

June 27, 2020
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
WARRANT



Annual Town Meeting Princeton, MA 01541 June 27, 2020

Warrant duly posted:	June 16, 2020
Inhabitants notified by website posting:	June 16, 2020
Advisory Board Hearing:	June 10, 2020
Quorum needed:	58
Voters Present:	170
Moderator:	Harry Pape
Checkers/Counters:	Susan Priest, Frances Thomas
Constable:	Michele Powers
Meeting called to order:	10:00AM
Meeting dissolved:	11:29AM

The Moderator opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the full warrant.

Moderator declared the vote was Unanimous at 10:01AM

Moderator read the charge to the Constable, and the Return of the Warrant.

The Moderator asked that all non-voters identify themselves for the tellers.

The Moderator read the results from the June 23, 2020 Annual Town Election.

All Articles are unanimously approved by the Advisory Board except where noted.

TOWN WARRANT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

June 27, 2020

ARTICLE 1. To hear the reports of the Town Officers and any outstanding committees and act thereon.
Moderator declared the vote unanimous 10:08AM

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.), c. 41, §108, to fix the salaries of the following Town Officers for the ensuing year (FY21), or take any other action relative thereto.

	<u>FY 20</u>	<u>FY 21</u>
Moderator	\$ 25	\$ 25
Selectmen	\$3,600 (\$1,200 per member)	\$3,600 (\$1,200 per member)
Assessors	\$ 0	\$1,500 (\$ 500 per member)

This article establishes the salaries of paid elected officials.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous 10:09AM

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate 10,693,162.25 including debt and interest, and to provide for a reserve fund for the ensuing fiscal year (FY21), or take any other action relative thereto.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous (without the school budget) 10:14AM
Advisory Committee Vote (WRSD 2-4-0), (Fire Dept. 5-0-1)

Chairman of Advisory Comm. moved to adjust the WRSD budget to 5,127,215.00. Various discussions on both sides were discussed at length. At 10:53AM a request was made to vote and cut-off the discussion. **Moderator declared that vote unanimous at 10:53AM.** Amended amount proposed by Advisory Committee failed; **moderator declared at 10:54AM. Moderator declared the original budget in the Warrant, 5,674,056.00, carries at 10:54AM**

ARTICLE 4. RECURRING BUSINESS

- A. To see if the Town will vote to establish the FY21 ambulance operating budget by use of receipts for ambulance services received to date and if necessary by raising and appropriating or by

appropriating from available funds. Receipts for ambulance services received in FY21 and all subsequent fiscal years to be deposited into a receipt reserved for appropriation account established in FY01. Appropriations from said account to be made at either the annual or special town meetings for the purpose of maintaining and operating the Town's ambulance service, i.e. salary for ambulance employees, vehicle maintenance, fuel, equipment and operating supplies. The requested appropriation for the FY21 ambulance-operating budget is \$62,620 for salary and \$65,000 for expenses for a total budget of \$127,620 with any balance in said account to be carried forward to subsequent years, or take any other action relative thereto.

This establishes the FY21 receipts reserved for appropriation account from which ambulance operating expenses will be paid.

- B. To see if the Town will vote to establish the FY21 trash operating budget. Receipts for trash disposal services received in FY21 and all subsequent fiscal years to be deposited into a trash enterprise fund account established in FY08. Appropriations from said account to be made at either the annual or special town meetings for the purpose of paying for the proper disposal of solid waste generated within the town. The requested appropriation for the FY21 trash-operating budget is \$21,000, to be appropriated from Solid Waste Enterprise. Any balance in said account to be carried forward to subsequent years, or take any other action relative thereto.

The Town pays directly to Wheelabrator Millbury, Inc. where the trash incinerator is located for solid waste disposal. This article allows the town to receive offsetting payments from trash haulers which are deposited into this account.

- C. To see if the town will vote to transfer from undesignated fund balance (free cash) account # 01-000-3591-000000 the sum of \$10,000.00 to be deposited in the Other Post Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund in order to offset future health insurance costs for retirees, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this will authorize a contribution to a trust fund established by the May, 2011 Annual Town Meeting to fund future health insurance liabilities for retirees, similar to funding future pension obligations.

- D. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$50 to the Goodnow Book Expense Account for the purchase of books for the Library, as required by the terms of the Goodnow Deed of Gift, or take any other action thereto.

The Deed of Gift requires an annual payment of \$50.

- E. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$800 to support the Wachusett Greenways, or take any other action thereto.

This article funds a portion of the Wachusett Greenways operation for maintaining and managing the rail trails in the Wachusett area.

- F. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from undesignated fund balance (free cash) account # 01000-3591-000000 the sum of **\$2,047** to the School Septic System Stabilization Fund for the purpose of reserving funds for the replacement and/or repair of the septic system at the Thomas Prince School; or to take any other action relative thereto.

The Town and the Wachusett Regional School District signed a Maintenance Agreement in FY17, which provides for an annual payment in the amount of \$2,047 in FY17, 18, and 19 to the Town of Princeton toward the replacement or repair costs of the septic system at the school. The FY18 funds were received by the Town, and by law were required to be deposited to misc. revenue, which eventually became part of the FY18 free cash balance.

- G. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to contract with and accept any grants from the Mass. Department of Transportation-Highway Division for the construction of any road or related work that may be allotted to the Town for the ensuing year or to take any other action relative thereto.

This article authorizes the Selectmen to accept any grants or contracts with the state for road or road-related projects.

Moderator packaged all of Article IV, declared the vote unanimous at 10:55AM

ARTICLE 5: DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS AUTHORIZATION

To see if the Town will vote to authorize revolving funds for certain town departments
under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 53E 1/2 for the fiscal year
beginning July 1, 2019, or take any other action relative thereto.

Revolving Fund	Authorized to Spend Fund	Revenue Source	Use of Fund	FY 2020 Spending Limit	FY 2021 Spending Limit
Building Department	Bldg. Inspector Town Admin.	Fees from Bldg, Wiring, and Plumbing Permits	To Pay Administrative & Inspector Salary & Expenses	\$55,000	\$55,000
Library	Library Director, Town Admin.	Copy Machine, Fax, Fines and Fees	Defray Operational Expenses	\$4,000	\$4,000
	P&R Commission				
Parks and Recreation (P&R)	Chairman, P&R Director, and Town Admin.	Fees Collected from Recreational Programs	Provide Recreational Programs & Pay Salaries	\$30,000	\$20,000
	P&R Commission				
Parks and Recreation (P&R)	Chairman, P&R Director, and Town Admin.	Fees Collected from Recreational Programs	Maintenance of Parks Pay Salaries	\$30,000	\$30,000
Board of Health	Board of Health Town Admin.	Permits & Inspections	Salary & Expense	\$19,000	\$21,000
	Cemetery Comm. Chairman, Town Admin.	Burial Fees	Salary & Expense	\$4,000	\$8,000
Fire Department	Fire Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Town Admin.	Fees from Fire Permits	To Pay Administrative & Inspector Salary & Expenses	\$6,500	\$8,500
	Conservation Commission Chair, Town Admin.	Lease Payments from Four Corners Hayfields	To Pay for the Upkeep of & Improvements to Conservation Property	N/A (New fund proposed)	\$3,500
Maximum Spending					\$150,000

All departments having revolving accounts were asked to complete a FY21 budget request. The spending limits were adjusted for each account to match revenue anticipated and available for each fund, as well as budgets requested, with minor exceptions. Please note that the Municipal Modernization Act of 2016 changed the procedures for Revolving Funds, requiring that a By-Law be established for revolving funds. A By-Law was established at the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting.

Advisory Committee Vote: (Fire: 5-0-1)

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 10:57AM

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to enact Chapter XX of the Town of Princeton General Bylaws, entitled “Stretch Energy Code”, for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy, pursuant to Appendix 115.AA of the Massachusetts State Building Code, 780 CMR, the Stretch Energy Code, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of January 1, 2021, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.

Currently, the Base Energy Code of the Massachusetts State Building Code is applied to all construction in town. Passage of this article would adopt a Stretch Energy Code Bylaw. This bylaw would apply the Stretch Energy Code, which is an appendix to the Massachusetts State Building Code, to new construction in town, requiring more energy efficiency in construction than currently required under the Base Energy Code. The current Stretch Energy Code applies only to new residential construction and to new large commercial construction (e.g., over 100,000 sq. feet or over 40,000 sq. feet for high-intensity energy users such as laboratories or grocery stores); it does not apply to renovations, repairs, alterations, or additions to existing homes or commercial buildings, or to new small commercial construction. Adoption of this bylaw would also adopt and apply all future versions of the Stretch Energy Code

Discussion from the Electric Light Commission member and Environmental Action Committee spoke on behalf of passing the article. **Moderator declared the vote carried at 11:10AM**

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$5,000.00; to conduct an energy audit of all Town owned buildings or take any other action relative thereto.

This article funds a baseline energy audit for Town buildings. This is one of the requirements for achieving Green Community Status. The Environmental Action Committee (EAC) and Town will continue to pursue ways to have the audit done without using Town funds. The Municipal Energy Technical Assistance Funds—which typically would have paid for the audits—are delayed until the fall in part because of Coronavirus restrictions and related delays. The Town would be unable to make the 2020 Green Community Designation deadline if the Town waited for META funds. This would mean missing the opportunity to get grant funds for energy efficiency projects as part of capital improvements that are already underway. The Selectboard and EAC believe that it is in the Town’s best interest to complete the steps needed to become a Green Community and have access to the related grant opportunities as soon as possible. The PMLD Commissioners voted to pay half the cost of the audit as long as the Town approves the Stretch Energy Code warrant article. Though the article includes the full \$25,000, it will be amended on the floor to be \$12,500 if the Stretch Code article (Article 6) passes.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:14AM

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from undesignated fund balance (free cash) account #01-000-3591-000000 the sum of \$60,000.00 for design and engineering services, including the production of construction documents, for repair of Princeton Library Clock Tower, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

This article pays for design and construction documents for the repair of the Goodnow Library clock tower. Inspection of the Tower by Chris Conway uncovered damage that needs to be repaired. The Library 13 Trustees funded the preliminary design work by Jones Whitsett Architects. The remaining documents are needed to search for grants and to pay to repair the Tower in a timely fashion before the water damage becomes worse.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:16AM

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from undesignated fund balance (free cash) account # 01-000-3591-000000 a sum of \$267,424.00 to the Town's General Stabilization account #80-000-578-801001; or take any other action relative thereto. **2/3 vote required**

This is the Town's general savings account. It is generally recommended that cities and towns maintain a minimum of five (5) percent of their annual operating budget in stabilization. The stabilization account currently has approximately \$442,085, which is approximately four (4) percent of the total annual budget. If approved, a 2/3rds vote is required to transfer funds out of this account in the future. Since the state passed the Municipal Modernization Act, funds from the Stabilization fund can be applied to capital expenses and infrastructure projects. For convenience, the Town has opted to place all funds into the General Stabilization Fund instead of splitting them across the General Stabilization Fund and the Stabilization Infrastructure Fund. Capital Requests have been deferred this year due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty surrounding state revenue estimates. These funds will be available to address future capital needs and/or reduce debt obligations.

Advisory Committee Vote: (5-1-0)

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:17AM

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Town Hall Annex Repair account #03-192-5305-0210100 the sum of \$18,000.00 to the Public Safety Building Repair account #03-220-5304-0231016 for installation of a power generator at the Public Safety Building, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of the article will allow certain funds remaining in the Town Hall Annex Account to be transferred to the Public Safety Building Repair Account to fund the installation of a power generator at the Public Safety Building. When Dispatch was regionalized several years ago, this generator was received through a grant, with the understanding that the Town would fund the installation. The existing generator isn't sufficient to power everything necessary at the Public Safety Building, while the new one will power everything. Note that the cost of installation has risen from \$12,000 in 2017 to \$18,000 today. The current balance in the annex repair account is \$78,355.58 as of 6/26/2020. Should both article 10 and article 11 pass, the remaining balance in the annex repair account will be \$45,355.58.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:18AM

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Town Hall Annex Repair Account #03-192-5305-0210100 the sum of \$15,000 to the Public Safety Building Repair Account #03-220- 5304-0231016 for unforeseen repairs at the Public Safety Building or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of the article will allow certain funds remaining in the Town Hall Annex Account to be transferred to the Public Safety Building Repair Account for unforeseen repairs. Most of the repair work 14 authorized by Town Meeting in 2018 has been completed. Installation of the exhaust evacuation system was more expensive than originally estimated, and most of the contingency funds for the project have been spent. This article allows the Town to finish the repair project. The current balance in the annex repair account is \$78,355.58 as of 6/26/2020. Should both article 10 and article 11 pass, the remaining balance in the annex repair account will be \$45,355.58.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:19AM

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$700,000 for the purpose of funding road construction and infrastructure improvements in town, and to meet said appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is hereby authorized to borrow said sum, pursuant to Mass. General Laws c.44, §7, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town, or take any other action relative thereto. **2/3 vote required.**

Approval of this article will allow the Treasurer, with approval of the Board of Selectmen, to borrow funds for road construction and infrastructure improvements (reconstruction of a culvert on Route 31 near Mirick Road and the bridge on Route 31 behind the old Highway Barn). Repayment of the funds borrowed would come from the annual Capital Road Construction Infrastructure Improvements budget. Combined, these projects total \$1,196,026. A Small Bridge grant and available Chapter 90 funds will provide partial funding for these projects. This article is meant to provide the balance. This strategy of borrowing for large, long-lived projects helps the road budget go further by avoiding a large one-time drawdown of available funds which would severely restrict the amount of available funds for future road reconstruction activity. Any borrowing undertaken now would be at historically low interest rates and would spread the cost of these nontraditional road projects out over time and enable the Town to continue with its program of rebuilding a portion of the Town's road system each year.

Moderator declared the vote unanimous at 11:24AM, 2/3 clearly met.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$80,000 for the purpose of stabilization and repairs at Bagg Hall, and to meet said appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is hereby authorized to borrow said sum, pursuant to Mass. General Laws c.44, §7, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town, or take any other action relative thereto. **2/3 vote required.**

Approval of this article will allow the Treasurer, with approval of the Board of Selectmen, to increase the amount of borrowing for Bagg Hall Stabilization by \$80,000. Unexpected issues and unforeseen additional brick and mortar repairs have arisen with the project, and the contingency funds are not considered to be sufficient given how far along the contractors are with the project. Excavation in the basement has already uncovered several problems that will need to be addressed, including the need for a sump pump to address a second source of water damaging the foundation. This amount would be added to the \$1.25 million authorized in May 2018.

Moderator declare the vote unanimous at 11:26AM, 2/3 clearly met.

Moderator asked for a motion to dissolve the meeting, was raised and seconded. Moderator declared the vote unanimous to dissolve at 11:29AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ginger R. Toll, Town Clerk