

TOWN OF EAST BRIDGEWATER



Transcript of Articles in the Warrant for the

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

And

Report of the Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

At 7:00 pm

Please bring this report to the meeting for use in the proceedings at the

**JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
143 Plymouth Street**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to the Special Town Meeting	2
Glossary of Terms	3
Index of Special Town Meeting Articles	5
Special Town Meeting Articles	6
Appendix 1 – Parliamentary Procedures	7

- IMPORTANT -

This Warrant contains Articles, explanations, recommendations, and appendices. Only the Articles are part of the “official” call to Town Meeting. The explanations and appendices are editorial, and the recommendations expressed are those of the Finance Committee. Only the Articles are part of the official Town Meeting warrant

TOWN OF EAST BRIDGEWATER



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

WARRANT FOR THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

At 7:00 o'clock in the evening
at the Junior/Senior High School, 143 Plymouth Street

Plymouth, ss

To any of the Constables of the Town of East Bridgewater, in said County of Plymouth, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of East Bridgewater, who being qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs, to meet at the Junior/Senior High School, 143 Plymouth Street, in said East Bridgewater, on Tuesday, the 20th day of February 2024 at 7:00 p.m.; then and there to act upon the enclosed articles, to wit:

In case all articles in the foregoing Warrant shall not be acted upon at the Meeting called for on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, to meet in Adjourned Sessions at such time and place as the meeting shall determine.

This building is accessible to the handicapped, and designated parking is provided. If requested, at least one week before the meeting, warrants with large print can be available. Please call the Town Clerk's office at least one-week before the Town Meeting at 508-378-1606.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appropriation: An authorization to make expenditures and to incur obligations for specific purposes. An appropriation is granted by Town Meeting and is usually limited in time and amount as to when it may be expended. Any part of the general appropriation not spent or encumbered by June 30 automatically reverts to surplus, which may become Free Cash. A specific appropriation is carried forward from year to year until spent for the designated purpose or transferred by Town Meeting vote to another account.

Assessed Valuation: A valuation set upon real or personal property by the Board of Assessors as a basis for levying taxes.

Budget: A plan of financial operation consisting of an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period and the means of financing them. The budget is voted in the spring at Town Meeting for the fiscal year that begins the following July 1st.

Capital Budget: A plan of proposed capital outlays and the means of financing them for the current year.

Cherry Sheet: An annual statement received from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue detailing estimated payments to the town for the next fiscal year and the estimated state and county government charges payable by the town. The Assessors in setting the tax rate use these amounts. The actual receipts and charges may vary from the estimates.

Debt Service: Payment of interest and repayment of principal to holders of the Town's debt instruments.

Fiscal Year: A 12-month period, commencing July 1 and ending June 30, to which the annual budget applies. Fiscal years are often denoted FYXX with the last two numbers representing the calendar year in which it ends; for example, FY24 is the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Free Cash: Free cash is the portion of the unreserved fund balance available for appropriation. It is not cash but rather is approximately the total of cash and receivables less current liabilities and earmarked reserves also reduced by reserves for uncollected taxes. This is also referred to as "available cash." The amount is certified annually by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

General Fund: The major town-owned fund created with town receipts and is charged with expenditures payable from revenues.

Grant: A contribution of assets by one governmental unit or other organization to another. Typically, these contributions are made to local governments from the state and federal governments. Grants are usually made for specific purposes.

Line-Item Budget: A format of budgeting that organizes costs by type of expenditure such as expenses, equipment, and salaries.

OPEB: Other Post-Employment Benefits. Benefits that an employee of the town will receive in retirement. OPEB does not include pension benefits paid to the retired employee. Other benefits include insurance premiums, healthcare premiums, and deferred-compensation contractual arrangements.

Overlay: The amount set aside to allow for uncollected property taxes. An amount for the overlay is added to the appropriations and other charges. Overlay Surplus – see below.

Overlay Surplus: The unused amount of the overlay for prior years, which may be transferred, by a vote of the Town, to the reserve account, or used for extraordinary items.

Property Tax Levy: The amount produced by multiplying the property's assessed valuation by the tax rate. The tax rate is expressed "per thousand dollars" of assessed valuation.

Reserve Fund: Money set aside by Town Meeting to be allocated by the Finance Committee for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.

Stabilization Fund: A special reserve funded by Town Meeting for future expenditures.

Tax Classification Tax Allocation: Before setting the tax rate each year, a classification hearing is held by the Select Board to determine the shares of the tax levy to be paid by each class of property in the community, and whether to allow an open space discount, residential exemption, or small commercial exemption. The Assessors provide information about the impact of these options at the hearing. The decisions of the Select Board are reported to the Bureau of Accounts and are referred to as the "Classification Tax Allocation."

Terms associated with Proposition 2½:

Debt or Capital Exclusion: The Town can assess taxes in excess of the levy limit by voting a debt exclusion or capital outlay exclusion. This amount does not become a permanent part of the levy limit base but does allow the Town to assess taxes for a specific period in excess of the limit for payment of debt service costs or payment of capital expenditures.

Excess Levy Capacity: The difference between the Town's tax levy limit and its actual tax levy for the current year. It is the additional tax levy that could be raised without asking for an override.

New Growth: The amount of property tax revenue that the Town can add to its allowable tax levy due to new construction, alterations, subdivisions, or change of use, which increases the value of a parcel of land by more than certain amounts.

Override: An amount voted by the Town, which is permanently added to the levy limit. A majority vote of the Select Board allows an override question to be put on the ballot. Override questions must be presented in dollar terms and must specify the purpose of the override. Overrides require a majority vote of approval by the Town.

Tax Levy Limit: The maximum amount of the tax levy for a period under the restrictions of Proposition 2½. It is calculated as the prior-year limit plus new growth plus 2.5% of the prior year levy limit.

Index of Articles for the Special Town Meeting

Article	Purpose	Submitted By	Page
1	Turf Field – Replace Turf Field	School Department	6
2	Leland Farm	Select Board	6
3	Reallocation of Funds	Fire Chief	6

TOWN OF EAST BRIDGEWATER



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

WARRANT FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
Tuesday, February 20, 2024

At 7:00 o'clock in the evening
at the Junior/Senior High School, 143 Plymouth Street

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will appropriate \$1,700,000, or any other sum, to pay costs of replacing the artificial turf field and track at the Jr/Sr High School, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transfer from available funds, including stabilization funds, borrowing, or otherwise, or any combination of the foregoing; or take any other action relative thereto.

Requested by the School Department

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to lease or license, for agricultural purposes, a parcel of Town owned property of up to twenty acres on what is known as "Leland Farms," identified as Map 83, Block 3 and Map 73, Block 3 of the Assessors Plan of the Town of East Bridgewater, and further described in the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 35, Page 1123, as lots 5 & 6, and recorded at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds in Book 4240, Page 658, a deed dated February 11, 1977, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine; or take any other action thereon or in relation thereto.

Requested by the Select Board

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will reallocate \$58,023.00 from 6/5/2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 16 (sick leave buy-back for a retiring firefighter) to Fire Department budget, Line 1-220-511-5140 Cover Sick.

Requested by the Fire Chief

APPENDIX 1: Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure has a long history. Originating in the early English Parliaments, it came to America with the first European settlers and became uniform in 1876 when Henry Robert published his manual, known as "Robert's Rules of Order." Our Town Meeting proceedings are governed by the rules contained in "*Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law*" except as modified by the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapters 39 and 43A.

Parliamentary procedure means that everyone may be heard and to come to decisions without confusion. It means democratic rule, flexibility, the protection of rights and most importantly a fair hearing for everyone.

The basic parts of parliamentary procedure provide for the presentation of motions, the seconding, or the expression of support of another's motion, an opportunity to debate, and ability to make a decision.

There are five general types of motions:

- Main Motions: These introduce subjects for consideration.
- Subsidiary Motions: This motion change how the main motion is handled. (They are voted on before the main motion.)
- Privileged Motions: These motions concern special or important matters not related to the pending business. In general, they are considered before other types of motions.
- Incidental Motions: These are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions, and they must be considered before the other motion.
- Motions that bring a question again before the assembly: These enable certain items to be reconsidered. In general, they are brought up when no business is pending.

Some questions relating to motions:

- Is it in order? Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the law.
- May I interrupt the speaker? Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.
- Do I need a second? Usually, yes, A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion and it prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.
- Is it debatable? Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on motions. However, some subsidiary or privileged, and incidental motions are not debatable.
- Can it be amended? Striking out or inserting wording, or both, can change some motions. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.
- What vote is needed? Most require only a majority vote (more than half the members present and voting). But motions concerning the rights of the town meeting, borrowing, and some other miscellaneous subjects may require "supermajorities" of $\frac{3}{4}$ or 9/10's depending on the applicable state law.
- Can it be reconsidered? Some motions can be debated again and revoted to give members a chance to change their minds. The motion to reconsider must come from the "winning" side.

How Do I Present My Motion?

Obtain the Floor:

- Wait until the previous speaker is finished.
- Rise and address the Moderator. Say, "Mr. Moderator."
- Wait until you are recognized.
- State your name and address for the record.

Make your motion:

- Speak clearly and concisely.

- State your motion affirmatively. Say, “I move that we do....” Instead of “I move that we do not...”
- Stay on the subject and avoid personal attacks.

You wait for a second:

- Another member will say, “I second the motion.”
- Or the Moderator will call for a second.
- If there is no second, your motion will not be considered. (Motions made at the direction of a board or committee (more than one person) do not require a second.)

The Moderator states your motion:

- The Moderator must say, “It is moved and seconded that we...”
- After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- Your motion is now “assembly property,” and you can’t change it without the consent of the body.

You expand on your motion:

- As the person who made the motion, you are allowed to speak first.
- Direct all comments to the Moderator
- Keep to the time limit for speaking.
- You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
- You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote.

The Moderator puts the question:

- The Moderator asks, “Are you ready for the question?”
- If there is no more debate, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken.
- The Moderator announces the result.

The method of voting on a motion:

- Voice: The Moderator asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no.” A member may move for an exact count.
- General Consent: When a motion isn’t likely to be opposed, the chair says, “If there is no objection...” Members show consent by their silence. If someone says, “I object,” the matter must be put to a vote.
- Show of hands: Members raise their hands to verify a voice vote, or as an alternative to it. This does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.
- Ballot: Members write their vote on a slip of paper, and this is done when secrecy is desired.

More Motions:

A motion to lay on the table: This motion is used to lay something aside temporarily to take care of more urgent matters. It should not be used to prevent debate or to kill a question. Members can “take from the table” a motion for reconsideration. This must happen by the end of the town meeting.

A motion to indefinitely postpone: This is a parliamentary strategy. It allows members to dispose of a motion without making a decision for or against. This is useful in case of a badly chosen main motion for which either a “yes” or “no” vote would have undesirable consequences.

You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting a copy thereof attested to by you in writing in each of six public places in the Town at least fourteen days before the time for holding the meeting called for in the Warrant. Herefore fail not, and make do return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk of said Town on or before the 6th day of February 2024.

Given under our hands this 20th day of February in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-four.

THE SELECT BOARD

Carole Julius, Chair

David Sheedy, Vice-Chair

Peter Spagone Jr, Clerk

At True Record:
ATTEST

Kathleen Cavanagh, Interim Town Clerk

Date

PLYMOUTH, SS.

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of East Bridgewater by posting up attested copies of the same at the East Bridgewater Post Office and the East Bridgewater Public Library in Precinct 1; at Country Convenience in Precinct 2; Ye Olde Standish Grille in Precinct 3; and finally at Dewhurst Lumber, and the Town Hall in Precinct 4; of said Town at least fourteen days before the date hereof, as within directed.

Date

Justice of the Peace

MAY REMOVE AFTER February 20, 2024

