

**TOWN OF DEDHAM**

*Select Board*

*Finance & Warrant Committee*

Dear Town Meeting Representatives,

While all business on the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant is important, this year one article rises above the rest based on its significance to the long-term health and safety of our Firefighters, Police Officers, Dispatchers, and the community at-large. Of course, we are talking about Article 14, which requests an additional $9.8 million to construct the Combined Public Safety Building ("PSB") on the former Town Hall site.

Town Meeting approved $45 million to construct this same project in November of 2017. Regrettably, that appropriation assumed that the new Town Hall/Senior Center ("TH/SC") would be complete in early 2018. In actuality, the TH/SC was not completed until June of 2020, and we are now nearly three years late on the scheduled start of the PSB. In the Boston metro area, those three years saw some of the highest construction inflation in recent history, averaging 5-7% per year. Without changing a single aspect of the PSB project, it would be underfunded by nearly $8 million at the end of the day. As a result of the unacceptable delays and cost overruns experienced on the TH/SC, in December of 2019 the Select Board unanimously supported switching from the traditional design-bid-build delivery method used on the TH/SC project to the construction manager at-risk delivery method. This change, which we believe will help ensure that the PSB project is completed on time and on budget, accounts for the remainder of the budget increase.

After discussing and working to minimize this request for several months, what is most evident is that we all agree that the current Police, Fire, and Dispatch Facilities are in deplorable condition. After extensive analysis, the Select Board and Finance and Warrant Committee remain convinced that the Combined Public Safety Building represents the best solution to a decades-old problem. For that reason, we unanimously support Article 14. Yes, we wish that circumstances were different and that we could have constructed the PSB with the original appropriation and time frame. Regardless, we don't think that it serves the interests of anyone - Firefighters, Police Officers, Dispatchers, or taxpayers - to go back to the drawing board now. Not only would that waste the nearly $5 million spent to date on this project, but it would

further delay the inevitable and only cost the taxpayers more, all the while subjecting our dedicated Public Safety professionals to difficult, if not hazardous, working conditions for years to come.

Enclosed you will find a Frequently Asked Questions document related to the project. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out and please vote in the affirmative on Article 14 on November 30, 2020.

Sincerely, Sincerely,

Dennis J. Teehan, Jr., Chair Kevin Preston, Chair

Dimitria Sullivan, Vice Chair David Roberts, Vice Chair

James MacDonald John Heffernan

Sarah MacDonald Susan Fay

Kevin Coughlin Michael Leahy

**SELECT BOARD** Michelle Persson Reilly

 Beth Pierce

 Marty Lindemann

 **FINANCE & WARRANT COMMITTEE**