

**TOWN OF WORTHINGTON  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
February 24, 2026  
7:00 P.M.  
RH Conwell School  
147 Huntington Road**

Hampshire ss:

To either of the Constables of the Town of Worthington in the County of Hampshire.

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 election and in Town affairs, to meet at the RH Conwell School in said Worthington on February 24, 2026, at 7:00 P.M., then and there to act on the following articles:

**ARTICLE ONE:** To see if the Town will vote pursuant to the provisions of Section 15 of Chapter 39 M.G.L. to allow, if a voice vote is not unanimous but clear as to a 2/3rds majority, that the Moderator's declaration of such vote will be sufficient, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**ARTICLE TWO:** To see if the Town will vote to Appropriate and Transfer the sum of \$7,110.10 from the Police Part Time Wages account to Police Department Expenses account, or take any other action in relation thereto.

*Selectboard Action: Recommended*                      *Finance Comm. Action: Recommended*

**ARTICLE THREE:** To see if the Town will vote to Appropriate and Transfer the sum of \$701.75 from the Recording Secretary Wages account to the Election Expense Account to cover the cost of the Special Town Election held on November 8, 2025, or take any other action in relation thereto.

*Selectboard Action: Recommended*                      *Finance Comm. Action: Recommended*

**ARTICLE FOUR:** To see if the Town will vote to Appropriate and Transfer the sum of \$572.57 from the Tent account to the Accounting and Treasury Software Accounts to pay outstanding balances due, or take any other action in relation thereto.

*Selectboard Action: Recommended*                      *Finance Comm. Action: Recommended*

**Article for Prior Year's Bill**

**ARTICLE FIVE:** To see if the Town will vote to Appropriate and Transfer the sum of **\$54.70** from the Fire Department Operating Expense account to pay a FY25 Rockwood Ag-Grid (cow power net metering) bill, or take any other action in relation thereto.

*Selectboard Action: Recommended*                      *Finance Comm. Action: Recommended*

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*The following article is proposed by a Citizens' Petition*

**ARTICLE SIX:**

To Warrant Article: Temporary Moratorium on Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and

Battery Energy Storage Systems

(To Amend the Worthington Zoning Bylaw)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Worthington Zoning Bylaw by adding a new Section as follows:

Section XX: Temporary Moratorium on Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and Battery Energy Storage Systems

**XX.1 Purpose**

In order to allow adequate time for the Planning Board, with input from other Town boards and the public, to study, hold public forums, and propose permanent zoning amendments regarding the siting, design, construction, operation, and decommissioning of large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations and battery energy storage systems (BESS), including but not limited to consideration of public health and safety, water resource protection, fire safety, visual impacts, and the Town's rural and scenic character, a temporary moratorium on the submission and acceptance of applications for special permits, site plan review, or building permits for such facilities is hereby established.

**XX.2 Moratorium**

For the effective period of this bylaw, no board, commission, or official of the Town of Worthington shall accept, process, or act upon any application for a special permit, site plan approval, building permit, or any other permit or approval related to the construction or installation of a Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation (as defined in Section XII of the Zoning Bylaw) or a Battery Energy Storage System greater than 600 kWh, whether standalone or co-located.

**XX.3 Term**

This moratorium shall expire on June 30, 2027, unless ended earlier by a vote of Town Meeting or extended by a subsequent vote of Town Meeting.

**XX.4 Severability** If any portion of this bylaw is declared invalid, the remainder shall continue in full force and effect.

or take any action relative thereto.

**ARTICLE SEVEN: Large-Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations Moratorium In Limited Areas**

**Add Section 8.5.7. as follows:**

The Town of Worthington has placed a temporary moratorium on Large-Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations (LSGMSPI) in the Worthington Water Supply District, the Flood Plain and Westfield River Protection District, the Westfield River Watershed (designated as an Outstanding Resource Water), MassWildlife BioMap3 Core Habitats, and Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPA) around all Public Water Supplies for the purposes of updating protective zoning by-laws as well as creating a Solar Overlay District. The Solar Overlay District will provide Designated Locations (Section 8.5.3) based on site suitability criteria in order to strengthen protection of highly vulnerable water and environmental resources. Protection of these critically important public water sources is incompatible with hazardous materials potentially released from solar equipment due to fire, vandalism and extreme weather events, as well as site disruption, fracture of the hydrologic barrier and erosion from large scale installations. The moratorium is in effect in those critical areas to provide urgent protection to the public's health and safety. LSGMSPI shall continue to be allowed in the remainder of the town. The moratorium shall be in effect through June 30, 2027 or until the town adopts amendments to the Zoning By-law Section 8.5 to adopt a Solar Overlay District map and other necessary revisions to protect the safety of the public and public drinking water, and align the By-Law with state and federal conservation regulations.

**ARTICLE EIGHT: Large Capacity Energy Storage Systems Moratorium in Limited Areas**

**Add Section 8.8 as follows:**

The Town of Worthington has placed a temporary moratorium on commercial Large Capacity Energy Storage Systems (ESS) in the Worthington Water Supply District, the Flood Plain and Westfield River Protection District, the Westfield River Watershed (designated as an Outstanding Resource Water), MassWildlife BioMap3 Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes, Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPA) around all Public Water Supplies, as well as a 300-foot setback from residences and structures where the public congregates, for the purposes of updating protective zoning by-laws as well as creating a Large Capacity ESS Overlay District. Additionally, the moratorium prohibits ESS of capacity larger than 5MWh. The Overlay District will provide Designated Locations based on site suitability criteria in order to strengthen protection of public safety, and highly vulnerable water and environmental resources. Protection of these critically important public water sources is incompatible with hazardous materials potentially released from ESS due to fire, vandalism and extreme weather events, as well as site disruption, fracture of the hydrologic barrier and erosion from large scale installations. The moratorium is in effect in those critical areas to provide urgent protection to the public's health and safety. ESS shall continue to be allowed in the remainder of the

town. The moratorium shall be in effect through June 30, 2027 or until the town adopts amendments to the Zoning By-law Section 8.5 to adopt a Large Capacity ESS Overlay District map and other necessary revisions to protect the safety of the public and public drinking water, and align the By-Law with state and federal conservation regulations.

**Amend Section 10 of the bylaws to add a subsection relating to 8.8 as follows:**

**The following relate to section 8.8 of this bylaw.**

Energy Storage System (ESS): A device utilized to store electrical energy (AC or DC) by converting electrical energy into chemical energy or vice-versa. May consist of a single battery or multiple batteries or other means which accomplish this conversion. May also include any devices utilized to provide cooling to said storage device.

Small Capacity Energy Storage System: Any energy storage system less than 150 kWh.

Large Capacity Energy Storage System: Any energy storage system of between 150 kWh and 5MWh. Energy Storage Systems larger than 5MWh are prohibited.

**ARTICLE NINE: Revise Site Plan Review Procedure**

**Amend Section 2.6 "Site Plan Review" as follows:**

**Section 2.6.7. Review Procedure**

~~A. Site Plan Review applications shall be reviewed and acted upon at a public meeting of the Site Plan Reviewing Authority.~~

A. Site Plan Review applications shall be acted upon by the filing of a decision with the Town Clerk within ninety (90) days after the close of a public hearing on the application. The public hearing shall open within sixty-five (65) days after an application is filed by the applicant with the Planning Board and the Town Clerk. Notice of said public hearing shall be provided by regular mail to abutters and abutters to the abutters within three hundred feet of the property line of the applicant as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list, no less than seven (7) days before the date of the public hearing. No publication in a newspaper of general circulation is required.

B. The Site Plan Reviewing Authority shall provide copies of the application and the site plan to the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Building Inspector, Highway Superintendent, Selectboard, and Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board. These boards and individuals shall have thirty-five (35) days to report to the Site Plan Reviewing Authority their findings and recommendations. The failure of a board or individual to report in the allotted time shall constitute approval by that board or individual.

C. The Site Plan Reviewing Authority shall post information about the application and how it can be reviewed at the place where other public notices are posted. ~~The reviewing authority shall also provide this information to abutters and non-abutters within three hundred feet of the application property.~~ Such information shall include a summary of the proposed project, including size, location, and proposed use. The Site Plan Reviewing Authority shall allow 14 days after such posting for receipt of written comments from the general public before making its decision.

~~D. The Site Plan Reviewing Authority shall render a decision on the application within sixty-five (65) days of the date the application was deemed complete and the Town has been reimbursed for all fees for engineering and consulting services referred to in Section 2.6.6 of this bylaw. If the Site Plan Reviewing Authority does not act within this period, approval is granted by default.~~

**ARTICLE TEN:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to petition the General Court for special legislation to provide as set forth below; provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill so submitted, unless the Selectboard approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court; and further that the Selectboard is hereby authorized to approve amendments which shall be within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON LARGE SCALE GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS IN THE TOWN OF WORTHINGTON

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, and notwithstanding any other provision of the Zoning Bylaws to the contrary, there hereby is a moratorium on any and all applications for Large Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and/or Battery Energy Storage Systems, which moratorium shall not apply for residential installations. The moratorium shall be in effect for one year after the adoption of this special act or the date on which the Town adopts amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaws concerning regulation of Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and/or Battery Energy Storage Systems, whichever occurs earlier. During the moratorium period, the Town shall undertake a planning process to study, review, analyze, and address what revisions to the Zoning Bylaws relative to Industrial Large Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and/or Battery Energy Storage Systems are needed or desirable to allow for and regulate such use consistent with applicable law while protecting the Town's ecological resources and furthering its planning goals.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Given under our hands this *10<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026*, I have served this warrant as directed.

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Date of Posting: \_\_\_\_\_

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Constable

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