



CITY OF NEWBURYPORT
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SEAN R. REARDON, MAYOR

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November 1, 2023

Garry James, Chairman
Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School Committee
115 Amesbury Line Road
Haverhill, MA 01830

Maureen Lynch Superintendent
Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School
115 Amesbury Line Road
Haverhill, MA 01830

RE: WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT - PROJECT VOTE

Dear Chairman James and Superintendent Lynch:

I am writing to you with the request that the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School Committee vote to hold a "town-by-town" vote tied to a debt exclusion override for the proposed new Whittier High School project.

The Whittier School District is planning to hold a districtwide vote on January 23, 2024 to authorize the Whittier School Committee to borrow the funds for this project. The draft ballot question does not have language stating that the vote is contingent on the passage of a debt exclusion override pursuant to Proposition 2 ½. Newburyport voters may not understand that this vote would authorize the project moving forward without a plan for the City to pay its share.

We have serious concerns about holding a districtwide vote in a special election in mid-January when voters are not primed to vote and weather could easily create issues in voting. The voting hours are scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and there will also be no early voting, which would limit residents' ability to vote. This means the turnout will be very low, and may not be representative of voters' concerns. Further, the result will be based on a districtwide vote, which will not represent voices of individual communities, which are particularly important in this case because of the previously mentioned constraints on City finances.

I am voicing support for an alternative process that would instead require individual votes in each municipality that are also tied to a debt exclusion override. We are asking that you listen to the voices of

the member communities throughout this process, and find a way to move forward that will ensure that the individual communities have the funds to take on this project. We believe this is the best way to proceed, and would allow for a collaborative process that takes into account the financial position of each municipality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. R. Reardon", written over a horizontal line.

Sean R. Reardon
Mayor

CC: Whittier School District Member Communities Municipal Leaders
Massachusetts School Building Authority
Senator Bruce Tarr
Representative Dawne Shand