

Three myths

About Williamstown's future

1. If we don't vote for this bond issue, town taxes will go up.

REALITY: The bond issue commits the town to enormous financial risks. Cheaper ways exist to provide high school water, which do not require a new water main.

2. A 16-inch, \$3.4 million water main is "free".

REALITY: Direct and indirect costs are uncertain. These include: Potential construction overruns; pump station costs; and re-engineering a 2 1/2 to 6-inch sewer line.

3. There's a water emergency at Mt. Greylock high school.

REALITY: The state says the school can use bottled water for 2-3 years safely. Viable, long-term options, which may qualify for up to 100% state funding, are under study.

Three facts

About Williamstown's future

1. Solving problems at Mount Greylock AND preserving the character of our town can be accomplished without obligating us to the risks of this \$875,000 bond.
2. Decisions made with incomplete, perhaps misleading, information about alternatives and their costs are bound to produce unanticipated consequences.
3. Mount Greylock's water needs should be addressed in the context of long-term planning for the building. Any major renovation would be financed with state aid and a Lanesborough contribution.

Three actions

For Williamstown's future

1. **Watch "A Williamstown Community Forum",**
RERUNS: Tues., Nov. 30, 8:30 p.m. and Wed., Dec. 1, 8 p.m.
on Adelphia Cable's WilliNet public access, Channel 17, 8 p.m.
2. **Read a special White Paper** and background briefings at the Williamstown library, at <http://www.newshare.com/williamstown/>, call 458-8001 or email whitepaper@newshare.com for a copy.
3. **Vote at Town Meeting**, Thurs., Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m. at Mount Greylock Regional High School. **ARRIVE AT 5:30 P.M. FOR BEST SEATS!**
Go to www.newshare.com/williamstown/ for links to updates.

This message distributed as a community service by:

Williamstown Citizens for Informed Decisions

... a informal study group including Henry Art, Anita Barker, Kathleen Casey, Leith Colen, Deborah Dane, Bill Densmore, Richard DeVeaux, Patrick Dunlavy, Joan Edwards, Sarah Gardner, Jenny & Steve Gerrard, Carol & Sherwood Guernsey, Elaine Hantman, Lee Harrison, Guy Hedreen, Amy Herring, Andy Hogeland, Dan Holland, Betsy Johnson, E.J. Johnson, Sandy & Tom Jorling, Elizabeth Kolbert, Steve Levin, Zane Lumelsky, Ann McCallum, Liz McGowan, Margot & Bill Moomaw, Elaine & Steve Moynahan, Chris Newbound, Nancy Nysten, Wendy Penner, Maribeth Pomerantz, Dave Richardson, Elizabeth & Sam Smith, David Smith, Susan Scheneski, Brenda Smith, Gwen & Dick Steege, Beth Stomberg, Dinny & Mark Taylor, Linda & Eric White, Heather Williams ... and a growing list of citizens concerned about Williamstown's and MGRHS's future (check <http://www.newshare.com/williamstown/handbill.htm> for the latest list)

WILLIAMSTOWN CITIZENS FOR INFORMED DECISIONS WHITE PAPER EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(see full text of white paper at http://www.newshare.com/williamstown/white_paper.htm)

Q: WHY IS THIS BOND ISSUE BEING PROPOSED?

A: This bond issue is being proposed to facilitate two major developments. The first is a new building for the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, currently located on the Clark Art Institute campus. The second is a 68-unit expansion of the Sweetbrook retirement community. The bond would allow the town to construct a 16-inch water main along U.S. Route 7 (Cold Spring Road). This main would also provide Mount Greylock Regional High School with a new source of water.

Q: ALL I CARE ABOUT IS GETTING CLEAN WATER FOR MT GREYLOCK. IS THE WATER MAIN A GOOD WAY TO DO THAT?

A: The water main will cost at least \$3.4 million, and probably take at least two years to build. There are several less costly and less disruptive ways to get water to the high school. These options (explored in some detail in the white paper) include:

1. Utilizing Wells Already Drilled on School Property by the Clark
2. Drilling a New Well
3. Filtering the Water
4. Tying into Sweetwood, Waubeeka Springs, or Cricket Creek Farm Water Supplies

Q: WHAT ABOUT FIRE SUPPRESSION?

A: If, at some point in the future, the school undertakes a major building project, it will have to install sprinklers in at least some areas. A project of this magnitude would receive significant state funding, and the remaining costs would be divided proportionately between Williamstown and Lanesborough. The existing building does not need sprinklers, and adding a water main would not add sprinklers.

Q: I KEEP HEARING THAT THIS PROJECT THREATENS THE CHARACTER OF OUR TOWN. CAN'T WE USE ZONING TO PROTECT THE SCENIC ROUTE 7 CORRIDOR?

A: With a large-capacity, extendable waterline in place, that may be harder. Currently most of the Route 7 corridor is zoned for 2.5-acre lots. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has not upheld 2.5 acre zoning as constitutionally permissible if the large lot zoning requirement is in place *only* to preserve land in its natural state or maintain the town's bucolic character, especially if town water and sewer are in place. Williamstown places itself in jeopardy of losing its 2.5 acre zoning if it installs the 16" water main.

Q: I KEEP HEARING THAT THIS WATER LINE IS "FREE." IS THAT REALLY TRUE?

A: The claim that this water line will be built at no cost to taxpayers is based on many theoretical assumptions, several of which may not hold up in fact. Examples of possible costs – both tangible and intangible - that the town has not accounted for include:

1. Cost-overruns while the project is underway
2. Land takings by eminent domain
3. Engineering errors in estimating impact on 2½ to 6-inch pressure sewer line, causing that line to fail and have to be replaced
4. Underestimating financing cost of \$875,000 bond issue or overestimating water receipts to cover debt service
5. Problems with ledge and stream crossings along the proposed route
6. Litigation associated with the project or lawsuits challenging the Town's zoning by-law
7. Traffic delays and safety hazards on Rte. 7 and Rte. 43 during prolonged construction project
8. Loss of business for establishments along Cold Spring Road
9. Loss of tourist revenue from development of town's scenic gateway
10. Cost of town resources and personnel