

**Town of Westminster
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Report and Recommendations of the Advisory Board

Fiscal Year 2023

Annual Town Meeting

Westminster Elementary School

Saturday, May 7, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.



Westminster Advisory Board

Lisa A. Rocheleau, Chair
Erin K. Casali, Vice Chair & Secretary
Melissa A. Urban-Banks
John F. Fairbanks
Peter J. Normandin

Table of Contents

Advisory Board Report 3
 Budget Recommendations 3
 Revenues 6
Annual Report of the Capital Planning Committee10
Special Town Meeting Warrant 18
Annual Town Meeting Warrant..... 19

Advisory Board Report

Introduction

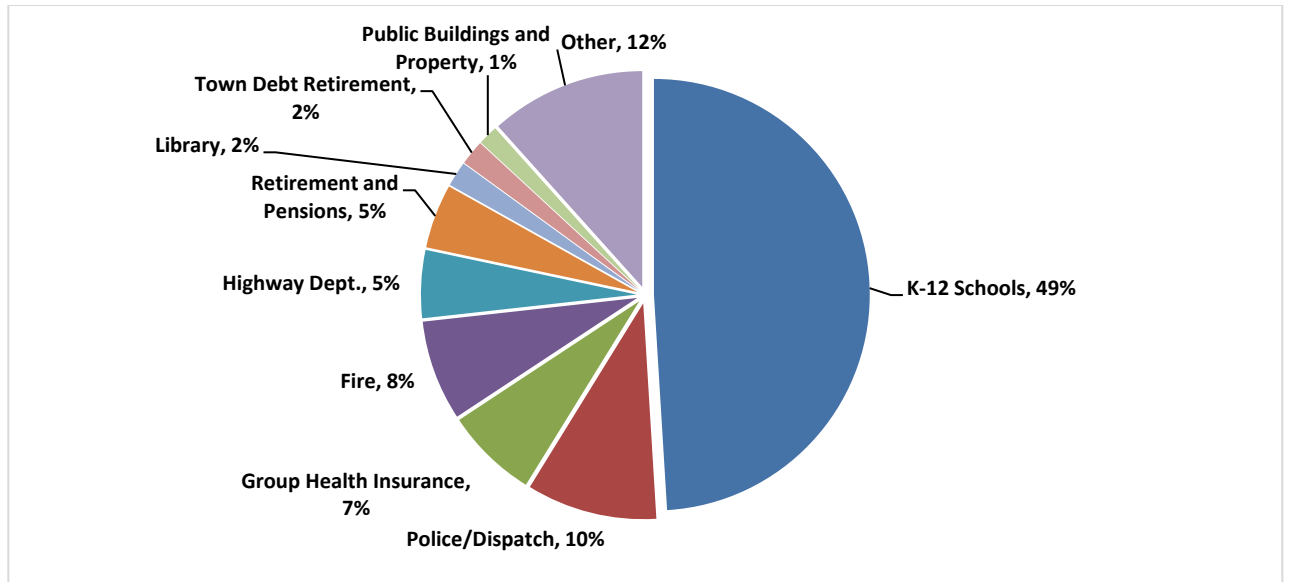
The following is the recommended budget proposal for the Town of Westminster from the Advisory Board for FY2023. The operating budget for the Town is presented in one article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant (article 9). The remaining FY2023 budget is comprised of additional articles that cover capital expenditures and requests for special services by the Town. Each year Town Meeting reviews the proposed budget and adopts it by voting to appropriate funds for each warrant article.

Budget Recommendations

The current budget recommendation is a responsible balanced budget which is within the 2 ½ plus growth guidelines as set forth by the Chairs of the Select Board and Advisory Board.

The recommended operating budget (article 9) for FY2023 is \$24,383,123. This is an increase of \$699,497 (2.95%) over the FY2022 operating budget. The increase is due to several factors which include:

- An increase of \$116,847 in “Police/Dispatch”, which is a 5.2% increase over FY22, due mainly to the establishment of two (2) new full-time positions (as discussed in article 5).
- An increase of \$113,672 in “Retirement and Pensions”, a 10.7% increase over last year, due to an increase in the Actuarial Accrued Liability. Most of this expense will be offset for the current year by a transfer from the Pension Stabilization fund.
- An net increase of \$298,117 in “Fire”/”Ambulance” which is a 3.8% increase over FY22, due to the establishment of two (2) new full-time positions. A portion of this expense will be offset by Ambulance receipts (as discussed in article 6). Additionally, article 7 references the creation of two additional positions (for a total of four (4) as compared to the prior year), however, the budget for these positions have not been included in the current year budget as they are contingent on the receipt of related grant funding. If obtained, this grant would fund the salaries and benefits of all four (4) positions for three (3) years, after which point, the town would be responsible for funding the positions.
- An increase of \$ 42,086 in “Group Health Insurance” which is a 3.2% increase over FY22, due to increases to the cost of health insurance for retirees and new enrollees; there was no increase year over year in the cost for current employees.
- An increase of \$37,915 in “Cemetery dept.”, which is a 26.0% increase over FY22, due mainly to the establishment of one (1) new full-time position (as discussed in article 8).



The chart above shows the breakdown of the operating budget by department for FY2023.

Below is a summary of the articles to be voted on at Town Meeting (both monetary and non-monetary). The Advisory Board is unanimously in favor of all the below articles:

Articles 5 through 8 are related to the establishment of new positions for the Police department, Fire department and Cemetery department. The budget for Police, Cemetery and two (2) of the four (4) Fire department positions are included in the Operating budget in Article 9 (as noted above).

Article 9 is for the annual operating budget and includes all operating departments, including the schools. The Operating budget is mainly funded through Raise and Appropriate (taxes); the remainder, \$762,469, is funded through transfers from Ambulance Receipts (\$649,469), the Pension Stabilization Fund (\$110,000) and Wetlands fees (\$3,000).

The FY2023 budget is also comprised of enterprise funds (Sewer, Water and Transfer Station – articles 10, 11 and 12) which total \$2,213,259 and are funded primarily by user fees; the remainder, \$96,962, is funded through Raise and Appropriate (taxes), as it relates to the capital costs of the loans associated with the Sewer In Line Storage and the Regional Treatment Plant.

Articles 13 and 14 are customary money articles. These are articles that are on the warrant every year, however article 13, for the Conservation fund, and has been increased to \$5,000 this year to provide funding for projects which may be needed.

Article 15 is the customary article used to offset the tax increase. The Advisory Board recommends \$230,000 of free cash be used to balance the budget, which is consistent with approved funding in the previous five (5) years.

Articles 16 through 19 are non-capital money articles that total \$60,000. These articles are requests submitted by various departments/committees but are not part of the Capital Plan. All articles are funded through free cash and as such, do not impact the tax rate in the current year.

Article 20 is for the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for FY2023. The funding for the FY2023 Capital Plan is broken down as follows:

- \$2,312,573 will be funded from Stabilization funds
- \$300,000 will be funded from Raise & Appropriate. Details can be found in the “Annual Report of the Capital Planning Committee” further on in this booklet.

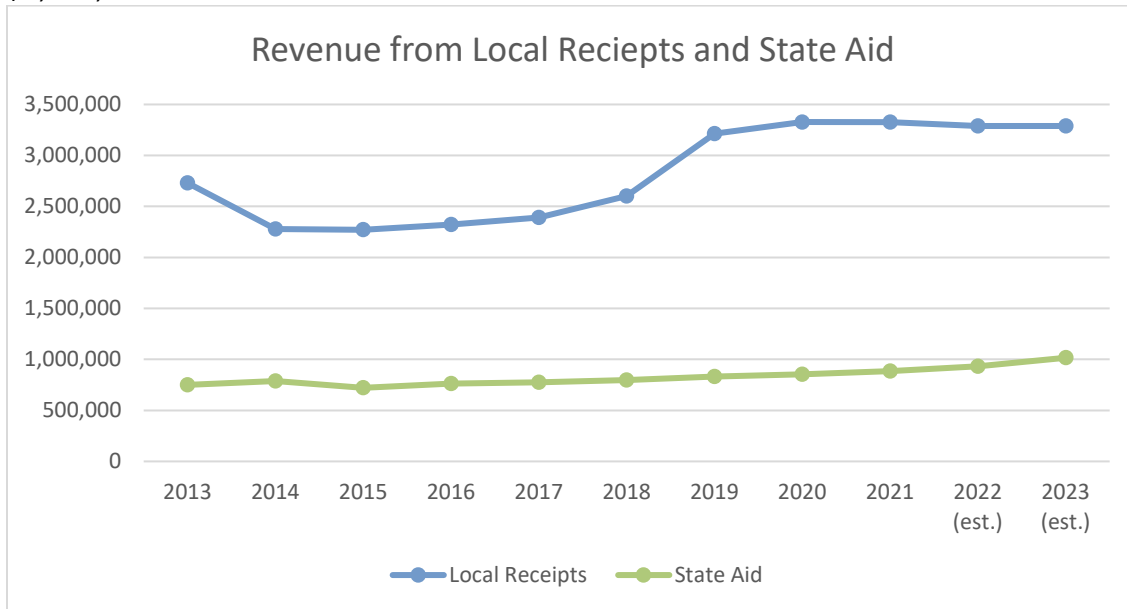
Articles 21 through 24 are non-monetary in nature and relate mainly to the following:

- Transfer of parcels to the Town from the Tax Custodian
- Utility easement to National Grid on Goodridge Drive
- Watercolor painting gifts to the library
- Zoning map change (requires 2/3 vote)

Revenue

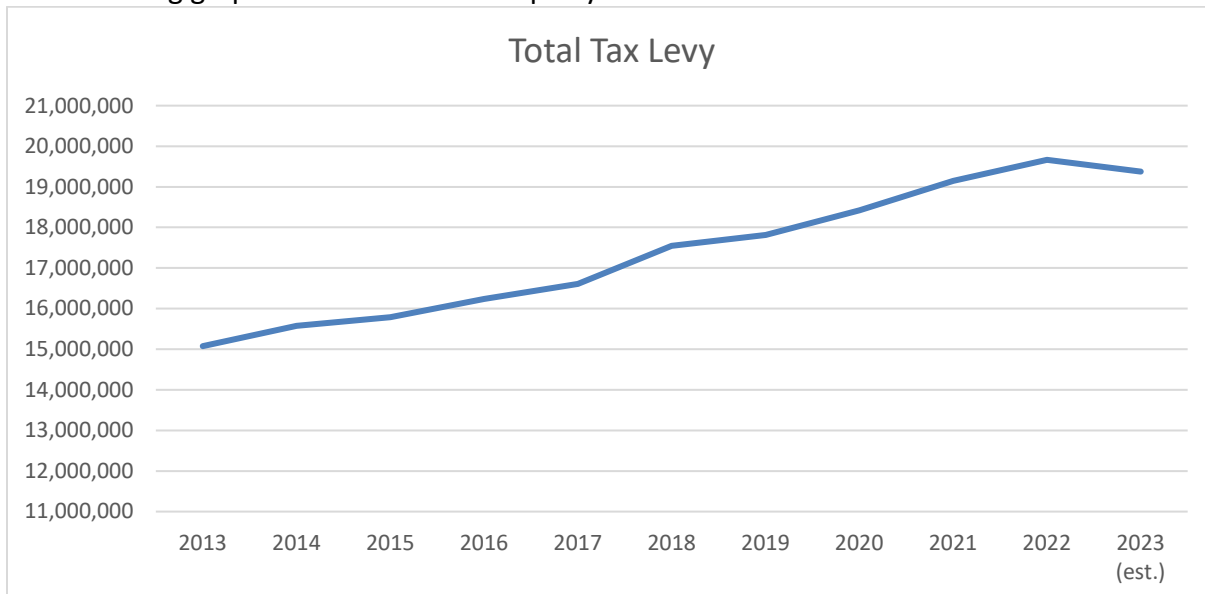
The sources of revenue for the Town of Westminster are State Aid, Property Taxes and Local Receipts. Local Receipts can be further broken down into Landfill Receipts and Other Local Receipts. Examples of Other Local Receipts include Excise Tax, Licenses/Permits, Fees and Fines/Penalties.

The following graph below shows the combined Local Receipts (including the landfill revenue estimate) and State Aid (\$4,306,083). The State Aid estimate is expected to increase slightly for FY2023 for a total of \$1,016,083.



Revenue – Property Tax Data

The following graph shows the Total Property Tax Levied for the Town since FY2013.



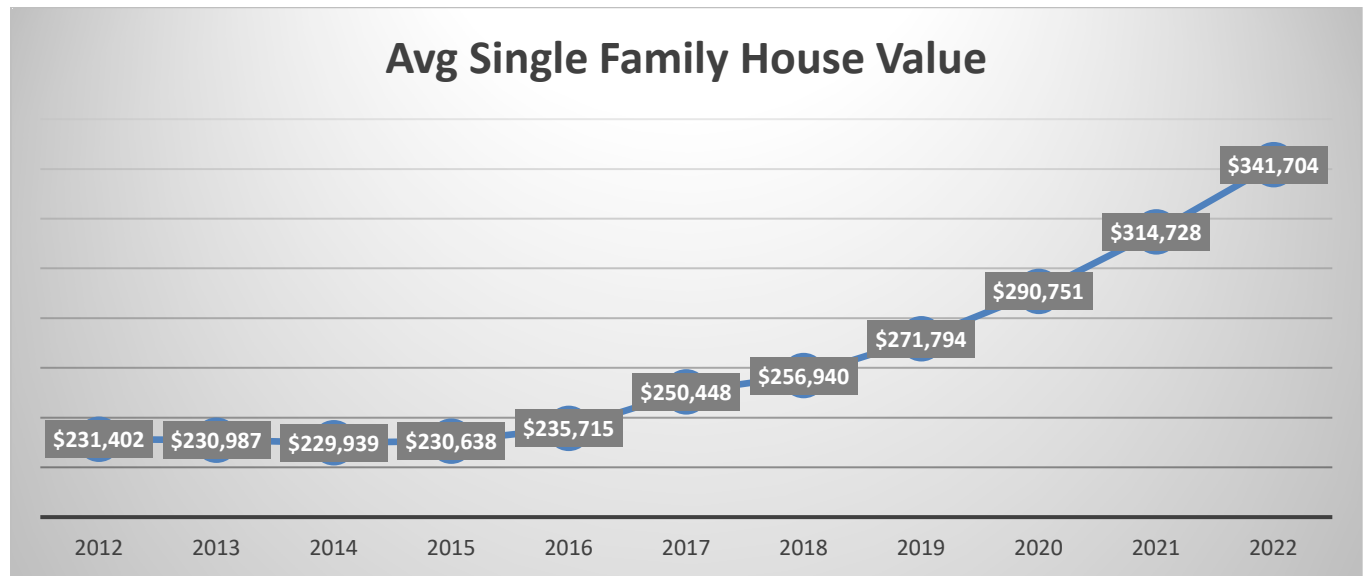
The current tax rate is **\$15.80** per \$1,000 of valuation. This is based upon the valuation of all property in Town for FY2022, which was \$1,244,635,882; this rate is expected to change once the final FY2023 valuations are performed. Any increase of \$100,000 in spending will increase the tax rate by approximately \$0.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Below are the average “Single-Family Home” tax bills, and the percentage of home value these tax bills represent FY2022 for some of our neighboring communities, and for some nearby communities of similar population.

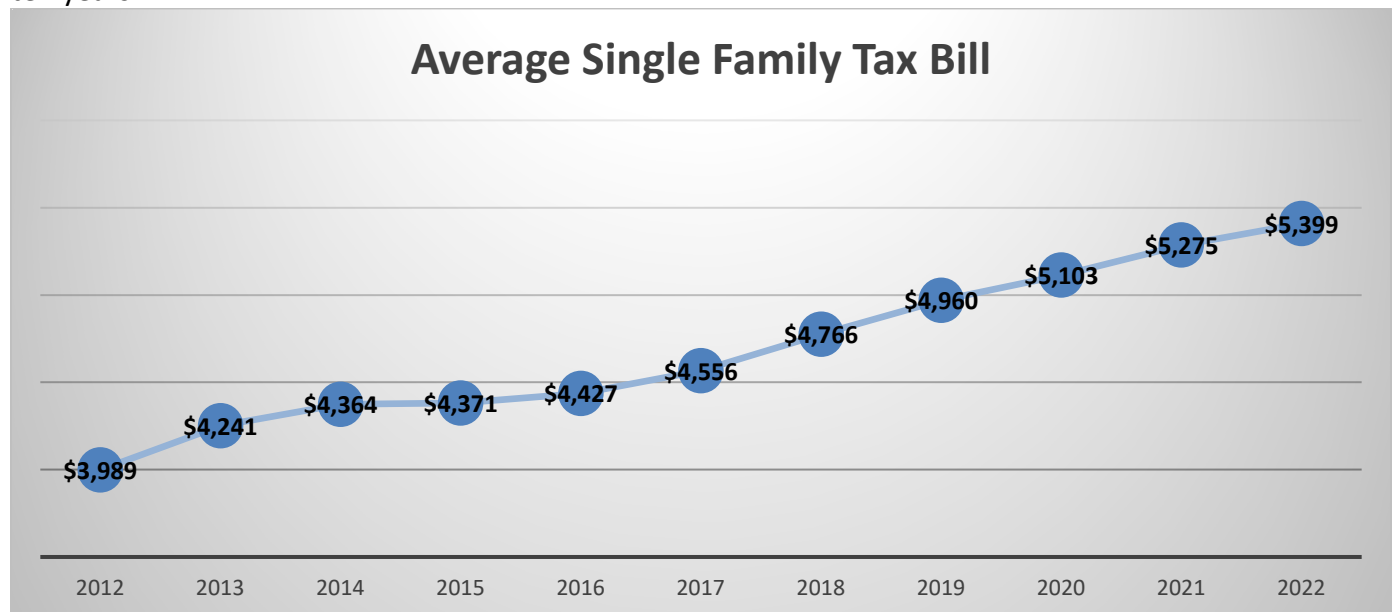
Municipality <i>(neighboring towns)</i>	Population <i>(2018)</i>	Average Home Value	Tax Rate	Average Tax bill	% of home value
HUBBARDSTON	4,787	\$315,258	\$14.00	\$4,414	1.40%
GARDNER	20,719	\$237,944	\$18.59	\$4,423	1.86%
FITCHBURG*	40,882	\$252,369	\$17.61	\$4,444	1.76%
WESTMINSTER	7,884	\$341,704	\$15.80	\$5,399	1.58%
LEOMINSTER	41,823	\$332,342	\$16.56	\$5,504	1.66%
ASHBURNHAM	6,346	\$292,769	\$18.88	\$5,527	1.89%
LUNENBURG	11,657	\$374,392	\$17.19	\$6,436	1.72%
PRINCETON	3,478	\$422,841	\$15.68	\$6,630	1.57%
Municipality <i>(similar populations)</i>	Population <i>(2018)</i>	Average Home Value	Tax Rate	Average Tax Bill	% of home value
AYER*	8,164	\$399,810	\$13.42	\$5,365	1.34%
WESTMINSTER	7,884	\$341,704	\$15.80	\$5,399	1.58%
SHIRLEY	7,649	\$353,477	\$15.48	\$5,472	1.55%
RUTLAND	8,846	\$349,540	\$15.79	\$5,519	1.58%
STERLING	8,190	\$410,430	\$15.25	\$6,259	1.52%
WEST BOYLSTON	8,215	\$363,438	\$17.68	\$6,426	1.77%
LANCASTER	8,185	\$389,188	\$19.45	\$7,570	1.95%

* residential tax rate different than industrial, commercial, open space and personal property

The following chart illustrates the average home value in the Town of Westminster over the past ten years. Home values declined from FY2012 until FY2014. However, there has been a 36% increase in values in the last five years (from FY2018 to FY2022).

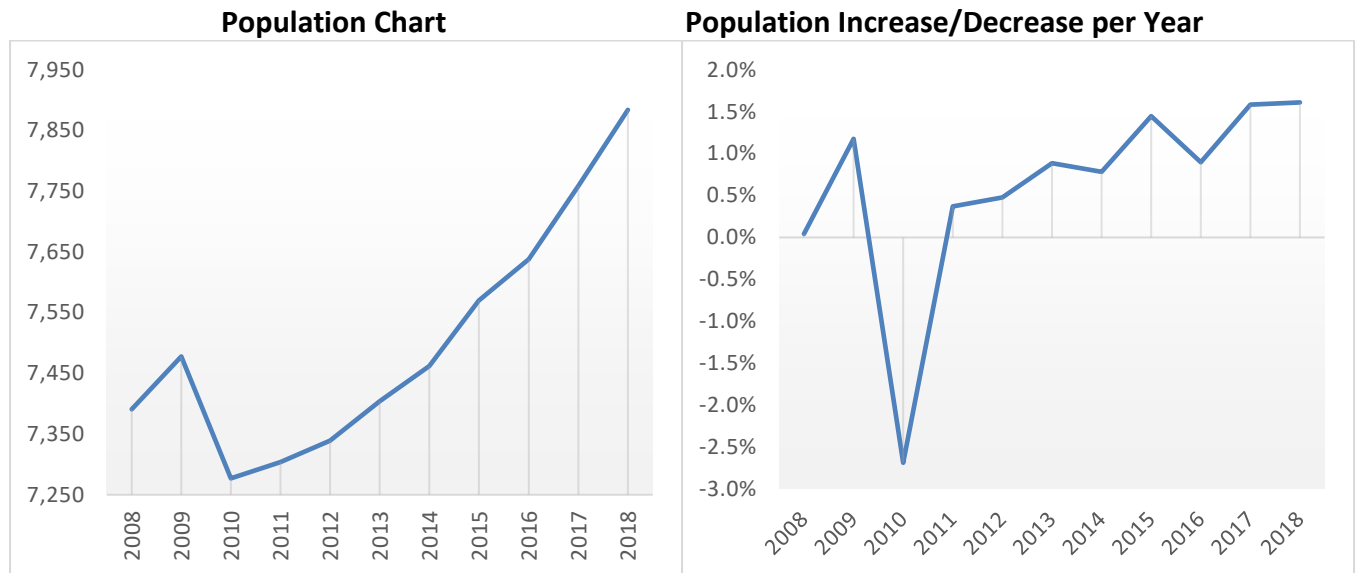


The following chart illustrates the average single-family tax bill for the Town of Westminster over the past ten years.



The average single-family tax bill forecast for FY2022 is \$1,410 higher than it was in FY2012 or approximately 35%, an average increase of 3.2% per year, which is slightly above US GDP growth over the same period. However, the tax rate is only 4% higher than the tax rate in 2012; the increase in the average single-family tax bill is a function of both the increase in assessed value (see above) and the tax rate per \$1,000 of value. Relative to the rest of Massachusetts, Westminster's average single-family tax bill is 193rd out of 351 towns/municipalities.

The “Population Chart” below illustrates the population growth from 2008 to 2018 [Population data is only updated every few years]. The population in 2008 was 7,391 compared to 7,884 in 2018 (an increase of 493). The “Population Increase/Decrease per Year” chart shows the population increase/decrease year over year. The largest increase was in 2018, increase of 125, however, on average, the population has increased by 45 each year in the decade shown. On average the population growth since 2008 is 0.6% per year; this is consistent with the average of the eight years from 2000 to 2008.



The source for all the Levy, Property Tax and Population Data information is from the <http://www.mass.gov/dor/local-officials/> website.

Report from the Capital Planning Committee

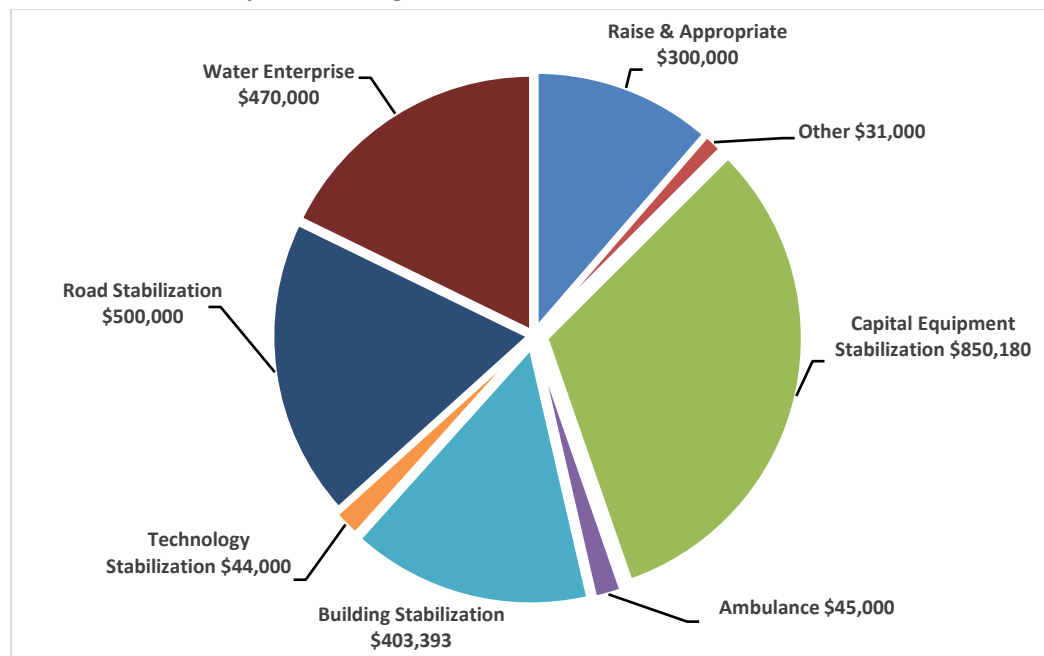
The primary focus of the Capital Planning Committee is to study, research and make recommendations on capital improvement projects. In addition, the committee may develop processes and policies in order to maintain the capital improvement program. A set of financial policies have been created by the Capital Planning Committee and approved by the Select Board on October 27, 2014. These policies can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document and are key items to the Capital Planning Process.

The Capital Planning Committee has met with the various department heads over the past year and developed the following five-year CIP. The committee is pleased to recommend the following report to the Town of Westminster.

FY2023 Capital Plan

The proposed CIP for FY2023 totals \$2,643,573. The FY2023 CIP is funded from a combination of sources: Raise & Appropriate (taxes), Stabilization Accounts, Enterprise Funds and Other funding (e.g. Chapter 90, Ambulance Receipts...etc.). The following chart (Chart 1) illustrates the breakdown of the funding for the FY2023 Capital Plan.

Chart 1 - FY2023 Capital Funding Chart



The purpose of the committee is to study capital (tangible assets and projects) spending requests with a dollar value greater than \$15,000. The committee is charged with preparing annual capital spending recommendations to be submitted to the Select Board and Advisory Board and to be published in the Advisory Board booklet. The committee is also charged with developing a long range capital plan of at least five years.

The following is the FY2023 Recommendation from the Capital Planning Committee.

Table 1
FY2023 Capital Plan

Department	Project	Raise & Appropriate	Capital Equipment Stabilization	Building Maintenance Stabilization	Technology Stabilization	Road Maintenance Stabilization	Water & Sewer Enterprise	Ambulance	Chapter 90	Other
Dept of Public Works	Road Maintenance	\$300,000								
Dept of Public Works	Road Improvement Project					\$500,000				
Dept of Public Works	Storm Water Permit		\$50,000							
Dept of Public Works	2005 John Deere Loader		\$250,000							
Dept of Public Works	2012 JCB Backhoe		\$150,000							
Dept of Public Works	Water Tank - Shady Ave						\$450,000			
Dept of Public Works	Water PRV (4 locations)						\$20,000			
Police Department	Body Worn Cameras		\$68,280							
Police Department	2017 Ford Interceptor		\$59,700							
Fire	2005 KME Ladder Truck		\$100,000							
Fire	2013 Chevy Pickup		\$45,000							
Fire	Chest Compression Machine							\$45,000		
Town (Maintenance)	1998 Ford F150 Pickup Truck									Take Fire PU
Town (Parks & Rec)	Ball Field Design		\$77,200							\$31,000
Town (Parks & Rec)	Playground Design - ARPA									
Technology	Computer Replacement				\$44,000					
Cemetery	2008 Ford F250 Utility Truck		\$50,000							
Schools (MHS & WES)	See Detail sheets			\$222,000						
Schools (Dist/Oak/OL)	See Detail sheets			\$181,393						
Totals		\$300,000	\$850,180	\$403,393	\$44,000	\$500,000	\$470,000	\$45,000	\$0	\$31,000

Stabilization Fund Summary

The goal of the Capital Planning Committee is to develop a fiscally responsible five year CIP and identify funding sources for at least the next three years of the plan. All Capital requests will be reviewed and prioritized by the Capital Planning Committee using a priority table. Furthermore, the five year CIP will be utilized as a planning tool to determine future Stabilization Fund Amounts.

Part of the CIP is funded from Stabilization Funds. Maintaining adequate stabilization fund levels is important to the financial stability of the Town. The Capital Planning Committee has defined minimum levels for each stabilization fund. As the Capital Planning Committee refines the five year CIP and identifies the funding sources the stabilization fund levels will be monitored. Adjustments to the five year CIP and/or funding sources may be required if future Stabilization Fund levels drop too low. Chart 2 illustrates the stabilization fund levels from 2008 through 2021 (amount includes the Capital Equipment, Building Maintenance and Technology Stabilization Funds). Chart 3 lists the stabilization fund amounts after the Fall Town Meeting on 11/16/2021.

The certified free cash for FY2021 was approximately 3.1 million dollars. This is higher than the typical average. The main contributing factor to this higher than average free cash amount was due to local receipts from the landfill. The landfill receipts came in at approximately 2.6 million over the amount estimated. The landfill receipts are expected to continue to exceed the estimated amounts in the future since the long term plan is to eliminate this revenue from the operating budget. Since the landfill will close at some point it is critical that revenue from this source be removed

from the operating budget. The recent influx of free cash greatly helped the stabilization fund levels and will help fund the five year CIP.

Chart 2
Combined Amount in 3 Stabilization Funds
(Capital Equipment, Building Maintenance and Technology)

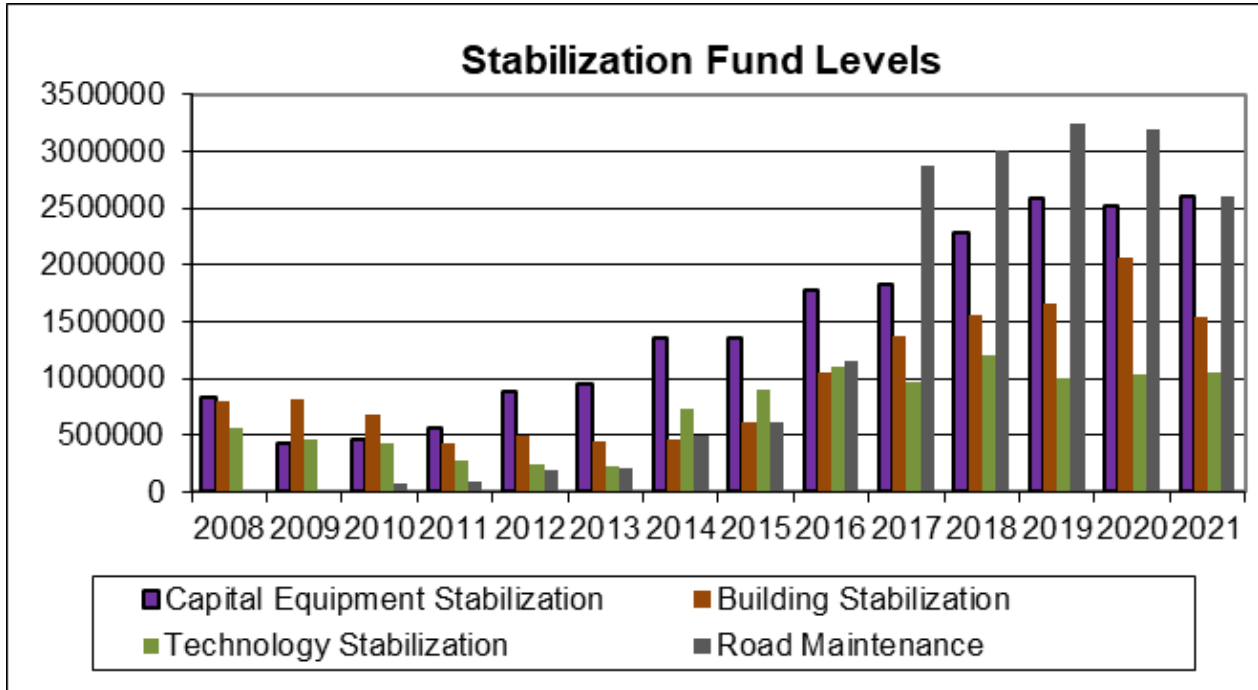
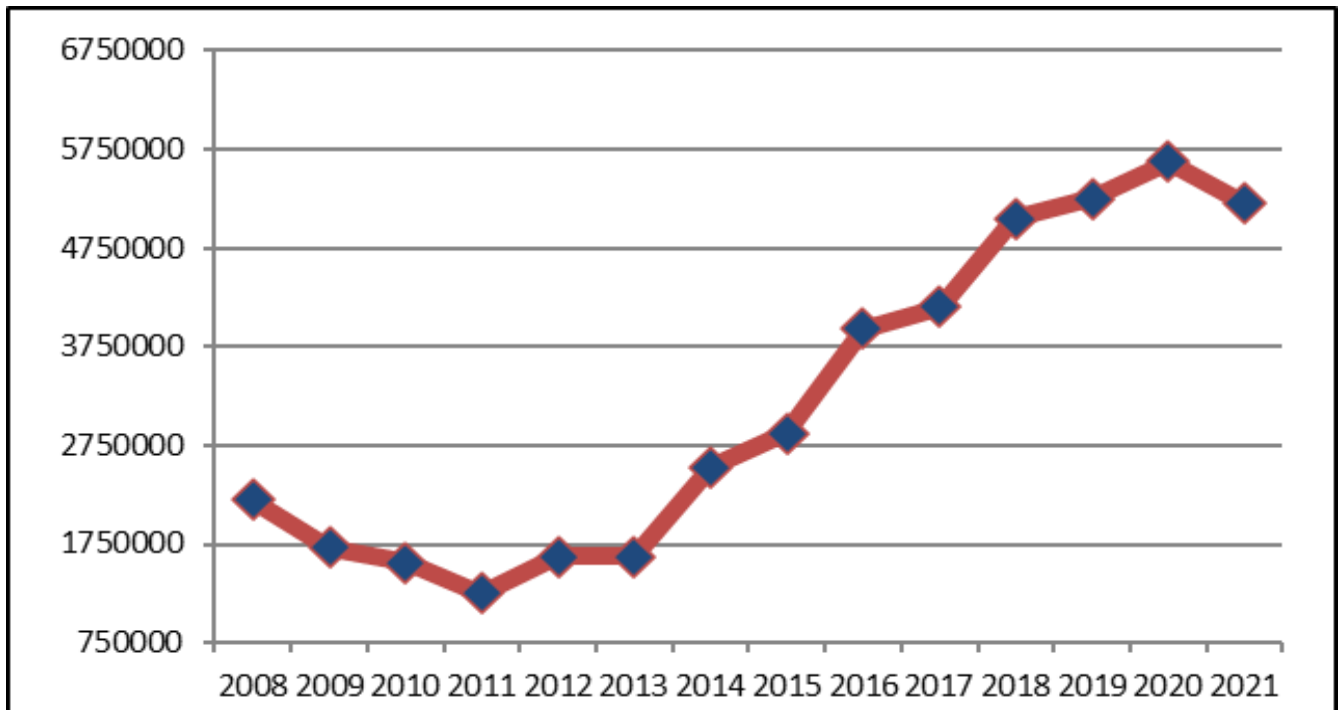


Chart 3
(Stabilization Fund Amount on 11/16/2021)



Stabilization Funds- Encumbered

An important aspect of the Stabilization Funds is not only the current levels but also the levels over the next five years as they are used to fund the CIP. A portion of the amount in the Stabilization Funds are encumbered or reserved for future capital purchases. This encumbering of funds is essential in funding the five year CIP and ensures that not only will capital purchases happen in a timely manner but the impact of these projects have a minimum effect to the overall budget. The following Table reflects the amounts encumbered in each of the Stabilization Funds over the next five years based on the current CIP.

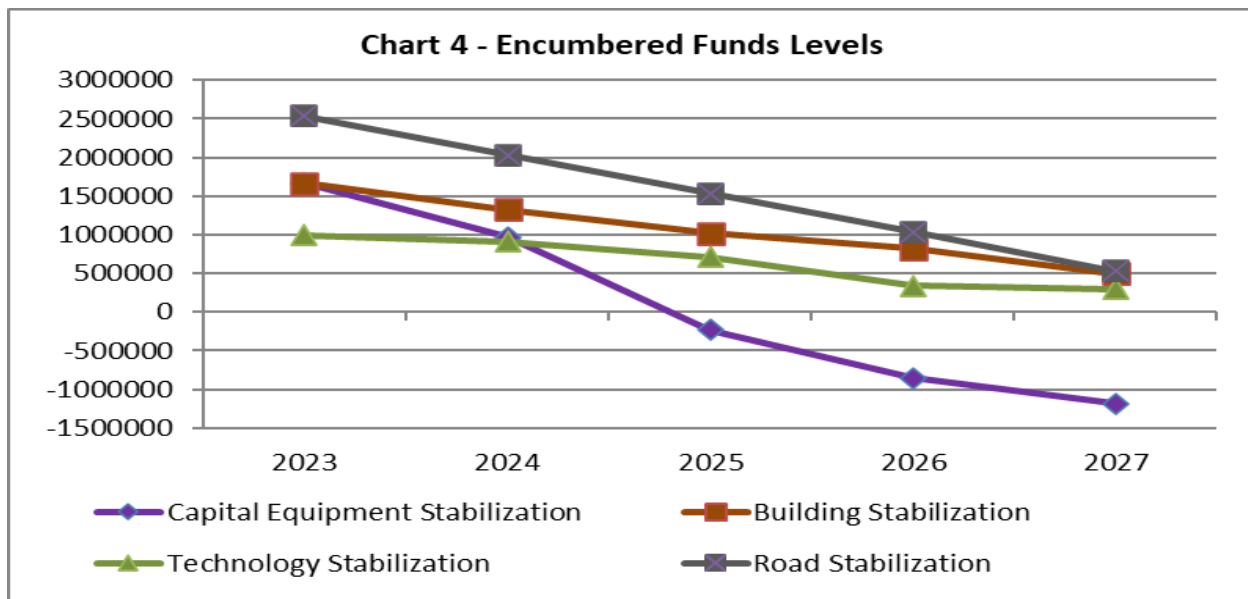
Table 2
Stabilization Fund Amounts Encumbered to fund the CIP

Stabilization Funds	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	5 Year Total
Capital Equipment Stabilization	\$850,180	\$691,000	\$1,201,500	\$620,400	\$336,600	\$3,699,680
Building Maintenance Stabilization	\$403,393	\$344,001	\$306,590	\$200,315	\$316,039	\$1,570,338
Technology Stabilization	\$44,000	\$89,000	\$195,000	\$371,000	\$46,000	\$745,000
Road Maintenance Stabilization	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$2,500,000

Taking into account the future Stabilization Fund encumbrances the chart on the right shows the impact to the fund levels.

The fund levels will decline if no additional money is transferred back into the Stabilization Funds. This is an important factor to understand when considering the Stabilization Fund levels. Each year the Town votes to transfer money back into the Stabilization Funds from the Certified Free Cash.

The amount transferred back into the Stabilization Funds is something that the Capital Planning Committee recommends based on the five year CIP. The amount transferred into the Stabilization Funds is part of a plan based on what is expected to be used in the future.



Some of the amounts in the Stabilization Funds reflected in FY2025 fall below the minimum stabilization fund levels established by the Capital Planning Committee in their Reserve Policy.

Debt Summary

A comprehensive CIP involves a strategy that includes a debt management plan. The debt management plan should be developed to meet the financing needs of the Town in a cost effective manner, taking into account Town priorities, as well as legal, financial, and structural considerations. The Capital Planning Committee has defined a debt policy to ensure that debt is managed within sustainable levels based upon annual revenues.

The following Table below show the current five year debt projections. The information is broken out to show the date of vote, debt excluded vs non-debt excluded, amount and mature date of the projects.

Table 3
Debt Summary - 5 year projection

Description	Vote/Issue	Excluded	Voted	Matured	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
***Sewer In-line Storage Project	4/11/2016	Yes	\$2,500,000	FY2056	\$53,554	\$53,554	\$53,554	\$53,554	\$53,554
***Sewer In-line Storage Project - Interest					\$50,073	\$48,600	\$47,128	\$45,655	\$44,182
Rte 140 Design	5/2/2015	No	\$410,000	FY2024	\$82,000	\$82,000	\$82,000		
Rte 140 Design - Interest					\$1,640	TBD	TBD		
Senior Center Bond	4/1/2015	Yes	\$2,830,100	FY2030	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000
Senior Center Bond - Interest					\$42,000	\$37,250	\$32,500	\$27,750	\$22,200
**Water Storage Tank - Ellis Road - BAN	11/17/2020	No	\$1,920,000	TBD	\$0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
**Water Storage Tank - Ellis Road - Interest					\$57,600				
New Tanker Truck (Fire)							TBD	TBD	TBD
New Tanker Truck - Interest							TBD	TBD	TBD
Septic Management Plan	5/4/2013	No	\$300,000	FY2039	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Septic Management Plan - Interest					\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2018 KME Fire Pumper/Tanker	11/27/2018	No	\$600,000	FY2025	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000		
2018 KME Fire Pumper/Tanker - Interest					\$888	TBD	TBD		
New KME Fire Engine							\$160,000	\$160,000	\$160,000
New KME Fire Engine - Interest							TBD	TBD	TBD

Enterprise Funds

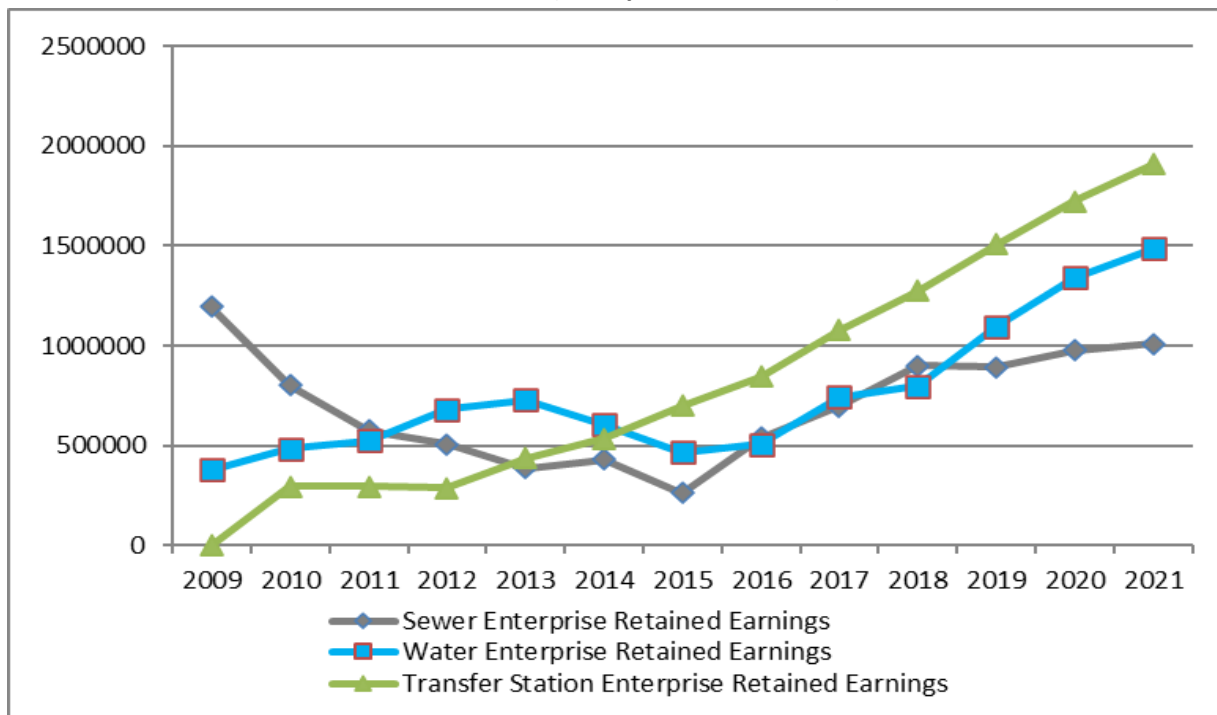
Enterprise funds establish a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods and services. The Town has three enterprise funds (water, sewer and transfer station). Some of the items on the CIP are funded by the enterprise funds. For example, if a pick up truck used by the water/sewer department is in need of replacement, then the funding for a new truck would come from the water and sewer enterprise funds. In addition, some items on the debt schedule are funded or partially funded by the enterprise funds (this is noted on the debt schedule - see previous page).

Similar to the stabilization funds, the enterprise fund levels must be maintained at adequate levels for financial stability. The chart below show the Sewer, Water and Transfer Station Enterprise levels from 2009 to 2021.

The Water Enterprise Fund level has increased from \$380,726 in 2009 to \$1,487,679 in 2021. The Sewer Enterprise Fund level has declined from 2009 to 2015. In 2009 the Sewer Enterprise fund was slightly under 1.2 million dollars. In 2015 the fund was at \$263,344. The Sewer Enterprise fund has increased the last few years with the 2021 amount of \$1,009,627.

Approximately 47% of the Sewer Enterprise expenditures are for collection charges paid to the City of Fitchburg. Another 26% is used to pay the debt for the sewer extension bond.

Chart 5
(Enterprise Fund Levels)



Overall, the status of the Town's financial position is positive. The stabilization funds have been restored to adequate levels and the Town now has an adopted policy addressing these funds and their minimum levels. In addition, the five year CIP is successfully leveraging these funds for future capital expenses and thus keeping the amount needed to raise & appropriate from taxes consistent year over year. The Enterprise Fund levels are being monitored and the long range plan is to grow these levels in order to support future capital projects.

The next few pages of the report are intended to expand on a few of the larger Capital Improvement Projects that are either currently on the plan or are expected to be added in the new few years. The goal is to inform and increase the awareness of these projects to the residents of Westminster.

Route 140 Design Project

A project for the engineering design of Route 140, i.e., Hager Park and Worcester Roads was approved at the May 2, 2015 Annual Town Meeting. This project will address a number of road repairs/deficiencies and flooding issues along the roadway. The area on Worcester Road in the vicinity of Mile Hill and Gatehouse Roads in particular has flooding issues and is a safety concern. The project has been split into two, Project 1 Narrows Road to Patricia Road and Project 2 Patricia Road to Princeton town line. Project 1 was completed in 2021. Project 2 is at 75% design submittal review with MassDOT with a proposed construction in 2023/2024. Both projects have been approved for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding. TIP is a multi-year program of capital improvements that reflect the needs of the regional transportation system.

Water Storage Tank (Ellis Road Standpipe) Project

A project for replacing the water storage tank on Ellis Road was voted at the FY2019 Annual Town Meeting. The cost of this project is estimated to be 1.9 million dollars. Funding this project will be borrowed and paid back from the Water Enterprise Retained Earnings. The existing storage tank is at the end of its useful life (60+ years old). Construction will start in 2022.

Water Main Improvement Program

An ongoing project to replace/upgrade aging/deficient water mains to improve water quality, fire protection and water storage tank tracking over a period of 20-years. The Water Department's water main improvement program plan is to replace approximately 30,000 linear feet of water main over the twenty-year period (approximately 14% of the water system).

Whitmanville Road Bridge Design Project

The engineering and construction for this project has been fully funded with state/federal monies. MassDOT performs inspections on municipal owned bridges that have a clear span > 20 feet and performed inspections on this bridge which showed a need to replace the bridge. The project was completed in 2021.

Old Town Farm Road Culvert Replacement

Engineering and construction costs to replace twin 36-inch culverts with a single culvert. The replacement will protect the dead-end roadway as well as aid in reducing debris blockage and provide for better fish passage.

MS4 Storm water Permit

This request is for the U.S. EPA's NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) 5-year permit jointly issued by EPA and MassDEP that became effective in 2018. Monies are used for consultant support in annual permit compliance. This request is for the newly issued NPDES Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit issued by the U.S. EPA. Money needs to be set aside in free cash for annual permit compliance.

Sewer Extension Projects

Multiple projects to extend sewers in environmentally sensitive areas in Town is being discussed/reviewed by the Public Works Commission. Projects include extending sanitary sewer in CWMP Phases 1, 2 & 4 which include the following areas in Town: Phase 1-Leino Park, Lakewood Park, Dawley Road, Phase 2-Lake Drive East/Edro Isle and Phase 3-Bacon Street. Preliminary engineering/construction costs for the projects range from \$2.5 M to \$4.0 M. Each phase is expected to take 3 years from design to end of construction.

Multi-Year Road Improvement Project

A multi-year road improvement plan for repairing and improving town roads is part of the CIP. It is funded by a combination of the Annual Road Maintenance appropriation, MassDOT Chapter 90 and Road Maintenance Stabilization funds. Funding for this project is dependent on landfill revenue. Once the landfill is closed, transfers to the Road Maintenance Stabilization Fund from landfill revenue will cease.

Public Safety Building

A public safety building committee has been formed and have been meeting to come up with a plan for the Public Safety Building. The current building has limited storage and the committee is looking at options for expansion of the existing building or possibly moving one or both department(s) to a new location.

Tower Ladder

A project for replacing the Tower Ladder is not yet on the five year CIP but is currently slated for FY2030. Although FY2030 is a number of years away, it is important to start discussing funding options now in order to have the least amount of impact to the tax payers. A Tower Ladder provides significant advantages over the traditional ladder truck with the main advantage being safety. A fire fighter can safely maneuver the bucket into position to best fight a fire and does not have to climb up and down a ladder that is wet and sometimes frozen. In addition, in a rescue situation rescued persons can be lowered to the ground rather than having to climb down a ladder. Another advantage is reach - a tower can extend out as well as up thus allowing a fire fighter to reach a home from the road. With all light weight construction buildings are made to depend on each component to support its own weight. When fire weakens one or more the building fall down faster endangering the people and firefighters. Another major advantage to a tower is that it can operate in any angle fully extended without fear of collapsing. This vehicle also allows us to operate with fewer people because of the safety factor.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

WORCESTER, SS.

To either of the Constables of the TOWN OF WESTMINSTER in the County of Worcester, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
9 ACADEMY HILL ROAD
WESTMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS
on
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022
AT 1:00 P.M.**

then and there to vote on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to supplement the amount voted under Article 5 of the May 1, 2021 Annual Town Meeting for the Snow & Ice Removal accounts (Department 423), or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$195,000)

AND YOU ARE DIRECTED to serve this warrant, by posting attested copies thereof at the Town Hall and the U.S. Post Office in said Town, fourteen days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

HEREOF FAIL NOT, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as aforesaid. Given under our hands this 11th day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-two.

James A. DeLisle

Salvatore J. Albert Jr.

Heather M. Billings

SELECT BOARD

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

WORCESTER, SS.

To either of the Constables of the TOWN OF WESTMINSTER in the County of Worcester, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
9 ACADEMY HILL ROAD
WESTMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS
on
SATURDAY, May 7, 2022
AT 1:00 P.M.**

then and there to vote on the following articles:

CUSTOMARY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or other appropriate state agency for the construction and maintenance of public highways for the ensuing fiscal year, or act in relation thereto.

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Chapter 40, section 4 of the General Laws to authorize the Select Board to enter into any and all contracts on behalf of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year unless otherwise provided by law, on such terms and conditions as it deems to be in the best interests of the Town, or act in relation thereto.

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

ARTICLE 3. To hear reports of any committees appointed to act on Town affairs or in its behalf.

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to set the following spending limits for each Revolving Fund authorized under Chapter 28-9 of the Town Bylaws for FY2023, or act in relation thereto:

- 1 Hazardous Materials Recovery - \$12,000
- 2 Agricultural Commission Programs - \$10,000
- 3 Public Health Clinic and Emergency Response - \$25,000
- 4 Private Road Maintenance - \$10,000

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote to establish two (2) full-time Police Officer positions in the Police Department, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to establish two (2) full-time Firefighter positions in the Fire Department, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to establish two (2) full-time Firefighter positions in the Fire Department contingent on the receipt of grant funding, or act in relation thereto.

(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to establish one (1) full-time Cemetery Foreman position in the Cemetery Department, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

OPERATING BUDGETS

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to fix the compensation of appointed and elected officers, provide for a Reserve Fund, and determine what sums of money the Town will raise and appropriate, including appropriations from available funds, to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt and interest, for the ensuing fiscal year, or act in relation thereto.

(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$24,389,472)

(space left intentionally blank)

ACCOUNT NAME AND NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	FY2022 APPROVED	FY2023 REQUESTED	INCREASE (DECREASE)	% Change	% of Budget	COMMENTS
Select Board	Salaries	4,000	4,000	0			
122	Expenses	27,250	27,250	0			
		31,250	31,250	0	0.00%	0.13%	
Town Administration	Salaries	174,550	148,604	- 25,946			New TA and Admin Staff
129	Expenses	7,200	7,200	0			
		181,750	155,804	-25,946	-16.65%	0.66%	
Advisory Board	Expenses	650	650	0			
131		650	650	0	0.00%	0.00%	
Reserve Fund	Expenses	75,000	98,400	23,400			.5% of FY22 tax levy (\$19,665,247)
132		75,000	98,400	23,400	31.20%	0.42%	
Accountant	Salaries	100,105	106,360	6,255			
135	Expenses	36,900	37,900	1,000			New audit contract
		137,005	144,260	7,255	5.30%	0.58%	
Assessors	Salaries	70,298	70,274	-24			
141	Expenses	20,964	20,964	0			
		91,262	91,238	-24	-0.03%	0.39%	
Treasurer/Collector	Stipend	1,000	1,000	0			
147	Salaries	160,600	162,789	2,189			
	Expenses	19,816	19,816	0			
		181,416	183,605	2,189	1.21%	0.78%	

Legal	Expenses	75,000	75,000	0		
151		75,000	75,000	0	0.00%	0.32%
Personnel Admin.	Salaries	49,951	54,531	4,580		
152	Expenses	18,250	19,500	1,250		
		68,201	74,031	5,830	8.55%	0.31%
Data Processing	Salaries	68,732	70,794	2,062		
155	Expenses	116,596	121,600	5,004		ViewPoint and Zobrio annual increases
		185,328	192,394	7,066	3.81%	0.81%
Town Clerk	Stipend	1,175	1,200	25		
161	Salaries	90,918	91,208	290		
	Expenses	10,930	11,260	330		
		103,023	103,668	645	0.63%	0.44%
	Stipend	600	700	100		
Elections	Salaries	4,952	15,585	10,633		
164	Expenses	14,605	18,505	3,900		
		20,157	34,790	14,633	72.60%	0.15%
						increased due to State Primary/State Election Fall 2022 and Annual Town Election 4/2023
Conservation	Salary	39,656	40,846	1,190		
171	Expenses	1,050	1,050	0		
		40,706	41,896	1,190	2.92%	0.18%
Town Planner	Salary	79,132	82,193	3,061		
172	Expenses	4,050	4,500	450		
		83,182	86,693	3,511	4.22%	0.37%

Planning Board	Salary	2,000	2,000	0		
175	Expenses	1,150	1,150	0		
		3,150	3,150	0	0.00%	0.01%
Board of Appeals	Salary	1,000	1,000	0		
176	Expenses	300	300	0		
		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Agricultural Commission	Expenses	500	500	0		
179		500	500	0	0.00%	0.00%
Economic Development	Expenses	1,300	1,300	0		
182		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Public Buildings and Property	Salaries	112,433	112,164	-269		
192	Expenses	252,050	252,050	0		
		364,483	364,214	-269	-0.07%	1.54%
Town Report	Expenses	2,250	2,250	0		
195		2,250	2,250	0	0.00%	0.01%
Crocker Pond	Salaries	21,664	22,314	650		
199	Expenses	7,655	7,655	0		
		29,319	29,969	650	2.22%	0.13%
Police/Dispatch	Salaries	1,969,286	2,044,243	74,957		includes new FT/Police Officers, and reduction in overtime budget
210	Expenses	258,800	340,690	81,890		
		2,228,086	2,384,933	156,847	7.04%	10.09%

		adjusted calculation with Ambulance budget split (67% Fire/33% Ambulance)				
Fire	Salaries	878,227	1,006,274	128,047		
220	Expenses	155,166	177,786	22,620		
		1,033,393	1,184,060	150,667	14.58%	5.01%
		Increased cost due to adjusted calculation and additional full time Firefighter/EMTs				
Ambulance	Salaries	376,386	497,218	120,832		
231	Expenses	132,299	152,251	19,952		
		508,685	649,469	140,784	27.68%	2.75%
		Entire budget for Ambulance to be funded from Ambulance Receipts Reserved				
		additional 4 hours/week for Deputy Emergency Mgr training				
Emergency Management	Salaries	0	4,611	4,611		
299	Expenses	11,985	12,405	420		
		11,985	17,016	5,031	41.98%	0.07%
Building Dept.	Salaries	228,905	232,606	3,701		
241	Expenses	20,000	20,000	0		
		248,905	252,606	3,701	1.49%	1.05%
Animal Control	Salary	0	0	0		
292	Expenses	40,000	40,700	700		
		40,000	40,700	700	1.75%	0.17%
Tree Warden	Salary	2,000	2,000	0		
294	Expenses	33,200	33,200	0		
		35,200	35,200	0	0.00%	0.15%

K-12 Schools 390	Contribution to Fndn. Budget	7,372,524	7,807,347	434,823	5.90%	
	Additional Funds	2,844,940	2,404,869	-440,071	-15.47%	
	Transportation	440,818	490,692	49,874	11.31%	
	Comm. Serv.	4,358	4,308	-50	-1.15%	
	Stabilization		0	0	0.00%	
	Capital		0	0	0.00%	
	Subtotal-Operating	10,662,640	10,707,216	44,576	0.50%	
	WES Bond	250,500	242,000			
	Oakmont Bond	245,500	230,000			
	Subtotal-Debt	496,000	472,000	-24,000	-4.84%	
	SUB-TOTAL K-12	11,158,640	11,179,216	20,576	0.18%	47.22%
Monty Tech	Foundation State Minimum	750,000	745,000	-5,000	-0.67%	
	Additional Funds			0		
	Transportation	50,000	20,000	-30,000	-60.00%	
	Capital	25,000	13,500	-11,500	-46.00%	
	Bonds			0		
	Sub-Total MTech	825,000	778,500	-46,500	-5.64%	3.49%
Total Schools, 390	Total Schools	11,983,640	11,957,716	-25,924	-0.22%	49.03%
Highway Admin. 421	Salaries	319,479	331,152	11,673		
		319,479	331,152	11,673	3.65%	1.40%
Highway Dept. 422	Salaries	625,657	641,498	15,841		
	Expenses	261,350	266,370	0		
		887,007	907,868	15,841	2.35%	3.84%

Snow and Ice Control	Salaries	77,000	77,000	0		
423	Expenses	320,000	320,000	0		
		397,000	397,000	0	0.00%	1.68%
Street Lighting	Expenses	25,625	26,000	375		increase in electric costs, will likely be reduced with installation of LED streetlights by FY2024
424		25,625	26,000	375	1.46%	0.11%
Cemetery Dept.	Salaries	130,302	168,217	37,915		reduction in 2 part time staff and addition of FT foreman
491	Expenses	15,680	15,680	0		
		145,982	183,897	37,915	25.97%	0.78%
Health Dept.	Salaries	121,351	125,367	4,016		
510	Expenses	15,900	19,860	3,960		requested increase for electronic food permitting software.
		137,251	145,227	7,976	5.81%	0.61%
Council on Aging	Salaries	59,743	62,522	2,779		Administrative staff and Meals on Wheels drivers
541	Expenses	15,700	15,700	0		
		75,443	78,222	2,779	3.68%	0.33%
Veteran's Services	Salaries	27,044	0	-27,044		
543	Expenses	1,635	17,000	15,365		decrease due to regionalized services with Gardner
		28,679	17,000	-11,679	-40.72%	0.07%
Veteran's Assistance	Expenses	90,000	90,000	0		
544		90,000	90,000	0	0.00%	0.38%

MART	Salaries	88,350	92,269	3,919		
549	Expenses	12,250	12,250	0		
		100,600	104,519	3,919	3.90%	0.44%
Library	Salaries	305,644	309,618	3,974		
610	Expenses	140,240	146,340	6,100		Books & periodicals, Lecturers
		445,884	455,958	10,074	2.26%	1.93%
Recreation Dept.	Salaries	19,093	27,380	8,287		increase program to 6 weeks with added staff
630	Expenses	14,540	21,440	6,900		increase programming for town activities
		33,633	48,820	15,187	45.16%	0.21%
Concerts	Expenses	3,000	3,000	0		
631		3,000	3,000	0	0.00%	0.01%
Hager Park Comm.	Expenses	900	1,100	200		increase of mowing cost for Rambler area
661		900	1,100	200	22.22%	0.00%
Historical Comm.	Expenses	1,280	1,280	0		
691		1,280	1,280	0	0.00%	0.01%
Memorial Day	Expenses	1,300	1,300	0		
692		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Care of Town Clock	Expenses	350	350	0		
699		350	350	0	0.00%	0.00%

Town Debt Retirement	Fire Truck	120,000	120,000	0			BAN - Year 4 of 5
710	Senior Center Bond	190,000	190,000	0			Maturing 6/30/2030
	Rte. 140 Re-design	82,000	82,000	0			BAN - Year 3 of 5
	Septic Management Program	15,000	15,000	0			Maturing 01/15/2039
	Total Expenses	407,000	407,000	0	0.00%	1.72%	VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM
Town Debt Interest	Short Term Borrowing	5,000	5,000	0			
750	Senior Center Bond	45,800	42,000	-3,800			
	Fire Truck	2,196	888	-1,308			
	Rte. 140 Re-design	7,380	1,640	-5,740			
	Total Expenses	60,376	49,528	-10,848	-17.97%	0.21%	VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM
Regional Plan. Council.	Expenses	2,678	2,899	221			annual assessment
840		2,678	2,899	221	8.25%	0.01%	
Other Employee Benefits		40,000	40,000	0			
910		40,000	40,000	0			
Retirement and Pensions	Expenses	1,058,473	1,172,145	113,672			
911		1,058,473	1,172,145	113,672	10.74%	4.96%	Annual increase in assessment from Worcester Regional Retirement, \$110,000 to be funded from Pension Stabilization
Group Health Insurance	Expenses	1,304,860	1,346,946	42,086			
914		1,304,860	1,346,946	42,086	3.23%	5.70%	0% increase in insurance premiums, increase for retiree benefits and additional staffing

Group Life Insurance	Expenses	4,500	4,700	200		
915		4,500	4,700	200	4.44%	0.02%
Other Insurance	Expenses	2,500	2,500	0		Unemployment
945		43,500	47,500	4,000		Workman's Compensation
		210,000	215,000	5,000		Property and Liability
		66,750	68,500	1,750		Fire/Police Accident
		2,000	2,000	0		Deductibles
		324,750	335,500	10,750	3.31%	1.42%
						VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET		11,678,536	12,431,756	753,220	6.45%	50.97%
TOTAL SCHOOL BUDGETS		11,983,640	11,957,716	-25,924	-0.22%	49.03%
TOTAL BUDGET		23,662,176	24,389,472	727,296	3.07%	

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Sewer Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2023, or act in relation thereto.
(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$1,280,252)

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Water Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2023, or act in relation thereto.
(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$659,707)

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Solid Waste Transfer Facility Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2023, or act in relation thereto.
(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$273,500)

CUSTOMARY MONEY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, sums of money for the following purposes, or act in relation thereto:

Westminster Cultural Council

Conservation Fund, as provided in Section 8C of Chapter 40 of the General Laws

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amounts requested: \$4,000 for Cultural Council; \$5,000 for Conservation Fund)

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to fund a portion of the cost of retaining a professional consultant to perform the revaluation of real and personal property in the Town as required under Massachusetts General Laws, or act in relation thereto.
(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$25,000)

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from Free Cash to reduce the Fiscal Year 2023 tax rate, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$230,000)

NON-CAPITAL MONEY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for professional trail maintenance assistance and supplies, or act in relation thereto.
(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$3,000)

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be spent under the direction of the Forbush Memorial Library Trustees to conduct appraisals for Town owned historical artifacts, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$5,000)

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be spent under the direction of the Historical Commission for continued work with a historic preservationist, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$2,000)

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to supplement vehicle fuel and building utility expenses for the various town departments; said sum to be spent under the direction of the Town Administrator, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board 2-1 in Favor and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$50,000)

CAPITAL ARTICLES

ARTICLE 20. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be spent for the following capital equipment and/or projects, including related incidental costs, or act in relation thereto. (2/3 vote required) *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

	Department	Item/Expense	Amount Requested	Proposed Funding Source
20-1	DPW	Maintenance of Town roads (including oiling, sealing, re-surfacing, drainage, guardrails, removing trees/brush, and other such activities.)	\$300,000.00	Raise and appropriate
20-2	DPW	Road Improvement Program	\$500,000.00	Road Maintenance Stabilization
20-3	DPW	Storm Water Permit	\$50,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-4	DPW	Replace 2005 John Deere Loader 544J	\$250,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-5	DPW	Replace 2012 JCB Backhoe	\$150,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-6	DPW	Water Pressure Reducing Valves (4 locations)	\$20,000.00	Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund
20-7	DPW	Water Storage Tank - Shady Ave	\$450,000.00	Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund
20-8	Police	Body Worn Cameras for Police Officers	\$68,280.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-9	Police	Replace 2017 Ford Interceptor	\$59,700.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-10	Fire	KME Ladder Truck (refurbishment Tower I)	\$100,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-11	Fire	Replace 2013 Chevy Pickup	\$45,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-12	Fire	Chest Compression Machine	\$45,000.00	Ambulance Receipts
20-13	IT	Computer Replacement Program	\$44,000.00	Technology Stabilization
20-14	Town	Engineering Study for Colony Rd Fields	\$77,200.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-15	Cemetery	Replace 2008 Ford F250 Utility Truck	\$50,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
20-16	School Dept	Districtwide Capital Projects Oakmont RHS - \$65,253 Overlook MS - \$35,072 District - \$81,068	\$181,393.00	Building Maintenance Stabilization
20-17	School Dept	Westminster Capital Projects Meetinghouse - \$130,000 Westminster - \$92,000	\$222,000.00	Building Maintenance Stabilization

MISCELLANEOUS AND ZONING ARTICLES

ARTICLE 21. To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody and control of the parcels listed below, from the Tax Custodian to the Select Board for general municipal purposes and to authorize the Select Board to convey said property on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Select Board deem appropriate, or act in relation thereto. (2/3 vote required). *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Map/Lot</u>	<u>Parcel Size</u>	<u>Zoning</u>
Shady Avenue	86/23	1.5 Acres	R-1
Ellis Road-Rear	132/2	6.3 Acres	R-2
East Main Street	111/2-1	3,930 SF	R-1
50 State Road West	101/6	3.8 Acres	R-1
State Road West	84/2	17,424 SF	C-2
Roper Road	74/5	1.6 Acres	R-2

ARTICLE 22. To see if the Town will vote to grant a utility easement to National Grid for Pole 14-4, that is located on the property owned by the Town at 12 Goodridge Drive for modifications and upgrades to the electric equipment, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 23. To see if the Town will vote to accept as gifts two framed pastel watercolor paintings done by John Roscoe Ballou c. 1910, one of the Forbush Memorial Library building, another of a New England seashore, given by John and Lynda Christian May 14, 2021 and accepted by the Library Board of Trustees July 20, 2021, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town vote to amend the Zoning Map of the Town, as it is established and referenced in Article III, Section 205-6 (Zoning Map) to change the zoning for 8 Worcester Road from Commercial-I to Residential-I or act in relation thereto. (2/3 vote required) *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

AND YOU ARE DIRECTED to serve this warrant by posting attested copies thereof at the Town Hall and the U.S. Post Office in said Town, seven days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

HEREOF FAIL NOT, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as aforesaid. Given under our hands this 11th day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-two.

James A. DeLisle

Date

Salvatore J. Albert

Date

Heather M. Billings

Date

SELECT BOARD