

Easing the override burden

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MAYNARD — Money leftover from the debt exclusion override that funded construction of the Fowler School, as well as other funding sources, may be used to fix facilities deficiencies at the high school that threaten its New England Association of School and Colleges accreditation, said Town Administrator John Curran.

“There is a \$107,000 balance in the Fowler School warrant article,” said Curran. “The town bonded the whole amount but they never spent all the money that they borrowed.”

Curran said that money could either go back into the general fund as free cash, or be re-appropriated for a similar purpose.

Curran said a total of \$244,000 has been found in various town funding sources for school projects. The \$107,000, along with an additional \$43,000 the town will request from the assessor’s overlay surplus, would be used to fund high school library upgrades — a priority NEASC requirement. Curran said \$50,000 from free cash would be used to repair the high school roof, and \$19,000 from free cash along with \$25,000 from taxation would fund oil tank removal.

Curran said the town will still present a debt exclusion override, which now totals \$4.82 million, at Town Meeting. This includes \$280,000 for one new boiler at both Green Meadow and the high school, \$440,000 for other Green Meadow repairs, \$200,000 for the installation of a new boiler at the fire station and \$3.9 million to convert the old library to a police station.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Sally Bubier hopes that the securing of concrete funding, outside of the debt exclusion override, for NEASC-sensitive needs will allow town officials and residents to focus on other issues, like public safety.

“The accreditation issues are clouding everything else because it’s very serious,” said Bubier. “Whether you have kids or not it’s really a big concern for everybody.”

Curran said that taking the NEASC-sensitive needs out of the debt exclusion override lessens the chance that the town will not support them.

“There is an opportunity for it to fail, but only at Town Meeting not at the ballot box which is a lot harder to sell,” said Curran.

The debt exclusion override, if it passes Town Meeting, will still require approval at a town election.