



Town of Hudson

MASSACHUSETTS 01749-2134

To: Registered Voters

From: Thomas Gregory

Date: May 5, 2025

Re: Annual Town Meeting – Summary of Warrant Articles

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide to the registered voters attending the Annual Town Meeting on May 5, 2025 a summary of each of the articles which appear on the Warrant as well as the quantum of vote required for each article. While this summary is intended to provide a brief explanation of the articles, please remember that the Warrant remains the official document to be considered at the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 1 – This article appears on the Warrant each year to anticipate receipt of invoices after the Town closes its books for the prior fiscal year. State statute requires that Town Meeting approve any bill of a prior fiscal year. There were four (4) invoices received this year after the books were closed: one (1) for \$190 for pre-employment physicals for new hires at the Library; and three (3) for \$960 for air testing of the air compressor at the Fire Station, for a total of \$1,150. It is requested that previously certified and available Free Cash (i.e., previous year's surplus funds) be used to pay these bills. A 4/5ths vote of Town Meeting is necessary for the passage of this article.

Article 2 – This article recommends that \$545,299 be transferred from Free Cash for the purpose of resolving projected current fiscal year departmental deficits due to unanticipated or unbudgeted expenses (detail shown below). These figures were being developed when the Warrant was published. The Finance Committee is meeting before the Annual Town Meeting to review these figures and to issue a recommendation. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Department	Account	Amount	Explanation
Building Department	Salaries (2410-008)	\$8,000	To fund Commissioner re-classification and new Deputy Inspector salary - both mid-year appointments.
DPW - Snow & Ice Control	Expenses (4230-040)	\$323,544	To fund a snow & ice control budget deficit which includes expenses for salt, liquid calcium, and vehicle repairs.

DPW - Administration	Expenses (4210-040)	\$4,000	To fund cost increases and fluctuations in electricity usage.
DPW - Vehicles	Expenses (4219-040)	\$21,000	To fund cost increases associated with general supplies, parts, and an increase in overtime.
EA - Elections & Town Meetings	Expenses (1231-040)	\$24,800	To fund cost increases in advertising for town meetings in the <i>Community Advocate</i> ; additional June town meeting; and additional unbudgeted ATM expenses (chairs, sound system, and stage).
EA - Salaries	Salaries (1230-008)	\$9,800	To fund costs associated with a contractual increase negotiated in May/June 2024.
EA - Expenses	Expenses (1230-040)	\$540	To fund increased costs associated with conference and travel and professional dues (MMA).
EA - Legal Services	Expenses (1235-040)	\$30,000	To fund costs associated with labor negotiations including JLMC-related expenses.
EA - Town Hall Expenses	Expenses (1236-040)	\$5,800	To fund costs associated with utility rate increases as well as increased usage and repairs to two (2) Town Hall copiers.
Finance Department	Expenses (1330-040)	\$30,200	To fund an unanticipated increase in postage costs as well as costs associated with hiring a temporary staffing firm to fill a vacancy during a period of employee turnover in this department.
Fire Department	Expenses (2200-040)	\$65,000	To fund the costs associated with repairs to various apparatus, including significant repairs to Engine 2.
General Insurance	Expenses (9141-040)	\$8,800	To fund the costs associated with fidelity bonds for new employees and anticipated insurance endorsements for new vehicles.
Health Department	Expenses (5100-040)	\$12,200	To fund costs associated with landfill compliance services at the closed Hudson Landfill on Gates Pond Road in Berlin per MADEP.
Select Board	Expenses (1220-040)	\$85	To fund cost increase to MMA annual dues.
Senior Center	Expenses (5410-040)	\$1,530	To fund overages in utility expenses.
TOTAL		\$545,299	

Article 3 – This article, occurring each year, recommends funding a municipal general fund operating budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026. The article includes the salaries and expenses of all municipal departments, including the school department, as well as debt service costs and operating support such as health insurance and the pension assessment. The Town’s assessment from the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School is also included in this article. **This budget anticipates a failed Proposition 2 ½ ballot question on May 12th.** A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 4 – This article recommends funding a municipal general fund operating budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026. **This budget anticipates and is contingent upon a successful Proposition 2 ½ ballot question on May 12th.** This operating budget would restore \$323,175 in cuts made on the municipal side and would increase the Hudson Public School appropriation by \$2,050,000. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 5 – This article, occurring each year, recommends the adoption of a plan of capital improvements and acquisitions for FY2026 to be funded by a transfer of \$2,269,889 from Free Cash. Included in this article is an initial deposit of \$500,000 toward the replacement of the Fire Department's aerial tower truck. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 6 – This article recommends that \$662,000 be transferred from Free Cash to fund a new DPW salt storage shed at 1 Municipal Drive. This expense was not included in the overall DPW facility project budget with the intention of re-purposing the existing transfer station facility as a salt storage shed. The extended permitted timeline involved in the transfer station relocation project required the Town to identify funds to build a new salt storage shed. Approximately \$200,000 will be contributed to the salt storage shed from the DPW facility project contingency. The cost estimate for the storage shed was being developed when the Warrant was published. The Finance Committee is meeting before the Annual Town Meeting to review this figure and to issue a recommendation. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 7 – This article requests that Town Meeting appropriate \$915,000 to design, permit, and implement improvements to the Town Hall HVAC system in a phased multi-year approach. The article seeks \$424,380.24 from Free Cash as well as \$490,619.76 from unspent balances in prior-year capital projects as described in the article. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 8 – This article requests a borrowing authorization of \$2,228,569 for the purpose of purchasing a new aerial ladder truck for the Fire Department. The intent of this article is to give the Town the ability to enter into a contract with the manufacturer, Pierce Manufacturing, and to place the order. The plan to fund this acquisition includes two (2) appropriations of \$500,000 from Free Cash (the second occurring at the 2026 Annual Town Meeting), with the balance to be financed over eight (8) annual payments to be funded from Free Cash. Delivery of this aerial ladder truck is expected by the fall of 2026. No debt will be issued from this borrowing authorization. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for passage of this article.

Article 9 – Just as the Town's general fund generates Free Cash at the end of each fiscal year, so also do the enterprise funds, and these funds are called Retained Earnings. Once certified by the Department of Revenue, Retained Earnings may be expended for uses related to the specific enterprise fund. This article requests that \$950,000 be transferred from Retained Earnings of the Water Enterprise Fund to make improvements to the Water Treatment Plant in addition to the replacement of a well. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 10 – This article requests that \$400,000 be transferred from Sewer Retained Earnings to make improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in addition to Wastewater pump station engineering expenses for future improvements. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 11 – In November of 2022, Town Meeting authorized the establishment of enterprise funds for water, sewer, and stormwater operations. This article recommends a FY2026 Water Enterprise Fund budget which includes expenses for salaries & wages, operating expenses, indirect costs, and debt service costs. This article is a recurring article each May. At its annual public hearing in June, the Select Board will set the Water rates for FY2026. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 12 – In November of 2022, Town Meeting authorized the establishment of enterprise funds for water, sewer, and stormwater operations. This article recommends a FY2026 Sewer Enterprise Fund budget which includes expenses for salaries & wages, operating expenses, indirect costs, and debt service costs. This article is a recurring article each May. At its annual public hearing in June, the Select Board will set the Sewer rates for FY2026. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 13 – In November of 2022, Town Meeting authorized the establishment of enterprise funds for water, sewer, and stormwater operations. This article recommends a FY2026 Stormwater Enterprise Fund budget which includes expenses for salaries & wages, operating expenses, indirect costs, and capital outlay. This article is a recurring article each May. At its annual public hearing in June, the Select Board will set the Stormwater fees for FY2026. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 14 – State statute requires that municipalities in Massachusetts undertake a comprehensive revaluation of all assessed properties in the Town every five years. This article requests that \$210,000 be appropriated from Overlay Surplus to fund expenses specifically related to this year's revaluation of properties. Upon request, the Board of Assessors may vote to release funds from the Overlay Reserve which, once released, become Overlay Surplus which may be appropriated by Town Meeting for any lawful purpose. A majority of Town Meeting is required for passage of this article.

Article 15 – In 2023, after negotiations between the Select Board and the municipal and school bargaining units, an agreement was reached to implement plan design changes to the Town's health insurance offerings. Part of the agreement required the Town to dissolve the Health Insurance Trust Fund. This article requests the establishment of a Health Insurance Stabilization Fund into which would be deposited the employer's share, \$709,965, of the dissolved Health Insurance Trust Fund. The purpose of the Health Insurance Stabilization Fund is to reduce health insurance premium costs to the Town. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 16 – This article requests that \$400,000 be transferred from the newly-created Health Insurance Stabilization Fund to the Health Insurance line in the Town's operating budget (line #49) for the purpose of reducing the Town's FY2026 appropriation for health insurance. A 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 17 – This article, occurring each year, recommends that a total of \$432,125 be appropriated from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, a special revenue fund, to support the operating costs of the HUD Access Television Studio as well as the costs associated with the Town’s Internet Network operations. These funds are derived from fees collected from customers by the cable operators in Hudson in connection with the franchise and required by cable licensing agreements to be used in support of public, educational, and government (PEG) programming. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for passage of this article.

Article 18 – This article recommends that \$605,000 be transferred from Free Cash to the Town’s Stabilization Fund. In November of 2023, Town Meeting approved an appropriation of \$1,210,000 from the Stabilization Fund to initiate a significant investment in upgrading the Town’s municipal financial platform. Because Free Cash is not available as a funding source in the fall, the recommendation was to “borrow” from the Stabilization Fund and then to replenish the fund incrementally over the next two years. This article is the second and final reimbursement payment which represents 50% of the original appropriation. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 19 – This article requests that \$50,000 be transferred from Free Cash to fund an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) study which will assist the Town in identifying all possible options relative to EMS operations in Hudson. It is anticipated that this study will also provide cost estimates for all options identified by the consultant. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 20 – This article requests that \$30,000 be transferred from Free Cash to fund a new Senior Tax Credit Program to be administered by the Senior Center for FY2025 and FY2026. New program guidelines have been developed which include increasing the \$500 benefit per participant to \$1,500. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 21 – This article recommends that \$50,000 be transferred from Free Cash to fund the Other Post-Employments Benefit (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund. The OPEB Trust Fund was established in November 2016 so that the Town can reserve funds to address the future costs associated with the provision of health insurance to municipal retirees. The current balance in the OPEB Trust Fund as of January 1, 2025 is \$1,140,721. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 22 – This article authorizes the Select Board to file a proposed Special Act to the State Legislature to amend the Town’s Charter by eliminating all references to “Executive Assistant” and replacing these references with “Town Manager”. This article, and corresponding Special Act, does not change the authority of this position. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 23 – This article requests that the Town’s General Bylaws be amended by changing all references from “Office of the Executive Assistant” to “Office of the Town Manager”. This article does not change the authority of this position. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 24 – This article, sponsored by the Board of Health, requests that the Town’s General Bylaws be amended by inserting a new bylaw titled “Non-Recyclable Plastic Reduction By-Law” which would create regulations around the use of certain plastic products by food and retail establishments within the town. This article would also introduce new penalties for non-compliance. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 25 – This article, occurring every year, recommends that funds be appropriated or reserved from the community preservation annual revenues in specific amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee for FY2026. Towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) generate monies through the implementation of a local CPA property tax (1% in Hudson) and through the receipt of annual matching funds from the statewide CPA trust fund. The statewide CPA trust fund revenues are derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the state’s registries of deeds. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 26 – This article recommends four (4) appropriations from the Community Preservation undesignated fund balance for the following purposes: \$3,800 to the Hudson Land Trust and Conservation Commission for Old North Road Signage; \$10,000 to the Park Commission for Lamson Park (Tripp’s Pond) Survey Work; \$25,000 to the Hudson Land Trust and Conservation Commission for Design Services for Trail Improvements at Danforth Falls Conservation Land; and, \$280,000 to the Park Commission for Construction of a Dog Park. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 27 – This article recommends that \$73,584.20 in FY2026 Community Preservation Funds (a 10% set-aside of total estimated CPA revenue) be transferred from the Community Preservation Reserve for Community Housing Fund Balance to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 28 – This article recommends that \$98,500 be transferred from the Community Preservation Undesignated Fund Balance to pay the FY2026 debt service costs associated with the Centennial Beach renovation project borrowing. This article will appear on the Warrant each year until the debt for this project has been retired. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 29 – This article, occurring on the Warrant each year, recommends that \$726,540 be appropriated to offset the operating costs of maintaining joint police and fire dispatch. Once Town Meeting approves this article, these funds are raised on the tax recapitulation sheet in December during the tax rate setting process. In an agreement signed in 2010, the Hudson tenants within the Highland Commons Shopping Center are required to provide public safety fees to the Town to cover the costs of the Town’s dispatch operations. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 30 – This article, sponsored by the Conservation Commission, recommends that \$3,000 be transferred from Free Cash to cover the costs of OARS, Inc., a local non-profit organization, which performs annual water quality monitoring of the Assabet River in Hudson as well as services to control invasive water chestnut plants in the Assabet River in Hudson. A majority of

vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 31 – This article, occurring on the Warrant each year, requests that Town Meeting authorize the annual spending limit for all of the Town’s revolving funds. A revolving fund is a fund intended to capture fees or other revenue so that expenses related to the purpose of the fund may then be paid. Revolving funds have been established in the Town’s General Bylaws, and each year Town Meeting authorizes a spending limit for each revolving fund. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 32 – This article, occurring on the Warrant each year, recommends that the Town accept \$225,000 from Hudson Light and Power. These funds represent a payment in-lieu-of taxes to the Town of Hudson. When approved, these funds will be applied to Line 48 (Contributory Retirement and Pensions) in the operating budget. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 33 – This article, occurring on the Warrant each year, recommends that \$8,000 be transferred from Free Cash to cover Hudson’s share of the ongoing expenses related to invasive weed control on Lake Boon. The Lake Boon Commission was created in 1941 by the State Legislature to regulate recreational activities and the use of motorboats on Lake Boon. Expenses are allocated between Stow and Hudson, with Stow responsible for 2/3rds and Hudson responsible for 1/3rd. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 34 – This article requests that the Town adopt General Laws, Chapter 39, Section 23D, the Mullin Rule, so-called. This statute 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, provided that certain conditions as established by statute are met. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 35 – This article, occurring on the Warrant each year, provides an opportunity for the formal acceptance of the Annual Town Report. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 36 – This article, sponsored by the Finance Committee, would amend the Town’s General Bylaws so that Finance Committee members absent from three consecutive meetings may be deemed to have resigned and may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the other members present and voting. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

Article 37 – This is a petitioned article which requests that \$20,000 be transferred from available funds (Free Cash) to fund addiction-related services provided by the Addiction Referral Center in Marlborough. A majority vote of Town Meeting is required for the passage of this article.

cc: Select Board
Finance Committee
All Departments
Interested Parties