

Town of Shirley

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



7 KEADY WAY – SHIRLEY, MASSACHUSETTS - 01464-2812
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

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April, 2014

Dear Residents of Shirley,

I look forward to my first Annual Town Meeting in Shirley, to be held on Monday, June 2, 2014. We have been very busy putting together final budgets and drafting the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. This year residents will see some new initiatives surrounding the Warrant and Town Meeting.

The Annual Town Meeting Warrant will be mailed to all residents prior to the Town Meeting on June 2nd. The Warrant will have all the information needed so that the residents can prepare for the Town Meeting. A Pre-Town Meeting will be scheduled the week prior to help the residents learn about the Articles being presented at the Annual Town Meeting. More information on the Pre-Town Meeting will be forth coming, as we get closer to June 2nd.

The Warrant will include standard financial articles, bylaw changes and an alteration to the Town Clerk and Town Collector from elected to appointed positions. Again, as we get closer to June 2nd, we will have the finalized draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. There will be a public hearing at the end of April with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee to review the Warrant Articles. Personnel Board will also hold a public hearing on the Wage and Salary Schedules, which are annually adopted at Town Meeting. I encourage you to view and take part in all of these public hearings.

Currently, the operating budget for the Town is in deficit for Fiscal Year 2015, even with the proposed cuts, layoff and change in health insurance; the budget deficit stands at \$138k. This deficit includes the Town's proposed Ayer Shirley Regional School District's increased assessment totaling \$269k. However, the Ayer Shirley Regional School District's requested assessment is \$200k above the Town's budgeted increased assessment. If Town Meeting passes the Schools' requested budget, the deficit will jump to over \$300k. To resolve this issue, the Town would have to use all of its one time monies to fund this deficit, leaving no room for much needed capital. Further, there are expenses that could not have been foreseen or accounted for in this Fiscal Year 2014, such as Snow and Ice and the Veterans' Benefits; each needing additional appropriation.

The Town, under Proposition 2 ½, is allowed to increase its tax levy up to 2 ½ % each year, plus the New High School Debt is due to begin in FY2015 as well, thus, residents will see both increases on their tax bill. Some are suggesting that the Town have an override for FY2015. An override would put a heavy burden on the taxpayer and would not solve the budget problem next year. The Finance Committee unanimously supported the Town's proposed increase in assessment of \$269k to the schools for FY2015, and rejected Ayer Shirley Regional School District's proposed increase in assessment of \$435k.

The Town is seeking ways to cut expenses and increase revenues, while at the same time, has adopted to wean itself off of using 'one time revenues' to fund recurring expenses.

As always, I have an open door policy, so please don't hesitate to come to me with your concerns or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Patrice Garvin,
Shirley Town Administrator