



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Town of Southwick

Finance Committee

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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 18, 2021

FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS

Article 6 – Road Reconstruction Borrowing Authorization

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 – DPW Dump Truck – Borrowing Authorization

PRO: This vehicle is needed to replace an older (2005) one which has required numerous, expensive repairs and will need more in the future. This will be a cost-effective purchase.

CON: Not replacing the 2005 aged vehicle will only postpone the inevitable and will still require extensive repairs to maintain its use.

Article 8 – Ambulance – Borrowing Authorization

PRO: We need to replace our older ambulance. Purchasing a new ambulance will keep the older one on the road until the new one is ready. This new unit would have four-wheel drive and be available in nine months to a year.

CON: We could put a new chassis under the 11-year-old ambulance box and save some money. It would take that older second ambulance out of service for 3-6 months however to get that work done. That would leave us with only one working unit.

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Article 9 – Water Transmission Main Improvements

PRO: Approval of this allows water lines to be updated making the Water Pumping Station on the north end of College Highway, to become fully functional. This will benefit members of our community.

CON: Without this approval, the full use of the pumping station cannot be utilized.

Article 10 – Annual Budget

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 11 - Departmental Revolving Fund Annual Spending Limit Authorization

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 12 – Community Preservation Annual Budget

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 13 – Community Preservation Committee – Administrative and Operating Expenses

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

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Article 14 – Community Preservation Committee – Trails Grant

PRO: This is maintaining our rail trails in town with the Community Preservation Committee funds from the open space category. This will keep the trails in good and usable condition for all who use them.

CON: The monies would need to come out of the general fund for the trails to be maintained if this is not approved.

Article 15 – Community Preservation Committee – Housing Plan

PRO: These monies will assist in the updating of the Town Master Plan.

CON: The funding would need to come out of the general fund to support this important town document if this is not approved.

Article 16 – Community Preservation – Old Library

PRO: There are no pros in approving this money to pay a for-profit, private business for that to which they had already agreed to do on their own (by virtue of their finalized purchase in accordance with the conditions of sale).

CON: This building was sold at a much-reduced rate with the expressed, various requirements of maintaining certain historical aspects of the building of which the buyers were patently aware. The selling price was such that it would not be any further, additional burden to the taxpayers of Southwick. To approve this article would not only negate any monies received for the property but would essentially pay more than twice what was originally received by the taxpayers and this was not the intention of the Town when it sold the property.

Article 17 – Community Preservation Committee – Old Fire Station

PRO: The funding would restore the historical aspects of our old fire station using current funds from the Community Preservation Committee.

CON: Given that these repairs need to be made, if not approved, the funds would come out of the general fund.

Article 18 – Alum Treatment Debt Service

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to make the second 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.

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Article 19 – Regional School District Budget

PRO: Passing Article 19 will allow the schools to operate as budgeted.

CON: Failure to pass Article 19 could mandate cuts to education services provided by the town.

Article 20 – Regional School District – Debt Authorization

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 23 – Easement/Takings

PRO: Approval of this article will allow the Select Board to take easements associated with Revere Road Acceptance as a Town Way and pay related expenses. Payments for appraisals, damages to abutters, legal fees, mailings, public notifications, land surveys, setting boundaries and any other related expenses would be paid for. Acceptance of this road would qualify the Town for additional funding from the State of Massachusetts for maintenance.

CON: Disapproval would deny funds to accept Revere Road as a Town Way and disqualify additional funding from the State of Massachusetts for maintenance of this road.

Article 24 – Appropriation For Appraisals For Taking and Costs Associated Therewith, Etc.

PRO: Approval of this article will allow the Select Board to take easements by eminent domain associated with Revere Road Acceptance as a Town Way and pay related expenses. Payments for appraisals, damages to abutters, legal fees, mailings, public notifications, land surveys, setting boundaries and any other related expenses would be paid for. Acceptance of this road would qualify the Town for additional funding from the State of Massachusetts for maintenance.

CON: Disapproval may disallow taking of easements and paying for the Acceptance of Revere Road as a Town Way and disqualify additional funding from the State of Massachusetts for maintenance of this road.