

## TOWN MEETING 2021 COMMENTS RECEIVED

### General Comments:

#### **Jim Sindelar - 263 Brockway Rd**

HOPKINTON OWNS OUR TRANSFER STATION; Our taxes established it, maintain it, and run it. And every time I go there, I note that Hopkinton residents have to contain all our garbage in those unhandy, frail green bags we have to buy, while Webster residents can and do dump anything they want into the hopper—little, big, doesn't matter, all unbagged. This strikes me as unfair and it burns me up.

I would like to know how this unfortunate and unfair situation came to be, and if anything can be done to correct it. If Webster residents can't/don't want to follow our rules, they should be told to build, run and maintain their own transfer station.

#### **Jim O'Brien - 17 Prospect Street**

I just wanted to take a moment to thank the Board, Neal Cass and all the town staff for your hard work and dedication during this challenging time. I am truly thankful that you are willing to give so much of your time and talents to make our community better.

I want to commend you for your work on the budget – which was recognized by a unanimous vote of the Budget Committee. It is great to see that we are able to refinance some of our debt and will realize significant savings in the upcoming years. The community should also be pleased by the economic development position contained in this budget. For years the town has been discussing the need to diversify our tax base. To do so requires some upfront investment and resources. The Economic Development Committee has been doing a fantastic job at identifying areas in our community to focus on – having this position will enable that work to move forward faster.

I also strongly support the appropriations in Article 4, Capital Reserve Funds and appreciate the work done by our department heads, the Board and the Capital Improvement Committee to adequately plan for these large items.

Thanks again for all that you do, and I urge voters to support the articles as presented.

#### **Elizabeth Sides - 265 Crowell Rd**

Dear Select Board Members and Moderator,

Thank you for the presentation on Monday. Everything was very clear and precise. I am writing to state my full support for all warrant articles presented.

Thank you all for your service and hard work to make our special town function as it should!

## **ARTICLE 3 – OPERATING BUDGET:**

**Ian Tewksbury - 73 Irish Hill Road**

*I would like to make a motion to amend Article 3. My motion is to increase the Operating Budget by \$15,921 and specifically the Merit Wage Pool.*

I feel that with the increase in health insurance as well as cost of living that a 1.5% increase is not enough and some of our employees will actually go backwards and take home less in their paycheck. The amount of \$15,921 would increase the wage pool to 2% based on the Select Board budget.

**Kevin Connally - 1221 Briar Hill Rd.**

I would like for the town voters to have an opportunity to vote on how to appropriate the potential windfall we may receive in the "American Rescue Plan" of \$570,000.

From the presentation, I understand that it would be payable in 2021 and 2022, and needs to be spent over the next four years.

My suggestion is that 1/4 of the amount be used each of the next four years to mitigate tax rate increases, or that the entire amount be used to repair our deteriorating roads and sidewalks. In any case, the voters must have direct input on how these monies should be spent.

## **ARTICLE 7 – Authorization to Rent Bates Building:**

**Catharine (Matteo) Ledoux - 108 Park Ave**

Article VII, I would like to see language added to this Article that not only allows the Lease terms to exceed a one year period, but also has language added to it **limiting the total years overall that the lease term is allowed to cover**, such as 5 years or 10 years. So allow a lease term/agreement to exceed a one year period, but also prevent a lease term/agreement to be written for anything longer than a 5 year or 10 year period. Obviously there should be an opportunity to renew said lease at the end of the term/agreement, but I would like to see language added that includes a cap to the amount of years the initial lease term/agreement is allowed to be written for as well.

## **ARTICLE 12 – SB2:**

**Bob LaPree, 25 Highland Ave.**

Thanks for the excellent information session, easy to access remotely. I listened to Steve's discussion regarding SB2, I absolutely agree that the present structure of the SB2 deliberative session and long hiatus before the vote is an invitation to reduce civic participation in the town meeting process. Some of the arguments for adopting SB2 include the accessibility of in-person meetings can be a challenge for many residents. Steve said that contacting the Board for assistance is a vague solution. We have found through virtual meetings required by pandemic restriction that residents can meaningfully participate through Zoom. I request the Board to implement zoom style access for all public meetings on a permanent basis. I expect there are software packages that will enable automated meeting origination without the direct hands-on of Neal. Hardware requirements would need to be invested in to make access available throughout the Town facilities. Money from the Covid 19 relief funds could be applied for. There likely are some law changes to make remote participation a valid part of official meetings. Setting up such a system would enable more residents to participate in civic affairs which can only be considered a worthwhile endeavor. Thank you for your consideration of this issue.