

# COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss. Officer's Return, Town of Reading:

By virtue of this Warrant, I Laura A Gemme, on \_\_\_\_\_, 2025 notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote on Town affairs, to meet at the place and at the time specified by posting attested copies of this Town Meeting Warrant, in the following public places within the Town of Reading:

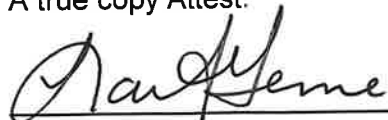
- Precinct 1 J. Warren Killam School, 333 Charles Street
- Precinct 2 Reading Police Station, 15 Union Street
- Precinct 3 Reading Municipal Light Department, 230 Ash Street
- Precinct 4 Joshua Eaton School, 365 Summer Avenue
- Precinct 5 Reading Public Library, 64 Middlesex Avenue
- Precinct 6 Barrows School, 16 Edgemont Avenue
- Precinct 7 Birch Meadow School, 27 Arthur B Lord Drive
- Precinct 8 Wood End School, 85 Sunset Rock Lane
- Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street

The date of posting being not less than fourteen (14) days prior to May 1, 2025, the date set for Town Meeting in this Warrant.

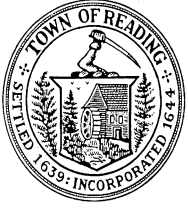


~~Constable~~ Town Clerk

A true copy Attest:



Laura Gemme, Town Clerk



## **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

### **COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Middlesex, ss.

To any of the Constables of the Town of Reading, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote in the Local Elections and Town affairs, to meet at the Reading Memorial High School Performing Arts Center, 62 Oakland Road, in said Reading on

THURSDAY, the FIRST DAY of MAY A.D., 2025

at seven-thirty o'clock in the evening, at which time and place the following articles are to be acted upon and determined exclusively by Town Meeting Members in accordance with the provisions of the Reading Home Rule Charter.

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**ARTICLE 1**                      Reports

To hear and act on the reports of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board, Finance Committee, Bylaw Committee, Town Manager, Town Accountant and any other Town Official, Board or Committee.

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**ARTICLE 2**                      Killam School Building Project

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Killam School Building Committee to design, construct, reconstruct, remodel, add to, equip, and furnish a new Pre-K through Grade Five Elementary School to replace the J.W. Killam Elementary School, with an approximate square footage of 122,941, located at 333 Charles Street, Reading, Assessors' Parcel 041.0-0000-19.0, inclusive of the abatement and demolition of existing school structures on said property, the design and construction of new parking lots and new multi-purpose fields, and all other costs incidental and related thereto, which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years, and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be

the sole responsibility of the Town. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) fifty-two and nineteen one-hundredths percent (52.19%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA. Or to take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

**Background:** In 2021, the district submitted a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the J. Warren Killam Elementary School. In March 2022, the Town was invited to partner with the MSBA on a feasibility study with \$2.2 million approved by Town Meeting. The Town quickly got to work establishing the Killam School Building Committee, in accordance with MSBA requirements, which included designees from the School Committee, Select Board, Finance Committee, all members of the Permanent Building Committee, and advisory Town and School staff including leadership, procurement, finance, and facilities. The Committee then hired Colliers Project Leaders as the Owner's Project Manager, and Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA) as the Designer.

### **Deficiencies in the Killam Elementary School**

The Killam Elementary School was built in 1969 and currently houses kindergarten through fifth grade as well as 2 pre-school classrooms. While the school itself is well-maintained, which was recognized by MSBA with increased reimbursement points, the Town has not done any major renovations to the facility. Some capital improvements over the years include a new roof, window replacement, unit ventilator replacement, a new fire alarm panel, and an updated security system. The school, however, is not ADA accessible. The bathrooms, stage, some doorways, and the library media center and more are not in code with ADA requirements. In addition, the building lacks a fire suppression system, requires a large-scale door and window replacement program, and has water infiltration during heavy rain. In 2017, water sample tests indicated that Killam had high levels of lead and copper in the system. In order to mitigate the high levels, students and staff at Killam use only bottled water for drinking. Programmatically, the building lacks appropriate space to support special education services, multilingual learners, and small group support. Closets are currently utilized for instructional and meeting spaces. Hallways and other common spaces are used for storage. Old wiring means limited data connections in classrooms constricting use of instructional technology.

Requirements of the MSBA feasibility study include assessing the costs of an addition or renovation of the existing school. Any significant renovation would reach a threshold of 20% of the building's assessed value and would thus trigger compliance requirements, currently grandfathered, such as making the entire building ADA compliant. However, the estimated cost for code upgrades and repairs, \$61M, was still significant and would not meet modern learning needs despite base-level code compliance.

### **Features of the Proposed New Killam Elementary School**

The new Killam School will continue to house kindergarten through fifth grade, with each grade having its own dedicated "neighborhood." In addition, the entire RISE integrated preschool program will be consolidated in the new school, thus freeing up classroom and programming space at Wood End Elementary School and Reading Memorial High School. This includes adding two RISE classrooms to meet community demand and ensure there is adequate space to meet the needs of Pre-K students with special needs. The MSBA will be participating in reimbursement for the 12 RISE classroom spaces.

The new school would offer community access to the gymnasium, available for public rental. It will offer modern learning spaces designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and hands-on learning, equipped with the latest technology and resources.

The building is being designed with extensive sustainability features including a hybrid geothermal system. The site will also feature separate play spaces for the different grades; revamped parking for staff and queuing for student pickup and drop-off; and athletic fields, which will also benefit recreational programs.

### **Cost and Finances**

The total cost for the project is \$130,011,783. The Town anticipates a MSBA reimbursement of \$44,182,227, reducing the Town's total cost to \$85,829,556. The Town is proposing a 20-year borrowing for this project, resulting in \$80.50 per \$100,000 of assessed home value. For the average home in Reading valued at \$890,000, the Killam School Building Project would add \$716.45 (\$59.70/month) to the annual tax bill.

**Finance Committee Report:** At their meeting on April 2, 2025, the Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend Article 2 to Town Meeting.

**Bylaw Committee Report:** No Report.

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## **ARTICLE 3                      Senior Center/Reading Center for Active Living Building Project**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow, or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Permanent Building Committee to design, construct, equip, and furnish a new community center, so called the Senior Center/Reading Center for Active Living, located on a portion of an approximately 15.2 acre parcel off of Symonds Way, also known as 0 E of Haverhill Street, Assessors' Map 35, Parcel 133, inclusive of the design and construction of new parking lots, improvements to Symonds Way, and all other costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

Select Board

**Background:** The Reading Center for Active Living (ReCAL) project began about ten years ago with significant research and community engagement along the way, including a 2017 UMass Gerontology Institute Needs Assessment of the Pleasant Street Center (PSC), the formation of the Reading Center for Active Living Committee (RECALC) in 2021, the 2022 report from the Gerontology Institute to facilitate planning and community engagement to determine the community's desire for a new senior/community center, the hiring of architectural and Owners Project Management firms, and then graduating to the Permanent Building Committee. Along the way, multiple surveys, focus groups, peer community benchmarking, community information forums, and public meetings have been conducted addressing this project.

The Center for Active Living, if passed, will replace the Pleasant Street Center as the hub for our age 60+ community. As the Baby Boomers age, Reading's 60+ community has grown. By 2030, it will be 1/3 of the town's population. The Pleasant Street Center, built in 1880, is no longer able to adequately meet the needs of this important part of our community.

### **Deficiencies in the PSC**

Prior to the pandemic, the PSC benefited from small renovations, including an upgraded front desk area, a refurbished computer room, new window treatments, interior painting, and some new furnishings. A seasonal tent was added in 2021 which helped bring people together outdoors in a safer way during the pandemic (installed for 2022).

However, those small upgrades did not address major issues concerning HVAC, persistent combustion odors, an undersized kitchen, a lack of programming space leading to long waitlists, no restroom facilities on the first floor, insufficient parking, lack of privacy for nursing and financial services, inadequate staffing space, and much more. The building has about 7,000 total square feet with just 4,000 programmable.

Through the research done by the Gerontology Institute and RECALC over a period of several years, it was determined that an all-ages community center with designated space and programming for residents 60+ would best serve the needs of the senior population and the community at large.

### **Features of the ReCAL**

The Town engaged the design services of Bargmann Hendrie + Associates (BH+A) to conduct a feasibility study funded by ARPA grant monies in the autumn of 2023. That process continued with Schematic Design, the hiring of Owner's Project Management Firm Turner & Townsend, Heery in the autumn of 2024, and culminated in the design and costs estimates presented today. The ReCAL design is 28,000 gross square feet planned for Symonds Way/ Range Road location across from the Burbank Arena on currently undeveloped land. Plans include approximately 22,000 square feet of programmable space including 10,000 square feet dedicated for two flex rooms, a fitness center, billiards room, arts and crafts room, café, lounge, game room, patio, deck, large multipurpose room, makerspace, and 9,000 square feet for a full gymnasium and elevated walking track. The facility will have access to the outdoors adjacent to the site, with a plan for a trail into the conservation area as well. The building is designed to meet the social, mental, and physical wellness needs of our 60+ population.

The building will also house the full-time staff of our Recreation and Veterans Services divisions, in addition to Elder and Human Services. It will include meeting space, private spaces for nursing and financial services, and adequate storage space, as well as a planned commercial kitchen. With the kitchen, showers, and a generator on site, the facility can be used as an emergency shelter even when schools are in session.

By housing more staff at the location, the hours of operation can increase, meeting the needs of not only working seniors who want to attend community programs after work, but also allowing for programs for all ages. Gymnasium space is at a premium in the community presently. Evening programming can be for adults of all-ages for activities like yoga, quilting, sporting leagues, foreign language classes, robotics, gaming, and more. Intergenerational activities are also planned for the building, as already currently done by Elder and Human Services, during non-peak 60+ hours. An operations plan was recently developed to illustrate the costs and revenues associated with a building like this. More information will be presented at Town Meeting.

### **Future of the Pleasant Street Center**

The future of the Pleasant Street Center has also been explored via research and a commercial appraisal. Potential ideas include housing, selling to a developer for mixed use purposes, a café, an arts and cultural center, retaining for leasing purposes, or expanded storage and office space for the town. Initial information from the commercial appraisal will be presented at Town Meeting.

**Cost and Finances**

The cost for the project is \$27.9 million and carries conservative contingencies (INFO) to shield the project from construction escalation risk. The town is proposing a 15-year borrowing for this project, resulting in \$28.78 per \$100,000 of assessed home value. For the average home in Reading valued at \$890,000, the Reading Center for Active Living Project would add \$265.04 (\$22.09/month) to the annual tax bill.

**Finance Committee Report:** At their meeting on April 2, 2025, the Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend Article 3 to Town Meeting.

**Bylaw Committee Report:** No Report.


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and you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof in at least one (1) public place in each precinct of the Town not less than fourteen (14) days prior to May 1, 2025, or providing in a manner such as electronic submission, holding for pickup or mailing, an attested copy of said Warrant to each Town Meeting Member.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at or before the time appointed for said meeting.

Given under our hands this \_\_\_<sup>th</sup> day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carlo Bacci

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark L. Dockser

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Gately Herrick

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Haley

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Murphy

SELECT BOARD OF READING

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk    ~~Constable~~