



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 16, 2022

**Uploaded to the website on:
May 25, 2022**

A True Copy Attest:

Jeanne M. Hudson

Jeanne M. Hudson, Town Clerk

At 7:00PM on Monday, May 16, 2022 the Annual Town Meeting was held at the Wachusett Regional High School Auditorium at 1401 Main Street in the Town of Holden. Holden Town Bylaws Article 1, Section 5 which states *one percent of the registered voters of the Town shall constitute a quorum*. As of April 19th, the last day to register as a voter there were 14,902 registered voters requiring 149 voters to be in attendance. At 7:13PM, there were one hundred and sixty four (164) registered Holden voters who attended and an additional fourteen (14) guests.

Through the CARES Act, the Town purchased the Meridia voting system in 2021. It uses radio frequency clickers to tally the vote and display the results on the overhead screen on the auditorium's stage for the audience to view. Town Clerk, Jeanne Hudson introduced the Meridia System and its operation to the audience. Assistant Town Clerk, Liz Monahan and Sean McPeak from Meridia monitored the system.

All non-voters or non-residents of the Town were asked to be recognized by the Moderator:

Jeanne M. Hudson, Town Clerk
Liz Monahan, Assistant Town Clerk
Lori Rose, Town Accountant
Stephen Madeaus, Town Counsel
Pamela Harding, Planning and Development Director
Darryll McCall, Superintendent of WRSD
Jarus Relly, School System
Russ Hall, Fire Chief
John Woodsmall, DPW Director
Patrick Wood, DPW
Rosemary Scully, Principal Assessor
Laurie Gaudet, Town Treasurer
Sarah Survell, Check in Clerk
Sean McPeak, Meridia Vendor

Holden Police Officers:
John Santimore
Todd Ventres
Haley Delahanty

There were no tellers appointed by the Moderator.

The following Election Workers checked in voters for the ATM:

Connie Hamilton, 417 Causeway Street	Susan Stafford, 296 Chapel Street
Cindy Patterson, 33 General Hobbs Road	Sarah Survell, 32 Saint Jude Blvd

ARTICLE 1 – TO CHOOSE A MODERATOR FOR SAID MEETING

MOTION MADE: N/A

The moderator, Joseph Sullivan, was elected at the Annual Town Election on Monday, May 9, 2022.

ARTICLE 2 – TO HEAR A REPORT OF THE RESULTS OF THE TOWN ELECTION HELD ON MAY 9, 2022

To cast their ballots for:

Moderator for one year.

Two Selectmen for three years.

Two Trustees of Damon Memorial Library for three years.

Three Members of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee for three years.

One Member of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee for one year.

One Holden Housing Authority Member for four years.

MOTION MADE: No motion made at this time as this article was acted upon previously.

As a courtesy the moderator read the results of the election.

ARTICLE 3 - TO HEAR THE REPORT OF THE TOWN OFFICERS AND ANY OUTSTANDING COMMITTEES AND ACT THEREON

Moderator Sullivan noted the Annual Town Report contained the reports of Town Officers, Boards, Commissions and Committees. The 2021 Annual Town Report Moderator Sullivan read the dedication page for Robert E. Evans. He noted the attendance of Mr. Evan's wife, Kathleen, in the audience. Mr. Evans was a resident of Holden for 54 years and avid classic car enthusiast.

No Action was necessary under this article as all the Boards and Committees submitted their annual report.

ARTICLE 4 – FIX SALARY AND COMPENSATION

To see if the Town will vote to fix the salary and compensation of all elective officers of the Town as provided by General Laws Chapter 41, Section 108, and appropriate a sum of money therefor, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 4		
FY 2022		FY 2023
N/A	FIX COMPENSATION	N/A

Summary: Article 4 sets the compensation rate for the annual services of the Town Moderator and the members of the Select Board. The compensation rates have not changed for many years and are minimal considering the number of hours and the effort expended by these individuals every year. The actual appropriations for these payments are included in Article 6, General Government.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 4.

MOTION MADE: Marilyn Foley, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town, in accordance with Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the General Laws as amended, vote to fix the salaries and compensation of elective Town officers for the ensuing year as follows:

Moderator	\$100.00
Selectman-Chairman	1,150.00
2nd Member	1,000.00

3rd Member	1,000.00
4th Member	1,000.00
5th Member	1,000.00
Trustees of Damon Memorial -	None

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 130 YES 9 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 5 – PAST TOWN DEBTS AND CHARGES

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges for the past fiscal years, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 5		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$1,402.69	PAST TOWN DEBTS AND CHARGES	\$0

Summary: Article 5 is a legal formality. It allows the Town Manager to pay bills that come in after the normal close of a budget year. The bills are typically small and the money for payments comes from free cash as the budgets that would have been used in those prior year(s) were closed to free cash. There are no bills/items to consider this year. Bills sometimes are for goods or services received in prior fiscal year(s), but invoices for payment were not submitted for processing before the close of the applicable fiscal year.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends no action be taken on Article 5.

MOTION MADE: Jane Titcomb, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town take no action under this article.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 107 YES 19 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 6 – GENERAL GOVERNMENT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, from the Overlay Reserve Fund, the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund, the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for General Government purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 6		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$7,174,458	GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$7,461,972

Summary: General Government comprises many required Town functions, including Town Manager, Accountant, Treasurer/Collector, Assessor, Clerk, Planning and Development, Information Technology and

Personnel. It includes health and liability insurance, legal services and pension assessments for all Town departments. It also funds local government functions including the Board of Selectmen, Town Moderator and Finance Committee, including the Finance Committee’s Reserve Fund.

Overall, the FY 2023 budget for General Government has increased \$287,514 (4.0%), primarily due to increases in the cost projections for the Town’s pension plan and the expense of holding 3 elections with an additional voting district during the coming year.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 6

MOTION MADE: Joseph Dolak, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$7,461,972 for the proposed budget for GENERAL GOVERNMENT, substantially as shown on page 7 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$49,980 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, by transferring \$12,648 from the Solid Waste Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, by transferring \$50,000 from Overlay Surplus and by raising and appropriating \$7,349,344 to cover the balance;

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 134 YES 7 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 7: HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for Human Services and Culture purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 7		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$1,318,810	HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE	\$1,364,378

Summary: This article includes the budgets for the Senior Center, the Veterans Assistance Office, the Gale Free Library, and the Historic District Commission. Those combined budgets are up 3.5% this year, as described below.

The Senior Services budget addresses the needs of our Senior Citizens, providing nutrition and outreach programs for the homebound, information and programs at the Senior Center and transportation. The Senior Services budget of \$311,180 has increased \$12,590, or 4.2%, due to increased fuel costs for the van services provided.

The Veterans Assistance Office is a state and federally mandated function that is 75% reimbursed by the State of Massachusetts for all direct assistance provided to veterans. The Veterans budget of \$86,568 is essentially the same as FY 2022.

The Gale Free Library budget exceeds the state minimum appropriation requirement for public libraries. Meeting the requirement allows Holden residents to borrow materials from any certified library in the Commonwealth and it makes the library eligible for state aid. Since the Massachusetts State Aid to Public

Libraries was established in 1987, Holden has always met the Minimum Appropriation Requirement. The Gale Free Library budget for FY 2023 is \$963,130, representing an increase of \$32,570, or 3.5%. This increase is driven by wage increases to attract and maintain qualified staff.

The Historic District Commission budget funds the care and maintenance of the Hendricks House as a museum and local historical education center. The Historical Commission budget for FY 2023 remains unchanged, at \$3,500.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 7.

MOTION MADE: Marilynn Foley, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$1,364,378 for the proposed budget for HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE, substantially as shown on page 7 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET.”

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 126 YES 6 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 8: GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT SERVICE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for General Government Debt purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 8		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$3,280,000	GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT SERVICE	\$3,518,977

Summary: The Debt Service budget covers the principal and interest payments due during FY 2023. As of June 30, 2021, the total long-term debt outstanding for the Town of Holden was \$44,788,040, of which \$15,761,946 is considered to be inside the debt limit, and \$29,026,094 to be outside the debt limit, also called exempt debt. Exempt debt has been excluded from the limits of Proposition 2 ½ by ballot votes in previous years, primarily for building Mountview Middle School, the Public Safety building and the new DPW building.

The Debt Service budget increased due to the final borrowing of \$9.2M of long-term debt for the new DPW facility at 18 Industrial Drive. The Town of Holden bond rating remains AA+ by Standard and Poors and AA2 by Moodys. These favorable ratings help to minimize interest expense on our debt issuances.

The debt associated with the renovation and expansion of Wachusett Regional High School is included in the education budget in Article 27 of this warrant.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 8.

MOTION MADE: Jane Titcomb, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$3,518,977 for the proposed budget for GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT, substantially as shown on page 8 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$674,104 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, and by

transferring \$1,114 from the reserved bond premium in the hands of the Treasurer, and by raising and appropriating \$2,843,759 to cover the balance.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 142 YES 3 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 9: TOWN'S OTHER POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OPEB) LIABILITY TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, a sum of money to deposit into the Town's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund, or act do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 9		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$478,967	TRANSFER INTO OPEB FUND – GENERAL FUND	\$250,000
\$15,039	TRANSFER INTO OPEB FUND – EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS	\$24,529
\$45,000	TRANSFER INTO OPEB FUND - WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND	\$45,000

Summary: This article represents this year's payment into a fund to provide for future Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) for retired personnel of the Town. The Town maintains a continuing obligation for payment of certain retirement and health insurance benefits for former employees, and it is building a fund from which to make these payments in the future, similar to the way we fund future pension obligations for former employees. The FinCom has adopted a policy that requires a contribution equal to 10% of certified free cash or \$250,000, whichever is greater. However, given the economic uncertainty that many Holden residents are facing this year, the FinCom decided to fund OPEB at the minimum level only, and not at the 10% of free cash calculation, which would have resulted in a contribution of \$519,110. Certain employees have a portion of their compensation withheld to be put into the OPEB Fund as well, and this article authorizes the deposit of those contributions to the fund. This article also transfers the Water-Sewer Enterprise Fund's annual OPEB contribution into the fund for the benefit of those employees. To date, the OPEB fund has \$8.8M, which is estimated to be approximately 40% of the total liability. Maintaining this fund improves our credit rating and ensures our employees of receiving the benefits that they have earned.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 9.

MOTION MADE: Christopher Lucchesi, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town deposit \$319,529 into the Town's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund and meet said deposit by:

- (i) Transferring \$24,529 as received by the Town pursuant to employee contribution programs for Other Post-Employment Benefits established by the Town Manager;
- (ii) transferring \$250,000 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer; and transferring \$45,000 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Free Cash in the hands of the Treasurer.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 138 YES 7 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 10: GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND, OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION STABILIZATION FUND, FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE, APPARATUS AND CAPITAL EQUIPMENT STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer: (i) a sum of money to be added to the General Stabilization Fund; all funds established pursuant to General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 10		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$150,000	TRANSFER INTO GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND	\$150,000
\$50,000	TRANSFER INTO OPEN SPACE STABILIZATION FUND	\$0
\$100,000	TRANSFER INTO FIRE VEHICLE STABILIZATION FUND	\$0

Summary: The General Stabilization Fund is essentially a ‘rainy day’ savings account, which collects funds that can be used to pay for a wide variety of future operations and purchases. It is therefore different than other stabilization funds, which can only be used for very specific purposes. This year the Finance Committee is recommending a \$150,000 contribution to the General Stabilization Fund, which will result in a total fund balance of approximately \$5.2M.

The Open Space Stabilization Fund collects monies that can be appropriated by voters to acquire real property within the town to be held and maintained as open space. In FY 2021, the Open Space Fund contributed \$250,000 towards the purchase of approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land off of Salisbury Street in partnership with the White Oak Land Conservation Society. Given the economic uncertainty that many Holden residents are facing, the FinCom decided not to add money to this fund this year. The total fund balance is approximately \$220,000.

The Fire Vehicle Stabilization Fund is a means of saving for future significant capital expenditures by the Fire Department. A \$325,000 ambulance planned to be purchased in FY 23 will be purchased using money made available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the federal government’s 2021 response to the COVID-19 crisis. This has lessened the need to build up this fund, so no contribution is planned for this year. Currently, the fund has a balance of approximately \$418,000.

All expenditures from these funds require a 2/3 majority approval at a Town Meeting. There are no planned expenditures from these funds in FY 2023.

It is important to note that healthy savings accounts not only smooth out future tax increases, but they also help the Town’s credit rating, which, in turn, drives down the Town’s cost of borrowing funds.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 10.

MOTION MADE: David White, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer the sum of \$150,000 for deposit into the General Stabilization Fund.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 134 YES 11 NO
MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 11 – PUBLIC SAFETY

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for Public Safety purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 11		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$6,202,997	PUBLIC SAFETY	\$6,561,074

Summary: The Public Safety budget funds the activities of the Police and Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services (Ambulance), Emergency Management, the Animal Control Officer, and the Wachusett Regional Emergency Communications (Dispatch) Center.

The Police Department budget of \$2.7M increased by \$137,060, or 5.3%. This increase is primarily attributable to contractual increases in salaries, wages and benefits, as well as higher fuel costs.

The Dispatch Center provides emergency communications services for Holden, Princeton, Paxton and West Boylston. Each town pays a portion of the support for the department. Holden needs to budget for the entire expense of the Center to authorize payment of its expenses, even a substantial majority of those costs will be covered by the other towns and the state reimbursement. The FY23 budget of \$872,862 has increased by \$90,307, or 11.5% from last year, due primarily to increasing compensation for dispatchers to market rates, in order to slow turnover of personnel. Anticipated revenue from member communities is \$351,650, and state grant revenue is anticipated to be \$504,000, which combined, will fund the majority of the costs budgeted here.

The Animal Control budget is \$80,765, increasing by \$5,610, or 7.5%, due to wage increases and an increased fuel budget.

The Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service Department (Ambulance or EMS) budget of \$2.6M increased by \$125,891, or 5.1% for FY 2023, due primarily to contractual increases in salaries and wages and increased fuel costs. Also, a significant portion of this increase is the result of the Town now shouldering all of the salaries of the 6 new firefighters hired in FY 2021 under a SAFER grant. Offsetting efficiencies gained through reduced overtime were first realized in prior years, and therefore, do not show a reduction this year. This budget will be partially paid for by estimated revenue of \$910,000 paid by users of ambulance services.

The Emergency Management Office funds and equips the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which is the group of volunteers who maintain preparedness for future emergencies. The budget is \$101,889, and it has been increased \$6,209 for FY 2022, primarily due to an accounting change to show certain benefit expenses totaling \$4,336 in this department rather than grouping them into the Fire budget, as had been done previously.

The Public Safety building has its own budget of \$200,500, so that the costs associated with this facility may be monitored closely. This budget decreased by \$7,000 in FY 2023 due to lower costs related to maintenance, offset by higher fuel costs.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 11.

MOTION MADE: Christopher Lucchesi, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$6,561,074 for the proposed budget for PUBLIC SAFETY, substantially as shown on page 10 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$504,000 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, by transferring \$25,000 from the Wachusett Fund, and by raising and appropriating \$6,032,074 to cover the balance; and to further authorize the Town Manager to transfer from the Town Manager Salary & Wages account various sums to the Salary & Wages accounts of other Town Departments, as the Town Manager may deem advisable to effect adjustments of salaries and wages in the ensuing fiscal year.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 138 YES 8 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 12 – PUBLIC WORKS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for Public Works purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 12		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$3,339,810	PUBLIC WORKS	\$3,556,571

Summary: The Department of Public Works budget includes:

Administration Division (DPW Director and staff)

Engineering Division (project planning & supervision)

Highway Division (road repair, maintenance and snow removal)

Building and Grounds Division (maintenance of buildings, fields, and cemeteries)

Mechanics Division (repair/maintenance of vehicles, and equipment)

Garage Division (DPW garage facility)

The Public Works budget increased \$216,761 (6.4%) for FY 2023. The major initiative is \$100,000 to remove trees in and around Dawson Recreation to allow an expansion of the fields and a pathway to Industrial Drive, where the Town would like to build additional fields. The remaining increase is due to normal salary and wage increases, plus higher fuel and utilities costs.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 12.

MOTION MADE: Alan Berg, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$3,556,571 for the proposed budget for PUBLIC WORKS, substantially as shown on page 11 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$109,068 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, transferring \$5,000 from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund, and by raising and appropriating \$3,442,503 to cover the balance, and to further authorize the Town Manager to transfer from the Town Manager Salary & Wages account various sums to the Salary & Wages accounts of other Town Departments, as the Town Manager may deem advisable to effect adjustments of salaries and wages in the ensuing fiscal year.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 140 YES 4 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 13 – PUBLIC WORKS DEPRECIATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer a sum of money to be added to the Public Works Depreciation Fund, created by Chapter 328 of the Acts of 2000, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 13		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$75,000	TRANSFER INTO PUBLIC WORKS DEPRECIATION FUND	\$0
\$0	TRANSFER INTO PUBLIC WORKS DEPRECIATION FUND	\$0

Summary: The Public Works Depreciation Fund was established to save money to fund large equipment purchases for the DPW. It was intended to minimize fluctuations in the DPW budget from year-to-year and currently has a balance of approximately \$765,000. We have been deferring the purchase of many vehicles, some quite expensive, in recent years, resulting in an aging fleet that will need replacing in coming years. However, given the economic uncertainty that many Holden residents are facing, the FinCom decided not to add money to this fund this year. Expenditures from this fund require a 4/5 approval vote from a Town Meeting. There are no planned expenditures this year.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 13.

MOTION MADE: Alan Berg, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town take no action under this article.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 110 YES 12 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 14 – CHAPTER 90 STATE HIGHWAY AID

To see if the Town will vote to accept and authorize the expenditure of all monies to be received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under Chapter 90 of the General Laws for highway purposes, or any other legislation adopted by the General Court relating to public works, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 14		
FY 2022		FY 2023
N/A	CHAPTER 90 STATE HIGHWAY AID	N/A

Summary: This article is a legal formality that allows the Town to accept and spend state assistance received under the provisions of MGL Chapter 90. Chapter 90 is a state reimbursement program. Once the Town expends money on road maintenance, it can file for reimbursement under this program. The funds are explicitly reserved for highway (including roads and sidewalks) related projects and expenses. In FY 2023, the Town is eligible for an estimated \$633,657 in Chapter 90 reimbursements, which is consistent with prior years. Planned expenses include various major road reconstruction and paving projects, as well as sidewalk work.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 14.

MOTION MADE: Alan Berg, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to accept and authorize the expenditure of all monies to be received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under Chapter 90 of the General Laws for highway purposes, or any other legislation as may be adopted by the General Court relating to public works.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 140 YES 2 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 15 – CAPITAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or authorize the borrowing of a sum of money to defray the expense of purchasing and/or leasing Capital equipment, vehicles, buildings, infrastructure, or other projects of the Town and to fund future Town debt related to these projects, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 15		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$708,000	CAPITAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION	\$1,245,500

Summary: This article funds certain capital purchases for all Town departments, except those of the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund (Article 17 authorizes those purchases). Of this year's appropriation, \$361,500 is for road maintenance, improvement and equipment, \$400,000 for buildings and grounds equipment and vehicles, while \$220,000 is for Public Safety equipment, including two new Police cruisers and a Fire Department squad car. \$220,000 is for repairs to various bridges and at the landfill, plus \$44,000 for technology purchases, and work at the library and Senior Center. The last two year's capital plans have been very limited in order to minimize tax increases, but these purchases cannot be deferred indefinitely. The significant increase in this year's budget reflects a return to a more normal level of spending and the urgent need to buy certain equipment and vehicles. We are not tapping the depreciation account for these acquisitions because the capital plan contains even larger purchases in the next few years, again, partially the result of aggressively deferring purchases for the past few years. A complete list of proposed capital purchases can be found on page 29 at the end of this document.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 15.

MOTION MADE: Stephanie Adams, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town appropriate the sum of \$1,245,500 for the purpose of acquiring capital items substantially as shown on page 29 of the "TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET," and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$1,167,444 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, transferring \$25,000 from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund, and by transferring \$53,056 from unused bond proceeds authorized at the May 15, 2017 Annual Town Meeting under Article 15 for the purchase of a loader as described in the FY18 capital budget.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 145 YES 5 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 16 – WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the

Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay debts and charges for the ensuing year for Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 16		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$8,292,577	WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND – OPERATING EXPENSES	\$9,119,261

Summary: Water and sewer services are provided through the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund. The income from water and sewer bills goes into the fund, and all expenses, such as water purchased from Worcester and sewage transport and processing charges, are paid from this fund. No tax money goes into this fund. This budget is increasing by \$826,684 (10.0%) from FY 2022, reflecting increases in sewage transportation and treatment, the cost of purchasing water from Worcester, and debt service. The Board of Selectmen has increased the water and sewer rates to cover these higher costs.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 16.

MOTION MADE: David White, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$8,960,213, to pay direct debts and charges for the ensuing year, and to transfer the sum of \$159,048 to the general fund to cover indirect costs for the ensuing year, for a total appropriation of \$9,119,261 for the proposed budget for the WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND, substantially as shown on page 12 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$577,500 from Water/Sewer Enterprise free cash in the hands of the Treasurer and raising the sum of \$8,541,761 through fees and charges.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 112 YES 6 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 17 – WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND CAPITAL

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or authorize the borrowing of a sum of money to defray the expense of purchasing and/or leasing capital equipment, vehicles, buildings, infrastructure, or other projects of the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Capital budget and to fund future Town debt related to these projects, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 17		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$1,900,000	WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND - CAPITAL	\$2,898,500

Summary: This article authorizes borrowing \$2,450,000 and using \$448,500 for capital purchases for the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund. \$1.5M is budgeted for water main replacement and/or lining, \$700,000 for sewer pump station upgrades, \$50,000 for water meter replacements and \$520,000 for other water system improvements. The remaining budget is for various vehicles and equipment. A complete list of proposed capital purchases can be found on page 29 at the end of this document.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 17.

MOTION MADE: David White, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,898,500 for the purpose of acquiring capital items substantially as shown on page 29 of the “TOWN MEETING

HANDBOOK FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET,” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$448,500 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund free cash in the hands of the Treasurer, and by borrowing the sum of \$2,450,000 under G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7 or Section 8, or any other enabling authority, which borrowing relates to the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund for Water Main Replacement and/or lining, Sewer Pump Station Repairs, and Water Meter Replacements and to that end that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, be authorized to issue bonds and notes therefore totaling \$2,450,000 and in accordance with Chapter 44 Section 20 of the General Laws, the premium received by the Town upon the sale of any Bonds or notes thereunder, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuances of such bonds or notes, may be applied to pay project costs, and the amount authorized to be borrowed for each project be reduced by the amount of any such premium so applied.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 141 YES 7 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED WITH A 2/3RDS VOTE

ARTICLE 18 – SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay debts and charges for the ensuing year for Solid Waste Enterprise fund purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 18		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$1,410,273	SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND	\$1,602,601

Summary: The Solid Waste Enterprise Fund provides curbside trash collection and recycling services. The income from trash removal bills goes into the fund and all solid waste expenses are paid from this fund. No tax money goes into this fund. The budget is up \$192,238, or 13.6%, due primarily to increases in trash and recycling collection costs and disposal fees. These increases are larger than usual due to the underlying contracts expiring in June 2022 and having to be renegotiated during a slump in worldwide demand for recycled materials, which increases the cost of a recycling program.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 18.

MOTION MADE: Jane Titcomb, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,589,953, to pay direct debts and charges for the ensuing year and to transfer the sum of \$12,648 to the general fund to cover indirect costs for the ensuing year, for a total appropriation of \$1,602,601, for the proposed budget for the SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND, substantially as shown on page 13 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$205,000 from Solid Waste Enterprise free cash in the hands of the Treasurer and raising the sum of \$1,397,601 through fees and charges.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 137 YES 7 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 19 – AMEND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REVOLVING FUND

To see if the Town will vote to:

- (i) amend the Recreation Department Revolving Fund, as set forth in Article II, Section 5 of the General Bylaws to include fees, charges, and other receipts of before and after school programs operated by the Recreation Department and to delete the restriction listed therein; and
- (ii) rescind the acceptance of MGL c. 44, section 53D relative to the establishment of a revolving fund for before and after school programs operated by the Recreation Department and to authorize the transfer of all of the funds in such account to the Recreation Department Revolving Fund established and operating under Article II, Section 5 of the General Bylaws, or act or do anything relative thereto.

Summary: For many years the activities of the Recreation Department have been accounted for under two separate funds. 1) The Recreation Revolving Fund accounted for various exercise, recreation and artistic programs, collecting fees for those programs and paying the expenses of running the programs, and; 2) The Before and After School Program Fund provided child care, collecting fees for those programs and paying the expenses of running the programs. Several of the same people and locations are used in both of these programs. In recent years it has become clear that this overlap is an inefficient arrangement that takes time to correctly allocate expenses between, while providing little value. This article proposes merging the two funds together to streamline the management and accounting for the activities. This proposal is strictly an accounting change, and will not impact the programs made available or their cost.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 19.

MOTION MADE: David White, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to:

Amend Article II, Section 5, subsection 5.05, by revising the revolving fund listed in the table therein for the Recreation Department by inserting in existing text listed under Column C, “Fee, Charges or Other Receipts Credited to the Fund” the additional terms: “before and after school programs”; and by deleting the text listed under Column E, “Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable From Fund” in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the word, “None”;

and;

Revoke the Town’s acceptance on May 20, 1996, of General Law Chapter 44, section 53D relative to the establishment of a revolving fund for before and after school programs operated by the Recreation Department and to transfer all of the funds in such account into the Recreation Department Revolving Fund established and operating under Article II, Section 5, subsection 5.05 of the General Bylaws, provided, however, that the transferred funds shall not be used for the purpose of paying any wages or salaries for full-time Recreation Department employees.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 137 YES 2 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

**ARTICLE 20 – RECREATION REVOLVING FUND, INSPECTION REVOLVING FUND,
PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to set the Fiscal Year 2023 spending limits for the Recreation Revolving Fund and the Inspection Revolving Fund, both as established in Article II, Section 5 of the General By-laws, and set the annual appropriation for the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, established in accordance with the General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F ¾, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 20		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$819,065	RECREATION REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL LIMIT	\$1,049,061
\$276,783	INSPECTION REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL LIMIT	\$247,259
\$357,948	PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND	\$387,230

Summary: The Recreation Department operates the town pool, recreation and before/after school programs year-round for residents. Revenue generated from user fees is deposited into the recreation revolving fund, which is then used to pay expenses. No tax money goes into this fund. The budget increase of \$229,996 (28.1%) is due mainly to increased personnel costs driven by the creation of an Assistant Recreation Director position, the addition of 2 new pool deck supervisor positions for high usage times and a need to increase wages for the seasonal pool staff. There are \$45,000 of planned capital expenditures in FY 2022, primarily pool and court upgrades.

The Inspection Revolving Fund is funded by building, electrical, plumbing and other permit fees. No tax money goes into this fund. All inspection and support activities are paid from this fund. The \$29,524, or 10.7%, decrease in this year's budget is due to last year's budget purchasing a vehicle for the Building Inspector, in order to reduce long-term transportation reimbursement costs for the Town. All other expenses are virtually unchanged, so the proposed budget has declined by approximately the cost of the vehicle.

Holden Community Television provides the programming seen on Charter Cable Channels 191, 192 and 194. These operations are budgeted in the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund. The revenue in this fund comes from an annual grant from Charter Communications, as required by our contract with them. No tax money goes into this fund. The \$29,282 increase in this budget is driven by the need to modernize certain equipment for the HD era.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 20.

MOTION MADE: Joseph Dolak, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town:

- (i) set the Fiscal Year 2023 spending limit for the Recreation Revolving fund at \$1,049,061;
- (ii) set the Fiscal Year 2023 spending limit for the Inspection Revolving Fund at \$247,259; and
- (iii) set the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriation for the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund at \$387,230.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 132 YES 6 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 21 –EMINIENT DOMAIN – SHREWSBURY STREET

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, or taking by eminent domain, any parcels of real property, permanent easements, and temporary easements, for public way purposes, including without limitation drainage, utility, slope, grading, road realignment, sidewalks,

construction of improvements and structures, and other related purposes, as may be necessary to complete the MassDOT Shrewsbury Street Transportation Improvement Project, said parcels and easement areas being generally shown on a plan entitled “Holden; Shrewsbury Street, Project File No. 609219”, on file in the Town Clerk’s Office and available for public inspection during regular business hours, and as may be amended through final project design; and further to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum of money to be expended for engineering, design, and other associated services, and for the acquisition of said parcels of real property and easements, including but not limited to acquisition costs, the award of eminent domain damages, and related expenses and fees, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Anthony Renzoni, Board of Selectmen

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, or taking by eminent domain, parcels of real property, permanent easements, and temporary easements, for public way purposes, including without limitation drainage, utility, slope, grading, road realignment, sidewalks, construction of improvements and structures, and other related purposes, as may be necessary to complete the MassDOT Shrewsbury Street Transportation Improvement Project, said parcels and easement areas being generally shown on a plan entitled “Holden; Shrewsbury Street, Project File No. 609219”, and as may be amended through final project design; and further to transfer the sum of \$140,000 from available funds held by the Treasurer and received under the Chapter 90 program, so called, to be expended for engineering, design, and other associated services, and for the acquisition of said parcels of real property and easements, including but not limited to acquisition costs, the award of eminent domain damages, and related expenses and fees.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 73 YES 71 NO

MOTION DOES NOT PASS AS VOTED WITHOUT A 2/3RDS VOTE

ARTICLE 22 – USE OF TOWN HALL

To see if the Town will vote to permit the use of the Town Hall for the next year at less than the fair rental value by: John E. Harkins Post #42 American Legion, Boy and Girl Scout Troops of Holden, Women's Auxiliary of the John E. Harkins Post #42, the Holden Baseball Program, Inc., League of Women Voters, 4-H Club, Rainbow Girls, the Grange, the White Oak Land Conservation Society, Inc., Holden Citizens for Responsible Energy, Holden Republican Town Committee, Holden Democratic Town Committee, Holden for Children, and Friends of Eagle Lake, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Stephanie Mulroy, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to permit the use of the Town Hall for the next year at less than the fair rental value by: John E. Harkins Post #42 American Legion, Boy and Girl Scout Troops of Holden, Women's Auxiliary of the John E. Harkins Post #42, the Holden Baseball Program, Inc., League of Women Voters, 4-H Club, Rainbow Girls, the Grange, the White Oak Land Conservation Society, Inc., Holden Citizens for Responsible Energy, Holden Republican Town Committee, Holden Democratic Town Committee, Holden for Children, and Friends of Eagle Lake.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 126 YES 2 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 23 – MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT EXCESS INCOME

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the sum of \$159,293 of the excess of the income of the Municipal Light Department for the calendar years 2022 and 2023 over and above the total expense of the plant as defined in the General Laws, as an item of income to be used by the Assessors in establishing the tax rate for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Geraldine Herlihy, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to authorize the sum of \$159,293 of the excess of income of the Municipal Light Department for the calendar years 2022 and 2023 over and above the total expense of the plant as defined in the General Laws, be transferred as income to the Assessors for use in establishing the tax rate for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 113 YES 5 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 24 – MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT STABILIZATION FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money for the operation and maintenance of the Municipal Light Department and its Depreciation, Construction and Rate Stabilization Funds, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Geraldine Herlihy, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote that the income from the sale of electricity to private consumers, of electricity supplied to municipal buildings, and for municipal power, and of sales of appliances and from jobbing during the calendar year commencing January 1, 2022, be appropriated for the Municipal Light Department, the whole to be expended for the expense of the department for said calendar year, and that if the income exceeds the expense of the department for said calendar year, such part thereof as the Town may vote shall be retained by the Town Treasurer in accordance with applicable law and any further excess shall be transferred to the Depreciation Fund, the Construction Fund, and the Rate Stabilization Fund of said Municipal Light Plant as may be hereafter authorized by the Board of Light Commissioners as outlined in General Laws, Chapter 164, Section 57.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 126 YES 4 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 25 – STREET ACCEPTANCE: DANIELLE LANE

To see what action the Town will take relative to accepting streets and authorizing the acquisition of related interests in real estate, according to plans filed with the Town Clerk after approval by the Selectmen and referrals to the Planning Board for a report, or act or do anything relative thereto..

MOTION MADE: Geraldine Herlihy, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to accept as a town way Danielle Lane, as shown on a plan entitled “Street Acceptance Plan Danielle Lane, Holden, Massachusetts,” dated April 19, 2022, said way having been laid out by vote of the Board of Selectmen on May 2, 2022, and to authorize the Board of

Selectmen to acquire by purchase, gift or taking by eminent domain all interests in said way and any ancillary interests deemed necessary to establish Danielle Lane as a public way.

MOTION SECONDED

SCOTT CARLSON, PLANNING BOARD CHAIRMAN, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE PLANNING BOARD STATING THE PLANNING BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF DANIELLE LANE

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 112 YES 10 NO
MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 26 – EDUCATION – VOCATIONAL & OUT OF DISTRICT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, or from any other available funds, a sum of money to pay Town debts and charges, for the ensuing year for Vocational Education/Out of District Placement purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 26		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$1,022,372	EDUCATION – VOCATIONAL & OUT OF DISTRICT	\$1,279,080

Summary: This article is primarily the \$1.2M assessment to Holden from the Montachusett Regional Vocational School District, which provides a very valuable educational alternative for Holden students. The underlying Montachusett budget is increasing by 7.8%, which is higher than normal, driven by decreased state aid for transportation and the need for higher-than-normal expenditures to maintain the building and its heating and ventilating systems. This article's increase of \$256,708, or 25.1%, is driven by the underlying budget increase as well as the number of Holden students attending the school rising to 107, from 88, a 23.9% increase. This article also provides \$59,700 for tuition and transportation for a student to attend a different vocational high school, as provided for by state law.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 26.

MOTION MADE: Paul Challenger, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate, to pay Town debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$1,279,080 for VOCATIONAL EDUCATION which is a part of the Proposed Education Budget, as printed on page 16 of the "TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2023 BUDGET" under the heading "FY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET."

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 120 YES 10 NO
MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 27 – EDUCATION - WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer a sum of money not to exceed \$33,806,436 for the Town's share of the costs and expenses of the Wachusett Regional School District, such sum to include the Town's so-called required Local Minimum

Contribution, debt service, transportation and an additional sum to supplement the required Local Minimum Contribution, for the ensuing fiscal year.

ARTICLE 27		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$32,969,402	EDUCATION – WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$33,806,436

Summary: This article funds Holden’s share of the Wachusett Regional School District, (WRSD), including the state-mandated Minimum Local Contribution, the voluntary operational assessment, transportation and debt service on the High School renovation and expansion. The WRSD assessment for FY 2023 has increased \$837,034 (2.5%) from last year and it fully funds the WRSD budget recommended by the School Committee. The Town Manager and the Finance Committee have no say in the development of this budget. We are required to present the School Committee’s assessment at this meeting.

The WRSD receives 32% of its funding from the state, and the rest comes from the member towns. This year, the WRSD saw an 8.7% increase in anticipated state aid, totaling over \$2.7M. This increase was driven by an unusually large 4.5% inflation adjustment, higher state aid per pupil rates and an increase in student population (driven by the return of students after pandemic driven withdrawals in the prior year), combined with a large increase in the state-set foundation budget.

The WRSD budget increased by 4.3%, driven primarily by increased health insurance and transportation costs. Transportation costs are increasing after the last two years had unusually low costs due to remote learning eliminating a significant number of the days that transportation was required. This transportation budget is a return to a full year’s normal usage, and is also increased for anticipated fuel cost increases.

Using the increased state aid to reduce the impact of the budget increase, the WRSD assessment for Holden increased 2.5%.

In December 2021, 4 of the 5 regional towns sent written requests to the school district that assessments to the towns be increased by no more than 2.5%. This budget achieves that request.

MOTION MADE: Paul Challenger, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate:

- (i) the sum of \$25,152,399 for the Town’s share of the costs and expenses of the Wachusett Regional School District for the ensuing fiscal year, such sum includes the Town’s so-called required Local Minimum Contribution, debt service and transportation; and
- (ii) the sum of \$8,654,037 as an additional appropriation for the costs and expenses of the Wachusett Regional School District for the ensuing fiscal year, to supplement the appropriation in part (i);

It being understood that by appropriating a total sum of \$33,806,436 to the costs and expenses of the Wachusett Regional School District, the Town thereby approves a budget of \$109,086,381 for Fiscal Year 2023 for the Wachusett Regional School District.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 27.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 116 YES 19 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 28 – BYLAW AMENDMENT TRUSTEES OF DAMON MEMORIAL TRUSTEES

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article V, Part 2, Section 1 of the General By-laws by inserting the following sentence after the first sentence therein:

Only residents of the Town shall be qualified to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Anthony Renzonni, Finance Committee

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to amend Article V, Part 2, Section 1 of the General Bylaws as printed in the Warrant.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 89 YES 33 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 29 – AMEND DOG LICENSING FEES

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 10 of the Town Bylaws, entitled “License/Permit Fees” by replacing the Town Clerk’s fee schedule for dog licenses and kennel licenses in its entirety, with the following:

DOGS

LICENSES

January 1 – April 15	Spayed/neutered \$10	Intact \$15
April 16 – December 31	Spayed/neutered \$35	Intact \$40
	(\$25 late fee added after April 15)	

KENNELS

January 1 to April 15		April 16
4 Dogs	\$20	\$40
10 Dogs	\$40	\$80
Unlimited	\$60	\$120

(includes a dog licensed before six months of age or within 30 days of acquisition if the dog is older)

Spayed/neutered	\$10
Intact	\$15

REPLACEMENT TAG \$1

TRANSFER LICENSE \$2

SERVICE DOGS AND OWNERS 70 OR OLDER

Exempt from paying the fee but still must register their dog(s)

Or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Anthony Renzoni, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to amend Chapter 10 of the Town Bylaws, entitled “License/Permit Fees”, by revising the sections under “Town Clerk”, for Dogs and Kennels, as shown in the Warrant.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 114 YES 4 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED**ARTICLE 30 – DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS – SENIOR CENTER**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article II, Section 5 of the Town’s General By-Laws, entitled “Departmental Revolving Funds”, by adding a revolving fund for the Senior Center in the “Table of Authorized Revolving Funds”, as set forth in Subsection 5.05, to read as follows:

A. Revolving Fund	B. Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer Authorized to Spend from Fund	C. Fees, Charges or Other Receipts Credited to Fund	D. Program or Activity Expenses Payable From Fund	E. Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable From Fund	F. Other Requirements/ Reports	G. Fiscal Years
Senior Center	Council on Aging	Fees charged and received by the Council on Aging for programs/Classes and for day or weekly programs offered at the Senior Center, as well as meals.	To pay for programs, classes, activities, food and events for seniors at the Senior Center, including equipment and supplies, and to pay for improvements and repairs to the Senior Center.	None, other than as set forth in this Bylaw.	None, other than as set forth in this Bylaw and by Town Meeting vote.	Fiscal Year 2023 and subsequent years

and to set the fiscal year 2023 spending limit for the Senior Center Revolving Fund, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 30		
FY 2022		FY 2023
\$0	SENIOR CENTER REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL LIMIT	\$20,000

This article establishes a new Revolving Fund to record, hold and disburse money collected by the Senior Center for various programs and activities that they run throughout the year. No tax money goes into this fund. Establishing this fund will provide more transparency in the tracking and accounting for these fees and expenses. This article also sets the maximum amount that can be expended from the fund during the year.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 30.

MOTION MADE: Stephanie Adams, Finance Committee

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to amend Article II, Section 5 of the Town's General By-Laws, entitled "Departmental Revolving Funds", by adding a revolving fund for the Senior Center in Subsection 5.05, the "Table of Authorized Revolving Funds", as shown in the Warrant, and to set the Fiscal Year 2023 spending limit for the Senior Center Revolving Fund at \$20,000.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 115 YES 2 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 31 – WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE WEIGHTED VOTING

To see if the Town will vote to approve an amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Agreement as proposed by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee, to amend Section 1 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement to Change the Committee Membership to Weighted Voting.

A copy of the proposed amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement is on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available for public inspection during regular hours of Town Hall; or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Michael Dennis, WRSD Representative

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to approve the amendments of Section 1 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement to Change the Committee Membership to Weighted Voting.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 104 YES 12 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 32 – WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REGIONAL AGREEMENT

To see if the Town will vote to approve an amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Agreement as proposed by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee, amend Sections 11.3 and 11.4 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement and to add a Section 11.5, all regarding assignment of students.

A copy of the proposed amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement is on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available for public inspection during regular hours of Town Hall; or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Michael Dennis, WRSD Representative

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to approve the amendments to Sections 11.3 and 11.4 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement and to add a Section 11.5, all regarding assignment of students.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 99 YES 10 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 33 – WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REGIONAL AGREEMENT, SECTION 16

To see if the Town will vote to approve an amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Agreement as proposed by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee, to amend Section 16 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement regarding capital expenditures and to provide for renumbering of sections of the Agreement.

A copy of the proposed amendment to the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement is on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available for public inspection during regular hours of Town Hall; or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Michael Dennis, WRSD Representative

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to approve the amendments to Section 16 of the Wachusett Regional School District Regional Agreement regarding capital expenditures and to provide for renumbering of sections of the Agreement.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 101 YES 14 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

ARTICLE 34 – CONVEYANCE OF PARCELS OF REAL ESTATE

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for a special legislation, as set forth herein, to enable the Town to convey two parcels of Town-owned land to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in exchange for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts conveying two parcels of State-owned land to the Town, provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Board of Selectmen approves the amendments thereto before enactment by the General Court, which amendments shall be within the public purposes of said petition:

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE CONVEYANCE OF PARCELS OF REAL ESTATE BY AND BETWEEN THE DIVISION OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AND THE TOWN OF HOLDEN

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of general law chapter 30B or any other general or special law to the contrary, the town of Holden may convey the following to parcels of land to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

- A parcel located off of North Street in Holden and shown on Assessors' Map 44 as Parcel 3, containing approximately 9.67 acres of land; and

- A parcel located off of Meadow Wood Drive in Holden and shown on Assessors' Map 161 as Parcel 3, containing approximately 11.65 acres of land.

SECTION 2. In exchange for and in consideration of the conveyances of the two parcels from the town of Holden identified in Section 1, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Conservation and Recreation, may convey to the Town the following two parcels of land, located in Holden:

- A parcel located off of Salisbury Street in Holden and shown on Assessors' Map 186 as Parcels 5, containing approximately 9.75 acres; and
- A parcel of land locate off of Salisbury Street in Holden and shown on Assessors' Map 186 as Parcel 8, Parcel ID No. 7216, containing approximately 8.66 acres of land.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its passage.

Or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Anthony Renzoni, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to:

Authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation as printed in the Warrant; and

Authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey two parcels of Town-owned land, said parcels being located off of North Street and shown on Assessors Map 44 as Parcel 3 and located off of Meadow Wood Drive and shown on Assessors Map 161 as Parcel 3, to the Commonwealth, in exchange for and in consideration of the Commonwealth conveying to the Town two parcels of land, said parcels being located off of Salisbury Street and shown on Assessors Map 186 as Parcel 5 and Parcel 8.

MOTION SECONDED

ELECTRONIC VOTING RESULTS: 113 YES 3 NO

MOTION PASSES AS VOTED

MOTION MADE

To adjourn the Annual Town Meeting.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

TOWN MEETING CONCLUDED AT 9:21PM

DETAIL OF THE PROPOSED FY 2023 BUDGET

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
ARTICLE 6 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT		
1,900,246	Salary & Wages	1,932,778
5,124,212	Expense	5,379,194
150,000	Reserve Fund	150,000
7,174,458	Total General Government	7,461,972
Moderator		
100	Salary & Wages	100
65	Expense	65
165		165
Finance Committee		
1,786	Expense	1,795
150,000	Reserve Fund	150,000
151,786		151,795
Selectmen		
7,250	Salary & Wages	7,250
33,000	Expense	32,550
40,250		39,800
Town Manager & Personnel		
488,937	Salary & Wages	520,453
21,250	Expense	25,750
510,187		546,203
Information Technology		
267,669	Salary & Wages	273,021
150,647	Expense	143,433
418,316		416,454
Accounting		
208,936	Salary & Wages	218,783
33,200	Expense	30,225
242,136		249,008

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
	Treasury	
232,561	Salary & Wages	239,895
<u>63,650</u>	Expense	<u>70,300</u>
296,211		310,195
	Assessors	
189,137	Salary & Wages	194,728
<u>97,050</u>	Expense	<u>58,128</u>
286,187		252,856
	Legal	
<u>190,000</u>	Expense	<u>205,000</u>
190,000		205,000
	Town Clerk	
216,672	Salary & Wages	255,532
<u>40,852</u>	Expense	<u>83,563</u>
257,524		339,095
	Planning and Development	
282,984	Salary & Wages	217,016
<u>76,000</u>	Expense	<u>95,874</u>
358,984		312,890
	Sealer	
6,000	Salary & Wages	6,000
<u>0</u>	Expense	<u>0</u>
6,000		6,000
	Insurance	
<u>2,374,507</u>	Expense	<u>2,385,546</u>
2,374,507		2,385,546
	Retirement	
<u>2,042,205</u>	Expense	<u>2,246,965</u>
2,042,205		2,246,965

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
ARTICLE 7 - HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE		
967,470	Salary & Wages	1,007,545
286,340	Expense	291,883
65,000	Veteran's Aid & Assistance	65,000
1,318,810	Total Human Services and Culture	1,364,378

Library		
678,970	Salary & Wages	708,647
251,590	Expense	254,483
930,560		963,130
Senior Citizens		
267,940	Salary & Wages	277,930
30,650	Expense	33,250
298,590		311,180
Veterans		
20,560	Salary & Wages	20,968
600	Expense	600
65,000	Aid & Assistance	65,000
86,160		86,568
Historical Comm		
3,500	Expense	3,500
3,500		3,500

ARTICLE 8 – DEBT		
3,126,023	Exempt Debt	3,370,248
153,977	Non-exempt Debt	148,729
3,280,000	Total Debt Service	3,518,977

FY 2022 Voted budget	FY 2023 Proposed Budget	
-------------------------	----------------------------	--

ARTICLE 9 - OPEB FUND CONTRIBUTIONS		
478,967	Contributions from General Fund	250,000
45,000	Contributions from Water/Sewer	45,000
15,039	Contributions from Employees	24,529
539,006	Total OPEB Fund Contributions	319,529

ARTICLE 10 - GENERAL, OPEN SPACE AND FIRE VEHICLE CONTRIBUTIONS		
150,000	General Stabilization Fund	150,000
50,000	Open Space Preservation Fund	0
100,000	Fire Vehicle Stabilization Fund	0
300,000	Total General, Open Space and Fire Vehicle	150,000

ARTICLE 11 - PUBLIC SAFETY		
5,392,147	Salary & Wages	5,717,824
810,850	Expense	843,250
6,202,997	Total Public Safety	6,561,074

Police		
2,341,354	Salary & Wages	2,464,614
237,700	Expense	251,500
2,579,054		2,716,114
Animal Control		
65,955	Salary & Wages	69,165
9,200	Expense	11,600
75,155		80,765

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
-------------------------	--	----------------------------

Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

2,160,303	Salary & Wages	2,263,994
302,750	Expense	324,950
2,463,053		2,588,944

Public Safety Complex

207,500	Expense	200,500
207,500		200,500

Regional Dispatch

738,855	Salary & Wages	828,162
43,700	Expense	44,700
782,555		872,862

Emergency Management

85,680	Salary & Wages	91,889
10,000	Expense	10,000
95,680		101,889

ARTICLE 12 - PUBLIC WORKS

1,640,250	Salary & Wages	1,655,271
1,179,560	Expense	1,381,300
520,000	Snow Removal	520,000
3,339,810	Total Public Works	3,556,571

Administration

200,636	Salary & Wages	204,649
10,550	Expense	11,750
211,186		216,399

Engineering

171,191	Salary & Wages	173,156
210,710	Expense	205,950
381,901		388,106

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
	Highway	
576,286	Salary & Wages	583,977
435,950	Expense	463,250
520,000	Snow Removal	520,000
1,532,236		1,567,227
	Mechanics	
205,812	Salary & Wages	198,600
18,300	Expense	20,400
224,112		219,000
	Building and Grounds	
486,325	Salary & Wages	494,889
419,150	Expense	546,050
905,475		1,040,939
	Garage	
84,900	Expense	124,900
84,900		124,900
ARTICLE 13 - DPW DEPRECIATION FUND		
75,000	DPW Depreciation Fund	0
75,000	Total DPW Depreciation Fund	0
ARTICLE 14 - CHAPTER 90 STATE HIGHWAY AID		
0	Chapter 90 State Highway Aid	0
0	Total Chapter 90 State Highway Aid	0
ARTICLE 15 - CAPITAL BUDGET		
708,000	Capital Budget - General Fund	1,245,500
708,000	Total Capital Budget - General Fund	1,245,500
A detailed listing of the capital assets to be acquired is found on page 29 of this handbook		

FY 2022	FY 2023
Voted budget	Proposed Budget

ARTICLE 16 - WATER / SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND		
719,172	Salary & Wages	730,115
7,316,005	Expense	8,130,098
157,400	Indirect Costs	159,048
100,000	Emergency Reserve	100,000
8,292,577	TOTAL WATER/SEWER	9,119,261

ARTICLE 17 - WATER / SEWER CAPITAL BUDGET		
1,900,000	Capital Budget - Water / Sewer	2,898,500
1,900,000	Total Capital Budget - Water / Sewer	2,898,500

ARTICLE 18 - SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND		
53,139	Salary & Wages	52,829
1,344,734	Expense	1,537,124
12,400	Indirect Costs	12,468
1,410,273	Total Solid Waste	1,602,601

ARTICLE 20 - CONTINUE REVOLVING FUNDS		
790,547	Salary & Wages	872,863
551,714	Expense	683,520
31,535	Indirect Costs	32,167
80,000	Capital Outlay	95,000
1,453,796	Total Revolving Funds	1,683,550

Recreation		
511,354	Salary & Wages	613,591
271,546	Expense	342,305
36,165	Indirect Costs	48,165
0	Capital Outlay	45,000
819,065		1,049,061

FY 2022 Voted budget		FY 2023 Proposed Budget
Inspections		
153,748	Salary & Wages	155,458
81,635	Expense	80,173
11,400	Indirect Costs	11,628
30,000	Capital Outlay	0
276,783		247,259
Cable		
106,815	Salary & Wages	103,814
198,533	Expense	230,764
2,600	Indirect Costs	2,652
50,000	Capital Outlay	50,000
357,948		387,230
ARTICLE 26- VOCATIONAL EDUCATION		
962,972	Montachusett Regional High School	1,219,380
59,400	Out of District Vocational	59,700
1,022,372	Total Vocational Education	1,279,080
ARTICLE 27- EDUCATION - WACHUSETT REGIONAL		
20,535,856	WRSD Required	21,404,782
9,143,678	WRSD Voluntary	8,654,037
36,710	Debt-Oil Remediation	33,980
1,038,732	Debt -School Construction	1,061,215
2,214,426	Transportation	2,652,422
32,969,402	Total Education - Wachusett	33,806,436
ARTICLE 30- SENIOR CENTER REVOLVING FUND		
0	Expense	20,000
0		20,000

ARTICLES 15 & 17 - FY 2022 Capital Program Detail

DEPARTMENT	EXPENDITURE	CASH	BOND	OTHER	TOTAL
FIRE - EMS	Transport ventilator	\$20,000			\$20,000
	Squad car	\$75,000			\$75,000
POLICE	Cruisers (2)	\$125,000			\$125,000
DPW	Culvert / bridge rehabilitation	\$70,000			\$70,000
	Landfill swale repairs	\$150,000			\$150,000
	F550 Truck w/ dump / plow wing #56	\$100,000			\$100,000
	Hazardous tree removal	\$100,000			\$100,000
	Roadside mower #61	\$165,000			\$165,000
	Stand-on leaf blower	\$10,000			\$10,000
	Air compressor	\$25,000			\$25,000
	Electronic message board (50%)	\$11,500			\$11,500
	Roads / Sidewalks	\$325,000			\$325,000
	Cemetery lawn mowers (2)	\$25,000			\$25,000
	Chapter 90			\$633,657	\$615,739
WATER / SEWER	Water Main Replacement and/or Lining		\$1,500,000		\$1,500,000
	Sewer Pump Stations		\$700,000		\$700,000
	Inflow / infiltration removal			\$120,000	\$120,000
	Water Meter Replacement			\$50,000	\$100,000
	Spring St water treatment plant			\$100,000	\$100,000
	Chapin and Avery Storage Tank Mixing Systems		\$250,000		\$250,000
	Pipe saw			\$15,000	\$15,000
	Electronic message board (50%)			\$11,500	\$11,500
	F350 w/plow, #2			\$50,000	\$50,000
	F350 w/plow, #3			\$52,000	\$52,000
	F350 w/plow, #50			\$50,000	\$50,000
SENIOR CENTER	Carport for vans	\$7,000			\$7,000
RECREATION	Court maintenance			\$15,000	\$15,000
	Pool re-caulking			\$10,000	\$10,000
	Pool consultant			\$20,000	\$20,000
CABLE TV	Studio Camera Upgrade			\$30,000	\$30,000
	Remote studio / upgrade			\$20,000	\$20,000
LIBRARY	Wooden windows feasibility study	\$20,000			\$20,000
TOWN MANAGER / IT	Simplivity equipment	\$17,000			\$17,000
Grand Total		\$1,245,500	\$2,450,000	\$1,177,157	\$4,872,657

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AVAILABLE FUNDS – See Free Cash

DPW DEPRECIATION FUND – The DPW Depreciation Fund was created at the Town’s request by a special act of the state Legislature. It is a Stabilization Fund used for DPW vehicles and equipment purchase purposes only.

ENTERPRISE FUND – Funds that account for all revenues and expenditures for services and allow surpluses to be used to reduce user fees for the services or to pay for capital improvements are Enterprise Funds. The Town has two Enterprise Funds: the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund, and the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. Each fund has a discrete and independent budget.

EXCESS LEVY CAPACITY - The difference between the levy limit and the amount of property taxes actually levied in a given year. This is the amount that taxes can be raised without an approved override or debt exclusion vote.

FISCAL YEAR – The Town of Holden’s Fiscal Year is from July 1 through June 30.

FREE CASH – The amount of surplus revenue, minus uncollected taxes of prior years is called Free Cash. Also known as Unencumbered or Available Funds, Free Cash funds must be certified each year by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue before they can be appropriated by Town Meeting.

GENERAL ESTIMATED RECEIPTS—Income derived from motor vehicle excise taxes, interest on investments, license and permit fees, etc.

OVERLAY – Funds set aside to cover abatements and exemptions. This amount is determined by the Board of Assessors.

OVERLAY RESERVE – Unused accumulated amounts of Overlay from previous years that are not required to be held in a specific Overlay account for a given year. Once ‘released’ by vote of the Board of Assessors, the funds may be used for any municipal purpose.

OPEB TRUST FUND – The Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund was established in 2009 to fund future obligations for the Town’s share of retirees’ health benefits.

RESERVE FUND – A fund established by the Annual Town Meeting. It is under the control of the Finance Committee which may authorize transfers for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures. The fund may be composed of an appropriation of not more than 5% of the tax levy for the preceding year.

REVOLVING FUND – A fund established that receives the revenues connected with the programs supported by the fund. Expenditures may be expended without further appropriation up to the balance of the fund or to the total authorized maximum established by Town Meeting. An annual reauthorization by Town Meeting is required. Currently, Holden has the following revolving funds: Recreation, Before/After Schools, Cable TV, and Inspections.

STABILIZATION FUND – A special account created to provide a reserve for municipal expenditures. A 2/3rds vote by Town Meeting is required to expend these funds. Currently, Holden has stabilization funds set up for General Purposes, Water/Sewer, Open Space and Fire Vehicles.