

Beth and Darren Foley
8 Valley View Drive
North Grafton, Massachusetts 01536

May 12, 2020

Dear Select Board,

Please read this letter during the Correspondence section of your next meeting.

I am writing to express my deep concern with the apparent lack of support the Select Board has given to promoting the upcoming override vote. This override vote was put on the ballot after many months of meetings in which the school department illustrated, very plainly, that every possible step had been taken to increase the schools' revenue but that the schools could still not maintain the same services without more funding. Covid-19 didn't change this. If anything, it makes the picture for the schools even more grim.

As a mother of two young school children, one in First Grade and the other only about to enter Kindergarten, I am frightened by the prospect of their education being cut down because of a lack of funding. Some of your children are already through school, or mostly there, and they already received the benefit of a sufficiently-funded education. Please don't now turn your backs on those that are waiting in the wings. It will be a sad day for our children if this override does not pass, or if it is, for some reason, not put to voters in June. You've seen the detrimental compounding effect that Dr. Cummings illustrated when schools like ours don't have the funding they need. With increased class sizes at a time when we should be shrinking them, taking away sports and arts, compounded with less money from school choice, increased costs of special education, and possibly less money from the state as well, without an override, our schools are in real trouble.

Select Board, please stand up for the children of Grafton. They are the future of this town, and they are our greatest responsibility.

Thank you,



Beth Foley



Joann Duncan <duncanj@grafton-ma.gov>

[Town of Grafton MA] Where is our leadership on the town budget? (Sent by Jeremy C Graves, jcgraves71@yahoo.com)

1 message

Contact form at Town of Grafton MA <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Tue, May 12, 2020 at 11:57 AM

Reply-To: jcgraves71@yahoo.com

To: BOS@grafton-ma.gov

Hello Select Board,

Jeremy C Graves (jcgraves71@yahoo.com) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/contact>) at Town of Grafton MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/edit>.

Message:

The following is an open letter to the town and the Select Board. "to be read as correspondence"

We should be angry about the town's budget situation, but let's direct that anger it where it belongs. The greatest failures lie with our town's leadership, past and present.

Here comes an override vote with the town needing more money for basic services at the same time we are all figuring out how to live with less. The timing of this need could not be worse, but that does not take away the need.

The root of our problems are slow-rising tax revenues, rapidly rising costs (inflation for things like health care, not just buying more stuff), and a recalculation of the state aid formula that wickedly short-changed communities like Grafton.

The schools are not "the problem". By any measure, Grafton has managed to establish a high quality school system at a remarkably low cost per student, generally among the lowest in the state. This performance has made Grafton a highly desirable town to live in and it has attracted students from other communities who chose to be educated in Grafton and for which Grafton is compensated. Furthermore, the communities supporting our various schools are part of the foundation of the town community itself. What the school district has achieved over the last 10+ years is remarkable, and any suggestion that careless spending by the schools is the root of the current issue is difficult to take seriously.

If you have owned a home, or put any children through the Grafton Public Schools in the last 15 years you have directly benefited from the skill and dedication of the schools, and you got that at a steep discount. Property values are higher in Grafton because of our schools. Costs have been among the lowest in the state on a per-student basis. Now that discount is fading.

This override is needed to replace funds that have been taken away by the state and by inflation. Rejecting this override means enduring deep damaging cuts that will degrade our schools, threaten local services and will harm the entire community. Once the cuts start to hit the schools, school choice students will look elsewhere and they will take their funds with them. Any surpluses have already been trimmed from the system. If we force the schools

to make significant cuts, those cuts would come directly out of the classrooms.

The issue is not limited to schools, either. All town departments are under pressure from the same issues listed above. This is a town issue, and we did see most of this coming.

One member of the Select Board has been agitating on this budget time bomb for YEARS. Other town leaders (including both members of SB up for re-election) have dismissed or criticized prior concern as alarmist. Our Town Administrator (whose contract was recently renewed before it was needed, with generous raises AND a pending severance bonus, by the same group of Select Board members) previously professed not to see a problem. Leadership has also embraced a "Not In My Back Yard" mindset with regard to new business licensing that is baffling and the business agreements it does conclude languish unused and un-taxed. In short, they have done NOTHING.

Yet a majority within town leadership are trying to get as far away as possible from the override topic, to offer empty assurances and zero action. Even worse, they champion wasteful and unnecessary spending (Superpark, TA Extension) exactly when this town can afford it the least.

There is no painless option here. Tax hikes are hard in a good year, and this year has been truly awful. Yet the need remains for us to pull together as a community and protect what we want Grafton to be.

We have important choices to make:

- Do we hold our town leaders accountable for their inaction in the face of a crises that was predicted years in advance?
- Do we find new leadership with sound financial backgrounds who can attack the town issues directly instead of hiding or misdirecting?
- Do we direct town leadership to stop spending money on "nice to have" projects and to expand aggressively our commercial tax base?
- Do we invest in this town to offset this current financial storm and to provide a sound foundation into the future?
- Can we unite to protect the character, the present and the future of this town?

I sure hope so.

Jeremy C Graves
4 Whitney St

Date: May 11, 2020
To: Select Board of Grafton
From: John & Maria Murdock
59 Elliot Trail, Grafton MA

I'd like to ask that this letter be read aloud at the correspondence section of the May 12th Select Board meeting.

We are asking for the Select Board's support in the passage of the proposition 2-1/2 override vote. Maria and I have been residents of Grafton for almost 20 years. Raising our family. Supporting elections. Supporting town improvements. Supporting the growth of this wonderful town. And supporting many of you. We ask you to do the right thing and invest in the future of Grafton.

The children in our community deserve a great education

- Grafton spends 25% less per child than the state average (this is for teachers, services, facilities, sports, programs, school materials, etc.-)
- Sutton, Northbridge, Millbury, Mendon-Upton all spend more than Grafton on a per child basis
- Without the 2-1/2 override, Grafton will need to cut teachers and services and fall further to the bottom of the state

To be this far behind the state and surrounding towns...is appalling. If you believe in the future of Grafton, it starts with the families and children that live here.

The residents in our community deserve great town services

- Grafton's funding for its police and fire department is embarrassingly low as compared to other small towns. For example, Grafton spends ~50% of what Holden spends and a measly ~22% of what Bellingham spends on fire department services.
- Grafton residents of all ages deserve a town that provides public safety and essential capabilities to residents when they need them.
- Relying on surrounding towns and volunteers is not a long-term strategy for Grafton

Vote yes to the proposition 2-1/2 override and support our town public safety services properly.

This will not be a big cost burden to our residents.

- By Voting Yes to pass the proposition 2-1/2 override, the average household tax bill will increase by only \$120 each year...on average.
- That's \$10/month
- 32 cents per day
- On average means a good majority of residents will pay less

Grafton takes care of each other

Grafton is a proud and beautiful community of hard-working families and close-knit friends. COVID and the current economic climate has been hard on everyone, but I've seen Grafton residents rally together to help one other. Maria and I chose Grafton because of the people, the community, and the small-town nature. Small towns take care of each other. We owe it to resident's young and old to make sure Grafton stays a beautiful community.

We hope you will continue to support the proposition 2 ½ override, and encourage residents of Grafton to Vote yes on June 23rd.

Thank you

John and Maria Murdock



Joann Duncan <duncanj@grafton-ma.gov>

[Town of Grafton MA] Silver Lake Beach (Sent by Lydia M Bogar, Toehead8@verizon.net)

1 message

Contact form at Town of Grafton MA <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Tue, May 12, 2020 at 9:38 AM

Reply-To: Toehead8@verizon.net

To: BOS@grafton-ma.gov

Hello Select Board,

Lydia M Bogar (Toehead8@verizon.net) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/contact>) at Town of Grafton MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/edit>.

Message:

Has the Board discussed the opening of the beach with the Board of Health, and/or state DPH? It seems presumptuous to hire staff and expand money on this in light of our current health issues.

What is the budget for the Beach specifically for the remainder of FY20? The money saved on closing the beach could be redirected to schools and other essential services.

May 11, 2020

From the desk of Elizabeth Anderson Spinney
71 Potter Hill Rd.
Grafton, Massachusetts 01519

Dear Select Board,

After watching the Select Board meeting of May 5, 2020, not to mention the many Board meetings prior to that, I felt compelled to write this letter that I ask you to read as correspondence at your next Select Board meeting.

First of all, I was appalled by the reading last week of a letter clothed as “correspondence” personally attacking your fellow Board member, Mr. Prisby. Ed can tell you, we’re not exactly best friends. We’ve had more disagreements over the past several years than we have had friendly conversation, so this should not be brushed off as someone just defending a friend. Frankly, however, I was embarrassed for this town that the Board actually allowed this letter to be read as if it were town business. The Board has exercised discretion at other times in choosing what public input is meeting-appropriate, and this was a bad call.

This was not a letter criticizing the decisions or other actions of the Select Board, but a personal attack on one person by someone who apparently got into a heated disagreement with him on Facebook. How did this letter relate to town business? Did the Board actually consider this to be important information for the town, or was it used as a chance to fire shots at a long-time adversary? Either way, I encourage the Board to refocus its attention on the more serious issues facing us.

Second, as Chair of the 2020 Yes Grafton Committee, I was perplexed by the interrogation of Peter Carlson as a result of his participation in a volunteer committee outside of his role on the Board. First, I am at a loss to determine why this was even brought up in the first place. Everything a Board member does in his or her private life is not Board business, nor is it your place to question them about it. I’m sure Mr. Carlson is more than happy to talk about Yes Grafton’s important mission (of supporting the schools and fire department) any time, but the way he was questioned last week was a bit much. You used excerpts taken from the meeting to interrogate Mr. Carlson, asking why he didn’t speak about alternative plans when that had absolutely no relevance, asking him to further explain certain numbers that other people presented during the meeting. When, in the history of our town, has a sitting member ever been grilled like this about one of his volunteer groups? Why were you not instead offering your help, asking Mr. Carlson to share how voters can learn more, or perhaps thanking him for his efforts?

Regardless, Mr. Carlson happily answered your questions. Our Yes Grafton informational meetings are public, and have been widely promoted. We welcome anyone’s participation, but not all of you have chosen to get involved, which is fine. But frankly, unless you want to join

our committee to offer your help, I see no reason that we should share our presentations with the Board, as you requested. Our presentations will be made available to you along with the rest of the general public when they are ready, not before. If you want to see them sooner, however, we would happily consider an invitation to speak at a Board meeting.

In addition, since the Board seems interested in learning more about Yes Grafton, I gladly share with you that it is a ballot initiative committee assembled to support the passage of the override on June 23rd. We believe that, even in, if not *especially* in, times such as this pandemic we are living through, our schools and first responders are critical infrastructures and need more than we're able to provide under Proposition 2 ½ to provide the services our town depends on. They are the rocks on which the foundation of our town is built, and without them, we will crumble. Our mission is to provide as much information as we can to voters to help them make their decision at the polls, and of course, our hope is that they will vote yes, as we believe this funding is critical to keeping our town afloat. To further the mission of providing information to voters, we have compiled a great knowledge base through our membership and participants.

At the March 5, 2020 Tri-Comm meeting when you put the override on the ballot, I encouraged you all to work together to get it passed. You mentioned, many weeks ago, having an outreach meeting, but that hasn't happened. So, it is up to us to do it for you. Even if you are not able to help inform voters about the override, however, you could at least be reminding voters about the new voting procedures, including the lifted restrictions on absentee ballots, and how they can easily download a request form online. I was surprised to see you gloss over this at the last meeting when you had previously been provided specific information and a plan for execution by the Town Clerk. Why just leave it to private citizens, as I've seen in many cases, to spread the word?

In short, I'm asking you to step up, set aside the political games during this period of uncertainty and act like the leaders you, as members of the Grafton Select Board, ought to be.

Thank you very much,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Spinney".

Elizabeth Anderson Spinney, Esq.
71 Potter Hill Rd.



GRAFTON
Massachusetts

Joann Duncan <duncanj@grafton-ma.gov>

[Town of Grafton MA] WARRANT ARTICLE 39. CITIZEN'S PETITION (Sent by MICHAEL MCCANN, mwmccann1@verizon.net)

1 message

Contact form at Town of Grafton MA <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Wed, May 6, 2020 at 9:56 PM

Reply-To: mwmccann1@verizon.net

To: BOS@grafton-ma.gov

Hello Select Board,

MICHAEL MCCANN (mwmccann1@verizon.net) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/contact>) at Town of Grafton MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/edit>.

Message:

WRT: ARTICLE 39. CITIZEN'S PETITION – ROAD ACCEPTANCE

https://www.grafton-ma.gov/sites/graftonma/files/uploads/select_board_meeting_packet_may_5_2020_amended.pdf

"To see if the Town will vote to accept the road known as High Point Drive and associated easements, recorded in the Worcester County Registry of Deeds at Plan Book 850, Plan 64, or take any other action relative thereto."

Is there a way to know who submitted this Citizens Petition, does it need to be a resident of Grafton? Is this the normal way a roadway and development is conveyed to the town? As a resident at [96 High Point Drive](#), watching the YouTube Select Board meeting is the first I've heard of this. It was my understanding there were conditions to be met before the town would accept the road. Have those conditions been met and as concerned resident is there a way I can see what those conditions were and their current status of completion? Recent work on the drainage looks like it is already eroding.

Thank you
Michael McCann
[96 High Point Drive](#)



Joann Duncan <duncanj@grafton-ma.gov>

[Town of Grafton MA] Override (Sent by Brook Padgett, Brook.Padgett@aol.com)

1 message

Contact form at Town of Grafton MA <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 2:05 PM

Reply-To: Brook.Padgett@aol.com

To: BOS@grafton-ma.gov

Hello Select Board,

Brook Padgett (Brook.Padgett@aol.com) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/contact>) at Town of Grafton MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/edit>.

Message:

The decision by the Select Board to move forward with the school committee request to place a Proposition 2½ override on the ballot at this time is puzzling. While there may be a time to debate if a 4 million dollar override (2.5 million for the schools with an additional of 1.5 million for police and fire) is appropriate; now is not the time as we are in the middle of a global pandemic and the economic situation of the citizens of Grafton and the Commonwealth is extremely uncertain. Grafton approved an override in 2014 for 1.5 million for the roads and 2 million for the schools and since 2014 the school budget has increased 20% (6.2 million) and the municipal 9% (\$863,500). The decision to ask the voters to decide on an override now is even more perplexing as has been reported the difference between the town and school budget is less than \$250,000.00 and will result in the loss of only one teaching position. Grafton has in the past supported its obligation to fund municipal service and schools budgets; however those in leadership must make decisions with ALL Grafton citizens in mind and whether an override seemed like a good idea a few months ago, things have changed. This is not the time to ask taxpayers to shoulder an additional tax burden as many of our neighbors are out of work or are uncertain of their economic future. Let us get through this crisis and next year when the future is less uncertain we can have a reasonable discussion on the needs of both the municipal and school budgets and whether either should be requesting additional funding going forward.

Hello Select Board,

Teri Turgeon (Teri.Turgeon@Perkins.org) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/contact>) at Town of Grafton MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14856/edit>.

Message:

5/8/2020

To Members of the Select Board:

I am asking that this letter be read into the record, as well as attached to the BOS meeting minutes for 5/12/2020.

I want to say that as I express my concerns to you as a board, I do so as a constituent, as a taxpayer, as a parent, and as a former school committee member who served this town for 10 years.

I am appalled that we are going forward with a vote for an override for this June.

My understanding is that the school is faced with cutting 2 teachers. Over my 10 years, we faced many years with cuts, and we found ways to make it work. While some may call this "kicking the can down the road", I call it learning to live within your means. In fact, there was one year we got a 0% increase in our school budget. During those years, we were even leaner; we didn't have instructional coaches, reading specialists or co-teachers.

I don't know how you all budget for your households, but in my house, if I can't afford an improvement, then it gets put off until I can afford it.

The Grafton Select Board is asking the residents in this town for a 4.5M override. This is happening at a time when constituents can't or haven't been able to fully participate, given the COVID crisis. Sure, there are those who are in favor it and they are mobilizing, but what about all of your other constituents who aren't getting information at this time. If this was during normal times, you would be going to the senior center and speaking on it, but who is telling them information now?

How can you conceivably in good faith, bring together people to a Town Meeting? What about all of those special populations that are at risk of the virus, who won't participate?

How can you as leaders of this town, put this before us and ask us to vote on

this? We are facing a 20% unemployment rate. I know directly of Grafton families that are facing rent crisis', I know folks who are faced with losing their jobs. We don't even know if and how schools will reopen in Sept and what that will look like? How can we even think about an override right now?

I compel you as Grafton's executive board to lead now, don't just put it to voters and let it be a case of whoever just shows up is who wins.

Lead, this is why we elected you. I urge you to take off the warrant the override and wait until the fall to re-look at this again, when we have a better understanding of the fiscal outlook during COVID, and can exercise our right to fully participate.

Respectfully submitted,

Teri Turgeon
17 Nelson St.

Colleen Roy <colleenmcintyrerdh@gmail.com>

Sat, May 9, 10:11 AM
(3 days ago)

to me, Jennifer, Donna, Doreen, Edward, Peter

Good Morning Select Board

Although I am a member of the Finance Committee, I am reaching out to you on my own behalf. I am concerned about the FY21 budget. At your April 21st meeting the Board was not in agreement about the use of stabilization to close the \$190,000 shortfall in the FY21 budget. According to the meeting minutes the decision was made to discuss this issue further at the next meeting.

I wanted to call Boards attention to the FY21 Capital Budget. Specifically, the “Replace Truck 44 – 5 ton – currently 16 year old truck” being funded with free cash for \$250,000. In January the Town announced they were awarded a grant to fund about 80% of the cost of this truck totaling \$182,040. In a release from the Town dated January 2, 2020 the Town indicated that “using the grant funds for the new truck, Grafton will be able to reallocate those dollars to complete other projects off the FY21 Capital Improvement Plan.”

The current FY21 Capital Budget does not reflect the changes in the January 2 memo from the town. It still has the truck being replaced using \$250,000 of free cash. I am asking the Board to consider using the free cash that is now available by this grant to close the \$190,000 shortfall in the FY21 budget. Allowing the stabilization account to remain intact for emergencies or the FY22 shortfall we will face if the override fails.

I have included both the FY21 Capital Budget as posted online and a copy of the January 2, 2020 release from the town announcing the grant.

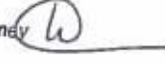
Thank you
Colleen Roy

DEPT	PROJECT	COST	Funding Source
FIRE DEPARTMENT			
	Fire Pumper/Tanker Lease* - expires 8/1/2025	\$99,577	Free Cash
	Replace Engine 3 with Foam System* - expires 3/15/2026	\$103,280	Free Cash
	Replace M-2 AWD Utility Vehicle	\$100,000	Free Cash
POLICE DEPARTMENT			
	L Scan 500 Palm Print Livescan	\$17,000	Free Cash
PUBLIC WORKS			
	Vehicle 47 - 1 Ton Dump Truck currently 14 years old	\$75,000	Free Cash
	Replace Truck 44 – 5 Ton - currently 16 year old truck	\$250,000	Free Cash
	Replace Truck 28 Cemetery – 1-Ton dump with plow – 12 years old	75,000	Perpetual Care – Sale of Lots
SEWER			
	Replace F-250 with Plow	\$45,000	Retained Earnings
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
	Phase I Part II - Electrical Upgrades to Municipal Center**	\$50,000	Free Cash
	Lease on Dell Server * - Expires 6/30/2022	\$10,800	Free Cash
	Replace Council on Aging Van – 2013 14-passenger van	\$62,000	Free Cash
SCHOOLS			
	Access Road Modifications GHS	\$50,000	Free Cash
	Tile Floor Replacement MSES	\$36,000	Free Cash
	Tile Floor Replacement NSES	\$35,000	Free Cash
	Renovate Tech Classroom GMS	\$40,000	Free Cash
	Classroom Carpet Replacement NSES	\$19,000	Free Cash
	Carpet Replacement MSES	\$58,000	Free Cash
	Carpet Replacement SGES	\$73,000	Free Cash
	Concrete Pad for lunches GMS	\$22,000	Free Cash
	Modify Guidance/Nurse GMS	\$22,000	Free Cash
TOTAL			\$1,125,470



**OFFICE OF THE
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519
(508) 839-5335

Town Administrator: *Timothy P. McInerney* 
mcinerneyt@grafton-ma.gov
www.grafton-ma.gov

January 2, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grafton Receives Grant Award from State for Purchase of New Truck:

The Town of Grafton is excited to announce that it has applied for and received a grant from the Commonwealth as a part of the VW Settlement Open Solicitation initiative. The Baker-Polito Administration has awarded \$7.5 million in grants for 98 projects that will support the funding for various capital projects and items throughout the state. Grafton will purchase a new 6-wheel dump truck with a plow and integrated salter/sander. With the \$182,040 awarded, the grant will cover approximately 80% of the cost of the truck. This truck was initially scheduled to be replaced as a part of the FY2021 Capital Improvement Plan.

Using the grant funds for the new truck, Grafton will be able to reallocate those dollars to complete other projects off the FY2021 Capital Improvement Plan.

Below are photos of the existing 16-year old truck that will be replaced.

