

Town of Southwick, Massachusetts

454 College Highway, Southwick, MA 01077

Finance Committee Warrant Pros & Cons STM March 02, 2010

FINCOM Explanations

Article 1:

The Finance Committee has taken a "No Action" position on Article one. This in no way reflects any opinion other than our highest regard for our Town's personnel and the respective jobs which they perform. It is important to note that the Finance Committee is not involved, and this is by Commonwealth Statute, in any salary, wage, benefit, or employment condition negotiations which occur within the town by the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, and employees. Our committee dead-locked on opining on this issue because in this fiscally challenging environment, we all were concerned how either a positive OR a negative position would be viewed by the taxpayers and town employees.

Our PRO position:

We believe that it is important to financially recognize staff for their respective accomplishments, the current inflationary market conditions, and the competitive nature for staff within the region. That is to say that we believe that people deserve financial compensation for their efforts, to not only reward but to motivate. We believe that as costs rise, so should compensation. We also recognize that our town needs to maintain a competitive posture within the geographic marketplace.

Our CON position:

As the Financial conscience of the community, we believe that to pursue any form of salary, wage, or benefit increase is to ignore the current economic conditions. When our seniors, especially those on Social Security, are denied even a cost of living increase, we are hard-pressed to take further tax dollars for anything, other than the most critical of expenses. In an economic environment which has witnessed pay cuts, furloughs without compensation, and outright job losses for many of our townspeople, we believe that to ask, through increased taxes, them to provide additional monies for raises would be in error.

Article 2:

Our PRO position:

The town will invest in the further training of its EMS staff, resulting in a higher quality of care.

Our CON position:

This will be an expenditure of town resources.

Article 3:

Our PRO position:

The town will invest in a new vehicle for our sewer department. As a result we will not have to spend time and money repairing a 27 year old vehicle.

This money is coming out of sewer capital and not the reserve fund or the general fund.

Our CON position:

Not replacing this vehicle could result in the ability of the Town to provide required services while the vehicle is repaired and therefore out of service.

Article 4:

Our PRO position:

By approving this transfer, the stage project can be completed without using general funds.

Our CON position:

There is no con to approving this article.

Article 5:

Our PRO position:

This article puts to use, the monies collected through the Community Preservation Fund, to improve Community Housing. Five homes will receive insulation, and two of those homes will also receive high efficiency furnaces.

Our CON position:

If we don't use the money collected through the Community Preservation Fund, we will be in violation of our participation agreement with the government.

Article 6:

Our PRO position:

The article will authorize the establishment of a new revolving fund for the Police department to use in their lake operations.

The intent of this fund is to remove the police lake operations from the general fund and its related budgeting process. As noted in the article, expenditures are capped at \$20,000.00 for this year. The fund would expedite operational financial activities.

Our CON position:

The alternative is to handle the police lake operations as they have been done and all expenditures would require town meeting approval.