

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss. Officer's Return, Reading:

By virtue of this Warrant, I, on _____, 2015 notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote in Town elections and 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 Walter S. Parker Middle School, 45 Temple Street
- 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 April 27, 2015, the date set for Town Meeting in this Warrant.

I also caused a posting of this Warrant to be published on the Town of Reading website on _____, 2015.

, Constable

A true copy Attest:

Laura Gemme, Town Clerk

TOWN 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 elections and Town affairs, to meet at the **Reading Memorial High School Performing Arts Center**, 62 Oakland Road, in said Reading, on Monday, April 27, 2015, at **eight 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.

ARTICLE 1 To hear and act on the reports of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board, Finance Committee, Bylaw Committee, Town Manager, Town Accountant and any other Town Official, Board or Committee.

Board of Selectmen

Background: This article appears on the Warrant for all Town Meetings. There are no reports scheduled for this Special Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 2 To choose all other necessary Town Officers and Boards or Committees and determine what instructions shall be given Town Officers and Boards or Committees, and to see what sum the Town will vote to appropriate by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, for the purpose of funding Town Officers and Boards or Committees to carry out the instructions given to them, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Board of Selectmen

Background: This Article appears on the Warrant of all Town Meetings. There are no known Instructional Motions at this time. The Town Moderator requires that all proposed Instructional Motions be submitted to the Town Clerk in advance so that Town Meeting Members may be "warned" as to the subject of an Instructional Motion in advance of the motion being made. Instructional Motions are normally held until the end of all other business at Town Meeting.

Finance Committee Report: No report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

ARTICLE 3 To see if the Town will vote to amend the FY 2015-25 Capital Improvements Program as provided for in Section 7-7 of the Reading Home Rule Charter and as previously amended, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Board of Selectmen

Background: This article appears on the Warrant for all Town Meetings. There are no anticipated actions expected under this Article during this Special Town Meeting.

Finance Committee Report: No report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

ARTICLE 4 To see what sum the Town will raise by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, and appropriate for the purpose of making extraordinary repairs, replacement and/or new installation of field lighting systems, including the costs of consulting services, audits, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended by and under the direction of the Town Manager; and to see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, or any other agency of the Town, to apply for a grant or grants, to be used to defray the cost of all, or any part of, said field lighting systems improvements; and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into any and all contracts and agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Article, or take any other action with respect thereto

Board of Selectmen

Background: A Master Plan for the Birch Meadow Complex was drafted in 2008 and approved by the Board of Selectmen in 2009. Town Meeting subsequently approved funding in the Capital Plan to begin in FY15. Approximately two years ago, a discussion with the Board of Selectmen concluded with a changed approach that the Recreation Committee would revisit the Master Plan and make comments and suggestions before any funds were expended. The project start date was pushed out beyond FY15 on the capital plan.

Last fall the Recreation Committee and Town staff began discussing the Master Plan in detail and one change evident to all was that the fields would not need to be shifted slightly. This represented a substantial cost avoidance compared to what had been proposed previously. This decision then made the Birch Meadow Complex project divisible into two phases – field lighting in the near term and the remainder of the project to follow.

The first phase of the project is the subject matter of this Article, which is a request to install newer energy efficient field lighting for the entire Complex at an expected cost of \$1.0 million. The second phase will begin with a community-wide survey by the Recreation Committee later this spring. The results of the survey will be discussed at public meetings with the Recreation Committee and the Board of Selectmen, and the community should expect to see the rest of the Birch Meadow Complex Master Plan within the next year. Town Meeting may see an Article at 2016 Annual Town Meeting to complete this last phase of the project.

The field lighting phase will encompass five fields as shown in the picture below. Note the photo is old – taken before the tennis courts were completed. Right away we shall admit to needing some creativity in field naming, but currently two of the fields (“Lighted Softball Field” and “Turf 2”) are lit, with ‘old’ lighting technology:



The field lighting portion of this project could be said to have two main components: community impact and recurring cost.

From a community impact standpoint, the increased hours of field illumination are estimated to add 3-5 hours per day for the three unlit fields, or the equivalent of adding 1.5 more fields to the existing Birch Meadow Complex. This estimate assumes that hours of use are not extended beyond their current limits, but simply that more fields are available deeper into the evening. This additional field time will be a huge positive step towards meeting unmet recreational demands from our residents, which are substantial. Growing the availability of team sports and activities is consistent with the efforts of the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse to provide alternatives and opportunities to engage the students and young adults in the community.

The Board of Selectmen will schedule a spring 2015 neighborhood meeting if this Article is approved in order to review the field lighting project details, answer all questions and hear any concerns. Parking, traffic, light spillage and other impacts will be discussed. If the community has an appetite to expand the current night-time hours of field use, that will be considered. Note that modern lighting design features very low light leakage and as one can see from the picture above, this should have negligible

impact on abutters and neighbors. There is expected to be no impact on Conservation land, but Conservation staff and the Commission as needed will be consulted before the project begins.

From a cost standpoint, it should first be noted up front that Recreation is not a profit-seeking enterprise. Recall that revolving funds are meant to draw in just enough revenues to reasonably pay the costs. All Recreation expenses are paid directly by the revolving fund during the year and at fiscal year end the revolving fund turns back about \$75,000 to \$100,000 to the general fund, an amount purposefully below the remaining wage and benefit costs of Recreation staff in order to provide a low-cost service to the community.

On the financing side, selling project debt for ten years will add approximately \$15,000 in annual interest costs. Note that participants are directly charged the cost of field lighting, so there is no additional operational cost to the town for adding new lighting. For the participants using the two currently lit fields, there is an estimated total combined energy savings of about \$10,000 annually.

Field revenues are currently estimated to be \$55,000 during the year. The addition of extra field availability should increase field hours purchased by at least 15%. The Recreation Committee has already discussed raising fees to help cover the cost of the first phase of the project. This is only possible indirectly since fees do not currently fully support all costs. Note that it is affordable by current night-time participants as they will get a break in lower lighting costs. Following is a chart that combines these two impacts on revenues, as reviewed at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting. It is not difficult to see this project paying for the extra \$15,000 costs described above.

SCENARIOS FOR INCREASE OF FEES AND PARTICIPATION					
			Increased Participation		
		Current	10%	15%	20%
		\$ 55,234	\$ 60,757	\$ 63,519	\$ 66,281
Increased Field Fees	20%	\$ 66,281	\$ 72,909	\$ 76,223	\$ 79,537
	30%	\$ 71,804	\$ 78,985	\$ 82,575	\$ 86,165
	40%	\$ 77,328	\$ 85,060	\$ 88,927	\$ 92,793
	50%	\$ 82,851	\$ 91,136	\$ 95,279	\$ 99,421

In the next year when the remaining phase of the Birch Meadow Complex is presented to the community, the financial approach to covering costs will again be explored, but weighed against the benefit of the service provided to the community.

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee recommends this Article by a vote of 8-0-0 at their meeting on March 25, 2015.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

Board of Selectmen Report: The Board of Selectmen at their meeting on March 24, 2015 voted 4-0-0 to support this Article. Selectman John Halsey left the meeting for both the discussion and the vote on this Article due to a possible perceived conflict of interest because of his association with baseball activities in the community.

ARTICLE 5 To see what sum the Town will raise by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, and appropriate, to be added to this amount appropriated for modular classrooms under Article 6 of the February 23, 2015 Special Town Meeting, for the purpose of purchasing and placing modular classroom units at elementary schools, including the costs of consulting services, audits, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended by and under the direction of the School Committee and the Town Manager; and to see if the Town will authorize the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, or any other agency of the Town, to apply for a grant or grants to be used to defray the cost of all, or any part of, said improvements; and to authorize the School Committee and/or the Town Manager to enter into any and all contracts and agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Article.

Board of Selectmen as a courtesy to the School Committee

Background: A Special Town Meeting in February 2015 approved \$1.2 million to be used from Free Cash towards the purchase and siting of modular classrooms at the Joshua Eaton, Alice M. Barrows and J. Killam Elementary Schools.

A first round of the procurement process has revealed the need for the School Committee to make some choices ranging from changing some technical specifications to a request for additional funding. Results from a second round of the procurement process currently underway will provide the School Committee with information to help determine the next steps.

In order to provide the most flexibility to the project, this Article has been placed on this Warrant. There are three possible outcomes:

- a) The Article will be tabled;
- b) The Article will move forward as a request to use debt instead of Free Cash for an amount up to \$1.2 million;
- c) The Article will move forward with a request to include additional funding above \$1.2 million, and to use debt instead of Free Cash.

The first two choices above indicate that the previously approved \$1.2 million is ample for the project, and that is the current expectation and desire of the School Committee. The third choice c) will indicate that the \$1.2 million is not adequate, in which case Town Meeting will be asked to approve debt for the entire project. Note that if this is the case, the Capital plan in Article 4 of the Annual Town Meeting will need to be first amended for the new total project cost.

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee recommends this Article by a vote of 8-0-0 at their meeting on March 25, 2015.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

School Committee Report: The School Committee at their meeting on March 26, 2015 voted 4-0-0 to support this Article.

ARTICLE 6 To see what sum the Town will raise by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, and appropriate for the purpose of making extraordinary repairs, replacement and/or new installation of retaining walls at Reading Memorial High School, including the costs of consulting services, audits, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended by and

under the direction of the School Committee and the Town Manager; and to see if the Town will authorize the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, or any other agency of the Town, to apply for a grant or grants to be used to defray the cost of all, or any part of, said improvements; and to authorize the School Committee and/or the Town Manager to enter into any and all contracts and agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Article.

Board of Selectmen *as a courtesy to the School Committee*

Background: Subsequent Town Meeting in November 2014 approved \$30,000 in funding for an engineering assessment of the retaining wall for the upper parking lot at Reading Memorial High School. That assessment is 50% complete and the estimated repair cost will be known if the snow ever melts, which hopefully will be before Annual Town Meeting!

Complete information for both Articles 5 and 6 will be known in advance of Town Meeting but not in sufficient time for the printing of this Special Town Meeting Warrant Report. If Article 5 has converted previously approved use of Free Cash to be debt instead, then it is possible that Article 6 will be tabled and the retaining wall repair project will continue as a request to use Free Cash instead of debt. Such a request would happen under Article 5 in the Annual Town Meeting. Otherwise this Article will request debt funding for these repairs.

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee recommends this Article by a vote of 8-0-0 at their meeting on March 25, 2015.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

School Committee Report: The School Committee at their meeting on March 26, 2015 voted 4-0-0 to support this Article.

ARTICLE 7 To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Section 5.2 of the Reading General Bylaws, to approve and authorize the Board of Selectmen to settle potential litigation involving the Sutton Brook Disposal Area Superfund Site, involving the possible payment of a sum of more than Fifty Thousand (\$50,000) Dollars, or take any other action relating thereto.

Board of Selectmen

Background: The Town may be named as defendant in a suit seeking contribution towards the cost of cleanup of the Sutton Brook Disposal Area Superfund Site, formerly known as Rocco's Landfill. The Town has received a preemptive offer of settlement, to be paid in exchange for avoiding litigation. Town Counsel has been looking into both the chances such a suit will actually be brought as well as the legitimacy of any claims the Town would face. Town Counsel and the Board of Selectmen will meet in Executive Session on April 14, 2015 in order to recommend a course of action. This Article is placed on this Warrant as a placeholder in the event that there is need for Town Meeting to approve the payment of a settlement.

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee may be asked to advise Town Meeting on this matter once Town Counsel recommends the best solution to the Board of Selectmen.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

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 April 27, 2015, 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 ___th day of _____, 2015.

John Arena, Chairman

Marsie K. West , Vice Chairman

Daniel Ensminger, Secretary

John R. Halsey

Kevin Sexton

SELECTMEN OF READING

, Constable