

***Lincoln Select Board's statement on the community center funding article
(released June 17, 2025):***

At its June 16, 2025 meeting, the Select Board voted unanimously to support Article 1, the transfer of funds from the Stabilization Fund to the Community Center Building Project.

In 2023 and 2024, following an exhaustive decade-long series of planning exercises, the town voted overwhelmingly to support a design concept and certain vision for a community center. Our volunteer, staff, and design team has worked diligently to turn the concept residents voted for into a design that is consistent with the original vision, and that will meet the needs of the Council on Aging & Human Services and Parks and Recreation Department for decades to come. This has made for some difficult decisions along the way and the Community Center Building Committee (CCBC) has had to cut over \$4 million from the design to stay within budget.

On May 29, we opened the bids with growing concern that broader market volatility and geopolitical pressures could challenge our ability to stay on budget. Unfortunately, as the bid results demonstrated, there was cause for concern as the low bid exceeded our budget by \$2.3 million.

At this point, our options are limited: we must either authorize an additional \$2.3 million and press forward with the project as envisioned or start over. While the current plan includes a prudent 8.6% contingency, it is not sufficient to close the funding gap, and given fluctuations in the market, it would be fiscally irresponsible to deplete that contingency before breaking ground. Starting over would be, in our judgment, financially unwise as the town would lose the \$2 million spent on the current design, would need to spend another \$2 million on a new design, and face an estimated \$1 million in additional escalation costs over the year it would take to redesign and return for a new vote.

We recognize that this is a significant decision for residents, and we are grateful for years of prudent fiscal policy that have put the town in the position to use existing stabilization funds to meet this need.

Given these considerations, and for the reasons stated above, we respectfully urge your support.