



# Town of Webster



## Town Meeting Guide

May 12, 2025

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# Town Meeting Information

Thank you for taking an interest in the Town of Webster's Town Meeting. Town Meeting is part of a great tradition of democracy which has been taking place in Webster ever since its townspeople came together to found Webster in 1832. Town Meeting is the legislative body of the Town, acting much like our legislative counterparts at the State and Federal level, to fund a budget and to establish bylaws. One important difference is that in Webster's Open Town Meeting form of government, every registered voter of the Town is a Legislator and has the opportunity to participate in, and vote on, every issue.

## **Procedures**

Webster's Town Meeting is governed by State law, the Town's Bylaws, tradition, and the book "Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law". Voters don't need to read these documents in order to participate in Town Meeting as your elected Town Moderator is there to guide the Town through the meeting while adhering to all applicable rules and regulations. Always remember that if you are not clear on the issue being voted on or the topic being discussed, you can always step up to the nearest microphone and ask questions.

At the front of the room you will find:

- The Moderator: Elected to preside over Town Meeting
- The Town Administrator: Webster's Chief Administrative and Financial Officer
- Town Counsel: the Town's attorney
- The Town Clerk: Officially records the votes taken at Town Meeting

Sitting at tables, also at the front of the room, are the following Boards/Committees:

- The Board of Selectmen: The Governing Body of the Town
- The School Committee: Recommends the School Department Budget
- The Finance Committee: Makes recommendations on all articles involving Town finances

## **Town Meeting Warrant**

The Board of Selectmen post a Warrant before the Town Meeting. The Warrant lists the agenda for what topics will be discussed and voted on at the Town Meeting. Each item on the agenda is called an "Article". An Article may be specific or broad. The booklet distributed at the Town Meeting includes both the Warrant that was posted by the Board of Selectmen as well as the Motions expected to be presented following the reading of each Article. Keep in mind that these may change.

## **Motions**

While a Warrant Article generally describes what topics will be discussed, a Motion is a statement of a specific action that is proposed to be taken. For example, a Motion to appropriate (designate) funds would specify the dollar amount, the source of the funds, and what purpose the funds are for. The Motions that are expected to be presented are printed in this booklet, but the actual Motion that ends up being presented may differ. It's important to realize the difference between the Warrant Article and

the Motion: the Warrant Article is the agenda item describing the subject matter to be voted on, and the Motion outlines the specific action to be voted on.

### **Amendments to Motions**

A Motion may also be made to amend the original Motion, in which case that amendment will be discussed and voted on before the original Motion. If the amendment passes, then discussion will return to the original Motion as amended. If the amendment is defeated, then discussion will return to the original Motion.

### **Motions to Pass Over**

A Motion to “Pass Over” is a proposal to take no action on the Warrant Article at the Town Meeting. The Town’s practice has been to either make a "Motion to Pass Over" or a "Motion to Pass Over for More Information". The Town of Webster’s General Bylaw, 253-14, prohibits an Article that received a favorable vote on a “Motion to Pass Over” from being re-considered prior to the next Annual Town Meeting. If the Motion to Pass Over is approved, then no action will be taken and the Town Meeting will move on to the next Article. If the motion is defeated, then the Town Meeting would ask for a Motion to take action as it relates to the Article being discussed.

### **Discussion**

After a Motion is presented, the topic of the Article is then open for discussion, questions, and debate by everyone participating in the Town Meeting. In order to for this to take place, residents may line up behind microphones stationed in each aisle if they have questions or would like to make comments. When recognized by the Moderator, the individual clearly states their name and address so that others in attendance know who is speaking. All comments should focus on the specific topic of the Article being discussed and not address a particular person or group other than the Moderator.

### **Ending the Discussion**

If a voter has heard sufficient discussion and wants to end further debate, they can make a Motion to end the debate which is often referred to as "moving the question". A voter cannot both comment on an Article and then “move the question” during the same turn at the microphone: he/she can only do one or the other. A motion to “move the question” is not debatable and requires a 2/3 majority vote in order to pass. If the motion to “move the question” passes, then further debate on the Article ends and Town Meeting will vote on the Motion. If the Motion to “move the question” is defeated, then the debate of the Motion continues.

### **Reconsideration**

If substantial new information becomes available that could alter the outcome of a vote after it has already been taken, a voter can make a “Motion to Reconsider” that earlier vote. The Moderator will not entertain a “Motion to Reconsider” on the basis of having different voters present in the room or because some voters are unhappy with the outcome of the original vote. If the “Motion to Reconsider” is accepted by the Moderator, it will be discussed by the Town Meeting. If the majority of the Town Meeting vote in favor of Reconsideration, then the original Motion that was previously voted upon will again be read to the voters. A “Motion to Reconsider” can only be made by an individual who earlier

voted on the prevailing side. The Town of Webster General Bylaw 253-13 requires a 2/3 majority vote in order to Reconsider.

### **Voting**

Rather than a voice vote or raising hands, each voter will be assigned an electronic voting device when they register at the door. Voters simply need to press a designated button, as instructed by the Moderator, for their vote to be recorded. Not only will this system be more accurate, but it also allows each vote to remain confidential. Additionally, the use of the electronic voting system will eliminate the need for any ballot votes, thus potentially reducing the length of Town Meeting. The electronic voting system will be tested prior to the Town Meeting to ensure that all votes will be accurate.

# SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Moderator's Motions to begin the meeting:

1. The Moderator moves the Town votes to dispense with the reading of the warrant.
2. The Moderator moves that the Moderator may extend the floor to Town Management and staff and other non-voters provided that they must be recognized by the Moderator.

## ARTICLE 1. GENERAL FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Town Administrator Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

### Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from the authorizations listed below totaling \$2,910.56 to the Town Administrator Unpaid Bills account (0112352-579000) for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices.

| Amount             | Vendor                            | Account #      | Account Description    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| \$ 39.98           | Auto Zone                         | 0121052-524003 | Vehicle Maintenance    |
| \$ 118.40          | Konica Minolta                    | 0121052-527010 | Equipment Rental/Lease |
| \$ 118.40          | Konica Minolta                    | 0121052-527010 | Equipment Rental/Lease |
| \$ 1,505.00        | Clough, Harbour & Associates, LLP | 0142552-530006 | Engineering Services   |
| \$ 1,128.75        | Clough, Harbour & Associates, LLP | 0142552-530006 | Engineering Services   |
| <b>\$ 2,910.56</b> | <b>Total</b>                      |                |                        |

**Background:** In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient. As is the case with the prior year bills presented.

## ARTICLE 2. SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Sewer Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

### Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from the authorizations listed below totaling \$10,502.29 to the Sewer Fund Unpaid Bills account (6046052-579000) for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices.

| Amount              | Vendor       | Account #          | Account Description   |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| \$ 10,502.29        | Xylem        | 6046052-524000-461 | Repairs & Maintenance |
| <b>\$ 10,502.29</b> | <b>Total</b> |                    |                       |

**Background:** Xylem-\$10,196.40, invoice # 3556C12525 which we received April 2025 was for a pump we had repaired. The invoice was emailed to an employee that retired and was dated 02/23/2022. We have researched this transaction and it aligns with our purchase order system and we have confirmed receiving the repaired pump.

In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient.

### **ARTICLE 3. WATER ENTERPRISE FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Water Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

#### **Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend to pass over this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to pass over this article.

**Background:** In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient.

### **ARTICLE 4. FUND SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the DPW Snow and Ice Supplies Accounts; or take any other action thereon.

#### **Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.



**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from free cash in the amount of \$250,000 for funding anticipated FY25 snow and ice deficit accounts.

**Background:** The Town annually budgets \$155,000 for snow and ice. For FY 2025 the Town anticipates a snow and ice deficit of \$250,000.

#### **ARTICLE 5. SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION DEFICIT**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Special Education Transportation Accounts; or take any other action thereon.

##### **Sponsored by the School Superintendent**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from free cash the amount of \$400,000 for purposes of this article.

**Background:** At the time of submission for the Town Meeting Guide, Town management estimates a deficit not to exceed \$400,000. This is a fluid situation and the Town Meeting motion have a revised amount.

Special Education transportation costs generally increase commensurate with Special Education Out-of-District placements. The FY25 actual expenses are projected to exceed the budgeted amount by approximately 46%. The District is required, by law, to provide transportation to and from schools that provide Special Education Services that the District is not able to provide. Transportation providers, and subsequently school districts, have experienced high rates of inflation since the pandemic which have further driven up costs over time. It is not standard District practice to include budgetary slack to prevent these types of deficits from occurring which is the reason for bringing this article to Town Meeting for approval.

#### **ARTICLE 6. FY25 GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE DEFICIT**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the General Liability and Insurance fund for the purpose of paying FY2025 deficit, or take any other action relative thereto.

##### **Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from free cash the amount of \$70,260 to fund the FY25 deficit of the general liability insurance account (0194552-574001).



**Background:** At the time the FY25 budget preparation, Town management budgeted for an increase of 3% to 4% increase for general liability insurance. Due to several unknown factors including worker compensation audit and increased value of Bartlett High School Renovation, the increase to FY25 general liability insurance approximated 13%.

#### **ARTICLE 7. APPROPRIATION TO STABILIZATION FUND**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$550,000.00 to the Town's the Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

##### **Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town appropriate and transfer from Free Cash, \$550,000 to the Stabilization Fund.

**Background:** Town management recommends replenishing the \$550,000 appropriated from Stabilization voted via article 5 at the May 13, 2024 Special Town Meeting.

This requires a majority vote for passage.

#### **ARTICLE 8. APPROPRIATION FOR TOWN CAPITAL PROJECTS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from free cash, a sum sufficient for the purpose of funding capital purchases/projects as listed in the table below, including all costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action thereon.

| <b>Department</b>  | <b>Project</b>  | <b>Amount</b> |
|--------------------|---|---------------|
| Town Administrator | Inventory of Town Buildings/Structures                                | \$ 50,000     |
| Town Administrator | Town Hall West (Church St.) Entrance Renovation                       | \$ 60,000     |
| Town Administrator | Town Hall Front (Main St.) Entrance Renovation                        | \$ 160,000    |
| Town Administrator | Town Hall East (Library Side) Entrance Renovation and Library Walkway | \$ 120,000    |
| Police Department  | Cruiser/SUV Replacement Plan – 3rd Vehicle                            | \$ 90,000     |
| Police Department  | Replace 20 Station Security Cameras                                   | \$ 35,000     |
| Police Department  | Replace 10 Portable Radios  | \$ 53,000     |
| Police Department  | Server Room AC Unit   | \$ 25,000     |
| Police Department  | Replace Building Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System            | \$ 70,000     |
| Police Department  | In Car Cruiser Cameras  | \$ 35,000     |
| Highway Department | Plow for 10-Wheeler   | \$ 65,000     |
| Highway Department | F350 Pickup   | \$ 85,000     |

|                   |  |           |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| School Department | PAE Electrical Controller Head Replacement | \$ 30,000 |
| School Department | BHS Tennis Courts                          | \$ 40,000 |
| School Department | BHS & WMS Exterior Basketball Courts       | \$ 50,000 |

### **Sponsored by the Town Administrator and School Superintendent**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer from free cash \$968,000 for purposes of this article.

### **Background:**

**Inventory of Town Buildings /Structures and their related systems:** In an effort to gain a better understanding of conditions of the Town's facilities/structures and their integral systems, Town management has been tasked with inventorying the Town facilities and structures. Having a study done to inventory the Town's facilities/structures and evaluate their integral systems will provide Town management an understanding of the condition of Town owned properties.

**Town Hall West (Church St.) Entrance Renovation:** Access to Town Hall entrances via walkways, ramps and stairs need to be renovated to ensure safe conditions. We anticipate reduction of maintenance costs. More importantly, the renovations will provide for safer access for all users.

**Town Hall Front (Main St.) Entrance Renovation:** Access to Town Hall entrances via walkways, ramps and stairs need to be renovated to ensure safe conditions. We anticipate reduction of maintenance costs. More importantly, the renovations will provide for safer access for all users.

**Town Hall Est (Library Side) Entrance Renovation and Library Walkway:** Access to Town Hall entrances via walkways, ramps and stairs need to be renovated to ensure safe conditions. We anticipate reduction of maintenance costs. More importantly, the renovations will provide for safer access for all users.

**Cruiser/SUV Replacement:** The Town has implemented a plan to replace 3 vehicles annually. Replaces aging vehicles in the fleet, which can either be traded, auctioned or repurposed. The plan allows for most heavily used vehicles to be replaced every 3 years. Administrative and other vehicles are replaced every 6 to 8 years.

**Replace 20 Cameras:** The Police Station contains 60 cameras, all of which were installed in 2014 and provide full security coverage of the inside and outside of the building. While the cameras are still operable, they are at the end of their expected lifespan and failures are likely to begin occurring.

**Replace 10 Portable Radios:** Radio Communications are critical to police operations. The replacement radios would be utilized to replace officer issues portable radios that are 8 years old allowing those radios to be shifted to spare status, replacing 15-year-old radios

**Server Room AC Unit:** Install a split type AC unit in the server room to ensure proper cooling of equipment. Server Rooms should have a supplemental cooling system. Currently the server room only has the main building AC unit. Component failures to the AC system have caused the room to reach 90° which risks failure of the large number of equipment in the room. A recent HVAC failure has led to the server room running at over 80° for 4 weeks while awaiting parts

**Replace Building Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System:** This UPS system provides power to critical building systems that must remaining running during a utility power failure until generator engagement to include phones and radio infrastructure. The building UPS system was installed in 2014 and the manufacturer has indicated that it will no longer be supported in 2027. The system has needed numerous recent repairs and parts availability has become problematic. The quoted replacement is substantially less expensive than had been projected.

**Cruiser/SUV Cameras:** Replaces existing, cameras, and are able to be synced with body worn cameras. Current in car cameras are old and constantly not working. Unable to get local repairs, and are essentially useless.

**Plow for 10-Wheeler:** Current plow has exceeded its useful life. Plow is in poor condition.

**F350 Pickup:** The highway department has requested a pickup truck to return the fleet to prior levels which will allow for vehicle rotation and maximize vehicle lives.

**Library:** Add 4 ethernet ports and floor outlets to area behind Reference Desk. An office space will be created in this area, and ethernet is required in order for Staff to work.

**PAE Electrical Controller Head Replacement:** Hardware that enables software controls that manage when lights are turned off/on which drives efficiency & cost savings. The controller's heads are shorted and require replacement.

**BHS Tennis Courts:** Short-Term Remediation by cleaning, filling, sealing cracks and painting impacted areas.

**BHS & WMS Exterior Basketball Courts:** Short-Term Remediation by cleaning, filling, sealing cracks and painting impacted areas.

## **ARTICLE 9. APPROPRIATION FOR SEWER CAPITAL PROJECTS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from Sewer retained earnings, a sum sufficient for the purpose of funding capital purchases/projects as listed in the table below, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action thereon.

| Project   | Amount    |
|---|-----------|
| Wastewater Plant Replacement Bar Rack Screens and Teeth | \$ 48,000 |
| HACH All Weather Automatic Sampler Upgrade              | \$ 8,500  |
| HACH Online pH Sensors for Aeration                     | \$ 6,000  |
| HACH Online Nitrate/NH3 Sensors for Aeration            | \$ 12,000 |

**Sponsored by the Water Sewer Commission and Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer \$74,500 from Sewer retained earnings for the purposes of this article.

**Background:** Wastewater Plant Replacement Bar Rack Screen and Teeth- Replace current 3/8" with 1/4" screen to remove debris on the influent entering the Wastewater plant. Upgrade rack bar with teeth cutters. Finer screens and more aggressive teeth will further enhance debris removal entering the Wastewater plant and further protect downstream equipment and treatment.

HACH All Weather Automatic Sampler, HACH Online pH Sensor, HACH Online Nitrate/NH3 Sensor for aeration. All three HACH units are past their useful life and no longer have support or parts readily available from the manufacture HACH. These are key instruments in maintaining state/federal reporting and performance requirements.

#### **ARTICLE 10. APPROPRIATION FOR WATER CAPITAL PROJECTS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from Water retained earnings, a sum sufficient for the purpose of funding capital purchases/projects as listed in the table below, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action thereon.

| Project   | Amount     |
|---|------------|
| Water Main Design (Worcester Rd. & Old Worcester Rd.) | \$ 250,000 |

**Sponsored by the Water Sewer Commission and Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to transfer \$250,000 from Water retained earnings for the purposes of this article.

**Background:** Water Main Design (Worcester Rd., Old Worcester Rd., & Bigelow Rd.) -The design and permitting of approximately 5,400 linear foot watermain project is proposed for the following areas:

- Worcester Road (Route 12) from the intersection of Old Worcester Road (North) to the intersection of Old Worcester Road (South)
- Old Worcester Road from the intersection of Worcester Road (North) to the intersection of Bigelow Road

- Bigelow Road from the intersection of Old Worcester Road to the intersection with Concord Court

The existing water mains in this area consist of 8-inch cast iron pipes that were installed between 1936 and 1957.

The water department is looking to replace/upsized approximately 3,850 linear feet of the old water mains from 8-inch to 12-inch diameter on Worcester Road, Old Worcester Road and Bigelow Road and add approximately 1,550 linear feet of 12-inch diameter water main on Worcester Road to create a looped piping system, enhancing water quality and hydraulics performance. This project was identified in the 2018 water distribution system evaluation and is an important component to fully utilize the new the Bigelow Well PFAS Treatment Plant at full capacity which is scheduled to come online in 2026. By completing the design, we will be able to properly estimate the construction costs and we are planning for work to start in 2028.

#### **ARTICLE 11. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT AERATION SYSTEM PHASE 2 CONSTRUCTION**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$5,200,000 for the purpose of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Aeration System Phase 2 project, and all related costs, and that to meet said appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, be authorized to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, Sections 7 and 8, Chapter 29C, and/or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds and notes therefor; or to take any action thereon.

##### **Sponsored by the Water/Sewer Commission**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town appropriate \$5,200,000 for the purpose of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Aeration System Phase 2 project, and all related costs; that to meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is authorized to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, Sections 7 or 8, or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds and notes therefor; that the Board of Selectmen is authorized to contract for and expend any federal or state aid available for the project; and that the Board of Selectmen, the Water Commissioners, and the Water and Sewer Superintendent, are each authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project.

**Background:** The goals of the Webster Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Aeration System Phase 2 Construction are to upgrade 40-year-old equipment near the end of its useful life within the second set of aeration tanks, improve energy efficiency of the aeration equipment, and to ensure compliance with the Town's NPDES Discharge Permit (issued by US EPA), which includes a requirement to remove Total Nitrogen (TN). This project follows Phase 1, which is finalizing construction now, and will be the final phase of the upgrades associated with the aeration system.

The aeration tanks are the most critical component of wastewater treatment, as they facilitate the removal of organics and solids from raw sewage. Equipment within the tanks to be upgraded includes slide and stop gates, which control the flow of water and aeration diffusers, which supply oxygen for the biological processes. The project also includes installation of two turbo-style jockey blowers and affiliated SCADA controls to improve energy efficiency of the air delivery system and

the installation of new pumps and mixers to reconfigure the existing aeration tank to also remove total nitrogen.

While the WWTF currently meets the TN permit limits at approximately half of its design capacity (3 MGD) for much of the year, the proposed design process configuration will enable year-round nitrogen removal to the permit limit and ensure compliance up to the full design capacity of the WWTF. Improving nitrogen removal performance has adjacent benefits of lower chemical usage, reducing energy consumption, and improved process performance.

This requires a 2/3rds vote for passage.

#### **ARTICLE 12. LOCAL ACCEPTANCE OF C. 200A, S 9A DISPOSITION OF UNCLAIMED PROPERTY**

To see if the Town will vote to accept Massachusetts General Law Chapter 200A, Section 6A, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to accept Massachusetts General Law Chapter 200A, Section 9A.

**Background:** Generally, Massachusetts law requires unclaimed property to be transferred to the state. The adoption of this provision will allow the Town to keep unclaimed property after all requirements have been fulfilled.

For example, Ch. 200A §9A makes available to cities and towns a more advantageous procedure for handling unclaimed checks than the escheat provisions applicable to other holders of unclaimed funds, whereby they must turn over such checks to the state. Indeed, if the treasurer complies with the procedures set out in this statute, instead of having to turn the checks over to the state, the municipality can retain them.

The §9A procedures require the treasurer to declare, in writing, an intention to retain the unclaimed checks and to file that declaration with the municipal clerk. The treasurer must then give notice to the apparent owner of each check. For an uncashed check issued by the municipality in the amount of \$10 or more, the treasurer must mail notice to the apparent owner, explaining how that person may solicit the money. For an uncashed check issued by the municipality in the amount of \$100 or more, the treasurer must cause a notice of the check to be published.

The owner of an unclaimed check has 1 year from the date of notice to file a claim for that check. If no claim is filed, the treasurer may credit the unclaimed check to the general fund of the municipality.

#### **ARTICLE 13: SPECIAL ACT TO MAKE TOWN CLERK APPOINTED**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Webster to pursue a special legislative act to amend the Webster Town Charter by eliminating Article 3, Section 5 providing for the election of Town Clerk; or take any other action relative thereto.

## **Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** In recent years towns are increasingly transitioning to appointed town clerks. Appointing a town clerk is not an exercise in looking backwards, but forward. What structure is most appropriate for the requirements of the ever increasing professional needs of the position? By its very nature, the need to run for election makes the position political. A prior Department of Revenue Financial Management Review stated clearly that the principle in government is that policy makers should be elected and operations personnel should be appointed. Town Clerk is an operations and personnel function – not policy making. Rather, similar to Treasurer-Collector, town clerk has become a highly technical position that is an integral part of the management team. By virtue of any position being elected, voters are not in a position to supervise or effectively evaluate job performance. Increasingly the position is required to be cognizant and proficient in understanding very important legal matters, i.e. public records laws, pertaining to voters rights, and open meeting laws. Credentials that contribute to qualifications for bonding and state certification are required. The chief record keeper and election officer of the town should not be a learn-on-the-job position, nor should it be a position without succession planning. An appointed town clerk can be screened for qualifications. The mere qualification of being a registered resident is no longer sufficient. Any legislative act would provide for a transition to occur only upon the expiration of the current elected term. The Town of Webster is fortunate to have a well qualified and competent Town Clerk who concurs with the aforementioned request to make the position appointed.

## **ARTICLE 14: ELIMINATE BYLAW COMMITTEE, SECTION 14-1**

To see if the Town will vote to eliminate Section 14-1 of the General Bylaws thereby eliminating the Bylaw Committee, take any other action relative thereto.

## **Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** The duties of the Committee are to make recommendations of the Town concerning all proposed changes in the By-laws. This By-law Committee shall also perform the five-year review of the By-laws per Section 7-7 of the Charter.

The By-law does not define “of the Town”. What body or person does the By-Law Committee report to? The Board of Selectmen, Moderator, Town Meeting?

The By-law conflicts with the Charter in that the Moderator is charged with appointing a “special committee” on years ending in 2 or 7 to review all By-laws. The current By-law providing for a By-Law Committee usurps that Charter provision by directing this committee to perform that function. A standing committee is not a “special committee”.



The provision has become an outdated and unnecessary layer of government. Other mechanisms exist for their stated role. For instance, the Planning Board is required by state statute to make a recommendation on all proposed zoning By-laws, the Finance Committee may make recommendations on all financial articles and the Board of Selectmen has a multi-layer process of determining what articles will appear on the warrant, and may choose to make a specific recommendation on articles. The Board of Selectmen, should they choose, may require article sponsors to appear before them to explain and advocate for their submission. The Board may also create a special committee to review a By-law proposal and make a recommendation. Further, professional staff and legal counsel are integral in preparation, review and recommendations on both substantive and technical matters pertaining to proposed By-Law changes.

Over time, the By-law Committee’s role has increasingly become a redundant layer of government and we are therefore recommending its elimination.

**ARTICLE 15: APPROPRIATE FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNT BALANCES TO FUND RENOVATIONS AT TOWN HALL**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the following surplus fund balances in the amount of \$168,820.56

| Fund Number | Fund Name/Description  | Surplus Balance |
|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 5003        | 124R High Street Demo  | \$ 137,500.00   |
| 5014        | Animal Shelter Cameras | \$ 696.15       |
| 5015        | Boat Docks             | \$ 3,237.23     |
| 5016        | Police Vehicle         | \$ 15,644.18    |
| 5039        | Breathing Apparatus    | \$ 11,743.00    |

to fund renovations at Town Hall from the Town Hall Capital Improvements Fund (Fund 5050), including all costs and related thereto, or take any action thereon.

**Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** Town management periodically reviews the status of authorized projects and unspent appropriations. The projects listed above have been completed and their balances are available for re-appropriation. Town management would like to facilitate access to the Town Clerk’s office by moving it to the first floor. By appropriating the above unspent appropriations to the Town Hall Capital Improvements Fund, the Town Administrator will be able to begin the process.

# ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Moderator's Motions to begin the meeting:

1. The Moderator moves the Town votes to dispense with the reading of the warrant.
2. The Moderator moves that the Moderator may extend the floor to Town Management and staff and other non-voters provided that they must be recognized by the Moderator.

## ARTICLE 1. REPORTS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

To hear and act upon the report and recommendations of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee; or take any other action thereon.

### Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the Finance Committee Report.

**Background:** - The Finance Committee works with Town Management and provides oversight for fair and comprehensive annual budgets and capital improvements program. Article 6 – Finances and Fiscal Procedures of the Charter of the Town of Webster provides a road map for the fiscal year budget and capital improvements program processes and Chapter 110 - Finance Committee provides direction to the Finance Committee for their role throughout these processes. One of the directives for the Finance Committee is to report a statement of the doings by the Committee during the year, a statement of bonded indebtedness of the Town, the amount of free cash and its recommendations or suggestions on those articles in the warrant which have been submitted to the Selectmen.

## ARTICLE 2: AUTHORIZE REVOLVING FUNDS SPENDING LIMITS

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c 44, §53E1/2, as most recently amended, to set FY 2026 spending limits for such Revolving Funds as follows:

| REVOLVING FUND                  | FY2026 FUND<br>SPENDING LIMIT |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Senior Center (Fund 3516)       | \$ 8,000                      |
| Library (Fund 3519)             | \$ 3,500                      |
| Recreation (Fund 3521)          | \$ 168,000                    |
| Composting Facility (Fund 3525) | \$ 13,000                     |
| Historical Sign (Fund 3529)     | \$ 5,000                      |
| Nuisance Properties (Fund 3530) | \$ 60,000                     |
| Code Enforcement (Fund 3534)    | \$ 603,250                    |

; or take any action thereon.

**Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** Each year the Town may authorize the use of one or more revolving funds which are accounted for separately from all other monies. The purpose of these funds is to pay for expenses directly from revenues received to provide the related services and/or programs.

**ARTICLE 3: FY 2026 GENERAL FUND ANNUAL BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to fix the compensation of elected officials, provide for a reserve fund, and determine what sum of money the Town will raise and appropriate including appropriations from any available funds to defray the charges and expenses of the Town including debt and interest for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026; or take any other action thereon.

**Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate an omnibus budget in the sum of \$64,791,959 an amount sufficient to fix the compensation of elected officials, provide for a reserve fund, and to defray the charges and expenses of the Town including debt and interest for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026. Said sum to be raised as follows:

| Funding Sources  | Amount        |
|--|---------------|
| Property Tax, State Aid, Local and Other Receipts            | \$ 61,573,128 |
| Sewer Fund (Indirect Costs)                                  | \$ 840,339    |
| Water Fun (Indirect Costs)                                   | \$ 633,770    |
| SWCCC (Dudley Indirect Costs)                                | \$ 129,722    |
| Donation from Fels Foundation for the Police & Fire Stations | \$ 200,000    |
| Transfer from Waterway Improvements Fund                     | \$ 15,000     |
| Transfer from Sale of Filmer Building                        | \$ 45,000     |
| Transfer from Town Hall Stabilization Fund                   | \$ 55,000     |
| Free Cash to reduce the tax rate                             | \$ 1,300,000  |
| Total of Funding Sources                                     | \$ 64,791,959 |
|  |               |

**Background:** The total FY26 Estimated Operational Budget is \$67,065,811 inclusive of total appropriations totaling \$64,791,959 and estimated tax rate recapitulation costs of \$2,273,852. This is an increase of \$4,998,464 or 8.05% on the total FY25 estimated operational budget. Please see the separate budget packet for additional information.

#### **ARTICLE 4: FY 2026 SEWER ANNUAL BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate and transfer from any available funds a sum sufficient to operate the Sewer Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026; or take any other action thereon.

##### **Sponsored by the Water Sewer Commission and Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to appropriate an omnibus budget in the sum of \$4,822,180, an amount sufficient to operate the Sewer Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 and that \$4,822,180 be raised as follows: \$250,000 from retained earnings and \$4,572,180 from department receipts.

**Background:** The total FY26 Estimated Sewer Enterprise Fund Operating Budget is \$5,662,519 inclusive of total appropriations of \$4,822,180 and indirect costs of \$840,339. This is an increase of \$149,334 or 2.71%. Please see the separate budget packet for additional information.

The Division of Local Services now recommend using some retained earnings as a funding source for sewer and water enterprise funds to mitigate usage restrictions from external situations such as oversight authorities or environmental conditions.

#### **ARTICLE 5: FY 2026 WATER ANNUAL BUDGET**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate and transfer from any available funds a sum sufficient to operate the Water Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026; or take any other action thereon.

##### **Sponsored by the Water Sewer Commission and Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to appropriate an omnibus budget in the sum of \$3,835,900, an amount sufficient to operate the Water Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 and that \$3,835,900 be raised as follows: \$250,000 from retained earnings \$3,585,900 from department receipts.

**Background:** The FY26 Estimated Water Enterprise Fund Operating Budget is \$4,469,670, inclusive of total appropriations of \$3,835,900 and indirect costs of \$633,770. This is a decrease of \$293,786 or -6.17%. For FY26 many debt service payments are decreasing compared to prior years.

The Division of Local Services now recommend using some retained earnings as a funding source for sewer and water enterprise funds to mitigate usage restrictions from external situations such as oversight authorities or environmental conditions.

#### **ARTICLE 6: AUTHORIZE SHORT-TERM BORROWINGS**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the consent of the Board of Selectmen, to temporarily borrow a note or notes, or make an inter-fund advance from available funds, in

anticipation of revenue from taxation, bonds, or grants, and to repay said sums within the current fiscal cycle; or take any other action thereon.

**Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the consent of the Board of Selectmen, to temporarily borrow a note or notes, or make an inter-fund advance from available funds, in anticipation of revenue from taxation, bonds, or grants, and to repay said sums within the current fiscal cycle; or take any other action thereon.

**Background:** This article allows the treasurer to borrow funds as needed throughout the fiscal year to meet cash flow needs in anticipation of future revenue.

**ARTICLE 7. CREATE BUDGET FOR CABLE ACCESS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from cable PEG Access account the following Cable Access Budget in accordance with General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F¾; or take any other action thereon.

| Account Description | Account Number | Amount    |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Salaries            | 3702-510000    | \$ 42,000 |
| Other Charges       | 3702-570000    | \$ 50,000 |
| Total               |                | \$ 92,000 |

**Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** This will adopt a budget from the Cable PEG Access account. The salaries will support two part-time positions. One, position will focus on the up keep of the equipment, software, and recording official meetings. The second position will focus on creating content for PEG channels as well as communicating town information to residents. The other charges have averaged expenditures of approximately \$50,000 over the last several years. This includes internet services, equipment, and recording services.

**ARTICLE 8. AMEND SECTION 334-2: REQUEST FOR BUILDING NUMBERS**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Webster Bylaws, Chapter 334 Buildings, Numbering of by deleting the existing Section 334-2 Request for building numbers and replacing it as follows:

The Selectmen shall review and approve a policy developed by the Assessor and the 911 Municipal Liaison that ensures consistent building number practices are utilized. The policy shall take into account best practices for street numbering for emergency response purposes along with ensuring any compliance that is required as part of the Commonwealth’s statewide 911

system. The Assessor shall be responsible for issuing building numbers in compliance with the approved policy.

Or take any other action thereon.

**Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented.

**Background:** Since the inception of Next Generation 911 in 2017, the process of street number addressing has changed drastically. Next Generation 911 relies upon Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and address updates are processed daily by the Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS). The 911 Municipal Liaison is responsible for ensuring street addressing conforms with the MassGIS Best Practices in Address Assignment under the authority of M.G.L. Ch. 7D, Section 5. The current bylaw was adopted in 1988 before a statewide 911 system had even been developed. This proposed bylaw revision would modernize the Town of Webster's bylaw pertaining to street number addressing to both conform with modern standards while also memorializing the process that has been in place since 2017.

**ARTICLE 9. WEBSTER LAKE MAINTENANCE FUNDING**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$25,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding Webster Lake maintenance; or take any other action relative thereto.

**Sponsored by the Town Administrator**

**Recommendation:** The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Town vote to approve the article as presented in the warrant.

**Background:** In April of 2023, town and state officials met with leadership of the Webster Lake Association (WLA) to discuss possible funding opportunities for maintenance of the state's lake. Out of that series of meetings it was determined that WLA would continue their fund-raising efforts to help care for the lake, and, that the town and state would seek funding to aide in the maintenance effort. In addition, Senator Ryan Fattman and Rep. Joe McKenna agreed to pursue state funding for a comprehensive lake management plan as well as annual funding to maintain this resource. Town officials participating in these discussions, including the Town Administrator and members of the Board of Selectmen, agreed to request local funding to assist this effort. If appropriated, the funds will be used to supplement state and/or WLA funding efforts for maintenance and/or development of the lake management plan.

## **ARTICLE 10: AMEND ZONING MAP**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Webster Zoning Map referenced in Section 650-13 of the code of the Town of Webster to re-zone two parcels of land from the current zoning designation of Industrial to Business, District 4 (B-4) and to be designated within the Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD), said parcels being located at and known as 21 Pearl Street, shown on the Town Assessor's Map as Parcel ID 15-A-5-0, containing approximately 2.18 acres, and 35 Pearl Street, shown on the Town Assessor's Map as Parcel ID 15-A-1-0, containing approximately 5.10 acres, both parcels owned now or formerly by 21 Pearl, LLC or take any action thereon.

### **Citizen Petition**

## **ARTICLE 11: AMEND ZONING MAP**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Webster Zoning Bylaw referenced in Section 650-25 of the code of the Town of Webster, entitled "District 11, Redevelopment Overlay District", by

(i) Revising Part G, "Uses Allowed by Special Permit", (1)(g) to read as follows:

(g) Mixed-use building containing multi-family units, provided that some portion of the building shall contain retail, personal services, or professional or business office uses.

(ii) Revising Part K, "Off-Street Parking", by inserting a new subpart (4) to read:

(4) For multi-family housing and for Mixed-use buildings, as allowed by Special Permit in the ROD, the Planning Board may modify the application off-street parking and landscaping regulations of Section 650-39.

Or take any action thereon.

### **Citizen Petition**