

# **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING LANCASTER MASSACHUSETTS**

**Mary Rowlandson Elementary School**

**October 1, 2012**

## **Abbreviated Notes**

The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Moderator David I. Spanagel. A total of 277 registered voters and 13 non-voting guests were signed in by Registrars John Ranieri, Mary Perreira and Kevin Baer. Moderator Spanagel led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and then introduced the Town Officials sitting on the stage: Board of Selectmen (BOS) members Jennifer Leone, John P. Sonia and Jean M. Syria, Finance Committee (FinCom) Members Jay Riley, Janet Baylis, Walter Sendrowski and Peter CampoBasso, and Michelle I Vasquez, Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco, Finance Director Cheryl Gariepy and Town Clerk Sue Thompson. The Moderator appointed Michael Lukaszevich and Barbara Bartlett as vote counters. Peter Farmer was resigning as a member of the Minuteman School Committee, so Moderator Spanagel asked any residents who were interested in this position to contact him.

Moderator Spanagel then asked for a moment of silence for residents of the Town who had died during the past six months.

**Article 1** – On a motion by John Sonia and a second by Jennifer Leone, the Town voted unanimously to approve the Capital Expenditures as printed in the Warrant. Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco noted that “Item b. New Water Source” was a request for \$95,500 for system design and permitting for a new well on state-owned land off Route 110.

**Article 2** – On a motion by Jennifer Leone and a second by Jean Syria, the Town voted by majority vote, with one negative vote, to raise and appropriate \$16,706,419.00 to defray the operating expenses of the Town for fiscal year 2013, with the expectation that \$2,378,598 of that amount will be offset by state aid and local receipts.

**Article 3** – On a motion by Jean Syria and a second by Jennifer Leone, the Town voted unanimously to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 5N, allowing the Town to create a Veterans Tax Abatement Program.

**Article 4** – On a motion by John Sonia and a second by Jean Syria, the Town voted by a supermajority vote of 184 yeas and 52 nays (a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority vote was needed to pass this article) to authorize the Treasurer-Collector with the approval of the Board of Selectmen to borrow \$3,400,000 for the purpose of making renovations and repairs to the Prescott Building, also referred to as the Old Lancaster High School/Center School, contingent upon the Town having voted to exclude any bonds or notes issued pursuant to this vote from the limitations of M.G.L. Chapter 59, section 21C; said funds to be expended under the direction of the Board of Selectmen. Funding for the Prescott Building renovations will be on the ballot at the May 13 2013 Annual Town Election.

**Article 5** – On a motion by Jennifer Leone and a second by John Sonia, the Town voted by a vote of 150 yeas and 88 nays (a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority vote was needed to pass this article) not to authorize the Treasurer/Collector to borrow \$563,750 for the design, construction and improvements to the Thayer Field Recreation Field/Campus. This loan would have been contingent upon the Town obtaining a Parklands Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Finance Committee did not recommend passage of this article, stating they did not have enough information about the long-term costs of the project. After the vote was taken a recount was called; according to the recount, the defeat of the motion was confirmed by an even wider margin, with only 147 yeas against 90 nays.

**Article 6** – On a motion by Jean Syria and a second by Jennifer Leone, the Town voted by a Moderator-declared majority vote with 12 nays, to appropriate \$20,200 from Fund Number 9N00, The Parker Gift Fund; \$30,000 from Fund Number 2102, Smart Growth Fund; \$11,300 from Fund Number 9011, The Land Purchase Fund, to fund the acquisition of the parcels of land shown on Lancaster Assessor's Map 33 Parcel 82 and Map 33 Parcel 82.A, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into agreements and execute all instruments necessary to purchase this land. This is a 20.5 acre piece of land abutting the Town Forest on Old County Road.

**Article 7** – On a motion by John Sonia and a second by Jennifer Leone, the Town voted, by a vote of 157 yeas and 66 nays, to disapprove the \$8,000,000 indebtedness authorized by vote of the Regional District School Committee of the Nashoba Regional School District on September 11, 2012. The money was to be used to renovate the science labs at the High School. Nancy Federspiel, chair of the NRSD School Committee, explained what the \$8 million would cover. The Finance Committee disapproved the article, stating that it was too hastily put together, that the costs were too high for the scope of the project, that the town had just paid off a school bond and wanted to use that money for other town projects, and that the town had just recently voted a bond for the athletic field project at the High School. A motion to reconsider failed.

**Article 8** – On a motion by Jennifer Leone and a second by Jean Syria, the Town voted by a Moderator-declared majority vote with only 3 nays, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, all temporary and permanent easements as depicted on a plan prepared by Beta Group Inc. dated February 28, 2012 entitled "Route 110/Old Common Road, Center Bridge Road Preliminary Right of Way Plan" and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into agreements and execute all instruments necessary on behalf of the Town to obtain the easements. The easements, which would be paid for by Commonwealth, are necessary in order to complete the 5 Corners Intersection reconstruction project.

**Article 9** – On a motion by Jennifer Leone and a second by Jean Syria, the Town voted to withdraw Article 9.

After all articles had been decided, resident Eugene Christoph moved that the citizens of Lancaster thank Thayer Memorial Library Director Joe Mulé for the Library's successful 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year and party.

There being no further business, Moderator Spanagel thanked the audience for their participation and accepted a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.