



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Town of Southwick

Finance Committee

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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING June 16, 2020

FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS

Article 6

PRO: This article is very necessary to repair and replace our roads in Town that have deteriorated over the recent years for a variety of reasons. Insofar as many of the roads are in disrepair, doing a bonding authorization annually is the only way for the Town to catch up over the next 6 -7 years.

CON: If this article does not pass, we will see further deterioration of our roads and we will fall even further behind in addressing this situation. We can no longer expect to pay for road repair from operating funds.

Article 7

PRO: A new roof and masonry work is needed for the Fire Station. There are leaks in the roof and the masonry walls need repairing. These problems were pointed out in the study done by Tighe & Bond that reviewed the Town's buildings. The work needed on the Fire Station was identified as the highest priority of the study.

CON: There are no cons on this Warrant Article as this work must get done.

Article 8

PRO: The Conservation Committee charges fees for the various projects that they are tasked to oversee. The collected money currently is placed in the Town's General Fund. Establishing a revolving fund would place those fees into a dedicated account to help pay for their own operations

Con: In any year the collected funds may not be a consistent funding source.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING June 19, 2020

FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS

Article 9

PRO: Approving this article establishes the process by which monies are spent as well as a reserve fund for unforeseen expenses.

CON: Disapproving this article would prevent the spending of monies on necessary expenses and eliminate the fund for unforeseen expenses.

Article 10

PRO: Approving this article provides the mechanism for establishing the related funding limits for certain revolving funds for operational processes of various departments.

CON: Disapproving this article would prevent the various departments the ability to function as designed.

Article 11

PRO: The taxpayers agreed to pay an additional 3% tax annually towards the Community Preservation Fund. The government matches the taxpayer contribution. In the past it was a dollar-for-dollar match, although that has not been the case over the past couple of years. This Article outlines the transfers of the individual reserves within the Community Preservation Fund at a rate of 10% as required by the laws that rule the Community Preservation Committee, which the Town of Southwick has agreed to. The balance of the tax generated monies, 70%, will be deposited in their General Fund.

CON: If we do not approve this article, we would be in violation of our agreement with the Commonwealth and Town of Southwick.

Article 12

PRO: This Article allows the transfer of monies, not to exceed 5% of the collect taxes, to be used for administrative and operational expenses of the Community Preservation Committee. This provision is allowed under the agreement.

CON: None

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING June 19, 2020
FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS

Article 13

PRO: Approving this will allow the maintenance of the property to be addressed and also improve the record keeping system of our town cemetery.

CON: Failure to approve this could impact the structural integrity and the functionality of the cemeteries.

Article 14

PRO: This signage will alert visitors to the importance of farming to our community. One intent of the signage is to warn drivers to expect tractors and farm machinery on the roads and to approach them safely and with caution. This signage will not have an impact on our tax rate.

CON: Without this signage, farmers will continue to have safety concerns when drivers approach their farm vehicles impatiently.

Article 15

PRO: Approving this will allow the headstones in the old cemetery to be repaired and maintained, allowing the historic value of our community to be preserved.

CON: Without this funding, the old cemetery will continue to deteriorate and parts of it could be lost for the future.

Article 16

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to make the first interest and principal payment on the \$600,000 bond issued for the approved alum treatment of Congamond Lake.

CON: Failure to approve this article will require the use of a general fund appropriation to fund the debt payment.

Article 17

PRO: Passing Article 17 will allow the schools to operate as budgeted.

CON: Failure to pass Article 17 could mandate cuts to education services provided by the town.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING June 19, 2020

FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS

Article 18

PRO: A yes vote will allow funds from retiring bonds to be used to pay the new debt source of the School Capital projects. This will keep property tax assessment lower.

CON: A no vote will not allow the replacement of needed school related equipment.

Article 19

PRO: The quarterly billing cycle should improve the cash flow of revenue whereby short term borrowings are eliminated (or at least limited) thereby saving interest payments. These interest savings, along with sending only two bills out (with 2 payment coupons on each mailing), will reduce costs. The savings on interest, postage, etc. will offset the costs of additional time to process any payments not done electronically.

CON: There will be additional costs to processing payments 4 times per year vs. 2 times a year. Interest payments on short term borrowings have not been excessive costs. As with any change to a long standing process, there is a learning curve and care will need to be taken to ensure the taxpayers are well aware of the new processes. During the initial first year, Code Red could be used as reminders and some grace periods might prove useful.