

**TOWN OF DUDLEY**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
Public Information Office



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Public Information

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**For Immediate Release**

July 6, 2023

**Dudley Town Administrator clarifies the state and fate of the town's Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.**

The library has funding in both the budget approved at the May 22, 2023, town meeting and in the proposed budget going before voters at the July 24, 2023, Special Town Meeting.

The May 22 budget, under which the town operates today, funded the library for Fiscal 2024, less a 10% cut. Had either of the override elections in April and June passed, the 10% cut in the library funding would have been restored.

Prior to any voter action at the July 24 Special Town Meeting, the 10% reduction budget approved in May stands. The library remains funded and open.

The purpose of the Special Town Meeting is to bring the budget back into balance following the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee vote to assess an additional \$901,683 above the \$10,036,308 voters approved in May. That additional assessment creates a \$901,683 deficit to a municipal budget that had already been cut by more than 10%.

The budget that will be proposed at the July town meeting was laid out at the June 29 selectmen's meeting. This budget funds the school committee demand of \$901,683. To bring the budget back into balance, an additional \$901,683 would be cut from municipal services. If this proposed budget fails, the town will continue to operate under the May 22 budget – the library remains funded at a 10% reduction and the school committee could call a Super Town Meeting.

If the budget that will be proposed at the July town meeting passes, the library will have minimum funding as of July 25. While library staff received layoff notices effective July 25, work is underway to keep staff on board with reduced hours. The library director position is funded through October 1, 2023. This will keep the library operational with "summer hours" until the Proposition 2 ½ Override ballot questions at the August 17 Special Town Election. If the question for the library passes, the library will be fully funded for FY2024. If the library question fails and a Super Town Meeting approves the school budget, thereby requiring Dudley to pay the \$901,683, the library will likely close.

What happens to the school budget and municipal services, including the library is in the hands of Dudley voters. It is premature to declare that the FY24 library budget been decided. We must await the

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town meeting and special election results. Once we have the results of both, the budget will be rebalanced and presented for adoption at the October 16, 2023, Special Town Meeting.

Dudley Town Counsel has contacted the state regarding the upcoming Proposition 2 ½ Override Election and informed governing authorities that the Dudley budget will be finalized on October 16. It is highly unlikely that any move by the state to impose fines, penalties or call for loan payback will occur until the October town meeting voters adopt the final FY24 town budget, and the library funding is settled.

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