

# FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

20 February 2024

## Introduction

More than thirty years ago the towns of Sandisfield and Otis joined together to solve a common problem. Both towns were educating our elementary students in buildings that were too small and unsuited to modern educational needs. Neither town was large enough to qualify for school building funds from the state. After much discussion, hard work, and town votes, the two towns created a new regional district, the **Farmington River Regional School District (FRRSD)**. This agreement allowed both towns to keep our elementary students close and under local control.

Just over three years ago Sandisfield began exploring alternatives to belonging in the regional district. Sandisfield's concerns focused primarily on academic performance of the elementary school, the **School Committee (SC)** performing its proper role and holding the administration accountable, and financial sustainability of the regional district. While the first two concerns have been resolved, the third has not. As a result, just over a year ago Sandisfield requested an amendment to the **Regional District Agreement (RDA)** to specify terms & conditions under which they could withdraw from the district, if they decided to do so in the future. Consequently, the SC is required to bring forward an amendment to the RDA.

Toward this end, the SC created a subcommittee – the **Regional Agreement Advisory Committee (RAAC)** - to propose to the SC an amended RDA for their consideration and approval. The RAAC recently voted to move consideration and decisions regarding how costs for operating the school district are apportioned to the towns back to the SC. This is a very complicated issue central to the future financial sustainability of the FRRSD. Accordingly, the SC has scheduled a special meeting on **Feb. 26, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the school library** to begin discussion of how to address this issue. The first step in this process will be to achieve SC consensus on the relevant facts & data underlying the current apportionment method, and to delineate the principal conclusions that can be logically drawn from these facts & data. What follows below is a starting point for the discussion to take place in the Feb. 26 special meeting.

## Underlying Relevant Facts & Data

Imagine for a moment that Otis and Sandisfield were one town, called Otisfield. The total assessment submitted to Otisfield by the FRRSD would be distributed to all Otisfield taxpayers according to property assessments. This is the way things are done in all municipal (single town) school districts in Massachusetts.

Per data from the MA **Department of Revenue (DOR)**, in this scenario, the measure of Otisfield's total assessed property value, known as its **Equalized Valuation (EV)**, would be just over \$1B, with **74%** of that comprised by the current Otis EV, and **26%** comprised by the current Sandisfield EV. Based on this, the Otisfield taxpayers formerly from Otis would pay 74% of the assessment from FRRSD, and those formerly from Sandisfield would pay the remaining 26% of the assessment. See *Appendix 1*.

Today Otis pays **60%** of the FRRSD assessment on their 74% of the aggregate EV, while Sandisfield pays the remaining **40%** of the assessment on their 26% of the aggregate EV. See *Appendix 2*.

The current RDA distributes the total FRRSD assessment to the towns via two different apportionment formulas: one for operating costs, and the other for capital costs. The RDA distributes the operating costs to the towns based on the enrollment split between the two towns – currently at **57%** Otis and **43%** Sandisfield – with no material consideration of relative wealth. As for the much smaller capital costs, the RDA distributes these costs using the average of the enrollment and EV splits, which currently stand at **66%** Otis and **34%** Sandisfield. And this is how the current 60% Otis, 40% Sandisfield split of the FRRSD assessed costs is arrived at. See *Appendix 2*.

When the RDA was put into place in 1992 the **difference** between the EV's of Otis and Sandisfield stood at **\$153M**, while today it stands at **\$494M**, an increase of **3.2x**. The founders of the FRRSD clearly could not have anticipated this drastic change. Unfortunately, the RDA hasn't been amended once since its inception 32 years ago. *See Appendix 3.*

Equally, and perhaps even more relevant here, the MA **Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE)** computes each year a parameter known as the **Combined Effort Yield (CEY)** for each MA town. The CEY is DESE's measure of the maximum the town could reasonably afford and be expected to contribute toward its education expenses. It's computed using a formula that considers both the EV of the town along with the total income of its residents. Currently the total cost assessed to Otis by the FRRSD is **\$1.4M under** its CEY, at **62%** of its CEY, while Sandisfield is **\$266K over** its CEY, at **121%** of its CEY. In short, Otis is paying significantly less than what DESE has determined it can afford, and Sandisfield is paying significantly more than what DESE has determined it can afford. *See Appendix 4.*

As indicated in the table below, the FRRSD assessment to each town comprises a significant portion of the tax levy the town must raise via property taxes. The last column of this table shows the percentage of the town tax levy attributable to the assessment from FRRSD, which is of course also the percentage of each tax bill the town sends out attributable to FRRSD. We refer to this as the **FRRSD Tax Load (FTL)**. The Sandisfield FTL is 6.05 percentage points higher than the Otis percentage, rendering Sandisfield's FTL **14.75%** greater than the Otis FTL. *See Appendix 5.*

|                    | FY24 Tax Levy | FY24 FRRSD Assessment | Assessment % of Tax Levy |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Otis</b>        | \$5,617,441   | \$2,302,417           | 40.99%                   |
| <b>Sandisfield</b> | \$3,290,075   | \$1,547,397           | 47.03%                   |

Lastly, DOR provides data each year for each town in MA that indicates the property tax load on its residents. This data is shown in the table below for Otis and Sandisfield, along with a link to the DOR data source.

| FY23        | SF Values (\$) | SF Parcels (#) | Avg SF Value (\$) | Avg SF TB (\$) | SF TB % of Value | Income Per Capita (\$) | Avg TB % of Income |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Otis        | 659,098,900    | 1,546          | 426,325           | 2,822          | 0.66             | 35,226                 | 8.01               |
| Sandisfield | 204,324,100    | 594            | 343,980           | 3,643          | 1.06             | 19,338                 | 18.84              |
| Ratio (O/S) | 3.23           | 2.60           | 1.24              | 0.77           | 0.62             | 1.82                   | 0.43               |
| Ratio (S/O) | 0.31           | 0.38           | 0.81              | 1.29           | 1.61             | 0.55                   | 2.35               |

SF = Single Family  
TB = Tax Bill

Source: [https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=AverageSingleTaxBill.SingleFamTaxBill\\_wRange](https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=AverageSingleTaxBill.SingleFamTaxBill_wRange)

The columns highlighted in orange provide, for each town, the **Average Single-Family Tax Bill (ASFTB)**, the **Income Per Capita (IPC)**, and the ratio of the ASFTB to the IPC. The last column can be viewed as a measure of the **Town Tax Load (TTL)** on its residents, as it indicates on average what percentage of resident income is consumed by the town tax bill.

The difference between the Otis and Sandisfield TTL is quite substantial, with the Sandisfield TTL, at **18.84%**, being a factor of **2.35x** greater than the Otis TTL, at **8.01%**. This is of course a direct consequence of the Otis IPC being a factor of 1.82x greater than the Sandisfield IPC, combined with the Sandisfield ASFTB being a factor of 1.29x higher than the Otis ASFTB.

The same DOR data source used above can be used to compare the TTL's of Sandisfield and Otis to those of other nearby Southern Berkshire County towns, as well as to all other towns in MA. Doing so yields the table below:

| FY23 Average Single Family Tax Bill % of Income Per Capita |       |         |               |           |
|--|-------|---------|---------------|-----------|
| Town   | %     | MA Rank | MA percentile | Area Rank |
| Otis   | 8.01  | 8       | 2%            | 1         |
| Tolland  | 11.15 | 36      | 10%           | 2         |
| Becket   | 11.59 | 48      | 14%           | 3         |
| Granville  | 12.03 | 58      | 17%           | 4         |
| Blandford  | 12.26 | 67      | 19%           | 5         |
| New Marlborough  | 12.51 | 76      | 22%           | 6         |
| Sheffield  | 14.15 | 143     | 41%           | 7         |
| Great Barrington   | 14.52 | 168     | 48%           | 8         |
| Monterey   | 14.77 | 178     | 51%           | 9         |
| Tyringham  | 17.12 | 267     | 76%           | 10        |
| Sandisfield  | 18.84 | 301     | 86%           | 11        |

The local towns listed in this table are ordered by TTL %, from lowest to highest TTL %. Otis has the lowest TTL of all the local towns listed, while Sandisfield has the highest. Relative to MA, only **2%** of MA towns have a **lower** TTL than Otis, and Sandisfield has a TTL **higher** than **86%** of MA towns.

Perhaps even more relevant, by multiplying, for each town, the ASFTB by the FTL percentage, we obtain the portion of each ASFTB attributable to the FRRSD assessment, as shown in the table below. As can be seen, on average a single-family taxpayer in Sandisfield pays **\$557**, or **48%** more a year towards FRRSD than a single-family taxpayer in Otis.

|                         | FRRSD Tax Load % | Average Single Family Tax Bill | Portion of ASFTB attributable to FRRSD |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Otis                    | 40.99%           | \$2,822                        | \$1,157                                |
| Sandisfield             | 47.03%           | \$3,643                        | \$1,713                                |
| <i>Difference (S-O)</i> |                  |                                | \$557                                  |
| <i>Ratio (S/O)</i>      |                  |                                | 1.48                                   |

### Ratification of the Relevant Underlying Facts & Data

It will be important for the SC to ratify the underlying facts & data relevant to the questions of the apportionment method and the financial sustainability of the FRRSD. For this purpose, at a minimum the SC should consider the following questions, among others:

- Are the facts & data presented relevant to the issues of the apportionment method & financial sustainability?
- Are the cited data sources credible?
- Has the data been accurately & clearly transcribed & presented from these sources?
- Are there other credible sources, with additional relevant facts & data, that should be added to what has been considered here?

### Establishment of Conclusions Evident from the Relevant Underlying Facts & Data

It will also be important for the SC to delineate conclusions evident from the relevant underlying facts & data. For this purpose, at a minimum the SC should consider the following questions, among others:

- Is the FRRSD, as currently constructed and operated, financially sustainable?
- Is amendment of the apportionment method needed to achieve financial sustainability?
- Should other approaches beyond amendment of the apportionment method be considered?

## **Next Steps**

If the SC concludes that amendment of the apportionment method is needed to achieve financial sustainability of the FRRSD, the SC will move to the next step of determining a framework to evaluate and compare different apportionment methods, and subsequently select the most appropriate alternative. After the SC votes to approve the most appropriate apportionment method, it will next vote to approve a new RDA incorporating this method, after consideration of the other changes to the RDA proposed by the RAAC. The new RDA approved by the SC will then be reviewed by DESE staff for preliminary approval. After this preliminary approval is received from DESE, the SC will then formally transmit the new RDA to each of the two towns, so that each town may vote on its acceptance in a town meeting. If the new RDA is approved by each of the two towns, it will then go to DESE for final approval by the DESE Commissioner. The new RDA will be in effect immediately upon its approval by the DESE Commissioner.

## **Closing Comments**

In closing, we underscore that the data & facts presented here pertain only to the financial sustainability of the FRRSD as a **regional district, as it is currently constructed and operated**. No attempt has been made here to provide a compendium of all the facts & data needed to consider alternatives to a regional district, or to consider alternatives to the way the FRRSD is currently operated and constructed **other than changing the RDA apportionment method**. See *Appendix 6*.

***APPENDICES NOW FOLLOW ON THE SUBSEQUENT PAGES***

***EACH APPENDIX IS A SEPARATE PAGE WITH A LABEL AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE***

**APPENDIX 1**

**LA-19**  
Equalized Valuation Report  
SANDISFIELD - 260 2022

Jurisdiction Sandisfield - 260 EQV Year 2022

**LA19 (FINAL)**

| CLASS                          | Assessed Value | Assessment Ratio | Estimated Full Value |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| RESIDENTIAL                    | 218,919,010    | 0.98             | 223,386,700          |
| OPEN SPACE                     | 0              |                  | 0                    |
| COMMERCIAL                     | 6,174,276      | 0.99             | 6,265,400            |
| INDUSTRIAL                     | 238,200        | 0.98             | 243,100              |
| PERSONAL PROPERTY              | 30,134,612     | 1.00             | 30,134,600           |
| TOTAL REAL/PERSONAL PROPERTY   | 255,466,098    | 0.98             | 260,029,800          |
| ESTIMATED GROWTH               |                | 0.76%            | 1,976,200            |
| PROPOSED EQUALIZED VALUATION   |                |                  | 262,006,000          |
| CHAPTER 121A VALUE             |                |                  | 0                    |
| 2022 FINAL EQUALIZED VALUATION |                |                  | 262,006,000          |

**25.75 %**

**LA-19**  
Equalized Valuation Report  
OTIS - 225 2022

Jurisdiction Otis - 225 EQV Year 2022

**LA19 (FINAL)**

| CLASS                          | Assessed Value | Assessment Ratio | Estimated Full Value |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| RESIDENTIAL                    | 653,481,095    | 0.93             | 702,667,800          |
| OPEN SPACE                     | 0              |                  | 0                    |
| COMMERCIAL                     | 15,330,205     | 0.93             | 16,458,500           |
| INDUSTRIAL                     | 3,395,700      | 0.93             | 3,651,300            |
| PERSONAL PROPERTY              | 26,812,001     | 1.00             | 26,812,000           |
| TOTAL REAL/PERSONAL PROPERTY   | 699,019,001    | 0.93             | 749,589,600          |
| ESTIMATED GROWTH               |                | 0.80%            | 5,996,700            |
| PROPOSED EQUALIZED VALUATION   |                |                  | 755,586,300          |
| CHAPTER 121A VALUE             |                |                  | 0                    |
| 2022 FINAL EQUALIZED VALUATION |                |                  | 755,586,300          |

**74.25 %**

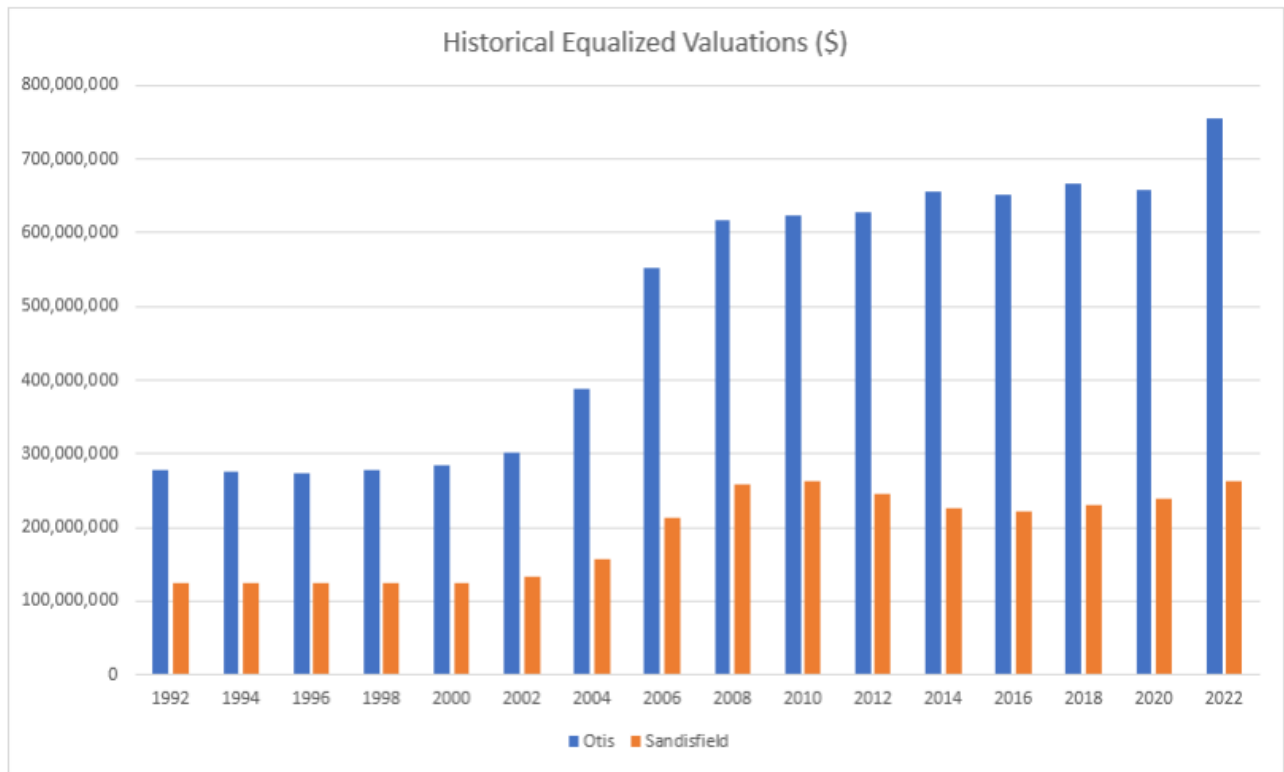
Reference: <https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/gateway/DLSPublic/LA19>

APPENDIX 2 (page 1 of 2)

| Farmington River Regional School District                                    |   |                        |                        |                        |                       |              |
|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| FY24 Assessment Calculation - Excess E&D applied to FY23 - Presented 3/23/23 |   |                        |                        |                        |                       |              |
|  |   | 2023                   |                        | 2024                   |                       |              |
| <b>Step 1</b>  | <b>Operating Budget</b>                         | <b>0.41%</b>           |                        | <b>4.77%</b>           |                       |              |
|  | Total Budgeted Expenditures                     | \$ 4,672,432.00        | \$ 4,895,205.00        |                        |                       |              |
|  | Less Transportation Budget                      | \$ 399,677.00          | \$ 416,104.00          |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Adjusted Operating Budget</b>                | <b>\$ 4,272,755.00</b> | <b>\$ 4,479,101.00</b> |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 2</b>  | Chap 70   | \$ 612,111.00          | \$ 618,910.00          |                        |                       |              |
|  | E&D Utilization                                 | \$ 200,000.00          | \$ 237,135.00          | E&D > 5%               |                       | \$134,213.00 |
|  | Earnings on Investments                         | \$ 1,000.00            | \$ 2,500.00            |                        |                       |              |
|  | Local Fees                                      | \$ 1,000.00            | \$ -                   |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Total Anticipated Revenues</b>               | <b>\$ 814,111.00</b>   | <b>\$ 858,545.00</b>   |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Balance to be Assessed</b>                   | <b>\$ 3,458,644.00</b> | <b>\$ 3,620,556.00</b> |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 3</b>  | <b>FY24 Required Local Contribution</b>         |                        |                        | <b>Change</b>          |                       |              |
| 1a   | Otis  | \$ 1,370,021.00        | \$ 1,443,945.00        | \$ 73,924.00           |                       | 5.40%        |
| 1b   | Sandisfield                                     | \$ 861,252.00          | \$ 907,243.00          | \$ 45,991.00           |                       | 5.34%        |
|  | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>\$ 2,231,273.00</b> | <b>\$ 2,351,188.00</b> |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Balance to be assessed</b>                   | <b>\$ 1,227,371.00</b> | <b>\$ 1,269,368.00</b> |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 4</b>  |   |                        |                        | <b>2023</b>            | <b>2024</b>           |              |
| 2a   | Otis  | \$ 703,385.00          | \$ 726,459.00          | 57.31%                 | 57.23%                |              |
| 2b   | Sandisfield                                     | \$ 523,986.00          | \$ 542,909.00          | 42.69%                 | 42.77%                |              |
|  | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>\$ 1,227,371.00</b> | <b>\$ 1,269,368.00</b> |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 5</b>  | <b>Transportation</b>                           |                        |                        |                        |                       |              |
|  | Regular Transportation                          | \$ 367,677.00          | \$ 317,604.00          |                        |                       |              |
|  | SN Transportation                               | \$ 32,000.00           | \$ 98,500.00           |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Total Transportation Budget</b>              | <b>\$ 399,677.00</b>   | <b>\$ 416,104.00</b>   |                        |                       |              |
|  | Less Reg Transportation Aid                     | \$ (226,979.00)        | \$ (196,846.00)        |                        |                       |              |
|  | <b>Trans Amount to be assessed</b>              | <b>\$ 172,698.00</b>   | <b>\$ 219,258.00</b>   |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 6</b>  |   |                        |                        | <b>2023</b>            | <b>2024</b>           |              |
| 3a   | Otis  | \$ 98,973.00           | \$ 125,481.00          | 57.31%                 | 57.23%                |              |
| 3b   | Sandisfield                                     | \$ 73,725.00           | \$ 93,777.00           | 42.69%                 | 42.77%                |              |
|  | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>\$ 172,698.00</b>   | <b>\$ 219,258.00</b>   |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Step 7</b>  | <b>Total Op &amp; Trans Assess.</b>             |                        |                        |                        |                       |              |
|  | Otis (1a+2a+3a)                                 | \$ 2,172,379.00        | \$ 2,295,885.00        | 5.69%                  | \$ 123,506.00         |              |
|  | Sandisfield (1b+2b+3b)                          | \$ 1,458,963.00        | \$ 1,543,929.00        | 5.82%                  | \$ 84,966.00          |              |
| <b>Step 8</b>  | <b>Capital Budget - Doors &amp; Gym Ceiling</b> | <b>\$ 70,270.00</b>    | <b>\$ 10,000.00</b>    |                        | <b>2024</b>           |              |
|  | Otis 50% Enrollment                             | \$ 20,135.00           | \$ 2,862.00            |                        | 57.23%                |              |
|  | Otis 50% Equalized Valuation                    | \$ 25,781.00           | \$ 3,713.00            |                        | 74.25%                |              |
|  | <b>Otis Total</b>                               | <b>\$ 45,896.00</b>    | <b>\$ 6,575.00</b>     |                        |                       |              |
|  | Sfld 50% Enrollment                             | \$ 15,000.00           | \$ 2,139.00            |                        | 42.77%                |              |
|  | Sfld 50% 50% Equalized Valuation                | \$ 9,374.00            | \$ 1,287.00            |                        | 25.75%                |              |
|  | <b>Sfld Total</b>                               | <b>\$ 24,374.00</b>    | <b>\$ 3,426.00</b>     |                        |                       |              |
| <b>Total Annual Assessment</b>   |   |                        |                        |                        |                       |              |
|  | Otis (Step 7 + Step 8)                          | \$ 2,218,275.00        | \$ 2,302,460.00        | 3.80%                  | \$ 84,185.00          |              |
|  | Sandisfield (Step 7 + Step 8)                   | \$ 1,483,337.00        | \$ 1,547,355.00        | 4.32%                  | \$ 64,018.00          |              |
| <b>Enrollment</b>  |   | <b>2021</b>            | <b>2022</b>            | <b>2023</b>            | <b>Combined Total</b> | <b>FY24</b>  |
| Otis   |   | 125                    | 136                    | 127                    | 388                   | 57.23%       |
| Sandisfield  |   | 96                     | 100                    | 94                     | 290                   | 42.77%       |
| <b>Total</b>   |   | <b>221</b>             | <b>236</b>             | <b>221</b>             | <b>678</b>            |              |
| <b>Equalized Valuation</b>   | <b>FY2022 DLS Final Equalized Valuation</b>     | <b>Total</b>           |                        | <b>% for Each Town</b> |                       |              |
| Otis   | \$ 755,586,300                                  |                        |                        | 74.25%                 |                       |              |
| Sandisfield  | \$ 262,006,000                                  | \$ 1,017,592,300       |                        | 25.75%                 |                       |              |

| <b>CURRENT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY</b>                           |                        | <i>Page 1 of 11</i>       |                    |                             |                    |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
|   | <b>District Totals</b> | <b>Breakdown by Towns</b> |                    | <b>% Breakdown by Towns</b> |                    |
|   |                        | <b>Otis</b>               | <b>Sandisfield</b> | <b>Otis</b>                 | <b>Sandisfield</b> |
| <b>District Foundation Enrollment (last 3 years average)</b>    | 226                    | 129                       | 97                 | 57.23%                      | 42.77%             |
| <b>Equalized Valuations</b>                                     | \$1,017,592,300        | \$755,586,300             | \$262,006,000      | <b>74.25%</b>               | <b>25.75%</b>      |
| <b>50/50 Equal Weighting (Avg) of EV % &amp; Enrollment %</b>   |                        |                           |                    | 65.74%                      | 34.26%             |
| <b>Adjusted Operating Budget to be assessed</b>                 | \$3,620,556            |                           |                    |                             |                    |
| <b>Required Local Minimum Contribution</b>                      | \$2,351,188            | \$1,443,945               | \$907,243          | 61.41%                      | 38.59%             |
| <b>Remaining Adjusted Operating Budget to be assessed</b>       | \$1,269,368            | \$726,423                 | \$542,945          | 57.23%                      | 42.77%             |
| <b>Transportation Budget to be assessed</b>                     | \$219,258              | \$125,475                 | \$93,783           | 57.23%                      | 42.77%             |
| <b>Capital Budget to be assessed</b>                            | \$10,000               | \$6,574                   | \$3,426            | 65.74%                      | 34.26%             |
| <b>TOTAL ASSESSMENT</b>   | \$3,849,814            | \$2,302,417               | \$1,547,397        | <b>59.81%</b>               | <b>40.19%</b>      |
| <b>Tax Burden Factor: (% Total Assessment / % Total EV) - 1</b> |                        |                           |                    | <b>-19.46%</b>              | <b>56.11%</b>      |

**APPENDIX 3**



\$153M delta

\$494M delta  
(3.2x increase)

Reference: <https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=PropertyTaxInformation.EQV.EQV>



**APPENDIX 4**

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
FY24 Chapter 70 and Net School Spending Formula Spreadsheet**



08/10/23

| 1                    |             | 3  | 4                                       | 5                        | 6                                     | 7                           | 8                  | 9 |
|----------------------|-------------|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|
|                      |             | From DOR   |   | From DOR                 |                                       |                             |                    |   |
|                      |             | 1. Calculation of effort goal (target local share) |   |                          |                                       |                             |                    |   |
|                      |             | uniform property percentage                        |   |                          | uniform income percentage             |                             |                    |   |
|                      |             | 0.3534%  |   |                          | 1.5331%                               |                             |                    |   |
| LEA                  | Town        | total<br>EQV 2022                                  | local effort<br>from property<br>wealth | DOR total<br>income 2020 | local effort<br>from income<br>wealth | combined<br>effort<br>yield | FY24<br>foundation |   |
| 225                  | Otis        | 755,586,300  | 2,670,262                               | 67,044,000               | 1,027,851                             | 3,698,113                   | 1,750,236          |   |
| 260                  | Sandisfield | 262,006,000  | 925,936                                 | 23,171,000               | 355,235                               | 1,281,171                   | 1,219,862          |   |
| Totals               |             | \$1,017,592,300                                    | \$3,596,198                             | \$90,215,000             | \$1,383,086                           | \$4,979,284                 | \$2,970,098        |   |
| % Otis               |             | 74.25%   | 74.25%                                  | 74.32%                   | 74.32%                                | 74.27%                      | 58.93%             |   |
| % Sandisfield        |             | 25.75%   | 25.75%                                  | 25.68%                   | 25.68%                                | 25.73%                      | 41.07%             |   |
| Otis FY24 Assessment |             |  |   |                          |                                       | \$2,302,417                 |                    |   |
| Sand FY24 Assessment |             |  |   |                          |                                       | \$1,547,397                 |                    |   |
| Otis Ass't % CEY     |             |  |   |                          |                                       | 62.26%                      |                    |   |
| Sand Ass't % CEY     |             |  |   |                          |                                       | 120.78%                     |                    |   |
| Otis Ass't Under CEY |             |  |   |                          |                                       | \$1,395,696                 |                    |   |
| Sand Ass't Over CEY  |             |  |   |                          |                                       | \$266,226                   |                    |   |

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
 DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES  
 BUREAU OF ACCOUNTS

**Otis**  
 TOWN

**TAX RATE RECAPITULATION**  
**Fiscal Year 2024**

**I. TAX RATE SUMMARY**

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| la. Total amount to be raised (from page 2, IIe)                           | \$ 8,612,568.09        |
| lb. Total estimated receipts and other revenue sources (from page 2, IIIe) | 2,995,126.69           |
| lc. Tax Levy (Ia minus Ib)   | <u>\$ 5,617,441.40</u> |
| ld. Distribution of Tax Rates and levies                                   |                        |

| CLASS           | (b)<br>Levy percentage<br>(from LA5) | (c)<br>Ic above times<br>each percent in col (b) | (d)<br>Valuation by class<br>(from LA-5) | (e)<br>Tax Rates<br>(c) / (d) x 1000 | (f)<br>Levy by class<br>(d) x (e) / 1000 |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Residential     | 93.8452                              | 5,271,699.12                                     | 813,534,010.00                           | 6.48                                 | 5,271,700.38                             |
| Net of Exempt   |                                      |  |  |                                      |  |
| Open Space      | 0.0000                               | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                 | 0.00                                     |
| Commercial      | 1.8616                               | 104,574.29                                       | 16,137,590.00                            | 6.48                                 | 104,571.58                               |
| Net of Exempt   |                                      |  |  |                                      |  |
| Industrial      | 0.4971                               | 27,924.30  | 4,309,700.00                             | 6.48                                 | 27,926.86                                |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b> | <b>96.2039</b>                       |  | <b>833,981,300.00</b>                    |                                      | <b>5,404,198.82</b>                      |
| Personal        | 3.7961                               | 213,243.69                                       | 32,907,806.00                            | 6.48                                 | 213,242.58                               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>100.0000</b>                      |  | <b>866,889,106.00</b>                    |                                      | <b>5,617,441.40</b>                      |

MUST EQUAL 1C

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
 DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES  
 BUREAU OF ACCOUNTS

**Sandisfield**

TOWN

**TAX RATE RECAPITULATION**  
**Fiscal Year 2024**

**I. TAX RATE SUMMARY**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| la. Total amount to be raised (from page 2, IIe)                           | \$ 4,570,769.44 |
| lb. Total estimated receipts and other revenue sources (from page 2, IIIe) | 1,280,694.79    |
| lc. Tax Levy (Ia minus Ib)   | \$ 3,290,074.65 |
| ld. Distribution of Tax Rates and levies                                   |                 |

| CLASS           | (b)<br>Levy percentage<br>(from LA5) | (c)<br>Ic above times<br>each percent in col (b) | (d)<br>Valuation by class<br>(from LA-5) | (e)<br>Tax Rates<br>(c) / (d) x 1000 | (f)<br>Levy by class<br>(d) x (e) / 1000 |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Residential     | 87.0313                              | 2,863,394.74                                     | 286,626,115.00                           | 9.99                                 | 2,863,394.89                             |
| Net of Exempt   |                                      |  |  |                                      |  |
| Open Space      | 0.0000                               | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                 | 0.00                                     |
| Commercial      | 2.6052                               | 85,713.02  | 8,579,958.00                             | 9.99                                 | 85,713.78                                |
| Net of Exempt   |                                      |  |  |                                      |  |
| Industrial      | 0.0847                               | 2,786.69   | 278,900.00                               | 9.99                                 | 2,786.21                                 |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b> | <b>89.7212</b>                       |  | <b>295,484,973.00</b>                    |                                      | <b>2,951,894.88</b>                      |
| Personal        | 10.2788                              | 338,180.19                                       | 33,851,829.00                            | 9.99                                 | 338,179.77                               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>100.0000</b>                      |  | <b>329,336,802.00</b>                    |                                      | <b>3,290,074.65</b>                      |

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## APPENDIX 6

Examples of other possible significant changes to the way the FRRSD is currently constructed and operated include:

To reduce FRRSD costs, one could consider changing the current model of one classroom per grade in the elementary school, resulting in multi-grade classrooms. This would of course lead to a smaller number of classes of larger size, which could potentially negatively impact the learning experience. It would also lead to staff reductions, for which the ramifications of the union contract would have to be given careful consideration.

To reduce costs further, one could also consider ceasing operation of the elementary school altogether and putting in place a tuition agreement(s) with an out-of-district elementary school(s), analogous to how it proceeds today with middle and high school pupils. This would likely result in significant cost savings, as the tuitions paid for the pupils would no doubt be considerably less than the current per pupil expenditures in the elementary school. However, in this case the elementary school pupils would no longer be “close and under local control”. And since this approach would result in very significant staff reductions, the ramifications of the union contract would again have to be given careful consideration here.

The following provide some limited but useful perspective regarding the second option above:

The second option above would render the FRRSD what is known as a non-operating school district, meaning that there are no in-district physical schools. This model is currently in use in MA, with just under 10 non-operating school districts currently in existence.

If Sandisfield was unable to continue with the FRRSD, it would likely form the Sandisfield School District as a non-operating municipal school district, and tuition all its pupils to out-of-district schools under tuition agreements, as this would no doubt reduce its education expenses appreciably from what they are today.

An example of deviation from a regional district is described below:

If Sandisfield was unable to continue with the FRRSD, one could consider reverting the district to a municipal district run by Otis, continuing operation of the elementary school, with all the district costs borne by Otis.

The following provides some limited but useful perspective regarding the above option:

In this option one would have to consider funding lost in the form of Sandisfield’s assessment (**\$1.5M**) and their apportionment of Chapter 70 state aid (**\$313K**), as well as state regional transportation aid (**\$197K**), since the state doesn’t provide transportation aid to municipal districts, only regional districts. It would also have to consider savings accrued by the district no longer having to pay tuitions for Sandisfield pupils (**\$486K**). And it would also have to account for funding potentially gained from choicing in 38 additional pupils to the elementary school (**\$190K**) – the same as the number of Sandisfield pupils currently enrolled in the elementary school – as a best-case scenario unlikely to be achieved near term, and perhaps never. It is estimated that this scenario would require Otis paying, in a best-case scenario, approximately **\$1.4M** a year more than it currently assessed by the FRRSD. *See Appendix 7.*

APPENDIX 7

|   |                    |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>CURRENT OTIS ASSESSMENT</b>                              | <b>\$2,302,417</b> |             |
| <b>Funding Lost By Sandisfield Withdrawal</b>               | <b>\$2,056,862</b> |             |
| Sandisfield Assessment                                      |                    | \$1,547,397 |
| Sandisfield Share of Chap 70                                |                    | \$312,619   |
| Reg Transportation Aid                                      |                    | \$196,846   |
| <b>Savings Accrued By Sandisfield Withdrawal</b>            | <b>-\$485,811</b>  |             |
| Tuitions for Sandisfield Pupils (est)                       |                    | -\$485,811  |
| <b>Funding Potentially Gained By Sandisfield Withdrawal</b> | <b>-\$190,000</b>  |             |
| Additional FRE Choice In (best case)                        |                    | -\$190,000  |
| <b>NEW OTIS ASSESSMENT</b>                                  | <b>\$3,683,468</b> |             |
| <b>\$ INCREASE</b>  | <b>\$1,381,051</b> |             |
| <b>% INCREASE</b>   | <b>79.08%</b>      |             |
| <i>FY24 Total Tuitions Paid</i>                             | <i>\$1,142,278</i> |             |
| <i>FY23 % Sandisfield Enrollment</i>                        | <i>42.53%</i>      |             |
| <i>Estimate of Sandisfield Tuitions</i>                     | <i>\$485,811</i>   |             |
| <i># Sandisfield FRE Students</i>                           | <i>38</i>          |             |
| <i>Additional FRE Choice In (best case)</i>                 | <i>38</i>          |             |
| <i>Choice In Revenue per Pupil</i>                          | <i>\$5,000</i>     |             |
| <i>Choice In Revenue (best case)</i>                        | <i>\$190,000</i>   |             |