



TOWN OF ASHFIELD
OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD

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Ashfield Lake Dam Borrowing Question Explanation

The Select Board has placed a question on the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election Ballot that pertains to borrowing funds only for the town portion of grants.

Question

Shall the Town of Ashfield be allowed to exempt from the provision two and one half, so called, the amounts required to pay for bonds to be issued in order to pay for the Town's share of the costs pertaining to the Ashfield Lake Dam, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, such project to be carried out by the Town of Ashfield Selectboard, only to be used as the Town share for grants awarded for Ashfield Lake Dam projects.

The Lake Dam (masonry spillway & earthen dam) impounds the 37 acres of water known as Ashfield Lake. The dam is classified by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (hereinafter DCR) as an Intermediate-size, **high** hazard potential dam (Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations 302 CMR 10.00 Dam Safety). The dam is inspected every other year, and as of September 7th, 2012, its condition was downgraded by Tighe & Bond Engineers from "satisfactory" to "fair" (please refer to the 2018 Phase I Inspection/Evaluation Report located at <https://ashfield.org/DocumentCenter/View/4019/2018-Ashfield-Lake-Dam-Inspection-Report-PDF>).

Twenty-one reasons for the downgrade were listed in the executive summary of the report. Failure of the town to recognize these maintenance needs could result in further downgrades and force state-issued consent orders/penalties. Additionally, the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety might not reissue our two-year permit, which could result in strict orders with "hard" timelines and strict performance requirements from the Chief Engineer at the MA DCR. A further downgrade to the "poor" level will increase town costs due to more frequent inspections (every 6 months vs. the current every two years) and will likely affect the town's insurance premiums. It is important that the town continue to show progress in addressing the maintenance as noted in the engineering report.

It is our plan that the Town secure grants to pay for the bulk of required improvements. By means of an example; In FY 2020, we applied and secured a \$34,400 grant offered by the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program. One requirement of that award is that the Town needs to contribute 25% to the State's 75%. Future grant awards may have similar contribution requirements. The town needs to demonstrate that it has the ability and capacity to make its share available.

An affirmative vote on this ballot question will better enable the Town to secure future grant opportunities.