

**Special Town Meeting** **Voters present 291**  
**February 27, 2021**  
**Recessed and Continued until March 6, 2021 by Moderator Ben Warren**

Moderator Ben Warren delayed the meeting while voters checked in. Moderator Ben Warren called the meeting to order at 1:50 PM. A quorum was present. Moderator read the warrant.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to borrow or otherwise provide a sum of money to pay costs of constructing, equipping and furnishing a new public safety complex to be located at 48 Stage Road in Westhampton, the site of the current fire station, to pay costs of demolishing the current structure, and to pay all other costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

Finance Committee approved the article as presented 8-0-1

Motion and second was made that the Town appropriates \$4,260,000.00 to pay costs of constructing, equipping and furnishing a new public safety complex to be located at 48 Stage Road in Westhampton, the site of the current public safety complex, to demolish the current structure, and to pay all other costs incidental and related thereto, and to meet this appropriation, Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard, is authorized to borrow said sum of money, under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount. No amounts shall be borrowed or expended pursuant to this vote unless the Town shall have voted to exclude the amounts required to be raised to repay any borrowing pursuant to this vote from the limitations on local property taxes set forth in M.G.L. c. 59, §29C (also known as Proposition 2½).

Phil Dowling, Selectboard and Public Safety Complex Building Committee, spoke to the history of bringing the project to this vote; the result of twenty years of taking care of all town building needs. He referred to the feasibility study and former town votes.

Steve Holt, Public Safety Complex Building Committee Chair, spoke to the work of the committee on the project and the condition of the current public safety complex.

Phil Dowling spoke as Capital Improvement Planning Committee Chair. The project: has been on the capital-planning schedule for years; will not increase the capital budget; bids received to determine the cost are good for 90 days; cost nearly \$300,000.00 to this point for feasibility/design/bid; should be completed before winter to get the fire equipment inside.

Questions asked by voters included matters of safety; compliance with OSHA and ADA regulations; construction contingency oversight; water supply; revenue and were answered by Phil Dowling, Steve Holt, and David Antosz (Fire Chief).

Mary Cleary, Finance Committee Chair, spoke to the planning of the project and the town being in the best financial position to do the project now.

Arguments in support of the project included, renovations to existing structure are not cost saving; construction costs expected to increase/more expensive if done later; current safety concerns (lack of venting exhaust fumes/no wash area to remove contamination/carcinogens/adequate space); trimmed down design; timing (seasonal/interest rates/financial position of town).

Arguments against the project included timing/effect due to economy; effect on tax bill/payers.

**Motion made and seconded to call the question-Motion carried.**

**Moderator declared, without objection, a secret vote be taken.**

Susan Bronstein and Patricia Cotton were sworn in as counters by Town Clerk, Cheryl Provost.  
**Final count was 291. Votes cast: 221-Yes / 69-No / 1- Undecided. Motion passed by 2/3 majority.**

**Motion made and seconded and unanimously approved to dissolve the Special Town Meeting at 3:55 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl A. Provost, Town Clerk