

TOWN OF BOLTON



SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

WARRANT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2007

Special Town Meeting
Monday, November 5, 2007
7:00 p.m.
Nashoba Regional High School Auditorium

****PLEASE BRING THIS WARRANT TO TOWN MEETING ****

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S STATEMENT

This Special Town Meeting is called to consider funding for a public safety building for Bolton's police, fire, and emergency medical services.

The Town has recognized the need for a new police building for some time. Until now, however, it has not reached consensus on how large the building should be, and where it should be located. The question of location was particularly difficult, essentially leaving us facing choices from among bad alternatives. At last, however, a dedicated group of volunteers working together over the last year has developed a proposal for a facility that meets the needs not only of our police department, but all of our public safety services functions.

There are five key elements of this proposal.

- First, it combines the facilities for all public safety services – police, fire, and emergency medical. This has many benefits, including the cost-effectiveness of sharing space and the productivity of close proximity among people who must work together in many ways.
- Second, it places these facilities in an almost-ideal location, the current fire station.
- Third, the design recognizes and provides for the unique needs of each of the services; sharing the facility will enhance rather than compromise the abilities of each of the services.
- Fourth, the design meets the needs for all of the services today and for a reasonable period of time into the future. The design also specifically accommodates future expansion to meet needs for years to come, but without spending that money until such expansion is truly justified.
- Fifth, the design minimizes, to the extent possible, the impact on direct abutters and the immediate neighborhood, and fits architecturally into the Bolton community.

This proposal has the strong support of the heads of all three public service departments and among their many full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff; many of these people have contributed significant time and provided insight that makes this facility workable. The Selectmen strongly endorse the statement of the Advisory Committee that is a part of this Warrant, and which details the need and the financing proposed for the facility.

We urge anyone uncertain of the need for this new facility, or who would like to learn more about what is proposed, to attend any of the information meetings and open houses scheduled prior to town meeting. Schematic drawings will be available at these meetings, and attendees can observe for themselves the inadequacies of our existing facilities.

Public safety services touch the lives of all Town citizens. Each of us hopes never to truly need police, fire, or emergency medical services, but if and when we do, we want well-trained and properly-equipped people responding quickly to help us. Providing police services is a particularly challenging balancing act in Bolton. Anyone reading the police

log in the local paper has probably smiled at the accounts of loose sheep or llamas, frowned at the occasional mailbox bashing, and generally felt that nothing much dangerous happens in Bolton. Thankfully that is usually the case, but the interstate and two state highways running through town offer easy access and quick escape for unsavory characters. We believe that the new public safety facility will provide our police with the infrastructure they need for communication, training, and support to handle any of the dangerous things that do happen.

We urge you to support the new public safety facility at the Special Town Meeting on Monday, November 5, and at the subsequent ballot box vote on Tuesday, November 13. Both votes must carry to move forward.

Anne E. (Panny) Gerken, Chairman
Curtis Plante
Kenneth F. Troup

ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT

Public Safety Facility

The most important issue before the Special Town Meeting is the proposal for a new Public Safety Facility. There is little doubt that a new facility is urgently needed. The current police station in the Houghton Building is wholly inadequate. There are no detention cells: detainees must be handcuffed to a bar attached to a wall. This procedure puts the physical safety of our police officers, other police station employees, the general public and the detainees themselves at an unacceptable risk. The police dispatch function is cramped into an area so small that dispatchers cannot adequately utilize the modern equipment that can allow the most rapid possible response to residents needing emergency assistance. Police investigation and reporting are hampered by a lack of work space for reviewing evidence and writing reports. Evidence and equipment storage space is nearly non-existent.

The ambulance service also lacks sufficient storage space and has no room where its call employee/volunteers can complete the administrative and reporting tasks that are required by law and that are an increasingly important part of the emergency services function.

The fire station has sufficient space for the time being, but elements of the station are badly in need of updating.

In a separate article, the Public Safety Building Task Force is also requesting approval of a 1200 square foot Training Room/Emergency Operations Center as an integral part of the new facility. The heads of the three departments, Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS-Ambulance), all believe that the training room is essential to the effectiveness of each of their operations. The police are required to complete training and be certified, often on an annual basis, in a wide variety of skills. Training is perhaps even more important for the fire department and the EMS department. These two organizations consist almost entirely of call employee/volunteers. They spend most of their time at their regular jobs, and utilize their firefighting or EMS skills only when there is a fire or an ambulance run. To make sure they can do this very important call employee/volunteer work effectively, it is essential that they train regularly and frequently. Without an adequate training room this is extremely difficult.

The training room will also serve as the Town's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This aspect of the training room will be crucial in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. It will allow, when circumstances are exceptionally difficult, close coordination of the Town's police, fire and EMS functions. It will also be important in helping us work with regional, State and Federal authorities during any period of extreme adversity. The training room/EOC is an essential element of the proposed Public Safety Facility.

If there were no cost or tax considerations, nearly everyone in town would favor a new Public Safety Facility and the associated training room/EOC. There is, however, a substantial cost for a new facility: \$5,745,000 for the basic facility, and another \$240,000 for the training room/EOC, yielding a total of \$5,985,000. This, by anyone's measure, is a large amount of money.

Yet, it is important to realize that the money will not have to be collected from taxpayers all at once. Instead, public buildings of this type are financed over a 20-year period, which reduces the impact on real estate taxes substantially. Moreover, by phasing in the financing as the Advisory Committee intends to recommend to the Selectmen, the period can be stretched to 23 years, further reducing the annual burden on taxpayers. In addition, principal and interest payments on projects undertaken by the Town in earlier years will be declining since we are constantly paying down this older debt. This will further reduce the net increase in debt service costs brought on by a new Public Safety Facility.

Taking all of this together, financing the Public Safety Facility and the associated training room will add only an average of an estimated \$22 per year (4 cents per \$1,000 of valuation) for each of the next four years to the tax bill of the average house in town, net of the decline in debt service on older projects. This works out to an incremental tax of only one-quarter of one percent per year.

It is important for residents to be aware, however, that we are also likely to be financing the Town's \$3.5 million share of the new Library at the same time. This will add additional debt service costs. Financing both the Library and the Public Safety Building will result in an average annual increase in taxes for debt service of an estimated \$68 per house (13 cents per \$1000 of assessed valuation) for each of the next four years. This is still less than a 1% annual increase for those years. This appears to the Advisory Committee to be a relatively low tax burden in exchange for which the Town will receive a new Library and a much-needed Public Safety Facility.

Therefore, as the new Public Safety Facility and the associated training room/EOC are badly needed, and as they can be financed without placing an undue burden on real estate taxes, the Advisory Committee strongly supports the Public Safety Facility and training room/EOC, and urges the Special Town Meeting to approve Articles 2 and 3.

Other Articles

The unpaid bills to Patriot Ambulance were legitimately incurred and should be paid. A recent streamlining of administration for the Town's Ambulance department is expected to minimize missed payments of bills in the future. The Advisory Committee recommends voting in favor of Article 1.

This past spring, the Selectmen, at the urging of the Advisory Committee, wisely decided to fund the full \$2.5 million authorized for the wastewater treatment plant with a municipal bond issued at a very attractive rate. Fortunately for the Town, the plant is being completed below the originally estimated cost. This allows funds to be transferred from the wastewater treatment plant article to the design of a sewer force main from the new Library and Public Safety Building (or, if the new facility is not approved, from the fire station) to the treatment plant. If ultimately completed, the force main could improve the operation of the plant by providing it with a more consistent flow than it would receive from the Sawyer/Emerson school complex alone. Even more important, it would eliminate the need to construct septic systems, and their associated leaching fields, at the Library and the Public Safety Facility. The Advisory Committee urges approval of Article 4.

David Lindsay, Chairman
Andrew Burnett
Todd Koelling

Jeanne Shapiro
Burt Shnitzler
Stanley Wysocki

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF BOLTON
WORCESTER, ss
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
Monday, November 5, 2007
Nashoba Regional High School Auditorium
7:00 p.m.**

To any of the Constables of the Town of Bolton, in the County aforesaid:

GREETINGS - In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Bolton aforesaid, qualified to vote in elections and town affairs, to meet at Nashoba Regional High School Auditorium in said Bolton, on the 5th day of November, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., then and there to act on the following articles:

Article 1: Unpaid Bills for Fiscal Year 2007

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the following for the purpose of paying unpaid FY07 bills, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 64; or do or act relating thereto:

| | |
|------------|--|
| \$1,271.98 | From Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation To pay Patriot Ambulance |
|------------|--|

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Summary: This is necessary to pay unpaid bills from last fiscal year for services that have been rendered. The transfer is being requested from an account created from collections for the ambulance services and does not affect the town's free cash.

Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Approved

Advisory Committee Recommendation: Approved

Vote Required: 9/10 majority

Article 2: Public Safety Center

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to \$5,745,000 (Five million seven hundred forty-five thousand dollars) for the design, expansion, construction, renovation, furnishing, and equipping, including any associated costs, of a public safety center at the location of the existing fire station facility, and that to meet this appropriation, authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept any grant monies, donations, state or federal aid, or any other monies provided by other parties, and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 7 or any other authority, to borrow the amount up to \$5,745,000 (Five million seven hundred forty-five thousand dollars), and to issue bonds and notes of the Town; the principal, interest, and associated costs on the borrowing to be contingent on the Town voting to exempt such borrowing from the limitation on total taxes imposed by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2-1/2); and that the Board of Selectmen be authorized to expend the monies so appropriated for the foregoing

purposes, and to take all action necessary to carry out this project; or do or act relating thereto.

Sponsor: Public Safety Building Task Force

Summary: The Public Safety Building Task Force is seeking Town Meeting approval to fund construction of an addition to the current fire station on Wattaquodock Hill Road that will house all three public safety organizations - police, fire, and ambulance. This centrally located facility will efficiently serve the operational needs of all three agencies, with future expansion planning incorporated into the design.

The current police station is outdated, having been built in the 1800s as a school house. There are no detention cell facilities to house arrests, necessitating officers to transport prisoners out of town. The current 911 dispatch center, which processed nearly 16,000 calls for service last year, is overcrowded and inefficient. The station is not handicapped accessible. The ambulance squad currently has no administrative, decontamination, or secure medical records storage space. The current fire station is cramped, and has limited expansion capacity. Consolidation of all three agencies in a central facility, utilizing town-owned land, will provide a cost-effective and efficient solution to the space needs and operational necessities of all three organizations, as well as provide for a safer working environment for our public safety employees. Your support of this article will ensure that the combined Bolton public safety agencies will be provided with a safe, modern, and efficient facility from which to provide the vital services now and into the future.

The debt exclusion override ballot election for the public safety center will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2007.

Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Approved

Advisory Committee Recommendation: Approved

Vote Required: 2/3 majority

Article 3: Public Safety Center Training, Emergency Operations Center and Public Meeting Room

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to \$240,000 (Two hundred forty thousand dollars) for the design, construction, furnishing, and equipping, including any associated costs, of a training, Emergency Operating Center, and public meeting room to be constructed in conjunction with the public safety center at the location of the existing fire station facility, and that to meet this appropriation, authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept any grant monies, donations, state or federal aid, or any other monies provided by other parties, and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 7 or any other authority, to borrow the amount up to \$240,000 (Two hundred forty thousand dollars), and to issue bonds and notes of the Town; the principal, interest, and associated costs on the borrowing to be contingent on the Town voting to exempt such borrowing from the limitation on total taxes imposed by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2-1/2); and that the Board of Selectmen be authorized to expend the monies so appropriated for the foregoing purposes, and to take all action necessary to carry out this project; or do or act relating thereto.

Sponsor: Public Safety Building Task Force

Summary: All three Bolton public safety agencies - police, fire and ambulance - are training intensive, due to the nature and requirements of the profession. Federal and state laws and regulations mandate continuous training and re-certifications due to the critical nature of the services they provide. All three Bolton agencies put the highest priority on training, so that the vital services they deliver to the citizens of Bolton include the most up-to-date care and protective services available. Frequent training also

proves to be the best method to ensure the safety of our public safety employees themselves. An on-site, centrally-located training room shared by police, fire, and ambulance would provide a cost-effective area to conduct the frequent training and meeting requirements of these agencies. This room would also be equipped to function as the town Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in event of natural or man-made disasters and emergency situations. Additional training opportunities and classes would be available at no cost to the town by using this room to host outside training organizations, seminars and schools. Lastly, in addition to its use as a training room and EOC, this handicapped-accessible room would be available as a public meeting room. Its central location, cable TV capabilities, and ample parking would be convenient for town and public use.

This article is presented as a separate item for voter consideration. If approved, a training, EOC, and public meeting room would be included in the Public Safety Center. The debt exclusion override ballot election for this project will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2007.

Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Approved

Advisory Committee Recommendation: Approved

Vote Required: 2/3 majority

Article 4: Transfer of Borrowed Funds to the Design of a Sewer Force Main

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$40,000 (Forty thousand dollars) for the purpose of designing a sewer force main from the sites of the town library and town fire station (or proposed public safety center) to the wastewater treatment plant, located behind the Florence Sawyer School, including engineering and preliminary expenses, and any other associated costs; that to meet this appropriation, \$40,000 (Forty thousand dollars) shall be transferred from unexpended proceeds of the town's Sewer Bonds dated June 15, 2007, which bonds were issued for the construction of a wastewater treatment plant pursuant to the vote of the town passed May 1, 2006 (Article 8); and that the Board of Selectmen is authorized to take any other action necessary to carry out this project; provided, however that no expenditures shall be made hereunder until the Board of Selectmen determines (which determination shall be conclusive) that after the transfer of such unexpended bond proceeds, the remaining amount of unexpended bond proceeds from the town's Sewer Bonds dated June 15, 2007 is sufficient to complete the wastewater treatment plant project referred to above, or do or act relating thereto.

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Summary: The town appropriated \$2.5 million dollars at the May 2006 town meeting to design, construct, and start-up a wastewater treatment plant at the Florence Sawyer and Emerson schools. The construction bids came in under budget, and although the project is still underway, it is near completion. There are sufficient funds available to fund the design of a sewer force main to connect the library and the fire station (or the proposed public safety building) to the treatment plant, thus eliminating the need for two new, separate septic systems. Voting to approve of this transfer allows the town to use existing funds to design this project.

Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Approved 2 to 1

Advisory Committee Recommendation: Approved

Vote Required: 2/3 majority

And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting up attested copies thereof at the U.S. Post Office, Town Library, Town Hall and Police Station at least fourteen (14) days before the time for holding said meeting.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting as aforesaid;

Given under our hands and seal, this 3rd day of October in the year of our Lord, Two thousand seven.

Anne E. (Panny) Gerken, Chairman) Selectmen
Curtis Plante) of
Kenneth F. Troup) Bolton

A true copy. Attest: _____ Constable of Bolton _____ Date

In obedience to the Warrant, I have notified and warned the said inhabitants of the Town of Bolton to meet at the time and place, by posting up attested copies of the same at the U.S. Post Office, Town Library, Town Hall and Police Station at least fourteen (14) days before the date hereof.

Constable of Bolton: _____ Date: _____

**Board of Selectmen
Bolton, MA 01740**

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**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2007
7:00 P.M.
NASHOBA REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

**SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2007
12 NOON TO 8:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL**