

MMA Executive Committee backs referendum bond measures

The 12-member committee backed bond items for water/wastewater, transportation and community college financing. It took no position on Question 1.

By Kate Dufour, Director of State & Federal Relations, MMA

At its September meeting, the Maine Municipal Association's 12-member Executive Committee voted to support the four bond measures that will be on the Nov. 6, 2018 referendum ballot. The committee also voted to take no position on the citizen-initiated measure (Question 1) proposing the enactment of a household income tax surcharge and payroll tax to supplement funding for the in-home and community support services provided to seniors and disabled persons who reside in Maine and need assistance with at least one activity of daily living (e.g., dressing, eating, bathing, etc.).

The bond issues on November's ballot include:

Question 2: \$30 Million Water/Wastewater Bond. This question proposes a \$30 million bond issue designed to improve water quality, support the planning and construction of wastewater treatment facilities and assist residents whose homes are served by substandard or malfunctioning wastewater treatment systems. Some \$2 million of the bond issue is dedicated to the Small Community Grant Program, administered by the Department of Environmental Protection, which can provide funds for the municipally supervised repair of malfunctioning wastewater systems. Another \$350,000 of the issue is dedicated to the Overboard Discharge program, which is similarly designed with respect to the malfunctioning residential wastewater systems in coastal watersheds, and \$27.65 million of the issue is dedicated to wastewater treatment facility planning and construction grants.

Question 3: \$106 Million Transportation Bond. This question proposes a \$106 million bond issue for

transportation purposes. Of that, \$80 million is dedicated to the construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of Priority #1, #2 and #3 state highways, the municipal partnership initiative, and to replace and rehabilitate bridges. Another \$20 million is dedicated to capital improvements

to ports, harbors, marine transportation, aviation, freight and passenger railroads, and bicycle and pedestrian trails. \$1 million is dedicated to improvements for the Maine Maritime Academy's waterfront pier in Castine. These bond proceeds are estimated to leverage \$137 million in federal and

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other source funds. An additional \$5 million, which does not leverage any federal funding, is dedicated to a competitive grant program matching local funding for upgrades to municipal culverts at stream crossings to improve fish and wildlife habitats and increase community safety.

Question 4: \$49 Million University System Bond. For purposes of expanding the state's workforce development capacity and to attract and retain students, this question proposes a \$49 million bond issue for the construction, reconstruction and remodel-

ing of existing or new facilities and other infrastructure within the University of Maine System as approved by the Board of Trustees. Under the terms of the bond, each borrowed dollar must be matched with public or private funding.

Question 5: \$15 Million Community College Bond. This question proposes a \$15 million bond issue to upgrade facilities at Maine's seven community colleges. Of the total bond: (1) \$4.3 million is dedicated to Southern Maine Community College for facility repairs and improvements, energy ef-

iciencies and instruction and library services; (2) \$2.5 million is dedicated to Central Maine Community College for renovation and expansion of instructional laboratories and to upgrade information technology infrastructure; (3) \$2.2 million is dedicated to Eastern Maine Community College for information technology system upgrades and to convert heating systems to natural gas; (4) \$2.2 million is dedicated to Kennebec Valley Community College for capital equipment to support a new millwrighting and industrial mechanics program; (5) \$1.7 million is dedicated to York County Community College for technology system upgrades and the development of the Industrial Trades Center in Sanford; (6) \$1.2 million is dedicated to Northern Maine Community College to expand the diesel hydraulics program laboratory; and, (7) about \$886,000 is dedicated to Washington County Community College to renovate and expand instruction laboratories. ■

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