

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



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Town of Hudson MASSACHUSETTS 01749-2134

To: Registered Voters

From: Thomas Gregory

Date: November 20, 2023

Re: Special Town Meeting – Summary of Warrant Articles

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide to the registered voters attending the Special Town Meeting on November 20, 2023 a summary of each of the articles which appear on the Warrant. While this summary is intended to provide a brief explanation of the articles as well as the quantum of vote, please be advised that the Warrant remains the official document to be considered at the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 1 – This article was placed on the Warrant to anticipate a bill being received after the Town closed the FY2023 books. State statute authorizes Town Meeting to approve payment of a bill of a prior fiscal year using current year funds. Since there were no prior year bills received, the Finance Committee has recommended that this article be passed over.

Article 2 – This article recommends that \$7,594.51 be transferred from the unexpended balance of a prior year capital account, Fire Department Security Camera Account, to a different capital account, the Public Safety Radio System Account to replace no longer supported Motorola radio control stations with updated Motorola APX4500 control stations and supporting equipment to connect with current dispatch console configurations in the combined fire/police dispatch center. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 3 – This article, sponsored by the Community Preservation Committee, recommends that \$50,000 be appropriated from the Historic Resource Preservation Reserve to fund exterior rehabilitation to the Unitarian Church; \$15,000 be appropriated from the Undesignated Fund Balance to the Park Commission to fund the installation of lights at the Cherry Street Field; and, \$90,000 be appropriated from the Undesignated Fund Balance to the Park Commission for the Replacement of Playground Equipment at Wood Park. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 4 – This article recommends that a sum of money be transferred from the Stabilization Fund to acquire new computer-assisted integrated financial management and accounting software and any associated hardware. The current financial management system is significantly outdated, fragmented, and inefficient. Since Free Cash is not available for appropriation in the fall, the Stabilization Fund has been identified as the funding source so that this multi-year project can commence this year. On October 10, 2023, the Finance Committee voted to amend the article by deleting “a sum of money” and inserting in its place “\$1,210,000.” It is anticipated that next May Town Meeting will be requested to transfer the same amount from Free Cash to replenish the Stabilization Fund. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 5 – This article recommends a borrowing authorization of \$975,950 so that the Town can acquire a new fire engine and related equipment. The acquisition of this fire engine would restore the Fire Department’s fleet to five (5) engines: two (2) front-line engines and (3) reserve engines. Since Free Cash is not available for appropriation in the fall, a borrowing authorization is being requested to allow the Town to place the order this year. It is anticipated that next May Town Meeting will be requested to transfer the same amount from Free Cash and rescind the original borrowing authorization. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 6 – This article recommends that Town Meeting authorize the borrowing of a sum of money to fund the costs associated with the design, permitting, and construction of stormwater culverts at Brigham Street and Park Street. Last year, the 100-year old culvert running underneath Brigham Street failed which required temporary measures be installed to prevent flooding and to keep a channel open. On October 12, 2023, the Finance Committee voted, at the recommendation of the DPW Director, to amend the article by deleting “a sum of money” and inserting in its place “\$1,200,000.” The annual debt service associated with this borrowing will be paid out of the Stormwater Enterprise Fund beginning in FY2025. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 7 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s General Bylaws by adjusting the age that persons may buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. In 2018, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts raised the legal age to buy tobacco products to 21. This article would align Hudson’s General Bylaws with state statute. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 8 – This article, sponsored by the Conservation Commission, recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s General Bylaws by inserting a new article titled “Wetlands Protection Bylaw” which would provide greater protection to the wetlands, water resources, flood prone areas, and adjoining upland areas in Hudson than is provided by the Commonwealth’s Wetlands Protection Act. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 9 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaws by replacing the existing metes and bounds descriptions of the Zoning District boundaries with an official Zoning Map and by adding a table of land uses based on the existing district use regulations. This article does not change or alter the existing Zoning District boundaries or use regulations. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 10 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaws by revising the names for the existing Zoning Districts. This article does not change or alter the existing Zoning District use regulations. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 11 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaws by replacing the existing language relative to non-conforming uses and structures in order to ensure compliance with applicable state statutes, and by providing clearer, more user-friendly language for the Zoning Board of Appeals and for property owners. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 12 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaws by re-organizing the location and renumbering certain sections of the Bylaws. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 13 – This article recommends that Town Meeting amend the Town’s General Bylaws by inserting a new article titled “Application and Penalties” which would allow the Town’s Zoning Enforcement Officer (Building Commissioner) to enforce via non-criminal disposition violations of the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaw. Currently, there is no enforcement mechanism that exists in the General Bylaws. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 14 – This article is a citizen’s petition. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for passage of this article.

cc: Select Board
 Finance Committee
 Town Moderator
 All Departments
 Interested Parties