

**2020 Town Vote
Board of Selectmen and
Water and Sewer Commissioners'
Majority and Minority Reports**

In preparation for Town Voting Day on March 9th 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 9th!

WARRANT ARTICLE 3 - FIRST RESPONDERS COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK \$2,400,000 BOND

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

At the 2019 Annual Meeting voters approved \$85,000 to hire a consultant to (a) study probable solutions, (b) make recommendations to the Board that would result in Milford's emergency services (Ambulance, Fire, Police, Public Works) being able to have at least 95% communication coverage throughout town, including being able to communicate in and out of buildings, and (c) assist in preparing a Request For Proposal (RFP) to accept bids for the equipment needed to achieve the approved solution. Because the study was to include not only a Milford-only option, but also a regional possibility, multiple meetings were held with the Select Boards of Mont Vernon and Wilton, with whom we currently share a MACC Base partnership through an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA).

In September 2019, CTA Consultants, LLC (CTA), a Lynchburg, Virginia company which has specialized in mission critical 911 Communications Center and Radio System evaluation/assessments and design, RFP development, vendor selection/negotiations activities and implementation oversight for over 35 years, was approved by the Board to conduct the study. On December 16, 2019, CTA presented its 241-page findings to the Board, the Boards of Mont Vernon and Wilton, as well as to interested residents in a public meeting at Town Hall. The CTA Assessment Report is accessible on the Town website.

Milford currently uses the Milford Area Communications Center (MACC Base) as its emergency communication center for Ambulance, Fire and Police. The operational budget for 2021 for MACC Base is \$797,998.07. Of that total, Milford will pay 71.29% (\$552,187), Mont Vernon will pay 11.36% (\$88,006) and Wilton will pay 7.34% (\$134,329). The town of Lyndeborough would pay \$23,473 as a customer. The 2021 MACC budget has an increase of 4.3% over last year. The 2020 MACC budget increased 3.48% over 2019.

The 2019 MACC budget increased 4.40% over the 2018 budget. That is a 12.18% increase in just three years!

The other towns (Mont Vernon and Wilton) have publicly stated that all three towns should have an equal vote on the MACC Board of Governors, but they also hold firm on their belief that Milford should continue to pay at least 71% of a regional upgrade. Simply put, it is not a good deal for Milford to have 33% of the vote and be forced to pay 71% of the cost! There is nothing equal about that.

One thing that all towns and the Director of MACC Base agree upon is that the current MACC Base equipment is old, outdated and needs to be replaced. A majority of the Milford Board has also taken the position that our communications center should be brought up to today's safety standards, which MACC Base is not.

After numerous discussions, Milford Selectmen, on a vote of 4-1, are recommending to voters the top-rated proposal recommended by CTA. This solution offers Milford residents the most benefit in a complete, long-lasting solution. The \$2.4 million project cost would be bonded over 15 years, with \$700,000 being used from unassigned fund balance, an account reserved to ensure we have sufficient funds to handle emergencies, which the Board perceives this to be. The use of these funds will place the remaining balance of this fund in the middle of the range recommended by the Department of Revenue Administration, ensuring we still have sufficient funds for other emergencies. The use of this \$700,000 will also reduce the tax rate of this critically needed item by about a third (from \$12.38/100,000 to \$8.19/100,000). Two million will be spent on infrastructure and equipment upgrades, and \$400,000 to build a code-compliant addition to the Milford Police Department facility to house the First Responders Communications Network for not only our first responders in the Ambulance, Fire and Police Departments, but also for the Department of Public Works, a critical department we recognize as part of our first responders. The total operational cost for this new First Responders Communications Network is projected to be \$595,950, with \$529,500 going to salaries and benefits and \$66,450 for annual operational expenses.

The subscribers (i.e. mobile radios, portable radios, pagers) have a lifespan of 10 years with heavy use, but that lifespan can be extended to 12-15 years if they are maintained and serviced regularly. The infrastructure (equipment that is located inside the communications center and the equipment that makes up the network outside the communications center and on the tower, but not the tower itself) is expected to have a lifespan of 15-20 years. The tower would have a lifespan of 30-50 years.

In its study, CTA also left open the possibility that the First Responders Communications Network could be regional, with current partnering towns joining as customers, and each town maintaining its own infrastructure. CTA proposes that any regional relationship include the establishment of a Finance Committee and an Operations Committee. Each committee would include one person from each of the emergency services from each town using the First Responders Communications Network. In this way each town would have a greater voice in maintaining the quality of their respective emergency services. These committees hold Milford accountable. If Milford were to ignore the needs of a particular town, we would lose that town as a customer, to the financial detriment of our town.

Based on the Board's proposed solution, CTA has continued to assist Selectmen in developing an RFP to identify the cost of the needed equipment. After reviewing submissions by vendors, Milford awarded Motorola the final design. CTA also assisted in developing an architect RFP for the addition that would house the First Responders Communications Network, all with the end goal of finally fixing and modernizing our emergency communication systems, for today and the future, bringing stability and reliability of Milford's emergency communications to a level of service expected by residents, while leaving open the possibility of a regional solution with neighboring towns.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Labonte DOES NOT RECOMMEND this article.

The minority opposes Warrant Article 3 for a number of reasons, the primary one being the abandonment of the regional system which has served us well for three and half decades. MACC Base was originally

created to replace the antiquated dispatch service then operated by the Milford Police Department because that department could not properly serve the interests of the various emergency departments of the Town of Milford, much less those of neighboring towns. Centralized communication centers offer more than financial economy. They also act as a hub for disseminating information that can quickly and easily be shared with all member communities. This capability is especially important when first responders are faced with conditions that threaten them as well as the public.

Abandoning MACC Base means giving up our interest in the infrastructure that we have built up over those years. Milford taxpayers paid good money to build that system and walking away from it means throwing away all those tax dollars.

CTA affirmed that the life expectancy of some of the new equipment being installed in this project is from 7 to 10 years. That means Milford will have to purchase new replacement equipment 7 to 10 years from now, even though we will still be paying down this bond for 8 to 15 years more. That means doubling the equipment expense for the entire second half of the term of this bond for those items.

The annual budget for the proposed Milford Communication Center, according to the brochure being circulated will be \$595,950.00. That breaks down to \$529,500.00 for salary and benefits and an additional \$66,450.00 for operational expenses. Milford's 71.2938% share for funding MACC Base in 2020 was \$529,054.39, but that figure included all operational expenses. In years where MACC Base has a surplus, that surplus is returned to each of the member towns. Milford generally receives back in the vicinity of \$40,000.00 per year. If this plan is adopted and Milford withdraws from MACC Base, Milford will not see a surplus from this proposed center because Milford will be responsible for 100% of the costs, and 100 percent of any cost overruns.

Although warrant article 3 states it "allows connectivity by neighboring towns if they choose to participate", no official offer from the Milford Board of Selectmen has ever been conveyed to Wilton or Mont Vernon regarding emergency communication options for those communities. No pricing numbers have been offered, nor even estimates upon which those communities could make an informed decision. These are communities that Milford relies upon for mutual aid with and for all first responding agencies.

WARRANT ARTICLE 4 - SEWER WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY (WWTF) SECONDARY CLARIFIERS REPLACEMENT MECHANISMS - \$1,750,000.00 BOND

Board of Commissioners Majority Report – Commissioners Courage, Putnam and White RECOMMEND this article.

This project will replace aging Secondary Clarifier mechanisms to avoid failure of equipment to ensure uninterrupted essential operations at the Waste Water Treatment Facility.

WARRANT ARTICLE 5 - WADLEIGH LIBRARY HVAC/Electrical Repair - \$995,000 BOND

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Approval of this article will enable the Library Trustees to make necessary repairs and upgrades to the HVAC system, most of which is 20 years old and inefficient. A new system would provide significant energy savings and allow patrons to enjoy comfortable temperatures throughout the year, including when the library is used as a cooling center in the summer months.

WARRANT ARTICLE 6 - TOWN OPERATING BUDGET - \$15,664,508

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie and Dudziak RECOMMEND this article.

The 2021 Operating Budget is \$402,813 more than the 2020 Operating Budget (2.6%).

The 2021 Default Budget is \$236,077 more than the 2020 Default Budget (1.5%).

The 2021 Operating Budget is \$156,682 higher than the default budget.

The major drivers in the 2021 Operating Budget increase are:

- Employee Benefits
- Police Administration
- DPW Streets
- Wage Increases
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Ambulance
- Information Systems
- Assessing
- Fire Department
- Building & Health
- Town Clerk
- Library
- Finance

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Labonte and Freel DO NOT RECOMMEND this article.

The minority does not support the 2021 proposed town operating budget. The minority would like to see line items that are typically not spent, either taken out or explained where they were used and line items adjusted to reflect that. The minority feels that the town budget could be more carefully reviewed and analyzed to be certain we are being fiscally responsible with taxpayer money.

WARRANT ARTICLE 7 - WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$2,288,406

Board of Commissioners Majority Report – Commissioners Courage, Putnam and White RECOMMEND this article.

The proposed Sewer Department Operating Budget reflects an increase of 14.4% to the 2020 Operating Budget. The Sewer Department has over 2,900 customers, maintains approximately 40 miles of sewer main, 1,200 manholes, and oversees 5.5 miles of sewer interceptor between the Wilton town line and the wastewater treatment facility in east Milford.

WARRANT ARTICLE 8 - WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET - \$1,589,652

Board of Commissioners Majority Report – Commissioners Courage, Putnam and White RECOMMEND this article.

The Proposed Water Department Operating Budget reflects an increase of 2.6% to the 2020 Operating Budget. The Water Department oversees the town wells, 57 miles of water pipe, over 3,400 customers, 503 hydrants as well as numerous service calls.

WARRANT ARTICLE 9 - RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWN ROADS - \$400,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

For many years the town funded road repairs at a little over \$300,000 per year to match what we receive from the state for road repair funding. This level of funding is nowhere near what is needed to properly maintain the roads in town, and the condition of our roads had continued to decline each year due to this low level of spending resulting in very poor roads. Recognizing this fact, four years ago we borrowed \$2,000,000 on a bond to increase our road repair activity to try to get ahead somewhat on our average road condition level. This bonded money was spent at about \$650,000 per year for three years to supplement the normal funding, resulting in average road spending of almost \$1,000,000 per year for those three years. Last year we wanted to continue this increased spending level, but it was done without bonding by raising and appropriating an additional \$400,000 to get to a spending level of a little over \$700,000, which was a bit less than the previous three years, but well ahead of the old level of spending that was seriously deficient. This increased spending level for the past four years has helped to improve our average road conditions, but we still have a long way to go to before we get to an acceptable level of repair. We want to continue with this increased level of repair this year by duplicating the extra \$400,000 that was approved last year. There are many candidate sections of roads needing repairs, and the exact sections to be repaired will be chosen in the late spring of 2021 when the winter damage can be assessed.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Daniels DOES NOT RECOMMEND this article.

While not denying that roads need to continue to be repaired, the minority feels that this additional \$400,000 would place too much of a tax burden on residents in the same year that the Board is asking for \$2,400,000 to fix our emergency communication dispatch problems, identified by the Board as its highest priority. There is \$300,000 in the operating budget to continue to repair the worst roads, as identified by DPW's Cartograph software. This year, concentration should be on fixing our emergency communications, with reconstruction of town roads secondary to that initiative.

WARRANT ARTICLE 10 - FIRE RESCUE TRUCK #1 REPLACEMENT - 7-YEAR LEASE/PURCHASE - \$689,700 (Annual Lease Payment \$86,214: \$100,000 Paid from Fire Apparatus Replacement Capital Reserve the Total Purchase Price (\$689,700)

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Rescue #1 is the Fire Department's Heavy Rescue Unit which carries vehicle extraction equipment and other technical rescue equipment used on a regular basis. This vehicle responds to all motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material incidents, and water and technical rescues. It is over 30 years old and in marginal condition, and it does not have current safety features that are important. The replacement vehicle will also be equipped with a pumper, allowing a single vehicle to respond to incidents instead of the current situation of having both a pumper unit and a rescue unit responding together to many incidents. This will allow for considerable manpower savings over the coming years.

WARRANT ARTICLE 11 - WADLEIGH LIBRARY MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP CAPITAL RESERVE - \$50,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Over recent years, with the uncertainty of whether the town would support a renovation and/or addition to the Library, the Wadleigh Library Board of directors had forgone major renovations and infrastructure upkeep that the aging structure is in need of. It is the position of the Select Board that it is a good idea to

fund this account and start saving for future Maintenance and Upkeep items that will need to be completed, in future years.

WARRANT ARTICLE 12 - PUBLIC WORKS SNOW PLOW UNIT 5 YEAR LEASE-PURCHASE - \$42,530 (Annual Lease Payment \$42,530; Total Purchase Price (\$180,000))

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Approval of this article would allow for the replacement of the 2002 International plow/dump truck unit, a frontline snowplow unit used to maintain and promote public traveling on 89.33 miles of roadway. This truck has required substantial repairs over the life of the vehicle, exceeding \$67,000. History establishes that maintenance costs increase to 66.51% in years 5-10 and increase by another 36.39% in years 10-15. According to the National Fleet Replacement Guidelines, this vehicle is in immediate need of replacement.

WARRANT ARTICLE 13 - SOCIAL SERVICES - \$40,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Presently there are twelve (12) agencies that provide assistance to Milford residents. 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 14 - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL RESERVE - \$40,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Our IT department is the life line to all of our town departments. It has become even more important for our IT department to keep up with the demands of additional internet communications among not only our town administration, boards, and individual departments-but also with the Milford Towns People. This article would fund the accounts for the first time and allow us to begin saving for future hardware and software upgrades necessary to keep Milford connected.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Dargie DOES NOT RECOMMEND this article.

The minority does not support this warrant article because there are many costly items on the warrant this year, and some of the capital reserve funding items such as this one are of a lower priority and therefore can be skipped for this year. The purpose of this new capital reserve fund is to have money available if there is an unexpected failure of Information Technology hardware or software requiring replacement or repair. If such an event occurs this year, then we will just follow the longstanding practice of finding the money in the existing budget to fill the unexpected need.

WARRANT ARTICLE 15 - NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES – \$32,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

The Board unanimously supports this article. Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative continues to provide affordable, wheelchair-accessible transportation for non-emergency healthcare appointments and other essential activities. 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 16 - PUBLIC WORKS WHEEL BUCKET LOADER PURCHASE – (\$146,118) \$120,000 Paid From Capital Reserves, Net Purchase price \$26,118;

Board of Selectmen’s Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Approval of this article will allow for the purchase of the bucket loader that is currently being leased at \$19,000 per five-month winter season. This purchase will eliminate the need for that annual rental. This will result in a significant cost savings to the town over the 15-year expected life of the bucket loader.

WARRANT ARTICLE 17 - FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE - \$25,000

Board of Selectmen’s Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, and Dudziak DO NOT RECOMMEND this article.

The majority of the Board opposes this article due to the amount of funding the Board has requested for other critical, higher priority items, such as the First Responder’s Communications Network. The majority feels this capital reserve funding item can be addressed next year.

Board of Selectmen’s Minority Report – Selectmen Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

The intent of this reserve fund is to offset the cost of a new piece of apparatus when it is needed. Continuing to fund this capital reserve will save us interest cost on a future lease or bond.

WARRANT ARTICLE 18 - KEYES PARK EXPANSION COMMITTEE PROJECT CAPITAL RESERVE - \$25,000

Board of Selectmen’s Majority Report – Selectmen Dargie, Dudziak and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

This article continues the funding of a capital reserve account dedicated to improvements at Keyes Park. The Keyes Park Expansion Committee developed a preliminary master plan for the site a few years ago after the former Permatlach facility was purchased and then added to the site. A consultant has been hired to assess the recreational needs in town and at Keyes field, and to come up with recommendations for future improvements. This capital reserve account currently has enough money in it to pay for the consultant, but no extra money for anything further beyond that. The addition to this capital reserve will enable future spending on park improvements.

Board of Selectmen’s Minority Report – Selectmen Daniels, and Labonte DO NOT RECOMMEND 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 this year has focused on higher priority, more critical items than this article. The minority of the Board opposes this article for the following reasons: (1) it is not a critical item, essential to running the town this year, and (2) discussion this year regarding the use of funds from this reserve has focused on using the capital reserve funds for small expenses whereas the purpose of a capital reserve is to even out the amount that is requested for large expenditures which would otherwise cause a spike in the tax rate.

WARRANT ARTICLE 19 - AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT PORTABLE RADIO REPLACEMENT FROM THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT CAPITAL RESERVE - \$13,927

Board of Selectmen’s Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

The ambulance department portable radios are past their end of life and are unable to be repaired when they fail. Approval of this warrant article will ensure that the ambulance department has fully functioning portable radios for all shifts that will work with any current or future town dispatch system and with other town departments. If warrant article # 3 (the First Responders Communication Network) passes, then only one set of radios for the ambulance department will be purchased. The use of this capital reserve fund requires voters' approval. This warrant article is independent of MACC Base and warrant article # 3.

WARRANT ARTICLE 20 - SUMMER BAND CONCERTS SUPPORT - \$9,000

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

Milford's summer band concerts are an example of why Milford is such a great place to live. The concerts are held in Emerson Park next to the post office or in Town Hall when there is bad weather. Listening to the various types of music on the banks of the Souhegan River is a wonderful experience that is suitable for people of all ages, including the many seniors that live nearby.

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

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

These funds cover the cost of town department expenses needed to properly support the Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Veterans Day parades that are held each year. These funds also cover the cost of flags for veterans in our cemeteries on Memorial Day. The three parades allow us to honor those who have served and/or made sacrifices to make our country better. They promote community involvement and allow our current groups and organizations to be recognized.

WARRANT ARTICLE 22 - BLIND EXEMPTION

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

The present exemption amount of \$15,000 is the minimum exemption established by statute in 2003. The exemption has not been increased, despite property tax increases since that time and, as such, the exemption has had a diminishing effect over time.

WARRANT ARTICLE 23 - GRANITE TOWN RAIL TRAIL REVOLVING FUND

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Dargie, Dudziak, Labonte and Freel RECOMMEND this article.

The conservation commission has been raising money for many years specifically for support of the Granite Town Rail Trail, with their major fundraiser being the Ghost Train Rail Trail Race that is normally held each fall. They have been unofficially accounting for the raised funds over the years, and this new fund just formalizes the arrangement so that there is no misunderstanding about the status of the funds.

WARRANT ARTICLE 24 - NASHUA STREET PEDESTRIAN SAFETY and SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - \$871,924 (State pays \$697,539; Town pays \$174,385) By Petition

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Labonte and Freel DO NOT RECOMMEND this article.

Cities and towns are responsible by law for ensuring that public sidewalks are passable. This means that the town would take on the liability of ensuring that the sidewalk is free of snow in the winter and would need to appropriate necessary funds yearly to maintain the sidewalk to keep it safe (free from cracks and

breaks) for pedestrians. This article uses a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program grant to fund 80% of the project, with the town funding the remaining 20% (\$174,385). However, the total amount of \$871,924 must first be taken from Milford taxpayers and the project completed before the state would pay back its share to the town. Even then, there is no guarantee that the \$697,539 reimbursed from the state would be returned to taxpayers, as the funds would be put in the town's general fund to be used at the discretion of the Select Board. This \$871,924 is just the initial cost to build the sidewalk. Going forward, Milford residents would be responsible for funding the on-going maintenance of this sidewalk (plowing and repairs) to keep the town free of liability. Between Article 24 and Article 25, there is an additional 7500' (1.42 miles) of sidewalk that would need to be plowed each snowstorm and repaired as needed. This will have an impact on DPW time and resources, including accelerated wear and tear on sidewalk plows, and the frequency in which we need to purchase them (we just purchased a sidewalk plow two years for \$155,000). Should this article pass, residents should expect an increase in future DPW budgets to cover this additional work. Furthermore, CMAQ grants have traditionally provided continual funding for these types of projects. This same article (at \$121,872 less) was placed by petition before voters at the 2020 Annual Meeting and was rejected on a 1297-yes to 1568-no vote. For these reasons, the majority does not support this article.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Dargie and Dudziak RECOMMEND this article.

This article provides the 20% matching funds (\$174,385) that are needed to build about 3,500 linear feet of sidewalks on Nashua Street on the east side of town in various sections between Cahill Place and Lorden Plaza. This project is one of the key components of the Milford Pedestrian, Bicycle, Trail & Recreation Connectivity Plan. This project has been in the Capital Improvements Plan for over a decade pending the awarding of the 80% funding by the state. This is our opportunity to get a very desirable project completed at a bargain price. There are many apartments at the east end of town and completing the sidewalk network in that area will help to improve transportation options for the residents and to increase public safety.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 25 - OSGOOD ROAD, MELENDY ROAD, AND ARMORY ROAD
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY SIDEWALK AND BICYCLE LANE PROJECT - \$797,872 (State pays
\$638,298; Town pays \$159,574) By Petition**

Board of Selectmen's Majority Report – Selectmen Daniels, Labonte and Freel DO NOT RECOMMEND this article.

Cities and towns are responsible by law for ensuring that public sidewalks are passable. This means that the town would take on the liability of ensuring that the sidewalk is free of snow in the winter and would need to appropriate necessary funds yearly to maintain the sidewalk to keep it safe (free from cracks and breaks) for pedestrians. This article uses a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program grant to fund 80% of the project, with the town funding the remaining 20% (\$159,574). However, the total amount of \$797,872 must first be taken from Milford taxpayers and the project completed before the state would pay back its share to the town. Even then, there is no guarantee that the \$638,298 reimbursed from the state would be returned to taxpayers, as the funds would be put in the town's general fund to be used at the discretion of the Select Board. This \$797,872 is just the initial cost to build the sidewalk. Going forward, Milford residents would be responsible for funding the on-going maintenance of this sidewalk (plowing and repairs) to keep the town free of liability. Between Article 24 and Article 25, there is an additional 7500' (1.42 miles) of sidewalk that would need to be plowed each snowstorm and repaired as needed. This will have an impact on DPW time and resources, including accelerated wear and tear on sidewalk plows and the frequency in which we need to purchase them (we just purchased a sidewalk plow two years for \$155,000). In addition, passage of this article would negatively impact the roadside parking area now used for events at Adams Field, further contributing to Milford's parking shortage. Should this article pass, residents should expect an increase in future DPW budgets to cover this additional work. Furthermore, CMAQ grants have traditionally provided continual funding for these types of projects. This same article (at \$34,872 less) was placed by petition before voters at the 2020 Annual Meeting and was rejected on a 1243-yes to 1628-no vote. For these reasons, the majority does not support this article.

Board of Selectmen's Minority Report – Selectmen Dargie and Dudziak RECOMMEND this article.

This article provides the 20% matching funds (\$159,574) that are needed to build about 4,000 linear feet of sidewalks and related improvements along Osgood Road, Mason Road, Melendy Road, and Armory Road in the area near Adams Field and Osgood Pond which are heavily used by students. This project is one of the key components of the Milford Pedestrian, Bicycle, Trail & Recreation Connectivity Plan. This project has been in the Capital Improvements Plan for over a decade pending the awarding of the 80% funding. This is our opportunity to get a very desirable project completed at a bargain price. This project provides sidewalk connectivity to Adams Field, the Leisure Acres manufactured housing development, and the Granite Town Rail Trail entrance on Armory Road.