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DAILY NEWS

## LOCAL

# Mendon voters will consider a sixth ballot question on Nov. 5. What it seeks

**Ziyue Zhu** Boston University Statehouse Program

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MENDON — A plan to spend \$13.2 million for a new senior and community center passed by the required two-thirds majority at Town Meeting on May 3, but failed by 52 votes later that month at the polls during the annual town election.

Now voters are getting another chance, this time at a reduced cost, in the form of Question 6 on their Nov. 5 ballot.

The significant amount of debt associated with the plan is the primary concern for voters, according to [Town Administrator Jeremy Stull](#), noting that the center is still projected to cost about \$11.95 million. The town will receive \$850,000 from the federal government, leaving \$11.1 million to be raised from local taxpayers.

**'Meant for emergencies':** [Prop. 2 1/2 overrides disappearing, but taxpayers still pay](#)

For a home assessed at \$500,000, the Proposition 2 1/2 override would amount to an additional \$130 annually in property taxes for the next 30 years.

## New community center proposal is more than \$2M cheaper

The Nov. 5 proposal represents about a 15% trim from the center's original \$13.2 million cost that was rejected in May.

“We had hoped that the cost would be further reduced, but it turned out that the major drivers of the cost are not things that can be cut from the project,” said [Select Board Chair Alejna Brugos](#).

"The amount of office space and meeting space were reduced," she said. "However, the heating and cooling systems, fire suppression, elevator and other accessibility features, as well as safe parking and driveways, are all individually significant cost items. They cannot be removed."

The current center recently hosted a veterans luncheon but was too small to accommodate all veterans who wished to attend. The entertainment at the venue included a choral group.

**'Presents significant challenges':** [Franklin rejects \\$6.8 million override in special election](#)

"I know one member of that chorus said she wanted to give up her space to perform, because she wanted that space to be available for a veteran to honor them," said Brugos.

Select Board member Michael Goddard said the new senior and community center isn't an idea that "just pops up on its own."

"This is part of the broader capital plan for the town," he said, noting that while Mendon plans to invest in a variety of areas, the new center is a priority because it will serve not only seniors but the whole community.

Just as in the spring, the proposal will not only need a simple majority at the ballot, but also two-thirds support at a Special Town Meeting. That meeting takes place on Nov. 18.

"When it failed in the spring, the Building Committee got back together and said, 'Well, the need is still there, right?'" said Building Committee Chair Phil Cieply.

