



# ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

May 5, 2025

*A TRUE COPY*

ATTEST: *Brynn C. Durno*

Brynn C. Durno, Town Clerk

## **RETURN OF THE WARRANT**

Pursuant to a warrant signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2025 by Select Board Members Chuck Walkovich, Anthony Beattie and Mark Mathews and posted on April 24, 2025 by Constable Keith Keady in five public places – Pepperell Town Hall, Pepperell Police Station, Pepperell Post Office, Mel’s Barber Shop and Pepperell Family Pharmacy as well as attested copies online. We, the inhabitants of the Town of Pepperell whom are qualified to vote in Elections and Town affairs are convening here at Nissitissit Middle School on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of May A.D. 2025 to act on the following twenty five articles.

There were *170 – one hundred and seventy registered voters and -19 – nineteen visitors* in attendance.

Moderator Blackburn opened the Annual Town Meeting at 7:05PM. The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **PRELIMINARY MOTION**

**Motion made by: Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair**

I move the Moderator allow non-voters or non-residents to speak on issues related to Town Meeting warrant articles where appropriate.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

### **PRELIMINARY MOTION**

**Motion made by: Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair**

I move that we dispense with the reading of the Warrant.

**Simple Majority required for passage**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

## **CONSENT AGENDA - Articles 1 – 5**

This Town Meeting will use a procedure known as a Consent Agenda. It is the combining of articles that are considered to be non-controversial, and/or are related by subject matter, into a single motion to be voted on by Town Meeting. The intent of the Consent Agenda is to save time by eliminating the need for an individual motion, explanation, and vote on a group of articles that are not expected to be the subject of any debate. This practice is used in other towns, and can be a routine part of Town Meeting.

When the meeting reaches the first article to be included in the Consent Agenda, which will be Article 1, the Moderator will read the title of each article to be voted by consent, and allow time for any voter who has a question on the article to say, “hold.”

Articles that are held will be set aside for separate consideration, apart from the Consent Agenda. Voters who request a hold will be asked to identify themselves and should be prepared to speak on the article when it is taken up later in the Town Meeting.

After the Town Meeting agrees on which articles to include in the Consent Agenda, the Moderator will call for a vote – without any debate. Every article included in the Consent Agenda will either pass or fail together, depending on the single vote taken.

Articles removed from the Consent Agenda by a hold will be taken up individually in the order in which they appear in the Warrant.

- **Article 1 – 2023 Annual Town Report**
- **Article 2 – 2024 Annual Town Report**
- **Article 3 – Non-Union Compensation Plan**
- **Article 4 – Appropriate PEG Funds to Pepperell Community Media**
- **Article 5 – Authorize spending limits on revolving funds**

**Motion made by:** Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair

I move that the Town vote to approve the actions proposed in all the articles included in the Consent Agenda as described in the individual motions for those articles in the handout presented to this Town Meeting.

Simple Majority required for passage.

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

### **ARTICLE 1 – 2023 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees for 2023 as printed, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees for 2023.*

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee took no action.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

### **ARTICLE 2 – 2024 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees for 2024 as printed, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees for 2024.*

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee took no action.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

**ARTICLE 3 – NON-UNION COMPENSATION PLAN**

To see if the Town will vote to amend its Non-Union Compensation Plan established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, § 108A and pursuant to Chapter 31 of the Code of the Town of Pepperell, by increasing the rates in the compensation table to reflect a 2.0% cost of living increase, effective July 1, 2025, as is shown in Appendix A to this warrant, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The Non-Union Compensation Plan provides a predictable wage for various positions within our government offices. The Select Board voted a 2.0% cost of living increase into the table for FY2026.*

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**ARTICLE 4 – APPROPRIATE PEG FUNDS TO PEPPERELL COMMUNITY MEDIA**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund the sum of \$169,713.18, or a lesser sum, the amount of \$169,713.18 having already been received by the Town from Charter Communications as part of its contractual obligation, to Pepperell Community Media, for provision of local public, education, and government cable television services, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *These funds will be used by Pepperell Community Media, which has submitted a budget, shown herein, that is consistent with allowed uses of Public, Education, and Government access (PEG) funding.*

FRANCHISE FEE REVENUE		
FRANCHISE FEE REVENUE		\$169,713.18
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$169,713.18</b>

COMMUNITY ACCESS EXPENSES		
DIRECT OPERATIONAL EXPENSES		\$163,700.00
Contingency		\$6,013.18
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$169,713.18</b>

Revenues	
Charter Cable Fee Income	\$169,713.18
Pepperell	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$169,713.18</b>

Expenses:	
Salary & Wages	\$80,000.00
Professional Fees	\$11,500.00
Rent	\$25,200.00
Insurance	\$7,000.00
Misc. Exp	\$30,000.00
Equipment	\$10,000.00
Contingency	\$6,013.18
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$169,713.00</b>

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**ARTICLE 5 – REVOLVING FUNDS – M.G.L. CHAPTER 44, § 53E1/2**

To see if the Town will vote, according to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, § 53E1/2 and the Town’s Revolving Funds Bylaw adopted by vote under Article 12 of the May 1, 2017 Annual Town Meeting, to set expenditure limits for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for the Town’s revolving funds, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** This article is required by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2, which states that the town shall, on or before July 1 of each year, vote the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund.

Revolving Fund	Spending Limit
L.R.T.A. Van Transportation	\$45,000.00
Senior Center Meals	\$60,000.00
Recreation	\$80,000.00
Library	\$8,000.00
Council on Aging	\$20,000.00

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY TO PASS ALL CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 6 - FISCAL YEAR 2026 TOWN GENERAL FUND BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$36,941,338.00, or some other sum, to defray the regular expenses of the Town for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for General Government, Public Safety, Nashoba Valley Technical High School, North Middlesex Regional School District, Public Works, Human Services, Culture & Recreation, Debt Service & State Assessments, Employee Benefits & Insurance, and Capital Outlay, as shown in Appendix B to the warrant for this Town Meeting; and to determine whether to appropriate any sums contingent upon approval, at an election, of an override of Proposition 2 ½, so-called, under M.G.L. c. 59, § 21C, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion made by:** Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair

I move that the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$36,941,338.00, to defray the regular expenses of the Town for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for General Government, Public Safety, Nashoba Valley Technical High School, North Middlesex Regional School District, Public Works, Human Services, Culture & Recreation, Debt Service & State Assessments, Employee Benefits & Insurance, and Capital Outlay, as shown in Appendix B to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,126,641.00 for Part I of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, General Government, as represented in lines 2 to 198 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,416,353.00 for Part II of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Public Safety, as represented in lines 200 to 398 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,240,699.00 for the NVTHS portion of Part III of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Education, as represented in lines 400 to 404 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$21,192,245.00 for the NMRSD portion of Part III of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Education, as represented in lines 406 to 409 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,855,606.00 for Part IV of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Public Works, as represented in lines 411 to 497 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$477,493.00 for Part V of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Human Services, as represented in lines 499 to 539 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$697,346.00 for Part VI of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Culture & Recreation, as represented in lines 541 to 574 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.

- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,980,260.00 for Part VII of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Debt Service and Assessments, as represented in lines 576 to 584 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,822,400.00 for Part VIII of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Employee Benefits & Insurance, as represented in lines 586 to 602 and lines 609 to 614 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.
- I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$105,361.00 for Part IX of the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Budget, Capital Outlay, as represented in lines 604 to 607 of the budget as shown in Appendix B.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

			<u>Select Board</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
Part I	General Government	\$2,126,641.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part II	Public Safety	\$4,416,353.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part III	Education NVTSH budget	\$2,240,699.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part III	Education NMRSD budget	\$21,192,245.00	3 to 0 to approve	Took no action
Part IV	Public Works	\$1,855,606.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part V	Human Services	\$477,493.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part VI	Culture & Recreation	\$697,346.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part VII	Debt Service & Assessments	\$1,980,260.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part VIII	Employee Benefits & Insurance	\$1,822,400.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve
Part IX	Capital Outlay	\$105,361.00	3 to 0 to approve	3 to 0 to approve

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 7 – PATRIOT REGIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (PRECC) BUDGET WITH REVENUE SUPPORTS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$1,500,831.00 to defray expenses of the Town for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for the Patriot Regional Emergency Communications Center, as shown in Appendix B of the warrant for this Town Meeting and represented in lines 350 to 364 of the budget as shown in Appendix B of the warrant for this Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *Pepperell is the host community of the Patriot Regional Emergency Communications Center (PRECC). The Town of Pepperell cost is \$353,457.00 and is included in the General Fund Budget, Article 6, Part II. The Department of Revenue requires that Pepperell appropriate the entire amount of the additional funding required to support the PRECC. That amount, \$1,500,831.00, is coming from the other four-member towns and state E911 grants as a reimbursement to Pepperell.*

Source	Amount
Ashby	\$97,209.00
Dunstable	\$102,264.00
Groton	344,523.00
Townsend	\$277,993.00
E911 Support	\$678,842.00
Total, Non-Pepperell Revenue	\$1,500,831.00

**Motion made by:** Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair

I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$1,500,831.00 to defray expenses of the Town for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for the Patriot Regional Emergency Communications Center, as set forth in Article 7 of the warrant for this Town Meeting and shown in Appendix B to the warrant.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 8 - FISCAL YEAR 2026 SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$3,226,743.00 to defray the regular expenses of the Sewer Enterprise Fund, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F½, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½, Enterprise Funds, which requires submission of an estimated income and expenditure budget to town meeting, to be voted on in the same manner as all other budgets, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate the following sums of money in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½ to operate the Sewer Enterprise Fund for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, with \$3,226,743.00 appropriated from Enterprise Fund revenues and \$0.00 from Sewer Enterprise Fund retained earnings, and \$110,000.00 of that amount to be appropriated into the General Fund operating budget, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

SEWER DEPT REVENUE		SEWER DEPT EXPENSES	
USERS FEES, MISC REV.	\$3,226,743	DIRECT OPERATIONAL COSTS	\$3,116,743
SEWER RETAINED EARNINGS	\$0	INDIRECT COSTS (GEN'L FUND)	\$110,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,226,743</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,226,743</b>

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 9 - FISCAL YEAR 2026 WATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$2,760,384.00 to defray the regular expenses of the Water Enterprise Fund, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F½, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½, Enterprise Funds, which requires submission of an estimated income and expenditure budget to town meeting, to be voted on in the same manner as all other budgets, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate the following sums of money in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½ to operate the Water Enterprise Fund for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, with \$2,560,384.00 appropriated from Enterprise Fund revenues, and \$200,000.00 from Water Enterprise Fund retained earnings and \$95,000.00 of the total appropriated into the General Fund operating budget, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

WATER DEPT REVENUE		WATER DEPT EXPENSES	
USERS FEES, MISC REV.	\$2,560,384	DIRECT OPERATIONAL COSTS	\$2,665,384
WATER RETAINED EARNINGS	\$200,000	INDIRECT COSTS (GEN'L FUND)	\$95,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,760,384</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,760,384</b>

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 10 – FISCAL YEAR 2026 TRANSFER STATION ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$629,750.00 to defray the regular expenses of the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F½, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½, Enterprise Funds, which requires submission of an estimated income and expenditure budget to town meeting, to be voted on in the same manner as all other budgets, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate the following sums of money in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½ to operate the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, with \$529,750.00 appropriated from Enterprise Fund revenues, and \$100,000.00 from Transfer Station retained earnings, and \$32,000.00 of the total appropriated into the General Fund operating budget, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

TRANSFER STATION REVENUE		TRANSFER STATION EXPENSES	
USERS FEES, MISC REV.	\$529,750	DIRECT OPERATIONAL COSTS	\$597,750
TRANS STA RETAINED EARNINGS	\$100,000	INDIRECT COSTS (GEN'L FUND)	\$32,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$629,750</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$629,750</b>

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 11 - FISCAL YEAR 2026 STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds \$280,125.00 to defray the regular expenses of the Stormwater Enterprise Fund, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting, in accordance with the provisions of

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *This article is to comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½, Enterprise Funds, which requires submission of an estimated income and expenditure budget to town meeting, to be voted on in the same manner as all other budgets, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate the following sums of money in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ½ to operate the Stormwater Enterprise Fund for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, with \$262,500.00 appropriated from Enterprise Fund revenues, and \$17,625.00 from Stormwater retained earnings and \$22,500.00 of that amount appropriated into the General Fund operating budget, as shown in Appendix C to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

STORMWATER REVENUE		STORMWATER EXPENSES	
USERS FEES, MISC REV.	\$262,500	DIRECT OPERATIONAL COSTS	\$257,625
STORMWATER RETAINED EARNINGS	\$17,625	INDIRECT COSTS (GEN'L FUND)	\$22,500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$280,125</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$280,125</b>

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

### **MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

### **ARTICLE 12 – FY2025 WATER ENTERPRISE FUND RETAINED EARNINGS APPROPRIATION**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the fiscal year 2025 Water Enterprise Fund budget by increasing the retained earnings line item appropriation by \$200,000.00, as a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund retained earnings certified as of July 1, 2024, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The Water Division is undertaking two significant capital projects to restore the system capacity and to improve water quality (remove PFAS). These efforts commenced after budgeting was completed for Fiscal Year 2025. Preliminary engineering efforts have started and these transferred funds will pay for these efforts.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to amend the fiscal year 2025 Water Enterprise Fund budget by increasing the retained earnings line item appropriation by \$200,000.00, as a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings certified as of July 1, 2024.

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

Simple Majority required for passage.

### **MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 13 – FY2025 TRANSFER STATION ENTERPRISE FUND RETAINED EARNINGS APPROPRIATIONS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the fiscal year 2025 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund budget by increasing the retained earnings line item appropriation by \$20,000.00, as a transfer from the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings certified as of July 1, 2024, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The Transfer Station has undergone a significant upgrade in the services and facilities over the last couple of years. The recycling bailer replacement project represented a one-time cost that exceeded the amount set aside. The cost of a gently used bailer was less than half projected cost for a new bailer.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to amend the fiscal year 2025 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund budget by increasing the retained earnings line item appropriation by \$20,000.00, as a transfer from the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings certified as of July 1, 2024.

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 14 – COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FUNDING**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$318,655.00 from Community Preservation Fund revenues, certified as of July 1, 2024, for support of nine community preservation projects and expenses shown in the table below, or take any other action relative thereto.

#	AMOUNT	Funding Source	REASON
1	\$20,000	Open Space & Recreation Account	Restoration of Nissitissit Middle School Baseball Field
2	\$47,770 and \$20,230	Historic Preservation Account Undesignated Fund Account	Preservation of Historic Peter Fitzpatrick School Façade
3	\$60,000	Undesignated Fund Account	Exterior Restoration of the Lawrence Library
4	\$47,770 and \$2,230	Community Housing Account Undesignated Fund Account	Affordable Community Housing Funding
5	\$35,000	Undesignated Fund Account	Affordable Housing Trust – community housing support
6	\$7,500	Undesignated Fund Account	Lawrence Library Portico Light Restoration
7	\$27,770 and \$22,230	Open Space & Recreation Account Undesignated Fund Account	Conservation Commission Open Space Fund
8	\$15,700	Undesignated Fund Account	Softball Fields Development
9	\$12,455	Undesignated Fund Account	Fiscal Year 2026 Administrative expenses
	\$318,655	<b>Total Requested Funds</b>	

**Explanation:** *The responsibility of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is to accept project proposals from the community and conduct a review of them, with the aim of selecting beneficial projects for recommendation to the Town Meeting. The committee shall make recommendations for use of CPA funds to the Town Meeting for the acquisition, restoration, creation and/or preservation of open space/recreation, historic resources and affordable housing projects. After review and deliberation, the CPC is making the project recommendations described in the table above. The recommendations may be moved as a group or separately.*

**Motion made by:** Bob Cataldo, Community Preservation Committee Chair

I move that the Town vote to appropriate \$318,655.00 from Community Preservation Fund revenues, certified as of July 1, 2024, for support of community preservation projects and expenses as shown in Article 14 of the warrant for this Town Meeting.

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 15 – ADOPT FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT, ZONING BYLAW**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map by adopting a new section 8200, establishing a Floodplain Overlay District that incorporates district boundaries based on the most current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), as shown in Appendix D of the handout for this Town Meeting titled “2025 Floodplain Overlay District Zoning Bylaw,” or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *Pepperell currently participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which allows community members to purchase NFIP flood insurance. For the community and residents to be eligible for certain types of federal disaster assistance, one of the requirements of participation is that the community needs to keep its regulations up to date with the NFIP minimum standards. This Zoning Bylaw amendment incorporates the most recent FEMA standards for flood plain regulations in Pepperell. The amendment will modify the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map to reference the most recent maps issued by FEMA, as amended over time, in order to comply with FEMA’s recommended standards and updated definitions.*

**Motion made by:** Tony Beattie, Select Board Clerk

I move that the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map by adopting a new section 8200, establishing a Floodplain Overlay District, as shown in the handout for this Town Meeting entitled “2025 Floodplain Overlay District Zoning Bylaw,”

**Report of the Planning Board by:** Al Patenaude, Planning Board Chair

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee took no action.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Two-thirds Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, 133 YAY – 6 NAY**

**ARTICLE 16 - AMEND THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF PEPPERELL**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Pepperell by deleting Chapter 95, Flood Control, in its entirety, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *No longer needed upon adoption of Floodplain Overlay District section of Zoning Bylaw.*

**Motion made by:** Tony Beattie, Select Board Clerk

I move that the Town vote to amend the Code of the Town of Pepperell by deleting Chapter 95, Flood Control, in its entirety.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee took no action.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

## **ARTICLE 17 – ACCEPT GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 59, Section 5C½**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5C½, for the purpose of increasing the real estate tax exemptions by 20% to all persons who qualify for property tax exemptions under clauses 22(a-f), 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, 17D, 37A, and 41C of section 5 of Chapter 59, to take effect in Fiscal Year 2026, starting on July 1, 2025, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *For several years the Select Board has attempted to provide tax relief for needy residents. In 2024, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created legislative support for local options to increase exemptions for those most in need. Article 17 proposes to increase the listed exemptions by 20%. The impact of this change will be about \$17,000.00 based on current applicants. This impact is covered from the Overlay budget and does not increase the budget request.*

**Motion made by:** Charles Walkovich, Select Board Member

I move that the Town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5C½, for the purpose of increasing the real estate tax exemptions by 20% to all persons who qualify for property tax exemptions under clauses 22(a-f), 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, 17D, 37A, and 41C of section 5 of Chapter 59, to take effect in Fiscal Year 2026, starting on July 1, 2025.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

## **MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

## **ARTICLE 18 – ACCEPT GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 59, Section 5, Clause 22I**

To see if the Town will vote to accept clause 22I of Section 5 of Chapter 59 of the General Laws, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under clauses 22(a-f), 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E and 22F of Section 5 (relative to veterans and their survivors) by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor's, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for the previous year, to take effect in Fiscal Year 2026, starting on July 1, 2025, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *For several years the Select Board has attempted to provide tax relief for veterans. In 2024, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created legislative support for local options to increase exemptions for veterans. Article 18 proposes to increase the listed exemptions by a Cost of living increase established each year by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The impact of this change will be about \$1700.00 based on current eligible applicants. This impact is covered from the Overlay budget and does not increase the budget request.*

**Motion made by:** Charles Walkovich, Select Board Member

I move that the Town vote to accept clause 22I of Section 5 of Chapter 59 of the General Laws, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under clauses 22(a-f), 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E and 22F of Section 5 (relative to veterans and their survivors) by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor's, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for the previous year, to take effect in Fiscal Year 2026, starting on July 1, 2025.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

## **MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

## **ARTICLE 19 – FREE CASH APPROPRIATION FOR SNOW & ICE**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$255,440.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, or other available funds, to reduce the Fiscal Year 2025 snow and ice budget deficit, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *An appropriation is needed to cover costs exceeding the amount appropriated in the FY2025 budget for Snow and Ice Removal for the FY2025 season.*

AMOUNT	TO	REASON
\$255,440.00	FY2024 FUND 42300 Snow & Ice Budget	Snow and Ice Deficit Spending

**Motion made by:** John Ladik, Finance Committee Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate \$255,440.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024 to the FY2025 General Budget Fund item 42300, Snow and Ice.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 20 – AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR A MODULAR BUILDING**

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 21C to authorize a lease-purchase financing agreement for the acquisition of a modular or pre-fabricated building to be used by the Fire Department, as shown in Appendix E to the warrant for this Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The Park Street headquarters of the Pepperell Fire Department is undersized and does not provide adequate office, operations, or living space for our first responders. In conjunction with Select Board member Tony Beattie and the Planning Board chair Al Patenaude, the Fire Chief requests permission to enter into a five year lease for a modular building. This building will enable us to provide the proper space for the department and to renovate the interior of the existing building.*

**Motion made by:** Tony Beattie, Select Board Clerk

I move that the Town vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 21C to authorize a lease-purchase financing agreement for the acquisition of a modular or pre-fabricated building to be used by the Fire Department as shown in Appendix E to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Two-thirds Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, 135 YAY – 1 NAY**

**ARTICLE 21 – APPROPRIATION FOR RENOVATION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow \$481,518.00 for the renovation and improvement of the Fire Department headquarters at 38 Park Street, including the installation of a modular or pre-fabricated building, as shown in Appendix E to the warrant for this Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *In conjunction with Article 20, the lease payments, site preparation, and interior renovations will cost \$481,518.00. This request asks that \$200,000.00 be transferred from the unused funds appropriated in Article 19 of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting and appropriate \$281,518.00 from Free Cash.*

**Motion made by:** Mark Mathews, Select Board Chair

I move that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate \$200,000.00, being the unexpended balance of the appropriation voted under Article 19 of the warrant for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting (fire pumper truck grant match) and appropriate \$281,518.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, for a total of \$481,518.00, for the renovation and improvement of the Fire Department Headquarters at 38 Park Street, including the installation of a modular or pre-fabricated building.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 22 – APPROPRIATION FOR OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$50,000.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, or other available funds, to be deposited into the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) are health insurance costs for Town retirees. The Town is required by law to provide certain eligible former employees a portion of their health insurance in retirement. Due to rising health insurance costs in the past three decades, the OPEB expense is now a significant portion of the Town budget. Funding the Trust holds funds in reserve for future obligations. The current unfunded liability is \$11,492,753.00 and there is \$375,137.00 in the OPEB Trust, just 3.26% of our liability.*

**Motion made by:** Charles Walkovich, Select Board Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate \$50,000.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, to be deposited into the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee does not recommend this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 23 – APPROPRIATION FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE HIGHWAY**

**GARAGE ROOF**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$250,000.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, or other available funds, for the replacement of the Highway Garage roof, as shown in Appendix F to the warrant for this Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The DPW highway garage roof is almost 50 years old and requires substantial repairs annually. These repairs are not adequate to prolong the life of the roof and the most recent repairs only reduce the leakage on a temporary basis.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move to appropriate \$250,000.00 from Free Cash certified as of July 1, 2024, for the replacement of the Highway Garage roof, as shown in Appendix F to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

**ARTICLE 24 – APPROPRIATION FOR VEHICLE**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$250,000.00 from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings and \$200,000.00 from Stormwater Enterprise Retained Earnings, certified as of July 1, 2024, or other available funds, for a total of \$450,000, for the

purchase of a hydro-excavator and catch basin cleaning vehicle, as shown in Appendix G to the warrant for this Town Meeting or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The regulatory environment has recently produced two unfunded mandates that require the Town to place efforts towards the inspection of the buried water system and the condition of the drainage system. These mandates through the EPA and MassDEP require the use of a hydro-excavator to minimize disturbance to the ground and provide the quick access for the mandated assessments.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate \$250,000.00 from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings and \$200,000.00 from Stormwater Enterprise Retained Earnings, certified as of July 1, 2024, for a total of \$450,000, for the purchase of a hydro-excavator and catch basin cleaning vehicle, as shown in Appendix G to the warrant for this Town Meeting.

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Simple Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY BY STANDING VOTE – 100 YAY – 18 NAY**

#### **ARTICLE 25 – LAND ACQUISITION FOR SEWER DEPARTMENT**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$3,500.00 from Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings certified as of July 1, 2024, for the purchase of a parcel of land located adjacent to Town-owned property at 51A Heald Street for the purpose of allowing for the proper access to, and maintenance of, a Sewer Department pumping station, as shown in Appendix H to the warrant for this Town Meeting or take any other action relative thereto.

**Explanation:** *The wastewater pumping station on Heald was constructed on a 0.02 acre lot of land known as 51A Heald Street. Since that time the station impact has been beyond the initial acquisition and the Sewer Division is looking to expand the land for the wastewater pumping station by an additional 10 feet in each direction to reduce impacts to the adjacent parcel.*

**Motion made by:** Pat Harrington, Board of Public Works Member

I move that the Town vote to appropriate \$3,500.00 from Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings certified as of July 1, 2024, for the purchase of a parcel of land located adjacent to Town-owned property at 51A Heald Street for the purpose of allowing for the proper access to, and maintenance of, a Sewer Department pumping station.

**Recommendation:** The Board of Public Works recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Recommendation:** The Select Board recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Two-thirds Majority required for passage.**

**MOTION PASSED BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, 120 YAY – 0 NAY**

All Business on the Warrant having been acted upon, a motion was made and seconded to dissolve said Town Meeting at 9:18pm.

(A full videotaped transcript of the 2025 Annual Town Meeting and all discussion details is available through Pepperell Community Media)