



Town of
Foxborough, MA

January 25, 2025

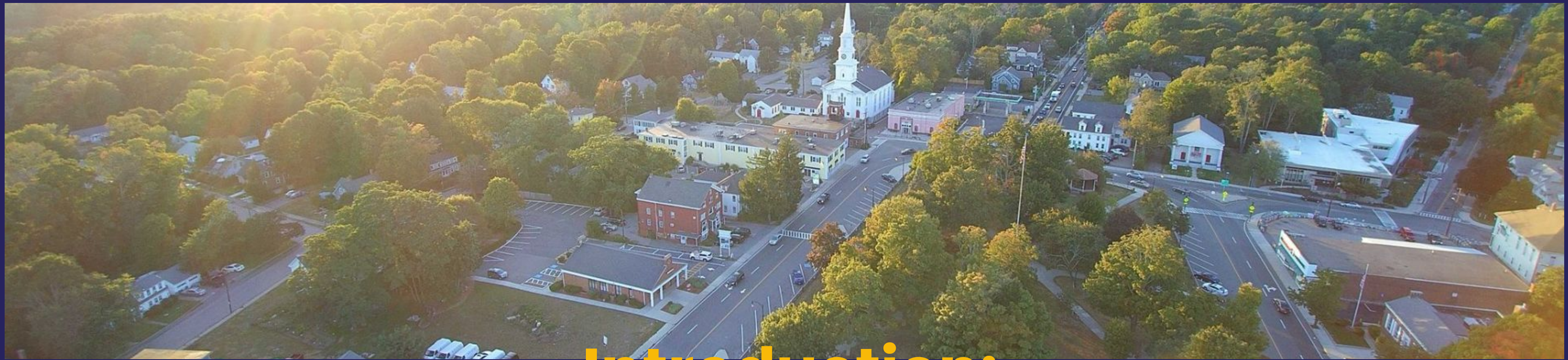
**Debt Exclusion Community
Engagement Success:**

May 2024

Town Meeting

Paige Duncan, Town Manager





Introduction: The Power of Community Engagement

Why it Matters:

In any town, informed and engaged residents are key to driving meaningful decisions that benefit everyone. Community engagement not only builds trust but ensures that residents feel empowered and connected to the issues that shape their future.

May '24 Town Meeting :

At last spring's town meeting, we faced the challenge of passing three significant debt exclusions. These would fund crucial projects but required a strong majority vote from the community.

Our Result:

Thanks to our comprehensive community engagement strategy, all three debt exclusions were successfully passed. This was a major achievement, directly tied to how we approached communication, transparency, and outreach.



STARTING

POINT

- New Town Manager and new Communications Specialist.
- Foxborough is fiscally conservative and has never passed a Prop 2 1/2 override.
- Initially, only the DPW Facility debt exclusion was planned, but two more urgent projects arose: Police women's locker room expansion and a new Community Center.
- In January 2024, a 17,000 SF church - ideal for a community center - went on the market for \$1.5 million.
- Shortly after, the Police Chief identified a pressing need for a \$750,000 locker room expansion.
- Combined, the annual tax impact for all three projects would be \$33.63 per \$100,000 valuation, or \$205 for the average \$608,662 home.
- Individually: DPW (\$164), church/community center (\$33), and locker room expansion (\$8).

**Could we get voters to approve
all THREE debt exclusions?**



Our Approach

We focused on 3 main goals:



Clarity

Enhanced transparency around decision-making to help residents understand the issues.



Comprehension

Ensured residents fully grasped the implications of their votes — both for individuals and the town.



Connection

Created opportunities for residents to voice their opinions, while actively reaching out through multiple mediums, both in-person and digital.

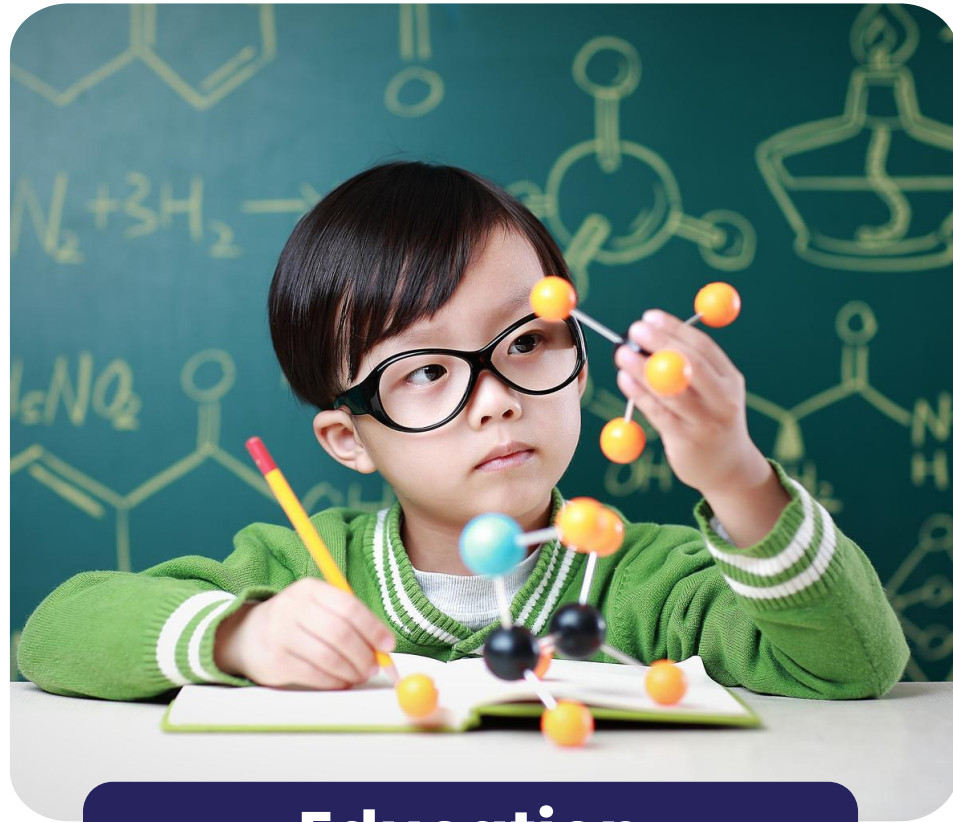
CLARITY

- **Historical Context and Decision Transparency:** Explained the background and reasoning behind decisions
- **Proactive Information Sharing:** Anticipated needs and shared critical details before questions arose.
- **Regular Updates and Clear Communication:** Kept residents informed with timely and straightforward messaging.
- **Video Tours and Leadership Interviews:** Provided in-depth, visual explanations of the issues up for vote.
- **Resident Guide:** Created a comprehensive online resource to explain the issues in detail.



These efforts helped ensure residents felt

COMPREHENSION



Education

- Aimed to make residents feel informed and empowered to make confident decisions.
- Provided residents with detailed, understandable information.
- Utilized a variety of methods to engage different learning styles and preferences.



Misinformation

- Actively monitored social media to identify and correct misinformation.
- Leveraged resident confusion to pinpoint areas requiring additional education.
- Regularly updated the FAQ section to ensure accurate and current information.

CONNECTION

Connection is a two-way street, so we took a two-pronged approach:

We made an effort to

1. Meet residents where they were
2. Actively engage with them in a variety of ways.

Staying accessible and responsive to residents' questions and concerns through various channels — social media, email, phone calls, and in-person interactions — ensured that residents felt heard, informed, and actively involved.





DEBT EXCLUSION

VS

OVERRIDES

What are they, how are they different, & why does it matter?

DEBT EXCLUSION SIMPLIFIED TIMELINE

- 1 The town proposes to fund a project via Debt Exclusion
- 2 The project proposal is added to the Warrant as an Article
- 3 Residents must vote to approve the Article's exemption from Proposition 2 1/2 during Town Election on May 6
- 4 If the vote passes, Resident's will vote again at Town Meeting on May 13 to approve the Article's funding via Debt Exclusion
- 5 If the second vote passes, the Town will be approved to secure funding via Debt Exclusion & the project will move forward

2024 TIMELINE OF PURCHASE PROCESS

- JAN 9** ▶ The 'Foxboro Ward' listed for sale on MLS (Multiple Listing Service).
- JAN 22** ▶ The Town of Foxborough was notified about the sale. Internal discussions began about the potential reuse of the property.
- JAN 25** ▶ Initial tour of the property with Rec Director, Human Services Director, & Building Commissioner.
- JAN 31** ▶ Consultation with Bay Colony Group & Conservation Commission. Tour with Select Board Rep, Town Manager, Facilities Dept. & Chairs of Rec, COA/HS, & Building Committee.
- FEB 7** ▶ Articles drafted for the potential purchase of the Church & the disposition of the Senior Center.
- FEB 16** ▶ Comments about mold shared on social media by former Church members. Mold Investigation report provided by Church showed no mold present.
- FEB 21** ▶ Property Tour with Select Board. HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, & Septic Inspections Completed. Property Tour with Human Services Staff.
- FEB 27- MAR 7** ▶ Executive Session 1 discuss purchase. Offer presented. Offers reviewed. Executive Session 2 to discuss negotiations.
- MAR 2** ▶ Presentation to Capital Planning Committee.
- MAR 8** ▶ Notification to the Town of offer acceptance.
- MAR 13** ▶ Presentation to the Advisory Committee
- MAR 19** ▶ Purchase Agreement Executed. Select Board Notified. Press Release posted on Social Media.
- MAR 26** ▶ Presentation to Select Board by the Town Manager.
- APR 9** ▶ Select Board signed Uniqueness Certificate
- MAY 6** ▶ Town Election: residents will vote to exempt this purchase (Article 15) from Proposition 2 1/2

IF VOTE PASSES

MAY 13

Town Meeting: residents will vote again, this time to approve funding for the purchase via Debt Exclusion

IF VOTE PASSES

Debt Exclusion will move forward & the property will be purchased!

IF VOTE DOES NOT PASS

The purchase will not be funded via Debt Exclusion & it will not move forward

"Public discussion is the best security for public welfare and for the safety of every good government." - Charles James Fox

We've put together this guide so our residents feel well informed, aware, and ready to let their voices be heard!

This May, there will be two important town events: Town Election on May 6th & Annual Town Meeting on May 13th (with a second night scheduled on May 14th, which will only occur if all articles are not completed on the first night). Both events will involve voting, and the relevant ballot questions that pass at the May 6th Town Election will be voted on again at Town Meeting to approve funding on May 13th.

How does it all start?	+
What happens at Town Election on May 6th?	+
Where can I find information about the candidates?	+
What is Proposition 2 1/2?	+
What is a Debt Exclusion?	+
What is a Warrant?	+
Why are Warrant Articles 13, 14, & 15 significant?	+
What is Article 13 (DPW Expansion Project)?	+
What is Article 14 (Police Women's Locker Room Expansion)?	+
What is Article 15 (76 Main St - Community Center)?	+
What happens after Town Election on May 6th?	+
What will happen at Town Meeting on May 13?	+
What will change if the Debt Exclusion is approved?	+
What if the Debt Exclusion is not approved?	+
Estimated Financial Impact	+
Where can I find info about the MBTA Communities Act (Article 26)?	+

An aerial photograph of a sports complex, likely a university campus, featuring a large stadium with a blue roof, several modern buildings, and a large parking lot. The background is a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage. The sky is clear with a few clouds. The text "FINAL OUTCOME" is overlaid in a dark blue box with white text.

FINAL OUTCOME



APPROVED

APPROVED

APPROVED

KEY TAKEAWAYS



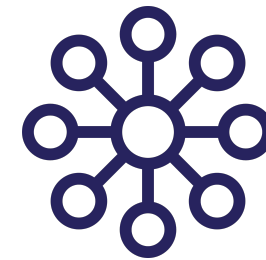
Think Like a Resident

Approach communication from the residents' perspective to ensure clarity and relevance.



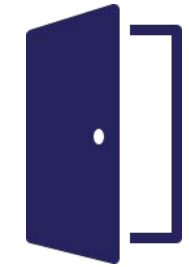
Proactive is Always Better

Anticipate questions and concerns before they arise, and share information early.



Diversify Dissemination

Use a wide range of communication methods, tailoring channels to reach specific audiences effectively.



Stay Accessible and Available

Maintain open lines of communication to build trust and keep residents informed.



THANK YOU!



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www.foxboroughma.gov



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