

Wellfleet Non-resident Taxpayers' Association

Promoting community involvement and communication

Tuesday May 12, 2015

Greetings!

Wellfleet held town meeting on two nights this year to cover all the issues.

As reported by CapeCod.com (April 29, 2015): "For the second time, Wellfleet Town Meeting voters approved asking the state legislature to allow the town to levy a tax on people who rent their homes seasonally."

A reminder that all this does is ask the Massachusetts State Legislature "to grant the authority to create a tax up to five percent on seasonally rented properties." According to Board of Selectmen chair Paul Pilcher: "Back of the envelope calculation say this is a \$10 million or more a year business and it's not taxed."

Even though this request to the state legislature has been made before by Wellfleet's town meeting, the bill to grant this authority never made it out of legislative committee at the State House.

In other news, 870 voters (or approximately 34% of Wellfleet's registered voters) went to the polls on May 4th. Here are the results:

http://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/sites/wellfleetma/files/file/file/may_4_2015_town_election_final_results.pdf

Dennis Murphy and Helen Miranda Wilson won the two open seats on the Board of Selectmen.

Of the 10 Questions put forth to voters on May 4, only one (Question 2) was rejected: a \$60,000 tax override for the hiring of a 13th Police Officer, with 415 in favor and 437 against.

Question 1, proposed a \$100,000 tax override for a voucher system to help pay

for universal preschool for Wellfleet four year olds. This was approved with 562 in favor and 281 against. Proponents of Question 1 celebrate the long term effect this could have on drawing more year round families to Wellfleet. The idea was first proposed several years ago by Selectman Jerry Houk and Selectman Paul Pilcher, board chair.

"There is also an economic aspect to this. There is the feeling this would be a real attraction to young families, which is something Wellfleet desperately needs," Pilcher said.

There are an estimated 13 to 17 children in this age group, and the cost to the town to pay up to \$7000 for preschool will be less than \$100,000.

Joanna Stephens, director of the Nauset Integrated Preschool program, said, "I'm happy to know that the town of Wellfleet is considering the idea of providing support through the use of vouchers for preschool education. The reason why I do what I do is that I see every day and with every child the tremendous growth that occurs between the ages of three and five when a child has early access to a quality educational program. I can report I've visited homes in our area where families are living on the edge, who have little extra after providing the necessities to afford a good quality preschool program. Children from these families do not have access to types of programs such as Head Start. I've had several parents report they cannot afford to send their children to preschool. This is the reality in Wellfleet as well as in other towns in the Nauset system," she said. "I applaud Wellfleet for engaging in this dialogue regarding town wide support for preschool vouchers for all the children of Wellfleet. It makes educational, economic and community sense."

Question 3, a debt exclusion for \$540,000 for plans to renovate the existing Police Station was approved with 471 in favor and 377 opposed. This will pay the costs of design and construction drawings for the updated building.

Question 4 was approved by a vote of 255 in favor and 294 against, resulting in a debt exclusion of \$580,000 to replace a fire engine. As a debt exclusion, the annual cost to taxpayers ends once the loan is paid.

"It will take approximately a year to build this truck, about 10 months. At that point

(the current truck) will be 26 years old," Fire Chief Richard Pauley Jr said. "We currently have the oldest fleet of fire apparatuses on Cape Cod and we probably have one of the smallest fleets." Of the price to replace the fire truck, he said, "Unfortunately, that's reality. It's a pretty standard truck."

Question 5, a \$69,000 debt exclusion was approved. This will see improvements for Route 6 and Main Street intersection, specifically completing a study, plans and designs. \$200,000 was borrowed last year for this purpose, with this final amount put off in order to stay within borrowing limits. Construction funding will be provided by the state and federal government.

Question 6, a \$62,000 debt exclusion was approved. This will allow for an engineering study, plans and designs, permitting and other related documents required to prepare for maintenance dredging.

Question 7, a debt exclusion for a bathymetric study of parts of Wellfleet Harbor was approved. The amount of \$82,000 will be used to collect and process sonar imagery and related data for areas of Wellfleet Harbor outside the Cape Cod National Seashore.

Question 8, a \$140,000 debt exclusion for transfer station improvements was approved.

Question 9, a \$67,000 debt exclusion to repave Mayo Beach parking lot.

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