

**LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF SOMERS
NOTICE OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

All electors and persons eligible to vote in town meetings of the Town of Somers, Connecticut (the "Town") are hereby warned that a Special Town Meeting of the Town is to be held at the Somers Town Hall Auditorium, 600 Main Street, Somers, Connecticut on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., for the following purposes:

1. To elect a moderator.
2. To consider and discuss (but not vote on) the following resolutions:
 1. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$13,200,000 FOR THE SENIOR/COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$13,200,000
 2. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,500,000 FOR THE HVAC AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$10,500,000

The full text of the foregoing authorizing resolutions are on file and open to inspection at the office of the Town Clerk, Town Hall, Somers, Connecticut for the use or inspection of any interested person.

All electors and persons eligible to vote in town meetings of the Town are hereby further notified that pursuant to Section 7-7 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, the Board of Selectmen by resolution adopted at its meeting on July 20, 2023, removed the foregoing resolutions from the agenda of this Special Town Meeting for submission to the voters for vote by voting machine to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at the times and at the polling places to be noticed.

3. To adjourn the meeting.

Dated at Somers, Connecticut this 18 day of October 2023.

TOWN OF SOMERS BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tim Keeney, First Selectman

William Meier, Selectman

Robert Schmidt, Selectman

**TOWN OF SOMERS
MINUTES SPECIAL TOWN MEETING, Oct 26, 2023**

The Special Town Meeting of October 26th was called to order at 7:02 pm by First Selectmen Keeney with approximately 35 residents in attendance. Town Clerk David Marti was requested to read the legal notice.

1. Elect a Moderator- A motion was made by Ralph Williams, seconded by William Meier to nominate Joseph Tolisano as moderator. No other nominations- motion unanimously voted to approve Joseph Tolisano.
2. Joseph Tolisano, member of the Board of Finance, shared that a combined effort from the BOF and BOS was required to get us to this meeting tonight. He shared that the two resolutions below are to be considered and discussed (but not voted on) at tonight's meeting.
 - a. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$13,200,000 FOR THE SENIOR/COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$13,200,000
 - b. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,500,000 FOR THE HVAC AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$10,500,000
3. The following stakeholders gave presentations on their areas:
 - a. Mike Marinaccio recapped the appropriation process on both projects.
 - b. Superintendent, Sam Galloway, gave an overview of the HVAC project for the Elementary School. He shared that he felt over 60% of the expense would be met by grant funding so the \$10,500,000 project should come in under \$5,000,000. Beginning in 2025 schools in CT will need to meet air quality HVAC standards and these upgrades are necessary to meet these future standards.
 - c. Todd Roland, Director of Land Use and Public Works discussed the Senior/Community Center project. The building would be four times the size of the current facility and will offer many more amenities.
 - d. CFO Brian Wissinger explained that the amount requested is the cost of the project and not the amount being bonded. For example, with the anticipated grant and other sources of funding the cost for the School HVAC Project expected to go from \$10,500,000 to \$3,437,500 and the Senior/Community Center Project from \$13,200,000 to \$9,200,000. Short term funding would be used until final cost determined and if feasible to proceed, then Bonding would occur for the remaining net amount.

- e. Mike Marinaccio recapped everything that was discussed. He focused on the fact that the amount in the two questions represented the total cost of each project and not the total financial amount that would be bonded. The bonded amount would be discounted by the grants and other offset moneys.
 - f. Joe Tolisano closed the conversation by recapping that no vote would be taken at tonight's meeting. That voting would take place on election day. He read each question and stated that a yes vote on either question would be an approval and a no vote on either question would mean no approval given. He opened the floor for discussion asking each participant to state their name and address before speaking.
4. Resident participation followed:
- a. Tim Potrikus thanked the BOF and BOS for all their hard work to get us to this point and endorsed both projects. He then asked the Board of Selectmen to work to encourage future business growth to help shift some of the tax burden from residents.
 - b. Lisa Horan questioned Dr. Galloway about the urgency of the need for HVAC updates. Dr. Galloway responded that the current system does not have the ability to move and circulate fresh air in the building and that requirement will be a future requirement.
 - c. Steve Krasinski questioned the reality of reduced debt being used to offset new borrowing. If reductions in debt are funding current operating cost than reallocating the dollars to cover new debt will not result in any savings. The question was answered by Brian Wissinger, explaining that reduction in debt was not used to pay for operating expenses since they are different accounts. Steve then asked, what would the mil rate increase be to cover the debt service, and Brian Wissinger responded that the increase would be .25% over the eight-year span.
 - d. Lisa Horan, shared with Dr. Galloway, Stephanie, and the group that Ellington received a large amount of grant money once their project was approved and that the pool of school grant money is large. She shared that the prospect is very positive to receive substantial grant offsets for the school project.
 - e. Johann Dreyer stated he understands that the costs being discussed are the capital expenditure of building the new Senior/Community center, but what would happen to the operating cost. Todd Roland explained that the hard cost utilities are projected to increase \$45,000 to \$55,000 annually, but if hours and programs grow, expenses will also grow. There is the opportunity to offset additional cost through program fees. The question was the asked on when the BOF would have to decide if a project was a go or no go depending on grant amounts received. Brian said that the Town has 2 years to act on the appropriation and it would be determined if enough of the cost had been offset by grants to move forward, before Bonding.
 - f. Bill Meier shared the Superintendent's concern about the quality of the air in the school. Bill asked about the life cycle of the HVAC systems and was told it was 30 years. He commented that it would not be prudent to bond something for 30 years if useful life was 20 or 25 years. You don't want to

be paying at the end for something that might need replacing before the bond is paid off.

- g. Lisa Horan spoke again explaining that there is a correlation between air quality in a school and students' performance in school. A high performing school would benefit everyone's home values, so this upgrade is important to everyone, not just parents with students in school.
 - h. Ralph Williams, the final presenter, discussed that elementary students (his example of grand children) are the biggest disease spreaders and air filtration, purification is important for the well-being of not only the kids, but their immediate and extended families. He endorsed the ventilation and filtration upgrades for the Elementary School.
5. Brian Wissinger announced that printed reference documents were available at the exit. Copies of the Full Project Scope for both projects were available on one table and Sample Ballots and Explanatory Texts of the ballot questions on the other table.

Joseph Tolisano adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted

David Marti
Town Clerk- Somers