

Voter Information Bulletin

Town of Douglas

NOVEMBER 2005

Special Town Meeting

Monday, November 7, 2005 at 7:00 PM

Douglas High School Auditorium

Message from the Finance Committee

A fall Special Town Meeting for the Town of Douglas has become a regular occurrence. Typical to others, this meeting will make corrections, supplemental appropriations and address some non-financial issues such as By-Law changes. This meeting has some time-sensitive articles such as the prior year capital item, correction to the payroll for an error, additional funding for the School operating budget for personnel shortages, bringing Town oversight to the Rte. 16 project and, after receiving yet another large Federal Grant for our Fire Truck purchase, addressing the A.D.A. concerns throughout the Town for compliance with Federal guidelines. The funding sources for this meeting are scarce.

The Overlay Surplus statute that allows the Town to request a review of this Account by the Board of Assessors and release of excess funds is the revenue source used for most of the articles. The definition of Overlay and Overlay Surplus can be found in the attached mini-glossary of terms at the end of this publication. The funds accumulated here have grown for more than 3 years; the last time that the Town used these funds was FY2001. Other funds have been realized through receipt of a generous Homeland Security Grant for the Fire Truck that was funded at the Annual Town Meeting in the Capital Plan; this savings can now be re-directed for some articles. Also, the Interim-Town Accountant has corrected the revenues expected due to changes that have occurred and the Town will realize an additional \$25,000. The appropriations to be considered by Town Meeting will exhaust all current revenues available.

Financial Term Definitions:

- **Overlay:** An account established annually to fund anticipated property tax abatements, exemptions and uncollected taxes in that year. The overlay reserve is not established by the normal appropriation process, but raised on the tax rate recapitulation sheet.
- **Overlay Surplus:** Any balance in the overlay account of a given year in excess of the amount remaining to be collected or abated can be transferred into this account. Within ten days of a written request by the chief executive officer of a city or town, the assessors must certify the excess amount of overlay available to transfer. Overlay surplus may be appropriated for any lawful purpose. At the end of each fiscal year, unused overlay surplus is "closed" to surplus revenue and becomes a part of free cash.

Article 1. Amendment of FY 06-11 Capital Improvement Plan	Article 6. Community Bulletin Board
Article 2. Acceptance of M.G.L. Ch.71 §71E:	Article 7. Selectmen's Office – Wages
Article 3. FY06 School Operating Budget	Article 8. Unemployment Expenses
Article 4. Tax Incremental Financing Plan: B& L Pools	Article 9. Interim Town Accountant
Article 5. Tax Incremental Financing Plan: Danlyn Realty	Article 10. Sign By-Law Changes

Article 1. Amendment of FY 06-11 Capital Improvement Plan:

To see if the Town will amend the Town of Douglas FY 06-11 Capital Improvement Plan with the amendments submitted by the Capital Improvement Committee and to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow the sum of \$126,242 in addition to the funds appropriated at the 2006 Annual Town Meeting on May 16, 2005, or take any other action related thereto.

Year	Department	Item	Amount	TM Amount	Note
2006	School	Oil Tank Removal and Replacement	\$ 309,393	\$ 78,142	Significant insurance has been applied. A \$35,000 grant has been applied for.
2006	Comm. Dev.	Route 16 project – Construction Administration and sidewalk design	23,100	23,100	To protect the town's interests in state-funded project.
2006	Exec. Admin.	ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan	25,000	25,000	To conform with federal laws and protect rights to grants
Projects Total			\$357,493		
Insurance and Grants Applied			(\$231,251)		
Net Request				\$126,242	

Finance Committee: Recommend

These projects have been identified by the Executive Administrator as time-critical additions to the Capital Plan. The Capital Committee has approved the article. The funding sources are adequate and available for this type of expenditure.

For further information on the three projects on this article please see the Town Website at www.douglasma.org.

Article 2. Acceptance of M.G.L. Ch.71 Section 71E:

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 71E (Revolving Fund, for certain programs), or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

The current Revolver Accounts that are being used by the School Department have not been authorized by the Town. The Interim-accountant has recommended that, if the Town intends to continue these programs, they be voted and approved. This approval allows the financial transactions currently occurring to continue; in no way does this article convey approval of any operating School program. Program approvals are the sole responsibility of the School Committee and/or the Board of Selectmen.

Article 3. FY06 School Operating Budget:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$110,000 to supplement the Fiscal Year 2006 Operating Budget for the Douglas School Department, or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

This article supports an addition to the Operating Budget for the School and will finance certain positions that could not be funded within the appropriation voted at the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 4. Tax Incremental Financing Plan – B&L Pools:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit to the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council an application designating the property of B&L Pools located on Riedell Road, shown as Assessor's Map 172 Lot 2 as an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 23A; and to further see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a Tax Incremental Financing Plan with B&L Pools pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 59, in connection with the development of the aforementioned property and described in a Certified Project Application and to implement the Tax Increment Financing Plan, the elements of which are substantially as set forth in the sample agreement on file in the Office of the Town Clerk; and further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take such other actions as may be necessary to obtain approval of the Certified Project Application, the Economic Opportunity Area, the Tax Increment Financing Plan and matters relating thereto and to implement the Tax Increment Financing Agreement; or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

These authorizations allow the Board of Selectmen to negotiate certain agreements with a Douglas business that provide some property tax benefits at the local level; more importantly, the designation gives additional benefits within the State tax code. Generally, the Selectmen will consider a T.I.F. agreement that also ensures some ongoing economic benefit to the Town.

Article 5. Tax Incremental Financing Plan – Danlyn Realty:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit to the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council an application designating the property of Danlyn Realty located on Riedell Road, shown as Assessor's Map 172 Lot 2 as an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 23A; and to further see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a Tax Incremental Financing Plan with Danlyn Realty pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 59, in connection with the development of the aforementioned property and described in a Certified Project Application and to implement the Tax Increment Financing Plan, the elements of which are substantially as set forth in the sample agreement on file in the Office of the Town Clerk; and further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take such other actions as may be necessary to obtain approval of the Certified Project Application, the Economic Opportunity Area, the Tax Increment Financing Plan and matters relating thereto and to implement the Tax Increment Financing Agreement; or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

See Article 5. explanation.

Article 6. Community Bulletin Board:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$5,000 for the purchase and installation of a Community Bulletin Board, or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

The Bulletin Board will provide a permanent area for informing citizens of Douglas about important civic activities, as well as public safety announcements.

Article 7. Selectmen's Office – Wages:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$891 to line item 11220000-51110 Selectmen Full-Time Wages, or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

This will correct an error in the calculation of wages that went unnoticed prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 8. Unemployment Expenses:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$36,000 to line item 19130000-51700 Unemployment Expenses, or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

This line item is annually funded at a minimal level and is usually calculated in conjunction with consultation with all Department heads. The expenses this year are much higher than anticipated due to lay-offs of School personnel.

Article 9. Interim Town Accountant:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$25,000 from line item 11350000-51100 Town Accountant Salary to line item 11350000-53000 Town Accountant Expenses, or take any other action related thereto.

Finance Committee: Recommend

Since the Town is using the services of a consultant as an Interim-accountant, the Accountant Salary line in the budget should be used to fund these temporary expenses until the Town secures the services of another full-time Accountant.

Article 10. Sign By-Law Changes:

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General By-Laws by adding the following language to the Sign By-Law:

(all changes are underlined and in bold text)

Finance Committee: No recommendation.

This article is not financial in nature; the Finance Committee voted to provide no recommendation.

10.1.2.0 Entrance Sign: Any sign erected at the entrance to the property of a Business where the business(es) cannot be seen from the road.

10.2.2.4 No permit shall be required for any sign erected by the Town of Douglas **Public Works Department** or by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or any agency thereof.

10.4.1.3 Temporary signs not exceeding six (6) square feet in area may be erected to warn against danger, call attention to a sale, promotion or special activity, **endorsement of candidates, or public elections**. Sign must be removed within seven (7) days after activity ends.

Exception: Banners announcing grand opening of businesses or special events not to exceed thirty-six (36) square feet may be allowed. They may be erected up to thirty (30) days before the event but must be removed the day after the event.

10.4.2.1 There shall be no more than two (2) exterior signs for each business premises, not including directional, informational, directory or secondary signs, except as provided herein. The exterior sign may be a wall sign, individual...

Exception: In the case where a business ('s) cannot be seen from the street an "entrance sign" may be allowed. An entrance sign not to exceed fifty (50) square feet may be allowed provided there is sufficient area at the property frontage and does not create a hazardous condition or obstruct traffic sight lines as approved by the Chief of Police and Building Commissioner.

10.4.2.2 The surface area of a freestanding sign shall not be more than twenty four (24) square feet. A wall sign, individual letter sign, or in the case of a one story building only, a roof sign shall not exceed four (4) feet overall in height. A wall sign. . .

Exception: For businesses within the Commercial and Industrial zoned areas, one (1) freestanding sign, [as one (1) of the (2) exterior signs allowed] may be a size no greater than fifty (50) square feet.

or take any other action related thereto.



Town of Douglas
29 Depot Street
Douglas, MA 01516

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 12
DOUGLAS, MA 01516

RESIDENT

DOUGLAS, MA 01516

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