

**TOWN OF DUDLEY**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
Public Information Office



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Public Information

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**For Immediate Release**

August 20, 2023

**Dudley voters supported public safety, public library and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District at the ballot box on August 17, 2023.**

In the town's third Proposition 2 ½ Override Election Monday, 31percent, or 2,731 voters decided five funding questions.

The first, to raise taxes by \$556,111 to support the police and fire department budgets was approved with 1,660 in favor and 1,057 opposed.

Question 2 which sought \$534,304 for the highway department failed to gain approval with 1,254 in favor and 1,449 opposed.

Question 3 which sought \$133,698 for town hall administrative functions, failed with 1,112 in favor and 1,591 opposed.

Question 4 which sought \$297,528 to maintain services at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library was approved 1,518 to 1,190.

And, Question 5 which sought \$901,683 to fund the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District's FY24 assessment increase was approved 1,791 to 931.

The approved questions add \$1.21 to the \$9.93 tax rate, which is an annual tax increase of \$353.72 for the average single-family home.

The Board of Selectmen, Fire and Police Chiefs and Library Trustees are grateful for the support shown by the community.

Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said, "The Board of Selectmen is grateful that the majority of Dudley voters decisively chose to support fire, police, education and to keep the public library open. The voters' support of three of the five questions ensures the community will maintain the high quality of services our residents deserve and expect. The Board of Selectmen has perennially maintained a position of providing the highest level of quality services that the Town can afford, and that guiding principle will continue in the weeks ahead."

Work is underway to restore services in departments affected by the budget cuts that were necessary to reduce spending and balance the budget at the May Annual Town Meeting and a Special Town Meeting held in July.

There were 32 possible funding outcomes based on the five menu-style questions presented on the ballot. The questions that passed will result in fully funding those budgets. Notices to rescind layoffs were issued August 18 for fire, police and library.

"Over the course of the last five years, nothing has given me greater satisfaction than to have been able to sign the notices rescinding the layoff of police, fire and library staffing. It is not easy to ask residents to vote a raise in their own taxes. The wisdom of the voters to hear the message through all the

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noise demonstrated our community commitment by stepping-up for the common good,” Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said, “All the credit goes to the voters, the department heads and senior staff that kept the messaging professional.”

The Highway Department question fell short by 195 votes at a time when we are 12 weeks away from the start of the snow season. Funding for Town Hall administrative services failed to pass by a greater number. Yet, the passage of the three other questions has freed-up revenue which will help to restore funding to other priority services such as highway, Town Hall staffing and online services.

Town officials have begun the process of preparing a supplemental budget. A balanced, supplemental budget that reflects the decisions made by voters at the polls will be presented at the October 16 Special Town Meeting.

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