



**TOWN OF EASTON
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
WARRANT AND RESULTS
November 8, 2021**

BRISTOL, SS.

To either of the Constables of the Town of Easton in the County of Bristol:
GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Easton qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs to meet in the Oliver Ames High School Auditorium in said Easton on Monday, the 8th day of November, next, at 7:00 P.M., then and there to act upon the following articles:

The Moderator reviewed some town meeting rules & procedures and noted that the glossary of terms is located at the back of the warrant. She led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A quorum of registered voters of the Town of Easton being present and the proper return of the warrant being met, Town Moderator Kate Welch called the November 8, 2021 Special Town Meeting, held in the Auditorium of Oliver Ames High School, to order at 7:43 PM.

ARTICLE 1. TRANSFER TO STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be placed into the Stabilization Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Select Board

MOTION: Select Board Chairperson Fulginiti moved that the Town vote to appropriate by transfer from free cash the sum of \$1,175,000 to be placed into the Stabilization Fund.

Explanation: This article moves \$1,175,000 of available free cash to the stabilization fund in accordance with the Town's financial management guidelines and the ongoing goal to build up reserves. Once transferred, the balance of the stabilization fund will be \$4,737,792.

*Vote Required: SIMPLE MAJORITY
Select Board Recommendation: RECOMMENDED
Finance Committee Recommendation: RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 2. TRANSFER TO THE CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be placed into the Capital Stabilization Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Select Board

MOTION: Select Board Chairperson Fulginiti moved that Town vote to appropriate by transfer from available Medicaid cost recovery funds the sum of \$117,283 to be placed into the Capital Stabilization Fund.

Explanation: This article moves available one-time revenues to the capital stabilization fund for future use, subject to town meeting appropriation. Once transferred, the balance of the capital stabilization fund will be \$1,889,757.

Vote Required: *SIMPLE MAJORITY*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 3. TRANSFER TO SPECIAL EDUCATION RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from available funds the sum of \$200,000 to be placed into the Special Education Reserve Fund established pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 13E of the Massachusetts General Laws; or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by School Committee

MOTION: Select Board Member Barger moved that the Town vote to appropriate by transfer from free cash the sum of \$200,000 to be placed into the Special Education Reserve Fund.

Explanation: The Special Education Reserve Fund was established to set aside funds for future unanticipated or unbudgeted costs related to special education costs. The requested appropriation will replenish funds previously transferred out of the Reserve Fund at the June 22, 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

Vote Required: *SIMPLE MAJORITY*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL INJURY LEAVE (INJURED ON DUTY) RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of the 4th paragraph of M.G.L. c. 41, §111F and establish a special injury leave indemnity fund, and to appropriate by transfer from available funds a sum of money to fund said fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator

MOTION: Select Board Member Barger moved that the Town vote to accept the provisions of the 4th paragraph of M.G.L. c. 41, §111F and establish a special injury leave indemnity fund, and to appropriate by transfer from free cash the sum of \$100,000 to be placed into said fund.

Explanation: The Town self-insures for injured on duty medical coverage, however, payroll costs associated with long term injury absences for Police and Firefighters are typically borne out of existing payroll budgets for those departments. The amount of overtime necessitated for shift coverage resulting from an injury in the line of duty varies widely and is not an expense that can reasonably be anticipated and budgeted for during the routine budget cycle, and so this special reserve fund would provide flexibility for those departments to adequately fund injury-driven overtime. Funds placed into this account would be under the care of the Select Board and could only be disbursed for IOD related costs following a vote of the Board at a public meeting

Vote Required: *SIMPLE MAJORITY*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 5. PAYMENT OF BILL(S) FROM A PRIOR FISCAL YEAR

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay the cost of bills incurred in a prior fiscal year, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Select Board

MOTION: Select Board Member Lamb moved that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,740 by transfer from water surplus to pay the cost of a bill incurred in the prior fiscal year.

Explanation: This prior year bill is for the replacement of PFAS containing firefighting foam which was funded by the Water Division as part of the department’s PFAS mitigation program.

Vote Required: *NINE-TENTHS*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 6. AMEND FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds a sum of money to amend fiscal year 2022 departmental budgets, including cost items for collective bargaining agreements, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator

MOTION: Select Board Member Lamb moved that the Town vote to amend fiscal year 2022 departmental budgets, including cost items for collective bargaining agreements by the following amounts which shall increase said budgets unless otherwise noted:

DEPARTMENT NAME	AMOUNT
ASSESSORS	\$ 18,100
FIRE AND RESCUE	64,176

REGIONAL & COUNTY SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS	65,739
MATURING DEBT & INTEREST <i>(Decrease)</i>	(729,067)
WATER ENTERPRISE	18,525
NET DECREASE	\$ 562,527

And to meet these amendments, the amount raised from taxation shall be decreased by \$653,572, \$8,344 shall be transferred from Septic Betterments Receipts Reserved for Appropriation, \$64,176 shall be transferred from the FY2022 Employee Benefits and Insurance Budget, and \$18,525 shall be transferred from Water Receipts.

Explanation: This article will adjust the Fiscal Year 2022 operating budget including revenues and expenditures. Adjustments for the assessing cover staffing transfers and training requirements, the fire department adjustment primarily funds a collective bargaining agreement reached since the Annual Town Meeting and is funded by existing collective bargaining reserves, regional and county school assessments increased mainly due to a change in the application of grant funds and net school spending requirements outside of the Town’s control, maturing debt and interest will decrease mostly due to a reduction in the amount of exempt debt to be raised on the school project, and the water enterprise fund requires an adjustment for additional debt service.

Vote Required: **SIMPLE MAJORITY**
 Select Board Recommendation: **RECOMMENDED**
 Finance Committee Recommendation: **RECOMMENDED**

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 7. SUPPLEMENT FY2022 CAPITAL BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, appropriate by borrowing, or appropriate by transfer from available funds, a sum of money to supplement the capital budget needs of the Town for fiscal year 2022 as follows:

Police – Two Marked Vehicles	\$ 117,800
IT - Annual Computer Hardware/Software Replacement	33,456
IT - Server Upgrade	36,464
School Dept - Computers/Technology	284,612
Fire/Police/DPW Facility Feasibility Study	500,000
Online Permitting System Upgrade	122,000
DPW - Replace 2006 F450 with F550 Hooklift	128,000
DPW - Replace 2003 Bobcat Loader	85,000
Fire Grant Matching Funds - SCBA Fill Station	6,364
Total	\$1,313,696

or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator

MOTION: Select Board Member Stacy moved that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,313,696 to supplement the capital budget needs of the Town for fiscal year 2022 as printed in the warrant under Article 7 and that to meet this appropriation, \$1,100,000 shall be transferred from free cash and \$213,696 shall be transferred from overlay surplus.

Explanation: This article addresses additional capital needs for fiscal 2022 that were not able to be funded at the Annual Town Meeting in May. The Town Administrator and other department heads will make a brief presentation on the Fire/Police/DPW Facility Feasibility Study component of the budget.

Vote Required: *SIMPLE MAJORITY*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 8. FUND SICK AND VACATION BUYBACK AS REQUIRED BY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay the cost of accumulated vacation and sick-leave required to be paid by collective bargaining contract, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator

MOTION: Select Board Member Stacy moved that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$18,580 to pay the cost of accumulated vacation and sick-leave required to be paid by collective bargaining contract.

Explanation: The Fire Department has a retirement forthcoming for an employee eligible for vacation and grandfathered into previous (but no longer existing) sick leave buy-back upon retirement.

Vote Required: *SIMPLE MAJORITY*
Select Board Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*
Finance Committee Recommendation: *RECOMMENDED*

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 9. APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES TO THE AMES TRUST FUNDS FOR THE TOWN OF EASTON HIGHWAY PERMANENT FUND AND SUPPORT OF SCHOOL FUND

To see if the Town will vote to place the Town of Easton Highway Permanent Fund, established by the Town at the Special Town Meeting of June 22, 1926, and the fund for the Support of School held by the Town of Easton in Trust under the will of the late Oliver Ames Jr., in the custody and care of Henry J. Ames and Kevin M. Kidd, with said trustees having the authority to invest and reinvest said funds, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Select Board

MOTION: Select Board Member Stebbins moved that the Town vote to appoint Henry J. Ames and Kevin M. Kidd as trustees to the Ames Trust Funds for the Town of Easton Highway Permanent Fund and Support of School Fund as described in the warrant.

Explanation: James S. Thomas, appointed a trustee by vote of Town Meeting on April 29, 1991, has resigned as trustee and this article would fill that vacancy and add a third trustee to care for and manage the funds along with continuing trustee David Ames Jr.

<i>Vote Required:</i>	<i>SIMPLE MAJORITY</i>
<i>Select Board Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>
<i>Finance Committee Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 10. RESCIND PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED DEBT

To see if the Town will vote to rescind \$230,000 of the borrowing authorized under Article 17 of the May 18, 2015 Annual Town Meeting, said borrowing having been authorized for the purpose of replacing Well #4, of which the remaining authorization is no longer needed as the project is complete, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Select Board

MOTION: Select Board Member Stebbins moved that the Town vote to rescind \$230,000 of the borrowing authorized under Article 17 of the May 18, 2015 Annual Town Meeting, as printed in the warrant under Article 10.

Explanation: This "housekeeping" article will remove the remaining authorization that would otherwise remain on the books indefinitely.

<i>Vote Required:</i>	<i>SIMPLE MAJORITY</i>
<i>Select Board Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>
<i>Finance Committee Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>

DECLARED VOTED BY MAJORITY BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 11. EASEMENT FOR NATIONAL GRID INSTALLATION OF UNDERGROUND ELECTRICAL UTILITIES FOR THE BLANCHE A. AMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – SPOONER STREET

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to grant an easement for the installation of underground electrical utilities in a property known and numbered as 50 Spooner Street, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator

MOTION: Select Board Chairperson Fulginiti moved that the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to grant an easement for the installation of underground electrical utilities in a property known and numbered as 50 Spooner Street, and further to authorize the Select Board to take any and all action necessary to effectuate this easement.

Explanation: This easement has been requested by National Grid for the installation of underground electrical service to the future Blanche A. Ames Elementary School, which is currently under construction. The property in question is town owned, and the easement is necessary to provide utilities to the building. A plan depicting the easement is on file with the Select Board's office.

<i>Vote Required:</i>	<i>TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY</i>
<i>Select Board Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>
<i>Finance Committee Recommendation:</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>

DECLARED VOTED BY 2/3 BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 12. SEPTIC LOAN PROGRAM

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,000,000 for the purpose of financing the following water pollution facility projects: repair, replacement and/or upgrade of septic systems, pursuant to agreements with Board of Health and residential property owners, including without limitation all costs thereof as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 29C of the General Laws; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust or otherwise, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Board of Health

MOTION: Select Board Chairperson Fulginiti moved that \$1,000,000 be appropriated for the purpose of financing the following water pollution abatement facility projects: repair, replacement and/or upgrade of septic systems, pursuant to agreements with the Board of Health and residential property owners, including without limitation all costs thereof as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 29C of the General Laws; that to meet this appropriation the Treasurer with the approval of the Select Board is authorized to borrow \$1,000,000 and issue bonds or notes therefore under G.L. c.111, s.127B 1/2 and/or Chapter 29C of the General Laws; that project and financing costs shall be repaid by the property owners, in accordance with those agreements, but such bonds or notes shall be general obligations of the Town; that the Treasurer with the approval of the Select Board is authorized to borrow all or a portion of such amount from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust established pursuant to Chapter 29C and in connection therewith to enter into a loan agreement and/or security agreement with the Trust and otherwise contract with the Trust and the Department of Environmental Protection with respect to such loan and for any federal or state aid available for the projects or for the financing thereof; and that the Select Board or other appropriate local body or official is authorized to enter into a project regulatory agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, to expend all funds available for the projects and to take any other action necessary to carry out the projects.

Explanation: If approved, this will allow the Town to avail itself of additional funds available through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust at low interest which will then be used to provide loans to residents for the express purpose of upgrading failed septic systems. Upgrading includes the replacement of an existing system or the connecting to a sewer. The funds will be offered as betterment loans which will be paid back with interest over a period of time, not to exceed 20 years. Betterments appear as additional charges on the real estate tax bill.

Since 2012 the Town has provided 3.4 million dollars in loans upgrading more than 140 systems to date. The approval of these additional funds will allow for the continuation of this program.

Vote Required: TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY
Select Board Recommendation: RECOMMENDED
Finance Committee Recommendation: RECOMMENDED

DECLARED VOTED BY 2/3 BY THE MODERATOR

The Special Town Meeting was declared Adjourned at 8:10 PM.

ATTEST:

Danielle M. Sicard
Town Clerk