

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



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Town of Hudson

MASSACHUSETTS 01749-2134

October 26, 2022

To: Registered Voters

From: Thomas Gregory

Re: Special Town Meeting – Summary of Warrant Articles

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide to the registered voters a summary of each of the articles which appear on the Warrant for the November 21, 2022 Special Town Meeting. 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 Special Town Meeting.

Article 1 – This article recommends that \$38,537 be raised and appropriated to fund the costs associated with the first year of a successor collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the Police Superior Officers' Union. The first year covers the period from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The costs include a wage adjustment, an increase in the clothing allowance, and adjustments to holiday pay including the formal recognition of the new Juneteenth holiday. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 2 – This article recommends that \$69,718 be raised and appropriated to fund the costs associated with the first year of a successor collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the Department of Public Works Union. The first year covers the period from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The costs include a wage adjustment, a tools stipend for four (4) mechanics, and the formal recognition of the new Juneteenth holiday. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 3 – This article recommends that \$22,199 be raised and appropriated to fund the costs associated with the first year of a successor collective bargaining agreement between the Town and the Clerical Union whose members are employed in various Town departments. The first year covers the period from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The costs include a wage adjustment, an increase in the mileage reimbursement rate, and the formal recognition of the new Juneteenth holiday. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 4 – From time to time an invoice will be received after the Town closes its books for the fiscal year. General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 64 requires that a municipality’s legislative body (i.e., Town Meeting) authorize the payment of a bill of prior year using funds from the current fiscal year. In this case, the article recommends that \$920 be raised and appropriated to pay a vendor, AFC Urgent Care, for costs associated with pre-employment physicals. A 9/10ths vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 5 – This article is also a bill of prior year, which recommends that \$181.10 be raised and appropriated using funds from the current fiscal year to pay for a reimbursement request submitted late. A 9/10ths vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 6 – This article recommends that \$9,500 be raised and appropriated so that the Finance / IT Department may issue quarterly tax bills. While Hudson adopted quarterly tax billing a number of years ago, tax bills are currently mailed on a biannual basis. This article covers the increase in printing and postage costs associated with mailing tax bills on a quarterly basis. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 7 – This article recommends that Town Meeting authorize the Select Board to enter into a multi-year lease purchase finance agreement for the purpose of acquiring and implementing body-worn cameras and less-lethal devices for the Police Department. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 8 – This article recommends that \$24,687 be raised and appropriated for the first-year costs to acquire and implement body-worn cameras and less-lethal devices for Police Department personnel. The Police Department’s FY2023 budget, approved at the Annual Town Meeting in May, had appropriated \$40,450 for this purpose. The total first-year cost to include in the lease finance agreement both body-worn cameras and less-lethal devices is \$65,137. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 9 – This article recommends that \$22,891 be raised and appropriated to fund a second full-time administrative assistant in the Inspections Department to support the increased work load resulting from new residential and commercial development that is occurring in the community currently. This new position would replace the 19.5 hour / week administrative assistant. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 10 – Since September of 2021, the Select Board has been considering the possible acquisition and redevelopment of the Hudson Portuguese Club to provide needed new municipal and school department office and meeting space. This article recommends that \$23,500 be raised and appropriated to fund a contract with Woodard and Curran to provide due diligence and environmental consulting services to assist the Select Board in deciding whether to proceed. An appraisal has been obtained on this property and the results of a feasibility study will soon be ready for the Select Board’s review. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 11 – This article recommends that \$192,909 be transferred from the FY2023 Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School assessment to Hudson Public Schools expenses (line 58) to fund various building, security, and IT investments in school buildings. This year’s Assabet assessment to the Town was reduced by \$192,909 due to an overage in the regional school’s excess & deficiency fund. When this happens, a regional school district must, per state statute, reduce the members’ assessments by the overage in amounts proportional to each member’s enrollment numbers. So as not to skew the year-to-year budget trend due to this one-time occurrence, the original Assabet assessment was retained in the Town’s operating budget which was funded at the Annual Town Meeting in May. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 12 – This article recommends that \$1,202.42 be transferred from the Fire Station #1 Repairs Account to the Fire Station Feasibility Study Account to fund a deficit in the current appropriation. The Fire Station Feasibility Study was just completed and provides the basis for the borrowing authorization proposed in Article 14. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 13 – This article recommends that \$32,000 be transferred from FY2023 Building Maintenance expenses (line 11) to FY2023 Building Maintenance personnel (line 10) to fund the salary of a full-time non-union custodian for the Town Hall, the Library, the Senior Center, and the Police / DPW Administration Building. The owner / operator of the cleaning vendor who had been providing custodial services to these buildings for many years recently passed away. The current market costs for contractual custodial services greatly exceed the Town’s available funds to pay for such services. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 14 – This article recommends a \$1,122,000 borrowing authorization to fund design services, repair, and renovation costs at Fire Headquarters. This building was constructed in 2004 and some of the building systems are reaching the end of their useful life, including the membrane roof, apparatus bay doors, and HVAC system. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 15 – This article recommends a \$300,000 borrowing authorization so that the Town can perform lead water service line inventories and plan for replacing these service lines. The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust has allocated \$20 million for cities and towns to perform this newly mandated work by October 2024. Once a municipality’s application is approved, the funds are loaned to communities via 100% principal forgiveness. The Town incurs no direct costs as a result of this borrowing authorization. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 16 – This article recommends the establishment of a National Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund to capture all settlement funds arising out of multi-district legal action at the state and national level so that such funds may be used to provide services in connection with treatment and prevention activities. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article. (A 2/3rds vote will also be required in the future for transfers out of this fund.)

Article 17 – This article recommends the establishment of a Water Enterprise Fund per General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53F½. By establishing this fund, all revenue and expenses of the water utility will be segregated from the General Fund thereby ensuring the most accurate accounting of the utility’s operations. Additionally, all indirect costs of the water utility borne by the General Fund will be calculated and reimbursed to the General Fund so that there is 100% cost recovery in the water rates. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 18 – This article recommends the establishment of a Sewer Enterprise Fund per General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53F½. By establishing this fund, all revenue and expenses of the sewer utility will be segregated from the General Fund thereby ensuring the most accurate accounting of the utility’s operations. Additionally, all indirect costs of the sewer utility borne by the General Fund will be calculated and reimbursed to the General Fund so that there is 100% cost recovery in the sewer rates. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 19 – This article recommends the establishment of a Stormwater Enterprise Fund per General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53F½. Most cities and towns in eastern and central Massachusetts are regulated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s municipal separate storm sewer system (“MS4”) permit. Hudson is one of these communities. Costs associated with regulatory compliance with this permit including costs relative to engineering and infrastructure improvements will be increasing in the near term. Segregating these expenses from the General Fund and, at the same time, implementing a new revenue source via a stormwater utility fee to fund these mandated expenses will ensure the most accurate accounting of this new utility’s operations. All indirect costs of the stormwater utility borne by the General Fund will be calculated and reimbursed to the General Fund. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 20 – This article recommends amending the Town’s General Bylaws by adding a new Stormwater Utility Bylaw which shall be used to administer stormwater permit compliance activities in Hudson. Once approved by Town Meeting, the Select Board will then have the authority to implement a fee schedule. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 21 – This article recommends amending the Town’s General Bylaws by replacing “Board of Health” and inserting in its place “Department of Public Works” as the department authorized to spend from the Curbside Revolving Fund. The day-to-day operations of the curbside trash and recycling program is overseen by the Department of Public Works. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 22 – This article recommends that \$1,753.90 be transferred from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation from the Transportation Network Companies. Under Chapter 187 of the Acts of 2016 certain transportation companies such as Uber and Lyft must submit to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) the number of rides from the previous calendar year that originated from each city or town and a per-ride assessment of \$0.20. The assessment is credited to the

Commonwealth Transportation Infrastructure Fund. Each year one half of the amount credited to the Fund is distributed by the DPU proportionally to each city or town based on the number of rides that originated in that city or town. This article transfers these funds to the DPW's roadway improvement program. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 23 – This article recommends that \$6,500 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of compensating senior citizens (age 60 or older) who participate in the Senior Tax Work Off Program. Income-eligible senior citizens may volunteer in various departments throughout the Town and, in exchange for these services, will receive a \$500 abatement on their real estate taxes. The program is authorized under General Laws, Ch. 59, Section 5k. This article will appear on a Warrant if there is an increase in interest in the program or if there are insufficient funds to compensate current volunteers. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 24 – This article recommends that \$34,266.48 be transferred from two (2) current Fire Department capital accounts to a new account for the purpose of funding the purchase and installation of new security cameras at Fire Department Headquarters. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 25 – This article recommends that the Select Board be authorized to petition the General Court (i.e., state legislature) to amend an existing Home Rule Petition enacted in 2019 which granted to the Town five (5) additional all alcoholic pouring licenses in the C-1 Zoning District. This article requests that the three-year issuance deadline be extended to six (6) years. To date, no license under the original petition has been issued by the Town. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 26 – This article recommends that \$5,070 be transferred from the Historic Preservation Reserve to the Historic Commission for historic signs; and, that \$15,000 be transferred from Historic Preservation Reserve to the Hudson Fire Department for the restoration of an historical 1886 picture and frame. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 27 – This article recommends a borrowing authorization of a sum of money for the purposes of design and substantial renovations to the Town's wastewater treatment plant. In June of 2020, \$14,762,179 was authorized for the same purposes. When the bids were received for this project in February, the lowest bid exceeded the borrowing authorization by a substantial amount. This project was put out to bid again in October, after the Select Board signed the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting. Bids will be in hand before the Special Town Meeting, however, so that a stated dollar figure can be referenced in the motion which will represent the delta between the original authorization and the new low bid. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 28 – This article recommends a borrowing authorization of \$2,500,000 for the purpose of purchasing and installing water meters and related software and collection equipment. In June of 2020, Town Meeting authorized a \$1,500,000 borrowing for the same purposes. Due to significant increases in pricing, this article raises the borrowing authorization to \$2,500,000. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 29 – This article recommends that Silver Oak Road and Cedar Street Extension be accepted as public ways together with acceptance of certain drainage and utility easements. Once a roadway has been constructed to standards acceptable to the Department of Public Works and the Planning Board, Town Meeting has the authority to accept the road so that it can become a public Town way and be maintained in the future by the Town. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 30 – This article recommends that the Town’s Protective Zoning Bylaws be amended such that future appeals of a Planning Board decision on site plan review may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction in Massachusetts such as the Trial Courts of the Commonwealth, that is, Land Court or Superior Court. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 31 – This article recommends that the Town’s General Bylaws be amended such that the quorum required for convening Town Meeting be reduced from 150 to 75 registered voters. If approved, this article would become effective for the Annual Town Meeting next May. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Articles 32 and 33 – These are petitioned articles. Because both articles recommend amendments to the Town’s Zoning Bylaws, a 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for their passage.

Cc Select Board
 Finance Committee
 All Departments
 Interested Parties