



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

Finance Committee

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## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 17, 2022 FINANCE COMMITTEE PROS AND CONS**

### **Article 6 – Town Hall – Roof and HVAC Replacement Borrowing Authorization**

PRO: The Town Hall roof is now over 20 years old and in need of replacement as part of regular maintenance and as identified by a Town-wide Assessment of municipal buildings conducted by Tighe and Bond Engineers. A new roof system will protect the building for another 20 to 30 years.

The aging HVAC system suffers efficiency issues as well as access to it in its current configuration (which is located in the attic area). A relocation and complete system upgrade will substantially improve the functionality and efficiency and improve the serviceability of the system. The upgrade will maximize energy savings utilizing the latest electronic technology in system controls. Coordinating the roof repair with the HVAC upgrade provides an economic and logistical advantage.

CON: Failure to replace the current roofing will result in further deterioration of the shingles, increased leakage and eventually damage to the structure itself.

Failure to address the HVAC system will contribute to continued poor heating, cooling, air distribution and air quality. Energy use will not be efficient and thus more costly.

### **Article 9 – 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.

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**Article 10 – 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 11 – Community Preservation Annual Budget**

PRO: The taxpayers agreed to pay a 3% surcharge on real estate tax bills with residential taxpayers paying 3% on property valuation above \$100,000 and commercial taxpayers paying 3% on the full valuation. The State government matches a percentage of taxpayer contributions, with the state contribution rate being determined annually. 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 12 – 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 administrative monies available to help administer the program.

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**Article 13 – Community Preservation Committee – Brass Rail Meeting House**

PRO: The project would create an entrance through the building's original basement that is compliant with the laws of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The building is listed as historic with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and under current ownership, is open to the public to gather for events which bring people into the town to support this and other local businesses. The funds would facilitate the rehabilitation of a historical building and is supported by the Community Preservation Committee.

CON: The Brass Rail is a privately owned, for-profit business. Using town funds to support this request may set a precedence for future funding requests from private, for-profit businesses in town.

**Article 14 – Alum Treatment Debt Service**

PRO: Approving this article will allow for the use of Community Preservation funds to make the third 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 15 – Regional School District Budget**

PRO: Passing Article 15 will allow the schools to operate as budgeted.

CON: Failure to pass Article 15 could mandate cuts to education services provided by the town.

**Article 16 – 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 school district to address these capital expenditures.