



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

Finance Committee

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Associate: Sheri Knowlton

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 16, 2023 FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS**

### **Article 7 – Borrowing Authorization – Road Reconstruction**

PRO: Approving this article will allow the Select Board to authorize payments for necessary roadway reconstruction.

CON: The town will incur debt as a result of passing this article.

### **Article 8 – Borrowing Authorization – Dump Truck and Plow**

PRO: Approving this article will allow the Select Board authorization to purchase a dump truck and plow package for critical DPW functions including maintaining the roadways of the Town and keeping road traffic safe during snow and ice storms.

CON: The town will incur debt as a result of passing this article.

### **Article 9 – Annual Budget**

PRO: Approving this article establishes the process by which monies are spent and will allow for the transfer of reserve funds 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 – Departmental Revolving Fund Annual Spending Limit Authorization**

PRO: Approving this article provides the mechanism for establishing the related funding limits for certain departmental revolving funds used for operational processes.

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

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**Article 11 – Regional School District Budget**

PRO: Passing this article will allow the schools to operate as budgeted, avoiding cuts in educational services.

CON: A no vote will force the school district to operate using FY2023's approved budget on a one-twelfth basis per month. The requested FY2024 budget will then be required to be presented at a town meeting for each of the three towns for approval.

**Article 12 – 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.

CON: A no vote will not allow the school district to address the capital expenditures.

**Article 18 – Community Preservation Annual Budget**

PRO: This article outlines the transfers of the individual reserves within the Community Preservation Fund at a rate of 10% for each open space, historic resources, and community housing 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 Unreserved 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 19 – Community Preservation Committee – Administrative and Operating Expenses**

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

CON: If we do not pass this article, there would be no monies available to help administer the program.

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**Article 20 – Alum Treatment Debt Service**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to make the fourth 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 21 – Restoration of Bronze Memorial Plaques**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to restore war memorial plaques, located at the War Memorial and the Old Cemetery.

CON: Failure to approve this article will mean the plaques will not be restored.

**Article 22 – Whalley Spray Park**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to create a community spray park to be located at Whalley Park. As a recreational community, this will create additional family-oriented activities to enhance our community and create a town amenity.

CON: A spray park will require additional operating expenses such as water usage, maintenance costs-including winterizing costs, and insurance premiums. Additional staff or overtime may also be required to keep the spray park operational. Usage by the community will also create additional risks to the town.

**Article 23 – The Moore House Repair**

PRO: Approving this article would allow preservation of a historical site.

CON: Failure to pass this article would allow the continued deterioration of this property.

**Article 24 – Hazardous Tree Removal at Old Cemetery**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to remove trees that may damage property and pose a serious risk of injury to cemetery workers and visitors.

CON: Failure to approve this article leaves the town with risk that the trees will fall or break on their own and cause property damage and/or serious personal injury at some point in the future.

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**Article 25 – Repair of Slate Roof and Cupola at Police Department**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to make repairs to an important town building which is currently deteriorating.

CON: Failure to approve this article means the repairs will not occur, and the town-owned building continues to deteriorate.

**Article 26 – Flooring Replacement – Southwick Housing Authority – Depot Street**

PRO: Approving this article will allow worn flooring to be replaced.

CON: The flooring will not be replaced if the article does not pass.

**Article 36 – Establishment of Municipal Lighting Plant – Fiber**

PRO: A municipal lighting plant allows the Town to explore alternative internet service providers. The process requires two votes to approve. The first vote to approve was obtained at the Special Town Meeting held on November 15, 2022. Approving this article will be the second vote to approve, and will allow the project to continue.

CON: There are no cons.

**Article 37 – Borrowing Authorization – Fiber Optic Broadband**

PRO: Approving this article will provide the funding source for the town to move forward with the Municipal Light Plant to bring fiber optic broadband access to the Town of Southwick.

CON: The town will incur debt as a result of passing this article.