

Analysis of the QRSD Assessment for Hubbardston and Other Member Towns

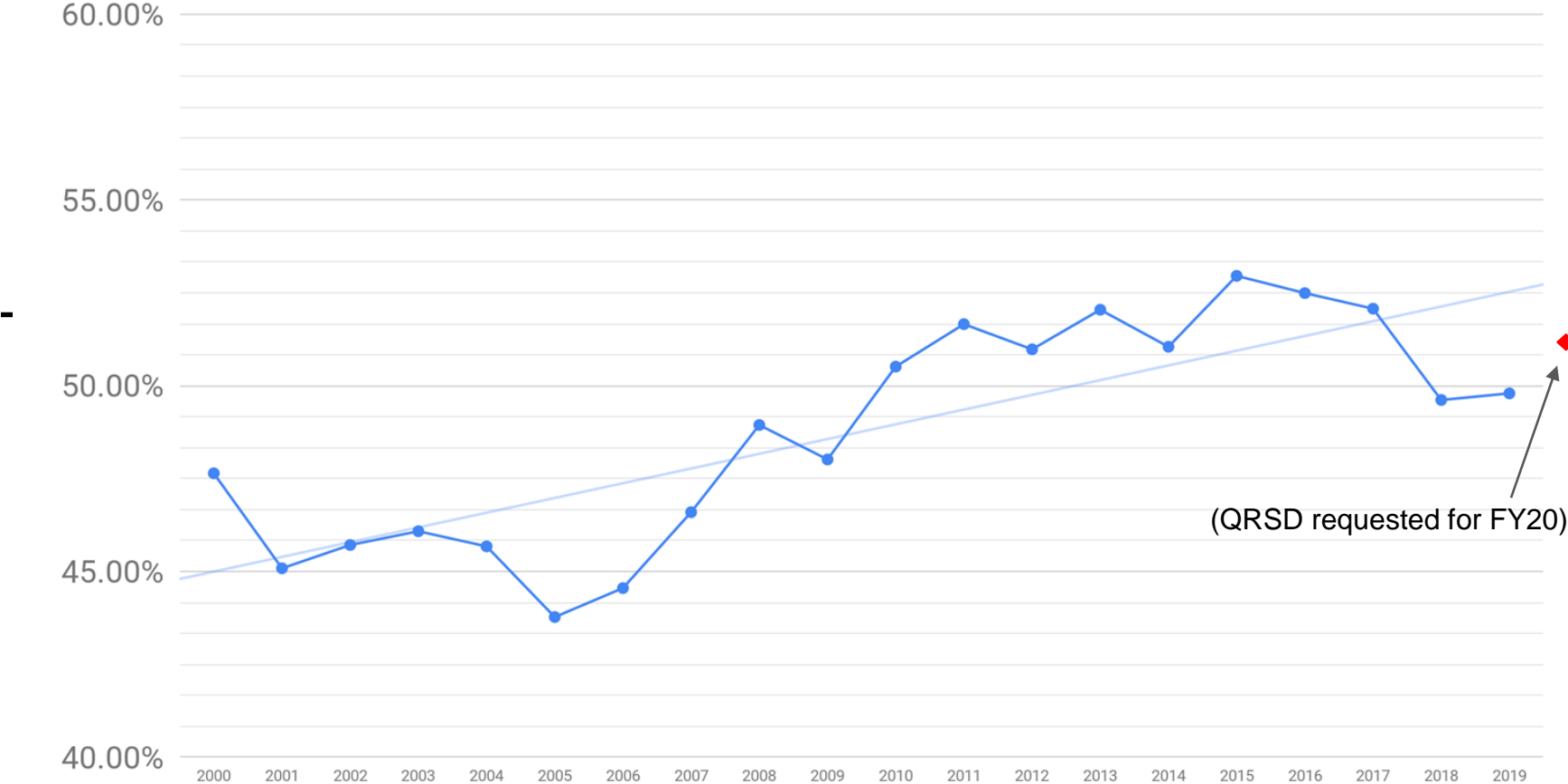
Joshua Lerner
Hubbardston Finance Committee

Sources:

1. Hubbardston's ATM approved budgets (FY2000-2019)
2. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) public information request
3. QRSD public information request
4. QRSD Budget Materials for FY20 from public budget hearing, March 14th, 2019 and presented to Hubbardston Finance Committee on April 4th, 2019

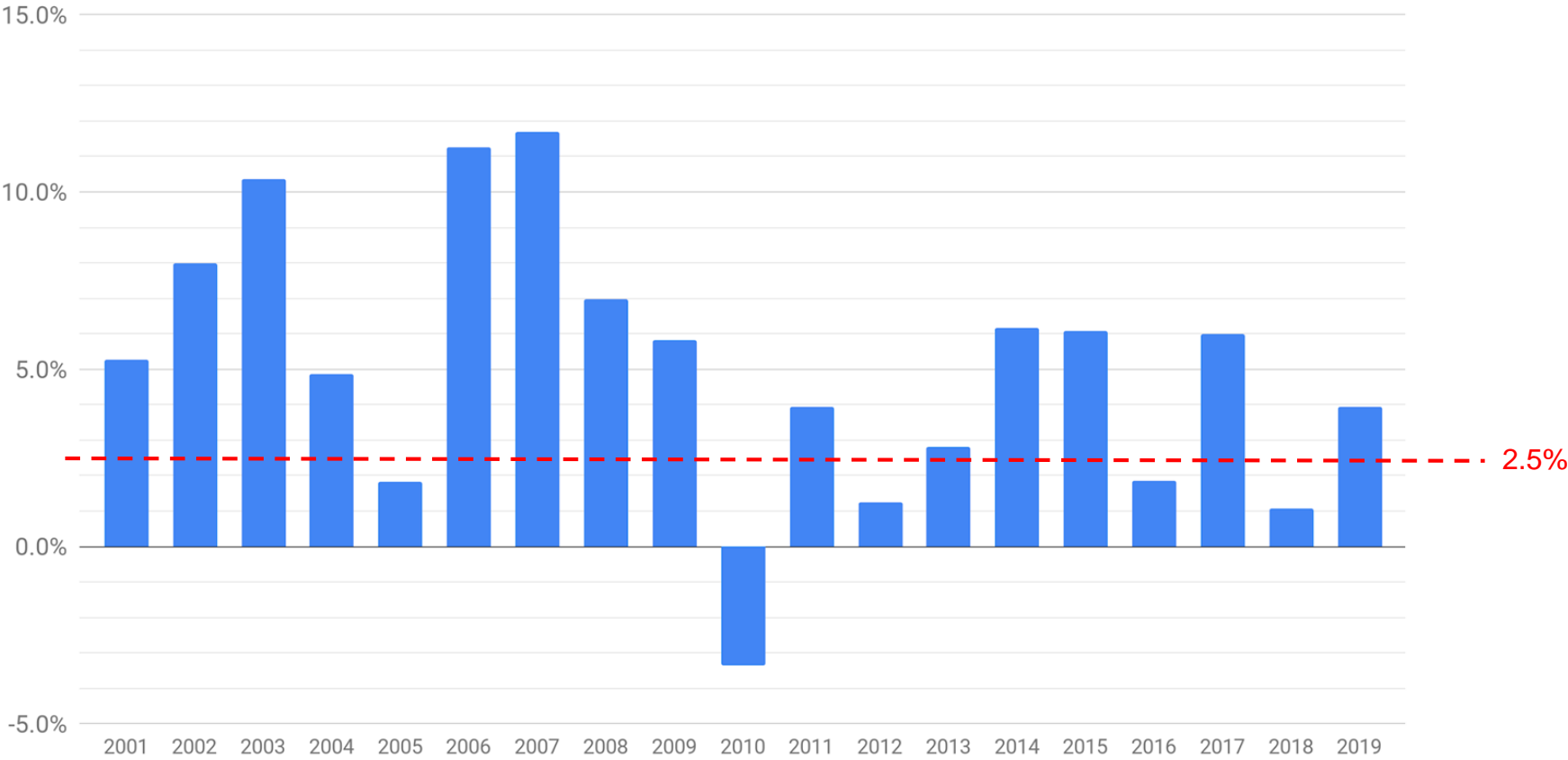
The Problem:

Hubbardston's QRSD Assessment as % of Total Budget



Source: Hubbardston Historical Budgets 2000-2019

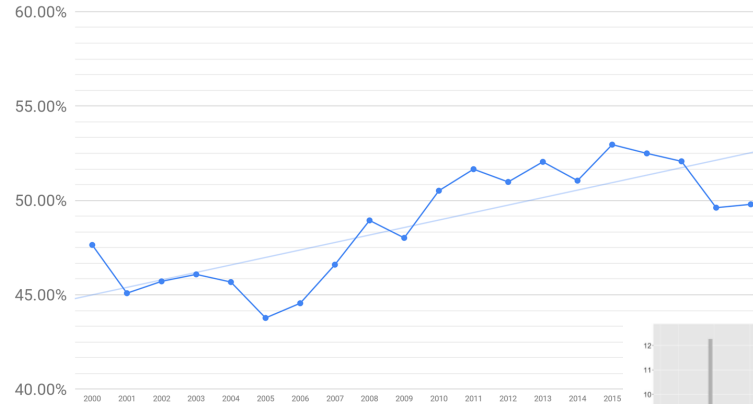
Year Over Year (YoY) Percent Change Of Hubbardston's Final QRSD Contribution



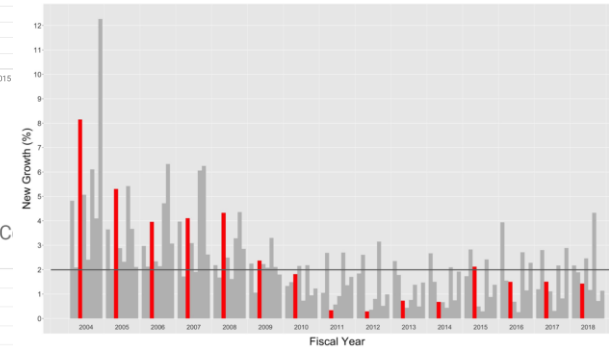
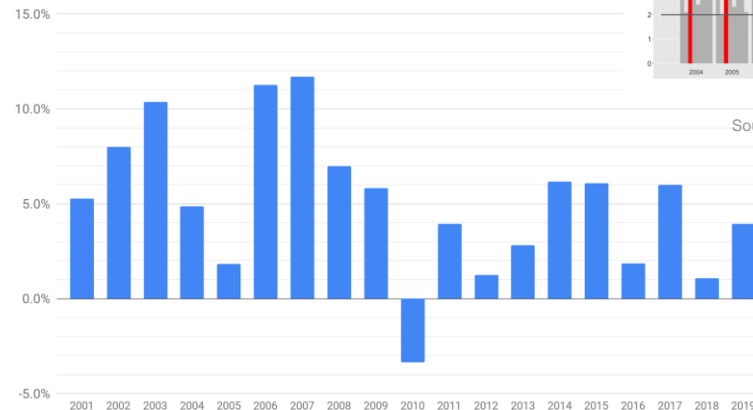
Challenges:

- QRSD assessment alone is consuming larger and larger portion of Hubbardston's annual budget. This is due Proposition 2.5 limitations coupled with the rate at which the QRSD annual assessment increases and exacerbated by limited annual new growth in town.
- If trend continues, Hubbardston will face increasingly difficult decisions regarding increased taxes or decreased services.
This is happening now.
- Variability of QRSD Assessment increases makes planning difficult *for the rest of the budget*

Hubbardston's QRSD Assessment as % of Total Budget



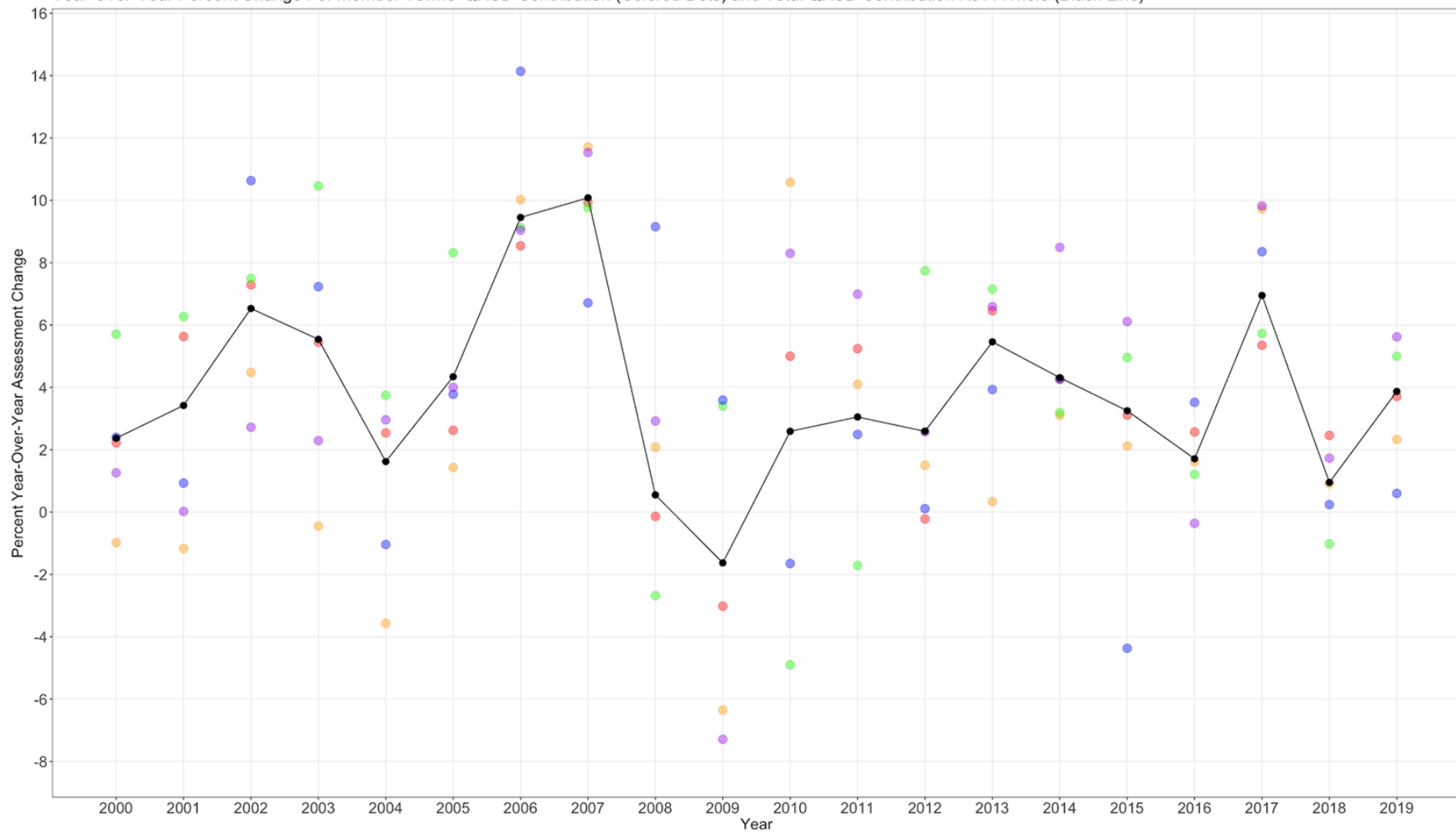
Year Over Year (YoY) Percent Change Of Hubbardston's Final QRSD C



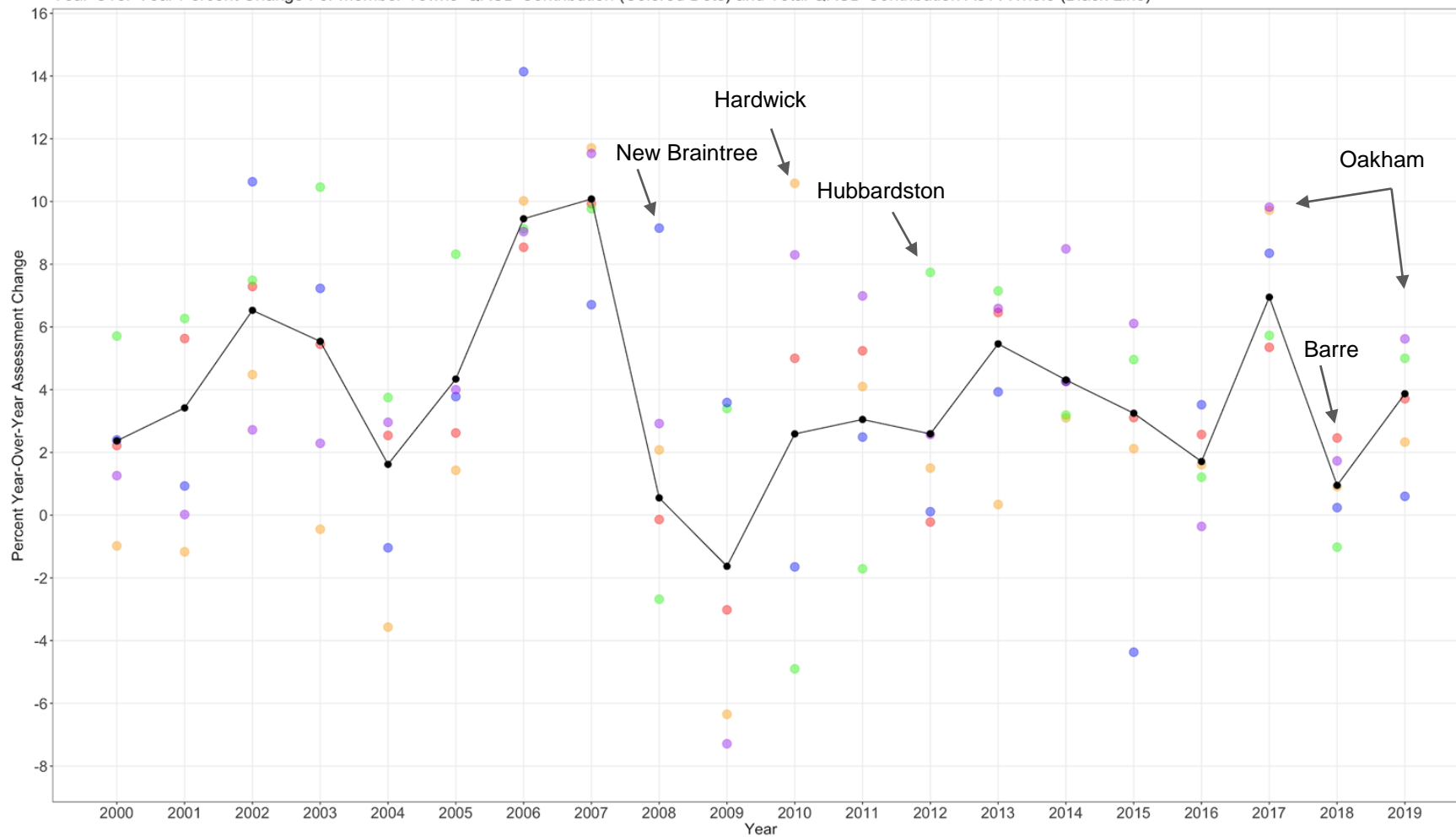
Source: Presentation to BOS on 8/20/18. Massachusetts Municipal Databank

This problem is not unique to
Hubbardston...

Year-Over-Year Percent Change For Member Towns' QRSD Contribution (Colored Dots) and Total QRSD Contribution As A Whole (Black Line)

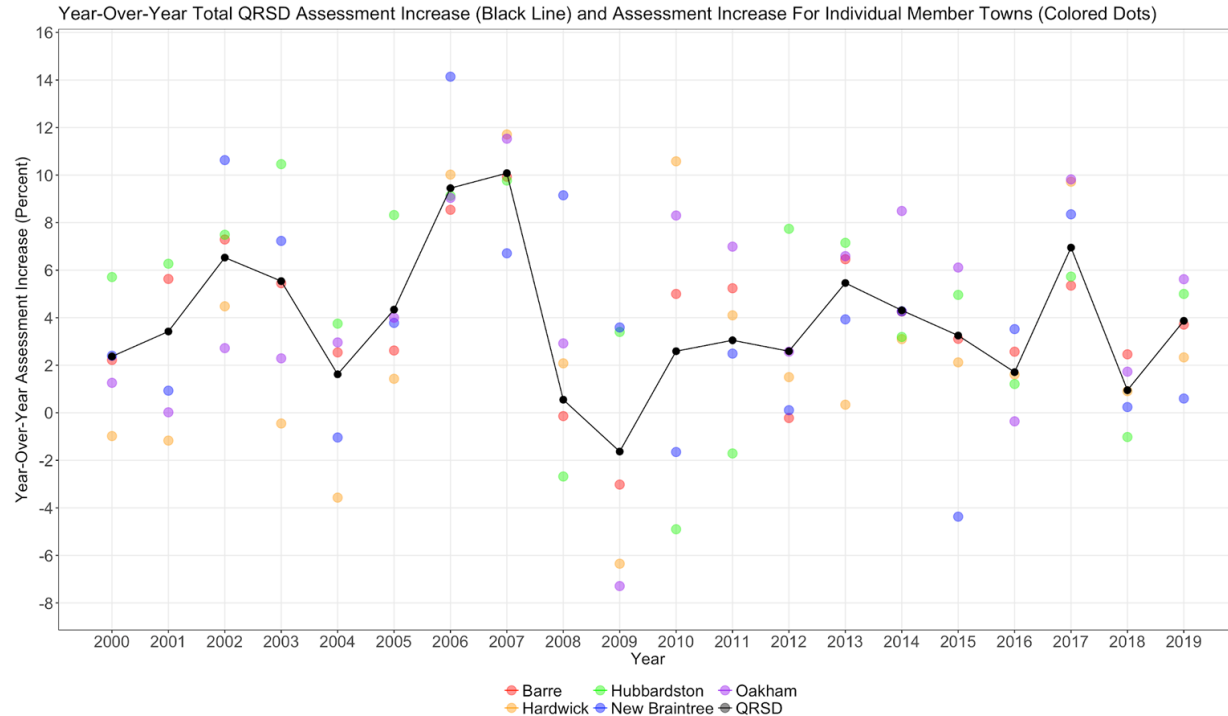


Year-Over-Year Percent Change For Member Towns' QRSD Contribution (Colored Dots) and Total QRSD Contribution As A Whole (Black Line)



Conclusions:

- Total QRSD YoY Assessment changes are highly variable
 - -1%-10%
- However, this variability is magnified and placed onto the member towns
 - -7.2%-14%
- Each year there are assessment increase “winners” and “losers”
 - Every member town has “lost” (greatest overall % increase) at least once in last 10 years
 - Every member town individually exhibits wider variability than QRSD as whole



Improving the QRSD Assessment Process

- Success of towns depends on high quality, successful schools.
- Assessment formula should be simplified to reduce year-to-year variability in assessment increases
 - Member towns may not be able to control all-member total assessment increase, which is based on QRSD total budget and state aid, but at least it can reduce variability in the assessment formula
 - Current formula does not even account for the staggered reassessments of each town (Town-wide assessment is factor in current QRSD formula).
- Examine whether an assessment based on member town student enrollment population will have less fluctuation year-to-year and/or more predictability

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrollment Population																
Barre	1086	1096	1076	1027	987	1011	972	931	877	842	799	818	799	755	772	730
Hardwick	462	490	461	439	440	423	405	410	381	383	376	376	380	359	345	292
Hubbardston	849	851	860	852	827	815	785	739	704	652	613	558	529	495	492	473
New Braintree	177	188	181	175	165	153	147	139	143	149	142	144	144	137	136	129
Oakham	400	403	406	395	371	343	332	302	290	283	265	249	245	230	241	221
TOTAL	2974	3028	2984	2888	2790	2745	2641	2521	2395	2309	2195	2145	2097	1976	1986	1845
% Of Enrollment	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barre	36.5%	36.2%	36.1%	35.6%	35.4%	36.8%	36.8%	36.9%	36.6%	36.5%	36.4%	38.1%	38.1%	38.2%	38.9%	39.6%
Hardwick	15.5%	16.2%	15.4%	15.2%	15.8%	15.4%	15.3%	16.3%	15.9%	16.6%	17.1%	17.5%	18.1%	18.2%	17.4%	15.8%
Hubbardston	28.5%	28.1%	28.8%	29.5%	29.6%	29.7%	29.7%	29.3%	29.4%	28.2%	27.9%	26.0%	25.2%	25.1%	24.8%	25.6%
New Braintree	6.0%	6.2%	6.1%	6.1%	5.9%	5.6%	5.6%	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%	6.5%	6.7%	6.9%	6.9%	6.8%	7.0%
Oakham	13.4%	13.3%	13.6%	13.7%	13.3%	12.5%	12.6%	12.0%	12.1%	12.3%	12.1%	11.6%	11.7%	11.6%	12.1%	12.0%

Percent of Actual Total Contribution	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barre	34.1%	34.1%	34.8%	35.1%	35.0%	35.4%	34.8%	34.5%	34.4%	34.2%	33.7%	34.5%	35.2%	34.3%	34.6%	34.6%	34.5%	34.8%	34.3%	34.8%	34.8%
Hardwick	19.5%	18.9%	18.1%	17.7%	16.7%	15.8%	15.4%	15.5%	15.7%	16.0%	15.2%	16.4%	16.5%	16.4%	15.6%	15.4%	15.2%	15.2%	15.6%	15.6%	15.4%
Hubbardston	25.4%	26.3%	27.0%	27.2%	28.5%	29.1%	30.2%	30.1%	30.0%	29.1%	30.6%	28.3%	27.0%	28.4%	28.8%	28.5%	29.0%	28.8%	28.5%	28.0%	28.3%
New Braintree	7.9%	7.9%	7.7%	8.0%	8.2%	7.9%	7.9%	8.2%	8.0%	8.7%	9.1%	8.7%	8.7%	8.5%	8.4%	8.4%	7.7%	7.9%	8.0%	7.9%	7.7%
Oakham	13.0%	12.8%	12.4%	12.0%	11.6%	11.8%	11.7%	11.7%	11.8%	12.1%	11.4%	12.0%	12.5%	12.5%	12.6%	13.1%	13.5%	13.2%	13.6%	13.7%	13.9%

Difference Between % Actual Contribution and % Enrollment Population By Town

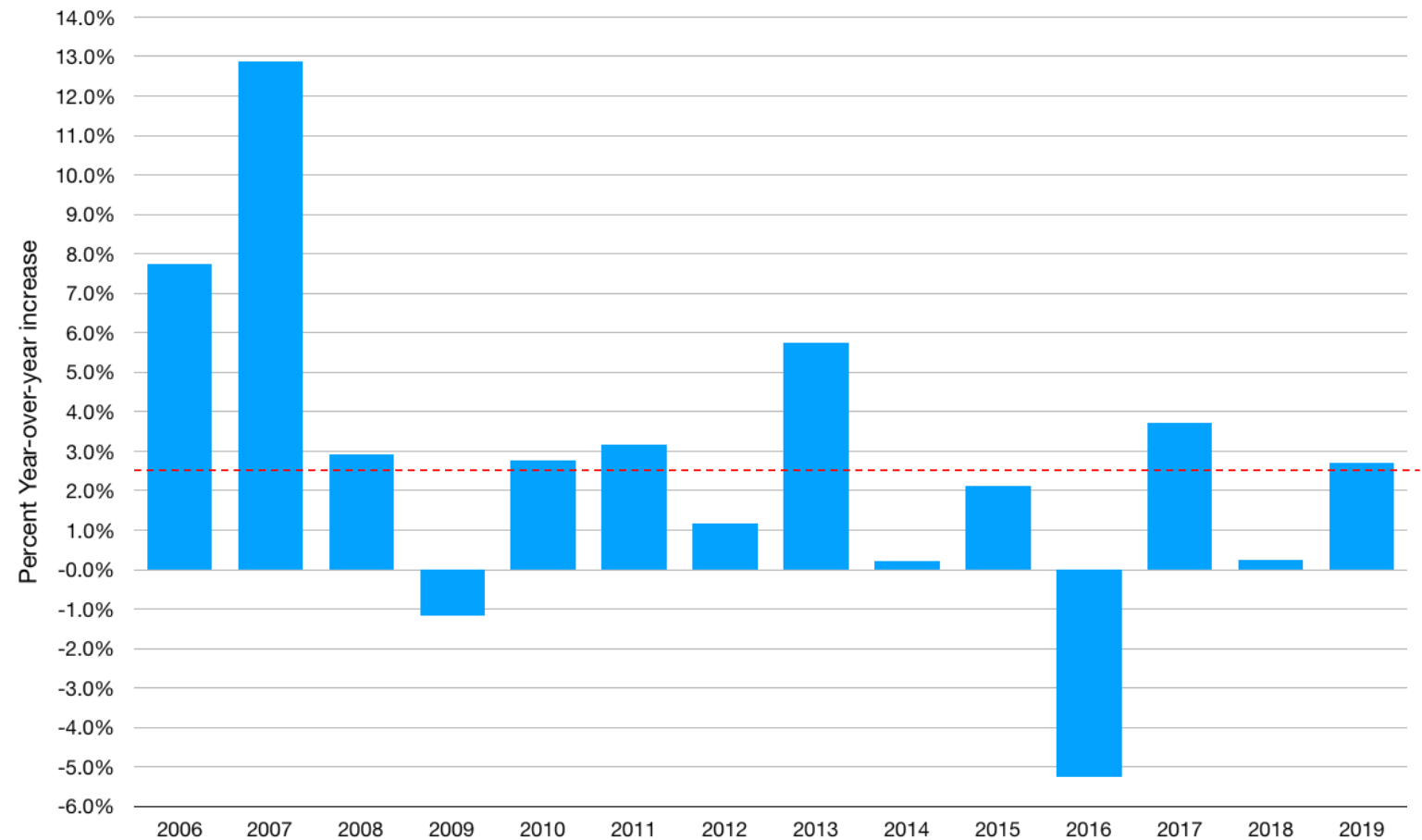
Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barre	-1.75%	-1.71%	-1.62%	-1.36%	-1.66%	-2.32%	-1.56%	-2.65%	-2.02%	-1.88%	-1.86%	-3.31%	-3.79%	-3.38%	-4.10%
Hardwick	-0.12%	-0.69%	0.27%	0.76%	-0.58%	0.96%	1.20%	0.10%	-0.34%	-1.20%	-1.91%	-2.32%	-2.52%	-2.58%	-2.01%
Hubbardston	1.65%	2.02%	1.21%	-0.43%	0.91%	-1.37%	-2.71%	-0.94%	-0.57%	0.27%	1.05%	2.83%	3.28%	2.91%	3.49%
New Braintree	1.95%	2.02%	1.91%	2.60%	3.21%	3.18%	3.13%	2.98%	2.40%	1.91%	1.28%	1.17%	1.12%	1.00%	0.83%
Oakham	-1.73%	-1.63%	-1.78%	-1.57%	-1.89%	-0.45%	-0.06%	0.52%	0.53%	0.89%	1.44%	1.62%	1.91%	2.05%	1.79%

Improving the QRSD Assessment Process

- Success of towns depends on high quality, successful schools.
- Assessment formula should be simplified to reduce year-to-year variability in assessment increases
 - Member towns may not be able control all-member total assessment increase, which is based on QRSD total budget and state aid, but at least it can reduce variability in the assessment formula
 - Current formula does not even account for the staggered reassessments of each town.
- Examine whether an assessment based on member town student enrollment population will have less fluctuation year-to-year

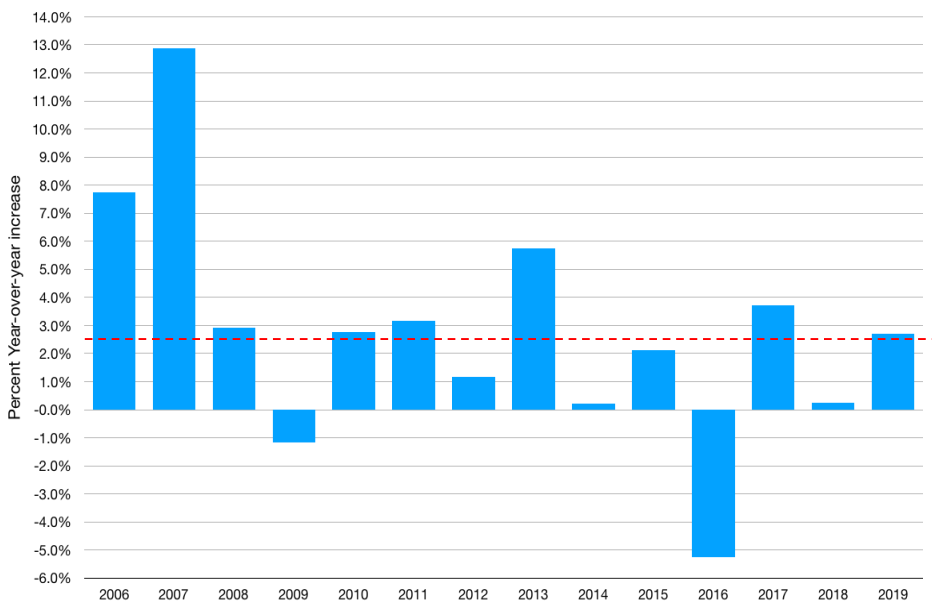
Hubbardston's Year-over-year % Assessment Change

(Hypothetical assessment based solely on enrollment population percentage)

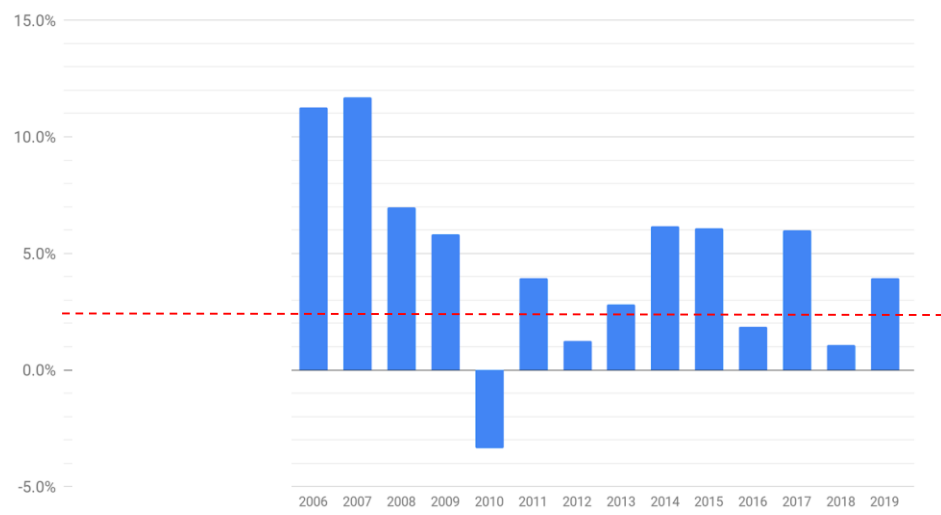


Assessment based on % Enrollment Population stabilizes Hubbardston's Assessment

Hypothetical YoY Increase Based on Overall Enrollment
Population Percentage:



Actual YoY Increase:



Improving the QRSD Assessment Process

- Success of towns depends on high quality, successful schools.
- Assessment formula should be simplified to reduce year-to-year variability in assessment increases
 - Member towns may not be able control all-member total assessment increase, which is based on QRSD total budget and state aid, but at least it can reduce variability in the assessment formula
 - Current formula does not even account for the staggered reassessments of each town.
 - Examine whether an assessment based on member town student enrollment population will have less fluctuation year-to-year (in progress)
- Communication and dialog between QRSD and member towns must improve
 - Budgetary time-tables should be better aligned
 - Discussion early and often about what towns can afford, rather than “final number” at end

Improving the QRSD Assessment Process

- Success of towns dependent on
- Assessment formula should show assessment increases
 - Member towns may not be able to afford QRSD total budget and state aid
 - Current formula does not account for less fluctuation year-to-year
- Communication and dialogue
 - Budgetary time-tables should be consistent
 - Discussion early and often

SERVING THE TOWNS OF BARRE, HARDWICK, HUBBARDSTON,
NEW BRAINTREE, NORTH BROOKFIELD, OAKHAM, PETERSHAM & RUTLAND SINCE 1834

BARRE GAZETTE

USPS 044560

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

June 13, 2019 | Vol. 185, No. 9 | \$1.00

www.barregazette.turley.com

Fourth graders take on immigrant roles



School committee lowers budget

Increase changes to 2.24 percent

By Ellenor Downer
Staff Writer

BARRE - In anticipation of upcoming Annual Town Meetings in its member towns, the Quabbin Regional School District Committee voted to lower the budget increase from 2.8 percent to 2.24 percent.

Cheryl Duval, director of administrative services, said the extra funds came from several estimated cost figures that came in at a lower estimate and the decision to put the middle school and grade 9 and 10 International Baccalaureate IB program on hold. Superintendent Dr. Sheila Muir said the state required the district to either move forward with an IB program for grades 7-10 this

school year or terminate the process. She explained that the district could opt to move forward with the middle school, grade 9 and 10 IB program at another time. The IB program for grades 11 and 12 would continue.

The using of these overestimated costs and reductions lowered Barre's operating assessment from 5.17 percent to 3.47 percent and Hardwick went from 0.52 percent to minus 1.07 percent. Hubbardston's assessment lowered to 6.97 percent from 8.83 percent; New Braintree from 8.60 percent to 6.82 percent and Oakham from 3.89 percent to 2.86 percent.

Cole Wilson of Hardwick Elementary School reported on happenings at Quabbin district elementary schools. Hardwick, New Braintree and Oakham students

See QRSD, page 7

Improving the QRSD Assessment Process

- Success of towns depends on high quality, successful schools.
- Assessment formula should be simplified to reduce year-to-year variability in assessment increases
 - Member towns may not be able control all-member total assessment increase, which is based on QRSD total budget and state aid, but at least it can reduce variability in the assessment formula
 - Current formula does not even account for the staggered reassessments of each town.
 - Examine whether an assessment based on member town student enrollment population will have less fluctuation year-to-year (in progress)
- Communication and dialog between QRSD and member towns must improve
 - Budgetary time-tables should be better aligned
 - Discussion early and often about what towns can afford, rather than “final number” at end

Further Work

- Examine whether assessments based solely on enrollment population percentages would provide budgetary stability for all member towns (in addition to Hubbardston)
- Improve communication between member towns' Finance Committees, Selectboards and QRSD school committee/administration regarding future budget processes.
- Encourage QRSD to develop budget forecast/plan
 - If they forecast their budget, we can better forecast our budget.