

**OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**



**Town of Hudson
78 Main Street
Hudson, MA 01749
Tel: 978-562-9963
Fax: 978-568-9641**

tgregory@townofhudson.org

To: Registered Voters
From: Thomas Gregory
Date: April 29, 2022
Re: Annual Town Meeting – Summary of Warrant Articles

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide to the registered voters attending the Annual Town Meeting on May 2, 2022 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, please be advised that the Warrant remains the official document to be considered at the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 1 – This article, occurring each year, recommends the adoption and funding of an operating budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2022 and ends on June 30, 2023. The article includes the salaries and expenses of all municipal departments, including the school department, as well as debt service costs and operating support such as health insurance and the pension assessment. The Town’s assessment to the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School is also included in this article. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 2 – This article recommends that a sum of money be raised and appropriated to fund the first-year financial obligations of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the members of the Clerical Union which will begin on July 1, 2022. At the time of the issuance of this memorandum, a successor agreement had not been reached with this union. It is anticipated, therefore, that the Finance Committee will not be issuing a recommendation on this article.

Article 3 – This article recommends that a sum of money be raised and appropriated to fund the first-year financial obligations of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the members of the Dispatchers Union which will begin on July 1, 2022. At the time of the issuance of this memorandum, the Finance Committee had not yet issued a recommendation. A recommendation with a stated sum of money is expected to be made at or shortly before Town Meeting. 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 raised and appropriated to fund the first-year financial obligations of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the members of the Police Patrol Officers Union which will begin on July 1, 2022. At the time of the issuance of this memorandum, the Finance Committee had not yet voted a recommendation. A recommendation with a stated sum of money is expected to be made at or shortly before Town Meeting. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 5 – This article recommends that a sum of money be raised and appropriated to fund the first-year financial obligations of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the members of the Superior Officers Union which will begin on July 1, 2022. At the time of the issuance of this memorandum, a successor agreement had not been reached with this union. It is anticipated, therefore, that the Finance Committee will not be issuing a recommendation on this article.

Article 6 – This article recommends that a sum of money be raised and appropriated to fund the first-year financial obligations of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the members of the Department of Public Works Union which will begin on July 1, 2022. At the time of the issuance of this memorandum, a successor agreement had not been reached with this union. It is anticipated, therefore, that the Finance Committee will not be issuing a recommendation on this article.

Article 7 – This article, occurring each year, recommends the adoption of a plan of capital improvements and acquisitions to commence on July 1, 2022 to be funded by a transfer of \$1,675,435 from certified and available Free Cash. The term Free Cash refers to unexpended year-end departmental appropriations as well as revenue collected above budgeted estimates. At the end each fiscal year, these funds are calculated and then certified by the Department of Revenue to be made available for appropriation at Town Meeting. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 8 – This article recommends the authorization to borrow \$450,000 for the acquisition of new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to be used by firefighters. The SCBA's currently in use have exceeded the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 9 – This article recommends the authorization to borrow \$525,000 to fund the costs associated with the design and installation of an air conditioning system at the Farley Elementary School. This project is part of a larger initiative by the School Department to make HVAC improvements to school buildings. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 10 – This article recommends the authorization to borrow \$590,000 to fund the costs associated with the installation of new windows at the Mulready Elementary School. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 11 – This article recommends the establishment of a new Water System Improvement Account, and that \$101,841.59 be transferred into this account from prior year water surplus. The \$101,841.59 amount is the result of funds that flowed into the General Fund (later to be part of the Free Cash certification) resulting from water collections above estimate and unspent Water Department appropriations for FY2021. This purpose of this account to ensure that Water Department funds are used for water operations. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 12 – This article recommends the establishment of a new Sewer System Improvement Account so that prior year sewer surplus can be used for sewer operations, in a manner similar to the Water System Improvement Account in Article 11. The financial analysis of FY2021 sewer operations determined, however, that no surplus funds could be identified for transfer into this new account. While there are no funds available to transfer, the Finance Committee voted to recommend passage of the article to establish the account. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 13 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that a total of \$453,750 be appropriated from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund to support the operating costs of the HUD Access Television Studio as well as the costs associated with the Town’s Internet Network operations. These special revenue funds include fees collected from customers by the cable operators in Hudson in connection with the franchise and required by cable licensing agreements to be used in support of public, educational, and government (PEG) programming. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for passage of this article.

Article 14 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$200,000 be raised and appropriated and transferred into the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund to fund the costs associated with reimbursements to the Commonwealth for unemployment compensation benefits and administration. These expenses had previously been carried in the operating budget until Town Meeting established a trust fund in May 2017 to better respond to fluctuations in expenses from year to year. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 15 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$125,000 be raised and appropriated and transferred into the Workers Compensation Trust Fund to fund the premium associated with this insurance coverage. These expenses had previously been carried in the operating budget until Town Meeting established a trust fund in May 2017 to better respond to fluctuations in expenses from year to year. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 16 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$50,000 be raised and appropriated and transferred into the Sick and Vacation Buy-Back Account. The purpose of this article is to provide the Town with the ability to pay out any eligible employee accrued leave upon separation from employment. Because it is unknown at this time which, if any, employees may retire or leave in FY2023, this account exists to offset any budget shortfalls due to employee separation. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 17 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$50,000 be transferred from Free Cash to fund the Other Post-Employments Benefit (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund. The OPEB Trust Fund was established in November 2016 so that the Town can reserve funds to address the future costs associated with the provision of health and life insurance to municipal retirees. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 18 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$100,000 be raised and appropriated and transferred into the Reserve Fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures in FY2023. General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 6 grants the Finance Committee exclusive control of releasing funds from the Reserve Fund upon request. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 19 – This article, occurring every year, recommends that funds be appropriated or reserved from the community preservation annual revenues in specific amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee in FY2023. Towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act generate monies through the implementation of a local CPA property tax (1% in Hudson) and through the receipt of annual matching funds from the statewide CPA trust fund. The statewide CPA trust fund revenues are derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the state’s Registries of Deeds. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 20 – This article recommends that \$79,952.60 be reserved in Article 19 for Community Housing fund balance to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 21 – This article recommends that \$111,000 be transferred from the Community Preservation Undesignated Fund Balance to pay the FY2023 debt service costs associated with the Centennial Beach renovation project. This article will appear each year until the debt for this project has been retired. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 22 – This article, occurring ever year, recommends that \$618,748 be appropriated to offset the operating costs of maintaining a joint police and fire dispatch. In an agreement signed in 1988, the Highland Commons Shopping Center is required to provide public safety fees to the Town to cover the costs of the Town’s dispatch operations. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 23 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that \$11,000 be transferred from Free Cash to cover Hudson’s share of the ongoing expenses related to invasive weed control on Lake Boon. The Lake Boon Commission was created in 1941 by the State Legislature to regulate recreational activities and the use of motorboats. Expenses are allocated between Stow and Hudson, with Stow responsible for 2/3rds and Hudson responsible for 1/3rd. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 24 – This article requests that \$80,000 be transferred from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation from the Sale of Cemetery Lots to fund the second phase of the cemetery wall replacement project at the Forestvale Cemetery. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 25 – This article, occurring each year, authorizes the annual spending limit for all of the Town’s revolving funds. A revolving fund is intended to capture fees or other revenue so that expenses related to the purpose of the fund may then be paid. Revolving funds have been established in the Town’s General Bylaws, and each year Town Meeting authorizes a spending limit for each revolving fund. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 26 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that the Town accept \$225,000 from Hudson Light and Power. These funds are intended to cover the indirect costs borne by the Town in support of Hudson Light and Power operations. If approved, these funds would be applied to Line 53 (Contributory Retirement and Pensions) in the operating budget (see Article 1). A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 27 – This article, occurring each year, provides an opportunity for various Town Departments, Boards, and Committees to present any reports at Town Meeting. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 28 – This article recommends that Town Meeting authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease agreement with the Hudson Cultural Alliance for a period of up to three (3) years for the use of the Armory located at 35 Washington Street. Legislation was recently passed authorizing the state Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to convey the Armory to the Town of Hudson. The Hudson Cultural Alliance intends to lease this property, once its conveyed to the Town, for a community arts center. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this vote.

Article 29 and **Article 30** are citizen petitions. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of both petitioned articles.

Cc Select Board
 Finance Committee
 All Departments
 Interested Parties