

**Board of Selectmen
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545**

**NOTICE OF BALLOT QUESTIONS
Presidential & Special Town Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

**Questions concerning voting matters may be directed to the
Office of the Town Clerk at 508-841-8507**

**Questions concerning the publication of this notice may be directed to the
Office of the Board of Selectmen at 508-841-8504**

Note: Details on Question 1 and Question 2 are sent to voters by the Secretary of the Commonwealth

**Presidential & Special Town Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2020
Polls Open at 7:00 AM and Close at 8:00 PM
Visit www.shrewsburyma.gov or call Town Clerk
for precinct information**

Pursuant to Chapter 427 of the Acts of 2006, you are hereby receiving the following information concerning the local ballot questions to appear on the November 3, 2020 Election Ballot: (1) the full text of the questions; (2) a fair and concise summary of the questions, including a 1- sentence statement describing the effect of a yes or no vote, prepared by the town counsel of the town; and (3) arguments for and against the questions written by principal proponents and opponents.

BALLOT QUESTION # 3

Shall the Town of Shrewsbury be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond(s) issued in order to construct and equip a police station on property located at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA, including the costs of architectural, engineering, and site work, abatement of hazardous materials and demolition services relative to existing buildings on the site, and payment of all other costs and expenses incidental or related thereto?

YES

NO

FAIR AND CONCISE SUMMARY OF QUESTION #3

Summary: In 1980 the voters of the Commonwealth adopted a referendum that became G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C, but is more commonly known as "Proposition 2 ½".

Proposition 2 ½ limits the tax levy of cities and towns. The tax levy is the total amount that can be raised by taxation. Proposition 2 ½ allows voters of a municipality to exempt from its provisions the amounts required to pay debt service expenses associated with a bond (or bonds) issued for a specific project. This authorization expires once the project so authorized is paid for. This process is called a Debt Exclusion which is a temporary tax

levy for a specific purpose, and not an Override, which is a permanent increase in the levy limit.

The present question seeks to exempt from the provision of Proposition 2 ½ the amounts required to pay for bonds to be issued to fund the construction, equipping and furnishing of a new police station, to repair and replace the Town's public safety radio system, and all other costs incidental or related thereto (collectively, the "Project"). The new police station will be constructed on the site of the existing police station, commonly known as the municipal campus, located at 100 Maple Avenue.

The Project requires a bond authorization in the amount of \$42,000,000. On September 29, 2020, the Project will be presented to a Special Town Meeting for an appropriation of that sum and for an authorization to borrow to meet the appropriation, which authorization will be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town on the ballot question.

A "YES" vote will allow the Town to exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2 ½ the amounts required to pay the debt service expenses associated with bonds issued in order to undertake and complete the Project;

A "NO" vote will not allow the Town to exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2 ½ the amounts required to pay the debt service expenses associated with bonds to be issued in order to undertake and complete the Project

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST QUESTION #3 AS REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED TO YOU UNDER G. L. 427 OF THE ACTS OF 2006: *These arguments have been prepared solely by the ballot question committees for each side. These committees were organized specifically to influence the outcome of the vote on the question and are printed as submitted.*

Argument FOR Question 3

Written by Michael Hale, 8 Wesleyan Street; Advisory Committee Chair, Community Supporters for Public Safety

The Police Station was built in 1972 and faces significant structural and infrastructure system challenges. The extent of disrepair and the inadequacy of the existing facility renders a new building the fiscally responsible decision. The Public Safety Emergency Communication System used by Police, Fire, SELCO and DPW is 25-years old. Parts are no longer manufactured to maintain it and the low frequency leads to poor coverage in certain areas of town and dead spots where communication is unable to occur, compromising public safety.

Why is a new building the best answer for Shrewsbury taxpayers?

- It provides a long-term solution. The building system deficiencies and infrastructure needs, including HVAC, roof, windows, life-safety and handicap accessibility, requires major renovations and compliance with the current codes, making the project fiscally infeasible.
- Replacement of the critical Public Safety Communication System is an investment in the safety of our first responders and residents of Shrewsbury.

- The new building will include a joint dispatch center allowing for emergency calls for Police, Fire, SELCO and DPW to be handled seamlessly in one central location.
- With our AAA bond rating, we can borrow money at a 1.9% interest rate, the lowest of any capital project to date.
- Failure to address the needs of the current police station and emergency communication system through a debt exclusion will result in costly short-term repairs using funds from the operating budget, leaving less funding for other municipal departments and our schools.

Please vote YES Tuesday, November 3rd. For more information visit www.Support4PS.com.

Argument AGAINST Question 3

Written by Town Counsel in accordance with G.L. 427 of the Acts of 2006

Town officials propose to spend an estimated \$42 Million to construct and equip a new police station. The project would be funded by a Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion, which, if approved, will enable the Town to assess local property taxes in excess of the levy limits imposed by state law.

The average single family home in Shrewsbury has an assessed value of \$481,400. If the proposed debt exclusion for a new police station is approved, it will result in an estimated increase of \$212 in property taxes on the average single family home, beginning in Fiscal Year 2022. Shrewsbury property owners will be subject to these additional taxes until the police station project is paid off, which is estimated to occur in 2042. This increase will be in addition to the other capital projects of the Town that are currently being paid for by Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion assessments.

A “No” vote will prevent this project and the corresponding increase in local property taxes.

BALLOT QUESTION # 4

Shall the Town of Shrewsbury accept sections 3 to 7, inclusive, of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body (Town Meeting) on August 8, 2020, a summary of which appears below?

YES

NO

FAIR AND CONCISE SUMMARY OF QUESTION #4

Summary: If accepted, Sections 3 to 7 of Chapter 44B of the General Laws of Massachusetts, also known as the Community Preservation Act, will enable the Town to establish a dedicated funding source which may be used to (1) acquire and preserve open space, which includes land for the protection of public drinking water supplies, well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, wetlands, farm land, forest land, scenic areas and other conservation areas, and land for recreational use, such as parks, playgrounds, trails, and athletic fields (2) acquire and restore historic resources, such as buildings and sites; and (3) create low and moderate income housing for individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing.

In Shrewsbury, the funding source for these Community Preservation Act purposes will be a surcharge of one percent (1%) on the annual property tax assessed on real property, beginning in Fiscal Year 2022, and by annual distributions made by the state from a trust fund established by the Act. The state trust fund benefits only municipalities

that have accepted the Community Preservation Act.

The following exemptions will apply to the 1% surcharge on real property taxes: (1) property owned and occupied as a domicile by any person who qualifies for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the Town, as defined in Section 2 of said Act; (2) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential real property; and (3) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of class three, commercial property, and class four, industrial property, as defined in General Laws Chapter 59, Section 2A. A taxpayer receiving a regular property tax abatement or exemption will also receive a pro rata reduction in the surcharge.

If accepted, a Community Preservation Committee will be established by Town bylaw, to be a public body composed of local citizens. The Community Preservation Committee will be responsible to study the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding community preservation. The Community Preservation Committee shall make recommendations on the use of funds for any of the purposes listed above; all expenditures must be approved by vote of Town Meeting. In each fiscal year, at least 10% of the annual revenue collected under the Act must be appropriated or reserved for future spending by the Town for acquisitions and initiatives in each of the categories of allowable community preservation purposes: (1) open space (including recreational land), (2) historic resources, and (3) community housing.

A "YES" vote will approve the question; the Community Preservation Act will be accepted if a majority of the voters voting on the ballot question vote Yes.

A "NO" vote will not approve the question; the Community Preservation Act will not be accepted if a majority of the voters voting on the ballot question vote No.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST QUESTION #4 AS REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED TO YOU UNDER G. L. 427 OF THE ACTS OF 2006: *These arguments have been prepared solely by the ballot question committees for each side. These committees were organized specifically to influence the outcome of the vote on the question and are printed as submitted.*

Argument FOR Question 4

Written by Jason Molina, 31 Wachusett Avenue; Campaign Manager, Community Preservation Shrewsbury

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) provides critical funding to save our disappearing **open space**, improve our **parks/playgrounds and athletic fields**, preserve our remaining **historical assets**, and provide **community housing**. These quality-of-life projects are rarely funded given necessary priorities for education, public safety, and infrastructure.

The surcharge for the average single-family home would be \$47 per year starting July 2021, but there are **exemptions for qualifying homeowners. If you do not pay real estate taxes, there is no charge to you.** Monies raised can only fund CPA projects. Shrewsbury will decide what projects to fund through a local committee and town meeting approval.

The state provides matching funds but only to towns that have adopted CPA. Last year Shrewsbury would have received a **24% return on investment!** **A YES vote ensures Shrewsbury gets its fair share and local control of this state money.**

CPA has been around since 2000 and not one of the 177 communities that adopted it has ever revoked it. The state continues to pay out matching funds. Last year, the Baker-Polito administration signed an increase to the statewide CPA Trust Fund.

Shrewsbury deserves a chance to maintain its historic New England character, essential open space and recreation, and help those in need stay in Shrewsbury. **Vote YES for the future of Shrewsbury.**

Sample FY20 Surcharge Exemption Income Limits

Property owned and occupied by	Household Size:1	Household Size:2	Household Size:3
Low-income owners	\$54,992	\$62,848	\$70,704
Senior (60+) owners	\$68,740	\$78,560	\$88,380

Learn more: **CommunityPreservationShrewsbury.org**

Argument AGAINST Question 4

Written by Benjamin W. Tartaglia Sr.; 19 Kenilworth Road

The CPA proposal is a financially **irresponsible** kind of Proposition 2-1/2 operational override. It automatically raises the override amount every year. It is the wrong method, at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons and with wrong assumptions. The Project Approval Process is flawed and guarantees the Board of Selectmen, (BOS) has the final say on which projects are put before Town Meeting. CPA concentrates more power in a few elected officials, who control the makeup of the committee, which makes recommendations back to the Selectmen. The committee will contain 5 department heads appointed by the BOS plus 4 citizens. The BOS therefore controls the voting majority of the committee. The initial 1% operational override real estate SURTAX can be raised to 3%. One town recently raised their percentage. "Matching" State funds does NOT mean the State will match our tax dollars dollar for dollar. The proposal estimates the town will receive \$500,000. BUT, it is NOT guaranteed. It is a VARIABLE distribution.

The proposal is **financially irresponsible**. The COVID virus is on the rebound. Our schools' finances are uncertain. We don't know when we will be back to work. Family finances are under historic pressures. The state's revenues are plunging. Meals, gasoline, excise and income taxes are all down. The proposal should be postponed until our finances improve.

Finally, the proposal's objectives can be met using a process already available, namely, obtaining ten signatures and placing a specific question on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. **Vote "no"**.