

News from the Selectmen

Doug Bersaw, William Daniels, Andrew Wallace

Saturday February 1, 2020 the three of us attended the Monadnock School District deliberative session to debate and decide the final warrant articles that will go to voters on March 10, 2020. As in previous years the district's operating budget was the most debated topic. The Monadnock School Board has been pushing significant increases to the budget even though previous years have ended with a significant surplus. This year there is also an additional \$1.4 million in state aid coming into the district, but despite this, the amount requested by the school board was increased thirteen percent. For that reason the budget committee set a budget lower than what was requested by the school board, but still considerably more than what was spent last year. Unfortunately after a lot of debate the budget committee's operating budget was increased with a 37-35 vote. The Selectmen are concerned by this increase because it will significantly impact Richmond's property tax rate which we work hard to keep in check. Nearly 67% of Richmond's property taxes go to the Monadnock School District and when the budget increases so does the tax rate. Quality education is important to all of us but the increase requested by the School Board has been left unexplained. When asked to justify the increase the school board was unable to provide any specific answers. This should result in another sizable surplus and articles seven and eight (which would set up new trust funds with money left over at the end of the year) lead us to believe that the school board expects the same.

In addition to the increased budget there are a number of spending articles, that if passed would further increase the burden on taxpayers. With the increase in state aid and an increased budget one would think district should have funds available for these without having to raise more through taxation.

ARTICLE TWO: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,130,000 for renovations at Monadnock Regional Middle High School

ARTICLE THREE: To see If the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$250,000 for engineering and design work as a result of the district-wide feasibility study

ARTICLE FOUR: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$240,000 for maintenance and repair work at all the District's Schools

ARTICLE NINE: Would allow the School Board to keep over half a million dollars in surplus funds rather than it being guaranteed to buy down the tax rate.

Three additional votes at this deliberative session could have saved the Richmond taxpayers over \$150,000 and your participation March 10, 2020 will also have a significant impact. Polls will be open at the Veterans Hall from 11:00AM to 7:00PM