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Contact: Donna Gendreau

Phone Number: 781-871-2568

Email: cdaac5@verizon.net

Concerned Citizens “Come Together for Abington”

Abington, MA - July 18, 2009 – A group of Abington residents seeking to ensure that the town’s schools, police, fire and library are able to provide core services to its citizens has formed a committee known as “Come Together for Abington.” The group is urging voters in Abington to vote yes and approve a \$1.7 million Proposition 2 ½ override on July 25, 2009. This override will provide necessary funding to these important departments.

Without the additional monies, critical town departments will be forced to eliminate staff, close and limit access to town buildings, and reduce certain services currently available to citizens. These deep cuts will affect the quality of life in the town of Abington. The override will not add any additional staff or services to any town department. It will allow the police, fire and library to provide a similar level of services as last year and although the school department will still be cutting services, such cuts would not impact students in as significant a way as the current funding levels do.

The school department will lay off 41.5 staff members and close the North School if the override fails. This will result in class sizes of more than 30 students in many grades. The high school will be forced to eliminate certain classes. It may be impossible for some students to coordinate their schedules so that they can obtain all of the necessary credits to graduate.

A group opposed to the override has recently taken the position that there is no correlation between the override vote and property values. Common sense dictates that there is a strong correlation. If the town of Abington chooses to fund its schools in a manner that will require drastic cuts, it is irresponsible to think that property values will not be affected.

Additionally, the departments charged with ensuring the public safety of the citizens of Abington are slated to make cuts in services. Specifically, the police department will lose a detective and a police cruiser. This will impact the ability of the police to adequately patrol the streets of Abington and will reduce its efforts to curtail criminal behavior within the town. In the Abington Town Report from 2008, Police Chief David Majenski stated that he “would be remiss in (his) duty as police chief” if he did not inform the townspeople that without an increase in staffing levels, the police “will not be able to continue to act as proactively” as in past years. The passage of the override will only allow Chief Majenski to operate at his current level despite the need for additional officers.

In 2008, Fire Chief Arthur Pelland indicated that he “still need(ed) to address additional personnel needs for the department to cover calls for service and potential risks.” Fire Chief Pelland stated, July 16, 2009, “If the override fails there will be a reduction in staffing. There will be an impact on either ambulance or fire prevention.” Without its passage, the citizens of Abington may see longer response times for emergency situations.

The public library will lose town funding for 3 part-time employees and \$20,000 in books and materials. Without the override, the library may be forced to reduce its hours of service to the public and access to the building and its resources.

The citizens of Abington have an important decision to make on July 25th. Essential departments require additional funding to ensure that residents can maintain their quality of life. “Come Together for Abington” urges voters to come together for the town by voting yes.

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