

2018 Town Vote Board of Selectmen and Water and Sewer Commissioners' Majority and Minority Reports

In preparation for Town Voting Day on March 13th the Board of Selectmen, Water & Sewer Commissioners, and the Warrant Article Petitioner would like to present to you the following information for your consideration prior to placing your votes on this year's ballot.

The premise of the information given is that each elected official was able to cast their vote to be in favor or against each warrant article as presented (excluding non-appropriation petition warrant articles in which only the petitioner's views are listed – as per state statute requirements, and Water/Sewer non-bonding articles which are voted on by the Water & Sewer Commissioners as their governing body). Once their votes were cast they then were given the opportunity to write a brief piece to explain their thoughts on why they chose the position they did.

We thank you for your participation in the democratic process and look forward to seeing you on March 13th!

WARRANT ARTICLE 3 - MAIN FIRE STATION UPGRADE – BOND - \$3,864,300

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

This project is to renovate the existing fire station which is 44 years old and is the number one priority of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan for 2017. The project request meets the following CIP project request criteria: Alleviates substandard conditions or deficiencies, improves the quality of existing services, provides incentive to economic development, expanded public demand and extends the life of the current facility. The current facility was built in 1974 and has experienced no major addition or renovations since that time. During those 44 years the Town population has more than doubled in size while the fire station has remained largely the same. The renovation and addition will allow for fifty years of growth and provide decontamination facilities to reduce firefighter exposure to cancer causing chemicals; training and emergency operations center areas and enhances the delivery of services.

WARRANT ARTICLE 4 - TOWN OPERATING BUDGET - \$ 14,060,271

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The 2018 Operating Budget provides a continuation of the Town delivering high-quality services while providing excellent value to the Milford Taxpayers. The 2018 Budget shows an increase of \$86,990 or 0.6% from the 2017 budget and is **lower** than the Default Budget. Department Heads, Finance & Administration, the Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee members all worked cooperatively to deliver a very responsible budget

The Town was very fortunate to see a significant decrease in Health Insurance cost reflecting our employees' attention to cost control methods like wellness campaigns and smart shopper programs. We also saw a decrease in Property & Liability Insurance. Increases including additional Firefighters, a 2% wage increase and

added debt service approved by voters last year to fund the paving and stormwater work projects were largely offset by the decreases noted earlier.

The 2018 Operating Budget will deliver the fourth straight year of improved services with a lower tax rate to the taxpayer.

Thank You for your support of the Town and the Operating Budget.

WARRANT ARTICLE 5 - WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$ 1,520,953

Water and Wastewater Commissioner's Majority Report – Commissioners Courage, Putnam, and White unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The proposed Water Department Operating Budget reflects an increase of 5.5% to the 2017 Operating Budget, or an increase of \$78,945. The Water Department oversees the town wells, 57 miles of water pipe, over 3,500 customers, 497 hydrants as well as numerous service calls.

WARRANT ARTICLE 6 - WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$ 2,069,450

Water and Wastewater Commissioner's Majority Report – Commissioners Courage, Putnam, and White unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The proposed Sewer Department Operating Budget reflects an increase of 6.3% to the 2017 Operating Budget, or an increase of \$121,000. The Sewer Department maintains approximately 40 miles of sewer main, 1200 manholes, and oversees 5.5 miles of sewer interceptor between the Wilton town line and the wastewater treatment facility in east Milford.

WARRANT ARTICLE 7 - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE - \$ 175,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Currently the Town of Milford has numerous bridges that are in need of repair or replacement. Bridges on Mason Road over Tucker Brook, Hartshorn Road over Hartshorn Brook, Mason Road at the Wilton Town line (culvert) and Mason Road over Great Brook are slated for 2018. This article will continue to fund the capital reserve to keep making progress on these bridge projects. The Selectmen feel that it is imperative to continue making the necessary repairs to these bridges by funding the capital reserve.

WARRANT ARTICLE 8 - DPW VEHICLES AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT – CAPITAL RESERVE - \$40,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Setting up a capital reserve account for DPW vehicles and Heavy Equipment is necessary and will lower the impact to the tax rate when a new vehicle or piece of heavy equipment is purchased. The funds will continue to accrue until a replacement is needed and can only be used for the replacement of a DPW vehicle or piece of heavy equipment.

WARRANT ARTICLE 9 - FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT – CAPITAL RESERVE - \$25,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Continuing to fund the capital reserve account for Fire Apparatus is necessary and will lower the impact to the tax rate when a piece of apparatus is purchased. The funds will continue to accrue until a replacement is needed. These funds can only be used for the replacement of a new piece of Fire apparatus.

WARRANT ARTICLE 10 - TOWN FACILITIES RENOVATION AND MAJOR REPAIR REPLACEMENT – CAPITAL RESERVE - \$25,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Continuing to fund the capital reserve account for town facilities is a wise initiative given the number of buildings the town is responsible for, along with their age. These funds would be used for large capital expenses such as heating and cooling systems or roof repair/replacement.

WARRANT ARTICLE 11 - AMBULANCE VEHICLE REPLACEMENT – CAPITAL RESERVE - \$25,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Continuing to fund the capital reserve account for Replacement Ambulance apparatus is necessary and will lower the impact to the tax rate when a new ambulance is purchased. The funds will continue to accrue until a replacement is needed and can only be used for the replacement of an ambulance.

WARRANT ARTICLE 12 - PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT – CAPITAL RESERVE - \$20,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Continuing to fund the capital reserve account for public safety communication equipment is necessary and will lower the impact to the tax rate when it's purchased. These funds will only be used for communication equipment that the town owns and maintains.

WARRANT ARTICLE 13 - ASSESSING REVALUATION CAPITAL RESERVE - \$15,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Pursuant to Part 2, Article 6 of the New Hampshire Constitution, the Town of Milford is required to revalue property at least every five (5) years. Furthermore, RSA 75:8 requires assessors and selectmen to reappraise real estate that has changed in value since the previous year and to correct all errors in property appraisals. By voting annually to fund this account, the cost necessary to conduct the required reassessments is spread out over time.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 14 - REPLACEMENT SIDEWALK PLOW LEASE/PURCHASE – \$155,000
(Annual Payment \$32,300/Total Purchase Price (\$155,000))**

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

With 13.9 miles of sidewalk in town, we need the appropriate equipment to maintain and care for those sidewalks. This purchase will replace one of the two existing sidewalk plows. The 2000 Holder sidewalk plow has been out of service since the winter of 2015. It was determined that the plow was no longer able to be repaired at a reasonable cost. Having only one sidewalk plow simply does not allow to get the sidewalks cleared in a reasonable time frame.

WARRANT ARTICLE 15 - SOCIAL SERVICES - \$40,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Presently there are fourteen (14) agencies that provide assistance to Milford residents. These agencies include Big Brother and Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley, Bridges, CASA, CAST, Child Advocacy Center, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center, Harbor Homes, Keystone Hall, Milford Regional Counseling Center, Nashua Children's Home, Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, Share Outreach and St. Joseph Community Services – Meals on Wheels. The services offered by these organizations provide an invaluable benefit to Milford residents in need, thus reducing the amount the Town of Milford spends on welfare to qualifying residents.

WARRANT ARTICLE 16 - NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES – \$30,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative continues to provide affordable, wheelchair-accessible transportation for non-emergency healthcare appointments and other essential activities, such as social service appointments, senior activities and grocery shopping. This is an invaluable service to the Town of Milford as well as surrounding communities which greatly benefits the town's elderly and disabled population giving them a sense of independence.

WARRANT ARTICLE 17 - PUMPKIN FESTIVAL - \$23,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

Unfortunately, MIT and the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce have decided not to organize the festival going forward. Hundreds of volunteer hours go into making this a spectacular three-day community event with music and activities for all ages. The event puts Milford "on the map". Over 35,000 visitors attended the 2017 Pumpkin Festival. In the past, the huge success of the festival was due to the collaboration of MIT with several town departments, over 25 local businesses, and hundreds of volunteers. Forty non-profit community based groups participated in 2017 with fundraising and awareness activities that benefit Milford in countless ways. The Board of Selectmen is confident that a committee of volunteers will step up to host the 2018 Pumpkin Festival in October. **This money supports funding for extra man-hours for the Department of public works, Police, Ambulance and Fire Department.**

WARRANT ARTICLE 18 – AFSCME CONTRACT - \$21,572

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

This article provides a 2% pay raise for Milford's Police Officers, a well deserving and dedicated group of individuals. This raise is consistent with what is being offered non-union employees and is fully supported by the entire Board of Selectmen 5-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE 19 - SUMMER BAND CONCERTS - \$9,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

These concerts provide an opportunity to get out and enjoy an evening of music and community involvement along the Souhegan River. These concerts are also an on-going and long standing tradition that has been part

of Milford's character and charm. These concerts also take place in Emerson Park, a downtown location close to many residents, including a number of senior housing complexes.

WARRANT ARTICLE 20 - FUNDING OF THE ANNUAL LABOR DAY PARADE – \$10,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

This warrant funds the bands for the Labor Day parade. It has been a tradition in town for 73 years and is the largest Labor Day parade in the state. It brings a lot of revenues to the local businesses, showcases our awarding-winning town oval and offers the opportunity for people to identify the numerous volunteer organizations and services that contribute to Milford's character and way of life.

WARRANT ARTICLE 21 - MEMORIAL, VETERANS & LABOR DAY PARADES AND RECOGNITION - TOWN SUPPORT - \$6,500

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The Memorial, Veterans' Day and Labor Day Parades are a way of honoring those who have made our way of life possible through their service and sacrifice. We also support the article in hopes that their actions and their stories will be passed on to future generations and that we never forget those who served, and those who gave all. We support the Labor Day Parade to not only promote community involvement, but also because it presents an opportunity for people to identify the numerous volunteer organizations and services that contribute to Milford's character and way of life. Milford's parades are a land standing and vital component of our community spirit that has been enjoyed by generations of residents through the years. These funds cover the cost for emergency services and DPW expenses associated with these events.

WARRANT ARTICLE 22 - APPOINTING AGENTS TO THE KEYES PARK EXPANSION COMMITTEE PROJECT CAPITAL RESERVE – \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

This article will allow the Board of Selectmen to expend monies from the Keyes Park Expansion Capital Reserve Fund to fund critical capital projects proposed at the community's premier town park. A detailed master plan has been prepared for Keyes, which will be used to guide future decision making. This article is fully supported by the entire Board of Selectmen 5-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE 23 - AUTHORITY TO GRANT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT TAX RELIEF - \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

This article will provide a tax incentive for existing or new industrial companies to expand their operations in Milford. A portion (50%) of tax rate (Town and School) will be waived for a period of 5 years and decrease over that period from a high of 50% to 10%. The Board of Selectmen believes that this initiative will encourage growth in business and job growth as well as expand our tax base. The entire Board supports this article 5-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE 24 - RENAME BRIDGE REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND - \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The purpose of this article is merely to rename the Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund to the Bridge Replacement and/or Repair Capital Reserve Fund. The purpose of this Fund has always been to utilize the funds in this account to address the highest priority projects with respect to bridge replacement or repair.

WARRANT ARTICLE 25 - SWING BRIDGE - \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **SUPPORT** this article.

The swing bridge is on the New Hampshire DOT ten (10) year plan to be refurbished in 2020. The plan requires matching funds. With access to funds in the Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund, this project could be completed earlier in the event grant funds become available.

WARRANT ARTICLE 26 - MILE SLIP TOWN FOREST EASEMENT - \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico and Dudziak support this article.

This article was proposed by the Conservation Commission and would create a conservation easement, in perpetuity, with respect to land known as Map/Lot 50-9 and 55-5, commonly known as Mile Slip Town Forest. The proposed easement is important and protects the scenic beauty of the land and ensures there is sufficient open space for future generations. This warrant article was passed in 2014 by voters. The Conservation Commission received new legal advice so they had to include a revised warrant article for 2018.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Daniels and Putnam do not support this article.

The minority feels that this land should not be subject to a conservation easement in perpetuity, as doing this we take away the right of future generations to decide how they would like to use the property. More egregious is the fact that this article would grant authorization for the property to be deeded to a “qualified organization,” with Milford residents effectively losing control of the property. This property exists now for our enjoyment. We should not permanently give away our right to control the use of the property as we from time to time decide how it should be used.

WARRANT ARTICLE 27 – KENO – \$0

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico and Dudziak support this article.

The majority feels that the town needs to explore all opportunities to offset the tax rate. We feel that the question of Keno should be placed directly to the Milford taxpayers.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Daniels and Putnam do not support this article.

This article is on the warrant as an incentive for voters to establish full-day kindergarten at taxpayer expense. Last year voters passed full-day kindergarten, with the condition that participants pay for it. For parents who have already paid for kindergarten for their children, this relieved them from paying for kindergarten again year after year on a permanent basis. In spite of voters authorizing this program, the program failed because of lack of participation, for various reasons. Now the push for full-day kindergarten is before voters again, this time requiring all taxpayers, not just participants, to pay the cost of the program. The additional cost of expanding kindergarten from a half-day program to full-day is calculated by the school district to be \$4,623 per child (additional program cost of \$582,500 / 126 students), meaning that the total cost for full-day kindergarten is estimated to be about \$1,147,500 (\$565,000 for the half-day program plus \$582,500 to transition to full-day kindergarten.) This equates to a full-day kindergarten per pupil cost of \$9,107 (\$1,147,500 / 126). Communities currently receive \$1,800 per student in base adequacy grants toward kindergarten from the state. If Milford passes full-day kindergarten, the school district will receive an additional \$1,100 per student from the state. This is where the Keno article comes in. Money from Keno is collected by the state and then distributed to all communities with full-day kindergarten to reduce the remaining cost of kindergarten. For Milford, that remaining

cost would be \$782,082 (\$9,107-\$1,800-\$1,100 = \$6,207 x 126 students). Any remaining cost per student not covered by Keno money distributions will be the responsibility of all Milford taxpayers. To date the Board has been made aware of only three entities in town that have indicated their interest in having Keno. This is exacerbated by the fact that the state would not allow every business to offer Keno, but only those businesses that pour liquor. Even those businesses that have a liquor license would be prohibited from offering Keno if they did not pour liquor. Because of this, the belief is that Keno will not provide enough revenue to cover Milford's supplemental \$782,082 cost of a full-day kindergarten program, and that taxpayers will indeed end up having to pay the on-going residual cost of a kindergarten program permanently. The minority viewed the bill passed by the state as being not only blatantly unfair to those businesses that were excluded, but also restrictive to the potential revenue that could be derived from Keno, which forces cost-shifting of the supplemental tax burden of a full-day kindergarten program onto the backs of community taxpayers. For these reasons the minority opposes this article. We should not be gambling with our children's education.

WARRANT ARTICLE 28 – FIREWORKS – \$8,500 - by petition

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam do not support this article.

Most people love fireworks, but fireworks are the most expensive recreational activity we have on the warrant. Consider that fireworks normally last about 20-30 minutes. Taking the average, that means we blow up \$340 of taxpayer money every minute of the 25-minute event. Contrast this with another recreational activity – band concerts – where we receive hours of enjoyment once a week throughout the summer for about the same amount of money. Consider also that there were fireworks at the 2017 Pumpkin Festival – at a cost of \$2,250, far below what this article requests. The cost of the fireworks article has increased 89% since 2012, when the cost was \$4,500. In trying to keep your property taxes down, the majority sought to present to voters a budget and warrant articles that contained cost, yet provided the services expected. The town continues to have significant needs in terms of road and bridge infrastructure, as well as numerous requests by departments for equipment. When all requests were viewed and prioritized, the majority did not view this as a high priority, but rather as something that, if desired, could be funded in a different manner.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Fougere and Federico support this article

Fireworks have been supported by the voters for many years and the minority believes the voters of Milford should decide if fireworks occur on July 4th. The events on the forth provide a great opportunity to enjoy the holiday with family and friends and is capped off with a nice displays of fireworks in the evening. The taxpayers of Milford should have the direct opportunity to decide if they believe such a display is worth the money.

WARRANT ARTICLE 29 – KEYES MEMORIAL EXPANSION CAPITAL RESERVE – \$25,000 – by petition

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico and Dudziak support this article.

The majority believes funding the Keyes Park Expansion Capital Reserve account will continue to add monies to address needed and planned projects at the Park. Great effort was made to expand Keyes a few years ago, with the purchase of the former Permatach facility. Through the efforts of the Keyes Park Expansion Committee, numerous initiatives were highlighted to address ongoing and future needs at this facility. Putting money away to address these needs is prudent and will offset future impacts to the tax rate.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Daniels and Putnam do not support this article.

While the Board of Selectmen has adopted a policy of using capital reserve accounts to deter spikes in future financial requests for some capital items, the Board is asking voters to fund over \$300,000 in capital reserve requests this year for future items it considers critical. The Board considered requesting funding for this capital reserve fund but then chose not to put it on the warrant, hence why it is appearing as a petition warrant article. Though support for the article has changed from 1-4 not to support the article prior to the Deliberative Session to a 3-2 vote to support subsequent to the Deliberative Session, the minority of the Board continues to oppose the

article for the following reasons: (1) it is not a critical item, and (2) because of the amount of funding the Board has requested for higher priority, critical items.

WARRANT ARTICLE 30 – CONSERVATION LAND FUND – \$20,000 - by petition

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Daniels and Putnam do not support this article.

While the Board of Selectmen has supported this article in the past, a majority of the Board are opposed to the petition funding request this year. Wanting only to ask taxpayers to fund those initiatives that are critical to the operation of the town, a majority of the Board feels that the \$99,000 that is currently in the conservation account is sufficient for the Conservation Commission to continue its duties and activities in 2018.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Dudziak and Federico supports this article.

This article was proposed by the Conservation Commission in order to increase the funds in the Conservation Land Fund. These funds are used to acquire property and conservation easements when they become available in an effort to further protect the town's natural resources.

WARRANT ARTICLE 31 – COMPACT PART OF TOWN – by petition

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report - Selectmen Fougere, Federico, Daniels, Dudziak and Putnam unanimously **OPPOSE** this article.

The Board of Selectmen DO NOT support the proposed petition warrant article. The Board was disappointed that none of the petitioners were available to speak at the Deliberative Session to explain the petition. In addition, creating a Compact Area on the Brox property would result in hunting being prohibited in this area, which the Board does not support.