

Good Morning Ipswich Residents,

There has been a lot of confusion over the upcoming election on May 15, 2018 and specifically the ballot question about the Proposition 2 ½ override vote for the proposed new school. Listed below is a link from our Town Counsel George Hall that explains the Town Meeting vote on May 8, 2018 where we did not obtain the necessary two-thirds vote required for borrowing and the upcoming election that has the ballot question about the required Proposition 2 ½ override vote.

In summary, I offer the following. The ballots for the election cannot be reprinted and we are legally bound to proceed. The Select Board is the only board that can put questions on the ballot and they have already posted the warrant for the Town Meeting which included the election ballot and the ballot questions. There is no procedure for the Select Board to amend the election warrant once it has been posted and sent to the Town Clerk. The rules for posting ballots are governed by Massachusetts General Laws and not in our Town Charter or Bylaws.

The question about the possibility of the Select Board calling a Special Town Meeting has come up. To clarify any confusion, there are only two (2) ways a Special Town Meeting can be called. The first is that the Select Board can vote to call a Special Town Meeting. The second way is that two hundred (200) residents could sign a petition requesting that the Select Board hold a Special Town Meeting, and they would be legally obligated to hold this meeting within forty-five (45) days of receiving the request. At this point there has been no such request made of the Select Board, and they do not meet again until May 21, 2018.

We have contacted the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and inquired if other towns have taken this route. MSBA has confirmed that six towns/districts have had similar failed votes at town meeting and subsequently called for and held a Special Town Meeting to revote the request to borrow funds for a school project. Only one of the six projects obtained the necessary two-thirds vote at the subsequent special town meeting. Of the remaining five towns/districts that were not successful, one is currently back in the project pipeline with MSBA with a new project.

So what does this mean for Ipswich? The ballot vote will happen on May 15, 2018 with the question about the Proposition 2 ½ override included on the ballot. The School Committee at their meeting on May 10, 2018 stated that they had no intent in asking the Select Board to call a Special Town Meeting to re-vote the existing project. My advice moving forward would be to go to the polls and vote the same way you did the night of Town Meeting or would have if you did not attend the meeting. Having the results of this ballot vote will give the elected leaders of the town guidance as they move forward with a new proposal for our elementary schools. Please feel free to contact the Town Managers office at 978-356-6609 or via email at [tonym@ipswich-ma.gov](mailto:tonym@ipswich-ma.gov) if you would like additional information.

<http://www.ipswichma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10494/Elementary-School-vote---Legal-opinion-5-10-18>