

TOWN OF NEEDHAM



SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019

7:30 P.M.

Snow Date Monday, January 28, 2019

JAMES HUGH POWERS HALL, NEEDHAM TOWN HALL

1471 HIGHLAND AVENUE

Additional information on particular warrant articles will be made available from time to time at www.needhamma.gov/townmeeting during the weeks leading up to the Special Town Meeting.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Norfolk, ss.

To either of the constables in the Town of Needham in said County, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify the qualified Town Meeting Members of the Town of Needham to meet in the Needham Town Hall on:

TUESDAY, THE TWENTY SECOND DAY OF JANUARY, 2019

At 7:30 in the afternoon, then and there to act upon the following articles:

ARTICLE 1: APPROPRIATE FOR MITCHELL SCHOOL MODULAR CLASSROOMS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and/or transfer and appropriate the sum of \$630,000 for the construction of modular classrooms and any associated work at the Mitchell Elementary School, said sum to be spent under the direction of the Permanent Public Building Committee and Town Manager, and to meet this appropriation that said sum be transferred from Free Cash; or take any other action relative thereto.

INSERTED BY: Board of Selectmen

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT: Recommendation to be Made at Town Meeting

Article Information: This Article requests approval of \$630,000 in supplemental funding for construction of two modular classrooms at the Mitchell School. Town Meeting has already appropriated a total of \$1,560,000 for this project, which is intended to provide necessary space in anticipation of implementation of full-day kindergarten in September of 2019. The additional funds are needed because the one bid received, although otherwise satisfactory, is greater than the appropriation, and Town Meeting approval of the requested amount is necessary for the project to go forward.

The Select Board, School Committee, and Permanent Public Building Committee (PPBC) have considered alternative options, such as redesign or rebidding the project. The difference between the appropriation and current bid is understood to be driven by tight market conditions. The boards believe that delaying the project would be unlikely to achieve material savings or decrease the cost. Further, delay would adversely affect the educational program, since the new classrooms would not be available for the September, 2019 full-day kindergarten start date.

Because of the time frame for the project, Town Meeting approval of an emergency preamble will be requested.

Additional information is below.

Since May 2018, Town Meeting has approved a total of \$1,560,000 for the construction of two modular classrooms at the Mitchell School: Town Meeting appropriated \$210,000 for design in May, 2018, followed by an additional \$1,350,000 for construction in October, 2018. These modular classrooms will supplement the school's 22 existing classrooms to provide the 24 classroom spaces necessary to implement full-day kindergarten at Mitchell School.

The bid process this fall resulted in only one bid for construction of the modular units. That \$1.73 million bid exceeded the anticipated construction budget by approximately \$630,000. The PPBC has stated that an additional appropriation of \$630,000, as requested in this Article, is needed in January, 2019 to proceed with the current bid, with an emergency preamble. If approved, a project award would be made in early spring to maintain a scheduled opening in September, 2019.

Several reasons may explain the higher than anticipated bid. There is uncertainty in the market relating to tariffs on imported construction materials, and an extremely tight market for labor given the amount of construction in the Boston metropolitan area. Additionally, there are a limited number of suppliers of these types of modular structures, and the extent of the site work required may have acted to limit interest in the project.

Rebidding or modifying the scope of the project, for example, by relocating or changing the building elements, or redesigning for on-site (as opposed to modular) construction, would delay implementation by one year and would likely increase total cost. Best estimates are that construction costs in the current market will continue to increase, with a limited pool of qualified bidders for the complicated Mitchell site.

Additionally, delay of the project would create significant operational challenges for the school, requiring compromises to the educational program. The new modular classrooms are intended to provide appropriate space for music and art, which will in turn free up space to meet the need for full day kindergarten, special education, English Language Learning, and literacy program spaces. If the space is not available in September of 2019, Mitchell School will still be able to provide full-day kindergarten but:

- Art classes would need to be delivered in regular classrooms, traveling as “Art on a Cart.” That art program would be substantially altered due to the lack of space, materials, water, etc. Due to the lack of an elevator, two different sets of art resources would also be needed as well as a part time art teacher to assist with the delivery of the program.*
- Teachers and staff would continue to instruct students requiring English Language Learning, special education, and literacy lessons in available hallways and stairwells. Some student testing and conferences would be held in closets, public spaces, or adjacent to staff toilet areas. Some parent and teacher conferences would be held in public spaces, which typically provide little or no privacy.*
- Before and after school programs would be impacted and placed in the cafeteria with little ability to separate and program for different age groups.*

The School Committee and Select Board request funding approval to proceed with the current bid. Although the current bid is higher than expected, the bidder is qualified and the PPBC believes the bidder can satisfactorily complete the project on time and within the revised budget. Timely completion of the modular classrooms will be a significant help in implementing full-day kindergarten in September.

And you are hereby directed to serve this Warrant by posting copies thereof in not less than twenty public places in said Town at least fourteen (14) days before said meeting.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this warrant with your doings thereon unto our Town Clerk on or after said day and hour.

Given into our hands at Needham aforesaid this 21st day of December, 2018.

Daniel P. Matthews, Chair
John A. Bulian, Vice Chair
Maurice P. Handel, Clerk
Matthew D. Borrelli, Member
Marianne B. Cooley, Member

Select Board of Needham

A TRUE COPY

Attest:

Constable: