

January 31, 2011

Dear Lincoln Residents,

On January 18, Lincoln voters rejected our proposal that the town fund via a bond the urgent repairs required at the Lincoln Community School. While the vote was very close, it nonetheless demonstrated that we had not convinced a significant number of residents that a bond is in the best interests of both school and taxpayer.

As we have considered next steps, we continue to try to balance the needs of the school with our responsibility to taxpayers. Despite our best attempts, we see no cheaper alternative to finance the renovations than the bond. We would like another chance to persuade you that it is the most sustainable way forward for both school and taxpayer. We will ask you to vote again when you go to the polls on March 1, the day after town meeting.

In an effort to better make the case for the wisdom of a bond, we have enlisted concerned citizens to help us provide information to voters; we will also hold a public meeting on February 21 at 7pm at the school; there will also be chance for discussion at the town meeting itself.

We are in the process of addressing directly the several questions we have heard which cover three primary concerns, some raised at our last public meeting just days before the final vote. They are...

1. The scope and timing of the project.
2. Cost and affordability for townspeople.
3. The possibility of tapping other sources of funding.

We have further information on each of these topics and are working on formats and venues for sharing it more effectively, especially the latest information about tax increases. Reductions already made in the educational program were made to make room for the bond payments. We have also held the line on teacher contracts. At this moment, the tax rate change for tax year 2011 will be very small (\$0.0021) if the Legislature maintains the current recommended \$0.87 statewide tax rate. Furthermore, we anticipate that paying for repairs as needed will be far more costly than making them in an orderly, predictable fashion; as-needed repairs might also result in potential disruption to the school year, or, at the extreme, a lengthy school closure.

We will be providing much more information in response to your concerns in the days and weeks prior to town meeting. We regret that we must ask for your vote a second time, but hope that even more residents will participate in this second poll.

Sincerely,

The Lincoln Community School Board