ARTICLE 31. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND - TOWN HALL RESTORATION/REHABILITATION

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate an amount not to exceed $600,000 of Community Preservation Act Funds, as recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, for the purpose of preparing design and construction documents and associated cost estimates for the restoration/rehabilitation of Town Hall. The appropriation is to be allocated to the Historic category, and funded from: $16,335 from Historic Reserves, $212,600 from FY18 Revenue, and $371,065 from Unrestricted Reserves.

Submitted by the Community Preservation Committee. (Majority vote required)

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT: This article requests an appropriation to begin the process of transforming the Town Hall, largely through CPA Historic funds, into the anchor facility of Sudbury's newly revitalized Town Center. This is a significant Town-owned asset upon which very little money has been spent in modern times. In addition, for the 26 years since passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, two of the building's three floors have been closed to the general public. It is hard to love a building that has seen little maintenance and is, in fact, little seen. The eight-member Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee, representing expertise at the least in design, construction, finance and history, and after much investigation envisioned a restored and rehabilitated Town Hall with a small addition. The Committee felt strongly that "[n]ewly available and appealing, and endowed with modern utility… the Town Hall's varied spaces will grow significantly in their use by both government and community entities."

It is anticipated the bulk of future construction costs, will be eligible for CPA funds. At 85 years old, Town Hall meets national criteria as an historic building. Plus it is an enlarged replica of the town's original Town Hall of 1846, and its design was overseen by three now famous architects who happened to be summer or full time residents of Sudbury in 1930. That original Town Hall burned down, but like the current Town Hall, it was uniquely equipped with a fireproof vault, and together they have kept safe some of the best colonial records in America, thus making them still available to be utilized as the basis for the groundbreaking, 1964 Pulitzer Prize winning history book, "Puritan Village." The current Town Hall, indeed the entirety of the larger area of town center, is listed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as protected, and locally is under the purview of both the Sudbury Historical Commission and the Sudbury Historic Districts Commission.

Adaptive reuse of the building has been a listed priority of the Board of Selectmen for 20 years. In that time many other priorities have been completed (new/renovated schools and library, new public safety buildings, etc.). An extensive feasibility study of Town Hall was voted in 2012 and completed in 2013. The Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee used it as they worked diligently on the options, problems and possibilities posed by both the building and by its key location in Town Center. Their Report is available on the Town's website.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN POSITION: The Board of Selectmen supports this article.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.