



Advisory Committee  
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**TOWN OF WELLESLEY**



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE LETTER  
 Special Town Meeting — Tuesday, June 5, 2018, 7:00 pm  
 Wellesley Middle School Auditorium**

**TERM ENDS 2018**

Tom Fitzgibbons  
 Mike Hluchyj, Chair  
 Mark Kaplan, Vice Chair  
 Alena Poirier  
 Ria Stolle

**TERM ENDS 2019**

Jane Andrews  
 Rose Mary Donahue  
 Tom Skelly, Vice Chair  
 Andrea Ward, Secretary

**TERM ENDS 2020**

Todd Cook  
 Mary Gard  
 Paul Merry  
 Lina Musayev  
 Betsy Roberti

To the Citizens of the Town of Wellesley:

May 23, 2018

A Special Town Meeting (STM) will convene on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at 7:00 pm in the Wellesley Middle School Auditorium. All residents are welcome to attend. The proceedings may be followed on Wellesley Media Corporation's Government Channel (Comcast Channel 8, Verizon Channel 40). The STM will also be live streamed at [www.wellesleymedia.org/live-streaming](http://www.wellesleymedia.org/live-streaming).

I am writing on behalf of the Advisory Committee to provide you with an overview of the matters that the STM will address. The *STM Advisory Report*, mailed to all Town Meeting Members, provides background information and discusses, in detail, Advisory considerations and recommendations on the articles and related motions coming before this meeting. The report is available at the Wellesley Free Library, the Town Clerk's Office and online at [www.wellesleyma.gov/241/Town-Clerk](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/241/Town-Clerk).

## Funding to conduct a feasibility study to replace the Hunnewell Elementary School

This STM is to convene for the purpose of authorizing up to \$1 million in funding to conduct a feasibility study for options to replace the Hunnewell Elementary School at 28 Cameron Street. Feasibility is the first of three steps, each requiring Town Meeting approved funding, in a process that the Town follows for major capital projects. Following completion of the feasibility study, the Town will seek funding for design and, later, funding for construction. The construction costs, estimated to range between \$55 million and \$61.5 million depending on when construction begins, will also require a Town-wide debt exclusion vote.

The Town has embarked on major upgrades to its schools over the last two decades. Sprague and Bates were rebuilt in 2002 and 2004, respectively. The Middle School underwent a series of upgrades between 2006 and 2008, and this year's Annual Town Meeting approved design funding for steam pipe replacement and feasibility funding for projects that, when completed, will leave the Town with a "25-year school." The new High School was completed in 2012, and Fiske and Schofield were extensively renovated in 2015 and 2016. This leaves the Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham (HHU) elementary schools as the three remaining schools in need of extensive repairs, renovations, and/or replacement.

Problems at the three schools include:

- Heating systems, plumbing systems (including bathrooms), electrical systems, life safety/fire alarm systems, and windows beyond their useful life, resulting in frequent repairs, uneven heating and the constant threat of failure;
- Exterior envelopes (facades) in need of significant repairs;
- No sprinkler systems and combustible roof framing at Hardy and Upham;
- Lack of compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Modular classrooms being used well beyond their service life;
- Undersized classrooms not conducive to learning, with outdated finishes, cabinetry, lighting, doors and acoustical treatments;
- Lack of specialized spaces for delivery of services;
- One space used for gym, cafeteria and auditorium, which reduces time available for physical education classes and results in significant inefficiencies due to setup and changeover of the shared space; and
- Need to use hallways for storage and for one-on-one teaching space.

The School Committee (SC) has been looking into the HHU issue for some time. A complicating factor is that the school system is in a cycle of declining enrollment that supports the consolidation of elementary schools from seven to six. This has been extensively studied over the past six years, most recently by the HHU Master Planning Committee (HHU MPC), leading to a position adopted by the SC last year to replace Hunnewell—the only school that serves the southwest quadrant of the Town—and to replace either Upham or Hardy pending the results of a feasibility study. The HHU MPC recommended, and the SC agreed, that a third school would be rebuilt only if and when current enrollment trends were to reverse.

A further complication, though one that is of significant potential financial benefit to the Town, is that in December 2017 the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) invited the Town into a process that could lead to partial funding (approximately 31%) of the costs of rebuilding the Upham or Hardy elementary schools. Originally, the Warrant for this STM included Article 2, which sought to fund feasibility and schematic design for the building of an elementary school in partnership with the MSBA at either the Upham or Hardy sites. Although communications with the MSBA indicate that it is aware and supportive of the Town's plans to evaluate both Upham and Hardy as potential sites for the rebuilt school, the MSBA process contains certain criteria—including designating a specific school as the focus of the funding and mandating specific language in the warrant article used to obtain community funding for feasibility and schematic design—that have raised additional questions in recent weeks. The SC and Board of Selectmen (BOS), joint sponsors of Article 2, ultimately decided to withdraw Article 2 from this STM and take it up at a future STM, likely in October 2018, in order to allow additional time for dialogue with the MSBA and outreach to the community on the MSBA process.

The only substantive article before this STM, Article 3, seeks funding for a feasibility study for options to replace the Hunnewell Elementary School. This project will be funded entirely by the Town, will run separately from the Hardy-Upham MSBA project and, consistent with the standard Town process, will be managed by the School Building Committee (SBC). The proposed Hunnewell feasibility study will provide new and critical information, including the buildable options at the site and the possible timing for the project. Also included in this study will be educational programming needs; conceptual building designs; topography documentation; geotechnical, geoenvironmental, wetlands and hazardous materials investigations; and traffic and swing space considerations.

As discussed in the *STM Advisory Report*, there is unanimous support by the Advisory Committee for moving forward with funding the feasibility study for the replacement of the Hunnewell Elementary School. This problem has been extensively studied over the last six years and the time has come to move forward to address the current building deficiencies for the benefit of our elementary school students and dedicated teaching staff.

I am thankful to my colleagues on the Advisory Committee, especially Jane Andrews, for their work on the *STM Advisory Report*. I am also appreciative of the citizens who attended the Public Hearing for this STM and voiced concerns and asked questions, as these were very helpful to the Advisory Committee. Finally, we should all be grateful to the members of the SC, School Administration, Facilities Management Department, HHU MPC, SBC and BOS for their tireless dedication and work to provide the Town with the proper school facilities required to offer the highest quality education to the children of Wellesley.

Sincerely,

Mike Hluchyj, Chair  
Advisory Committee