

“TIF” Frequently Asked Questions

We have been receiving numerous questions about the “TIF” agreement which we will be voting on at the August 8th (Monday) special town meeting. The following are the questions (and related answers) we have been asked so far:

1. What is a “TIF”?

The State has developed a tax increment financing (TIF) program that is meant to encourage business growth throughout the Commonwealth by allowing towns to give new or expanding businesses real estate tax relief for a pre-agreed period of time. Any business who plans to build a new facility or make a substantial financial investment in an existing facility is eligible to apply to the town where they are located or hope to move into, to ask for a temporary reduction in taxes to help offset the cost of the building improvements. The TIF can be as short as 5 years and as long as 20 years. The Curtis TIF is proposed to be 13 years on the proposed addition which will provide the Town additional new tax revenue on top of the taxes that will continue to be paid over this period of time. While this would be the first TIF for West Boylston, many Massachusetts communities have approved TIFs.

2. Who is Curtis Industries? What do they make?

Curtis Industries is a long standing manufacturing company that was founded in 1968, and builds the cab enclosures for tractors such as John Deere and Kubota, as well as the cabs for golf carts and other utility vehicles, and snow and ice equipment and plows. The company manufacturing processes include metal fabrication, welding, and paint coating, as well as mechanical and electrical assembly and packaging.

3. What is in it for the Town? Why would we want to do this?

By providing a TIF to Curtis Industries, we convince them to move to West Boylston to our established Industrial Section of Town to renovate/add on to the existing facility. The major expansion of the building will permanently increase the assessed value of the property, and will provide the Town with increased annual tax revenue throughout the term of the TIF and beyond. Additionally, Curtis has agreed to advertise any new jobs created first in West

Boylston for a period of two weeks to provide West Boylston residents a first chance at applying for the solid jobs that Curtis will be bringing to the Town.

4. I heard that Curtis is just leasing the space. Why is the TIF for the business, and not the property owner?

Curtis Industries has signed a lease for the space at 70 Hartwell Street. The owner of the facility is D&S Realty, LLC. The lease requires that Curtis, the tenant, pay for the taxes, operations and maintenance of the property during the term of the lease. As such, the TIF directly benefits Curtis Industries.

5. Why would we reduce the taxes a business has to pay us?

The proposed TIF would give Curtis a 2 year 100% tax elimination period on the proposed new addition only; there is no reduction in taxes on the existing building and property. After the first 2 years are up, Curtis will start paying an increasing amount of taxes each year through to the end of the 13 year agreement – after which time they will pay 100% of the new tax assessed on the building. By providing tax relief in the beginning, Curtis is able to afford the relocation to West Boylston, as well as build a substantial addition to the building which in turn will add to the assessed value of the building and generate a higher level of taxes.

6. Is the TIF a credit for the old part of the building and the new part also?

The tax relief would be applied to only the new assessed value of the renovation and addition that Curtis builds at the 70 Hartwell Street facility. Curtis will have to continue to pay the full amount of taxes owed on the original section of the facility; plus the new taxes on the new and improved sections – which will increase each year according to the agreed upon TIF exemption schedule.

7. Why are we thinking of giving this business a tax break and not the other businesses in town? Or the residents?

Any business who makes a substantial financial investment in their facility is eligible to apply to the Town for a TIF. By law, TIFs are only available for business properties. The program does not apply to residences.

8. What happens if Curtis decides to leave town, or goes under?

If Curtis leaves the location prior to the expiration of the 13 year TIF agreement, the Town can petition the state Board that approves these deals, the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council, to ask that the project be decertified. D&S Realty, LLP, as the owners of the building, would then be responsible for paying the full tax bill on the property.

9. Won't there be more truck traffic?

There will be limited additional truck traffic (approximately 5 – 10 per day) associated with the delivery of production supplies to the site, and then shipping out of the completed products. The traffic will be using the East Mountain Street and Shrewsbury Street routes.

10. Will we be exposed to any toxic chemicals?

No. There is no discharge of any toxic chemical from any of the manufacturing processes. Curtis is required to comply with all local, state and federal regulations.

11. How will this business impact other area residents?

This site is zoned for this type of manufacturing use. All of the manufacturing processes occur inside the facility so there will be no excess noise, odors or activity than is seen at any other normal manufacturing facility.

12. What happens if we do not get a quorum to vote this article on August 8th?

The Moderator has the ability to delay the start of town meeting for a reasonable period of time to ensure a quorum of the required 100 voters has been checked in. As has been done in the past, we may resort to using cell phones to urge friends and family to come down to the meeting to help a quorum be achieved! We urge you to take the time to attend this special town meeting for this important vote. Bring your spouse, friends and neighbors! Alternate dates of August 10th and August 15th have been set aside as back-up dates if we are totally unable to get a quorum on August 8th.

13. Why is there such an urgency to have the special town meeting on August 8th?

The process of having a TIF approved requires both a local vote by the Town, and then a vote at the state level by the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC). The EACC holds hearings only a few times a year, and in order to have this TIF be considered by the EACC this fall, the paperwork must be submitted to the State's by August 24th.

14. Who is completing the building enhancements and who will own the property?

D&S Realty, the Owner, will be completing the majority of the building renovations and additions, and Curtis will be undertake the final completions necessary for and associated with their manufacturing processes and equipment. D&S Realty will retain ownership of the building.

15. Is the TIF agreement with Curtis? Yes. The TIF is with Curtis, but D&S Realty has to sign off to confirm that they assent to the provisions of the agreement.

16. Does our TIF agreement spell out the obligations for Curtis and D&S, as this Framingham 2015 agreement does?

Yes. Our agreement spells out the obligation of all signing parties.

Thank you for your interest in this TIF proposal! If you have any other questions not covered here, please feel free to contact our Town Administrator, Anita Scheipers, at 774-261-4088.

We look forward to seeing you on Monday, August 8th at the 7pm special town meeting.