



# Town of Reading



**Annual Town Meeting  
April 24, 2023**

**For the PAC Audience  
use RPS GUEST**

**WiFi password: none**





# **2023 Annual Town Meeting**

## **Article 5**

**Adds, removes or changes items in the FY23-33 Capital Improvements Program – does not authorize any funding for these items:**

**FY23 General Fund: -\$200,000 net changes**

**-\$200,000 Glycol Reclamation**

**FY24 General Fund: -\$875,000 net changes**

**\$ 900,000 Carts for automated collection (debt in FY25)**

**\$ 200,000 Glycol Reclamation**

**-\$ 225,000 Blower unit for Loader moved to FY27**



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 4 continued

### **FY25: General Fund: -\$249,500**

- \$ 97,500 RMHS Ropes Course moved to FY27
- \$ 66,000 School Buildings Carpet/Flooring moved to FY26
- \$ 76,000 Town Buildings ARC Flash Hazard Study moved to FY26
- \$ 225,000 Blower unit for Loader moved from FY24
- \$ 950,000 Pumper Engine 2 moved to FY26
- \$ 200,000 2007 Sander moved up from FY26
- \$ 200,000 2006 Sander moved up from FY26
- \$ 40,000 2006 Cemetery Sedan moved up from FY26
- \$ 60,000 2006 Highway Pickup Truck moved up from FY26
- \$ 215,000 School Site Improvements moved up from FY26



# **2023 Annual Town Meeting**

## **Article 4 (continued)**

**FY23 Enterprise Funds: no changes**

**FY24 Enterprise Funds: no changes**

**FY25 Enterprise Funds: Sewer +\$115,000**

+ \$115,000 Joseph's Way Sewer Station Design increase by \$15,000 and moved up from FY26



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 5

**Authorizes these changes to FY23 General Fund budget:**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>Increase</b>
B99 Benefits	111F Pending Retirements		\$100,000
E99 Vocational Education	Essex North \$35,000		\$35,000
G91 Admin Services Wages	Wage savings due to vacancy	\$30,000	
G92 Admin Services Exp	Insurance Deductibles \$21,000 Pollution Liability Insurance \$90,000		\$111,000
G92a Technology Exp	Technology Security Enhancements		\$30,000
H91 Public Services Wages	Wage savings due to vacancy	\$125,000	
I91 Finance Wages	Wage savings due to vacancy	\$7,000	



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 5

### FY23 General Fund budget (continued):

Line	Description	Decrease	Increase
J91 – Public Safety Wages	Police Vacation/Sick Buyback		\$175,000
J92 – Public Safety Exp.	Coalition Expenses funded by Opioid Settlement		\$21,790
K91 – Public Works Wages	Wage savings due to vacancy	\$150,000	
K92 – Public Works Expenses	Supplies & Equipment \$5,000 Hwy Equip. Parts/Maint. \$25,000 Hwy Fuel \$85,000 Grove St. Design \$27,500 Parkview & Auburn Design \$72,000		\$214,500



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 5

**Authorizes these changes to FY23 General Fund budget:**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>Increase</b>
K93 Snow & Ice	Estimate as of 3/15/23		\$50,000
K94 Street Lights	Street Lighting	\$15,000	
	<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>\$327,000</b>	<b>\$737,290</b>
	<b>Net Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$410,290</b>
	<b>From Free Cash</b>		<b>\$388,500</b>
	<b>From Opioid Settlement Funds</b>		<b>\$21,790</b>



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 5

**Authorizes these changes to FY23 Enterprise Fund budget:**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>Increase</b>
W99 Water EF	SCADA Upgrade \$50,000 WBD Paving \$50,000 Copper Tubing \$10,000		\$110,000
S99 Sewer EF	SCADA Upgrade \$50,000		\$50,000
	<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>\$160,000</b>
	<b>Net Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$160,000</b>
	<b>From Water EF Reserves</b>		<b>\$110,000</b>
	<b>From Sewer EF Reserves</b>		<b>\$50,000</b>



# **2023 Annual Town Meeting**

## **Article 6**

Prior Year's Bills – Not Applicable, recommend that this article be tabled.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 7

### Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Move appropriated funds to the OPEB Trust

**\$500,000** General fund

**\$ 85,000** Water Enterprise Fund

**\$ 25,000** Sewer Enterprise Fund

**\$ 10,500** Storm Water Enterprise Fd.

**\$620,500 in total**



# **2023 Annual Town Meeting**

## **Article 8**

Move 40R funds to Stabilization Fund

No funds received. Not Applicable, recommend that this article be tabled.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 9

### Authorizes Revolving Funds Annual Spending Limits and amends Section 6.5.2 of the General Bylaw:

#### 6.5.2 Inspection Revolving Fund

Funds held in the Inspection Revolving Fund shall be used for legal costs, oversight and inspection, plan review, property appraisals and appeals, public services general management, pedestrian safety improvements, records archiving, and other costs related to building, plumbing, wiring, gas, and other permits required for large construction projects and shall be expended by the Town Manager. Receipts credited to this fund shall include building, plumbing, wiring, gas and other permit fees for ~~the Schoolhouse Commons, The Metropolitan at Reading Station, Postmark Square, 20-24 Gould Street, 467 Main Street, Oaktree, Addison-Wesley/Pearson,~~ Johnson Woods, Eaton Lakeview (23-25 Lakeview Avenue and 128 Eaton Street), 258 Main Street, ~~267 Main Street,~~ 531 Main Street, 18-20 Woburn Street, 6-16 Chute Street (Green Tomato), 25 Haven Street (Rite Aid) and 459 Main Street (128 Tire) developments.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 9 continued

## Authorizes Revolving Funds Annual Spending Limits

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Conservation Consulting	\$33,225	\$25,000
Inspections	\$668,753	\$250,000
Public Health Clinics & Services	\$19,215	\$25,000
Library Fines and Fees	\$10,212	\$15,000
Mattera Cabin Operating	none	\$10,000
Community Gardens at Mattera Cabin	none	\$10,000
Town Forest	none	\$10,000



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 10

## Affordable Housing Trust Fund Allocation Plan

Pursuant to Article 10 of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, an Affordable Housing Trust Fund Allocation Plan for the Fiscal Year 2024 in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2001 is as follows:

Available Balance – <u>Unrestricted Funds</u> :	\$ 460,504
Available Balance – <u>Restricted Funds</u>	\$ 0

Unrestricted funds shall be used for the following purposes:

- \$10,000 or a maximum of 5% for administration of Affordable Housing
- Remainder for constructing affordable housing (including loan and grant programs); or for maintaining and improving affordability of existing housing stock; or for the purchase of existing housing stock to add it to or maintain it as a part of the existing affordable housing inventory.



# **2023 Annual Town Meeting**

## **Article 11**

**To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 13E of the Massachusetts General Laws to establish a Special Education Reserve Fund**

- To be utilized in the upcoming fiscal years, for the general purposes of funding, without further appropriation, unanticipated or unbudgeted costs of special education and recovery high school programs, out-of-district tuition or transportation, all as provided for by law.
- Funds would be distributed after a majority vote of the School Committee and a majority vote of the Select Board.
- The balance in such reserve fund shall not exceed 2 percent of the annual net school spending amount established for the school district



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 12

**Adopt FY24 Budget** - Separate PowerPoint presentation by Town Accountant, School Superintendent and Town Manager.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 13**

**Authorize \$900,000 of debt to purchase rubbish and recycling carts for residents currently on the municipal rubbish program:**

- The Town's rubbish and recycling collection contract with Republic Services is set to expire in June 2026, and the rubbish disposal contract with Covanta is set to expire one year prior in June 2025. Both contracts are expected to see significant cost increases.
- Purchasing these carts now will prepare the Town for possible future automated rubbish and recycling collection in 2026 and lessen the financial impact on the Town when the new rubbish and recycling collection contract is bid in 2026.
- Supplying these covered carts to households would greatly mitigate rodent issues, rainfall accumulation issues with current residential rubbish containers, litter blowing around neighborhoods on collection days due to open top containers, as well as an improvement to the aesthetics of the Town on collection days.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 13 continued**

- This proposal would allow for (1) 64-gallon rubbish cart and (1) 64-gallon recycling cart per each residence currently receiving rubbish and recycling collection by the Town.
- If funding for this article is approved, the Select Board would decide at a later date, on what options would be permitted for households that might accrue more rubbish or recycling than one cart would hold.
- Options for addressing extra rubbish/recycling would include residents being able to purchase either 30-gallon overflow bags (to be placed next to the cart on collection day), or a yearly purchase of a 2<sup>nd</sup> 64-gallon cart.
- The Town does have data which shows that the average weekly household rubbish volume in 2022 was only 57.3 gallons.
- The average weekly household recycling volume in 2022 was 23.5 gallons.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 14**

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay the costs of infrastructure improvements to the Birch Meadow Complex**

- The infrastructure improvements would include the reconstruction of the parking lot, construction of a passive recreation walkway, installation of a bathroom structure, and the installation of a concrete practice wall.
- The \$1.5 million in ARPA funding has expedited Activitas and the Working Group to finalize a design for Phase I of the Birch Meadow Project and put forward a bid package for Phase I construction.
- Due to the trying times in the current economy, the project bid came back with higher cost implications than estimated in 2022 when Recreation asked for construction funding for Phase I.
- Supplemental funding of \$1,220,000 is needed to complete the project.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 14 continued**

### **Proposed Funding Sources:**

1. \$600,000 from the Parker Middle Roof Project. This project was bonded at 0.87% interest rate.
2. \$180,000 from the Police Station Renovation Project. This project is now completed and has a remaining balance. This project was bonded at 0.87% interest rate.
3. \$440,000 from the 40R District Incentive/Bonus Payments from the Commonwealth. We currently have \$917,000 in this stabilization fund. The incentive payments can only be used for capital projects.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 15**

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay the costs of installation and improvements to the Gazebo Circle Pump Station Project**

- The project will include reconstruction of the pump station, installation of mechanical and electrical equipment, and installation of water mains to and from the station.
- A transfer is proposed from previously approved and borrowed funds from the Grove Street water main improvements which has \$252,432.41 remaining unspent. The project on Grove Street has been completed, and no future expenditures are needed.
- The remaining funds will be transferred to the Gazebo Circle Pump Station Project. With growing construction costs, inflation and supply chain concerns these funds will help to ensure the project has ample funding.
- The Gazebo Circle project is anticipated to go out to bid Spring 2023.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 16**

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay the costs of installation and improvements to the Downtown Water Main Project**

- The Downtown Water Main Project will include the installation of water mains, water services, and hydrants at a cost of \$965,486.81
- A transfer from previously approved and borrowed funds of \$658,971.72 from the Main Street water main cleaning a lining project, which has been completed, and no future expenditures are needed.
- A transfer from previously approved and borrowed funds of \$306,515.09 from the MWRA Water Improvements, which has been completed, and no future expenditures are needed.
- With growing construction costs, inflation and supply chain concerns these funds will help to ensure the project has ample funding.



## **2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 17**

### **Authorize debt through the MWRA interest free loan and grant program for Phase 14 for \$1,040,000:**

- Phase 14 funds will be distributed as 75% grants and 25% interest-free loans with loan repayment over 10 years. (\$780,000 grant and \$260,000 interest free loan).
- Acceptance of the grant/loan offer will enable the Town to continue with its I/I removal program to remove unwanted sewage flows from the sewer system which reduces excess assessments from MWRA and decreases the excess demand on the sewer system.
- The anticipated project for this Phase will be to perform manhole rehabilitation, spot repairs, lining and replacement of sewers.



## 2023 Annual Town Meeting Article 18

### Rescind \$402,000 of unused debt authorization for RMHS Turf II Project:

<b>Town Meeting Vote</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Debt Authorization</b>	<b>Reduction Amount</b>	<b>New Debt Authorization</b>
April 22, 2019 Annual Town Meeting, Art. 15	Reading Memorial High School's Turf Field II Project	\$2,225,000	\$402,000	\$1,823,000



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 19

**To see if the Town will amend the General Bylaws, Article 4, Personnel, by striking Section 4.2.2 in its entirety and replacing the section with the following language:**

### 4.2.2 Requirement of Medical Examination

The requirement for a medical examination prior to an employee's entrance on duty shall be governed by the applicable personnel policy, employment contract, or state or federal law.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 20

**To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Section 8.8.2.1.6 of the General Bylaws, to set the amount of the late fee for dog owners and keepers that fail to renew a license issued under Section 8.8.2.1 of the General Bylaws, by March 31, or by the first business day thereafter:**

- This article is to replace our current late fee structure, which has a monthly escalator, to a one-time late fee, when a pet owner fails to register their dog on an annual basis.
- Currently, our late fees are as follows: "\$10.00 fine on the first day of April *and an additional \$5.00 per month fine for each month thereafter.*
- It is administratively cumbersome to track the additional monthly penalty in fines.
- The monthly escalator climbs quickly and can become a burden to residents.
- We propose that only a \$10 late fee be issued, to residents that fail to register their dog by April, and that monthly escalator be removed.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 21

- (1) Authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, 17 Harnden Street, Reading, shown as Assessor's Map Parcel 17 Harnden, for general municipal purposes, including senior and community center purposes, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, and to authorize the Town Manager to take any and all actions and to enter into and execute any and all agreements and other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the foregoing acquisition;
  
- (2) Raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purposes of (i) acquiring said 17 Harnden Street, including all incidental or related costs, such funds to be administered by the Select Board, and (ii) renovating said 17 Harnden Street, including the costs of engineering and architectural services and all incidental or related costs; provided, however, that this appropriation and debt authorization shall be contingent upon passage of a Proposition 2½ Debt Exclusion ballot question pursuant to M.G.L. c. 59, §21C(k);



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 22

**To see if the Town will vote to adopt a mandatory charge per kilowatt-hour upon Reading Municipal Light Plant's electricity consumers located within the Town of Reading pursuant to Section 20(c) of Chapter 25 of the General Laws, for the purposes of qualifying the Town as a Green Community under Section 10 of Chapter 25A of the General Laws:**

- 280 communities have been designated as Green Communities across Massachusetts.
- Green Communities must contribute to the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust Fund. To do this, all electricity customers must pay a charge of \$0.0005/kilowatt-hour collected through their electric bills (approximately \$3.00 to \$4.00 per year for the average home).
- With the implementation of the renewable energy surcharge for Town participation in Green Communities, we expect the average residential customer to pay an additional \$0.41/month or \$4.92/year, paid to MA CEC.



# 2023 Annual Town Meeting

## Article 23

To remove Town Meeting members that have not attended at least 50% of the three (3) sessions in the past 12 months, as prescribed by the Town Charter Section 2-6.

### Town Meeting Members Attendance 2023 Annual Town Meeting - Article

Total of 2 Town Meetings resulting in 7 evenings of attendance

Listed below are those who attended 3 evenings or less

Precinct	First Name	Middle	Last Name	Term	Total	Precinct Vote	Remove Keep in TM	Remain Remove TM
1	Grace	Lynn	Arena	2024	3			
1	Andrena	Marie	Silva	2024	2			
2	Penny		Belmonte	2025	2			
2	Francis	P	Burke	2025	3			
2	Laura	Faye	Wilson	2024	3			
3	Thomas	C	Bellini	2025	1			
3	Thomas	W	Coppola	2024	2			
3	Joseph	J	<u>Sarofeen</u>	2024	2			
3	Matthew	James	Sullivan	2025	1			
4	Jeffrey	P	<u>Jadul</u>	2024	2			
5	Vanessa	I	Alvarado	2025	3			
5	Christine	T	Lusk	2025	3			
8	Jesse	Adam	Wilson	2024	2			

42 Town Meeting Members had perfect attendance in 2022