

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2015
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- ARTICLE 1. Appropriation of Funds to Cover Union Contract Settlement.** This article would appropriate the sum of \$10,078 to cover wage and salary benefits employees negotiated with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 274 under the town's collective bargaining agreement for Fiscal 2014. This amount would supplement an existing appropriation made under Article #9 of the September 12, 2013 Special Town Meeting. Increases are to be paid retroactive to July 1, 2013.
- ARTICLE 2. Supplemental FY 2015 Appropriation for the Police Department.** Article 2 would appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to supplement the FY 2015 budget of the Police Department. Since the adoption of the FY 2015 budget the department has experienced some unanticipated costs. These include: (1) One of the Patrol Supervisors was injured while on duty and was out of work for 3 months. The open shift had to be filled during the supervisor's absence from the Police Overtime line item. This put the Overtime budget behind by \$12,000. (2) One of the older police cruisers, Car #6, required a new transmission in December at a total cost of \$3,452.39. The repair was necessary because the cruiser is assigned to the Reserve Police Officers and was used to transport the newest recruit Police Officer back and forth to the academy in Springfield each day.
- ARTICLE 3. Supplemental Appropriation for the Legal Budget.** Article 3 would appropriate the sum of \$22,500 for the purpose of supplementing the legal budget. The town budgets \$70,000 per year for the legal budget, with \$50,000 of this amount allocated to general Town Counsel and \$20,000 allocated to Labor Counsel. Although spending on Labor Counsel is well within the budgeted amount, the Town Counsel portion of this budget is currently running well above this amount (\$47,190.87) through 6 months of the year. Some of this amount can be justifiably covered through other accounts (i.e. expenses associated with tax title foreclosure, the airport, water pollution control), however the legal account is still projected to have a significant shortfall (currently estimated at \$23,000). One of the larger, unanticipated expenses (approximately \$10,000) is associated with the town's participation in the Attorney General's Receivership Program. This program will ultimately bear fruit in terms of upgraded properties and increased tax revenues. Similar benefits are anticipated from the investment in

legal costs for the Commercial Homesteading Program (i.e. the Millers Falls and Montague Center School properties).

- ARTICLE 4. Town's Share of Costs Purchasing a New 6 wheel Dump Truck.** This article would appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to equip a new 6 wheel dump truck that the town is purchasing. Unanticipated Chapter 90 funds (\$142,000) are being used to purchase the truck, but that funding source can only be used to fund construction-related equipment. It cannot be used to purchase the sander, plow and other incidental setup costs that will be necessary to use this truck for snow clearance operations. That money must be appropriated separately by the town. The new truck will replace a 1996 Ford L8000 dump.
- ARTICLE 5. Acquire Necessary Easements for First Street Pump Station Replacement.** Article 5 would authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire the easements necessary to implement the First Street sewer pump station replacement. This project was authorized at a recent town meeting.
- ARTICLE 6. Acquire Necessary Easements for Poplar Street Pump Station Replacement.** Article 6 would authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire the easements necessary to implement the Poplar Street sewer pump station replacement. This project was also authorized at a recent town meeting.
- ARTICLE 7. Acquire the Turners Falls Athletic Club Building for a Senior Center and/or Other Uses.** The current owners of the TFAC building (Power Town) have offered to sell the building to the town for \$1. The town currently uses the building as a senior center under a lease arrangement which expires in 2016. The town would only accept conveyance of the building if parking were also included. The town is currently exploring other future options for a senior center, but with the lease expiring and all other senior center development options requiring a minimum of three years to implement control of this building it is considered a wise investment. Should the town opt to build a new senior center at a different location the TFAC building could either be made available for another town use or sold to a potential developer.