



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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**Andover Select Board calls Special Town Meeting
for West Elementary and Shawsheen Preschool Project**

Voters asked to Weigh-In on National Economic Conditions Impacting the Project

Andover, Mass. — On Monday, September 26, 2022, the Town of Andover Select Board [approved a recommendation](#) by the West Elementary and Shawsheen Preschool Building Committee to hold a Special Town Meeting to address a budget deficit experienced on the project due to the impact of inflation and other economic conditions being felt across the country. Pending Select Board approval, the Special Town Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 7 p.m. at the Collins Center at Andover High School.

Construction on the project began in spring 2022, following successful community support at the June 2021 Annual Town Meeting and subsequent ballot box approval. The project was funded at \$151,661,968 and is supported with financing of \$38,442,820 by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

“This isn’t a step the Committee takes lightly. The budget deficit for this project is reflective of the current economic forces and supply chain issues seen across the country, and not due to the scope or management of the project,” notes Joel Blumstein, chairperson of the West Elementary and Shawsheen Preschool Building Committee, “We recognize that the community wants to understand the direct impact this will have on their households. Our goal is to be transparent throughout the process.”

The Committee reports that bids for project construction have come in about 14% over budget, resulting in a supplemental appropriation request of approximately \$19 million. Over the coming weeks, this number will be refined. The goal is to arrive at a number that does not ask the community for more than is needed to complete the project but that also ensures that the project can be completed without future budget requests.

“Should voters at Special Town Meeting approve the request, we anticipate the increase to household property taxes to be about \$83 per household for 30 years,” adds Town Manager Andrew Flanagan. “To approve the supplemental appropriation, a 2/3 majority vote by the town meeting voters is required. We are committed to providing robust outreach to the community before the Special Town Meeting so that any questions may be answered.”

The warrant for Special Town Meeting opened at the Select Board meeting and will close on Friday, September 30, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

“We appreciate the support for the project from the community thus far on behalf of our APS students,” said Susan McCready, chairwoman of the Andover School Committee. “Having reviewed the options for completing this project, Special Town Meeting is the option that allows the community to have a voice in next steps. Further reductions to project scope will impact the educational plan for the project. Our community deserves to fully understand impacts and act on that at a Special Town Meeting.”

At the [West Elementary and Shawsheen Preschool Building Committee meeting](#) on September 21, 2022, the Committee heard from SMMA Vice President Lorraine Finnegan regarding districts across Massachusetts that are experiencing similar budgetary challenges. Despite the recent economic challenges, the MSBA cannot increase their support for the project.

“I know the commitment and care the School Committee and West Elementary and Shawsheen Building Committee have taken to support the educational opportunities of our students,” adds Dr. Magda Parvey, superintendent of Andover Public Schools. “The completion of this project will benefit all students in the district and is an important step to enhancing the quality education our community deserves.”

To stay informed on the project, visit the West Elementary & Shawsheen Building Project's [webpage](#), or [sign up](#) for community newsletters.

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