

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

November 18, 2019

The Special Town Meeting was called to order by the Moderator at 7:40 p.m. and commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 59 registered voters present which satisfied the quorum of 20 registered voters needed; and 15 guests. The 18 articles were handled in the following manner, following the recommendations of the Finance Committee:

Article 1: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$12,000 from Free Cash to the Technology Equipment Purchases account in order to fund the conversion of Windows 7 computers to the Windows 10 platform. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 2: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to the Life & Health Insurance account. This will cover the cost associated with the several additions to the personnel choosing Town provided health coverage. Finance Committee member, Mark Carpentier, explained that when a sum is appropriated it means it is raised through the tax levy as opposed to the sum being transferred from another account. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 3: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$15,000 from Free Cash to purchase and install a Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) to replace the current non-variable well pump motor for the Water Department. This new equipment will run more efficiently and will respond better to variable water demand volumes. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 4: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$70,000 from the Water Stabilization Fund and \$5,000 from Free Cash to fund the purchase of a Water Department stand-by generator for the pump station. This generator will be capable of providing stand-by power sufficient to run not only the well pump, but any additional equipment needed for an anticipated treatment plant. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and after some discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 5: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$73,000 from the MTBE Stabilization Fund and \$2,000 from Free Cash for the hiring of a consulting engineer for future water related capital projects. This will be used to fund the cost of hiring a firm to prepare, review and assess infrastructure, right of ways, provide base mapping and surveying, along with preparing preliminary designs and cost estimates. In response to a question, Board of Selectmen member, Ted Boulay, explained that this fund was remedial money obtained from a class action lawsuit settlement many years ago – many towns received money. [MtBE was a gasoline additive used to raise the octane that was found to contaminate water sources when gasoline leaked into the ground.] A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 6: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$10,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of purchasing necessary piping, meter, chemical feed pump and associated hardware and wiring for the West Street Well. The current equipment will need to be replaced when the VFD unit is installed and this will ensure more accurate metering. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 7: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$5,000 from Free Cash to the Water Department Standpipe Maintenance Account. This will provide for cleaning and inspection of the standpipe on Doane Avenue. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 8: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$48,000 from the Municipal Capital Purchase Account to purchase a Water Department Utility Body Truck and Plow to replace the 20+ year old Water Department vehicle. It will also effectively replace a pickup truck-sized plow vehicle taken out of service several years ago. This Article required a two-thirds majority vote. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, and the required two-thirds majority met, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 9: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$321 from Free Cash to the Treasurer Clerical Wages Account to fund a shortfall. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 10: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$32,068.59 from the 100th Anniversary Stabilization Account to the 100th Anniversary Celebration Expense Account, which will allow the Committee to expend funds needed for vendors and associated costs for the Town's 100th Anniversary celebration and events. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 11: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$6,575 from Free Cash to purchase an MPH Industries speed trailer. This portable speed unit will not only remind motorists of their speed versus the posted speed, but will also act as a data logger to determine the volume of speeding motorists at any given location. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 12: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$5,400 from Free Cash to purchase a Town Clerk new voting machine to replace the 22-year old unit currently in use. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 13: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$691 from Free Cash to the Selectmen's Professional & Technical Account to allow for the payment of a prior year bill from Town Counsel. This Article required a nine-tenths vote. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, and the nine-tenths requirement being met, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 14: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 44, Section 53F½ of the M.G.L. establishing a Water Department Enterprise Fund effective fiscal year 2021 to establish a stand-alone fund from which the Water Department expenses and revenues will be handled. This will ultimately ensure that the majority of water costs are funded by water users rather than through the tax levy. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 15: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to accept M.G.L. Chapter 64N, Section 3, to impose a local sales tax upon the sale or transfer of marijuana or marijuana products by a marijuana retailer operating within the Town to anyone other than a marijuana establishment at a rate of 3% of the total sales price received by the marijuana retailer as consideration for the sale of marijuana or marijuana products, said excise to take effect on the first day of the calendar quarter commencing at least thirty days after such vote of Town Meeting. This will allow for the imposition of a local sales tax on these products should a sale location be opened in Town. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 16: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote approve the \$450,000 borrowing authorized by the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District for the purpose of paying costs of the feasibility study of David Prouty High School, 302 Main Street, Spencer MA, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any study costs shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities. Any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA for the Study shall be as set forth in the Feasibility Study Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA. School Committee member, Mike Ethier, introduced the following guests who were present to help answer any questions the Townspeople might have regarding this Article: Mr. Jay Barry, consultant, Mr. Gary Suter, SEBRSD business manager, and District School Superintendent, Mr. Paul Haughey. The feasibility study will provide the District with a preferred model, but will look at three different options. There will be an "information campaign" to allow the residents of both towns to stay abreast of the findings. It was explained that the borrowing will be combined with up to \$400,000 of the District's E&D funds. No Town funds are being expended at this time, however, this action does commit the District and the two towns to the expenses associated with the study. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 17: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$15,000 from Free Cash to a South Pond QQLA Alum Treatment, contingent upon all area towns (Brookfield and Sturbridge) coming up with full funding of their share. Carl "Skip" Nielsen explained that the mud at the bottom of the lake is saturated with phosphate due in part to the housing growth around the lake. This one treatment is expected to reduce or eliminate the phosphate contamination for 20-25 years. A motion to accept this Article was made, seconded and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as adopted.

Article 18: The Finance Committee recommended the Town vote to pass over this article as no acceptance action was needed – it is already law. A motion to pass over this Article was made, seconded and there being no discussion and no opposition, the Moderator declared the Article as passed over.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Meeting, and all being in favor the Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan V. Jacobs
Town Clerk