

Clarification and detail on Article one, soon to be warned and voted on in December.

Article One is to approve money for deferred maintenance, structural repairs, insulation, alternative energy/heating sources, and a new roof for the Town Hall. With an ongoing problem of roof leaks at the Town hall, independent contractors had advised the current and prior Selectboard that Town hall needs a new roof. It was also recognized that a lack of insulation was contributing to ice dams causing the leaks. The Selectboard discussed several options and decided that we should have a more comprehensive look at the building to make sure we were looking at both the capital expenditure for a big project and the ongoing operating costs of the building (the Plymouth Town hall uses approximately twice the energy of the average municipal building in Vermont). Additionally, improved insulation to combat ice dams would leave much more snow on the roof potentially exceeding the design loads of the building.

The Selectboard hired an architect and their consulting engineer to do a full-envelope analysis, the results of which are posted on the Town website. The subsequent report notes that significant structural upgrades should be made to prevent a building failure. Upon closer examination, roughly \$400,000 in deferred maintenance should be completed. We were advised that the current propane boiler serving the offices is at the end of its useful life, as are the heaters in the Fire department bay and Garage. The overhead doors are also showing significant wear, and daylight is visible from the inside.

Voting 2-1, the Selectboard chose option D, as designated in the aforementioned report. The two Selectmen voting for option D thought it made the most sense when looking at the project from the angles of capital expenditure and long-term operating costs.

If option D is approved by the voters, the next step would involve engineered drawings for the necessary structural work with specifications for the related work including boiler upgrades, insulation, windows, etc. Once a firm plan for the work is determined it would then go out for bid, in a effort to secure the best price while meeting design specifications.

The project would be paid for with money in the General Fund and the Building Reserve fund. As of June 30, 2021, the General Fund had a balance of \$1,264,000.00, and \$200,000 of this was returned to the tax payers this year through a lower tax rate. The Building Reserve balance is \$180,000.00, which would be used first and after the approximate \$950,000.00 expenditure, leaving approximately \$294,000 in the General Fund. NEMRC, who has been proving financial training and assistance to the Town, advises that a \$250,000.00 balance should be more than sufficient for operating capital and for unanticipated expenses. Therefore, we do not anticipate an increase in the tax rate from 2019 levels due to this project.

Additionally, the Fire Department is seeking a replacement for the current pumper truck, which is over 30 years old. The Fire department has hired a grant writer and is optimistic in acquiring funds for this purchase of an estimated \$375,000-plus. The Fire Department also has \$100,000.00 to contribute toward the purchase.

The Selectboard will welcome your questions at the December meeting.