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# **TOWN OF MIDDLETON**

## **APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 FORUM ON THE**

## **2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING (ATM)**

Our upcoming ATM Warrant features 23 Articles. Each Article includes a brief explanation in the text of the ATM Warrant.

Based on feedback from residents, we are providing additional background information on two of the more complex articles you will be seeing this year:

**Article 7 – FY2025 Operating Budget Override**

and

**Article 23 – MBTA Zoning**

**TUESDAY, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 AT 7:00PM**

**HOWE-MANNING SCHOOL GYMNASIUM**

**26 CENTRAL STREET, MIDDLETON, MA**

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# ARTICLE 7

## What is Proposition 2 ½?

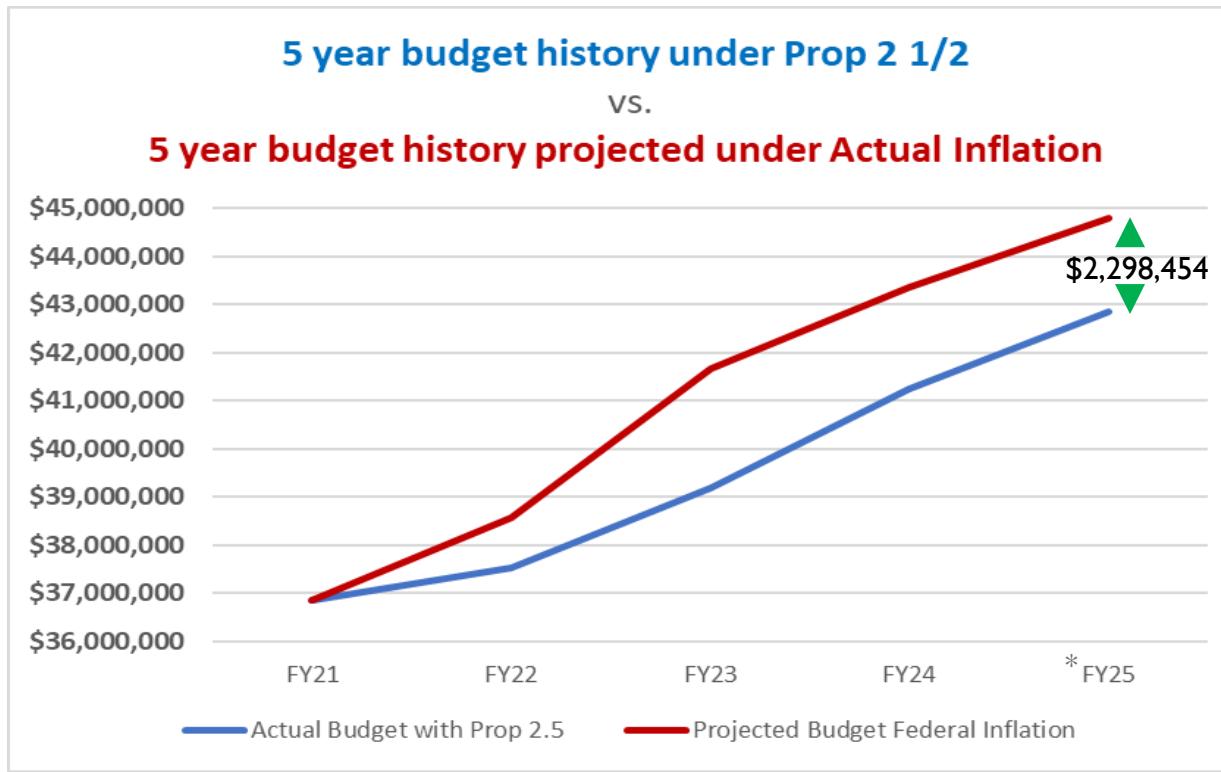
A State law, enacted by citizen initiative petition in 1980, that regulates local property tax administration and limits the amount of revenue – the levy – a city or town may raise from local property taxes each year.

## What is an override?

A vote to increase the amount of property tax revenue in excess of the automatic 2 ½ percent allowed under Proposition 2 ½. An override permanently raises the Levy Limit unless later reversed.

**FY2025 OPERATING BUDGET OVERRIDE**

# ARTICLE 7



Setting debt aside, over 5 years our annual budget increased from \$36,841,236 in FY21 to our proposed FY25 Budget of \$42,499,242 (less debt of \$3,828,178) under the limitations of Prop 2 1/2.

If our budget followed actual Federal Inflation Rates, which ran as high as 8% over that time period, our proposed budget would have reached \$44,797,696 for the same services. This is \$2,298,454 higher than the restraints of Prop 2 1/2 allowed.

Rising costs in materials, health care, and labor over the past five years have created historic pressures on municipal budgets throughout Massachusetts.

## THE LIMITATIONS OF PROP 2 1/2.

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## ARTICLE 7

**How much is being requested for FY25 at Town Meeting?**

\$1,033,500, a breakdown of which is available on the following slide.

**What is the total amount of the request?**

\$1,796,500 (the \$1,033,500 listed above as well as \$763,000 in future capacity).

**What is future capacity?**

Future capacity is additional funding to cover future projected anticipated expenses in future fiscal years. The entire amount of \$1,796,500 is expected to cover the next five years. Such future expenditures would require annual approval from the citizens of Middleton as part of the annual budget approval process.

**FINANCIAL DETAILS OF THE REQUEST**

# ARTICLE 7

## ***Middleton School Department***

Instructional Interventionists	\$55,000
Specialist Programming	\$160,000
Classroom Section	\$75,000
<u>Student Support Personnel</u>	<u>\$85,000</u>
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>

## ***Town of Middleton***

Police Department Personnel (2)	\$156,500
Fire Department Personnel (3)	\$282,000
Facility Maintenance Personnel (1/2 year)	\$50,000
Library Personnel (2 part-time)	\$31,000
<u>Health Insurance, Medicare for Additional Full-Time Personnel</u>	<u>\$139,000</u>
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$658,500</b>

**Fiscal Year 2025 Grand Total:** **\$1,033,500**

## A BREAKDOWN OF THE FY25 REQUEST

## ARTICLE 7

### How much would the FY25 increase of \$1,033,500 impact my taxes?

We estimate an impact of \$0.32 per thousand. By example, an “average” single family home in Middleton is valued at ~\$935,000. The additional tax impact at a rate of \$0.32 per thousand would be roughly \$295.

### How much would the full override amount impact my taxes?

The total tax impact to an average home would be \$580 spread out over the next five years. (This includes the \$295 listed above)

### Does the budget balance without an override?

Yes. The proposed override would fund additional personnel at the Middleton Elementary School, as well as 2 additional Police Officers, 3 Firefighter/Paramedics, 2 Part-Time Staff at the Flint Public Library, and (1) Full Time Maintenance Position for all municipal buildings.

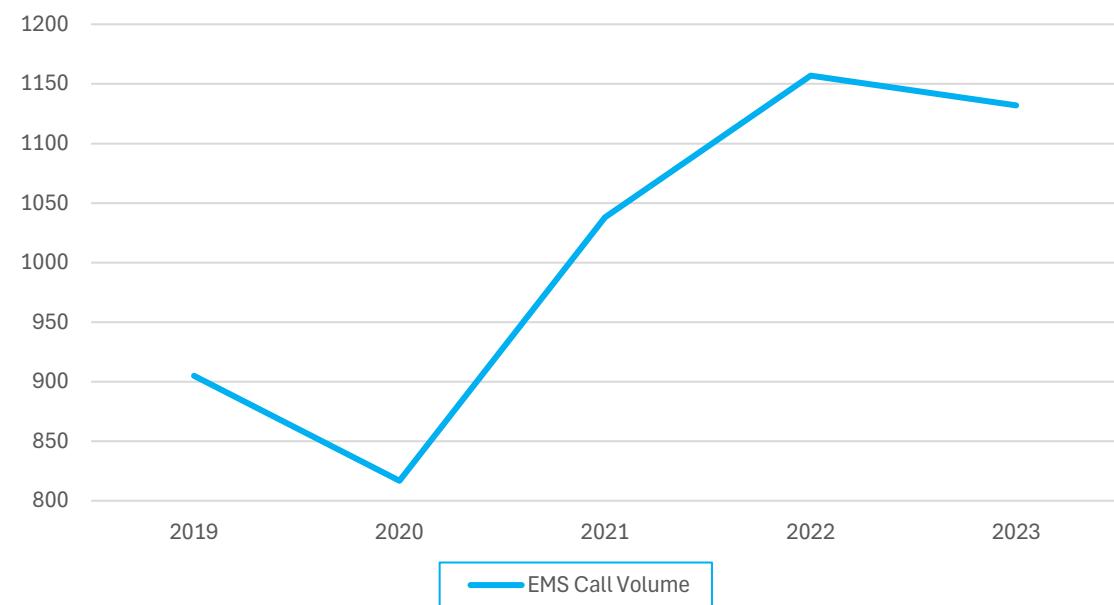
# WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

# ARTICLE 7

## Why do we need additional personnel?

Over 2/3rds of the FY25 Budget Override is calling for the addition of 5 public safety personnel (3 Fire, 2 Police). The need for additional staffing is well supported by data. For example, EMS call volume has sharply increased, ballooning over 25% from 2019 to 2023. (905 calls in 2019 to 1,132 calls in 2023).

*Trends in Middleton EMS Call Volume 2019-2023*



## THE IMPACT TO SERVICES (FIRE)

# ARTICLE 7

## Why do we need additional personnel?

Compared to other departments, Middleton Police is leanly staffed. Even with two additional full time officers as proposed, Middleton would be at the lower end of the middle of the pack for staffing. In addition, community population does not always tell the entire story.

Middleton sees a significant amount of through traffic along Rt 114 between neighboring communities.

Additional staffing would allow for an increased presence.

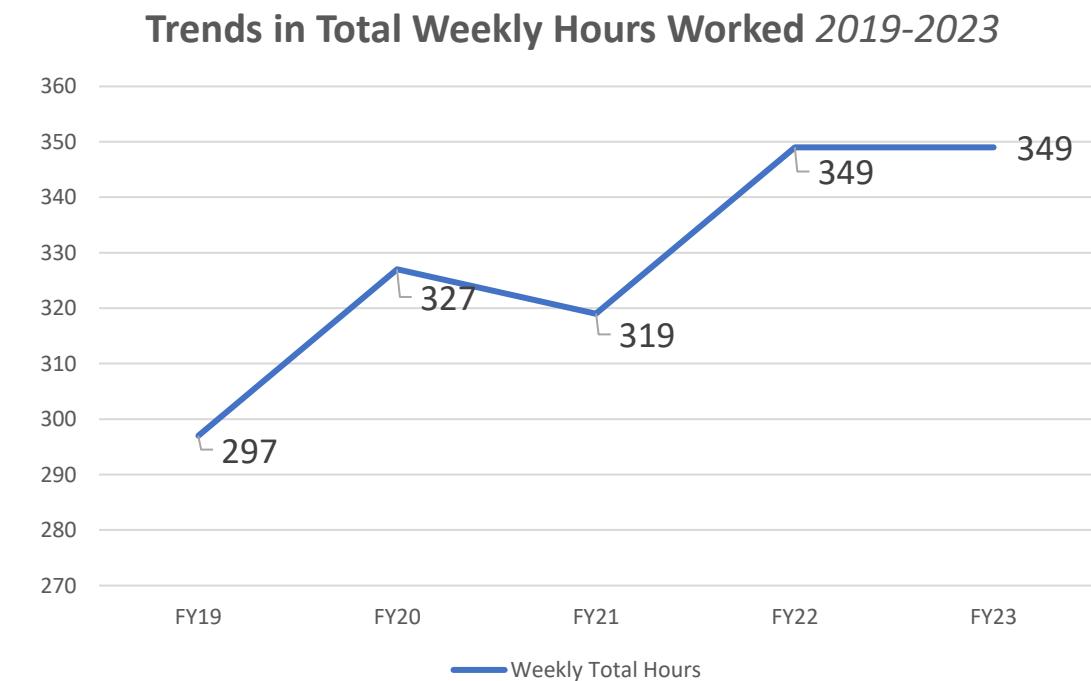
Community	Population	Square Miles	Police F/T	Police P/T
Lynnfield	13,000	9.86	32	0
Ipswich	13,785	32.11	31	15
North Reading	15,554	13.16	27	0
Tyngsborough	12,442	18.1	25	0
Norfolk	11,550	14.9	21	7
Littletown	10,141	16.52	19	3
Middleton	10,000	13.45	17	6
Boxford	8,203	23.56	11	11

## THE IMPACT TO SERVICES (POLICE)

# ARTICLE 7

## Why do we need additional personnel?

The Flint Public Library has seen a year over year increase in the total amount of hours worked on a weekly basis. This grew from 297 hours in 2019 to 349 in 2023 – an over 17.5% increase without any noteworthy changes in staffing. This has created scheduling challenges over the past several years, a trend that will not reverse without the addition of staff. The FY25 override is proposing a modest addition of two (2) part-time employees.



## THE IMPACT TO SERVICES (LIBRARY)

# ARTICLE 7

## Why do we need additional personnel?

Conversations surrounding a Full Time Maintenance Position began in previous budget cycles. As an organization, it is our goal to keep \$1,500 problems from turning into \$15,000 problems – or more. As we look to invest in new public facilities, we are being mindful of other existing assets that require attention. This includes an upcoming conditions assessment of the Flint Public Library. We are also looking to be forward thinking, timing this new hire to begin less than a year before substantial completion of our new Town Hall/Community Center and Public Safety Facility. The savings of preventative maintenance are well documented, making this position a worthy investment.



**“In fact, a good [Preventative Maintenance] program can help you cut operational costs by 12 to 18 percent”**  
- ICMA “Important Trends You Should Know in Preventative and Predictive Maintenance”

## THE IMPACT TO SERVICES (TOWN WIDE)

# ARTICLE 23

## What is the MBTA Communities Act?

This law established a requirement that each of the 177 MBTA Communities must have zoning that:

- Provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right.
- Cannot have age-restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children.
- Must have a minimum gross density of 15 dwelling units per acre.
- Must partly be located within 0.5 miles from a commuter rail, subway, ferry, or bus station, as applicable.

## What are the requirements for Middleton?

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) defined the following requirements for Middleton:

1. Minimum Multifamily Unit Capacity: 750
2. Minimum Land Area: 50 acres

## Does this mean Middleton needs to build 750 new units of housing?

No. This means the area zoned needs to be able to accommodate this much housing – including units that may already be there.

The proposed area along the Interstate Highway Business zone is already home to some of the densest development in town.

## MBTA ZONING

# ARTICLE 23

## **What happens if this is voted down at Annual Town Meeting?**

Being in non-compliance could result in a costly legal battle. The Governor's Office has also expressed that a failure to adopt this locally would result in the loss of grant funding for municipalities. Middleton is currently working towards multiple grants, some with caps as high as \$5,000,000 with the goal of addressing town-wide Rt 14 adjacent traffic issues.

## **What was the strategic process to respond to this state mandate?**

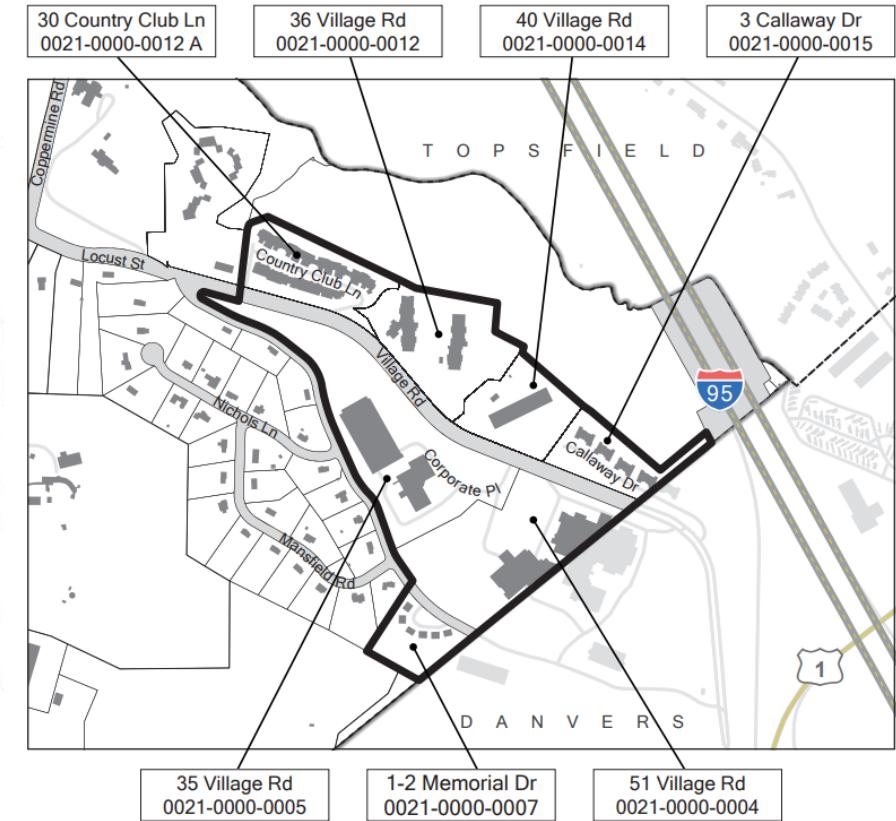
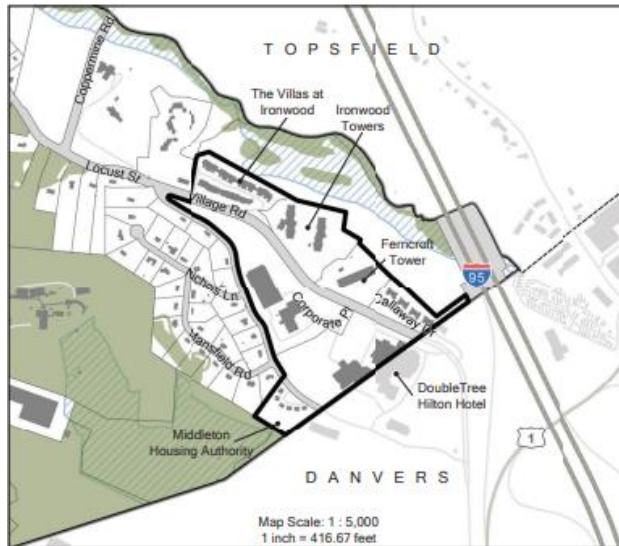
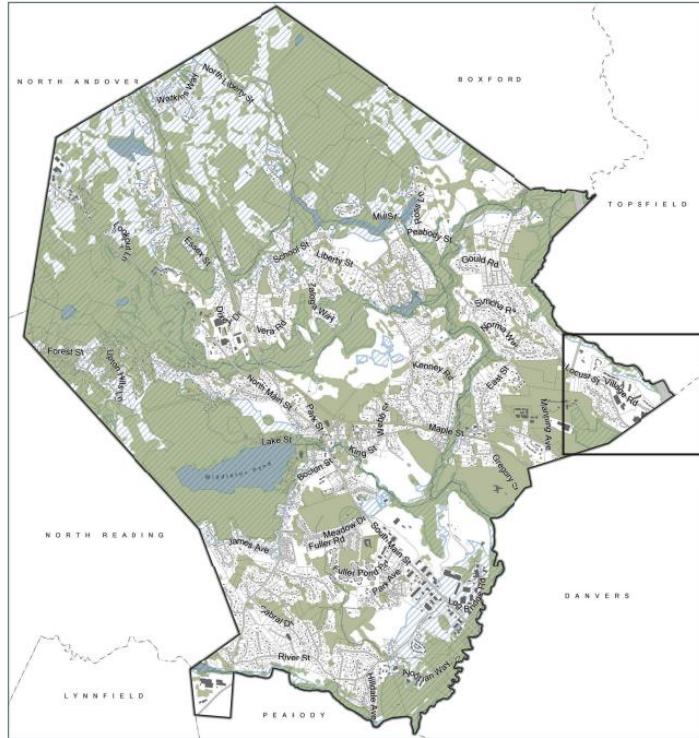
The Planning Board sponsored two public meetings – one in November 2023 and one in January 2024. In addition, a public hearing was held on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The focus of these meetings was to develop a plan that would meet minimum compliance while also minimizing any impact to Middleton with traffic and rural feel being paramount.

## **What was the recommendation of the Planning Board?**

Based on citizen input, the goal was to identify the least intrusive way to implement this law in Middleton. Ultimately it was determined that by placing this area along the existing Interstate Highway Business Zone near I-95 in the easternmost corner of town, Middleton would satisfy the requirements of this law in a way that significantly minimizes the impact to Middleton without jeopardizing future grant funding. A detailed map of this proposed area is included on the next page.

## **MBTA ZONING**

# ARTICLE 23



## MBTA ZONING

# **TOWN OF MIDDLETON**

## **2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING (ATM)**



A pre-Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Flint Public Library.

Additional information pertaining to Annual Town Meeting  
and the FY2025 budget can be found at [MiddletonMA.gov](http://MiddletonMA.gov)

**TUESDAY, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 AT 7:00PM**

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