

Override? OK

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Maynard -

Town Meeting voters supported the renovation of the old library and its reconstruction as a new police station.

Recognizing the disrepair of the fire and police station on Summer Street, residents backed the move by an overwhelming majority.

Coupled with four boilers and repairs to the elementary school, the new police station was one of several safety requests under Article 14.

In a 332-16 vote, residents supported the multi-part article, allocating nearly \$4.82 million to various capital projects and agreeing to raise taxes above the 2 1/2 percent limit.

"This article is all about health and safety," said Selectman Bob Nadeau in its introduction Monday night. "[We want to ensure] that our staff and personnel can work in a safe environment. The proposed improvements are all important. There is not one item in this article that is more important than the other."

Despite the support at Town Meeting, the article will not pass unless residents vote for it at the polls on June 12.

The police station alone will cost taxpayers \$4.1 million. But department heads and committee members said the chance to renovate the old library is well worth it.

"We have a unique opportunity to reuse the existing facility," said Mike Smith, chairman of the Public Safety Building Committee. "We are saving roughly 30 percent [by reusing a building], which is a benefit to the town."

Currently, there is no private interviewing space in the Summer Street facility. Prisoners are handcuffed to the radio counsel. The female locker room is a closet and the building is not handicap accessible.

"The place is a dump," said Police Chief James Corcoran who has been there for more than 20 years. "It is unsafe and unhealthy. For \$3.8 million, we have a chance to move on."

Amidst applause, he continued, "This is not the police department's building. It is the town of Maynard's building. And it is a hazard not only for the police, but also for the public."

No one spoke in opposition to Article 14 and the resounding comment from those who voiced support was, 'It's about time.'

Residents also voted in favor of the \$10 million wastewater treatment plant upgrade, meaning their water bills will rise by 26 percent in a one-time increase in 2009.

The upgrade was in response to new standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency. The federal agency now requires treatment plants release less than 1 percent of the amount of phosphorous it takes in back into the river. Previously, treatment plants were able to dump up to 10 percent of the phosphorous back into the environment. Maynard has consistently released between 4 and 6 percent.

According to town officials, the upgrades will address the town's wastewater needs for the next 20 to 30 years or more.

If the town does not improve its discharge, it could be faced with fines, said selectmen.

"We do have to achieve low phosphorous outputs," said Selectman Bill Cranshaw. "We went with the [solution] that cost the least to build and cost the least to operate."

Residents, who will not be hit with the increases until 2009, voted in support of the upgrades in a 219-17 vote.

Funding for an engineering study for the Maynard High School solicited few comments from voters. Understanding the school was under probation by the New England Association of School and Colleges, residents supported the study in a near-unanimous decision.

Residents also supported upgrades and repairs at the high school and the Green Meadow Elementary School, including expansion of the high school library, repairs to the school's roof and removal of two underground oil storage tanks from the school's property. The cost of this article is \$244,000.

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