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## Seekonk residents reject MBTA zoning proposals, pass budget

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Seekonk Town Hall

Sun Chronicle file photo

SEEKONK — Residents at a lengthy annual town meeting Monday night opposed zoning changes to comply with a state law promoting affordable housing.

A total of 195 voters turned out to the 4 1/2 hour meeting at the high school, which didn't wrap up until close to midnight.

Residents spent a good deal of time on the zoning proposal to conform to the MBTA Communities Act, which requires cities and towns with or near commuter rail stations to set aside a zoning district for multi-family affordable housing.



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The areas targeted by the planning board were the existing Greenbrier multi-family housing site off Fall River Avenue (Route 114A) and Taunton/Oakhill avenues near the Rhode Island border.

Five amendments were proposed at town meeting and all five failed.

Voters did approve a \$72.1 million budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 that is about \$2.6 million, or 3.73%, over this year's spending.

Education will account for \$34.3 million, public safety \$12.4 million.



Local schools are losing some positions due to layoffs and positions not being filled.

Select board members proposed two amendments: to increase the school budget by \$135,000 and the trash disposal budget by \$387,651.

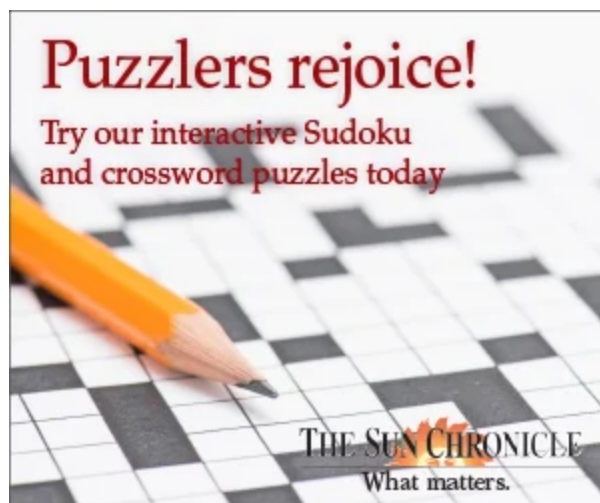
Voters approved a five-year contract for trash and recycling collection set to begin July 1.

The contractor is MTG of Seekonk.

There were also building and equipment items on the 16-article agenda that were approved, including \$285,000 for renovations to the police station and other requests for equipment and vehicles. The library received about \$120,000 for technology and furnishings.

In other town meeting business, a citizen's petition was supported for \$25,000 for percussion instruments for high school band students.

Another zoning change also failed that would have allowed development of a mini-storage facility at 1693 Fall River Ave. (Route 6) by rezoning the property from residential to industrial. The applicant was Storage USA.



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STEPHEN PETERSON