

Town of Clinton
2026 State of the Town
Michael Whitton, Town Supervisor

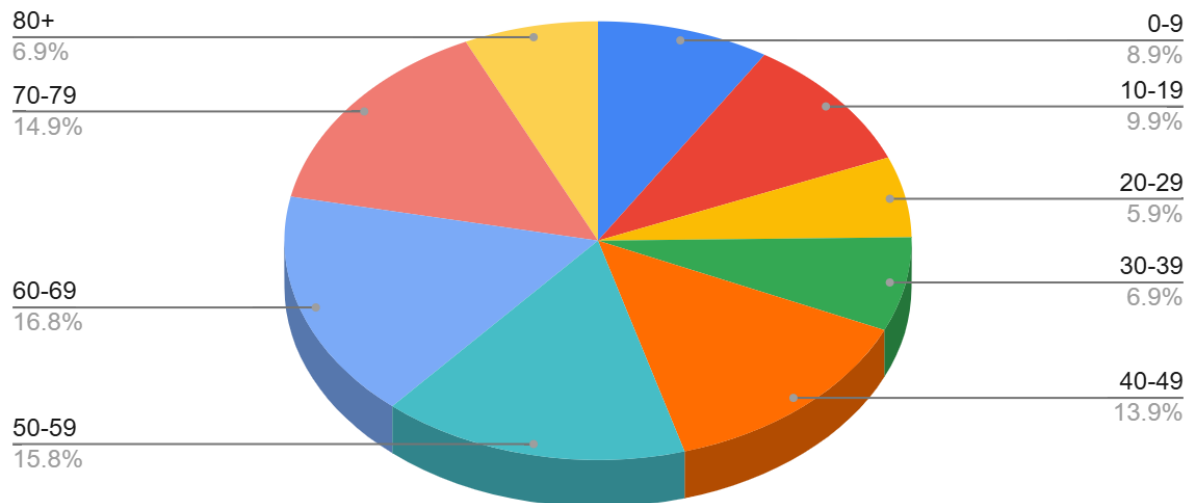
The November elections resulted in no change to the current makeup of the Town Board. I believe this reflects the trust our community places in the leadership team as we continue the important work of serving our town.

I also want to thank all employees of the Town of Clinton for their hard work and dedication. I am continually impressed by their commitment to excellence, and it is truly appreciated.

Statistics (2020 census)

Population	4061
Area (square miles)	38.1
People per square mile	10.5
Median age	54.3
Households	1570
Persons per household	2.5
High school grad or higher	89.6%
Bachelors degree or higher	49%
Population with Veteran status	7.2%
Per capita income	\$83,827
Median Household Income	\$119,615

Percentage by age range



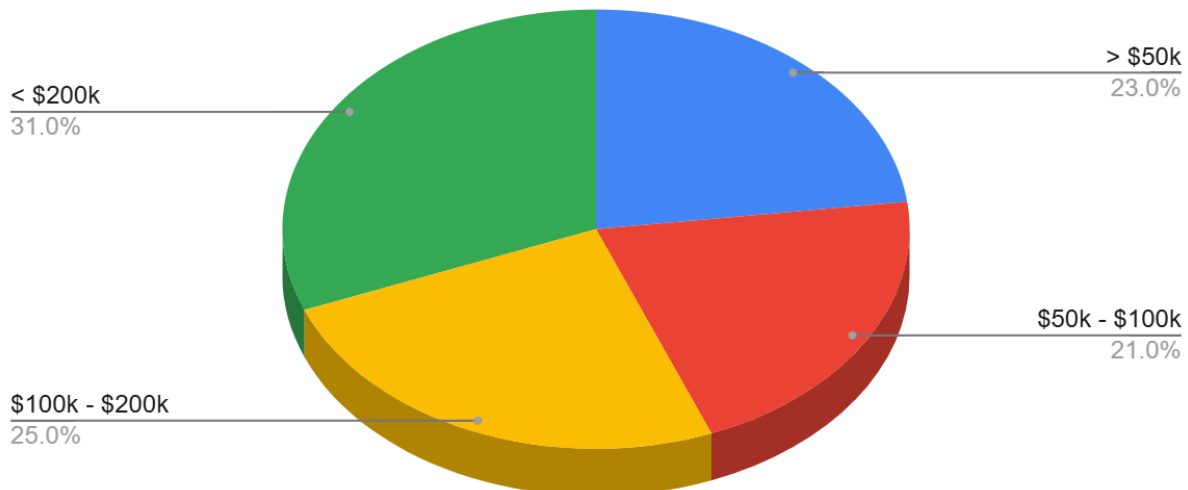
Budget and Taxes

The 2026 Town budget can be found on the Town of Clinton website at www.clintondcny.gov.

This document represents values by acting as a reflection of personal or organizational priorities, ensuring money is invested in what matters most. A key aspect of how this budget represents values is by prioritizing what to fund, directly reflecting what is deemed most important. It also connects financial resources to long-term goals while balancing needs.

I am always aware that more than half of the Town's budget is paid for by property taxes. Much of the remaining revenue comes from sales and mortgage taxes, which are indirect costs borne by our residents. Because of this, I take our responsibility to be careful, thoughtful, and respectful stewards of taxpayer dollars very seriously.

Household Income



I would like to take a moment to help residents better understand how their property tax dollars are allocated, and how small a portion actually funds Town services.

When residents tell me, “I pay high taxes,” what I most often hear is, “I pay high taxes, and I’m not getting value for my dollar.” That’s an understandable frustration, but it’s important to clarify where those tax dollars go.

The Town of Clinton tax rate is currently the lowest it has been since 2010 and 2011. In fact, over the past 53 years, dating back to 1973, which is as far as Dutchess County records go, these are the only two years when the Town tax rate has been lower than it is today.

The percentage of your total property tax bill that goes to the Town of Clinton varies depending on where you live. This is because properties are located in one of two fire districts (East Clinton or West Clinton) and one of four school districts (Hyde Park, Millbrook, Pine Plains, or Rhinebeck).

For example, my own property is located in the East Clinton Fire District and the Rhinebeck Central School District. Only 10.67% of my total property tax bill goes to the Town of Clinton. The remainder is distributed as follows:

- Rhinebeck Central School District: 68.05%
- Dutchess County: 14.00%
- East Clinton Fire District: 6.45%
- Clinton Community Library: 0.83%

Across the Town of Clinton, property taxes are driven primarily by school district levies. Town taxes average less than 10% of the total tax bill. County taxes account for approximately 14%, with fire districts and the Clinton Community Library making up the balance.

Dutchess County residents often experience a high overall tax burden, with the median annual property tax bill reaching \$9,388. However, only a small fraction of that total supports the services provided directly by Clinton.

2025 Accomplishments

The Climate Smart Communities Task Force has been approved for a \$50,000 grant through NYSERDA. The Town of Clinton became eligible for this grant due to the efforts of the CSC Task Force to make Clinton a certified Bronze Community. This grant, the money will be used in conjunction with a \$10,000 grant the Town has already been awarded to make our Highway Garage more energy efficient. This should save the Town money for years to come.

The Town of Clinton is serious about protecting our environmental resources in our agricultural community for future use. Solar panels are scheduled to be installed on the Salt Shed when the weather cooperates a little more. The solar panels will make the Town more energy efficient while lowering our electricity bill. This project was funded with grant money.

Our Hometown Heroes project began in 2024 to great success! Volunteers installed additional banners honoring Town veterans in 2025. More banners will be installed in subsequent rounds. Anyone interested in having or sponsoring a banner should contact the Supervisor's office at (845) 266-5853.

The Recreation Department secured a CDBG grant to install a Pickleball Court at Friends Park. That court is now open. The Town Board would like to thank the Recreation Department for its continued dedication to making sure our community has many options for leisure activities.

The Town Highway Department plows about 17 miles of County Roads after snowstorms, and the County pays the Town for this service. Those funds were used to purchase two plow trucks for the Highway Department. That bond payment is now finished. The Town has now put in an order for another plow truck and a pickup truck for the Highway Department. This bond payment will again be paid for by our contract with Dutchess County. We are replacing the highway fleet without using Town money.

After many years, the Town Board is nearing the end of our Zoning Revision process. This came about as a result of the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2012. Our revisions to the Town zoning code have been sent to the Dutchess County Planning & Development Department. After their review, and any subsequent changes the Town Board makes based on that review, we will then move to a vote regarding the revisions. We have already had significant public input over many years, and there will be at least one more public hearing before the zoning revision vote takes place.

The union that represents our highway employees is the Civil Service Employees' Association (CSEA). The contract between the Town and CSEA was scheduled to expire at the end of 2025. After several collaborative sessions of discussion, a new contract was approved. The new contract will be for three years, ending on December 31, 2028. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to Marion Auspitz, Chris Burns, and TJ Tompkins for their valuable partnership and participation in the negotiation process.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the monumental efforts of the many groups and individuals who responded to the severe thunderstorm on July 3. The storm left more than 90% of the Town of Clinton without power, with much of the area also experiencing a loss of internet service.

In the face of this widespread disruption, Central Hudson rose to the challenge, supported by utility crews from more than 40 states. Beginning that Saturday, they distributed dry ice and bottled water to affected customers. We are deeply grateful for the tireless work and coordination that helped our community begin to recover.

The East and West Clinton Volunteer Fire Companies were also invaluable, clearing roads, assisting with portable generators, providing power at their stations, and offering support in countless other ways.

Our recovery would not have been nearly as efficient without the dedicated

efforts of the Town of Clinton Highway Department. At one point, 12 roads were closed, yet the highway crew worked tirelessly over a holiday weekend to keep residents safe and restore access as quickly as possible. As Todd Martin aptly said, “Our highway crew is amazing!”

In response to this storm, I declared a State of Emergency on July 4. This action was taken to help secure funding for our response efforts and to minimize the financial burden on Town taxpayers.

Throughout the weekend, I remained in close contact with County Executive Sue Serino, Central Hudson, our two fire companies, and the Highway Department to coordinate our emergency response.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the recovery efforts, as well as our incredible residents, for their cooperation and patience during this challenging time.



New Pickleball Court at Friend's Park

2026 Goals

As we all know, cellular phone service in this area can be unreliable and, in some locations, virtually nonexistent. Town Board member Charlie Dykas has been diligently pursuing improvements to address this issue. The Town was initially informed that service upgrades would not occur until late 2027. This is an unacceptable timeline. Charlie has since engaged our State Representatives to seek their involvement, and we have now received assurances that this schedule will be accelerated. It is possible that meaningful improvements could occur by the end of this year, and I am confident that Charlie will continue to pursue this goal.

On May 3, 2025, Norene Collier passed away. Norene was an important voice in the Town of Clinton for many years. As Chair of the Town of Clinton Conservation Advisory Council, she successfully secured grants that helped the Town develop laws to protect water quality, farmland, open space, and wildlife habitat. She also obtained grants that contributed to the planning and construction of the Walkway Over the Hudson. Norene lived in the Town of Clinton for 58 years, and this coming spring, the Conservation Advisory Council will rename our nature trail in her honor.

I also intend to pursue new sources of revenue that do not place an additional burden on existing taxpayers. To that end, I will be introducing two proposals this year, both of which will require State legislative approval.

The first proposal is an Occupancy Tax on overnight stays in the Town of Clinton. With the anticipated approval of the Six Senses project and the expected cost of overnight accommodations, this tax could generate meaningful revenue from visitors rather than residents.

The second proposal is a Transfer Tax on higher-end home purchases within the Town. I intend to structure this tax so that it applies only when a sale price exceeds a certain multiple of the average home sale price, thereby targeting more expensive transactions. I propose that the revenue generated be split evenly between two dedicated funds: a maintenance fund for Town buildings and facilities, and a recreation fund to support improvements to our parks. This proposal would also require approval

through a Townwide referendum.

A new Comprehensive Plan Committee has been formed and will begin meeting soon. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2012, and numerous changes have occurred since then that should be reflected in an updated document. The process is expected to take approximately two years and will include extensive community engagement. Residents, stakeholders, and community members will all have opportunities to participate in defining a shared, long-term vision for future land use, development, and Town policy.

I believe it is essential to significantly improve efficiency in both the Zoning and Building Departments, a view shared by many. These departments have begun using a program called iWorQ to better track activities and applications. One clear benefit is the ability to submit applications online, which helps ensure completeness and will improve workflow and overall efficiency. We will be pursuing this improvement this year.

Finally, I plan to move forward with an idea that has been discussed for some time. Conveying unused Town-owned land to the Clinton Community Library, contingent upon the Library raising funds to construct a new, separate building. Should this occur, the current library space would revert to the Town, allowing it to be repurposed as a community space and as a meeting space for the Planning Board, ZBA, CAC, and other boards and committees.

Michael Whitton, Town Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Whitton", with a stylized flourish at the end.