

# Annual Town Meeting

May 2, 2026 . 9:17 AM . ID: 233643381

## Transcript

00:02 - 00:04

(This conference will now be recorded.)

01:01 - 01:09

Okay, we've got plenty of seats up front here packed into the middle We've got Two minutes left.

01:09 - 01:11

Can everybody please take a seat?

03:37 - 03:40

Okay, we're really, really close.

03:40 - 03:46

Could someone representing the petition please come see me just really briefly?

03:50 - 03:52

Hearing no discussion.

03:53 - 04:00

So we really need somebody representing the petition between now and Article 27.5.

04:01 - 04:05

So if anybody sees someone, please let me know.

04:06 - 04:13

Okay, we're going to have a little bit of a slow start as people sign in.

04:13 - 04:15

It is 9.30.

04:15 - 04:19

We're officially underway with the introductory part.

04:19 - 04:26

Again, I'm reminding people we are not going to do a line item read of every budget item.

04:27 - 04:38

You can put a hold on a budget item by raising your hand and saying, I'd like a hold on it such and such an item, and then we'll do that during discussion.

04:38 - 04:51

But look at the budget, look at the, there's a long bylaw change in there, we're not going to be going through all of that, I'll ask the presenter to summarize that one.

04:52 - 04:59

So again, the handouts you've got, I'm seeing people with the annual report, that is part of the process.

04:59 - 06:00

Today I'll be speaking more and more usually at the end of the meeting I'll say the development of next year's warrant begins this next Tuesday so the next select board meeting is Tuesday and we'll be reviewing the progress of today and start setting up for next year so I give this as a little bit of a preaching a little bit of the lecture because that's how it works so input into the government during the year is as important as today so again sorry to lecture but I think it'll help we have a lot more activity in town recently due to a couple of things and we want to keep that going so so voting will continue till 1230 if we are still operating in around 1130 or noon we'll take a break for people who haven't voted to go and vote.

06:02 - 06:07

And then should we see a need for a break earlier in that, we'll do it.

06:08 - 06:13

We have a very rich warrant in terms of topics.

06:13 - 06:14

There's the budget.

06:14 - 06:15

There are bylaws.

06:15 - 06:16

There's a petition.

06:18 - 06:26

So back to the usual rules of come to the mic, say your name and address.

06:26 - 06:27

We do have new residents.

06:28 - 06:38

Our clerk and myself usually know who is and who isn't a resident, but we've got to make sure we we do the the name and the address when you come to the mic.

06:40 - 06:45

There is a pastry cake sale back in the kitchen.

06:46 - 06:50

There will also be a plant sale later in the month.

06:50 - 06:54

Watch your your emails from the school and from select board about that.

06:54 - 06:54

That.

06:55 - 07:03

And in terms of the pastry sale being back in the kitchen, we have lawn mowers

outside.

07:03 - 07:05

Let's keep it quiet back there too.

07:07 - 07:14

So I'm just going to defer here to Amy to talk about why Deb is not here.

07:15 - 07:16

Okay.

07:16 - 07:23

I just wanted to let town know that Deb Rock is not here with us at the select it because she is a farmer.

07:23 - 07:35

She's a maple farmer and this is her biggest weekend event in the year and unfortunately I think it's in Maryland anyway so she cannot be here because her business relies on her being there.

07:36 - 07:39

So just to let you know it's not that she's not at our meeting by choice.

07:40 - 07:41

She really has no choice in this.

07:42 - 07:42

It's her business.

07:43 - 07:44

So thank you.

07:46 - 08:25

Okay just going through my own notes here you all have the registered voters have voting cards we will be using the voting card method again in terms of tallying the vote again for two-thirds vote we will go to a voice vote first if that vote is

unanimous or very clear that it's two-thirds one-third we'll go by that otherwise we'll do the count Tom Wisnowskis and has an assistant who will help us with the count and I think in terms of methodology it will all be similar.

08:25 - 08:30

So I can see some children in the back there anxious to come forward.

08:31 - 08:46

The school has agreed to have some of our young singers open the events of the morning Uh, introduced by, uh, Jonas Kane, our music teacher and, and Jonas.

08:46 - 08:48

Yeah, it would, it's been requested.

08:48 - 08:51

They be, there we go by the mic.

08:52 - 08:56

So, uh, Jonas will introduce his choir.

08:57 - 08:59

Thank you so much.

08:59 - 09:09

The RH Conwell chorus is 26 members strong, and we have six members who are going to represent the whole today on this side, we have summer Samson.

09:10 - 09:20

Collins Noelle, Marie Longley, Annie Robinson, Emma Fisk, and Kaylee Roberts.

09:29 - 09:32

They will be performing America the Beautiful.

09:59 - 10:04

Of above the fruited plain.

10:07 - 10:25

America, America, God shed thy grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea.

10:25 - 10:36

O beautiful for heroes proved, in liberating strife.

10:39 - 10:48

More than self, their country loved, and mercy more than life.

10:48 - 11:09

America, America, I shed thy grace on you, and crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

11:35 - 11:41

Okay, one last ceremonial thing, the Pledge of Allegiance before we begin.

11:42 - 11:45

Flag is over in the corner here.

11:45 - 11:56

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, God indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

12:00 - 12:00

**[speaker unknown]**

Okay.

12:03 - 12:07

So to begin, so I'm going to gavel in the meeting, we are officially open.

12:11 - 12:25

All comments and questions to be directed only to me as moderator, refrain from addressing others in the room, we'll be observing the rule that all speakers will be heard once before any speaker can return for further comment unless as requested

by the moderator.

12:25 - 12:27

State your name and address before speaking.

12:28 - 12:30

Non-resident speakers will need to be voted in by the meeting.

12:31 - 12:34

Town council and school superintendent are considered part of the meeting.

12:35 - 12:40

As far as I know Gretchen is listening and hearing by Zoom.

12:41 - 12:43

We've got the Pledge of Allegiance.

12:43 - 12:44

Again, we can come to order.

12:45 - 12:48

The warrant has been signed by majority of the select board posted and returned.

12:49 - 12:55

Meeting all statutory requirements and with the quorum presently, we can begin this annual town meeting.

12:56 - 12:58

Do I have a motion on article one?

12:59 - 13:07

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to choose all other town officers as are not required by law to be elected by ballot.

13:07 - 13:23

Ominers of the Whiting Street Fund, Ruth Barshefsky, Diane Meehan and Janet

Dimock, field drivers and fence viewers, Bart Nicewonger, Kevin Porter, Darlene Millman, surveyors of Wood and Timber, Keith Manley, Sam Powell, and Clarence Witter.

13:24 - 13:25

Do I have a second?

13:26 - 13:28

Any discussion?

13:29 - 13:32

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to a vote on article one.

13:32 - 13:36

All those in favor of article one, do so by saying aye.

13:36 - 13:36

Aye.

13:36 - 13:39

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

13:40 - 13:42

Article two, do I have a motion?

13:43 - 13:54

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to act upon the reports of the town clerk, town treasurer, select board, homeowners of the Whiting Street Fund, and other elected or appointed officers or committees of the town.

13:55 - 13:56

Do I have a second?

13:58 - 14:00

Any discussion?

14:00 - 14:01

Discussion.

14:03 - 14:05

Alex Lack, Bingo Road.

14:05 - 14:08

I have a question on the treasurer's report.

14:08 - 14:15

So I'm glad to see that that's in the annual meeting or the annual report.

14:15 - 14:17

It's on page 27.

14:17 - 15:04

And it's great to see that now we have a list of all the funds and what the interest rate is and the question I have is the general East Hampton something interest bearing checking account there's there's basically three accounts totalling about seven hundred fifty thousand dollars that's making on average a little bit less than around one percent where most of the other accounts we are about four and a half to five percent interest and a lot of those are you know you can access those daily so the question I have is you know why do we have so much money at one percent when the difference between one and four percent that three percents about twenty one thousand dollars in interest we're losing is there a reason why we have to have that at such a low rate.

15:14 - 15:26

We're not getting much of a so the treasure is not here it's something we would need to look Any more discussion?

15:27 - 15:30

Okay, we are at article two.

15:31 - 15:34

All those in favor do so by saying aye.

15:35 - 15:36

All those opposed?

15:36 - 15:39

Passes unanimously article three.

15:39 - 15:40

Mr. Moderator.

15:41 - 15:42

We've got this.

15:42 - 15:44

Allison's going to do three and four.

15:45 - 15:45

Sorry, my fault.

15:52 - 15:53

Good morning, everybody.

15:54 - 16:03

Before I make the motion, I just wanted to convey Superintendent Gretchen Morstobus's regrets that she can't be here.

16:05 - 16:07

As some of you may know, she had surgery earlier this week.

16:08 - 16:09

She's fine.

16:09 - 16:10

She's recovering well.

16:11 - 16:21

But she's discovered much to her dismay that despite her fortitude and tireless energy, she's not invincible and actually needs to rest to recover.

16:21 - 16:29

So we're sending her good wishes and for a speedy recovery and gratitude for all she's done to prepare the budget for us today.

16:32 - 16:50

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,970,351.38 the total Worthington School District budget for the period of July 1, 26, through June 30, 27.

16:51 - 16:55

Do I have a second discussion?

16:55 - 17:01

Yes, before we have discussion, I also want to make an amendment to this.

17:02 - 17:09

We received news about how many high school students will be attending Smith-Vogue after the budget was finalized.

17:09 - 17:31

The number of students attending Hampshire will be two fewer than we budgeted for, two students I'd like to make a motion that we amend this motion to reduce the request by \$30,000 to the sum, here you go, Katherine, \$1,940,351.38.

17:33 - 17:42

The reduction will come out of line 48 of our budget, but you're just voting on the total request, not individual line items of the budget.

17:43 - 17:47

Okay, we'll go to a vote on the amendment first.

17:47 - 17:51

I believe it's been clearly stated.

17:52 - 17:54

So we'll go to a vote on that amendment.

17:55 - 18:02

So the amendment just brings the total down to, I'm going to read it number by number.

18:05 - 18:06

**[speaker unknown]**

1940351.38.

18:07 - 18:10

So all those in favor of this amendment, do so by saying aye.

18:10 - 18:14

All those opposed passes unanimously.

18:14 - 18:18

Now we have to go back and vote on Article 3.

18:18 - 18:19

I think it's been clearly stated.

18:20 - 18:22

Discussion on Article 3.

18:22 - 18:27

May I make some comments for information before questions or comments?

18:28 - 18:28

Okay.

18:30 - 18:37

We provided a handout of the budget and that shows every line item so you can see exactly where funds are allocated.

18:37 - 18:47

We also provide a budget explanation handout to answer common questions, but I'd like to direct your attention to a few parts of this explanation.

18:48 - 18:50

First, preschool.

18:51 - 19:04

We heard the feedback in the last town meeting from a few voters expressing concern about the district policy of offering preschool free of charge to students from other towns when we have openings not filled by Worthington students.

19:05 - 19:16

The school committee voted shortly after last town meeting to begin in the 27-28 school year to charge tuition for preschool students from other towns.

19:17 - 19:26

We felt it important to make this change to honor voters' desire to ensure that Worthington resources go to Worthington students.

19:29 - 19:40

We'll schedule this change to start in the fall of 27 so that students who are already enrolled in the program when we made the decision would be able to complete their preschool.

19:41 - 19:49

September of this year, there are 14 students in preschool, 10 from Worthington and four from other towns.

19:49 - 19:55

The presence of those four students does not change the staffing or cost of running the program.

19:58 - 19:59

A little more here.

20:05 - 20:07

There's quite a problem here, I don't know.

20:07 - 20:08

I know.

20:11 - 20:11

There it goes.

20:12 - 20:13

It's a little better.

20:18 - 20:31

Now I'm at my back with you, let me, there we go, nope, okay, I'm sorry, I put my hand on it.

20:31 - 20:32

Keep your hand on it.

20:32 - 20:33

Okay.

20:36 - 20:36

All right.

20:37 - 20:45

So I also want to give you some information about line 55, the Acres of Opportunity program.

20:45 - 20:52

You may notice the title of this echoes the title of Russell Conwell's book, Acres of Diamonds.

20:53 - 21:03

Our school's namesake, Russell Conwell, taught that we can find diamonds in our

own backyard, that we can find opportunity and success within our own community rather than outside it.

21:04 - 21:17

So this seemed an appropriate reference for this new program that's going to provide intensive special education services at Conwell to some elementary students who previously needed to attend out-of-district programs to meet their needs.

21:18 - 21:24

You'll notice that the line item 51 for out-of-district services is zero for next year.

21:25 - 21:32

To serve students' needs next year, out-of-district would have cost Worthington \$332 ,375.

21:34 - 21:50

By bringing those services in-house with the help of a consultant who's training Cardinal staff over the next three years, will save \$164 ,375 next year, as well as enrich all Conrail students' experience.

21:51 - 22:02

The consultant fees will diminish each year over three years and then phase out, resulting in a program that is even more cost effective in three years than it will be next year.

22:03 - 22:05

One more comment on the Acres program.

22:05 - 22:12

You'll notice on the spreadsheet, 90 ,000 of revenue offsetting the gross cost that program.

22:13 - 22:28

The school committee created a special education reserve fund several years ago, a sort of special education savings account which we fund by diverting one-third of the school choice revenue the district receives from sending towns every year.

22:29 - 22:41

This fund is intended to cover unexpected special education costs that arise during the school year, ones that arise too late to be included in the budget you approve at annual town meeting.

22:42 - 23:00

However, because the 10 as a whole was facing a budget shortfall again this year, and voters were clear last year that they did not support an override, the school committee agreed to allocate revenue from this reserve fund for known special education costs for next year to help avert the shortfall.

23:01 - 23:05

This will leave the district with a smaller reserve by about half.

23:05 - 23:17

And if other unexpected special education costs arise during the year that exceed our reserve, we may need to come back to the town for additional revenue to cover those costs.

23:18 - 23:28

Just a reminder, we are legally obligated to cover any special education services for needs that are identified in students' educational plans.

23:28 - 23:30

We cannot not pay for their education.

23:32 - 23:37

Finally, I want to address the line item an increase that probably got your attention.

23:38 - 23:41

The secondary tuition to Hampshire, line 48.

23:43 - 23:48

Part of the increase is that we will have more students attending Hampshire next year than we have this year.

23:48 - 23:54

We budgeted in the spreadsheet you see for 40 students, it's now 38.

23:55 - 23:57

This year, 30 attended.

23:57 - 24:00

So that is eight more students.

24:01 - 24:07

And for next year, our per pupil cost will be 15 ,000.

24:07 - 24:09

So that's eight times 15.

24:11 - 24:13

We pay a per pupil tuition fee.

24:14 - 24:19

And so the cost is determined by the number of students who attend just the same way that Smith vocational works.

24:21 - 24:26

The other part of the increase is that our per pupil cost is higher next year than it is this year.

24:27 - 24:35

Hampshire's per pupil cost in 2026 was calculated to be 23 ,359 per student.

24:36 - 24:41

We will pay 15 ,000 per student plus our own busing and special education costs.

24:42 - 24:52

Just for comparison, Gateway's per pupil costs in 2024, two years ago, were 25 ,430 per student.

24:53 - 25:02

We've heard a few people express concern about the rising costs of the Worthington school budget and question why we don't send students to Gateway.

25:03 - 25:12

Unfortunately, it costs a lot to educate our young people no matter what district they attend and costs arising comparably statewide and nationally.

25:13 - 25:20

In most districts in the state, the two biggest drivers of cost increase are health insurance premiums and special education costs.

25:21 - 25:30

I do wanna give kudos to Gretchen and our district office manager, Lisa, for doing a really great job managing the costs in our district.

25:31 - 25:36

If you look at the total elementary budget, this is the blue subtotal line, just below line 47.

25:37 - 25:44

You'll see the percentage increase in that portion of the budget where we can really manage costs is under 2%.

25:44 - 25:46

So thank you, Lisa and Gretchen.

25:47 - 25:48

I'm happy to answer any questions.

25:50 - 25:52

Looks like we have a discussion at the mic.

25:55 - 25:56

Alex Blackworth in Can-Mass.

25:56 - 26:11

So one question I have is the \$90,000 or maybe it's not \$90,000, the amount of money that was transferred out of the special education account to reduce our budget this year, that's a one-time effect.

26:11 - 26:15

Next year that I'm assuming next year we're not going to be able to do that.

26:15 - 26:23

So does that mean next year automatically we're going to be we're going to have a shortfall of \$80,000 or whatever that was that we can't cover this year?

26:24 - 26:27

Yeah, so I'm going to let Allison respond.

26:28 - 26:29

That's a great question.

26:31 - 26:36

As I mentioned, the costs for the consultant are going to be diminishing over three years.

26:37 - 26:40

Next year, that consultant costs \$90,000.

26:40 - 26:48

They will be here pretty much full-time training Conwell staff to provide these specialized in-house services.

26:48 - 26:51

The year following, it's going to be significantly less.

26:51 - 26:56

I'm sorry, I can't remember the exact figure, but if we need it, Lisa may be able to provide it.

26:57 - 27:01

The third year, it will be much smaller, and the fourth year, it will be zero.

27:02 - 27:07

And so we, you know, we have, we've got to provide these services.

27:07 - 27:16

The choice was either that money comes out of our reserve fund or it comes out of the stabilization fund or an override.

27:16 - 27:37

And so it was a little bit of a chicken and egg situation and because we have it and it's education related, we agreed to use it for this, knowing that once that fund is diminished, if we have special education costs we can't cover from the reserve fund, we would need to come to a special town meeting.

27:38 - 27:48

But we are quite confident that that plan for the diminishment in consultant costs is fixed.

27:48 - 27:49

That's a contract.

27:49 - 28:17

There is also a plan for this in-house program after year two to begin accepting incoming students from other districts who may will pay tuition to Conwell in order to attend the program if there's space and so just like we were paying a hundred thousand plus hundred fifty thousand for a student to So out of district.

28:18 - 28:26

We have the potential to receive 150-ish for a student to come to our program if there's space.

28:26 - 28:43

And so this was an investment not only in providing our students with services in Worthington so they get to be home with their peers, but also creating a sustainable

model which potentially could be self-supporting.

28:47 - 28:48

More discussion?

28:48 - 28:53

Okay, we're going to a vote on the overall Article 3.

28:54 - 28:57

All those in favor of Article 3, do so by saying aye.

28:57 - 28:58

Aye.

28:58 - 28:59

All those opposed.

29:00 - 29:04

So it passes, we just needed a majority vote there.

29:05 - 29:07

So on to Article 4.

29:09 - 29:11

Select board want to take Article 4.

29:12 - 29:34

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to vote pursuant to the provisions of Section 53E1-2 of Chapter 44, Mass General Law, to reauthorize the amount of \$6,000 as the annual spending limit for the Conwell School Laptop Protection Plan Revolving Fund.

29:35 - 29:38

Such limit to be applicable for fiscal year 2027.

29:38 - 29:58

Do I have a second discussion on article 4 then go to a vote on article 4 all those in favor do so by saying aye all those opposed article passes unanimously onto article 5 back to the select board.

30:00 - 30:12

Mr. moderator I moved at the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred and sixty six thousand two and \$17 for vocational education.

30:12 - 30:17

The second discussion on article five.

30:17 - 30:24

I believe that takes into account the actual number that were accepted at the spoke or is that the number we started with?

30:30 - 30:41

So is the 366-217 the actual number based on the number of kids that got in with the lottery or is that what our estimate was?

30:42 - 30:42

I can't remember.

30:46 - 30:46

Can you hear me?

30:46 - 30:47

Yeah.

30:47 - 30:59

I sent out a spreadsheet to the dyslexia and the finance committee that shows how much it would cost for each child that goes.

30:59 - 31:22

There's currently enough in there to pay for All of the students that we have calculated that will be there, plus there's a little extra that will give us a buffer, because also some students are assessed a spec cost.

31:22 - 31:25

And we don't know that until the rest of the year from now.

31:25 - 31:35

So that number will give us a little bit of a little more if something changes, or even at the end of the year, or excuse me, if school starts.

31:36 - 31:38

Smith has had.

31:40 - 31:55

In addition to this lottery thing that they just implemented this year, if kids had not made an application, but they showed up at the beginning of the school year, they kicked out.

31:57 - 32:07

So again this is a very hard budget to budget for but hopefully we have enough and we're covering all bases for what might happen.

32:08 - 32:14

Okay thanks I just that was my question because the lottery literally just took place a couple days ago.

32:17 - 32:58

Okay so more discussion on Article 5 then go to a vote on Article 5 all those in ever do so by saying aye all those opposed unanimously on article 6 and article 7 a little little intro so the numbers in article 6 and article 7 that you're looking at in the printed version as the warrant was posted have some typos or actually some numero issues so the numbers you're hearing from the the movers of these articles will be giving the correct numbers.

32:59 - 33:08

So I'm going to leave it at that and move on to someone to move Article 6.

33:08 - 33:09

Select board.

33:09 - 33:33

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to fix the salaries or compensation of all elected officers of the town as provided by Mass General Law Chapter 41, Section 108 as amended, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$79 ,101 for these salaries and compensation to be as of July 1.

33:33 - 33:35

2026, as posted in the warrant.

33:36 - 33:37

Do I have a second?

33:38 - 33:39

Second.

33:39 - 33:42

We have a second discussion on Article 6.

33:45 - 33:48

Seeing no discussion, we'll go to a vote on Article 6.

33:48 - 33:50

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

33:51 - 33:51

Aye.

33:51 - 34:18

All those opposed passes unanimously on to article seven uh select board i believe mr moderator i moved at the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred and five thousand seven hundred and seventy four dollars for the fyi 2027 town general charges as posted in the law do i have a second we have the second discussion on article Yes.

34:21 - 34:24

Good morning, Krishna Gipper, 219 River Road.

34:26 - 34:29

Could someone help me understand?

34:30 - 34:49

We've got tax collector, assistant tax collector slash assistant treasurer, and then further down on the sheet, sorry, we have tax taking collector, tax title foreclosure treasurer, and tax title foreclosure maintenance.

34:49 - 34:56

Could someone help me understand how the tax-taking collector is different from the tax collector?

34:58 - 35:01

And I'm sure there's a reason, I just don't know what it is.

35:02 - 35:15

So we have, our treasurer is also our tax collector and she has an assistant who also works in both functions and is compensated separately for the two functions.

35:18 - 35:23

And the foreclosure expenses are legal expenses.

35:23 - 35:24

That's nothing to do with personnel.

35:25 - 35:26

Thank you.

35:28 - 35:30

More discussion on article seven.

35:31 - 35:34

Deborah Cook, 224 Comington Road.

35:35 - 35:39

I have a question in this list of items.

35:39 - 35:42

There's \$2 ,000 allocated for Webmaster.

35:44 - 35:56

That's actually, I believe something's gonna be voted on later in Article 26, and so I was curious if we vote to appropriate this, what happens to it if Article 26 doesn't pass?

35:56 - 36:14

It doesn't get spent, or we spend it on, it's a little bit complicated and I'm gonna explain it when we get to the later article, but essentially it's gonna allow me who have been functioning as webmaster to be compensated as a select board member also in that position.

36:15 - 36:25

So if that article doesn't pass, then we would use that \$2 ,000 to at least help fund somebody to do that work.

36:26 - 36:30

So regardless, so the two are related but not directly.

36:31 - 36:32

Hopefully that makes sense.

36:33 - 36:36

But I will try to clarify further when we get to the other article.

36:36 - 36:41

But essentially this \$2 ,000 is for website maintenance, regardless of who's doing.

36:43 - 36:44

**[speaker unknown]**

It.

36:44 - 36:47

Okay, more discussion on article seven.

36:48 - 36:48

Yep.

36:52 - 36:54

Hi, Julie Woodruff, 294 River Road.

36:55 - 37:05

Forgive me if you've gone over this, but for assessor's revaluation, it's \$6 ,000 for this year, and it's jumped up to \$24 ,500 extra for next year proposed.

37:06 - 37:09

What are the increases for that amount of money?

37:12 - 37:14

Joe, do you want to address it, or.

37:16 - 37:28

It's an expense that's only once every five years, The Department of Revenue requires that every city in town, every five years, do a complete and total rebuild.

37:29 - 37:31

So that's what this represents.

37:31 - 37:36

If there was a spreadsheet that went back five years, you would see another five years before.

37:37 - 37:45

So it's a one-time expense that happens every five years, and that's the cost of doing that complete and total rebuild.

37:47 - 37:47

Great.

37:47 - 37:48

Thank you for explaining.

37:51 - 37:54

Okay, see no more discussion on Article 7.

37:54 - 37:55

We'll move to a vote.

37:55 - 37:58

All those in favor of Article 7 do so by saying aye.

37:59 - 38:01

All those opposed?

38:01 - 38:02

Passes unanimously.

38:02 - 38:05

So on to Article 8.

38:09 - 38:09

Yes.

38:10 - 38:11

Spokesman for the library.

38:15 - 38:15

Mr. Moderator.

38:15 - 38:16

No, Kai.

38:17 - 38:17

Name.

38:18 - 38:20

Kai Wachowiak, 17 Old North Road.

38:22 - 38:29

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$26,509 for the Worthington Library.

38:30 - 38:33

We have a second discussion on Article 8.

38:34 - 38:36

Go right to a vote on Article 8.

38:36 - 38:38

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

38:38 - 38:39

Aye.

38:39 - 38:41

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

38:42 - 38:43

Article 9.

38:45 - 38:57

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$21,295 for the FY 2027 town cemetery charges as posted in the warrant.

38:58 - 39:02

Do I have a second discussion on Article 9?

39:02 - 39:04

Seeing no discussion, we'll go to vote.

39:04 - 39:07

All those in favor of Article 9, do so by saying aye.

39:07 - 39:08

Aye.

39:08 - 39:11

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

39:12 - 39:13

Article 10.

39:15 - 39:28

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$853,579 for the FY 2027 town insurance charges has posted in the work.

39:28 - 39:33

We have a second discussion on Article 10.

39:34 - 39:35

Seeing no discussion, we'll go to a vote.

39:36 - 39:39

All those in favor of Article 10 do so by saying aye.

39:40 - 39:43

All those opposed passes unanimously.

39:44 - 39:45

Article 11.

39:46 - 40:05

Mr. Moderator, I moved that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$229,786 for the 2027 town public health and safety charges as posted in the warrant do I have a second discussion on article 11.

40:07 - 40:09

I've got some discussion.

40:21 - 41:07

John Fosno Indian Oven Road 169 Indian Oven Road a question the Hilltown community ambulance I know we give money to them every year to join it does the town give additional money to that or is that transferred over from what is the individuals give to it the question clear those are two separate things so the annual subscription right is I think what you're referring to yes and if you choose to subscribe as an individual or a family that means Hilltown ambulance which will in essence pick you up for free as a subscriber.

41:08 - 41:22

In addition, the six member towns, which are essentially all the gateway towns minus Middlefield and plus us, each pay an assessment based on population.

41:22 - 41:26

So it's based on the federal population census.

41:27 - 41:29

It's a number that we pay.

41:29 - 41:32

And I can't remember what the number is at at the moment.

41:32 - 41:35

I think it's 550 or something like that per resident.

41:36 - 41:39

So there's an annual assessment that every town pays based on population.

41:40 - 41:45

And then there's an additional assessment to that for an ambulance fund.

41:47 - 41:49

And I believe that's also population based.

41:49 - 41:50

It's a smaller number.

41:51 - 41:52

Does that answer your question?

41:52 - 42:00

It answers, but it seems to be somewhat contradictory where people contribute to it out of their own pocket.

42:00 - 42:08

And then also the town contributes to it for those that say, yeah, I'm not gonna worry about it.

42:08 - 42:13

So if you don't subscribe and Hilltown picks you up, you get billed for it.

42:13 - 42:25

So the billing that they make along with the assessment that each town pays is what finances that and makes it possible for us to have the coverage.

42:25 - 42:39

So neither one is enough money to cover it in and of itself, the subscription totals for all the towns is much, much smaller than the amount of the assessments that all the town put in.

42:40 - 42:47

So probably 75% of the funds that keep Hilltown Ambulance going are coming from these assessments.

42:48 - 42:58

And that smaller amount essentially differs the cost of the actual, of carrying you to wherever you're going to the hospital.

42:58 - 43:07

So it's an option, the subscription thing is strictly an option and if you decide to subscribe and Hilltown Ambulance picks you up, you don't have to pay.

43:08 - 43:09

Okay.

43:09 - 43:09

Okay.

43:09 - 43:10

Thank you.

43:12 - 43:15

More discussion on Article 11.

43:15 - 43:21

I mean, I should just clarify, I mean, Hilltown's response rate has been almost 100%.

43:21 - 43:42

Occasionally, if both ambulances are tied up and there's not enough personnel and somebody else has to pick you up so if Highland comes out of Goshen or if Northampton has to come up here then even if you're a subscriber you do have to pay it's only a filth on picks you up which is what happens 90 95 percent of the time okay next Eliza Lake.

43:42 - 44:01

Kenny Bercowd, just a quick question veterans aid dropped significantly I'm just interested in why that is is that population-based or so the veteran services department gives us a number every year and it's always ridiculously high and we never spend it all so we're finally reconciling that to what we think is a more realistic numbers.

44:03 - 44:28

More discussion on article 11 Julie Grom 718 Huntington I'm looking at streetlights and it was at 1,400 and now it's at 2,160 I'm wondering what the 50% increases did we get more streetlights well we did but it was a few years ago so when the new streetlights went in particularly around the rotary.

44:29 - 44:31

Eversource forgot to bill us.

44:31 - 44:35

So they finally figured out that we weren't paying for some of our streetlights.

44:35 - 44:36

They didn't backbill us.

44:36 - 44:39

Right, they didn't backbill us, but we are paying going forward.

44:40 - 44:42

So we only have six.

44:42 - 44:45

I think now we have maybe nine streetlights in town total.

44:45 - 44:46

Is it not 11?

44:47 - 44:47

Ok.

44:50 - 44:53

So we got off for a few years there without having to pay.

44:54 - 44:57

More discussion on Article 11.

44:57 - 44:58

Hearing no more discussion.

44:58 - 45:11

We'll go to a vote on article article 11 all those in favor do so by saying aye all those opposed Passes unanimously article 12 Do I have a motion?

45:14 - 45:52

Mr. Moderator, I moved that the town vote to raise an appropriate seventy four thousand nine hundred and sixty one dollars for the FY 27 town fire department second discussion on article 12 hearing no discussion will go to vote all those in favor of article 12 do so by saying aye all those opposed passes unanimously on to article 13 do I have a motion mr. moderator I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate a hundred and forty two thousand four hundred and ninety six dollars for the FY 2027 town police department charges as posted in warrant.

45:54 - 45:57

We have a second discussion on article 13.

45:58 - 46:00

Mark Horner 163 Huntington Road.

46:01 - 46:04

My first question is what are the hours of our police officer?

46:08 - 46:11

So the select board want to respond.

46:12 - 46:18

You mean like the hours per day is it I'm not sure what hours of the day of the day is daytime nighttime?

46:21 - 46:24

It's it's most he's Mostly, he's doing a mixture.

46:24 - 46:27

Sometimes he's here at night, sometimes he's here during the day.

46:27 - 46:31

It's basically, it's a 40 hour week, so it's basically an eight hour day.

46:31 - 46:39

But I cannot, unless I looked at a specific day, I can't tell you, unless, John, do you want to answer like specific hours?

46:39 - 46:49

I don't know that you can any better than I can just because, you know, on a specific day he may be here during the day, and then another day he may be here at night.

46:49 - 46:58

And right now, he is doing the dog training, which is an immensely time-consuming thing.

46:59 - 47:09

So his hours are sort of extended tremendously, and he is often out of town training the dog, but then he's back in town patrolling.

47:11 - 47:21

I think the shorter answer is the only consistent hours are Tuesday evenings when there's office Other than that, it's essentially as needed, but he works at least a 40-hour week.

47:22 - 47:22

Right.

47:22 - 47:32

I guess the root of the question here is that I've noticed a distinct lack of traffic control in the middle of town, especially during the day and during the school hours.

47:33 - 47:40

We used to have quite a bit of traffic control, and now we appear to have none, as far as I can tell.

47:41 - 47:44

So I'm wondering if that could change.

47:44 - 47:50

I think that's a different question, so we'll let it hang unless the select board wants to respond.

47:51 - 47:52

Here we go.

47:53 - 47:53

We can.

47:57 - 47:57

**[speaker unknown]**

Yeah.

47:59 - 48:02

The dog didn't find any contraband on the way here.

48:06 - 48:12

Okay, so you guys are all aware when I'm not here, B-5 covers, correct?

48:12 - 48:13

Does everyone understand that?

48:13 - 48:17

The state police will respond to a 911 when I'm not on duty.

48:18 - 48:24

At night, the state police only have three offices on in this area at B5.

48:24 - 48:26

One's on the desk, two are on the road.

48:27 - 48:31

Because of that fact, I usually work three to midnight.

48:33 - 48:39

Because you will not get a response quicker than 30 minutes because those guys have to work in all the towns around here.

48:41 - 48:43

So that's why most of the time you have that.

48:43 - 48:47

When we had two offices, yes, Chief Renke would sit out on the road during the day.

48:48 - 48:52

Right now, my day goes from, on a Tuesday, it's from 7 a.m.

48:53 - 48:54

To 7 p.m.

48:55 - 48:57

I work a 12-hour day on Tuesdays.

48:57 - 49:01

Most of the other days, I work at least, at the very least, 11 hours.

49:05 - 49:11

When I'm not going to be doing dog training, which my dog training should be finished, we finish patrol training by June.

49:12 - 49:15

He should be certified, and then I will go into narcotics for a month.

49:15 - 49:20

Once he's done with that, I will be back on the road, and you'll see me, you know, before the midnight.

49:22 - 49:25

So I understand there's not a whole lot of traffic going on.

49:25 - 49:30

If you see specific issues with somebody, call 911 and report it to B5.

49:31 - 49:35

That's the best I can tell you, because at least they can go out and watch for the vehicle.

49:38 - 49:38

I'm one officer.

49:39 - 49:40

We used to have two.

49:40 - 49:42

We used to have multiple archivists.

49:42 - 49:43

We have none of that anymore.

49:47 - 49:50

But if you guys want me to change my hands and work, please, I'll work just days.

49:51 - 50:10

But when it's a 45-minute response, I don't want to be the one to say that that's what happens but that's what's gonna happen and there's been medicals that I've been on where I'm the only guy that shows so I know some of you guys who have had medical issues I'm the only person that shows I'm.

50:13 - 50:25

Doing the best I can right now I work about 60 hours a week my pay hasn't changed a penny I don't ask for overtime I don't ask for comp time for it nothing is there's no charge to the town for the dog I wrote a.

50:29 - 50:33

So nothing has cost anything, he is going to multiply this department.

50:35 - 50:38

Right now he tracks at about three quarters of a mile, he can track you down in the woods.

50:44 - 50:47

Whether you're a good guy or a bad guy.

50:49 - 51:00

I do also want to point out that over the years we have tried to get another police, We had funding for a full-time police officer, and we had funding for part-time police officers.

51:00 - 51:06

We have tried to get people to fill these positions, and we have not succeeded.

51:08 - 51:12

Our police chiefs have been very picky, which is actually to our benefit.

51:14 - 51:19

As Bob Renke had said to me, he didn't want the cowboys, and he didn't want the yahoos.

51:19 - 51:30

He wants somebody who will respect the town, respect the people, and enforce the law, as opposed to kind of not really terrorizing us, but just not being friendly and cooperative.

51:30 - 51:35

He would like people who are going to be good for the town.

51:35 - 51:37

So that's not so easy to get.

51:38 - 51:40

And we're not the only town in this position.

51:41 - 51:50

So just to point that out, it's not like we're not, it's not like we were never trying to get another person to replace the missing police officers who couldn't find people.

51:51 - 51:58

Yeah, you'll see there's a reduction in the police part-time wages budget from 20 to 5,000.

51:58 - 51:59

And that's the reason.

52:00 - 52:05

The state has substantially changed what it takes to be a police officer in this state.

52:05 - 52:09

And essentially, if you're not doing it full-time, it just doesn't pay.

52:09 - 52:18

The amount of training necessary to be a police officer just is too much for anyone to do it as a part-time job.

52:18 - 52:24

So it's become almost impossible, especially for small rural towns, to find part-time officers.

52:25 - 52:34

So we're sort of facing reality and reduce that budget in the hope maybe we'll get some help, but not real as to be expected much.

52:35 - 52:39

John, could you introduce your dog to us until he's listening?

52:40 - 52:41

Okay, so this is Tracer.

52:41 - 52:43

As you can see, he's really on the ball.

52:44 - 52:47

It may not look like he's standing guard, but he is.

52:49 - 52:52

We don't see that kind of action out of someone.

52:53 - 52:56

Right now he's only 15 months old, so he's still really young.

52:57 - 52:59

We're in our fifth week of training.

52:59 - 53:03

The only person he has bit was me, like seven times, eight times now.

53:03 - 53:04

But he's getting better.

53:06 - 53:08

As you can see, he's a ball of energy.

53:08 - 53:10

He's half Belgian, half German.

53:11 - 53:18

So right now we're in patrol school and patrol school he's going to learn how to track, track the human scent, find articles.

53:18 - 53:22

Like so if you took your keys and threw them out in the grass he could go and find them.

53:22 - 53:23

Yep, he would.

53:24 - 53:26

I use them on my wife all the time.

53:27 - 53:29

So he's really good at that.

53:30 - 53:36

Most of the other stuff right now that we're, you know, he does bite, control, aggression, that kind of stuff.

53:36 - 53:37

We're not going to demonstrate that just yet.

53:40 - 53:48

Like I said, after he gets certified, which he should make it, I mean, I think he could probably test right now to be certified, but he's going to do a month of narcotics.

53:48 - 53:50

He'll be a narcotics detective dog.

53:50 - 53:53

There's not really a sense that you need to do narcotics or firearms.

53:54 - 53:56

I don't know why I would do firearms up here.

53:56 - 54:00

98% of you guys have LDCs, so I expect you to have a gun on you.

54:02 - 54:13

So yeah, anytime you guys want to meet him, as soon as he's done training, we'll go out to town, but any other questions like that or any other issues, just leave a message.

54:13 - 54:17

I understand traffic is terrible, I get it.

54:17 - 54:20

I've been here for 21 years, it's been terrible for 21 years.

54:21 - 54:26

And we're certainly gonna do something about it as soon as I'm done and I have time to come up here and start doing things.

54:27 - 54:29

But right now, it's just me.

54:31 - 54:38

You know, I will make a difference, and you'll notice when I do, because everyone's gonna be complaining, oh, that guy just writes tickets.

54:40 - 54:41

Right.

54:42 - 54:42

All right.

54:42 - 54:44

He's a ball of energy today.

54:50 - 54:51

All right.

54:55 - 54:56

Thanks.

54:57 - 54:58

Thank you, too.

54:59 - 55:01

Jim down the Old North Road.

55:02 - 55:09

Officers Gobi, thank you and thank you very much for the thank you very much for the uncompensated time you give to Worthington.

55:09 - 55:22

I just had one question though, the point about traffic enforcement, is there another way similar to what's being done in Chesterfield where we have radar enforced or some sort of electronic sign that tracks your speed?

55:23 - 55:28

We've talked about this for years in front of the maples and in front of the medical center.

55:28 - 55:45

And it seems for, I don't know what they cost, but for a negligible amount of money, if there were some notification that people are exceeding the speed limit as they approach the maples, It's not the same thing as having an officer on duty, but I do think it sends a psychological message.

55:45 - 55:56

It seems to work in Chesterfield, and I'm not sure why we don't avail ourselves of it here in town in various locations, in front of the school, the Maples, et cetera.

55:58 - 56:00

We'll consider that tangential, so next.

56:05 - 56:24

Actually, my question, Alison Todd, My question was similar, but my question is specifically, does this budget for the police department include funds to have access to monitoring equipment like that because it is effective?

56:25 - 56:45

And as the school committee chair, knowing that there's some ever present way of letting people know that when they pass the school, they need to go slowly, that would be very reassuring for the school because there are kids and lots of parents coming in and out and it's not safe to have people going by at 50.

56:46 - 56:47

Thank you.

56:48 - 56:50

So my question is, is that in that budget?

56:52 - 56:54

I do not believe it is.

56:54 - 57:11

The signs that we have now, the radar signs that are up on 143 going west, those signs were from a grant and it would basically be pursuing another grant, which obviously is a reasonable thing to do.

57:12 - 57:16

I can talk with John about how we would go about doing it.

57:16 - 57:21

I'm pretty sure he doesn't have the time at this moment to do it, but we can pursue it.

57:21 - 57:23

The radar signs are reasonably effective.

57:24 - 57:32

I will tell you, part of the reason Chesterfield was so successful is because they used to ticket you if you went 26 miles an hour.

57:32 - 57:41

So that stopped everybody, but now for the past, I don't know how many years, they

don't have the police officer out there writing a ticket for blinking as you go by them.

57:41 - 57:46

So seriously, like nobody went over 25 just to avoid the ticket.

57:46 - 57:53

But we would have to look into probably pursuing more grants.

57:53 - 57:57

And I think they're not very difficult to get in a sense, it's just they have to be done.

57:57 - 58:02

And this is another one of those things where do we have the time, Do we have a person who can write the grant?

58:02 - 58:18

And I will talk to John about it to see if I can maybe help him pursuing a grant to get more radar equipment that can just be put up, like the one that says that you're going too fast, and the one that says thank you when you slow down to the speed limit.

58:19 - 58:24

And they did put signs up next to the school that says 20 miles an hour.

58:24 - 58:27

But that doesn't mean people just ignore it.

58:27 - 58:28

They blow through.

58:28 - 58:32

So I you know which isn't good.

58:33 - 58:42

So I could be mistaken but my understanding was there's at least one sign that has that's at the station and hasn't been installed so I think we have access.

58:44 - 58:50

Oh right does that mean we can't put a sign.

59:11 - 59:18

This falls into a category I mentioned before that may be as early as next Tuesday's select board meeting.

59:18 - 59:19

We'll get this on the agenda.

59:20 - 59:21

Sorry guys.

59:21 - 59:22

Thank you.

59:22 - 59:23

Okay, Article 13.

59:24 - 59:27

Seeing no more discussion, we'll go to a vote on Article 13.

59:28 - 59:30

All those in favor do so by saying aye.

59:30 - 59:32

All those opposed?

59:33 - 59:33

Passes unanimously.

59:34 - 59:36

Do I have a motion on Article 14?

59:37 - 59:52

Okay, Mr. Moderator, I moved that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$653 ,465 for the fiscal year 2027 town highway department charges as listed in the war.

59:53 - 59:54

Do I have a second?

59:54 - 59:54

Second.

59:56 - 59:59

Ok, discussion on Article 14.

01:00:02 - 01:00:06

Seeing no discussion, we'll go to a vote right away on Article 14.

01:00:06 - 01:00:09

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:00:09 - 01:00:09

Aye.

01:00:10 - 01:00:11

All those opposed?

01:00:11 - 01:00:13

Passes unanimously.

01:00:14 - 01:00:16

Article 15, do I have a motion?

01:00:17 - 01:00:47

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to transfer from the general stabilization fund the sum of \$12 ,000 to hire a professional consultant to perform a peer review of the previous design study for reconstruction or renovation of the town highway garage, including evaluation of the current site and other sites owned by the town or

sites that could be acquired and providing recommendations for overall costs savings and preliminary cost estimates for their recommendations.

01:00:47 - 01:01:28

Second any discussion on article 15 hearing no discussion we'll go to a vote on article 15 all those in favor do so by saying aye all those opposed so that was a two-thirds vote was unanimous in that first voice vote so it passes article 16 same thing will be two-thirds vote do I have a motion mr. moderator I that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$59 ,868.78 from the General Stabilization Fund to purchase a new Kubota utility cab tractor for the Highway Department.

01:01:30 - 01:01:30

We have a second.

01:01:30 - 01:01:33

Any discussion on Article 16?

01:01:34 - 01:01:36

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to vote.

01:01:36 - 01:01:38

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:01:39 - 01:01:40

All those opposed?

01:01:41 - 01:01:47

There was a little bit of an opposition, but not enough to sway at two-thirds, one-third, so it passes.

01:01:48 - 01:01:52

Article 17, do I have a motion?

01:01:52 - 01:02:05

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$5 ,000 from the General Stabilization Fund to purchase a new AG25C compressed gas

welder for the Highway Department.

01:02:05 - 01:02:06

Second.

01:02:06 - 01:02:07

We have a second.

01:02:07 - 01:02:09

This again is two-thirds vote.

01:02:09 - 01:02:11

We'll go to the very voice vote first.

01:02:11 - 01:02:43

All those in favor of article 17 do so by saying aye aye all those opposed passage unanimously article 18 do I have a motion mr. moderator I move that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of seven thousand two hundred ninety dollars and ninety one cents from the general stabilization fund to purchase and install a diesel exhaust fluid storage system and a bulk oil container system for use in the town garage.

01:02:43 - 01:02:44

Do I have a second?

01:02:44 - 01:02:47

We have a second discussion on Article 18.

01:02:48 - 01:02:49

Again, a two-thirds vote.

01:02:49 - 01:02:51

We'll go to the voice vote first.

01:02:52 - 01:02:55

All those in favor of Article 18, do so by saying aye.

01:02:55 - 01:02:56

Aye.

01:02:56 - 01:02:57

All those opposed?

01:02:58 - 01:02:59

Passes unanimously.

01:02:59 - 01:03:01

Article 19, do I have a motion?

01:03:02 - 01:03:18

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to establish a reserve fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures, as provided by Mass General Law, Chapter 40, Section 6, as amended.

01:03:19 - 01:03:22

We have a second discussion on Article 19.

01:03:23 - 01:03:27

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to a vote on Article 19.

01:03:27 - 01:03:30

All those in favor, so by saying aye.

01:03:30 - 01:03:32

All those opposed?

01:03:33 - 01:03:34

Passes unanimously.

01:03:34 - 01:03:36

Article 20, do I have a motion?

01:03:37 - 01:03:54

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to appropriate as available funds, the total sum of \$421 ,849.15 from Chapter 90 funds or any other amounts from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and or maintenance.

01:03:55 - 01:03:59

We have a second discussion on Article 20.

01:04:00 - 01:04:01

Does the majority vote?

01:04:01 - 01:04:03

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:04:03 - 01:04:04

Aye.

01:04:04 - 01:04:06

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

01:04:06 - 01:04:08

Articles 21.

01:04:08 - 01:04:09

Do I have a motion?

01:04:10 - 01:04:21

Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$520 ,194 from free cash to the General Stabilization Fund.

01:04:22 - 01:04:25

We have a second discussion on Article 21.

01:04:26 - 01:04:28

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to a vote.

01:04:28 - 01:04:30

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:04:30 - 01:04:33

All those opposed?

01:04:33 - 01:04:36

Pass unanimously article 22.

01:04:36 - 01:04:37

Do I have a motion?

01:04:37 - 01:04:49

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to authorize the select board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Highway Department for construction and or maintenance of public highways for the fiscal year 2027.

01:04:49 - 01:04:57

And further to authorize the select board on behalf of the town to accept any money from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and or maintenance.

01:04:58 - 01:05:04

We have a second discussion on Article 22, but we do have discussion.

01:05:18 - 01:05:20

Mike Don Diego, 82 Lindsay Hill Road.

01:05:21 - 01:05:37

Just from the fire department perspective, I guess if we're entering into new contracts with Mouse Highway, those are the folks who can cover some of the expenses incurred for the DOT folks upstairs in the fire department building.

01:05:37 - 01:05:47

And the reason I'm asking is we've incurred some increased electrical utility expenses

due to the DOT folks working upstairs.

01:05:48 - 01:05:53

And if that can be factored into some of the contracts going forward.

01:05:55 - 01:05:57

So they do pay rent.

01:05:57 - 01:05:59

It's a pretty nominal amount.

01:06:00 - 01:06:06

I'm not sure when we negotiate that or is it negotiated for the term of the construction?

01:06:20 - 01:06:24

Hi, I'm Peggy O'Neill, 180 Prentice Road.

01:06:24 - 01:06:26

So I don't remember.

01:06:27 - 01:06:30

It was a couple of years ago, the contract, it was \$500 a month.

01:06:30 - 01:06:35

I think that that was, we could see about changing the amount on that.

01:06:35 - 01:06:40

I mean, it's a three-year, they're planning on being here for another year or two.

01:06:40 - 01:06:42

So yeah.

01:06:45 - 01:06:46

We can talk to them.

01:06:46 - 01:06:50

They're pretty amenable when we ask for stuff, so yeah.

01:06:50 - 01:06:56

And just to follow up, Brandon, maybe this is our ongoing conversation starting next Tuesday.

01:06:56 - 01:07:12

But our electric bills in the fire department have gone up from about \$180 a month pre-all construction to about \$450, \$500 a month, just an electric, while all this construction has been going on in town.

01:07:12 - 01:07:17

So that's my, that's my little number in my head that we're paying folks up there.

01:07:18 - 01:07:18

I agree with you.

01:07:18 - 01:07:21

That's a Tuesday and following follow-up.

01:07:23 - 01:07:24

Okay.

01:07:24 - 01:07:28

I think we're still in article 23, hearing no more discussion.

01:07:28 - 01:07:32

We'll go to a vote 22, I'm writing on the wrong one.

01:07:33 - 01:07:36

So, we go to a vote on Article 22.

01:07:36 - 01:07:38

All those in favor do so by saying aye.

01:07:38 - 01:07:39

Aye.

01:07:39 - 01:07:40

All those opposed?

01:07:40 - 01:07:43

Passes unanimously now Article 23.

01:07:43 - 01:07:44

Yes.

01:07:44 - 01:07:44

Do I have a motion?

01:07:45 - 01:07:59

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to authorize the select board to apply for Massachusetts state or federal grant programs and to further authorize the select board to expend monies received through such programs following a public hearing.

01:08:00 - 01:08:01

We have a second.

01:08:01 - 01:08:05

Discussion on Article 23.

01:08:05 - 01:08:07

Hearing no discussion we'll go to vote.

01:08:07 - 01:08:09

All those in favor do so by saying aye.

01:08:10 - 01:08:12

All those opposed.

01:08:13 - 01:08:14

Passes unanimously.

01:08:14 - 01:08:20

So Article 24 is extensive in terms of its wording.

01:08:21 - 01:08:33

So as we do with the budget I'm going to towards before we have discussions.

01:08:36 - 01:08:38

So, who wants to take that on?

01:08:38 - 01:08:41

You can read the whole thing if you want to, but...

01:08:41 - 01:08:43

No, I don't think it's necessary.

01:08:43 - 01:08:52

So Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to amend the general bylaw by adding a following section on the closing of townways and bridges.

01:08:53 - 01:09:01

Essentially what this language does, which we all was able to put together based on what some neighboring towns are doing.

01:09:03 - 01:09:11

Most people know that we posted all the dirt roads this spring to try to keep the heavy truck traffic off of them.

01:09:11 - 01:09:15

We were having issues particularly with some loggers on one of the dirt roads.

01:09:17 - 01:09:31

So the reality is while the highway supervisor is able to do that, there's really no been

up until now no teeth to that so if there was a violation we couldn't really find anybody or too much about it.

01:09:33 - 01:09:55

This takes that advisory in terms of into a town a town law so that we would have much more enforcement authority in essence on the issue but it's basically designed so that in the spring when the roads are soft and during mud season we keep the heavy traffic off the roads and try to keep them from getting destroyed.

01:09:58 - 01:09:59

Further discussion?

01:10:01 - 01:10:03

Ok, we'll go to a vote on Article 24.

01:10:03 - 01:10:05

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:10:06 - 01:10:07

All those opposed?

01:10:08 - 01:10:11

Passes unanimously, Article 25.

01:10:13 - 01:10:43

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to accept for the following boards, committees, or commissions holding adjudicatory hearings in the town the provisions of Mass General Law, of Chapter 39, Subchapter 23D, known as the Mullin Rule, which provides that a member of a board, committee, or commission holding an adjudicatory hearing shall not be disqualified from voting in the matter solely due to the member's absence from one session of such hearing.

01:10:43 - 01:10:48

Provided that certain conditions as established by said statute are met.

01:10:48 - 01:10:55

Boards and committees affected, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board

of Appeals and Select Board.

01:10:56 - 01:11:00

We have a second discussion on Article 25.

01:11:02 - 01:11:09

Hearing no discussion, hearing one more, we'll go to a vote on Article 25.

01:11:09 - 01:11:11

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:11:11 - 01:11:11

Aye.

01:11:12 - 01:11:14

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

01:11:15 - 01:11:16

Article 26.

01:11:16 - 01:11:17

Do I have a motion?

01:11:18 - 01:11:18

Yeah.

01:11:19 - 01:11:33

Mr. moderator I move that the town vote pursuant to general laws chapter 268 a section 21 a to authorize the select board to designate one of its members to serve as town webmaster.

01:11:35 - 01:11:37

We have a second discussion on article 26.

01:11:38 - 01:11:59

So I can try to explain and then certainly you know answer questions but three years

ago I came to the select board of finance committee during our budget meetings and asked if they would consider a stipend for the additional work I was doing on the website.

01:11:59 - 01:12:09

Doing the AV stuff like this, and a lot of additional IT work as well that I do, pretty much all outside normal select board duties.

01:12:10 - 01:12:19

They agreed to put that on the warrant, it passed, and in fiscal 25, I guess, I did get the \$2 ,000 stipend.

01:12:19 - 01:12:29

Sometime last fall, I got a call from the ethics department, the state ethics commission with someone concerned that there was a conflict.

01:12:30 - 01:12:48

To be honest, I never considered, I never had considered that there might be, but in discussions with them, we determined that yeah, state law doesn't allow a select board member to also serve essentially as a second town paid employee.

01:12:50 - 01:13:22

Without without this happening and then the select board would then have to decide whether or not to in fact appoint me or someone else on the select board to do this work and then I would have to fill out an exemption form and file it with the town court that states that I have this potential conflict so this is step one this is not specific to me it simply authorizes the select board Since we're in a town under 10 ,000 people.

01:13:23 - 01:13:29

We are allowed to do this to authorize a select board person to also serve as some sort.

01:13:29 - 01:13:37

And the same would be similar on some other town board if a member of that board wanted to serve as some other town employee.

01:13:37 - 01:13:39

So this makes that possible.

01:13:39 - 01:13:48

We discussed whether to maybe not make it so specific and decided this was when we were preparing the warrant and the warrant question just to leave it.

01:13:48 - 01:13:57

This is language that came from our town council after being advised to check with town council by the state ethics commission.

01:13:58 - 01:14:17

So I hope I've explained that there are a couple of different laws, sections of state law that deal with this, but as I said, this would be step one, assuming if this passes, then the select board could decide whether or not they want to hire me for this additional position.

01:14:17 - 01:14:20

And of course, I would refuse myself from that process.

01:14:22 - 01:14:28

So I also want to point out that this does not mean that we would only choose a member of the select board to be our webmaster.

01:14:28 - 01:14:36

It just would allow us to have a member of the select board be the webmaster, which Charlie has done for years unpaid.

01:14:36 - 01:14:41

He had one year where he got a \$2,000 stipend that didn't really cover it, but he was nice.

01:14:43 - 01:14:45

But this just allows us to do it.

01:14:45 - 01:14:47

It doesn't mean that we will only do that.

01:14:47 - 01:14:50

If Charlie was unable to be the webmaster, I have no desire.

01:14:51 - 01:14:54

I don't think that Deb Rock at this time has any desire either.

01:14:54 - 01:14:56

We'd have to hire somebody else.

01:14:57 - 01:14:57

But that's all.

01:14:57 - 01:15:02

I have been tracking my hours for the past several months just to try to get a handle on this.

01:15:03 - 01:15:07

And roughly eight to 10 hours a week I'm doing this kind of stuff.

01:15:07 - 01:15:11

And at 2,000 bucks a year, that's about less than \$5 an hour.

01:15:13 - 01:15:14

More discussion?

01:15:18 - 01:15:20

Hi, Annie Liguori, Buckingham Hill Road.

01:15:21 - 01:15:31

So it just came to my attention recently that we actually are paying someone to do that work and I do appreciate all the time and effort for it.

01:15:32 - 01:15:45

I do however have a comment as to paying for this and not having official meetings on the town calendar on a regular basis.

01:15:46 - 01:16:18

I think the way we are now, everyone's using not everyone a lot of people are using the internet they don't have necessarily have time to go to some of the posting spots to find out the information so if we're paying someone to do this web mastering work that that information could make it on the calendar all the time that would be very helpful thank you yep and i'm going to to aggravate our select board even more.

01:16:18 - 01:16:21

And that's another Tuesday ongoing discussion.

01:16:22 - 01:16:23

More just, yeah.

01:16:23 - 01:16:36

I can just say, we've made a very concerted effort and I've put a ton of these hours in on revamping the town calendar to make it more accessible and to work with the heads of all the town boards so they can post their own meetings.

01:16:37 - 01:16:39

And people are doing a really good job of it.

01:16:39 - 01:16:53

And we had a discussion again, when we put the warrant together about whether or not to put an article on the warrant to in fact, make the town website an official third legal location required for postings.

01:16:54 - 01:17:06

And we felt we still didn't have 100% handle on this and that we were concerned about locking ourselves into a situation where something didn't get posted, which meant a meeting couldn't happen.

01:17:06 - 01:17:08

It would have to be postponed.

01:17:08 - 01:17:09

And we just didn't think we were ready yet.

01:17:10 - 01:17:21

So I think that the intention is to eventually get there and that we're working really hard to make the, if you've looked at the website in the last month or two, you've seen a big difference in what the calendar looks like.

01:17:22 - 01:17:24

I've also moved it to the front page of the website.

01:17:26 - 01:17:28

And so we are trying, but I hear you.

01:17:29 - 01:17:30

More discussion.

01:17:31 - 01:17:33

Deborah Cook, 224 Comington Road.

01:17:33 - 01:17:37

First of all, thank you for the description or the discussion, it was very helpful.

01:17:37 - 01:17:39

I do have one other question.

01:17:40 - 01:17:41

I know Charlie's been doing this for years.

01:17:42 - 01:17:44

We've appropriated the sums for Webmaster.

01:17:45 - 01:17:49

Is this going to be, I'm assuming that this is going to be an ongoing position?

01:17:49 - 01:17:51

Is this something that we'll be hiring for in the future?

01:17:52 - 01:17:53

Is it just going to be appointed?

01:17:55 - 01:17:57

I would say that it could be either.

01:17:59 - 01:18:07

At this time, Charlie's willing to do it and so we were talking about him being appointed and therefore we would pay him.

01:18:07 - 01:18:17

However, if Charlie were no longer on the select board, at that point, you know, we would be looking to hire somebody and it might be him, but it might not be as well.

01:18:17 - 01:18:20

So it's not really fixed either way.

01:18:20 - 01:18:21

We need somebody.

01:18:22 - 01:18:28

So we will determine whether we are hiring outside or continuing to appoint Charlie.

01:18:30 - 01:18:34

But definitely, we've not decided one way or the other.

01:18:34 - 01:18:35

So it's always open.

01:18:36 - 01:18:49

If you know somebody who wants to be the webmaster, I was just curious because this seems like it could be something that maybe a high school intern would be interested in or other people in town might be interested in.

01:18:50 - 01:18:58

So since it seems like it might be an ongoing position, I wanted more information about how that process is going to go on forward.

01:18:59 - 01:19:13

Sure, I will say one thing that whoever is the webmaster has to be devoted to being the webmaster because there's a lot of stuff As Charlie said, the calendar issue, other boards can put their own meetings on, but somebody has to actually do it.

01:19:13 - 01:19:26

One of the problems I have seen in other organizations I'm part of with volunteer people or minimally paid members to govern the website, things don't get done.

01:19:27 - 01:19:37

There's an organization I'm part of that for three years has not had its calendar updated because the person who's supposed to do it just never really gets around to it.

01:19:37 - 01:19:39

And so that's a bit of a problem.

01:19:39 - 01:19:43

We're trying to get around that and the calendar is much, much, much better than it was.

01:19:44 - 01:19:45

I actually like this calendar.

01:19:45 - 01:19:50

I thought the old one was next to useless, but I like this one a lot.

01:19:50 - 01:19:53

It opens up, it shows me a meeting, it shows me an agenda when it's available.

01:19:54 - 01:20:00

So I like the way it works, but that's because he's made these changes in the last year, which was not paid.

01:20:02 - 01:20:07

We're kind of, go ahead, but we've got to get back to the topic at hand now.

01:20:08 - 01:20:08

Okay.

01:20:08 - 01:20:23

So Peggy O 'Neill, Apprentice Road, I just want to point out that Charlie has been doing this for years and he does the website, he does the calendar, he does all the IT things for all the meetings that are happening, we have all the public hearings that we have.

01:20:23 - 01:20:29

And so, in the future, should he not be the webmaster.

01:20:32 - 01:20:36

The price tag for this item will be considerably more, just saying.

01:20:38 - 01:20:40

Hello, it was in this old post, right?

01:20:44 - 01:20:54

The amendments, or the, it says webmaster, but all the AV work that you do isn't the job of a webmaster.

01:20:55 - 01:21:08

If we're putting this in and making it official, years from now, if you're gone, we don't want somebody to say, oh, well, the AV stuff isn't included in this \$2 ,000.

01:21:08 - 01:21:09

I'm not gonna do it.

01:21:09 - 01:21:11

I'm only gonna do the web stuff.

01:21:11 - 01:21:16

And so I'm wondering if there's a different name we could call it, media.

01:21:19 - 01:21:21

Media baron, or...

01:21:23 - 01:21:26

Something that would include both the web and the AV work.

01:21:27 - 01:21:33

Av work is quite expensive if we were to contract that out separately or something.

01:21:34 - 01:21:36

So I've got to ask this question.

01:21:37 - 01:21:38

Are you intending to amend this?

01:21:39 - 01:21:46

Well, I'll just say we did discuss this at our meeting and decided leaving it more specific.

01:21:46 - 01:21:53

I don't love the term webmaster, but it's simple enough and speaks to the main function of what I do.

01:21:54 - 01:22:00

And the 2000 is, in essence, a stipend to cover the extra time I put in.

01:22:00 - 01:22:04

And I would just say, we wouldn't hire somebody to do all three of these things.

01:22:04 - 01:22:05

You wouldn't find somebody.

01:22:05 - 01:22:09

Mr. Moderator, I propose an amendment.

01:22:11 - 01:22:17

I wanted to point out, as was pointed out to me, that in the budget, it says Webmaster.

01:22:17 - 01:22:46

And we did approve that item in the budget so if we're now changing the name of what it is then that item in the budget is no longer correct am I correct yeah and I just think the I was part of listening to the discussions on this so I would I would request of the discussion here to to put this on hold Um.

01:22:47 - 01:22:53

And then bring it up, uh, when we begin business again on Tuesday, just because of the conflict.

01:22:53 - 01:22:59

Can I leave you a note of what my suggestion is, is web and media coordinator?

01:23:00 - 01:23:01

That would include both of those.

01:23:05 - 01:23:09

So no more discussion on 26 that I see will go to vote.

01:23:09 - 01:23:12

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:23:12 - 01:23:12

Aye.

01:23:13 - 01:23:16

All those opposed, passage unanimously.

01:23:16 - 01:23:41

We are going on to a citizen's petition so we skipped one again writing notes on the wrong one so article 27 do I have a motion that's so mr. moderator I moved at the town vote to raise an appropriate the sum of \$400 to pay fiscal year 2025 bill for highway department flagger courses through UMass transportation.

01:23:41 - 01:24:15

Second we have a second we have discussion my understanding the bill came in late it's not like Cynthia McGraw Williamsburg Road is this actually a requirement tonight I'm figuring this is like a civilian as opposed to a police officer doing flagging for traffic construction or things yes it's required training in order to We're not for basically for civilians somebody like me could be trained or yes Okay.

01:24:15 - 01:24:16

Thank you.

01:24:16 - 01:24:38

I just wanted some clarity And I think some of the people we use for for that work That that's being done, you know, particularly around 143 those aren't all police officers So they have to go through a course I see them that's why I wondered Yeah, and I assume that it was some official requirement.

01:24:38 - 01:24:48

But it doesn't Really say that and this allows the highway workers who literally flag traffic around when they're doing work on the highway Which legally they can't do it.

01:24:48 - 01:25:23

They don't take Mike is there a Point where one could ask a question about having a report on the stabilization fund with our annual meeting packages because we talk about you know 500 ,000 in and 400 ,000 out you're bouncing around here so well I'm just asking yeah yep we've got to keep to the keep to the war so in terms of that let's ask the question again of the select board in the finance committee either by email whatever okay but I understand your Okay.

01:25:23 - 01:25:25

Thank you.

01:25:25 - 01:25:26

More discussion?

01:25:27 - 01:25:28

Article 27.

01:25:30 - 01:25:32

Scott Smith, 85 Huntington Road.

01:25:34 - 01:25:38

Regarding, it says, Highway Department Flagler Courses.

01:25:39 - 01:26:03

One of the things over the years that I have brought up from time to time to the DEP or the department, state department and the police chief and previous police chiefs is that sometimes it's very hard when they don't have a flag to begin with.

01:26:04 - 01:26:09

They don't have a sign or they don't have neon gloves.

01:26:10 - 01:26:26

And if the time is right or it's dusk or it's whatever, you know, I would love to see the select board request actually using flags from the flagger course.

01:26:27 - 01:26:29

So on that, thank you very much.

01:26:29 - 01:26:29

Okay.

01:26:29 - 01:26:32

So I am 100% with you.

01:26:32 - 01:26:38

I have said this multiple times to both our current and previous police chief.

01:26:38 - 01:26:54

I agree a wholeheartedly and the the worst offenders are the police they will be the state police and the Actual police refuse to use a sign a stop, you know, one of those signs the old up says stop go How hard is that?

01:26:54 - 01:27:13

But you got to hold your cell phone instead and I believe they have those signs in their vehicles So we do complain about it and we will continue to complain So let us know if you know when you when you're seeing it, let us know and then we can go at them again Julie woodward discussion.

01:27:13 - 01:27:14

Yep.

01:27:14 - 01:27:14

Yep.

01:27:15 - 01:27:21

I'm just seconding that I've actually bought stop signs and passed them out Because it was so awful.

01:27:21 - 01:27:23

Yeah when the sun is in your face.

01:27:23 - 01:27:39

So yeah, I think just keep poking the bear Okay, we'll go to a vote on article 27 And this is a four-fifth vote for the \$400, but we'll go to a voice vote first.

01:27:39 - 01:27:41

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:27:41 - 01:27:42

Aye.

01:27:42 - 01:27:45

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

01:27:45 - 01:27:46

Now we'll go on to the citizen petition.

01:27:47 - 01:27:54

So we are designating that as Article 27.5 going forward.

01:27:54 - 01:28:07

This is a late add to the to the warrant, and it needs to be given a little bit more of a numbering for the report to the JAG's office.

01:28:08 - 01:28:20

So the other thing I'm going to mention, I asked before for the petitioner to come forward to understand clearly how to propose this.

01:28:20 - 01:28:26

So I'm going to ask again, the petition has to be made by the petitioner.

01:28:26 - 01:28:36

Then I'm also going to say that, hang on, hang on, this is what I just was talking about.

01:28:42 - 01:28:52

So again I'm going to caution that this is only about the topic at hand which is having to do with legal representation.

01:28:52 - 01:28:54

It is not about the of solar.

01:28:54 - 01:29:00

It is not about property at 190 Ridge Road or on Post Road.

01:29:00 - 01:29:06

It is solely about what is in this request in the petition.

01:29:07 - 01:29:17

And as such, I will allow the petitioner a brief explanation in discussion and then a quick response from our select board.

01:29:19 - 01:29:34

And I know the petitioner was part of the three-minute rule, the speed presentation on a moratorium, and I'm going to watch my watch on that three minutes, because this is a complicated topic, and we want a lot of back and forth.

01:29:34 - 01:29:36

Does my three minutes start when I start reading this?

01:29:36 - 01:29:37

No, it starts when the discussion starts.

01:29:38 - 01:29:40

So it was a group of us, actually.

01:29:41 - 01:29:41

Yeah.

01:29:42 - 01:29:45

Emily Larabee, 138 Whithill Road.

01:29:46 - 01:30:22

Mr. Moderator, we, the undersigned registered voters, of the town of Worthington hereby submit this article for inclusion on the annual town meeting warrant to see if the town will vote to instruct the select board to obtain an independent legal opinion separate from current town council regarding the town's authority and responsibilities in the review and permitting of current and future large-scale ground-mounted solar and battery energy storage system installations including long-term governance and enforcement.

01:30:23 - 01:30:25

I would like to wait until after.

01:30:27 - 01:30:36

Okay we have a second so terms of discussion then I'm going to go immediately to the select board for for their discussion.

01:30:37 - 01:30:38

So Charlie you're up.

01:30:38 - 01:30:39

You want to go first?

01:30:39 - 01:30:39

Yeah.

01:30:40 - 01:30:51

Okay so this has been brought to the select board previously the request for a second legal opinion in essence and we did discuss it at a meeting.

01:30:51 - 01:31:01

I did discuss back and forth with a couple of residents and I think the consensus and concern was we didn't see a reason for it.

01:31:01 - 01:31:18

The town is currently represented by KP Law who represents us on most matters, formerly Koppelman and Page, by far the largest municipal legal group in the and they essentially have probably have the deepest bench on this subject.

01:31:18 - 01:31:27

They're currently representing the town of Northfield on a really similar matter concerning solar installation in a wetlands.

01:31:29 - 01:31:41

So we didn't see it and I asked for some sort of documentation of what it is that the concern is that KPUA is not representing us on.

01:31:41 - 01:31:44

And to date, I haven't really seen that.

01:31:47 - 01:31:56

In addition to that, a couple of concerns with the article itself, the way town meeting works, we just all sat through this.

01:31:56 - 01:32:02

It's all about money and budgets and occasionally a bylaw change or introduction.

01:32:02 - 01:32:04

And that's what town meeting does.

01:32:04 - 01:32:08

Town meeting doesn't tell boards what to do in essence.

01:32:09 - 01:32:11

Certainly town meeting can advise.

01:32:11 - 01:32:14

And that's in essence, what this would be as an advisory.

01:32:15 - 01:32:26

The problem is if the town meeting wants to advise select board planning board conservation commission to hire second legal counsel, that money has to come from somewhere.

01:32:27 - 01:32:32

And normally with this kind of request, there would be an appropriation request as well.

01:32:32 - 01:32:38

And it's unfortunate that it's only requesting us to do something and not providing the funds to do it.

01:32:38 - 01:32:44

I would guess a \$20,000 appropriation would be appropriate to pay for additional

legal counsel.

01:32:44 - 01:32:48

We're probably spending close to that now with our current council.

01:32:49 - 01:32:51

So, but we could come up with a better number.

01:32:51 - 01:32:55

So it's unfortunate that that didn't make it into this.

01:32:57 - 01:32:58

This request.

01:33:00 - 01:33:18

I guess if the sense of the town on voting on this is that yes, we need additional legal help, then I would probably feel the need to call or we suggest a special town meeting in order to consider an appropriation to pay for that.

01:33:19 - 01:33:20

I do have a response.

01:33:22 - 01:33:34

So the intention of the warrant was to ask the select board to use 53 G funds, which I think a lot of people were under the impression that our tax funds were not paying for the legal counsel to process this.

01:33:34 - 01:33:37

He said it was \$20 ,000 about.

01:33:39 - 01:33:52

And Mass General Law 44, Section 53G, Chapter 44, 53G allows towns to charge the applicant for independent outside consultants, which I know we've been doing.

01:33:54 - 01:33:59

And lawyers, I can't, lawyers fall under that, specialized lawyers.

01:33:59 - 01:34:09

Our town council, like you said, has been heavily involved in the permitting process and they're paid hourly without a contract, which has been coming out of our town legal fund.

01:34:11 - 01:34:12

**[speaker unknown]**

The.

01:34:14 - 01:34:18

So sorry, not great notes, but yeah, that's all I have to say on that.

01:34:18 - 01:34:24

And then I'll leave it up to- So I could just say I did discuss this with town legal counsel.

01:34:25 - 01:34:27

Of course, so I can see how you might see a conflict there.

01:34:28 - 01:34:33

But regardless, in their opinion, yes, we can try asking Blue Wave.

01:34:33 - 01:34:38

And I believe the planning board is in the process of asking them to cover legal costs.

01:34:38 - 01:34:44

But in their opinion, we couldn't ask them to cover legal costs for a second opinion, basically.

01:34:45 - 01:34:49

Isn't that up to the select board to make that decision, not Blue Wave?

01:34:49 - 01:34:56

I was under the impression that under the law, they could appeal to the select board, but the select board has the ability to deny or approve.

01:34:57 - 01:35:01

Well, the way it can say no, we're not gonna pay for that, and then we're in court.

01:35:06 - 01:35:10

Hello, Helen Sharon Pollard, 343 Huntington Road.

01:35:11 - 01:35:32

Just had some prepared notes, but first of all, I'd like to thank the planning boards, the board and conservation commission, and the townspeople for all the work that we've been doing collectively to respond to the solar applications that are before us, they are very complicated, and we need to make sure that we get them right.

01:35:33 - 01:35:42

There's concern that gaps in the records could be grounds for litigation from the applicant, from the landowners, from the abutters, from townsfolk.

01:35:47 - 01:36:24

If we don't find any gaps in the record, that's great, But as a business person, I can tell you that a second opinion is something that when it's something as large and complex that we would seek from a municipal perspective the most effective way to Reduce litigation risk is to ensure that the record is clear consistent and fully supported before decision is made Independent review is often part of that process our bar bylaws and section eight point five point six G provide that the planning board may engage at the applicant's expense.

01:36:25 - 01:36:37

Professional and technical consultants, including legal counsel, to assist in the review of an application under Chapter 4453-G of Massachusetts General Law.

01:36:38 - 01:36:44

We are being active on projects that will shape Burlington for the next 20 to 40 years and beyond.

01:36:45 - 01:36:47

These are not temporary decisions.

01:36:47 - 01:36:53

They will define land use responsibilities and obligations long after we are no longer in this room.

01:36:54 - 01:37:09

I think that warrants us I think it's a prudent step for us to take a look at the record what we've got here make sure there are no gaps if there are gaps in the record address them now while we're still in the review stage with the applicant.

01:37:09 - 01:37:10

Thank you.

01:37:12 - 01:37:13

More discussion?

01:37:23 - 01:37:25

I wanted to point out a couple of things.

01:37:25 - 01:37:37

One is there have been times in the past when the town meeting has in fact directed town boards to do things in terms of actually having to approach the general court or to support moratoriums on certain types of things.

01:37:37 - 01:37:39

So I don't think that's out of bounds in that respect.

01:37:40 - 01:37:54

In terms of getting a second legal opinion, it's only useful if in fact the town has a perspective on how it wants to approach solar installations.

01:37:54 - 01:38:09

So just by way of example, if we relied only on town council, back when the school was closed, we would not have a school today because the town council repeatedly told us that we shouldn't reopen the buildings at private school, which was our interim bridge to getting back to a public school.

01:38:09 - 01:38:19

So we did hire other attorneys to deal with that for us at that time, but they were

directed to find ways to support a particular point of view that the town had.

01:38:20 - 01:38:33

And so in the absence of the select order or other elected representatives having a perspective about that, whether or not we wanna try to encourage solar or discourage solar, I don't see what you would get out of a second opinion, I would agree with that.

01:38:33 - 01:38:40

But sometimes it is useful to have a perspective to ask legal counsel to find a way to make something happen if possible.

01:38:42 - 01:38:43

More discussion?

01:38:49 - 01:38:52

Yeah, Richard Mansfield, I live on West Street.

01:38:52 - 01:39:07

I'm a little worried about who is going to appoint as second council, it could come from the notorious group who is the natural gas lobby, they're the fiscal alliance.

01:39:08 - 01:39:13

I don't think that would serve an impartial view.

01:39:13 - 01:39:17

I mean, how is this second council, where is he gonna come out from?

01:39:17 - 01:39:19

Who gets to choose this person?

01:39:22 - 01:39:22

More discussion?

01:39:26 - 01:39:40

Deborah Cook, 224 Wilmington Road, I'm not quite sure what the second opinion

would be from a town council or from a separate town council.

01:39:40 - 01:39:52

I am a little concerned though the wording of the warrant or the petition says that it would be an independent legal opinion regarding the town's authority and responsibilities in the review and permitting.

01:39:53 - 01:40:21

What I heard in the was that the second legal opinion would be to assist in the review of applications and to look for gaps in the record and it sounds like there's a disconnect between the way the warrant is written and what the actual intent is yeah that that that description is part of discussion not as part of the motion so during discussion the the appropriateness of discussion comes to play.

01:40:21 - 01:40:32

So you brought up a good point, but since it was part of discussion, not part of the motion, then we can't stop that.

01:40:32 - 01:40:34

Okay, more discussion.

01:40:35 - 01:40:36

Julie Woodruff, River Road.

01:40:37 - 01:40:39

I just want to point out the importance of a second opinion.

01:40:39 - 01:40:48

When the CONCOM made the decision for an RDA for 190 Ridge Road, that was something that a lot of us disagreed with.

01:40:49 - 01:40:59

The abutters then appealed that decision, and the Mass Department of Environment did require Blue Wave, the solar company, to file an NOI.

01:40:59 - 01:41:16

So that changed the requirements from Blue Wave, making it a lot more research

required, more evidence required, in order for them to put this project in where they want to, which is because Mass DEP did find that there would be impacts to the wetlands.

01:41:16 - 01:41:24

If we had gone with the original decision of an RDA, we would have been in a different position with the requirements for Blue Wave.

01:41:24 - 01:41:49

So I think I just want to point out the importance of the townspeople to continue to voice their opinions, differences of opinions collectively and in a kind way, and also to point out that this is why we have the discussion and that it's important to look at it from different perspectives and a second opinion does allow us to do that.

01:41:49 - 01:41:52

We're getting kind of repetitive, so.

01:41:52 - 01:41:52

Cool.

01:41:53 - 01:41:53

Next.

01:41:56 - 01:41:58

Gabriel Lunger, 112 Ferial Road.

01:41:58 - 01:41:59

Is town council here today?

01:42:01 - 01:42:02

They're usually at the town meeting, okay.

01:42:03 - 01:42:04

I understood.

01:42:04 - 01:42:07

It's an option to have them here when we think it's necessary.

01:42:07 - 01:42:10

It didn't seem like it was worth spending the money.

01:42:10 - 01:42:10

Totally.

01:42:12 - 01:42:22

I was under the understanding that one of the reasons why the citizens put forth this petition had to do with also some concerns whether KP Law also represented big solar companies.

01:42:22 - 01:42:27

As a municipal law firm might do, they probably can't make all their money from representing the towns.

01:42:28 - 01:42:30

They charge the towns a lot less than they charge corporations.

01:42:31 - 01:42:36

And the feeling was that KP Law also represents Blue Wave for similar clients like that.

01:42:36 - 01:42:46

They're gonna put their best lawyers on that because the billing is higher and that we're not assuming there's a direct conflict of interest, but we don't feel good about that wall.

01:42:46 - 01:42:49

And it's another reason to have outside counsel.

01:42:49 - 01:42:55

Do you know if KP Law is involved on Blue Wave's side as well, obviously with different counsel?

01:42:55 - 01:42:57

They absolutely are not.

01:42:57 - 01:42:59

I did talk to them to confirm.

01:42:59 - 01:43:02

95% of their business is municipal.

01:43:03 - 01:43:07

And they do occasionally represent mostly it's an individual error there.

01:43:09 - 01:43:13

They're in law representing Boston on a tax matter right now.

01:43:13 - 01:43:17

But yeah, they don't represent corporations according to what console told me.

01:43:17 - 01:43:55

Okay, he said he's on the executive committee of KP law I think the other concern is that We anyone that went to those hearings saw that at the very beginning town council was very clear about Basically saying there was nothing we could do and I understand where that was coming from But now this is six months in eight months in there's been a lot of things we've been doing we've gotten planning board and everyone has slowed down this process and the fact that town council didn't seem to be even showing us our options similar to what Dick Wagner was saying that the school was a concern.

01:43:55 - 01:43:56

That's all I have to say.

01:44:01 - 01:44:02

We're going to have a planning board respond.

01:44:04 - 01:44:16

Just on that last point, I don't agree with the idea that The town council told us this

would be fast.

01:44:16 - 01:44:22

From the very beginning, they represented Northfield in a very similar issue a couple of years ago.

01:44:22 - 01:44:27

They're still representing Northfield on the same issue because it just takes a long time.

01:44:27 - 01:44:35

I think that from my perspective, what the town is seeing is that these kinds of projects are big and complicated and really slow.

01:44:35 - 01:44:42

And I think that there was a lot of anxiety at the start back in the fall that this would somehow be really fast and done.

01:44:42 - 01:44:43

And it just isn't.

01:44:44 - 01:44:48

So I personally, I feel like KP Law has been doing a good job.

01:44:48 - 01:44:50

They're, they're, they're a, they're town council.

01:44:51 - 01:45:00

So they are telling us the town, what they're looking to protect the interests of the town, which is not an advocacy position.

01:45:01 - 01:45:07

One side or the other, it's simply looking at the towns, looking to protect the town's interests.

01:45:07 - 01:45:13

So nothing that, you know that yeah I'll stop there.

01:45:14 - 01:45:15

More discussion?

01:45:15 - 01:45:27

I just want to be respectful of everyone's time but so I totally agree with Bart that KP Law's main purpose is to keep the town out of lawsuits and I think that's what was most concerning.

01:45:28 - 01:45:44

I'm curious Charlie if you've confirmed that we'll be able to get back pay out of for KP Law out of the 53G you said you wanted to back pay instead of getting a specialty lawyer out of 53G?

01:45:45 - 01:45:50

I'm going to let this go one more step or we're kind of getting into the weeds beyond the scope.

01:45:50 - 01:45:52

I think you mischaracterized what I just said.

01:45:53 - 01:45:56

I do not think that town council's goal is to keep us out of lawsuits.

01:45:57 - 01:46:01

I think their interest, their goal is to represent the interests of the town as a whole.

01:46:01 - 01:46:10

And the second is that the 53G accounts, state law says one thing, Our bylaw says something different.

01:46:10 - 01:46:12

Our bylaw explicitly includes legal costs.

01:46:13 - 01:46:17

State law doesn't, and it's not clear what the interpretation is.

01:46:17 - 01:46:26

We're in the process of figuring out how we can, whether the legal costs can be covered by 53G, but it's gonna take time to answer that question.

01:46:28 - 01:46:38

And 53G, the way, the mechanism of those accounts is the applicant must reimburse those costs prior to an approval of the permit.

01:46:38 - 01:46:41

So it's yes, it's a reimbursement, but.

01:46:42 - 01:46:43

Okay.

01:46:43 - 01:46:45

And this would be non-binding, correct?

01:46:46 - 01:46:50

What this, this warrant, in other words, I'll explain that.

01:46:53 - 01:46:54

I'll explain it right now.

01:46:56 - 01:46:59

So, uh, Charlie wanted to say something or put the mic.

01:46:59 - 01:46:59

Okay.

01:47:00 - 01:47:04

So yeah, the question was, is this non-binding and it is non-binding.

01:47:05 - 01:47:08

So does advisory we've, we've, we've had articles like this before.

01:47:08 - 01:47:22

So, the vote you guys express right now tells the select board, tells the town back to yourselves that this is the desire, it is not a mechanism to get that done.

01:47:23 - 01:47:28

So as I said before, there are mechanisms to get things done and they start next week.

01:47:29 - 01:47:36

So with that in mind, everybody's clear, there's no more discussion, we'll go to a vote on Article 27.5.

01:47:36 - 01:47:43

I've already closed discussion so you quick.

01:47:48 - 01:48:26

This is such a complicated matter before us Helen Sharon Pollard 343 Huntington Road it's a complicated process I personally have spent quite a bit of my time doing research to try to understand what our standing is I've seen things that I believe could cause issues and that's why we brought this up that there are things that have happened that I'd like to just make sure that the town of Worthington is in good standing here so that we don't find ourselves in litigation.

01:48:28 - 01:48:38

There have been multiple revisions of the solar application at 190 Ridge Road as well as subdivision plan inserted here.

01:48:39 - 01:48:47

Any one of these could have caused us to turn the application back to the client and have them resubmit.

01:48:48 - 01:49:06

And just because this is a litigious position between the landowner, the abutters, the applicant, I think that it behooves all of us as a town to try to ensure that we are in good stead as we move forward in this process.

01:49:06 - 01:49:09

And that is the reason that we've brought this up again.

01:49:09 - 01:49:10

Thank you very much.

01:49:11 - 01:49:19

Ok, and the reason I went to select board right of way is this had been given a lot of discussion in the instance of this particular warrant.

01:49:22 - 01:49:26

So with that, we'll go to vote on Article 27.5.

01:49:27 - 01:49:29

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:49:29 - 01:49:30

Aye.

01:49:30 - 01:49:31

All those opposed?

01:49:32 - 01:49:32

Aye.

01:49:34 - 01:49:36

I'm pretty sure the ayes had it.

01:49:37 - 01:49:38

Anybody disagree with that?

01:49:39 - 01:49:40

Okay, the ayes had it.

01:49:41 - 01:49:46

It goes to the select board and the AG's office for the next steps.

01:49:47 - 01:49:53

So on to the Nantucket sleigh ride part, Article 28.

01:49:56 - 01:49:58

Do we have a motion on Article 28?

01:49:58 - 01:50:22

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to amend the general bylaw section 16, revolving funds, college school laptop protection plan, revenue source by deleting school committee laptop fees and replacing it with all receipts for student fees and computer buyback programs and the sale of used laptops.

01:50:23 - 01:50:24

We have a second.

01:50:24 - 01:50:26

Any discussion on Article 28?

01:50:27 - 01:50:31

Go to right to a vote then on Article 28.

01:50:31 - 01:50:33

All those in favor do so by saying aye.

01:50:34 - 01:50:35

All those opposed.

01:50:36 - 01:50:37

Passes unanimously.

01:50:38 - 01:50:39

Article 29.

01:50:39 - 01:50:40

Do I have a motion?

01:50:41 - 01:51:03

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$38,416.56 from the General Stabilization Fund to fund FY 2026 deficit spending in the following appropriations, winter highway supplies, winter highway overtime wages, and highway super additional winter compensation.

01:51:04 - 01:51:07

We have a second discussion on Article 29.

01:51:09 - 01:51:10

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to a vote.

01:51:11 - 01:51:41

All those in favor of 29 do so by saying aye all those opposed passes unanimously we are at article 30 do I have a motion mr. moderator I move that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of twelve thousand eight hundred dollars from the general stabilization fund to the FY 2026 law expense account to pay outstanding invoices we have a second do we have discussion Mike.

01:51:51 - 01:52:03

Could you please itemize those name name name Tom Spiro West Street I'm not sure that's a okay thanks Peggy.

01:52:09 - 01:52:26

O'Neill Prentice Road it's been a busy law year legal expense wise so This represents three months of bills, January, February, and March that are overspent, so.

01:52:26 - 01:52:27

Of this year.

01:52:27 - 01:52:28

Of this year.

01:52:28 - 01:52:34

So town council has not been paid for the last three months and they need to be,

that's it.

01:52:37 - 01:52:38

Further discussion.

01:52:41 - 01:52:45

It's a variety of different representations.

01:52:45 - 01:52:46

It's not all for one thing.

01:52:46 - 01:52:51

Certainly, the work relative to the solar representation has a lot to do with it.

01:52:51 - 01:52:54

It's not all just that.

01:52:54 - 01:52:56

That probably could put us over our budget, though.

01:52:56 - 01:52:57

I think that's fair to say.

01:52:58 - 01:53:01

And we hope we'll get reimbursed on that, but that's the process.

01:53:05 - 01:53:10

Hearing no more discussion on Article 30, you will go to a vote.

01:53:10 - 01:53:12

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:53:12 - 01:53:13

Aye.

01:53:13 - 01:53:15

All those opposed, passes unanimously.

01:53:15 - 01:53:17

There was 2 thirds, but it was unanimous.

01:53:17 - 01:53:20

Article 31, do I have a motion?

01:53:21 - 01:53:44

Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$16,000 from the general stabilization fund to a newly created FY 2026 OPEB actuarial and fixed assets account to bring the town into compliance with GASB 34 and GASB 75 in preparation for potential borrowing for the repair and replacement of the highway garage.

01:53:44 - 01:53:48

We have a second discussion on Article 31.

01:53:51 - 01:53:54

Hearing no discussion, we'll go to vote on Article 31.

01:53:54 - 01:53:56

All those in favor, do so by saying aye.

01:53:56 - 01:53:57

Aye.

01:53:57 - 01:53:58

All those opposed?

01:53:59 - 01:54:01

That was a two-thirds vote, but it passed unanimously.

01:54:02 - 01:54:04

Do I have a motion to dissolve?

01:54:05 - 01:54:06

Motion to dissolve.

01:54:06 - 01:54:06

So moved.

01:54:08 - 01:54:09

Somebody has to make the motion.

01:54:09 - 01:54:10

I move.

01:54:10 - 01:54:10

We dissolve.

01:54:11 - 01:54:12

I second.

01:54:12 - 01:54:15

No, no, somebody seriously, you got to say, Mr. Moderator, I move.

01:54:15 - 01:54:16

Mr. Moderator.

01:54:16 - 01:54:17

Mr. moderator.

01:54:17 - 01:54:20

I move that we dissolve our annual town meeting for this year.

01:54:20 - 01:54:21

Do I have a second?

01:54:22 - 01:54:30

All those infer of dissolving the meeting hold your cards up and actually return return your cards on the way out We have a majority.

01:54:31 - 01:54:31

Thank you.

01:54:31 - 01:54:32

We'll see you again next year.

01:54:32 - 01:54:33

We'll see some of you Tuesday.