

ARTICLE 12: AMENDMENT REGARDING FY16 BUDGET APPROPRIATION

May 26, 2015

Proposed by Adam Dash, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1

Moved: That the following be added to the motions under Article 12:

“**MOVED:** J) That under General Government, an additional **\$1,674,069** be raised and appropriated to supplement the Warrant Committee Reserve. (*Majority*)”

Rationale: The purpose of this amendment is to implement the will of the voters by providing an alternative appropriation of the override funds should Article 13 not pass. The purpose of Article 13 is to raise and appropriate the override funds not being spent in FY16, and to place them in the General Stabilization Fund for use in future years. Should Article 13 not pass, then those override funds would not be levied, effectively reducing the size of the voter-approved override for FY16.

This amendment seeks to raise and appropriate the same amount of override funds as stated in Article 13, but to place said funds in the Warrant Committee Reserve Account. This would preserve the will of the voters by levying the full amount of override funds.

If this amendment passes, then the intent is that the Warrant Committee would not spend said funds in FY16, and said funds would fall into free cash. Said funds could then be placed into the General Stabilization Fund at next year's Town Meeting, or left in free cash.

Should Article 13 pass, then the intent is to withdraw this amendment as being moot.

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Proposed Amendment A to ARTICLE 13: TRANSFER FUNDS TO STABILIZATION FUND 2015 MAY 27 PM 3: 35

MOVED: that the motion be amended to change the amount (from "\$1,674,069" to "\$250,000") and target fund (from "the General Stabilization Fund" to "the Special Education Stabilization Fund"), so the section reads in whole:
That the Town raise and appropriate to the Special Education Stabilization Fund the sum of \$250,000.

The Original, showing the proposed changes:

That the Town raise and appropriate to the General Special Education Stabilization Fund the sum of \$1,674,069 \$250,000.

Explanatory Note:

The purpose of this amendment is to use funds authorized by the recent override to replenish (by \$250K) the Special Education Stabilization fund that was recently depleted to meet the FY15 School Department budget. Consistent with the explanation in the "True Copy of the Warrant" that this Article should seek to "achieve the Town's financial plan for FY16," this amendment places funds in the stabilization fund that has the highest likelihood of being needed in FY16: the school system continues to see unparalleled growth; significant unanticipated needs in the area of Special Education are not impossible. (The original motion, in contrast, is not oriented toward the needs of FY16, nor does it allocate funds toward targeted uses but instead collects funds without specific goals.) Although adding a higher amount to the fund would be prudent given the purpose and Protocols of the fund, this amendment only seeks to replenish the fund to its previous level (\$250K), in case it needs to be accessed in FY16.

Amendment Sponsor

Kevin Cunningham

**Proposed Amendment B to ARTICLE 13: TRANSFER FUNDS TO
STABILIZATION FUND**

2015 MAY 27 PM 3: 36

MOVED: that the motion be amended to direct that \$500K of the total funds collected under this Article be allocated specifically to the Special Education Stabilization Fund rather than the General Stabilization Fund, so the section reads in whole:

That the Town raise the sum of \$1,674,069 and allocate this as follows:

- 1) \$250,000 to the Special Education Stabilization Fund;**
- 2) \$1,424,069 to the General Stabilization Fund**

Explanatory Note:

The purpose of this amendment is to use a portion of the full funds authorized by the recent override to specifically replenish (by \$250K) the Special Education Stabilization fund that was recently depleted to meet the FY15 School Department budget. Although adding a higher amount to the fund would be prudent given the purpose and Protocols of the fund, this amendment only seeks to replenish the fund to its previous level (\$250K), in case it needs to be accessed in FY16.

[If Proposed Amendment A on this Article passes, this motion B would be withdrawn.]

Amendment Sponsor
Kevin Cunningham

**Proposed Amendment to ARTICLE 19: ESTABLISH CAPITAL/DEBT
STABILIZATION FUND**

2015 MAY 27 PM 3: 36

MOVED: that the motion be amended to focus the fund on the Belmont High School Building project only, so the section reads in whole:

That the Town create a Capital/Debt Stabilization fund in accordance with Section 5B of Chapter 40 for the purpose of defraying the capital costs, or the costs of borrowing, associated with the engineering and design (including feasibility studies), construction, reconstruction, renovation, furnishing and equipping of the Belmont High School.

The Original, showing the proposed changes:

That the Town create a Capital/Debt Stabilization fund in accordance with Section 5B of Chapter 40 for the purpose of defraying the capital costs, or the costs of borrowing, associated with the engineering and design (including feasibility studies), construction, reconstruction, renovation, furnishing and equipping of any of the four following building projects (not in any order of priority): (1) the Belmont High School, (2) the Belmont Public Library, (3) the Department of Public Works facility, or (4) the Belmont Police Station, or any combination thereof.

Explanatory Note:

The purpose of this amendment is to focus the proposed capital/debt stabilization fund on the only named project that has broad and explicit public support and is also likely to come to the fore in the near future: renovating/expanding the Belmont High School. While each of the other projects named in the original motion may or may not be worthy of town funding on its own merits, there is no town consensus that these three represent the three top priorities after the High School. In fact, there is not even a formal list of priority projects for the town to begin with. Furthermore, there is no consensus that any of these three projects, whatever its merits, will ever actually proceed. Given all these factors, it is premature to create the Stabilization Fund as defined in the original motion (never mind allocating actual revenues to it). To create such a fund under such terms would be to presume what the town's priorities were, before the town itself can reach consensus on that issue, and would therefore preempt the rights of the town, and of Town Meeting in particular, to due process in the deliberation of its goals for the town.

Amendment Sponsor

Kevin Cunningham

ARTICLE 21 CITIZEN'S PETITION: WRITTEN ARTICLE OPINIONS

MOVED: that the motion be amended to add after the words "Meeting Approval." the words " as time permits.", so the motion reads " **Belmont's Board of Selectmen, Warrant Committee, and Capital Budget Committee shall be instructed to distribute to Town Meeting Members at least one day in advance of any scheduled Town Meeting a written summary of the rationale behind their opinions on articles presented for Town Meeting Approval as time permits.**"

Explanatory Note:

The purpose of this amendment is to recognize that, in some cases, decision making on articles may continue up to the day of a scheduled meeting rendering any advance report not possible . In such cases, the respondents can include the rationale for their opinions verbally when announcing their opinions or not.

Amendment Sponsors
Jim Williams

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