**Q&A #4 – SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**On May 10, 2013, the Newtown Board of Education, as members of the Sandy Hook School Task Force, endorsed the decision to remove the Sandy Hook Elementary School and build a new school on a modified version of the current site.**

**We will be issuing a series of Q&A documents to ensure the community is informed throughout the rebuilding process. The following Q&A document provides an update on the Sandy Hook Elementary School building project.**

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| **QUESTION** | | **ANSWER** |
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| **Does the Town of Newtown have to**  **repay the State for the grant of $50 million for the Sandy Hook School project?** |  | No, the Town has no obligation to repay the State of Connecticut for the  grant of $50 million to build the new Sandy Hook School. |
| **Is the Town able to spend more than the**  **$50 million grant?** |  | The referendum question sent to the voters seeks approval of an appropriation of $50 million granted by the State for Sandy Hook School. The wording of the referendum question limits the amount that can be spent on the project. |
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| **What happens if the project costs more than $50 million?** | | The Town would have to ask for a special appropriation from the Town for additional funds. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Legislative Council, and Public Building and Site Commission have already indicated their commitment to keep spending  **below** the cap. There is no interest on the part of any government agent to exceed the grant provided by the State. |
| **Why is the referendum scheduled for a**  **Saturday (October 5th)?** | | A Saturday was selected for the referendum for two significant reasons. Saturday voting maximizes the opportunity for residents to get to the polls; and Saturday voting eliminates concerns that arise from using the school building during the school week. |
| **Will absentee ballots be available for the**  **Saturday, October 5th referendum?** | | Yes, the Town Clerk’s office will publish when and where to obtain absentee ballots in the Newtown Bee and on the Town website when we are closer to the October 5th date. |
| **Why was the decision made to build a new school and not just renovate?** | | Analysis of the renovate vs. build new by the Advisory Committee showed that costs to renovate this 56 year old building, bring it up to code, eliminate the portables, make it energy efficient, provide necessary safety features, and more, generated a cost almost at the same level of new building construction. |
| **Why wasn’t the decision made to just demolish the classrooms and hallway where the tragedy occurred and remodel that section?** | | **Any** remodeling of the building requires code work and would also involve almost all the features listed in the previous question. It made no economic sense to invest significant funds in a 56 year old building given that the  costs came close to a total rebuild. |

*8/19/2013*

*Q&A#4*