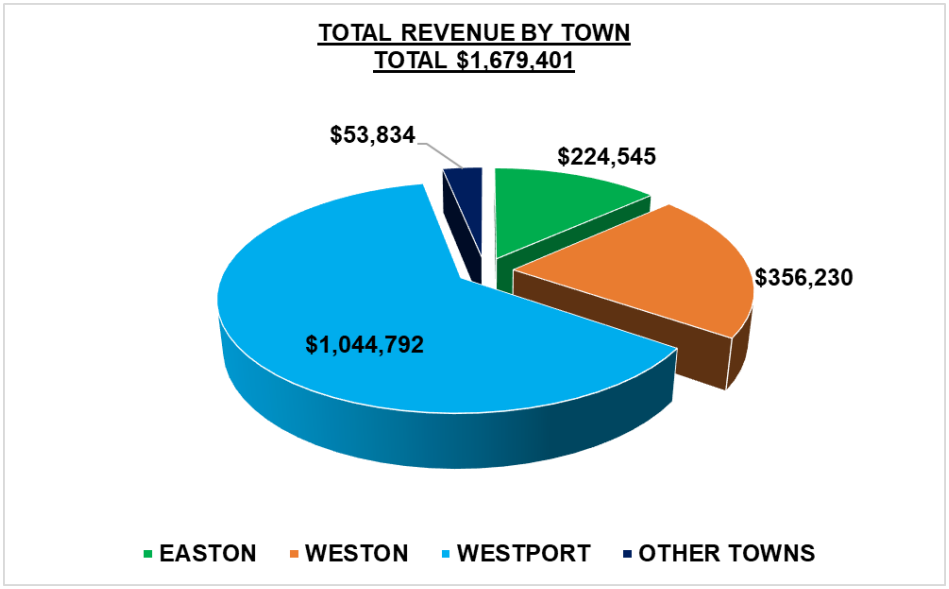


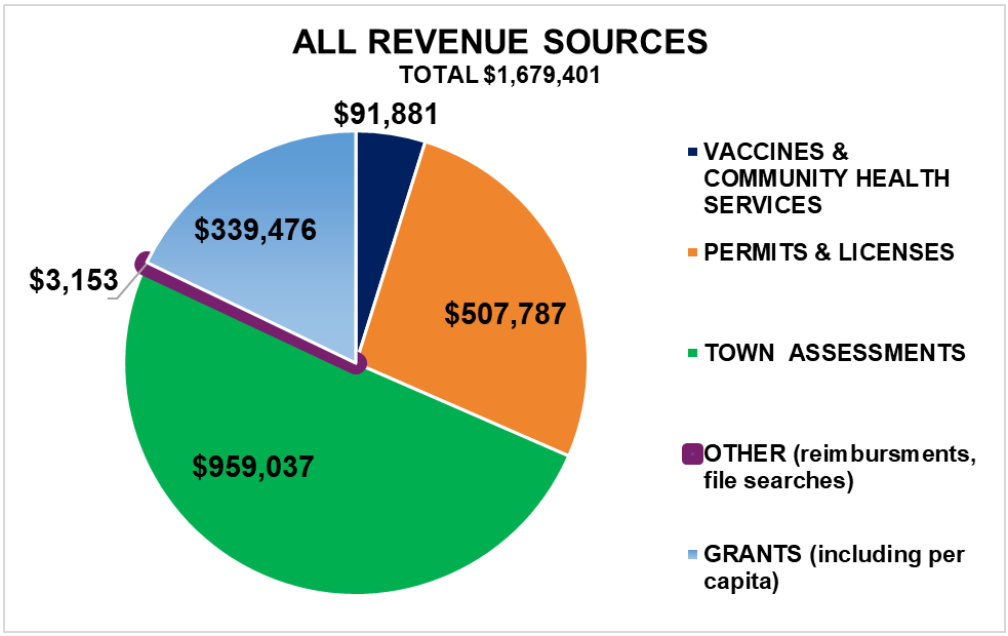
Construction and renovation applications peaked during the COVID-19 pandemic when families were upgrading their homes to include office space for remote work settings. The pandemic also elevated applications for pools, accessory dwelling units and other renovations when families were spending less time traveling and more leisure time at home. As indicated in the chart below, the number of plans peaked during COVID. After the pandemic, the number of submittals never returned to the pre-pandemic numbers but remained at and set a new increased construction and renovation norm. This increase has continued to put pressure on the current staff that was never strengthened to meet the needs of the increased workload.

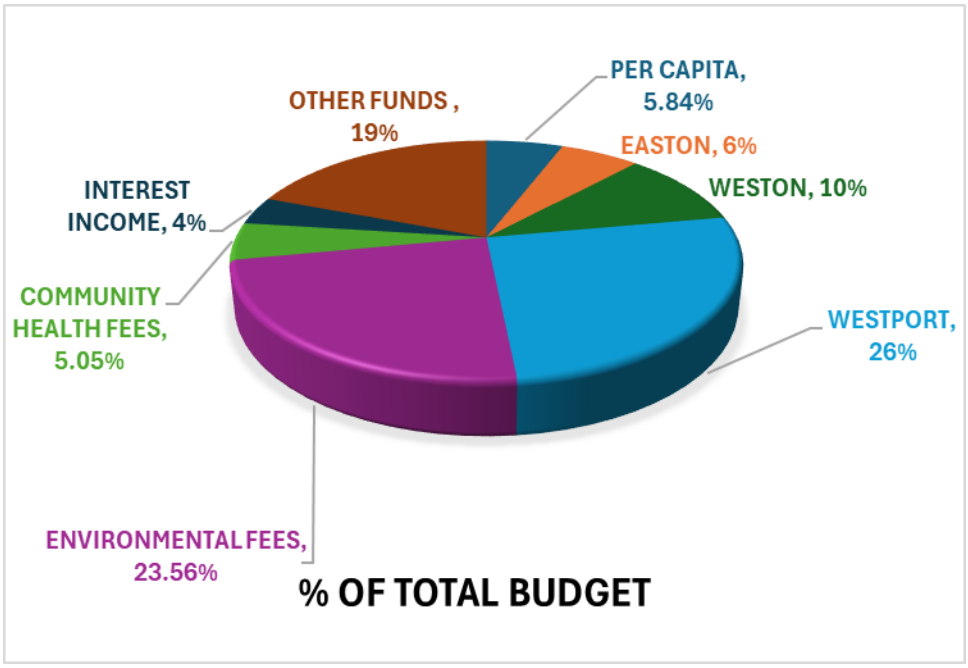




REVENUE AND EXPENSES FY24-25







Staffing Comparisons FY24-25

HEALTH DEPARTMENT/DISTRICT	POPULATION	SANITARIANS
Aspetuck Health District	46,301	4
Darien	21,500	3
New Canaan	20,620	3
Fairfield	61,500	4
Stratford	52,350	3
Milford	50,500	5
Torrington Health District	137,000	11
Newtown Health District	42,090	3
Danbury	86,520	5.5
Naugatuck Valley Health District	126,390	7
Bristol Burlington Health District	71,720	3
North Central District of Health	164,290	9.5

Workload Analysis

The table below highlights the vast differences in applications received among other local health districts served by subsurface sewage disposal systems compared to Aspetuck Health District. In addition, the data does not accurately represent the staff's time associated with review and approval of these applications, including travel, review, meetings, consultations and revisions. The substantial and continuously increasing volume of applications in terms of septic systems, food inspections, and other permits necessitates the need for additional staff.

FY24-25 (survey ended prior to June 2025)

HEALTH DISTRICT	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
ASPETUCK	141	233	239	258	191	193	356	148	238	293	113
NVHD	25	26	14	27	18	8	21	22	29	31	16
BRISTOL/BURLINGTON	5	8	4	7	3	6	3	4	10	10	12
NORTH CENTRAL	85	89	77	82	76	84	69	59	73	67	58

PREVIOUS BUDGETS

	FY23-24 APPROVED	FY23-24 ACTUAL	FY24-25 APPROVED	FY24-25 ACTUAL	FY25-26 APPROVED
REVENUE					
TOWN ASSSESSMENTS	$922,151	$922,061	$959,037	$959,037	$982,215
INTERGOVERNMENTAL	$117,237	$117,543	$272,000	$117,543	$188,865
ENVIRONMENTAL FEES	$550,000	$531,320	$525,000	$508,474	$475,000
COMMUNIITY HEALTH FEES	$66,000	$66,080	$75,000	$109,043	$95,000
INTEREST AND OTHER	$5,000	$97,699	$50,000	$87,722	$82,000
UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE	$65,027	0	$70,000	0	$100,000
TOTAL REVENUE	**$1,725,415**	**$1,734,703**	**$1,951,037**	**$1,781,819**	**$1,923,080**
EXPENDITURES					
PERSONNEL	$1,117,739	$1,117,739	$1,117,739	$1,156,016	$1,238,593
FRINGE	$433,026	$470,588	$470,588	$362,462	$442,122
BUILDING AND GROUNDS	$8900	$9500	$9500	$37,134	$10,093
CONTRACTED SERVICES	$42,700	$55,000	$55,000	$99,253	$80,272
SUPPLIES, OFFICE & EQUIPMENT	$76,050	$80,210	$80,210	$106,972	$100,000
INSURANCE	$35,000	$50,000	$50,000	$38,288	$40,000
TRAVEL, MIILEAGE, COURIER	$11,000	$9500	$9500	$10,294	$11,000
PRINTING AND PUBLICATIONS	$1000	$1500	$1500	$1900	$1000
DOH TRANSITION	0	0	$157,000	$64,280	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$1,725,415**	**$1,794,037**	**$1,951,037**	**$1,876,599**	**$1,923,080**

PROPOSED BUDGET FY26-27

	FY 25-26 APPROVED	FY26-27 PROPOSED	CHANGE	% increase/decrease yr/yr	% OF TOTAL BUDGET CONTRIBUTION
INCOME					
PER CAPITA GRANT/OTHER GRANTS	$188,865	$138,903	($49,962)	**-26.45%**	5.84%
TOWN OF WESTON	$235,843	$242,918	$7,075	**3.00%**	10.22%
TOWN OF WESPORT	$606,459	$624,653	$18,194	**3.00%**	26.28%
TOWN OF EASTON	$139,913	$144,110	$4,197	**3.00%**	6.06%
ENVIRONMENTAL FEES (including 2% fee increase effective 7/1/26)	$475,000	$560,000	$85,000	**17.89%**	23.56%
COMMUNIITY HEALTH FEES-includes 20% vaccine fee increase	$95,000	$120,000	$25,000	**26.32%**	5.05%
INTEREST INCOME	$82,000	$90,000	$8,000	**9.76%**	3.79%
OTHER INCOME-UNDESIGNATED FUNDS	$100,000	$455,881	$355,881	**355.88%**	19.18%
TOTAL	**$1,923,080**	**$2,376,465**	$453,385	**23.58%**	**100.00%**
EXPENSES					
SALARIES	$1,238,593	$1,360,113	$121,520		
PAYROLL TAXES	$0	$228,799	$228,799		
FRINGE BENEFITS	$442,122	$484,821	$42,699		
MILEAGE	$11,000	$2,000	($9,000)		
INSURANCE-BUSINESS	$40,000	$60,000	$20,000		
TELEPHONE	$0	$17,000	$17,000		
UTILITIES	$10,093	$14,000	$3,907		
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	$80,272	$112,000	$31,728		
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	$0	$4,500	$4,500		
POSTAGE/COMMUNICATONS	$1,000	$3,000	$2,000		
MEDICAL SUPPLIES	$0	$850	$850		
VACCINES	$0	$75,000	$75,000		
OFFICE SUPPLIES	$100,000	$5,532	($94,468)		
EQUIPMENT	$0	$1,000	$1,000		
COURIER	$0	$3,000	$3,000		
PROGRAM SUPPLIES	0	$550	$550		
EQUIPMENT REPAIR/MAINTENANCE	$0	$800	$800		
BANK CHARGES	$0	$1,800	$1,800		
VEHICLE OPERATIONS	$0	$1,000	$1,000		
RECONCILIATION DISCREPANCIES	$0	$700	$700		
OTHER INCOME-UNCATEGORIZED EXPENSES	0	0	$0		
TOTAL	**$1,923,080**	**$2,376,465**	$453,385		
	$1,923,080	**$2,376,465**	**$453,385**	**23.58%**	

Updated 1/27/2026