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From: Linda Merullo <linmer03@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2020 11:16 AM
To: Dover School Board; City Council - All
Subject: Tax relief with a compliant budget

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I believe it is State mandated that a budget must be adhered to by the deadline. Since very few people are interested in listening to audio of these meetings and we can't hear what others say (I am assuming you are not playing recorded messages during public forum), it is imperative that you help the citizens by not overriding the tax cap this year.

It will be impossible to conduct school and council meetings either via telephone for some of the members and just a few sitting in chambers far apart, but this is the new norm. I would like each update of the budget to be put on the City of Dover and facebook sites of all crucial information pertaining to the budget. I'm assuming the SB is meeting tonight. We need to have updates of the budget discussion tomorrow morning. Has the SB still not provided a tax cap compliant budget? No one knows what is going on.

With all the crises of people out of work, this is not the year to be collecting more than your rightful department is allowed. Personally, my opinion is that you can't possibly be thinking that, but I've learned the hard way that the SB listens to no one - not even Councilors that have asked for the SB tax cap compliant budget over 5 weeks ago. I never thought the Council would override the tax cap 4 years in a row and to my unbelievable shock, it has been five years now of overrides. The buck literally stops with the Council. You cannot override the tax cap for the schools. The Mayor has been totally silent. Not a peep about how he is helping this community. Not one thing has been noted in the news, no mention at all of the budget. Fergus taped a very sincere note on most everyone's mailbox in Ward 6 saying he will help any of his constituents if he can. Such a kind gesture. A kindness in this crisis from each and every one of you is to adhere to the tax cap this year.

With the precious stimulus check (that few may get if they are under the government guideline for income), you cannot possibly expect that precious stimulus money to be used for school wants and take it back. It is for rent, mortgage, bills and providing food to a needy person or family. This economy may never come back to what it was. I would suspect severe layoffs and closures again of city and school departments as it was in 2008. Do not fool yourselves thinking it will all be okay by the summer and you can spend our money frivolously and hiking up the tax bill come December.

Please, I urge those SB members and Councilors that are on social media sites for Dover, to update the citizens as much as possible as each meeting is held. We need to know what is going on and whether the SB is still demanding an override. With Foster's totally focused on the virus, I'm not sure they will update any meeting news, so it's up to you to inform us personally. The best media for that is on the Dover websites. Yes, I know, Mayor Bob again out of touch and out of reach. He doesn't believe in social media nor knows how to post. I guess he expects 30,000 people to call or email him with questions. Boggles one's mind over that. How are you supposed to keep in touch with your City when everyone is sheltered in? The only way we are getting all news is through social media because of so many changes by the minute.

You should select one person from the SB and Council to be the spokesperson who will interact with the FB platforms and update us as soon as possible. Carolyn Mebert and Zach Koehler do a good job but when the questions get tough and there is back and forth from their constituents, they shut down and do not respond. I don't hear anything from Councilors. You can always post with the option of no comments allowed, if that is the only way we can get the budget news.

Linda