

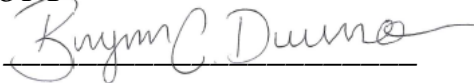


SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2024

A TRUE COPY

ATTEST:



Brynn C. Durno, Town Clerk

RETURN OF THE WARRANT

Pursuant to a warrant signed on 18th day of March, 2024 by Select Board Members Chuck Walkovich, Anthony Beattie and Mark Mathews and posted on March 20, 2024 by Constable Keith Keady in five public places – Pepperell Town Hall, Pepperell Police Station, Pepperell Post Office, Mel’s Barber Shop and Pepperell Family Pharmacy as well as attested copies online. We, the inhabitants of the Town of Pepperell whom were qualified to vote in Elections and Town affairs are convened at Nissitissit Middle School on the 8th day of April A.D. 2024 to act on the following article.

There were *314 – three hundred and fourteen registered voters and -34 – thirty -four visitors* in attendance.

There were *140 – one hundred and fourty registered voters and 16 – sixteen visitors* in attendance on May 7, 2024.

Moderator Blackburn opened the Annual Town Meeting at 7:34PM. The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEETING MINUTES

ARTICLE 1 –TAX LEVY INCREASE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,991,136.00 for General Fund budget expenses for fiscal year 2025, for General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, Human Services, Culture & Recreation, Debt Service and Assessments, Employee Benefits & Insurance; for the Nashoba Valley Technical High School operating and transportation assessments to the Town for fiscal year 2025; and for the North Middlesex Regional School District operating and transportation assessments to the Town for fiscal year 2025; such appropriation to be contingent upon the Town’s approval, at an election, of an override of Proposition 2 ½, so-called, under M.G.L. c. 59, § 21C; or take any other action relative thereto.

Explanation: *Fiscal Year 2024’s budget is supported with \$710,338.00 of cash from town reserves. Local development has slowed and local receipts and state aid are at the lowest increase in several years. In order to provide necessary services for Fiscal year 2025, an increase in tax revenues of \$2,991,136.00 is requested.*

The Town and school districts continue to see general inflation for goods and services, especially wages, services, transportation, and energy costs. The general inflation impacting the entire economy impacts the town and schools in similar ways. For Fiscal 2024, the North Middlesex Regional School District (NMRSD) reduced the original request dramatically but the Town still needed to appropriate funds from cash and stabilization accounts to cover the required spending. The NMRSD indicated last year, that this year’s request would need to be even larger. The Town has faced its own financial pressures and also requires more funds to maintain services at a responsible level.

This request, if approved at the ballot on April 22, 2024, will raise the limit on the Town of Pepperell tax levy. The FY2025 General Fund budget scheduled to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting on May 6, 2024 cannot exceed the levy limit.

Presentations are expected from the Town and each of the School Administrations.

Recommendations:

The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Motion:

I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,991,136.00 00 for General Fund budget expenses for fiscal year 2025, for General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, Human Services, Culture & Recreation, Debt Service and Assessments, Employee Benefits & Insurance; for the Nashoba Valley Technical High School operating and transportation assessments to the Town for fiscal year 2025; and for the North Middlesex Regional School District operating and transportation assessments to the Town for fiscal year 2025; such appropriation to be contingent upon the Town's approval, at an election, of an override of Proposition 2 ½, so-called, under M.G.L. c. 59, § 21C.

- **DAVID DONESKI, TOWN COUNSEL, GAVE AN EXPLANATION ON WHAT THE MEETING VOTES MEANT.**
- **PRESENTATIONS WERE GIVEN BY TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ANDREW MACLEAN, SUPERINTENDENT BRAD MORGAN FROM NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND DR. DENISE PIGEON, SUPERINTENDENT FROM NASHOBA VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL.**
- **QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY VOTERS AND DISCUSSION ENSUED.**
- **MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION, MOTION SECONDED. MOTION PASSED.**

MAIN MOTION – “VOTING TO RAISE AND APPROPRIATE...” – PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR.

All Business on the Warrant having been acted upon, a motion was made and seconded to dissolve said Town Meeting at 10:02pm.

(A full videotaped transcript of the 2024 Special Town Meeting and all discussion details is available through Pepperell Community Media)