

VOTER INFORMATION BULLETIN

Town of Douglas

March 2001

TWO SPECIAL SPRING TOWN MEETINGS TO TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14TH AT DOUGLAS MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

1 Article Meeting at 7PM • 12 Article Meeting Immediately Following

FINANCE COMMITTEE MESSAGE

On March 14th, two Special Town Meetings are scheduled. The majority of articles at both Town meetings relate to the growth in our community. The Finance Committee's recommendations have their basis in the multi-year budget projections developed in September 2000 and relied upon in concluding that a new school could fit within the Town's financial capacity. We will continue to use and update these calculations in the future.

The only article at the first Special Town Meeting would transfer approximately \$500,000 into the Stabilization Fund reserve account. Continuing to add to our Stabilization Fund was an integral part of the strategy proposed by the Staff Finance team, the Town Accountant, the Town Administrator and the Finance Committee to use the Stabilization fund to keep the tax-rate down during the early years of financing the school project before state reimbursement payments are scheduled to be received. It is imperative that we follow through with this commitment without straying from the objective of providing tax relief.

A close look at the articles on the second Special Town Meeting warrant will show you what is happening in Douglas. The Capital Planning Committee proposes its first 5-year plan for the Town's approval. The Library trustees are looking for grants to assist in expansion and Water/Sewer is proposing sewer line rehabilitation and upgrades to provide the new school with adequate infrastructure services. A land purchase that was originally approved at the October town meeting is now proposed to be funded through the Overlay Surplus, thus incurring no interest costs. Legal services have mounted to almost double the annual appropriation and the Assessors are asking to reduce the numbers of small personal property accounts while adding staff hours. The ambulance department incurred costs due to the new Fire Station coming on line last year. These articles indicate that the Town is busy, growing and very involved with Capital project issues.

The Finance Committee's review of the second warrant is incomplete and has been fragmented with problems of committee quorum, meeting cancellations due to weather, article changes and the perceived need for an expedited review process for the Blackstone Valley Tech building expansion. This large project was not a part of the review by the Staff Finance Team last fall, nor was the 20-year debt assessment amount of \$90,800 per year used within those projections. The time for a comprehensive review of the debt and operating costs that will be generated has been brief. The consensus among Finance Committee members, Town Administrator and Town Accountant has been that the expansion and renovation project for the vocational high school, while a seeming worthwhile project, cannot be funded within our already-strained community budget. It must be funded outside of the parameters of Proposition 2 1/2 as a Debt Exclusion, with a positive majority vote both at the Special Town Meeting of 3/14 and through a Ballot question at the Annual Election in May. The tax burden and questions of affordability must be brought to the people of Douglas. The current wording of Article 6 does not reflect the written recommendation of the Town Administrator, the Town Accountant and the general consensus of the Finance Committee, that the debt should not be approved unless the vote is contingent on the passage of a Debt Exclusion. The Finance Committee's final consideration on four articles (Articles 4, 6, 7 and 11) will take place at its meeting of March 12th; recommendations will be made at the Special Town Meeting.

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ARTICLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING AT 7PM

Article 1. Stabilization Fund

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$507,859 from Certified Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Article 1. Adoption of FY02-07 Capital Improvement Plan

To see if the Town will vote to approve the Town of Douglas FY02-07 Capital Improvement Plan as submitted by the Capital Improvement Committee, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 2. Transfer of Overlay Reserve to Selectmen for Land Acquisition

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$233,690.91 from the Overlay Surplus Account to the Board of Selectmen for Land Acquisition, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee does not recommend this article.

Article 3. Transfer of Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Free Cash to Sewer Inflow & Infiltration

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$70,000 from the Water/Sewer Free Cash Account to the Water/Sewer Capital Account, to undertake a sewer system infiltration/inflow and rehabilitation as required by an existing state consent decree, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 4. Water Line Design

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds (Supplemental Lottery) to the Water/Sewer Department Capital account for the purpose of designing water main

replacements in Main Street, or take any other action related thereto.

Recommendation will be given on the floor.

Article 5. Library Building Expansion Project Approval

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Library Trustees of the Simon Fairfield Public Library and the Library Building Committee to apply for, accept and expend any state grants which may be available for a library renovation and expansion project and to further approve the renovation and expansion of the Simon Fairfield Public Library contingent on the receipt of a state grant, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 6. Blackstone Valley Vocational School Building Expansion

To see if the Town will vote to approve the debt authorized by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District on March 1, 2001 for costs of adding to, equipping, reconstructing and making extraordinary repairs to the regional school, including all costs incidental and related thereto, of which approximately \$820,812 represents the net principal amount of such debt estimated to be allocable to the Town, in accordance with the terms of the District Agreement, and further that the Town shall vote on the question of whether to exempt from the limitation on total taxes imposed by G.L. c.59, §21C (Proposition 2 1/2) amounts required to pay for the Town's share of the principal and interest on the borrowing authorized by the District, or take any other action related thereto.

Recommendation will be given on the floor.

Article 7. Economic Opportunity Area No. 5.

To see if the Town will vote to establish an Economic Opportunity Area in the Town of Douglas in accordance with Massachusetts General Law c. 23A, § 3E at and including the entire industrial and Residential Commercial Two zone located on both sides of Route 16 on the western town line of Douglas as it borders the Town of Webster, and including portions of

property zoned Residential Agricultural, all as shown as EOA No. 5 on the attached map, or to take any other action related thereto.

Recommendation will be given on the floor.

Article 8. Legal Services

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$35,000 from available funds (Supplemental Lottery) to the Town Counsel account, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 9. Personal Property Exemption

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 59§5(54) allowing the Town to establish \$5000 as a minimum fair cash value required for personal property accounts to be taxed and to be effective FY 2002, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 10. Assessor Salary Expense

To see if the Town will vote to amend the action taken at the Annual Town Meeting held May 15, 2000 to increase the sum appropriated to the Assessors' Salaries & Wages – part time account from Fifteen thousand five hundred twenty five dollars (\$15,525) to Seventeen thousand seven hundred five dollars (\$17,705) by a transfer from the Assessors' Special Mapping Account, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

Article 11. Interim Executive Administrator

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds (Supplemental Lottery) to Selectmen Personnel Services for the purpose of retaining an interim Executive Administrator, or take any other action related thereto.

Recommendation will be given on the floor.

Article 12. Ambulance Transfer

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Ambulance Receipts the sum of \$1,050 to Ambulance Fuel, the sum of \$1,596 to Ambulance

Operating Expenses, and the sum of \$1,354.00 to Ambulance Repair & Maintenance for a total of \$4,000, or take any other action related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends this article.

CAPITAL PLAN MESSAGE

The Capital Improvements Committee proposes the adoption of Douglas' first Capital Improvements Plan. The plan details the projected capital items requested by all departments for fiscal years 2002 through 2007 with the anticipated cost, recommended funding and timing. Actual funding decisions will be made at the Annual Town meeting for the FY 2002 items recommended by the Committee.

Since the enactment of the Bylaw creating the Capital Improvements Committee in November 1999, the Committee has undertaken two major steps. First, to request the capital needs from every town department and committee for the current year as well as subsequent 5 years. Second, to determine the funding available for capital items.

Using the initial capital requests obtained during the FY00 budgeting process as a basis, new or revised department requests were incorporated into the plan during November 2000 through early January 2001. Additionally, the firm of C & R/Rizvi, Inc. conducted a Municipal Building review. The review evaluated the town buildings in the areas of grounds, exterior envelope, roof, interior, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection. The results of that review were then incorporated into the final plan.

Once all the known-to-date projects had been incorporated into the plan, the Committee began the prioritization process for the FY2002 projects. The Committee's prioritization process includes assessing and ranking each request based on the requesting department's ranking of their own projects, type of service provided, impacts to future expenses and revenues.

Having determined the relative ranking of all projects, the next step is to compare the resulting list of projects to the available funding. For projects funded within the levy limit, the Committee had recommended and received approval to budget 2% of the annual General Fund revenues for capital expenses. Generally, the individual requests total less than \$100,000 when recommended funding is through General Funds. Of the 15 FY2002 requests for less than \$100,000 that were reviewed, 11 are recommended for inclusion in the FY2002 budget, 2 are potential additions to the FY2002 based on funding review and 2 were deferred to FY2003.

The balance of the requests for projects in FY2002 are projects larger than \$100,000. The recommended funding for these projects will likely be through Prop 2 1/2 override debt exclusions. The next major goal of the Committee is to establish guidelines for funding of such projects. The Committee plans to present our research, results and recommendations on these

projects as well as the inclusion of FY2008 in the Fall 2001 Special Town Meeting.

In conclusion, the major areas addressed by the FY2002 plan include major maintenance of town buildings 2) replacement and acquisition of public safety and road maintenance vehicles and equipment, and 3) support of new services such as expansion of water/sewer, recreational and educational facilities, and economic expansion.

FY02-07 TOWN OF DOUGLAS CAPITAL REQUESTS

Requesting Department	FY02 Recommended Projects	Cost
School	Early Learning Center Window Replacement	47,460
Town Buildings	Roof Repairs - Pump Station #1, M/HS & Old Elementary	47,381
Fire	Replace Air Paks	41,172
School	Middle/High School Masonry Control Joints	28,875
Police Department	4 Wheel Drive Emergency Response Vehicle	26,000
Economic Development	Industrial Land Feasibility Study	25,000
Town Clerk	Ballot Optical Scanner Machine	12,530
Recreation	Martin Road Concession/Restroom Building	12,000
Town Buildings	Post Office Renovations - Painting, Insulation, Gutters	11,091
Community Devel	Pick-up Truck	11,000
Town Buildings	Pick-up Truck	11,000
	FY02 Total	273,509
	Potential Additional FY02 Projects	
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
Highway	Catch Basin Cleaner	60,000
	Total Potential Additional FY02 Projects	88,000
Water/Sewer	Inflow & Infiltration Repairs (From Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund)	40,000

Requesting Department	FY03 Requested Projects	Cost
Town Buildings	Municipal Center Renovations	64,220
School	Truck	45,000
Town Buildings	Replacement Main Electrical Panel	45,000
Town Buildings	Municipal Facilities Master Plan - Phase 2	30,000
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
Highway	Chipper	27,000
VFW	Handicapped Ramp	20,625
School	Middle/High School Garage	20,000
Fire	Replace Air Paks	19,940
Highway	Stainless Steel Sanders (2)	18,000
School	Pavement Resealing	15,000
VFW	Install 1st Floor Unisex Bathroom	13,750
Recreation	Martin Road Access Roadway	10,500
	FY03 Total	357,035

Requesting Department	FY04 Requested Projects	Cost
Fire	Rescue Truck	85,000
Highway	4 Wheel Drive 1-Ton Truck w/Plow	40,000
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
	FY04 Total	153,000

Town of Douglas
Cable Advisory Committee Survey

PLEASE ANSWER AS MANY QUESTIONS AS POSSIBLE. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE USED BY THE CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DURING UPCOMING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS. PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN MEETING, AT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S OFFICE, OR AT THE SIMON FAIRFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY.
THANK YOU!

RESPONDER INFORMATION:

1. Male or Female (circle one) (more than 1 may respond)

2. Please indicate number of household members in each age bracket:

____ 18-30 ____ 31-40 ____ 41-50 ____ 51-65 ____ 65+

3. Are you a currently a **Cable TV subscriber**? (circle one) Yes or No

If you answered **YES**, please go to the **SUBSCRIBER SECTION**.

If you answered **NO**, please go to the **NON-SUBSCRIBER SECTION**.

SUBSCRIBER SECTION

SUBSCRIBER:

4. Do you take advantage of the Senior Citizens discount? (circle one) YES or NO

5. Do you use a satellite dish ? (circle one) YES or NO

If YES, Why? _____

6. Are you considering satellite dish service? (circle one) YES or NO

7. What type of cable service do you have? (check one)

a. Basic Service (antenna service) b. Expanded Service (all except pay channels)

c. Premium Service (all plus pay channels such as HBO)

GENERAL:

8. Are you aware that cable-ready TV's only need a cable box for pay-stations(such as HBO) and pay-per-view service? (circle one) YES or NO

CAPACITY:

9. Are you interested in pay-per-view movies and events ? (circle one) YES or NO

QUALITY:

10. How would you rate the overall quality of service? (circle one)

Excellent

Very Good

Average

Below Average

Poor

11. Which, if any, of these problems have you had in the past 6 months? (check all that apply)

a. none e. picture quality poor on all stations

b. picture quality poor on specific stations f. equipment problems

c. complete loss of cable for several hours (outage)-If so, how long? _____

d. other: _____

12. Please rate the current Cable service on each of these items, where:

1 = Excellent 2 = Good 3 = Fair 4 = Poor

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ___ a. quality of picture | ___ g. billing accuracy |
| ___ b. quality of sound | ___ h. channels offered |
| ___ c. quality of cable equipment (boxes, remotes) | ___ i. telephone accessibility |
| ___ d. customer service (business hours) | ___ j. business hours |
| ___ e. customer service (after hours) | ___ k. value for your money |
| ___ f. service and repair | |

13. Please rate the quality of the Pay-per-View service: (circle one)

Excellent Very Good Average Below Average Poor

SERVICE:

14. Is it easy to understand your bill? (circle one) YES or NO
15. Have you experienced billing inaccuracies? (circle one) YES or NO
- a. If Yes, were the inaccuracies resolved promptly? (circle one) YES or NO
16. Have you called for service problems? (circle one) YES or NO
- a. If Yes, was your call answered promptly? (circle one) YES or NO
- b. Were you satisfied with the resolution of the problem? (circle one) YES or NO

17. Are you satisfied with the information Charter Communications provides you regarding (please check)

- | | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Not Satisfied |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Changes in Programming | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Changes in Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Pricing Packages | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. If you have a chronic problem with cable, describe the problem and the channel(s):

- a. Have you contacted the cable company? (circle one) YES or NO
- b. If Yes, Has it been corrected. (circle one) YES or NO
- c. How many times have you contacted them about the problem? _____

19. Indicate your level of interest in each of these offerings:

1=Want More 2= Current OK 3=Less 4=No Interest

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ___ a. sports | ___ h. weather |
| ___ b. ethnic: _____ | ___ i. family/children |
| ___ c. music | ___ j. educational/historical |
| ___ d. religious | ___ k. science fiction |
| ___ e. shopping/advertising | ___ l. home/gardening/food |
| ___ f. local programming (Channel 18) | ___ m. travel |
| ___ g. pay-per-view | ___ n. cartoons |
| | ___ o. others: _____ |

LOCAL:

20. Is having a community studio for residents, students, and staff to use to produce community programming television important to you? (circle one)

VERY IMPORTANT IMPORTANT NOT IMPORTANT

21. How often do you watch: 1 = Regularly 2 = Sometimes 3 = Never

- _____ a. Douglas Selectmen's meetings _____ c. Local Sports
- _____ b. Political Candidate Debates _____ d. Public service

22. Mark the local programs that you watch or would like to see offered:

- a. talk programs (Around Town) e. School Committee meetings
- b. religious programs f. Planning Board meetings
- c. community events g. Other government board meetings
(Specify: _____)
- d. special speakers h. Other: _____

23. Do you take advantage of the Charter studio for producing community television? (circle one)

YES or NO or FUTURE

24. Would you take advantage of a studio if it were located in Douglas? (circle one)

YES or NO or FUTURE

25. Charter currently charges a franchise fee to support Public, Educational & Government (PEG) access programs. To support Douglas' future PEG and potential improvements in the local studio for public use, what would you be willing to pay per monthly bill? Please check one.

- none (we would not support PEG in Douglas)
- \$0.10 \$0.25 \$0.50 \$0.75 \$1.00
- Other (explain) _____

26. Would you subscribe to "Charter Digital cable service" if available? (circle one) YES or NO

NON-SUBSCRIBER SECTION

27. If NOT a subscriber, what are the specific reasons why you do not subscribe or why you discontinued your subscription to Cable TV?

NON-CABLE:

28. Do you plan to become a cable subscriber? (circle one) YES or NO

If Yes, how soon: _____ If No, why not? _____

29. Are you a former subscriber? (circle one) YES or NO

a. If Yes, why did you cancel? If No, why did you NOT subscribe?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. too expensive | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. unhappy with customer service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. poor technical service | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. unhappy with channel line-up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. frequent outages | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. we own a dish/happy with satellite service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. poor picture/sound quality | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. driveway too long, hookup too expensive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. limited channel/program choices | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. cable service not on our street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. unhappy with reception | (Which street: _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. don't watch enough TV for the expense | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. other: _____ |

30. Is Cable service available at your house? (circle one) YES or NO

31. Is the Cable installation too expensive? (circle one) YES or NO

32. Would you consider subscribing solely for cable modems and high speed internet access?
(circle one) YES NO MAYBE DON'T KNOW

INTERNET:

33. Would you like Charter to provide for access to the internet? (circle one) YES or NO

34. If Charter provides Internet Access in the future, would you be interested in taking advantage of that resource? (Circle One)

VERY INTERESTED INTERESTED MAYBE NOT INTERESTED

35. Do you currently use the internet from home? (circle one) YES or NO

a. If YES, do you use telephone lines? (dial-up) (56K etc)

YES or NO or OTHER (specify: _____)

36. If Charter provides internet access soon, how likely would it be that you would subscribe to the service? (FYI – 1999 Charter Pipeline service fee was \$54.95 plus tax per month – this included service, cable modem, and IP address)

- LIKELY NOT LIKELY SOMEWHAT LIKELY DEPENDS ON PRICE

37. If an internet provider offers comparable high speed internet service before Charter, how likely is it that you'll subscribe to their competitor?

- Very likely Somewhat likely Not likely

38. Do you "Telecommute" ? (circle one) YES or NO

GENERAL FEEDBACK

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Requesting Department	FY05 Requested Projects	Cost
Water/Sewer	Well Exploration	75,000
Highway	Dump Truck w/Plow (1) Replacing 1978 Truck	80,000
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
	FY05 Total	183,000

Requesting Department	FY06 Requested Projects	Cost
Highway	Dump Truck w/Plow (1) Replacing 1979 Truck	75,000
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
	FY06 Total	103,000

Requesting Department	FY07 Requested Projects	Cost
Middle/High School	Replace ceiling tile	81,000
Middle/High School	Replace bathroom fixtures	70,000
Highway	Sidewalk Tractor	64,500
New Elementary	Replace ceiling tile	42,000
New Elementary	Replace bathroom fixtures	30,000
Highway	New Sidewalk Construction	28,000
Highway	1/2 Ton, 2-Wheel Drive Pickup	22,000
Highway Garage	Replace office roof; service bay roof	21,250
Town Buildings	Replace ceiling tiles	14,850
VFW	Replace lighting and fire alarm	10,000
	FY07 Total	383,600

	Total FY02-07 Capital Outlay Projects	1,453,144
	Average Capital Outlay Annually	242,191

Funding Year	Department	Project Requests Exceeding \$100,000 For Later Funding Determinations **	Cost
2003	Water/Sewer	Sewer Plant Upgrade (Eligible for 2% Loan)	4,806,000
2003	Library	Library Renovation & Addition (Eligible for 50% State Reimbursement)	3,150,000
2003	School	Blackstone Valley VocTech Expansion (Annual Assessment of \$90,800)	1,816,641
2003	Highway	Replacement of 1931 Highway Garage	1,222,100
2003	Water/Sewer	Davis Street Sewer Extension (Included In High School Bond)	682,199
2003	Water/Sewer	Main Street Water Main (Franklin-North; Grant Eligible)	361,000
2003	Water/Sewer	8" Gravity Sewer Line and Pump (C St to Pump Station)	336,400
2003	Water/Sewer	Davis Street Water Main (Included In High School Bond)	306,000
2003	Highway	Highway Garage Land Acquisition	220,000
2003	Fire	Ambulance	140,000
2003	School	Connector Road – Current Middle/High School to Elementary	***
2004	Police	Replacement of Police Station	2,000,000
2004	Town Buildings	Boiler, A/C	185,000
2005	Fire	Replace Brush No. 1	150,000
2005	Water/Sewer	Main Street Booster Station	100,000
2006	Water/Sewer	Water Main (Mechanic, Manchaug, & Gilboa)	310,000
2007	Fire	Replace Ladder No. 1	725,000
2007	Water/Sewer	Water Main (Franklin to Glenn)	230,000

** NOTE: Some of the above projects have partial funding sources identified and may be subject to debt exclusion ballots

*** Cost Not Determined

LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE MESSAGE

Article 5 is not a money vote. Approval of the article is a state requirement that will allow the library trustees and building committee to pursue a state grant that would partly fund improvements to the library.

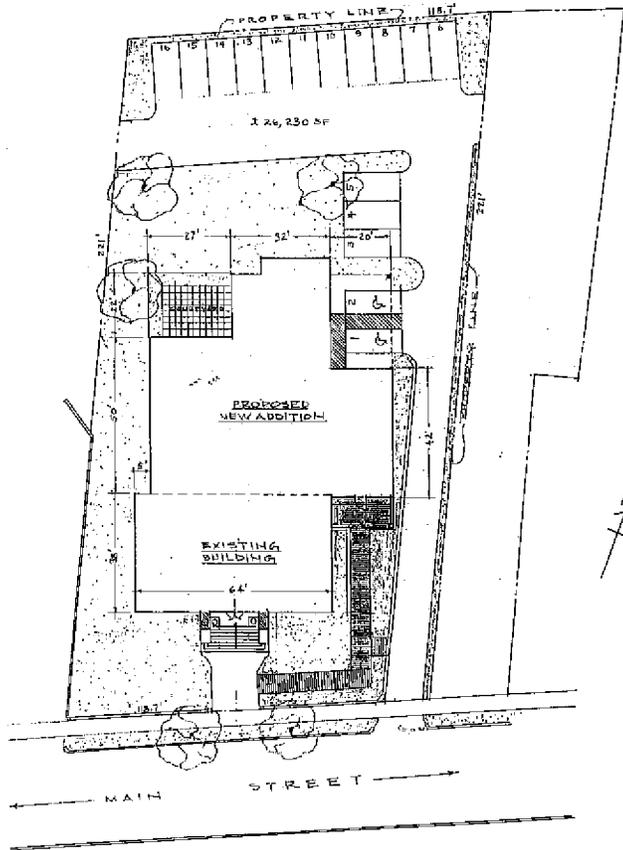
In Town Meeting a year ago voters approved spending \$30,000 for architectural design work on a proposed two-level, 10,870 square-foot addition to the library. This work has been completed and the design has been submitted to the State as part of a request for a grant to cover one half of the estimated \$3 million cost of the project.

This library expansion will provide much-needed additional space for:

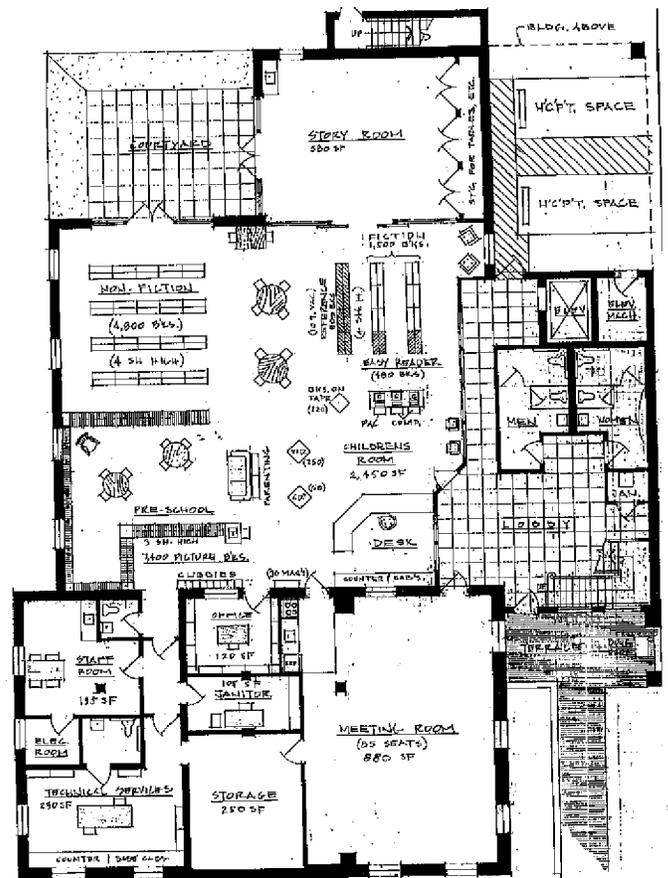
- local history and research materials
- computers, video and audio tapes, and compact discs
- newspapers and periodicals
- new fiction and non-fiction
- a special young adults section
- a separate children's section which will include a story room, creative play area
- a sheltered outdoor reading and activity courtyard.

The expansion plan maintains the historical character of the present building and provides for:

- ample parking
- "green space" landscaping
- handicapped access and parking
- upgrades and repairs to the existing building systems.



SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



GROUND FLOOR
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**BLACKSTONE VALLEY VOCATIONAL
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
UPGRADE/EXPANSION PROJECT FACTS
AT-A-GLANCE**

Here is your guide to the Valley Tech Upgrade & Expansion key facts:

- **Expansion** of 46,451 square feet for classrooms and career training facilities, gender equality and a first-of-its-kind 800-seat training and competition center using the latest proven technology for distance learning, technology-based training, performing arts, athletics and exhibitions
- **Upgrade** for code compliance for fire safety, disability access, indoor air quality, heating, lighting, electrical distribution, acoustics, traffic flow and parking—all found necessary in a recent architectural/engineering examination of the building, the first done in 20 years

Avoid code citations, building inspection issues, legal challenges and other complications, which will cost much more if the town does not take favorable action now

- 75% state reimbursement totaling \$27 million if the project is approved by June 1, 2001
Grandparented eligibility for this higher reimbursement rate will run out in June
The eligible SBA allowance is \$193 per square foot – the cost of this project is \$145 per square foot
- \$9 million financed by 13 towns over 20 years - repair/expand while 13 partners are contributing an equalized share based upon actual student enrollment
The project comes at a time when Valley Tech long-term debt for previous renovations is being retired, thereby reducing the annual cost impact to the town
- \$1.1 million contributed by the private sector
- New curricula in telecommunications, dental assistant, cosmetology/fashion design, and textiles/interior decorating
- State and Federal Reserve Bank of Boston employment projections document jobs waiting for graduates
- Under state law, high school aged citizens have a guaranteed right to a vocational technical education - if opportunities are not

available within a member town's own district, tuition costs to other vocational technical systems are incurred - an expansion will eventually reduce state mandated out-of-district tuition expenses

Q&A SPECIFICS

Did the Valley Tech School Committee look at alternatives to this project?

Yes. The Valley Tech School Committee refused to even consider a \$52.6 million option permitted by the state, rejected a \$42.8 million plan as excessive, and turned down a \$27.5 million proposal as inadequate. In voting unanimously for a \$35.9 million project, the School Committee, knowing that half the applicants are denied admission for lack of space, saw the need to offer career training that serves the pressing needs of employers.

After expansion, when would Valley Tech reach full capacity?

Completion of the expansion in 2005 means 50 additional students a year until 2010 when, with a student body of 1,250, cooperative education and internship placements could make room for still more students.

Why expand vocational-technical education when the future really calls for a college degree?

Independent studies of job growth consistently point to the increasing demand for trained, career-oriented personnel in a world in which technology is making a bigger and bigger difference. And actually, one-half of Valley Tech graduates enroll in college, the largest proportion of Massachusetts' 28 voc-ed high schools. Valley Tech serves as the other high school for each of its 13 shareholder towns.

Valley Tech is obligated, in serving the District's residents and employers, to keep pace by working ahead. This is why we see it as our responsibility to bring to our 13 member towns the opportunity to update and expand Valley Tech. It's for the students. It's for the future.

--Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-
Director, Valley Tech, 2001

**Your questions are invited.
Please call 1-800-529-7758 ext. 3849**

**TWO SPRING SPECIAL TOWN MEETINGS ON MARCH 14TH
STARTING AT 7PM AT THE DOUGLAS MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

SPECIAL SPRING TOWN MEETING AT 7PM

Article 1. Stabilization Fund

SPECIAL SPRING TOWN MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

- Article 1. Adoption of FY02-07 Capital Improvement Plan
- Article 2. Transfer of Overlay Reserve to Selectmen for Land Acquisition
- Article 3. Transfer of Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Free Cash to Sewer Inflow & Infiltration
- Article 4. Water Line Design
- Article 5. Library Building Expansion Project Approval
- Article 6. Blackstone Valley Vocational School Building Expansion
- Article 7. Economic Opportunity Area No. 5.
- Article 8. Legal Services
- Article 9. Personal Property Exemption
- Article 10. Assessor Salary Expense
- Article 11. Interim Executive Administrator
- Article 12. Ambulance Transfer

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED CABLE ADVISORY SURVEY. THIS SURVEY WILL AID THE CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN UPCOMING CABLE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS. PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- THE BOX LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN MEETING
- THE SIMON FAIRFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
- THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

Town of Douglas
29 Depot Street
Douglas, MA 01516

Presorted Standard
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 12
DOUGLAS, MA 01516

RESIDENT
Douglas, MA 01516