Annual Town Meeting

May 8, 2023

Swallow Union Elementary School

Town Meeting Warrant

There are a total of 20 articles on the Town Meeting Warrant including:

- FY24 Operational Budget
- Community Preservation Committee project recommendations
- The creation of a stabilization fund for opioid settlement funds
- A Right-of-Way General Bylaw
- Other standard articles which appear on the warrant annually

Article 1

ARTICLE 1 - Reports: To hear and act upon the reports of Town Officers, Boards, Committees, Commissioners, and Trustees, or take any action in relation thereto.

This is a standard article to allow any Town Officer, Board, Commission, or Board to make a report at Town Meeting.

Article 2

ARTICLE 2 - Unpaid Bills of FY22: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from Free Cash (Surplus Revenue) a sum of money for the purpose of paying unpaid bills of FY2022, including the following, or take any action in relation thereto.

This article is necessary to pay bills of prior fiscal years consistent with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 64. This requires a 4/5ths vote at Town Meeting.

At present, the Town does not anticipate any bills from FY22 needing payment under this article.

Article 3

ARTICLE 3 – Transfer to Water Enterprise Fund: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or transfer from available funds to the Water Enterprise Fund or Capital account a sum of money for the purpose of funding operating expenses or other purposes as deemed necessary by the Board of Water Commissioners for FY2023 or take any action in relation thereto.

This article is a standard article. At present, the Town does not anticipate the Water Enterprise Fund or Water Capital account to require any additional appropriations or transfers for the current fiscal year, FY2023.

Article 4

ARTICLE 4 - Operating Budget: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, or any combination thereof, to fund the various departments, boards, committees, commissions, and other operating expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2024 beginning July 1, 2023, or take any action in relation thereto.

This article sets the operating budget for all Town Departments and the School District for FY2024. The Select Board and Advisory Boards will be presenting two budgets at Town Meeting: an operating budget which includes a $301,162 general override, and an operating budget without an override requiring reductions in the Police Department, Fire Department, Highway Department, and several other Town Departments.

Article 5

ARTICLE 5 - Free Cash Transfer for FY24: To see what sum the Town will vote to appropriate from Free Cash (Surplus Revenue) to meet the appropriations of Fiscal Year 2024, beginning July 1, 2023, or to authorize the Assessors to utilize said transfer in order to reduce the tax rate, or take any action in relation thereto.

This article is necessary to appropriate Free Cash to subsidize the FY2024 operating budget. The Select Board and Advisory Board will be presenting two recommendations: a $479,343 Free Cash appropriation to fund the FY2024 operating budget with an override, and a $574,343 Free Cash appropriation to fund the FY2024 operating budget without an override.

Article 6

ARTICLE 6 - Revolving Fund Expenditure Limits: To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, to set the annual expenditure limits for Fiscal Year 2024 for all revolving funds established by the General Bylaws, as follows, or take any action in relation thereto:

Cemetery	$8,500
Recreation	$7,000
COA Transport	$3,500
Permit Application Fees	$5,000
Approval Not Required Plans	$15,000
Transfer Station	$155,400

This article is necessary to set expenditure limits for FY2024 for Town Revolving Funds pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½.

A revolving fund separately accounts for specific revenues and earmarks them for expenditure for particular purposes to support the activity, program or service that generated the revenues.

Article 7

ARTICLE 7 – Establishment of Regional School District Stabilization Fund for the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School District: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School District to establish a Regional School District Stabilization Fund in accordance with Chapter 71, Section 16G1/2, of the Massachusetts General Laws, or take any action in relation thereto.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 16G1/2, the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School District requested this article be included on the Town Meeting Warrant. For more information, visit here.

Article 8

ARTICLE 8 - Community Preservation Committee Recommendations: To see what transfers or other actions the Town may vote with respect to any recommended action of the Community Preservation Committee or take any action in relation thereto.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, Section 6, this article is required to transfer not less than 10% of the annual revenues in the Community Preservation Fund for open space, not less than 10% of the annual revenues for historic resources, not less than 10% of the annual revenues for community housing, and no more than 5% of the annual revenues for administrative and operating expenses of the Community Preservation Committee.

This article will also include the debt service payment due in FY2024 for the purchase of the Ferrari Farm Property.

Article 9

ARTICLE 9 – Removal of Invasive Weeds at Lake Massapoag: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, a sum of money for the continued removal of invasive weeds in Lake Massapoag, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended that $3,000 from the Open Space/Recreation Allocation be appropriated to support the continued removal of invasive weeds at Lake Massapoag.

Article 10

ARTICLE 10 – Acquisition of Morgan's Pond on Mill Street: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, a sum of money for the purchase of Morgan's Pond on Mill Street, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended appropriating $60,000 from the Undesignated Allocation to support the purchase of a parcel of land on Mill Street, including Morgan's Pond, for conservation purposes. It is anticipated that roughly 60% of the cost will be recovered through grant funds.

Article 11

ARTICLE 11 – Drew's Landing Boardwalk Construction: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, a sum of money for the construction of a Boardwalk at Drew's Landing, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Community Preservation Committee to enter into any grant agreement or other agreements related to such appropriation, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended appropriating $46,332 from the Undesignated Allocation to support the construction of a boardwalk at Drew's Landing. This Conservation Commission is seeking additional funding sources for the project, including a MassTrails Grant. This CPC funding would serve as the 20% matching funds, if successful in securing the grant.

Article 12

ARTICLE 12 – Improvements to Storage Sheds at Larter Field: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, a sum of money to make improvements to the storage sheds at Larter Field, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended appropriating $9,640 from the Open Space/Recreation Allocation to support the renovation of the storage sheds at Larter Field. The project includes an upgraded garage door, and general renovations to the snack shed, rear storage area, and small irrigation shed. These sheds are used to store equipment and supplies to maintain the field and to support the sports teams, and Parks and Recreation.

Article 13

ARTICLE 13 – Reallocate CPA Funds Appropriated for Rehabilitating Existing Tennis Courts: To see if the Town will vote to amend the vote taken under Article 15 of the July 30, 2020, Town Meeting, to transfer the $152,000 previously appropriated from the Community Preservation Undesignated Reserve account and $30,000 previously appropriated from the Open Space Reserve account thereunder for the purpose of rehabilitating the existing tennis courts, for the new purpose of constructing new tennis courts at Larter Field, including all costs incidental and related thereto, or take any action in relation thereto.

On July 30, 2020, Town Meeting approved the appropriation of $182,000 to rehabilitate the existing tennis courts behind Swallow Union Elementary School. This article reallocates this previously approved funding for the new purpose of relocating and constructing new tennis courts at Larter Field.

Article 14

ARTICLE 14 – Renovation of Wells at Larter Field: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, a sum of $33,600 for the renovation of wells at Larter Field, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

This article will appropriate $33,600 for the purpose of renovating the existing wells at Larter Field and replacing the well pumps. Currently, the wells at Larter Field are not functioning and will not be able to service the irrigation system at the field unless this work takes place.

Please note: This article is a placeholder article which has not yet been recommended by the Community Preservation Committee.

Article 15

ARTICLE 15 – Woodward's Mill Dam Improvements: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, the sum of $61,308 for consulting services to conduct and complete a Phase II assessment of Woodward's Mill Dam, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

In 2021, a Phase I Assessment of the dam was conducted resulting in the observation of deficiencies and a reclassification of its condition. The next step to renovate the dam is for a Phase II assessment to be completed. The Phase II Assessment will result in a comprehensive review and assessment of the dam's condition and recommendations on options to renovate.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended appropriating $61,308 from the Open Space/Recreation Allocation to support this project.

Article 16

ARTICLE 16 – Union School Building Restoration and Rehabilitation Planning: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, including CPA funds, the sum of $25,000 for consulting services to work with the Town to develop a plan to restore and rehabilitate the Union School Building, based upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, or take any action in relation thereto.

The Union School Building is currently occupied by the Groton-Dunstable School District. Once the School District completes the construction of the new Florence Roche Elementary School, the District intends to vacate the building and turn it over to the Town. As a result, the Select Board has created a Union Building Rehabilitation Committee responsible for making recommendations on the rehabilitation and restoration of the Union Building.

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended appropriating $25,000 for consulting services to work with the Committee to develop a plan to restore and rehabilitate the Union School Building.

Article 17

ARTICLE 17 - Chapter 90 Funds: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate any sums of money received by the Town under provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90 for the purposes authorized by Chapter 90 or take any action in relation thereto.

This article is a standard, annual article authorizing the Town to appropriate Chapter 90 funds received by the state. Per the legislatively established formula, the amount of funding a municipality receives is based on local road mileage (58.33%), population (20.83%), and employment (20.83%). Local road mileage is gathered from MassDOT's Road Inventory File.

In FY2024, the Town of Dunstable is slated to receive $185,313 in Chapter 90 funding.

Article 18

ARTICLE 18 – Reallocate Funds for Police Station Improvements: To see if the Town will vote to amend the vote taken under Article 9 of the July 30, 2020, Town Meeting, to transfer the sum of $15,000 previously appropriated thereunder for the purpose of replacing the Police Department computer server, for the new purposes of paying for capital improvements and operations of the Police Department including all costs incidental and related thereto.

This article will reallocate $15,000 previously approved at Town Meeting on July 30, 2020, for the purpose of replacing the Police Department's computer server. The server replacement was paid for through an alternative funding source. The $15,000 will be repurposed to allow for the replacement of the floor at the Police Station, the purchase of a new speed limit radar trailer, and/or to cover 2 months salary of a recruit working to complete the Massachusetts Police Academy.

Article 19

ARTICLE 19 – Revenue Dedication of Opioid Settlements to Special Purpose Stabilization Fund

The Town is slated to receive payments from opioid defendants in connection with opioid settlements in the amount of roughly $24,500. For more information on individual payments, you can visit the Attorney General's website here: https://www.mass.gov/lists/municipal-abatement-payments.

This article will create a stabilization fund for the special purpose of holding and spending the opioid settlement proceeds by creating an opioid stabilization fund. Once created, appropriations into the stabilization fund will require a simple majority vote annually by Town Meeting. However, appropriations from the fund will require a two-thirds majority vote annually.

A two-thirds majority vote is required to create the fund.

Article 20

ARTICLE 20 – Right-of-Way Bylaw

This article will create a Right-of-Way Bylaw and is sponsored by the Planning Board and Board of Road Commissioners to ensure public safety and visibility along the Town's public ways.

The bylaw prohibits "improvements" such as structures, fences, walls, and landscaping features within the Right-of-Way or areas of property under the care, custody, or control of the Town of Dunstable, without first obtaining the approval of the Town's Board of Road Commissioners.