I will discuss this with the Board and get a sense from them as to how they wish to proceed. Ultimately, the Town Moderator makes the decision about location but will typically work with the Board to do so.

We have set the date for the Special Town Meeting and have very strict timing constraints around when certain things must happen.

So, we will need to look into the availability of the WHRHS for that date.

That said, if the Board does not want to change the venue and/or WHRHS is not available for that date, we can also make sure that the gymnasium is set up to show what is happening in the auditorium and that we have folks there with microphones to take questions from the people in the gymnasium. This has been done in the past with success and could be done for the upcoming Special Town Meeting.

In either event, we will be better prepared for a large number of attendees at the upcoming Special Town Meeting than we were at our past Town Meeting.

Warmest Regards,

Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett
Hanson Select Board Chair
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On May 19, 2024, at 12:55 PM, Mike Day <mike@msday.net> wrote:

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Good afternoon,

I'm writing to address some potential capacity concerns with regard to the upcoming Special Town Meeting currently scheduled to be held at Hanson Middle School on June 17, 2024. I am proposing that the town and school district collaborate to find a different and higher capacity venue for this meeting.

I believe that Hanson Middle School's auditorium has a capacity to hold something like 400 or 500 people. I attended the recent town meeting on May 6th, and the school budget override was a noticeable draw that saw a significantly more filled room that day. Recent (initial and unofficial) Hanson town election results showed that 1,393 voters cast a vote for the override question. Notably, 95% of all ballots had a vote cast for this question, signaling strong interest and engagement on this issue. (Where only 78 voters - or 5% - did not cast a vote on this issue, this compares to 664 voters - 45% - that chose not to vote for a Select Board candidate, and 223 - 15% - that chose note to vote for a School Committe candidate.)

The number of citizens that voted in the town meeting (and that placed a vote on the override issue) well exceed the HMS auditorium capacity. It would send a message of significance to the town, its voters, and citizens if the Select Board and others could arrange for the June 17th Special Town Meeting to be held in a venue with a higher capacity that can maximize community participation. A logical choice would likely be at Whitman Hanson High School where I believe this is some precedent in holding special town meetings there, and since June