

ARTICLE 34

On June 3, 2021, by a vote of 182-21-16, Brookline Town Meeting voted FAVORABLE ACTION on the Advisory Committee's Supplemental Amended Motion under WA 34

ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDED MOTION

1. WHEREAS, the Town of Brookline has historically been a lighthouse community in our nation, with a reputation for responding with creativity and innovation to a broad range of local, national, and global challenges — in climate action, education, housing, preservation, and engaged governance;
2. WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has produced the dual financial challenges of reduced Town of Brookline revenue and significant increased need; it also presents an opportunity to create a 21st Century Vision of Brookline in a Global Context supported by community volunteers and people of means who find fulfillment providing financial support to their home community;
3. WHEREAS, The Town of Brookline has immediate needs not included in the current budget to serve the less-privileged among us, especially in the context of COVID-19, for nutritious food, urgent affordable housing repairs, access to reliable and affordable wifi services, emotional and physical safety and wellness, including additional social workers in the public schools, Innovation Funds in the K-8 schools that can address equity issues, technology-vocational training, and educational support;
4. WHEREAS, in addition to addressing immediate needs, the Town of Brookline requires long-term resources, including for comprehensive planning and zoning, to develop and realize a 21st Century Vision of Brookline in a Global Context, that will: a. Provide necessary support so that all Brookline residents, including the elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged, have food, safe housing, and basic services; b. Address racial justice and equity issues; c. Lead the transition from fossil fuel energy to renewable electricity for Town facilities and throughout Brookline to support a sustainable future for the world; d. Engage elders as wise counselors and inspiring mentors for younger generations; e. Provide guidance and support to meet the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellness needs of students in the Public Schools of Brookline; f. Advocate for improvements in state and national policies to better meet local needs;
5. WHEREAS, many employees of the Town of Brookline cannot afford to live in Brookline, and a Town program providing affordable housing for Town employees who want to live in Brookline could benefit the entire Brookline community;

6. WHEREAS, tax policy in the United States and in Massachusetts has skewed LESS progressive since the 1970's, with real hourly wages stagnant and the social safety net weakened, leading to growing income and wealth gaps, and those most fortunate among us now have the means to make a greater contribution to the public good of the town;

7. WHEREAS, In 2020, the wealthiest 1.13% of U.S. households had a net worth above \$10 million; and in Brookline it is likely substantially higher;

8. WHEREAS, an annual household voluntary contribution from the more wealthy among us can help realize a 21st Century Vision of Brookline in a Global Context and would be of significant value to our community;

9. WHEREAS, The Town of Brookline has a Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) Policy and receives voluntary contributions from tax-exempt property owners;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Brookline Town Meeting calls upon the Select Board to (i) adopt a Payment in Addition to Tax (PIATT) Program; (ii) appoint a committee charged with developing rules and regulations for disbursement of funds received; (iii) encourage Brookline households to make annual voluntary contributions to the Town of Brookline with a suggested guideline of 1% of household net worth above \$10 million (with other voluntary contributions gratefully accepted as well), pursuant to and under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53A; with these contributions to be used exclusively for public purposes and therefore be considered tax-deductible under Section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code; and (iv) consider a similar program for businesses and others.