**Explaining the Ballot Question on July 25, 2023 Special Election**

Wording of the Ballot Question is as follows:

*Shall the Town of Westport be allowed to assess an additional $3,000,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budgets of the Town and the Public Schools for the fiscal year beginning, July 1, 2023?*

The wording of the ballot question is determined by law.

Explanation of the Ballot Question

The ballot question on the July 25th election asks for a yes or no vote for a $3 million override. It would allow for a $3 million addition to the Property Tax Levy Limit.

Town Administration Plan

The Town Administration proposes to appropriate this $3 million override in increments of $1 million per year over three fiscal years in budgets presented and voted for at Town Meeting.

At the May 2, 2023 Town Meeting, the voters approved Article 6 which set a $1 million override budget for FY24. If the override ballot question passes on July 25th, only that $1 million be added to the operational budget for FY24.

The budgets for FY25 and FY26 will propose to add increments of $1 million each year until the full $3 million is utilized.

Town Meeting must approve those budgets as it did for FY24.

Why is the override proposed in this way?

* The override will enable the Town to start to address the “structural deficit” in the Town’s finances.
* By phasing the override over 3 years, the property tax rate will increase more gradually rather than in one single large increase. The average tax on residences will increase $110 per year over 3 years rather than as a $330 one time increase in FY2024.
* Town meeting will weigh in each year as it did this year on the use of the override funds.