

# **TOWN OF TOPSFIELD MASSACHUSETTS**



## **ANNUAL AND SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANTS**

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**TOWN MEETING**

**TUESDAY MAY 3, 2022  
7:00 PM**

**MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL  
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
20 ENDICOTT ROAD, BOXFORD MA**

March 30, 2022

Dear Fellow Residents,

While there may be light coming, it has been a long two years. Topsfield, its residents, and its employees have continually demonstrated why our town is such an amazing place to live. We thank the Town and school employees in continuing to adjust how they work and continuing to provide essential services to the Town during the changing and challenging Covid environment. We also recognize and thank everyone in Town government and the schools who were able to also achieve a balanced budget for FY 23 without the need for an override. We do recognize that this balanced budget does include the use of grants and other one-time funds.

In accordance with the bylaws of the Town of Topsfield, the Finance Committee reviewed and prepared recommendations regarding the Town's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY2023) for July 1, 2022 through to June 30, 2023 and for other Warrant Articles to be voted upon by all citizens in attendance at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and at the Special Town Meeting.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Order on March 12, 2020, which suspended certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25), allowing Finance Committee meetings to take place via video and voice conferences. The minutes of these meetings and some recordings of the Finance Committee's deliberations have been made available on the Town website.

On November 16, 2021, the Finance Committee issued guidelines to all Town departments and elected supervising boards to consider as they built their budgets based on their assessment of needed services and known costs. The guidelines are not a guarantee of funding but provide a starting point to assist the Town and school administrators in preparing a proposed budget without a need for overrides. These guidelines requested the submission of department budgets with appropriate adjustments to the salary and wage grid for non-represented personnel, negotiated contractual salaries and wages, and a 0.0% increase in "Other" costs, which is comprised of non-salary and wage accounts. The guidelines stated no new programs, and departments were asked to continue to focus on services that are essential to the Town. We recognize that insurance costs, primarily health care and pension contributions, have historically been rising significantly. Recognizing the continued impact of Covid-19 and the need to support our students; for the Elementary Schools the guideline was a 3.00% increase over the FY2022 budgeted amount, excluding any extraordinary special education costs. The guideline for the Masconomet Operating & Maintenance (O&M) Budget was 2.75% for overall Community Contributions; Topsfield's share of the Community Contributions is calculated based on State Net School Spending requirements and Topsfield's share of Masconomet enrollment. In the guideline letter, the Finance Committee again articulated its continued perspective that there is an unsustainable fundamental disconnect between the 4-6% annual increase in salary growth (in the theoretical scenario where headcount and personnel are static in two consecutive years, not including any changes in insurance or benefits) compared to the 2.5% annual increase consistent with Proposition 2½. The Finance Committee wishes to emphasize its recommendation that the supervising boards and the Town and school administrations look at ways to align future personnel costs more closely with broader economic wage growth. We recognize that the Masconomet school committee and the Town Select Board in the most recent negotiations acknowledged this issue and worked to begin addressing this disconnect.

Department budgets and any needed capital items were discussed and voted during public meetings of the respective elected supervising boards. As in years past, over the course of the winter and early spring, the Finance Committee worked with Town boards and department heads to understand department needs and costs, and potential revenue sources. Every year it is a challenge to provide even level services within the constraints of available funds. With the unknowns of the long-term economic impacts of COVID-19, current inflation trends, and the potential for economic downturns, the Finance Committee has used

March 30, 2022

conservative assumptions in its modeling of state and local receipts and is anticipating challenging times ahead over the next few years. We would like to acknowledge the trend in ambulance receipts is significantly positive and expect this to continue for the next few years. The use of one-time funds and grants has allowed the town to maintain services without requiring overrides. However, as those funds end, it is unlikely that we can continue existing services within the tax levy limit.

Recognizing that it is a unique and difficult year, the Topsfield Elementary and Masconomet Regional Administration and School Committees worked hard to meet their targets for this coming year. Using one-time funds and deferring some initiatives from their long-term plan, the Elementary Schools were able to meet the targeted guidelines of 3.0% with a budget of \$9,649,704 with an additional \$85,819 in extraordinary special education costs. The Masconomet Administration and School Committee came in within our 2.75% guidelines at a 2.2% increase in the community contribution to the O&M budget; this was achieved with the help of significant one-time savings and non-recurring funds. Again, this year due to enrollment shifts Topsfield's share grew and the Topsfield assessment increased 4.56% for a total of \$8,776,844. This is partially offset by a credit of \$143,887 to Topsfield from the final State payment towards Masco building debt.

It should be noted that enrollment figures for Masconomet have decreased significantly over the last 10 years and the Finance Committee hopes the School Committee will find ways to reduce their expenses in line with the reduction in the number of students served.

Along with the work the schools did, the Town Administrator and team worked with the Select Board and Finance Committee and identified the necessary cuts to deliver a balanced budget without the need for any overrides. After deliberations and subsequent voting, the Finance Committee has recommended an FY2023 budget with a 2.19% increase in the General Operating Budget (Article Third).

Notable items in the Article Third budget:

- Health insurance came in at a 3.43% increase
- The Finance Committee voted to recommend an FY2023 Elementary School budget that is at the Finance Committee guideline. This does include an additional reduction in the fees charged for 5-day Kindergarten compared to FY2022, funded again through use of one-time grant funds. The Elementary School Committee had also hoped to expand services, including free 5-day Kindergarten, small class size, curriculum enhancements and a regular technology replacement cycle, but pulled back those pursuits again this year given the reality of the economic impact of COVID-19. We are anticipating requests to support these goals in FY2024
- The salary & wage lines of department budgets reflect settled contracts and a 2.0% increase to the non-union salary & wage grid, with no movements on the grid for this coming year. We acknowledge the sacrifice made by non-represented personnel to balance the budget.
- The Debt Service budget decrease is 16.4%, reflecting some debt that has been paid off.
- The Finance Committee has chosen to apply \$300,000 of Free Cash to balance the budget, consistent with our policy guidelines for use of Free Cash. An additional \$100,000 of Free Cash has been applied to further reduce the tax levy, effectively returning to the taxpayers FY2021 tax dollars that were not needed for operating costs, due to receipt of COVID-related grant funds.
- Overall, the recommended FY2023 budget for Annual Town Meeting is projected to increase 1.89% compared to FY2022. After considering projected state aid and local receipts, new growth, Free Cash and other available funds, the projected increase to the tax levy is 1.17% compared to FY2022.

March 30, 2022

In addition to certain fixed charges that resulted in an increase in FY2023 compared to FY2022 (e.g., increased pension obligations, and additional funds for ambulance billing services, offset by increased ambulance revenue), the Finance Committee considered a number of other requests over guidelines that are contractual or aim to improve Town services. Some of these were approved, including: 1.) \$138,347 to fund 2 additional firefighters' wages and training for 24/7 station coverage which is being funded in the short term by ARPA Funds and anticipated to be funded in the future by revenue growth from the Ambulance Service; 2.) \$14,100 in increased expenses related to ambulance services that are covered by significantly growth in Ambulance revenues funded via ARPA; 3.) \$12,489 to support mandated election changes including two precincts and extended In-Person Voting funded via ARPA; 4.) \$ 8,100 for the bi-annual GASB 45 OPEB Actuary Study funded via ARPA; 5.) \$3,925 for town hall equipment including Cyber Software, and additional electricity charges funded via ARPA; 6.) Increase in Building Inspector and Alternate Inspector Wages of \$6671; 7.) \$11,976 for Library expenses including Landscaping, replacing water bubblers, and increases in Computer and Network expenses; 8.) \$3,500 lease on a town hall plotter printer; The total of all the approved contractual and other above guideline requests is \$198,708 or about 0.73% of the total tax levy; some of these items were offset by reductions in other line items or anticipated increases in revenues.

The Finance Committee worked with the Town Administrator and departments/boards on funding for a number of capital and one-time purchase items. During the ATM, Finance Committee recommends funding various items from Free Cash, including: 1.) Police radios; 2.) Phase 1 of 3 to address Steward and Proctor School Floors, 3.) Public Works pickup truck, and a dump truck; A vehicle lift, and a zero-turn mower; 4.) Removal of hazardous trees from Town property; 5.) Landfill repairs; 6.) Park and ballfield improvements; 7.) Consulting for the municipal stormwater permit; and 8.) Recodification of zoning bylaws. These were deemed the most important of many competing needs. Free Cash expenditures for these capital and one-time items totals \$502,300. Additional capital items associated with the Cemetery or Water Department are recommended to be funded through the Cemetery or Water Enterprise Funds. The Finance Committee has also voted to use Free Cash to make annual contributions in the amounts of \$400,000, \$125,000 and \$360,000 to the capital stabilization, general stabilization and OPEB funds. These can be thought of as the Town's savings accounts against an unexpected need and/or future financial commitments. These amounts are consistent with our financial policies for OPEB and the two stabilization funds and in anticipation of upcoming capital needs.

We encourage you to read the warrants carefully, then participate in the Town Moderator's Forum (Tuesday, April 26, 2022 @7PM via Zoom, please check the Town website under the News section for more information) and Annual Town Meeting, and to give careful consideration to both the immediate and long-term implications of all the important decisions before you. Additional detail for each budget addressed in the Warrants for Town Meeting, as well as more general information about Town Meeting, are available on the Topsfield website: <http://www.topsfield-ma.gov/>.

Respectfully submitted by the Topsfield Finance Committee,

Che Elwell, Chair

Karen Dow

Karen Duval

Jonathan Guido

Michael Hartmann

David Larson

Tim O'Malley

### **Dear Citizens of Topsfield,**

It is once again time for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and Special Town Meeting (STM) which will be held for the first time at Masconomet Regional High School Auditorium at 20 Endicott Rd., Boxford MA. For those citizens new to our area or unfamiliar with the “town meeting” form of government, this is the “legislative body” of Topsfield where citizens decide how to allocate resources for the coming year. Each citizen has the right to discuss and vote on the articles as they come before the general body. The only requirement is that you be a registered voter in town. Conducting the ATM at Masco will allow ample seating and space to conduct the meeting indoors and safely for those still concerned with the recent pandemic and its aftermath.

The Finance Committee and the Select Board have again done an extraordinary job in oversight of this year’s budget in attempting to keep tax assessments low and maintain services for the Town which is predominately dependent on real estate revenue.

During this year’s meeting, we will also continue to use the technique of “Consent Calendar” which was introduced several years ago by the Moderator and has been used successfully during the last few years to expedite the passing of certain warrants at Town Meeting and thus shortening the total time spent at Town Meeting.

Consent Calendar addresses certain articles which the Select Board and the Finance Committee expect, based on previous experience, to pass without controversy or debate. Its purpose is to allow the Finance Committee’s recommendations under these articles to be acted upon in a single vote. (As this requires suspension of the usual rule that the Meeting acts on each article separately, it requires unanimous consent; hence the use of the term “Consent Calendar” or Consent Agenda.) It is hoped that the time saved by not reading and explaining the Finance Committee’s recommendation under each article separately will allow the meeting to proceed more quickly rendering more time for discussion on the remaining articles.

The Consent Calendar will be taken up when the first article “on Consent” is reached. Specifically, where Article Seventh (Grant Authorization for Town Projects) will be the first Consent Article in the Warrant, there will be a motion after Article 7<sup>th</sup> to adopt the Finance Committee’s recommendations on each article included within the Consent Calendar. The same will happen prior to Article Thirtieth, which introduces changes to the Masconomet Regional School Agreement.

When that motion is made, the Moderator will ask whether any voter objects to the inclusion of any of the articles which are so listed. Any voter may rise and object to the inclusion of any particular article in the Consent Calendar. Any article to which an objection has been raised will be removed from the Consent Calendar and will then be debated and voted in the usual order. *A voter need not state a reason for making an objection and making an objection does not obligate the voter to comment on, or vote against, the recommendation under that article.*

The Finance Committee's recommendations as to all articles to which no objection has been made will then be offered for acceptance by the Town Meeting in a single vote without debate.

If you have any questions about the Consent Articles, motions or procedure, please feel free to contact the official listed in the summary of the article or to contact the Town Administrator/Select Board's Office by telephone at 978-887-1500 before Town Meeting.

Prior to the ATM, we will once again hold a Moderator's Forum to preview all the Warrant Articles that are scheduled to be addressed at this year's ATM and STM. This will be a Zoom broadcast and will take place at 7PM a week before the ATM (Information on how to join will be under the News Section of the Town Website). If you have questions or concerns about any of the Warrants, this would be an appropriate forum to air those questions.

In addition, if you have any intention of presenting a report to the general citizenry, as specified in Article the First, you must let the Moderator know ahead of time so that necessary plans and equipment may be in place. As of this writing date, there are no reports to come before the body.

I once again thank you for the honor of moderating the ATM and STM and look forward to conducting the meeting with all general courtesy, decorum and timeliness. I hope to see you at Masco Auditorium this year.

Sincerely,

Stephen T. Whelan, Town Moderator (moderator@topsfield-ma.gov)

2022 Annual Town Meeting  
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\*\* Consent Agenda Two

**TOWN OF TOPSFIELD**



**WARRANT FOR THE 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Essex, ss.

To the Constable of the Town of Topsfield, in said County:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Topsfield, qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL  
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
20 ENDICOTT ROAD, BOXFORD MA**

in said Boxford, on Tuesday, the third day of May, 2022, at seven o'clock in the afternoon (7:00 PM) then and there to act on the following articles:

**ARTICLE FIRST:**  
**REPORTS**

To hear all reports that may legally come before the meeting.

**ARTICLE SECOND:**  
**BALANCE TRANSFERS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer certain account balances and appropriate the same to fund the General Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 to be voted under Article Third, or take any other action relative thereto.

<b>Account:</b>	<b>Amount:</b>
Conservation Commission	20,000
Cemetery Revolving Account	25,000
Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund	25,000
Cable/PEG Fund	54,898
<b>Account Subtotal</b>	<b>\$124,898</b>
<b>American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant:</b>	
Two New Fulltime Firefighters (includes uniform allowance)	138,347
Increase in Ambulance Billing	8,100
Increase to Ambulance Medical Supplies	6,000



Bi-annual GASB 45 Actuary Study	8,100
Additional Election Costs in FY23	12,489
Electricity for Old Garage	625
Additional Cyber Security Contract Costs	3,300
<b>ARPA Subtotal</b>	<b>\$176,961</b>
<b>Total Balance to Transfer:</b>	<b>\$301,859</b>

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$301,859 from various funds listed under this Article Second in the warrant and appropriate the same to fund the General Operating Budget in Fiscal Year 2023 to be voted under Article Third.**

*This article transfers available funds from various accounts to help fund the Fiscal Year 2023 General Operating Budget.*

### **ARTICLE THIRD:**

#### **GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to fix the annual salary and compensation of all elected officers, and raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money for elementary schools, highways, and other Town expenses from July 1, 2022 for Fiscal Year 2023, and determine the manner of expending the same, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$22,715,420 for elementary schools, highways, and other Town expenses, and fix the annual salary and compensation of all elected officers from July 1, 2022, and determine the manner of expending the same as stated in Attachment A to the warrant; and to meet said appropriation, in addition to the amount transferred for such purposes under Article Second, raise and assess the sum of \$22,413,561.**

*This article approves the Fiscal Year 2023 General Operating Budget for the Town, within the levy limit, for general government purposes and the elementary schools. The transfers proposed under Article Second provide \$301,859 to fund a portion of Fiscal Year 2023 General Operating Budget, thereby reducing the total amount to be raised.*

*Please refer to "Attachment A" for the detailed Fiscal Year 2023 General Operating Budget.*

### **ARTICLE FOURTH:**

#### **WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money for the Water Department for Fiscal Year 2023 and determine the manner of expending the same, or take any other action relative thereto.

## WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET

Actual Appropriation FY2022		Proposed Appropriation FY2023
\$ 366,175	Salary & Wages	\$ 397,213
434,930	Other	419,550
659,300	Long-Term Debt Principal	652,300
366,886	Long-Term Debt Interest	337,856
-	Short Term Debt Principal	-
-	Short-Term Debt Interest	-
-	Debt Issue Costs	-
125,000	Water Reserve Fund	125,000
155,000	Unanticipated Emergency	125,000
<u>2,107,291</u>		<u>2,056,919</u>
	SUB-TOTAL – DIRECT COSTS:	
178,046	Indirect Costs	190,671
<u>\$2,285,337</u>	TOTAL WATER DEPARTMENT BUDGET:	<u>\$2,247,590</u>

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer from Water Revenue the sum of \$2,056,919 and appropriate the same as detailed under this Article Fourth in the Warrant, to operate the Water Department from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, and to confirm the sum of \$190,671 of indirect costs appropriated in the General Fund under Article Third, to be funded from Water Revenues.**

*This article approves the Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget for the Water Department.*

### **ARTICLE FIFTH:**

#### **MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Gross Budget of the Masconomet Regional School District and to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money for the Town's share of the assessment of same, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Gross Budget of the Masconomet Regional School District in the amount of \$38,367,132 and raise, assess and appropriate the sum of \$8,776,844 to fund the Town's share of the Fiscal Year 2023 Masconomet Regional School District Maintenance & Operating Assessment.**

*This article approves Masconomet's FY23 gross budget and appropriates funds for Topsfield's share of that budget which is referred to as Topsfield's assessment. The Masconomet FY23 assessment, for the first time in some 20 years, includes only operating expenses because all debt assessments for the school's renovation will end this year. The operating portion of this year's Masconomet budget increased by \$853,893 (2.3%) over FY23 and Topsfield's assessment of that budget increased by \$382,477 (4.6%) based upon Topsfield's percentage of student enrollment.*

### **ARTICLE SIXTH:**

#### **ESSEX NORTH SHORE AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Gross Operating Budget of the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District and to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money for the Town's share of the assessment of same, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Gross Operating Budget of the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District in the amount of \$33,585,649 and raise, assess and appropriate the sum of \$442,571 for the Town's share of the assessment of same.**

*This article approves the Fiscal Year 2023 Gross Operating Budget for the school district and authorizes the appropriation for Topsfield's share of the school district's assessment. Topsfield's participation in the school satisfies the Commonwealth's statutory requirements to offer vocational education at the high school level. Currently, there are 27 students enrolled from the Town of Topsfield, which is an increase of two students from the prior year. Topsfield's FY23 assessment represents a 5.5% increase over FY22.*

**\*\*\*\*\* CONSENT AGENDA ONE \*\*\*\*\*  
(Articles 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>)**

**\*ARTICLE SEVENTH:**

**GRANT AUTHORIZATION FOR TOWN PROJECTS**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept, and expend without further appropriation any private, state, or federal grants or loans for Town projects, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept, and expend without further appropriation any private, state, or federal grants or loans for Town projects.**

*This annual article allows the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend any private, state, or federal grants and loans for Town projects.*

**\*ARTICLE EIGHTH:**

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for the ensuing year, and to accept and expend such sums as may be made available to the Town in accordance with MGL c.90, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for the ensuing year and to accept and expend any sums of money made available to the Town in accordance with MGL c.90.**

*This annual article allows the Select Board to enter into contracts with the state for roadway and highway improvement purposes and to accept state funds such as "Chapter 90" funds for road maintenance and reconstruction.*

**\*ARTICLE NINTH:**

**TRI-TOWN COUNCIL ON YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money as a grant for Fiscal Year 2023 to fund certain activities of the Tri-Town Council, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$21,525 as a grant for Fiscal Year 2023 to fund activities of the Tri-Town Council.**

*This article approves funds for a grant to support the activities of the Tri-Town Council, a non-profit organization serving Topsfield, Boxford and Middleton. The Council's mission is to reduce and prevent at-risk behavior and strengthen the social and emotional well-being of Tri-Town youth.*

**\*ARTICLE TENTH:**

**SENIOR CARE**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money as a grant to Senior Care Inc., an authorized service provider for elders in Topsfield, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$1,500 as a grant for Fiscal Year 2023 to fund activities of Senior Care Inc.**

*This article appropriates funds for a grant to support Senior Care Inc. for its provision of services to seniors. Senior Care Inc. has been the service provider for over 40 years, serving Topsfield and eight other towns on the North Shore. These services, in part, include Meals on Wheels and a multitude of care, intervention and nursing services.*

**\*ARTICLE ELEVENTH:**

**COMPENSATED ABSENCES FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to the Compensated Absences Fund for the costs of employment separation benefits for unused sick and vacation leave, or other benefits as may be required by law, the Personnel Bylaw, rules, regulations, policies or applicable contracts or collective bargaining agreements, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$100,000 to the Town's Compensated Absences Fund to fund the costs of employment separation benefits for unused sick and vacation leave or other benefits as may be required by law, the Personnel Bylaw, rules, regulations, policies or applicable contracts or collective bargaining agreements.**

*This article allows the Town to appropriate funds to the Compensated Absences Fund, a separation account created under Article Fifteenth of the May 2, 2017 Annual Town Meeting for obligations to employees who retire, or who otherwise leave the service of the Town, for unused sick and vacation leave or other benefits earned and accrued while employed by the Town and which are owed pursuant to the law, the Personnel Bylaw, rules, regulations, policies, applicable contracts or collective bargaining agreements.*

**\*ARTICLE TWELFTH:**

**UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to the Unemployment Compensation Fund for the costs of unemployment benefits as may be required by law, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$80,000 to the Town's Unemployment Compensation Fund to fund the costs of unemployment benefits as may be required by law.**

*This article allows the Town to appropriate funds to the Unemployment Compensation Fund, a separation account created under Article Sixteenth of the May 2, 2017 Annual Town Meeting, to provide for potential*

*payments to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts relative to unemployment compensation for school and municipal employees separated from the Town's employment.*

**\*ARTICLE THIRTEENTH:**

**TOWN FACILITIES REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board to fund facilities repairs, maintenance and any associated costs to repair, maintain and ensure the safety and security of Town-owned properties, facilities equipment and assets, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$25,000 to be expended by the Select Board to fund facilities repairs, maintenance and any associated costs to repair, maintain and ensure the safety and security of Town-owned properties, facilities equipment and assets, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article funds Town facility repairs and maintenance needs that exceed appropriations available in the General Operating Budget in Article Third.*

\*\*\*\*\* END CONSENT AGENDA ONE \*\*\*\*\*

**ARTICLE FOURTEENTH:**

**POLICE CRUISER RADIOS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, with the advice of the Police Chief, to purchase and install two new police cruiser radios, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$11,000 to be expended by the Select Board, with the advice of the Police Chief, to purchase and install two new police cruiser radios, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would allow the Town to replace two existing in-vehicle police radios with two new in-vehicle radios that provide state and federal encryption. This is the next part of a multiyear program to upgrade the department's in-vehicle police radios. In the future, two more radios will be requested to complete this program.*

**ARTICLE FIFTEENTH:**

**STEWART AND PROCTOR SCHOOL FLOORS – PHASE 1**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Topsfield School Committee, to fund Phase I of a three-year program to replace the classroom, hallway and office flooring at the Stewart and Proctor Elementary Schools, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$60,000 to be expended by the Topsfield School Committee to fund the first year of a three-year program to replace the classroom, hallway and office flooring at the Stewart and Proctor Elementary Schools, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would allow the School Committee to begin a three-year program to replace the vinyl composite tile flooring which has deteriorated in the classrooms, hallways and offices at Steward and Proctor Schools with a more durable vinyl tile and with nylon power bond carpet in certain areas.*

#### **ARTICLE SIXTEENTH:**

##### **PUBLIC WORKS PICKUP TRUCK**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to purchase and equip a new Public Works Pickup Truck, including all incidental and related expenses, and trade-in or sell a 2014 Pickup Truck, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$40,000 to be expended by the Select Board to purchase and equip a new Pickup Truck, including all incidental and related expenses, and trade-in or sell a 2014 Pickup Truck.**

*This article would allow the Town to purchase a new pick-up truck to replace a 2014 pickup truck which has had daily use including roadside support, emergency services, snow removal and other work. The current vehicle has significant rust issues. The total cost for a new pickup truck, including outfitting with lights, rack, and tool box, is \$53,000 and the estimated trade-in or sale of the 2014 pickup truck, is \$13,000, resulting in a net cost of \$40,000.*

#### **ARTICLE SEVENTEENTH:**

##### **PUBLIC WORKS ONE-TON DUMP TRUCK**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to purchase and equip a new Public Works One-Ton Dump Truck, including all incidental and related expenses, and trade-in or sell a 2010 One-Ton Dump Truck, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$59,000 to be expended by the Select Board, to purchase and equip a new One-Ton Dump Truck, including all incidental and related expenses, and trade-in or sell a 2010 One-Ton Dump Truck.**

*This article would allow the Town to purchase a new one-ton dump truck to replace a 2010 one-ton dump truck which has had daily use including park, cemetery and highway hauling, snow removal, and other work. The total cost for a new one-ton dump truck, including outfitting a snow plow, is \$67,000, and the estimated trade-in or sale of the 2010 one-ton dump truck, is \$8,000, resulting in a net cost of \$59,000.*

#### **ARTICLE EIGHTEENTH:**

##### **PUBLIC WORKS VEHICLE LIFTS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to purchase and equip heavy duty and light duty vehicle lifts for the DPW Facility, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$67,000 to be expended by the Select Board to purchase and equip heavy duty and light duty vehicle lifts for the DPW Facility, including all incidental and related expenses; and to meet said appropriation, transfer the sum of \$60,300 from Free Cash, and the sum of \$6,700 from the Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings.**

*This article would fund replacement of the current twenty-three-year-old heavy-duty vehicle lift, which is unreliable and has incurred costly repairs to maintain certification. The light duty lift, which supports vehicles by their underbody, will allow the Town mechanic to safely and effectively maintain the Town's dozen and a half cars and pickup trucks. Together these two lifts will allow the Town to better service our vehicles in-house, in lieu of costlier third-party vehicle maintenance.*

#### **ARTICLE NINETEENTH:**

##### **PUBLIC WORKS ZERO TURN MOWER**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to purchase and equip a new Public Works zero-turn mower, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$10,000 to be expended by the Select Board to purchase and equip a new Zero-Turn Mower, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would allow the Town to replace one zero-turn mower used for daily ground maintenance of the Town's parks, fields, cemeteries and other open space. Currently there are four front line mowers, with each mower having an estimated useful life up to four years. The intent going forward is to replace one mower each year.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTIETH:**

##### **PINE GROVE CEMETERY ROADWAY AND WATER LINE REPLACEMENT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to repair, improve and expand the water lines and roadways at the Pine Grove Cemetery, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Cemetery Perpetual Care funds the sum of \$160,000 to be expended by the Select Board to repair, improve and expand the water lines and roadways at the Pine Grove Cemetery, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would allow the Town to reclaim, regrade and repave the deteriorated roadways in the cemetery. Further, this article would allow the town to replace and expand the water lines used to provide water throughout the cemetery. The waterlines, most of which are under the roadways, have deteriorated resulting in patches and bypasses to keep the system running.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-FIRST:**

##### **PINE GROVE CEMETERY LOT EXPANSION**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board to fund expansion of the Pine Grove Cemetery, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Sale of Lots Cemetery fund the sum of \$40,000 to be expended by the Select Board to fund the expansion of the Pine Grove Cemetery, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article will allow the Town to fund the engineering, planning, clearing and plantings to create an estimated 300 additional burial lots at the Pine Grove Cemetery. The cemetery currently has about ten full burial lots available for sale.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-SECOND:**

##### **WATER DEPARTMENT BILLING SOFTWARE**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to fund the purchase, installation, and implementation of a new Water Department Billing Software System, including all incidental or related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from the Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings the sum of \$25,000, to be expended by the Select Board, to fund the purchase, installation, and implementation of a new Water Department Billing Software System, including all incidental or related expenses.**

*This article would fund the replacement of the current Water Department billing software, which is no longer supported by Microsoft, with a system that includes cloud features allowing residents to track their prior water use and obtain billing information. The new software will also create a more efficient interdepartmental operational procedure. The cost for the new software includes a one-time expense for initial onboarding and data migration.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-THIRD:**

##### **LANDFILL REPAIRS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, for the repair and/or replacement of environmental control and monitoring equipment at the Landfill site, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$35,000 from Free Cash, to be expended by the Select Board for the repair and/or replacement of environmental control and monitoring equipment at the Landfill site, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would fund correcting certain defects in the monitoring network and related infrastructure at the former landfill at Pye Brook Community Park. This maintenance is mandated through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Solid Waste Facility Regulation, 310 CMR 19.133: Maintenance of Environmental Control and Monitoring Systems.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-FOURTH:**

##### **TREE REMOVAL**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to fund the removal of hazardous trees from Town properties and public right-of-ways, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 from Free Cash, to be expended by the Select Board to fund the removal of hazardous trees from Town properties and public right-of-ways, including all incidental and related expenses.**



*There are a number of hazardous trees located on Town properties and public right-of-ways. This article would allow the Town to address this backlog of hazardous trees which are typically dead or diseased. The annual Town budget includes funds for tree removal but these funds are used primarily to remove trees which come down during storms.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-FIFTH:**

##### **TREE PLANTINGS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to fund the planting of trees on Town properties and public right-of-ways, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town take no action.**

*This article would fund the planting of trees on Town properties and public right-of-ways. Currently the Town does not have a funding source to purchase and plant new trees to offset trees that have been removed by the town or trees that have come down during storms.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-SIXTH:**

##### **PARK AND BALL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, to repair and improve multiple park and ball fields at Pye Brook Community Park, Klock Park, and Proctor School, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$45,000 from Free Cash, to be expended by the Select Board to repair and improve multiple park and ball fields at Pye Brook Community Park, Klock Park, and Proctor School, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would fund improvements to six (6) baseball and softball fields at Pye Brook Community Park, Klock Park, and Proctor School. As a result of the wear and tear on the fields, the playing surfaces have deteriorated significantly, resulting in unlevel playing surfaces and raised edges that pose a safety concern. This article would allow for the fields to be professionally leveled, regraded, and edged, and for new sod to be planted at each field. The work would likely take two playing seasons to complete.*

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-SEVENTH:**

##### **CONSULTING TO MAINTAIN MS4 GENERAL PERMIT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board, for consulting services to perform work and prepare and submit reports related to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System General Permit, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$65,000 from Free Cash, to be expended by the Select Board for consulting services to perform work and prepare and submit reports related to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System General Permit, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would fund a consultant to help the Town comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit. Under this permit communities such as Topsfield are required to implement*

*extensive stormwater-related programs with mandated reporting for the collection and discharge of stormwaters from roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, and/or storm drains.*

*The permit has been in effect since 2016 and requires additional work to ensure compliance through FY23.*

**ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHTH:**  
**RECODIFICATION OF ZONING BYLAWS**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board to fund the codification of the Town's Zoning Bylaws, including all incidental or related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$7,000 from Free Cash, to be expended by the Select Board to perform a codification of the Town's Zoning Bylaws, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*This article would fund procurement of the services of a third-party vendor to perform a codification of the existing Zoning Bylaws. The codification of the Town's Zoning Bylaws will revise section headings and sub-designations, and provide for consistent capitalization, and a uniform style in the Zoning Bylaws, to create a better organized and more easily accessible structure for access by the public. Last year the Town adopted the codification of the Town's General Bylaws. This is the second and final phase of the Bylaw codification.*

**\*\*\*\*\* CONSENT AGENDA TWO \*\*\*\*\***  
**(Articles 29<sup>th</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup>)**

**\*\*ARTICLE TWENTY-NINTH:**  
**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - APPORTIONMENT**

To see if the Town will vote to amend subsection E (3) of Section IV ("Apportionment of Operating Costs") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

*For Fiscal Year 2024, operating costs will be apportioned to member towns using the method outlined in G.L. c. 70, § 6. Operating assessments for each member town shall equal the sum of (i) such member town's required local contribution to the regional school district as determined by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, and (ii) the product of (a) that portion of the regional school district's net school spending, as defined by G.L. c. 70, § 2, which exceeds ***the total required local contribution for all member towns, multiplied by (b) the ratio which such member town's October 1 pupil enrollment in the regional school district for the three (3) preceding fiscal years bears to the total pupil enrollment from all member towns during the same period.****

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Twenty-Ninth in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, with respect to a typographical error that inadvertently left off a clause of subsection E (3) of Section IV when Amendment 11 was adopted.*

**\*\*ARTICLE THIRTIETH:**

**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - PAYMENTS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend subsection F ("Fiscal Year and Times of Payments of Apportioned Costs") of Section IV ("Apportionment of Operating Costs") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by deleting the text shown in ~~strike through~~, and inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

**F. Fiscal Year and Times of Payments of Apportioned Costs**

~~The fiscal year or period of the District shall be the same as the fiscal period of the member towns as provided by law, and the word year or fiscal year or calendar year as it relates in this Agreement to a fiscal or budget year shall mean the fiscal year of the District.~~

~~Each member town shall pay to the District in each fiscal year its proportionate share, certified as provided in subsection V (C), of the capital and operating costs. Except as otherwise provided in subsection V (A), the annual share of each member town shall be paid in four (4) equal installments quarterly due on or before the following dates each year:~~

~~August 15~~

~~November 15~~

~~February 15~~

~~May 15~~

And replacing it with:

**F. Fiscal Year and Times of Payments of Apportioned Costs**

***The fiscal year or period of the District shall be the same as the fiscal period of the member towns as provided by law, and the word year or fiscal year or calendar year as it relates in this Agreement to a fiscal or budget year shall mean the fiscal year of the District.***

***Each member town shall pay to the District in each fiscal year its proportionate share, certified as provided in subsection V (B), of the capital and operating costs. Except as otherwise provided in subsection V (A), the annual share of each member town shall be paid in four (4) equal installments quarterly due on or before the following dates each year:***

***August 15***

***November 15***

***February 15***

***May 15***

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Thirtieth in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, to correct an error in Amendment 12 from 2021. The 2021 amendment incorrectly referenced the removal and replacement of the second sentence when the third sentence was intended to be removed and replaced. In addition, this amendment corrects an inaccurate reference to Section V(C), which should be renumbered to "V (B)" due to a previous amendment.*

**\*\*ARTICLE THIRTY-FIRST:**

**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - BUDGET APPROVAL**

To see if the Town will vote to amend subsection (B) ("Final Maintenance and Operating Budget") of Section V ("Budget") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by deleting the text shown in ~~strike through~~, and inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

The Committee shall, not later than forty-five (45) days prior to the earliest date on which the business session of the annual town meeting of any member town is to be held (but in any event, not later than March thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) in each year adopt an annual maintenance and operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year, ***by a two-thirds vote of all its members***. Said budget to include debt and interest charges and any other current capital costs as separate items, and shall apportion the amounts necessary to be raised in order to meet the said budget in accordance with the provisions of subsections IV (D) and IV (E). The amounts so apportioned to each member town shall, ***not later than thirty days following adoption of the final annual budget***, be certified by the District treasurer to the treasurers of the ~~such~~ member towns, and each ~~member town shall be liable for and shall,~~ ***at its next annual town meeting***, appropriate the amounts so certified to it. ***Approval of the budget shall require an affirmative vote of the appropriating authorities of two-thirds of the member towns.***

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Thirty-First in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, which affirms the statutory requirements that the School Committee must adopt a budget by a 2/3 majority vote of its members and that each town's annual town meeting must vote whether or not to appropriate the amounts certified to it by the Regional District Treasurer.*

**\*\*ARTICLE THIRTY-SECOND:**

**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - AMENDMENTS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend subsection B ("Procedure") of Section VII ("Amendments") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

A proposal for amendment may be initiated by a majority vote of all the members of the Committee or by a petition signed by 10% of the registered voters of any one of the member towns. In the latter case, said petition shall contain at the end thereof, a certification by the town clerk of such member town as to the number of registered voters in said town according to the most recent voting list and the number of signatures on the petition which appear to be names on registered voters of said town. Any such proposal for amendment shall be presented to the secretary of the Committee, who shall mail or deliver a notice in writing to the Board of Selectmen of each of the member towns that a proposal to amend this agreement has been received and shall enclose of copy of such proposal (without the signatures in the case of a proposal by petition). The selectmen of each member town shall include in the warrant for the next annual or a special town meeting called for the purpose an article stating the proposal or the substance thereof. Such amendment shall take effect upon its acceptance by all of the member

towns, acceptance by each town to be by a majority vote at a town meeting as aforesaid, **and approval of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.**

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Thirty-Second in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, which clarifies that all amendments to the Regional Agreement must be approved by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to take effect.*

**\*\*ARTICLE THIRTY-THIRD:**

**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - ADMISSION**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section VIII ("Admission") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

By an amendment of this agreement adopted under and in accordance with Section VII above, any other town or towns may be admitted to the regional school district upon adoption as therein provided of such amendment and upon acceptance by the town or towns seeking admission of the agreement as so amended and also upon compliance with such provisions of law ***and regulations*** as may be applicable, and such terms as may be set forth in such amendment. ***A new member may be admitted to the regional school district as of July 1 of any fiscal year, provided that all requisite approvals for such admission or withdrawal, including the Commissioner's approval, shall be obtained no later than the preceding December 31. The authorizing votes may provide for the deferral of said admission or withdrawal until July 1 of a subsequent fiscal year.***

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Thirty-Third in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, which clarifies the process and timelines through which a new town could be admitted to the Regional School District.*

**\*\*ARTICLE THIRTY-FOURTH:**

**AMEND MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT - WITHDRAWAL**

To see if the Town will vote to amend subsection A ("Procedure") of Section IX ("Withdrawal") of the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as recommended by the Masconomet Regional School District School Committee, by inserting the ***bold, italicized text***:

Any member town may withdraw from the regional school district by a majority vote of the voters present and voting on the question at an annual or special town meeting called for the purpose, such withdrawal to become effective on June 30 of the year named in the question, provided: (1) that in pursuance of such vote, the withdrawing town gives the regional school district at least one year's written notice of its intention to withdraw, (2) that the said town has paid over to the District any costs which have been certified by the district treasurer to the treasurer of the withdrawing town, including the entire amount so certified

for the year in which such withdrawal takes effect, and (3) that the said town shall remain liable to the District for its share of the indebtedness, ***including but not limited to Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and other liabilities*** of the District outstanding at the time of such withdrawal, and for interest thereon, to the same extent and in the same manner as if the town had not withdrawn from the District, except that such liability shall be reduced by any amount which such town has paid over at the time of withdrawal and which has been applied to the payment of such indebtedness or interest. ***An existing member may withdraw from the regional school district as of July 1 of any fiscal year, provided that all requisite approvals for such admission or withdrawal, including the Commissioner's approval, shall be obtained no later than the preceding December 31. The authorizing votes may provide for the deferral of said admission or withdrawal until July 1 of a subsequent fiscal year.***

**Recommended that the Town vote to amend the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, as set forth in this Article Thirty-Fourth in the warrant.**

*This article seeks approval of an amendment to the Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, of which the towns of Topsfield, Boxford, and Middleton are members, which clarifies the process through which a member town may withdraw from the Regional School District.*

\*\*\*\*\* END CONSENT AGENDA TWO \*\*\*\*\*

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY-FIFTH:**

##### **RETIRING OF SCHOOL BUILDING DEBT**

To see if the Town will vote to rescind the authorized but unissued portion of the borrowing approved at the May 2, 2017 Town Meeting for the purpose of replacing roofs at the Proctor and Steward Elementary Schools which balance is no longer needed for the projects, or to take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to rescind the authorized but unissued portion of the borrowing approved under Article Thirtieth of the May 2, 2017 Town Meeting for the purpose of replacing roofs at the Proctor and Steward Elementary Schools which balance of \$2,392,694 is no longer needed for the projects.**

*The 2017 Annual Town Meeting approved the issuance of debt for an envelope project to replace the roofs of the Proctor and Steward Elementary Schools in the amount of \$7,651,757. The roofs were completed and the project was closed out in early 2021. The final cost to the Town was \$5,259,063, reflective of Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) contribution towards the project, which left \$2,392,694 in unissued debt.*

#### **ARTICLE THIRTY-SIXTH:**

##### **OTHER POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ("OPEB" TRUST FUND)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$360,000 to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund.**

*This article allows the Town to continue to fund its OPEB liability by depositing funds in the OPEB Trust. The Town's Financial Policies recommend increasing the funding amount by \$20,000 each year until the annual funding amount reaches \$500,000 after which the funding amount will remain at \$500,000 annually until the Trust is fully funded. OPEB liabilities relate primarily to funding healthcare for retirees.*

**ARTICLE THIRTY-SEVENTH:**  
**CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote in accordance with the provisions of MGL c.40, §5B to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to the Capital Stabilization Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$400,000 to the Capital Stabilization Fund.**

*The Capital Stabilization Fund was established for the purpose of setting aside funds annually to address long term capital needs. Appropriations to such fund remain in the fund from year to year until appropriated by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting for any legal purpose consistent with the purpose of the fund. Like the General Stabilization Fund, appropriation of monies into the Capital Stabilization Fund requires a majority vote of Town Meeting.*

**ARTICLE THIRTY-EIGHTH:**  
**GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to the General Stabilization Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$125,000 to the General Stabilization Fund.**

*The General Stabilization Fund is sometimes called the "rainy day fund", and provides financial reserves for the Town. Appropriations to such fund remain in the stabilization fund from year to year until appropriated by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting for any legal purpose. Appropriation of monies into this fund requires a majority vote of Town Meeting. This article transfers funds to the general purpose "rainy day fund".*

**ARTICLE THIRTY-NINTH:**  
**FREE CASH TO OFFSET THE TAX RATE**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to reduce the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2023, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$400,000 to reduce the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2023.**

*This annual article proposes to appropriate Free Cash, not otherwise used by the Town during the Annual or Special Town Meeting, if any, to reduce the tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year.*

\*\*\*\*\* ELECTION WARRANT \*\*\*\*\*

And you are also directed to notify said inhabitants, qualified to vote in the election of Town Officers, to meet at the St. Rose Church Hall, 12 Park Street, the Fifth day of May 2022, when the polls will be open from seven o'clock in the morning (7:00 AM) to eight o'clock in the evening (8:00 PM), to bring in their votes on one ballot for the following offices:

ONE	Assessor	(3 years)
ONE	Commissioner of Trust Funds	(3 years)
ONE	Housing Authority	(5 years)
TWO	Library Trustees	(3 years)
ONE	Moderator	(1 year)
TWO	Planning Board	(3 years)
ONE	Regional District School Committee	(3 years)
TWO	Elementary School Committee	(3 years)
ONE	Select Board Member	(3 years)

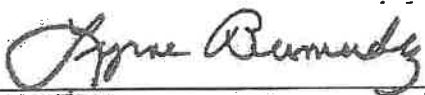
\*\*\*\*\*

You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting attested copies thereof, one at the Post Office, one at the Town Hall, and one at each of the Public Meeting Houses in said Town, seven days at least before time for holding the election portion of said meeting.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doing thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting as aforesaid.

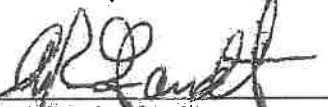
Given under our hands this Thirty-First day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-two.

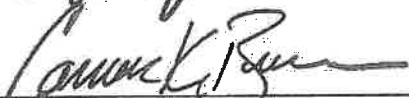
TOWN OF TOPSFIELD SELECT BOARD

  
Lynne A. Bermudez, Chair

  
Marshall F. Hook, Vice Chair & Clerk

  
Boyd R. Jackson, Member


  
A. Richard Gandt, Member

  
Cameron K. Brown, Member



A true copy

ATTEST:

  
Frederick Capobianco, Town Constable

**RECOMMENDATIONS AS VOTED BY THE TOPSFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Karen Dow

Karen Duval

Che Elwell, Chair

Jonathan Guido, Vice Chair

Michael Hartmann

David Larson

Timothy O'Malley

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2023**  
**GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET**  
**May 3, 2022**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

<b>Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2022</b>		<b>Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2023</b>	<b>\$ Chng + / (-)</b>	<b>% Chng + / (-)</b>
<b>ELECTED OFFICERS</b>				
50	<b>MODERATOR:</b>	50		
	<b>SELECTMEN:</b>			
1	Chairman	1		
1	Clerk	1		
1	Member	1		
1	Member	1		
1	Member	1		
	<b>ASSESSORS:</b>			
1,500	Chairman	1,500		
1,500	Clerk	1,500		
1,500	Member	1,500		
Appointed	<b>TOWN CLERK:</b>	Appointed		
300	<b>TOWN CONSTABLE:</b>	300		
	<b>PLANNING BOARD:</b>			
1	Chairman	1		
1	Clerk	1		
1	Member	1		
1	Member	1		
1	Member	1		

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

	Moderator:			
50	Salaries & Wages	50	-	-
50	<b>TOTAL: Moderator</b>	<b>50</b>	-	-
	Selectmen:			
285,551	Salaries & Wages	309,137	23,586	8.3%
14,111	Other Expenses	14,111	-	-
<b>299,662</b>	<b>TOTAL: Selectmen</b>	<b>323,248</b>	<b>23,586</b>	<b>7.9%</b>

Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2022		Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2023	\$ Chng + / (-)	% Chng + / (-)
	Selectmen's Special:			
77,300	Other Expenses	77,300	-	-
<b>77,300</b>	<b>TOTAL: Selectmen Special</b>	<b>77,300</b>	-	-
	Finance Committee:			
1,579	Salaries & Wages	1,610	31	2.0%
350	Other Expenses	350	-	-
100,000	Reserve Fund	100,000	-	-
<b>101,929</b>	<b>TOTAL: Finance Committee</b>	<b>101,960</b>	31	0.0%
	Town Accountant:			
171,046	Salaries & Wages	174,457	3,411	2.0%
37,026	Other Expenses	37,026	-	-
<b>208,072</b>	<b>TOTAL: Town Accountant</b>	<b>211,483</b>	3,411	1.6%
	Board of Assessors:			
146,357	Salaries & Wages	147,566	1,209	0.8%
55,295	Other Expenses	55,295	-	-
<b>201,652</b>	<b>TOTAL: Assessors</b>	<b>202,861</b>	1,209	0.6%
	Town Treasurer and Collector:			
219,624	Salaries & Wages	223,503	3,879	1.8%
52,068	Other Expenses	60,168	8,100	15.6%
<b>271,692</b>	<b>TOTAL: Town Treasurer / Collector</b>	<b>283,671</b>	11,979	4.4%
	Town Hall:			
-	Salaries & Wages	-		
265,466	Other Expenses	261,841	(3,625)	-1.4%
<b>265,466</b>	<b>TOTAL: Town Hall</b>	<b>261,841</b>	(3,625)	-1.4%
	Town Owned Buildings:			
400	Other Expenses (School Street Bldg Electricity)	625	225	56.3%
<b>400</b>	<b>TOTAL: Town Owned Buildings</b>	<b>625</b>	225	56.3%
	P.E.G. / Cable Advisory:			
5,000	Salaries & Wages	5,048	48	1.0%
49,850	Other Expenses	49,850	-	-
<b>54,850</b>	<b>Total: P.E.G. / Cable Advisory</b>	<b>54,898</b>	48	0.1%
	Town Clerk:			
105,292	Salaries & Wages	116,816	11,524	10.9%
20,457	Other Expenses	23,277	2,820	13.8%
<b>125,749</b>	<b>TOTAL: Town Clerk</b>	<b>140,093</b>	14,344	11.4%
	Conservation Commission:			
96,597	Salaries & Wages	98,407	1,810	1.9%
<b>96,597</b>	<b>TOTAL: Conservation Commission</b>	<b>98,407</b>	1,810	1.9%

**Approved  
Appropriation  
Fiscal Year 2022**

**Approved  
Appropriation  
Fiscal Year 2023**

**\$ Chng**  
**+ / (-)**

**% Chng**  
**+ / (-)**

	Planning Board:			
5	Salaries & Wages	5	-	-
1,791	Other Expenses	1,750	(41)	-2.3%
<b>1,796</b>	<b>TOTAL: Planning Board</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>
	Zoning Board of Appeals:			
745	Other Expenses	750	5	0.7%
<b>745</b>	<b>TOTAL: Zoning Board of Appeals</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>1,705,960</b>	<b>SUB-TOTAL: GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>1,758,942</b>	<b>52,982</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

	Police Department:			
1,560,170	Salaries & Wages	1,544,642	(15,528)	-1.0%
125,488	Other Expenses	122,188	(3,300)	-2.6%
-	Capital Equipment	-	-	-
<b>1,685,658</b>	<b>TOTAL: Police Department</b>	<b>1,666,830</b>	<b>(18,828)</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>
	Fire Department:			
901,434	Salaries & Wages	1,050,294	148,860	16.5%
142,183	Other Expenses	156,283	14,100	9.9%
<b>1,043,617</b>	<b>TOTAL: Fire Department</b>	<b>1,206,577</b>	<b>162,960</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
	Inspectional Services:			
145,788	Salaries & Wages	158,047	12,259	8.4%
13,465	Other Expenses	13,465	-	-
<b>159,253</b>	<b>TOTAL: Inspectional Services</b>	<b>171,512</b>	<b>12,259</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
	Sealer Weights & Measure:			
1,726	Salaries & Wages	1,726	-	-
<b>1,726</b>	<b>TOTAL: Sealers Weights &amp; Measure</b>	<b>1,726</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	Animal Control Officer:			
10,229	Salaries & Wages	10,229	-	-
571	Other Expenses	571	-	-
<b>10,800</b>	<b>TOTAL: Animal Control Officer</b>	<b>10,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	Animal Inspector:			
7,750	Salaries & Wages	7,750	-	-
1,840	Other Expenses	1,840	-	-
<b>9,590</b>	<b>TOTAL: Animal Inspector</b>	<b>9,590</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	Tree Department:			
6,882	Salaries & Wages	6,882	-	-
8,880	Other Expenses	8,880	-	-
<b>15,762</b>	<b>TOTAL: Tree Department</b>	<b>15,762</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2022		Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2023		\$ Chng + / (-)	% Chng + / (-)
2,926,406	SUB-TOTAL: PUBLIC SAFETY	3,082,797	156,391	5.3%	
<hr/>					
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION					
	Proctor Elementary School & Steward Elementary School:				
7,757,512	Total Salaries & Wages	7,853,479	95,967	1.2%	
1,349,146	Total Other Expenses	1,675,460	326,314	24.2%	
261,986	Total Special Education (Tuitions & Services)	206,584	(55,402)	-21.1%	
9,368,644	TOTAL: Elementary Schools	9,735,523	366,879	3.9%	
9,368,644	SUB-TOTAL: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	9,735,523	366,879	3.9%	
<hr/>					
PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES					
	Stormwater Management:				
5,413	Salaries & Wages	5,413	-	-	
10,000	Other Expenses	10,000	-	-	
15,413	TOTAL: Stormwater Management	15,413	-	-	
	Highway Department:				
397,888	Salaries & Wages	411,746	13,858	3.5%	
246,558	Other Expenses	246,558	-	-	
-	Capital Equipment	-	-	-	
644,446	TOTAL: Highway Department	658,304	13,858	2.2%	
	Snow and Ice:				
33,870	Salaries & Wages	38,870	5,000	14.8%	
181,845	Other Expenses	176,845	(5,000)	-2.7%	
215,715	TOTAL: Snow and Ice	215,715	-	-	
	Street Lights:				
30,000	Other Expenses	30,000	-	-	
30,000	TOTAL: Street Lights	30,000	-	-	
	MSW Collection, HHW & Recycling:				
429,915	Contracted Services	428,915	(1,000)	-0.2%	
429,915	TOTAL: MSW Collection, HHW & Recycling	428,915	(1,000)	-0.2%	
	Recycling:				
1,650	Other Expenses	1,650	-	-	
1,650	TOTAL: Recycling	1,650	-	-	
	Park and Cemetery Department:				
226,041	Salaries & Wages	234,985	8,944	4.0%	
54,170	Other Expenses	103,670	49,500	91.4%	

Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2022		Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2023	\$ Chng + / (-)	% Chng + / (-)
280,211	<b>TOTAL: Park &amp; Cemetery Dept.</b>	338,655	58,444	20.9%
	Landfill:			
42,300	Other Expenses	29,600	(12,700)	-30.0%
42,300	<b>TOTAL: Landfill</b>	29,600	(12,700)	-30.0%
1,659,650	<b>SUB-TOTAL: PUBLIC WORKS</b>	1,718,252	58,602	3.5%

#### HUMAN SERVICES

	Board of Health:			
98,653	Salaries & Wages	100,506	1,853	1.9%
36,076	Other Expenses	36,576	500	1.4%
134,729	<b>TOTAL: Board of Health</b>	137,082	2,353	1.7%
	Council On Aging:			
132,280	Salaries & Wages	134,839	2,559	1.9%
5,561	Other Expenses	5,561	-	-
137,841	<b>TOTAL: Council On Aging</b>	140,400	2,559	1.9%
	Veterans' Benefits:			
20,960	Other Expenses	20,960	-	-
20,960	<b>TOTAL: Veterans' Benefits</b>	20,960	-	-
	Soldiers & Sailors Graves:			
1,000	Other Expenses	1,000	-	-
1,000	<b>TOTAL: Soldiers &amp; Sailors Graves</b>	1,000	-	-
294,530	<b>SUB-TOTAL: HUMAN SERVICES</b>	299,442	4,912	1.7%

#### CULTURE & RECREATION

	Library:			
487,802	Salaries & Wages	490,253	2,451	0.5%
164,680	Other Expenses	176,656	11,976	7.3%
652,482	<b>TOTAL: Library</b>	666,909	14,427	2.2%
	Recreation Department:			
31,103	Salaries & Wages	31,708	605	1.9%
2,000	Other Expenses	2,000	-	-
33,103	<b>TOTAL: Recreation Department</b>	33,708	605	1.8%
	Historical Commission:			
400	Other Expenses	300	(100)	-25.0%
400	<b>TOTAL: Historical Commission</b>	300	(100)	-25.0%
	Memorial Day/Veteran's Day:			
100	Salaries & Wages	100	-	-

Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2022		Approved Appropriation Fiscal Year 2023	\$ Chng + / (-)	% Chng + / (-)
1,750	Other Expenses	1,750	-	-
1,850	TOTAL: Memorial Day/Veteran's Day	1,850	-	0.00%
687,835	SUB TOTAL: CULTURE & RECREATION	702,767	14,932	2.2%
<b>DEBT SERVICE</b>				
775,000	Long-Term Debt Principal	590,000	(185,000)	-23.9%
534,564	Long -Term Debt Interest	504,364	(30,200)	-5.6%
2,500	Issue Cost	2,500	-	-
1,312,064	TOTAL: DEBT SERVICE	1,096,864	(215,200)	-16.4%
1,312,064	SUB TOTAL: DEBT SERVICE	1,096,864	(215,200)	-16.4%
<b>OTHER EXPENDITURES</b>				
Pensions:				
1,432,033	Essex Retirement	1,547,146	115,113	8.0%
1,432,033	TOTAL: Pensions	1,547,146	115,113	8.0%
Insurance:				
473,612	Liability/Accident/Workmen's Compensation	412,500	(61,112)	-12.9%
2,273,187	Life/Medical/Medicare	2,351,187	78,000	3.4%
2,746,799	TOTAL: Insurance	2,763,687	16,888	0.6%
Other Employee Costs/Benefits:				
75,000	Salary Reserve	10,000	(65,000)	-86.7%
75,000	TOTAL: Other Employee Costs/Benefits	10,000	(65,000)	-86.7%
Transfer to Other Funds				
Unemployment				
Compensated Absenses				
20,000	Police / Fire Idemnity Leave	-	(20,000)	-100.0%
20,000	TOTAL: Transfer to Other Funds	-	(20,000)	-100.0%
4,273,832	SUB-TOTAL OTHER EXPENDITURES	4,320,833	47,001	1.1%
22,228,921	***TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET ***	22,715,420	486,499	2.2%

Fiscal Year 2022: July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022

Fiscal Year 2023: July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

**TOWN OF TOPSFIELD**



**WARRANT FOR 2022 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

Essex, ss.

To the Constable of the Town of Topsfield, in said County,

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Topsfield, qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL  
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
20 ENDICOTT ROAD, BOXFORD MA**

in said Boxford, on Tuesday, the third day of May, 2022, at half past seven in the afternoon (7:30 PM) then and there to act on the following articles:

**ARTICLE FIRST:**  
**REPORTS**

To hear all reports that may legally come before the meeting.

**ARTICLE SECOND:**  
**PRIOR YEAR BILLS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay any outstanding bills contracted prior to July 1, 2021.

**Recommendation pending further review.**

**ARTICLE THIRD:**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET TRANSFERS**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the unexpended balance of certain accounts, and/or from available funds, and appropriate said funds to certain other accounts to pay certain expenses for the 2022 fiscal year, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommendation pending further review.**



**ARTICLE FOURTH:**  
**CONSULTANT FOR TOWN-WIDE MASTER PLAN**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess, or transfer from available funds, and appropriate a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board to fund a consultant to assist in preparing a Town-wide Master Plan, including all incidental or related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommended that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$25,477.75 from Article Twenty-Fifth of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting (Coppermine Road Improvements), to be expended by the Select Board, with the advice of the Planning Board, to fund a consultant to assist in preparing a Town-wide Master Plan, including all incidental and related expenses.**

*The Town has received a State grant of \$100,000 to develop a Master Plan. However, the total cost of the Master Plan project is expected to exceed the grant amount. This article would provide the funds for additional professional consulting support for the project which is estimated to take sixteen months to complete.*

*A Master Plan is a community's "blueprint" for guiding regulatory changes, land use policies, budgeting decisions, and related community decision making over the next several decades. Under the Planning Board's guidance, the Master Plan process will include soliciting town-wide ideas, suggestions and recommendations to affect the Plan.*

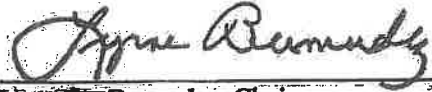
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You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting attested copies thereof, one at the Post Office, one at the Town Hall, and one at each of the Public Meeting Houses in said Town, fourteen days at least before time for holding the election portion of said meeting.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doing thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting as aforesaid.

Given under our hands this Thirty-First day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-two.

**TOWN OF TOPSFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN**



Lynn A. Bermudez, Chair



Marshall P. Hook, Vice Chair & Clerk



Boyd R. Jackson, Member



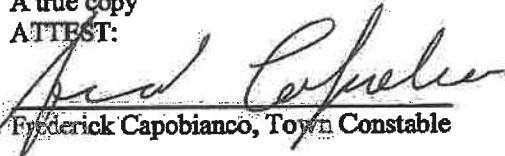
A. Richard Gandt, Member



Cameron K. Brown, Member

A true copy

ATTEST:



Frederick Capobianco, Town Constable

**RECOMMENDATIONS AS VOTED BY THE TOPSFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Karen Dow  
Karen Duval  
Che Elwell, Chair  
Jonathan Guido, Vice Chair  
Michael Hartmann  
David Larson  
Timothy O'Malley

OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD  
8 WEST COMMON STREET  
TOPSFIELD, MA 01983



U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 51  
TOPSFIELD, MA

TO ALL REGISTERED VOTERS:

CURRENT RESIDENT

TOPSFIELD, MA 01983

**ANNUAL AND SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

Masconomet Regional School Auditorium

**TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2022  
7:00PM**

**ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION**

**THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2022**

**7:00 AM to 8:00 PM**

**ST. ROSE CHURCH HALL**

**12 Park Street, Topsfield**