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CITY OF AMESBURY  
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SPONSORED BY: *Peter Frey* BILL No. 2023-140  
Peter Frey, District 5 Councilor

*Nicholas Wheeler*  
Nicholas Wheeler, District 4 Councilor

**A Resolution to Request Reconsideration of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Building Project**

**Summary:** This resolution requests that the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the School Committee of Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High each reconsider the proposed project scope given the financial burden of the proposed school building project on the district's member communities.

*WHEREAS, Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School's School Building Committee has received approval to proceed into the schematic design phase for a new school building; and*

*WHEREAS, regional vocational and technical education programs are an integral component of public education to provide the opportunity for students to get the education and skills necessary to pursue careers in essential fields; and*

*WHEREAS, the proposed new school building for the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School is currently estimated to cost approximately 445 million dollars, and after the estimated reimbursement from the MSBA, participating member communities of the school district will be responsible for 267 million dollars of the project cost; and*

*WHEREAS, Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School's enrollment capacity will not increase under the proposed new building project; and*

*WHEREAS, the City of Amesbury does not currently have sufficient excess levy capacity to fulfill the estimated financial obligation for the new school building project; and*

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*WHEREAS, Amesbury's residential taxpayers in particular have already faced significantly increased tax burdens in recent years (including a separate debt exclusion in the Fall of 2019 for construction of the recently-opened Sgt. Jordan Shay Memorial Lower Elementary School) and a debt exclusion vote would be necessary to further increase the burden on taxpayers; and*

*WHEREAS, passage of the January referendum for the proposed school project and a subsequent failed debt exclusion vote would then necessitate significant budget cuts to multiple essential services within both Amesbury's Public Schools and other municipal city services; and*

*WHEREAS, the statutory requirements for the proposed referendum have historically resulted in extremely low voter turnouts in referendums related to similar regional school building projects; now, therefore,*

**Be it Resolved by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled and by the authority of the same, as follows:**

*That the Amesbury City Council hereby requests that the School Committee of Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School reconsider the scope of the proposed building project to reduce the financial burden on its member communities while still providing an opportunity to build a new school that will deliver the necessary educational programming for vocational and technical careers; and further,*

*That the Amesbury City Council also hereby requests that the Massachusetts School Building Authority also reconsider its decision on the reimbursement amount to lessen the burden on municipal financial budgets and to authorize a community referendum in a way that will ensure the maximum possible voter participation.*