



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 15, 2023

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A True Copy Attest:

Jeanne M. Hudson

Jeanne M. Hudson, Town Clerk

At 7:00PM on Monday, May 15, 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 28th, the last day to register as a voter there were 15,170 registered voters requiring 152 voters to be in attendance. At 7:00PM, there were one hundred and fifty-three (153) registered Holden voters, later totaling 225 voters, who attended and an additional fourteen (14) guests.

According to Article 1, Section 14 of the Holden Town ByLaws: The Moderator may make a public declaration of a 2/3rds vote without the necessity that a count be taken except as otherwise provided by General Laws Chapter 39, Section 15.

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
Brian Faulk, Town Counsel
James Reilly, Superintendent of WRSD
Michelle Grise, WRSD Director of Business and Finance
Russ Hall, Fire Chief
John Woodsmall, III, DPW Director
Rosemary Scully, Principal Assessor
Laurie Gaudet, Town Treasurer
Karen Phillips, Senior Center Director
Angela Greene, Recreation Director
Glenda William, Conservation Administrator
Colin M.J. Novick, Greater Worcester Land Trust
Thomas Browne, Superintendent, Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
William Howatt, Chapin Road Trust
Lauren Brown, Chapin Road Trust
Susan Scott, Director of the Gale Free Library

Holden Police Officers:

Ray Sherbourne
Ethan Parker
Todd Ventres
Haley Delahanty

There were three tellers on standby if needed and would be appointed by the Moderator.

Lisa DeCeiro, 86 Brattle Street
Faith Keskula, 624 Malden Street

The following Election Workers checked in voters for the ATM:

Janet Longvall, 8 Redgate Lane
Karen Trembley, 153 Jackson Street

As is customary, the Moderator made a motion to dispense with the reading of the warrant articles as the body of the meeting had the printed warrant in hand. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously as declared by the Moderator.

ARTICLE 1 – TO CHOOSE A MODERATOR FOR SAID MEETING

MOTION MADE: N/A

The moderator, Daniel Nason, was elected at the Annual Town Election on Monday, May 8, 2023

ARTICLE 2 – TO HEAR A REPORT OF THE RESULTS OF THE TOWN ELECTION HELD ON MAY 8, 2023

To cast their ballots for:

Moderator for one year.

One Selectmen for three years.

Two Trustees of Damon Memorial Library for three years.

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

One Holden Housing Authority Member for five 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 Nason noted the Annual Town Report contained the reports of Town Officers, Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Moderator Nason read the dedication page for 2022 Town Report to Joseph G. Sullivan. He noted that Mr. Sullivan was not in attendance but commented on his years of dedicated service as a member of the Board of Selectmen and Town Moderator.

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 2023		FY 2024
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

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$0	PAST TOWN DEBTS AND CHARGES	\$1,325.36

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 5 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 a YES vote on Article 5.

MOTION MADE: Jane Titcomb, 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 \$1,325.36 to pay five (5) bills payable in prior fiscal years for services rendered or goods delivered by the following vendors for the following sums:

Excel Elevator (April 2022) \$308.70

Excel Elevator (May 2022) \$308.70

Excel Elevator (June 2022) \$308.70

Cleaner Image \$269.34

Gatehouse Media \$129.92

MOTION SECONDED

4/5THS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION PASSED BY 4/5THS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$7,461,972	GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$7,854,243

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 2024 budget for General Government has increased \$392,271 (5.3%), primarily due to increases in the cost projections for the Town’s pension plan (\$227,992, or 10.1%) and health insurance (\$178,326, or 7.5%). Headcount in General Government is being reduced by one position due to an open position that will not be filled.

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

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 \$7,854,243 for the proposed budget for GENERAL GOVERNMENT, substantially as shown on page 6 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to raise said sum by transferring \$50,979 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, by transferring \$12,901 from the Solid Waste Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, by transferring \$100,000 from Overlay Surplus, by transferring \$1,465,089 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, and by raising and appropriating \$6,225,274 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

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$1,364,378	HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE	\$1,362,687

Summary: This article includes the budgets for the Senior Center, Veterans Assistance, Gale Free Library, and Historic District. Those combined budgets are down slightly 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 \$289,838 has decreased \$21,342, or 6.9%, due to turnover in staffing resulting in lower salary levels.

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 \$82,486 is down \$4,082, or 4.9% due to an anticipated reduction in caseload as we emerge from the pandemic.

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 2024 is \$986,863, representing an increase of \$23,733, or 2.5%. 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 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 \$1,362,687 for the proposed budget for HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE, substantially as shown on page 7 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET.”

MOTION SECONDED
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 **Human Services and Culture** purposes, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 8		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$3,518,977	GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT SERVICE	\$3,981,784

Summary: The Debt Service budget covers the principal and interest payments due during FY 2024. As of June 30, 2022, the total long-term debt outstanding for the Town of Holden was \$46,437,976, of which \$23,675,769 is considered to be inside the debt limit, and \$22,762,207 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 for the new DPW facility at 18 Industrial Drive. FY24 will see payments (\$227,829) begin for first borrowing on the recreation fields project approved by the October Town Meeting last year and for improvements to the elementary schools (\$157,740). 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 24 of this warrant.
Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 8.

MOTION MADE: Donna Wallace, 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 \$3,981,784 for the proposed budget for GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT, substantially as shown on page 8 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to raise said sum by transferring \$30 from excess debt excluded appropriation reserved from prior years, by transferring \$4,056 from bond premiums reserved, and by raising and appropriating \$3,977,698 to cover the balance.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$250,000	TRANSFER INTO OPEB FUND – GENERAL FUND	\$254,668
\$24,529	TRANSFER INTO OPEB FUND – EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS	\$36,449
\$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 goal to contribute 5% of certified free cash or \$250,000, whichever is greater. This year’s contribution meets the 5% goal. Employees hired after 2018 contribute 1% their base wages to 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. The OPEB fund has a \$6.3M balance, which is estimated to be approximately 37% 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: Donna Wallace, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town deposit \$336,117 into the Town’s Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund and meet said deposit by:

- (i) Transferring \$36,449 as received by the Town pursuant to employee contribution programs for Other Post-Employment Benefits established by the Town Manager;
- (ii) transferring \$254,668 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer; and
- (iii) appropriate \$45,000 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund fees and charges
- (iv)

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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: a sum of money to be added to the Town's **General Stabilization Fund**, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 10		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$150,000	TRANSFER INTO GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND	\$100,000
\$0	TRANSFER INTO OPEN SPACE STABILIZATION FUND	\$0
\$0	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 \$100,000 contribution to the General Stabilization Fund, which will result in a total fund balance of approximately \$5.0M, before taking action on Article 20, which would authorize the use of a portion of the Fund to purchase land. See Article 20 for more details on this proposed acquisition.

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. Given the significant tax increases being faced this year, the FinCom decided not to add money to this fund this year. The total fund balance is approximately \$220,000, before taking action on Article 20, which would authorize the use of \$100,000 of the Open Space Fund to purchase land. See Article 20 for more details on this proposed acquisition.

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 is being 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 \$507,000. There are no planned expenditures from this fund this year.

All expenditures from these funds require a 2/3 majority approval at a Town Meeting.

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: Donna Wallace, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, the sum of \$100,000 for deposit into the General Stabilization Fund.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$6,561,074	PUBLIC SAFETY	\$6,805,076

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

The Police Department budget of \$2.8M increased by \$71,832, or 2.6%. 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 though a substantial majority of those costs will be covered by the other towns and state reimbursement. The FY24 budget of \$904,167 has increased by \$31,305, or 3.6% 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 \$357,454, 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 \$85,971, increasing by \$5,206, or 6.4%, due to wage increases.

The Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service Department (Ambulance or EMS) budget of \$2.6M increased by \$43,602, or 1.7% for FY 2024, due primarily to contractual increases in salaries and wages. This budget will be partially paid for by estimated revenue of \$1.0M paid by users of ambulance services.

The Community Risk Reduction division was created this year to manage all of the public facing programs for the safety of the citizens of Holden. This division oversees the provision of Emergency Management, Emergency Preparedness, Public Health and Public Education services that previously were in separate departments. The budget of \$172,408 has increased \$70,519, or 69.2%, primarily due to absorbing the \$51,500 budget of the Board of Health, which in prior years was under the Planning Department, and to increased compensation expenses.

The Public Safety building has its own budget of \$222,038, so that the costs associated with this facility may be monitored closely. This budget increased by \$21,538 in FY 2024 due to higher costs related to maintenance and fuel.

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 \$6,805,076 for the proposed budget for PUBLIC SAFETY, substantially as shown on page 10 of the "TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET" under the heading "FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET" and to raise said sum by transferring \$25,000 from the Wachusett Fund, and by raising and appropriating \$6,780,076 to cover the balance.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$3,556,571	PUBLIC WORKS	\$3,823,380

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 all Town vehicles and equipment)

Garage Division (DPW facility)

The Public Works budget increased \$266,809 (7.5%) for FY 2024. The major increase is \$80,000 to more accurately fund snow removal efforts. In December 2022, the department moved into the new DPW building at 18 Industrial Drive. This facility is substantially larger than previous quarters, and will require more fuel and utilities expenses. With the building being new, we have taken a conservative approach to budgeting for these unknown costs, so the Garage Division's budget increased \$81,100, or 64.9%. The remaining increase is due to normal salary and wage increases, plus higher fuel and supplies 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 \$3,823,380 for the proposed budget for PUBLIC WORKS, substantially as shown on page 11 of the "TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET" under the heading "FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET" and to raise said sum by transferring \$109,749 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise fund receipts for indirect costs, transferring \$5,000 from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund, and by raising and appropriating \$3,708,631 to cover the balance.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$0	TRANSFER INTO PUBLIC WORKS DEPRECIATION FUND	\$50,000
\$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 \$742,000. 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. While we continued to push out buying certain vehicles, a significant capital expense is projected within the next two years, so it was determined to be prudent to put a little extra into the fund to help us be ready when these

vehicles require replacement. 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 vote to transfer from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer the sum of \$50,000 for deposit into the Department of Public Works Depreciation Fund.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
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 2024, the Town is eligible for an estimated \$615,739 in Chapter 90 reimbursements, which is consistent with prior years. The expenditure of these funds is included in the capital budget, as shown on page 28.

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

MOTION MADE: Marilyn Foley, 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

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 for purchasing and/or leasing **Capital** equipment, vehicles, buildings, infrastructure, or other projects of the Town, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 15		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$1,245,500	CAPITAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION	\$2,307,000

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, \$565,000 is for road maintenance, improvement and equipment, \$105,000 for buildings and grounds equipment and vehicles, while \$182,000 is for Public Safety equipment, including two new Police cruisers and a Police Department vehicle. Additionally, \$5,000 is for technology purchases at the library. After two years of very lean capital plans the FY23 budget included a number of desperately needed items that couldn’t be deferred any

more. This year, we have returned to a very limited budget in order to minimize tax increases, but these are purchases that cannot be deferred indefinitely. 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 28 at the end of this document.

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

MOTION MADE: Donald Graves, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town appropriate the sum of \$2,307,000 for the purpose of acquiring capital items substantially as shown on page 12 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK FY 2024 CAPITAL BUDGET,” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$857,000 from available funds in the hands of the Treasurer, and by borrowing the sum of \$1,450,000 under M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7 or Section 8, or any other enabling authority, which borrowing relates to the acquiring and equipping of a Tower Truck for the Fire Department and to that end that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, be authorized to issue bonds and notes therefore totaling \$1,450,000.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE
MOTION SECONDED
MOTION PASSED BY A 2/3RDS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$9,119,261	WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND – OPERATING EXPENSES	\$7,781,413

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 decreasing by \$1.3M (14.7%) from FY 2023, primarily reflecting a jury finding that the rates charged for sewage transportation by the City of Worcester to the Town of Holden have been incorrectly calculated for decades. As a result, the budget for sewage disposal was reduced by \$2.0M. A significant lump-sum payment of damages has been ordered by the court. Other items impacting this budget include the cost of purchasing water from Worcester (increased \$235,000), sewage treatment and disposal costs (increased \$111,773), normal wage adjustments (increased \$43,698), and legal costs to complete the above mention lawsuit (increased \$200,000), offset by a decrease in debt service of \$212,558.

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

MOTION MADE: Donald Graves, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay direct debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$7,620,685 and to also transfer the sum of \$160,728 to the general fund to cover indirect costs for the ensuing year, for a total appropriation of \$7,781,413 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 2024 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation through fees and charges of the Water/Sewer Enterprise.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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, authorize the borrowing of a sum of money, or otherwise provide funds from abandoned capital projects and from bond and/or bond anticipation note sale premium reserved for future appropriation in accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §20, for purchasing and/or leasing capital equipment, vehicles, buildings, infrastructure, or other projects of the **Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Capital** budget, or act or do anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 17		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$2,898,500	WATER/SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND - CAPITAL	\$2,334,000

Summary: This article authorizes borrowing \$2,050,000 and using \$284,000 for capital purchases for the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund. The borrowing is for water main improvements. The remaining budget is for various other water system improvements. A complete list of proposed capital purchases can be found on page 28 at the end of this document.

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

MOTION MADE: Donald Graves, Finance Committee

The Finance committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,334,000 for the purpose of acquiring capital items or completing capital improvement projects substantially as shown on page 13 of the “TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK FY 2024 CAPITAL BUDGET,” and to meet said appropriation by

- (i) appropriating \$284,000 from the Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund fees and charges;
- (ii) transferring \$77,816, for the water main replacement project, from bond and/or bond anticipation note sale premium reserved for future appropriation in accordance with M.G.L Chapter 44, Section 20 as follows:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Bond or Note Issue Date</u>
\$5,088.45	Bonds issued 6/14/2018
\$3,063.88	Notes issued 6/14/2019
\$21,446.49	Notes issued 11/13/2019
\$2,439.35	Bonds issued 10/29/20
\$24,471.31	Notes issued 10/30/20
\$392.35	Bonds issued 10/22/21
\$20,914.26	Notes issued 10/29/21

- (iii) transferring \$280,000, for the water main replacement project, representing unspent proceeds of the bonds issued on 06/14/2018 for the Sycamore Drive Pump Station project originally authorized under vote of the Town meeting on 05/15/2017 (Article 15), which project was not completed and no liability remains and such project is here by abandoned, and
- (iv) the Treasurer with the approval of the Board of Selectmen is authorized to borrow \$1,692,184, for the Water Main Project and Inflow and Infiltration Removal, under M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7 or Section 8, and/or M.G.L. Chapter 39C, or any other enabling authority; that all or a portion of the borrowing appropriation may be borrowed from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; the Board of Selectmen is authorized to

contract for and expend any federal or state aid available for the project; and that the Board of Selectmen is authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out these projects.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED BY A 2/3RDS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

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 2023		FY 2024
\$1,602,601	SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND	\$1,679,545

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 \$76,944, or 4.8%, due primarily to increases in trash and recycling collection costs and disposal fees.

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

MOTION MADE: Alan Berg, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to appropriate, to pay direct debts and charges for the ensuing year, the sum of \$1,666,644 and to also transfer the sum of \$12,901 to the general fund to cover indirect costs for the ensuing year, for a total appropriation of \$1,679,545, 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 2024 BUDGET” under the heading “FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET” and to meet said appropriation by transferring \$250,000 from Solid Waste Enterprise free cash in the hands of the Treasurer and raising the sum of \$1,429,545 through fees and charges of the Solid Waste Enterprise.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 19 – RECREATION REVOLVING FUND, SENIOR CENTER REVOLVING FUND, INSPECTION REVOLVING FUND, PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND

To see if the Town will vote to set the Fiscal Year 2024 spending limits for the **Recreation Revolving Fund**, **Senior Center 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 19		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$1,049,061	RECREATION REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL LIMIT	\$1,113,867
\$20,000	SENIOR CENTER REVOLVING FUND	\$25,000
\$247,259	INSPECTION REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL LIMIT	\$248,731
\$387,230	PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND	\$330,761

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 \$64,806 (6.2%) is due mainly to increases in wages (\$23,000) for lifeguards and other childcare staff, utilities (\$15,000) and an increase of \$25,000 of planned capital expenditures in FY 2024, primarily pool maintenance and tennis court upgrades.

The Senior Center Revolving Fund holds and disburses money collected by the Council on Aging for various programs and activities that they run throughout the year. No tax money goes into this fund. This article sets the maximum amount that can be expended from the fund during the year.

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. This budget is virtually unchanged.

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 \$56,469 (14.6%) decrease in this budget is caused by significant equipment purchases in the prior year not being necessary in the coming year.

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

MOTION MADE: Marilyn Foley, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town:

- (i) set the Fiscal Year 2024 spending limit for the Recreation Revolving fund at \$1,113,867;
- (ii) set the Fiscal Year 2024 spending limit for the Senior Center Revolving Fund at \$25,000;
- (iii) set the Fiscal Year 2024 spending limit for the Inspection Revolving Fund at \$248,731;
and
- (iv) set the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriation for the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund at \$330,761.

MOTION SECONDED
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 20 - SPRING LEDGE FARM

ARTICLE 20		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$0	STABILIZATION FUND	\$1,180,000
\$0	OPEN SPACE FUND	\$100,000

To see if the Town will vote to

- i. Transfer \$1,180,000 from the **General Stabilization Fund** and \$100,000 from the **Open Space Stabilization Fund** for the purpose of purchasing, for conservation and passive outdoor recreation purposes, certain property known as “**Spring Ledge Farm**”, containing approximately 112.78 acres and consisting of three parcels of land described and shown on the Assessors Maps as:
 - Parcel 219-3, which is also shown as Lot C, containing 20 acres, on a plan recorded at the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 882, Plan 14;
 - Parcel 219-2, which is also shown as Lot D, containing 87.64 acres, on said plan; and
 - Parcel 220-40, which is also shown as Lot E-1, containing 5.14 acres, on a plan recorded at Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 894, Plan 99

All being a portion of the premises owned now or formerly by Louise H. Howatt, Trustee of the Chapin Road Trust, and described in deed dated September 15, 2003 and recorded at the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 31651, Page 307; said property to be purchased pursuant to the provisions of MGL Chapter 40, Section 8C, as it may hereafter be amended, and other general laws relating to conservation, to be held and managed under the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission, and to be made subject to a Conservation Restriction in perpetuity to be conveyed to the Greater Worcester Land Trust, Inc. and/or the City of Worcester, pursuant to MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33;

- ii. Authorize the Conservation Commission to file on behalf of the Town any and all applications deemed necessary for grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as deemed necessary under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, (P.L. 88-578), for purposes of seeking a grant of \$640,000 as reimbursement towards the Town's purchase of said property, and for any other grant programs in any way connected with the scope of this Article;
- iii. Authorize the Town to accept gifts or grants from the Greater Worcester Land Trust and the City of Worcester, estimated to be \$540,000, as a contribution towards the Town's total purchase for said property and to reduce the total expenditure by the Town under this Article by such contributions, and
- iv. Authorize the Town Manager and the Conservation Commission to enter into all agreements and to execute any and all instruments as may be necessary on behalf of the Town to affect said purchase; or act or do anything relative thereto.

Summary: The Town has an opportunity to purchase 108 acres of land off of Chapin Road, commonly referred as the Spring Ledge Farm, in a coordination with White Oak Land Conservation Society, the City of Worcester and various other entities. Holden will purchase the land for \$1,280,000. The City of Worcester and greater Worcester Land Trust will jointly hold a conservation easement, ensuring it will not be developed in future years. The other entities are contractually obliged to then provide their share of the funding to Holden, totaling \$1,180,000, which will be returned to the stabilization fund. The Town's share of \$100,000 will come from the Open Space Fund, established specifically to provide funding for this type of acquisition.

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

MOTION MADE: Paul Challenger, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to approve Article 20 as printed in the posted warrant.

Mr. Challenger yielded the floor to Colin M.J. Novick, Executive Director of the Greater Worcester Land Trust to further present the merits of purchasing Spring Ledge Farm. The Moderator noted that Mr. Novick is not a Holden resident and requires the approval of the body of the meeting. The Moderator asked for a voice vote to allow Mr. Novick to speak to the article. After requesting a vote of Ayes and Nays the Moderator declared Mr. Novick was voted the ability to speak to the article.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED BY A 2/3RDS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 21 –CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

To see if the Town will vote to **transfer the remaining balance** of funds initially borrowed to pay costs of a completed capital improvement project, as permitted in accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §20, to pay the costs of a new capital improvement project, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Christopher Lucchesi, Finance Committee

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

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 22 – OPIOID SETTLEMENT STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.40, Section 5B, to create a new special purpose stabilization fund, to be known as the **Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund**, which may be expended for all of the purposes allowed by law, including those outlined in applicable opioid-litigation settlement documents, a document prepared by the Substance Abuse Bureau of the Commonwealth’s Office of Health and Human Services Department, found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-abatementterms/> download entitled “Abatement Strategies”, and consistent with any state guidelines or regulations further clarifying allowable uses of opioid litigation settlement funds; and further, to adopt the last paragraph of said Section 5B and dedicate to such fund, without further appropriation, 100% of the opioid litigation settlement funds received by the Town; and further, to transfer from available funds a sum of money equal to that received or to be received by the Town from opioid litigation settlements resulting from the Town’s participation in the national Opioid Multi-District Litigation into said Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund; or act or do anything relative thereto.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 22.

MOTION MADE: Christopher Lucchesi, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town create a new special purpose stabilization fund, to be known as the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund and to dedicate to such fund, without further appropriation, 100% of the opioid litigation settlement funds received, or to be received, by the Town.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED BY A 2/3RDS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 23 – RESCIND UNUSED BALANCE

To see if the Town will vote to **rescind the unused balance** of a borrowing authorization as approved under Article 15 at the May 20, 2019 Annual Town Meeting, which is no longer needed to accomplish the purposes for which it was approved, or take any other action relative thereto.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 23.

MOTION MADE: Christopher Lucchesi, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to rescind the \$220,000 unissued balance of the borrowing authorized at the Town Meeting on May 20, 2019 (Article 15) for the Jefferson Water Tank Rehab, which project is completed and no liability remains, and no additional funds are needed to accomplish the purposes for which it was approved.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 24 – WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARTICLE 24		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$21,404,782	WRSD REQUIRED MINIMUM LOCAL CONTRIBUTION	\$22,192,218

\$8,654,037	WRSD VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION	\$9,168,930
\$2,652,422	WRSD REQUIRED TRANSPORTATION	\$3,040,331
\$1,095,195	WRSD REQUIRED DEBT SERVICE	\$1,073,661
\$33,806,436	TOTAL WRSD ASSESSMENT	\$35,475,140

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 \$35,475,140 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.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 24.

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 \$26,306,210 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 \$9,168,930 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 \$35,475,140 to the costs and expenses of the Wachusett Regional School District, the Town thereby approves a budget of \$116,208,797 for Fiscal Year 2024 for the Wachusett Regional School District.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 25 – VOCATIONAL EDUCATION / OUT OF DISTRICT PLACEMENT

ARTICLE 25		
FY 2023		FY 2024
\$1,279,080	EDUCATION – VOCATIONAL & OUT OF DISTRICT	\$1,653,742

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.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends a YES vote on Article 25.

MOTION MADE: Paul Challenger, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends and I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate, the sum of \$1,653,742 for VOCATIONAL EDUCATION which is a part of the Proposed Education Budget, as printed on page 17 of the "TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FY 2024 BUDGET" under the heading "FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET."

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 26 – 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

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 27 – LIGHT DEPARTMENT TAXES

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the sum of \$138,947 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, 2023, 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 \$138,947 of the excess of the income of the Municipal Light Department for the calendar years 2023 and 2024 over and above the total expense of the plant as defined in the General Laws, as income to be used by the Assessors in establishing the tax rate for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 28 – LIGHT DEPARTMENT BUDGET

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: Thomas Curran, 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, 2023, 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

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 29 – STREET ACCEPTANCES – DAMON STREET EXTENSION

To see what action the Town will take relative to accepting streets and authorizing the acquisition of related interests in real estate by gift, purchase, or taking by eminent domain, 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:

(i) accept the alteration of the layout of Damon Street to extend the existing public street layout from its current terminus in a northwesterly direction for an additional 245 feet in length and 50 feet wide, more or less, over the areas shown as "Unaccepted Portion of Damon Street Right-of-Way" and as "Parcel 'D' 9,938 sq. ft.", on a plan recorded at the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 737, Plan 69, as voted by the Board of Selectmen at public hearing on April 24, 2023; and

(ii) authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, or taking by eminent domain an easement for public street purposes therein and to acquire any ancillary interests in land as may be necessary to establish such extended portion of Damon Street as a public way.

MOTION SECONDED

Mr. Scott Carlson, Chairman of the Planning Board reported on behalf of the Planning Board and stated the Board supported the article.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 30 – SHREWSBURY ST. AND DOYLE RD. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ALTERATION OF EXISTING PLANS

To see if the Town will vote to accept the **alteration** of the existing public street layouts of portions of **Shrewsbury Street, Brattle Street, Doyle Road, Chapel Street, Holden Street, Lincoln Avenue and Wachusett Street**, as having been laid out by the Board of Selectmen, and accept such alterations as the new public street layouts for said ways, all as shown on a plan prepared by VHB, Inc., entitled "Easement Plan of Land in Holden, Massachusetts", dated March 31, 2023, on file in the Town Clerk's office and available for public inspection during regular business hours, said alterations being required to complete the MassDOT Shrewsbury Street Transportation Improvement Project, so called, Project File No. 609219, or act or do anything relative thereto.

MOTION MADE: Thomas Curran, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen recommends and I move that the Town vote to accept the alteration of the existing public street layouts of portions of Shrewsbury Street, Brattle Street, Doyle Road, Chapel Street, Holden Street, Lincoln Avenue and Wachusett Street, all as shown on a plan prepared by VHB, Inc., entitled "Easement Plan of Land in Holden, Massachusetts", dated March 31, 2023.

MOTION SECONDED

Mr. Scott Carlson, Chairman of the Planning Board reported on behalf of the Planning Board and stated the Board supported the article.

After the Moderator called for a voice vote he requested a hand count. The Town Clerk, Jeanne Hudson, called the three stand by tellers to the front of the hall and swore them in to service and assigned sections of the auditorium to count. The moderator asked voters in favor to rise and be counted while holding their voter card received at the check in table. After counting the affirmative votes, the Moderator asked those not in favor of

the motion to rise and be counted. Once the tellers returned to the Town Clerk with their numbers the Moderator announced the outcome.

HAND COUNT IN FAVOR 118

HAND COUNT OPPOSED 26

MOTION PASSED AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 31 – ZONING BYLAW – FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT BYLAW

To see if the Town will vote to **amend** Chapter 7.1 Zoning Bylaw Section. XIII, **Flood Plain District Regulations Bylaw**, by deleting the existing text therein and inserting in lieu thereof the provision with the recommended changes and updates for flood standards provided by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and FEMA, as shown on a document entitled “Town of Holden Floodplain District Bylaw” on file in the Town Clerk’s office and available for public inspection during regular business hours, 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 7.1 Zoning Bylaw Section. XIII, Flood Plain District Regulations Bylaw, by deleting the existing text therein and inserting in lieu thereof the provision with the recommended changes and updates for flood standards provided by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and FEMA, as shown on a document entitled “Town of Holden Floodplain District Bylaw.”

MOTION SECONDED

Mr. Scott Carlson, Chairman of the Planning Board reported on behalf of the Planning Board and stated the Board supported the article.

2/3RDS VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE

MOTION PASSED BY A 2/3RDS VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 32 – GENERAL BYLAWS – REVISE STREET OPENING BYLAW ARTICLE IX

To see if the Town will vote to **amend** Article IX, “**Street Opening**”, of the Holden General Bylaws by inserting new paragraph in Section VIII therein to provide that newly resurfaced areas within a public right-of-way are subject to a five (5) year prohibition on the issuance of a street opening permit and excavations with the right of way, and that the Town Manager may grant an exception to the prohibition if he deems it to be in the interest public safety and convenience, 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 amend Article IX, “Street Opening”, of the Holden General Bylaws by inserting A new paragraph at the end of Section VIII as follows:

Newly resurfaced areas within a public right-of-way (ROW) are subject to a five (5) year prohibition on the issuance of street opening permits and excavations within the ROW. This prohibition shall also apply to new street ROWs within five (5) years of their acceptance date by the Town. Exceptions to the five year moratorium may be granted by the Town Manager, as he deems necessary in his sole and absolute discretion, to provide for the protection, convenience, and safety of the public. In the event such an exception to the prohibition is granted, a written waiver shall be issued by the Town Manager or his designee, which may limit or specify the type of repair or excavation permitted during the moratorium.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 33 – CITIZEN’S PETITION – BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAGS

To see if the Town will vote:

PROPOSED HOLDEN REGULATION ON USE OF NON-DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS.

March 28, 2023

The purpose of this proposed bylaw is to reduce the usage of thin-film single-use plastic bags by all retail and grocery stores in the Town of Holden. ·

Use Regulations:

- Thin-film single-use plastic bags shall not be distributed, used or sold for checkout or other purposes at any retail or grocery store within the Town of Holden.
- Customers are encouraged to bring their own reusable or biodegradable shopping bags to stores. Retail or grocery stores are strongly encouraged to make reusable checkout bags available for sale to customers at a reasonable price.
- Thin-film plastic bags used to contain dry cleaning, prescription medications, newspapers, produce, meat, bulk food, wet items and other similar merchandise, typically without handles, are still permissible. ·
- Customers are encouraged to bring their own reusable or biodegradable shopping bags to stores. Retail or grocery stores are strongly encouraged to make reusable checkout bags available for sale to customers at a reasonable price
- Thin-film plastic bags used to contain dry cleaning, newspapers, produce, meat, bulk foods, wet items and other similar merchandise, typically without handles, are still permissible.

MOTION MADE: Michael Mazloff, Petitioner

To rescind the petition.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

To adjourn the Annual Town Meeting.

MOTION MADE: Anthony Renzoni, Board of Selectmen

To adjourn Town Meeting.

MOTION SECONDED

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

TOWN MEETING CONCLUDED AT 9:06PM

DETAIL OF THE PROPOSED FY 2024 BUDGET

FY 2023 Voted budget	FY 2024 Proposed Budget
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ARTICLE 6 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT		
1,932,778	Salary & Wages	1,867,792
5,379,194	Expense	5,836,451
150,000	Reserve Fund	150,000
<hr/>		<hr/>
7,461,972	Total General Government	7,854,243

	Moderator	
100	Salary & Wages	100
65	Expense	65
<hr/>		<hr/>
165		165

	Finance Committee	
1,795	Expense	1,795
150,000	Reserve Fund	150,000
<hr/>		<hr/>
151,795		151,795

	Selectmen	
7,250	Salary & Wages	7,287
32,550	Expense	32,950
<hr/>		<hr/>
39,800		40,237

	Town Manager & Personnel	
520,453	Salary & Wages	522,604
25,750	Expense	75,750
<hr/>		<hr/>
546,203		598,354

	Information Technology	
273,021	Salary & Wages	186,876
143,433	Expense	194,166
<hr/>		<hr/>
416,454		381,042

	Accounting	
218,783	Salary & Wages	229,507
30,225	Expense	56,175
<hr/>		<hr/>
249,008		285,682

FY 2023 Voted budget		FY 2024 Proposed Budget
	Treasury	
239,895	Salary & Wages	250,804
<u>70,300</u>	Expense	<u>62,950</u>
310,195		313,754
	Assessors	
194,728	Salary & Wages	206,826
<u>58,128</u>	Expense	<u>51,100</u>
252,856		257,926
	Legal	
<u>205,000</u>	Expense	<u>225,000</u>
205,000		225,000
	Town Clerk	
255,532	Salary & Wages	249,690
<u>83,563</u>	Expense	<u>73,439</u>
339,095		323,129
	Planning and Development	
217,016	Salary & Wages	208,098
<u>95,874</u>	Expense	<u>48,330</u>
312,890		256,428
	Sealer	
6,000	Salary & Wages	6,000
<u>0</u>	Expense	<u>0</u>
6,000		6,000
	Insurance	
<u>2,385,546</u>	Expense	<u>2,559,872</u>
2,385,546		2,559,872
	Retirement	
<u>2,246,965</u>	Expense	<u>2,454,859</u>
2,246,965		2,454,859

FY 2023 Voted budget	FY 2024 Proposed Budget
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ARTICLE 7 - HUMAN SERVICES AND CULTURE		
1,007,545	Salary & Wages	1,005,370
291,833	Expense	297,317
65,000	Veteran's Aid & Assistance	60,000
1,364,378	Total Human Services and Culture	1,362,687

Library		
708,647	Salary & Wages	725,596
254,483	Expense	261,267
963,130		988,863
Senior Citizens		
277,930	Salary & Wages	258,388
33,250	Expense	31,450
311,180		289,838
Veterans		
20,968	Salary & Wages	21,386
600	Expense	1,100
65,000	Aid & Assistance	60,000
86,568		82,486
Historical Commission		
3,500	Expense	3,500
3,500		3,500

ARTICLE 8 – DEBT		
3,370,248	Exempt Debt	3,943,838
148,729	Non-exempt Debt	37,946
3,518,977	Total Debt Service	3,981,784

FY 2023 Voted budget	FY 2024 Proposed Budget
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ARTICLE 9 - OPEB FUND CONTRIBUTIONS		
250,000	Contributions from General Fund	254,668
45,000	Contributions from Water/Sewer	45,000
24,529	Contributions from Employees	36,449
319,529	Total OPEB Fund Contributions	336,117

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

ARTICLE 11 - PUBLIC SAFETY		
5,717,824	Salary & Wages	5,858,183
843,250	Expense	946,893
6,561,074	Total Public Safety	6,805,076

	Police	
2,464,614	Salary & Wages	2,528,546
251,500	Expense	259,400
2,716,114		2,787,946
	Animal Control	
69,165	Salary & Wages	74,271
11,600	Expense	11,700
80,765		85,971

FY 2023 Voted budget	FY 2024 Proposed Budget
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Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

2,263,994	Salary & Wages	2,288,246
<u>324,950</u>	Expense	<u>344,300</u>
2,588,944		2,632,546

Public Safety Complex

<u>200,500</u>	Expense	<u>222,038</u>
200,500		222,038

Regional Dispatch

828,162	Salary & Wages	856,212
<u>44,700</u>	Expense	<u>47,955</u>
872,862		904,167

Emergency Management

91,889	Salary & Wages	110,908
<u>10,000</u>	Expense	<u>61,500</u>
101,889		172,408

ARTICLE 12 - PUBLIC WORKS

1,655,271	Salary & Wages	1,751,180
1,381,300	Expense	1,472,200
<u>520,000</u>	Snow Removal	<u>600,000</u>
3,556,571	Total Public Works	3,823,380

Administration

204,649	Salary & Wages	214,296
<u>11,750</u>	Expense	<u>11,750</u>
216,399		226,046

Engineering

173,156	Salary & Wages	186,079
<u>214,950</u>	Expense	<u>214,950</u>
388,106		401,029

FY 2023 Voted budget		FY 2024 Proposed Budget
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	Highway	
583,977	Salary & Wages	623,233
463,250	Expense	534,750
520,000	Snow Removal	600,000
1,567,227		1,757,983
	Mechanics	
198,600	Salary & Wages	199,229
20,400	Expense	27,100
219,000		226,329
	Building and Grounds	
494,889	Salary & Wages	528,343
546,050	Expense	477,650
1,040,939		1,005,993
	Garage	
124,900	Expense	206,000
124,900		206,000

ARTICLE 13 - DPW DEPRECIATION FUND		
0	DPW Depreciation Fund	50,000
0	Total DPW Depreciation Fund	50,000

ARTICLE 15 - CAPITAL BUDGET		
1,245,500	Capital Budget - General Fund	857,000
1,245,500	Total Capital Budget - General Fund	857,000
A detailed listing of the capital assets to be acquired is found on page 27 of this handbook		

FY 2023 Voted budget		FY 2024 Proposed Budget
ARTICLE 16 - WATER / SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND		
730,115	Salary & Wages	773,813
8,130,098	Expense	6,746,872
159,048	Indirect Costs	160,728
100,000	Emergency Reserve	100,000
9,119,261	TOTAL WATER/SEWER	7,781,413

ARTICLE 17 - WATER / SEWER CAPITAL BUDGET		
2,898,500	Capital Budget - Water / Sewer	2,334,000
2,898,500	Total Capital Budget - Water / Sewer	2,334,400
A detailed listing of the capital assets to be acquired is found on page 27 of this handbook		

ARTICLE 18 - SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND		
52,829	Salary & Wages	50,329
1,537,124	Expense	1,616,315
12,468	Indirect Costs	12,901
1,602,601	Total Solid Waste	1,679,545

ARTICLE 19 - CONTINUE REVOLVING FUNDS		
872,863	Salary & Wages	896,459
703,520	Expense	669,090
32,167	Indirect Costs	32,810
95,000	Capital Outlay	120,000
1,703,550	Total Revolving Funds	1,718,359

Recreation		
613,591	Salary & Wages	636,607
372,583	Expense	389,016
17,887	Indirect Costs	18,244
45,000	Capital Outlay	70,000
1,049,061		1,113,867

FY 2023 Voted budget		FY 2024 Proposed Budget
	Inspections	
155,458	Salary & Wages	154,082
80,173	Expense	82,789
11,628	Indirect Costs	11,860
0	Capital Outlay	0
247,259		248,731
	Cable	
103,814	Salary & Wages	105,770
230,764	Expense	172,285
2,652	Indirect Costs	2,706
50,000	Capital Outlay	50,000
387,230		330,761
	Senior Center	
20,000	Expense	25,000
20,000		25,000

ARTICLE 24 - EDUCATION - WACHUSETT REGIONAL		
21,404,782	WRSD Required	22,192,218
8,654,037	WRSD Voluntary	9,168,930
33,980	Debt - Oil Remediation	31,500
1,061,215	Debt - School Construction	1,042,161
2,652,422	Transportation	3,040,331
33,806,436	Total Education - Wachusett	35,475,140

ARTICLE 25- VOCATIONAL EDUCATION		
1,219,380	Montachusett Regional High School	
59,700	Out of District Vocational	113,910
1,279,080	Total Vocational Education	1,653,742

ARTICLES 15 & 17 - FY 2024 Capital Program Detail

DEPARTMENT	EXPENDITURE	CASH	BOND	OTHER	TOTAL
FIRE - EMS	Lucas press (CPR)	\$15,000			\$15,000
	Tower truck		\$1,450,000		\$1,450,000
POLICE	Cruisers (2)	\$130,000			\$130,000
	Replace SUV #7	\$37,000			\$37,000
DPW	Culvert / bridge rehabilitation	\$70,000			\$70,000
	Well pump replacement - field irrigation	\$20,000			\$20,000
	F550 Truck w/ dump / plow wing #18	\$170,000			\$170,000
	Sports field large mower #53	\$85,000			\$85,000
	Roads / Sidewalks	\$325,000			\$325,000
	Chapter 90			\$615,739	\$615,739
WATER / SEWER	Water main replacement and/or lining		\$1,250,000		\$1,250,000
	Inflow / infiltration removal		\$800,000		\$800,000
	Parker sewer meter replacement			\$50,000	\$50,000
	Spring St well redevelopment			\$20,000	\$20,000
	Wachusett treatment plan chemical feed modification			\$60,000	\$60,000
	Heather Circle pump station driveway repair			\$10,000	\$10,000
	Water storage tanks chemical add retrofit			\$144,000	\$144,000
SENIOR CENTER					
RECREATION	Tennis court maintenance			\$55,000	\$55,000
	Lap pool re-caulking			\$15,000	\$15,000
CABLE TV	Studio Camera Upgrade			\$30,000	\$30,000
	Remote studio / upgrade			\$20,000	\$20,000
LIBRARY	Replace public computers	\$5,000			\$5,000
Grand Total		\$857,000	\$3,500,000	\$1,019,739	\$5,376,739

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, Cable TV, Inspections and Senior Center.

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.