



TOWN OF HOPEDALE **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES**

November 29, 2023

7:00 pm

The inhabitants of the Town of Hopedale qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs met in the Dennett Auditorium of the Junior/Senior High School on Wednesday November 29, 2023. The meeting was called under the Warrant dated the 9th day of November 2023, which was posted in accordance with Town By-Laws. Moderator Eugene N. Phillips called the Special Town meeting to order at 7:02 PM. There were seventy-nine (79) registered voters recorded as present [a quorum being fifty (50) registered voters].

Eugene N. Phillips, Moderator, welcomed all residents and announced the individuals who have privileges of the floor:

- Mitchell Ruscitti, Town Administrator
- Robin Stein, Town Counsel
- Tanya Campbell, Partner, Marcum LLP (Town Accountant)
- Cheryl Hanly, Principal Assessor
- Mark Giovanella, Police Chief
- Tom Daige, Fire Chief
- Karen Crebase, Superintendent of Schools
- Stanley Golenski, Highway Superintendent
- Tricia Perry, Director, Bancroft Memorial Library
- Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Superintendent, Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School

Moderator Phillips held a moment of silence for residents that have passed and then lead the Town Meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to dispense with the reading of the warrant.

ARTICLE 1 **BANCROFT MEMORIAL LIBRARY HVAC SYSTEMS REPAIR/REPLACEMENT** **(Select Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money for design, engineering and all other costs associated with repairs and/or replacement of the heating and air conditioning systems at the Bancroft Memorial Library, or take any other action related thereto.

Glenda Hazard, Select Board Chair, moved to transfer the sum of \$101,000 from those funds as appropriated under Article 2 of the May 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting; \$96,506 of said sum to be transferred from those funds appropriated under account 100 – General Government with the balance of \$4,494 to be transferred from account 400 – Public Works, the total being transferred to account 610 – Library as voted under Article 2 of said Annual Town Meeting to be

utilized for design, engineering and all other costs associated with repairs and/or replacement of the heating and air conditioning systems at the Bancroft Memorial Library.

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

**ARTICLE 2
PRIOR YEAR BILLS
(Select Board)**

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to M.G.L. c.44, §64 to transfer from available funds such sums of money necessary for the purpose of paying outstanding bills from prior fiscal year(s), as listed below:

VENDOR	INVOICE # DATE	INVOICE TOTAL	APPROPRIATION AMT.NEEDED
Direct Energy/NRG	HS33706497 6/29/2023	\$291.08	\$165.11
Perch Community Solar	145309 4/20/2023	\$8,262.60	\$1,284.39
Perch Community Solar	148616 5/19/2023	\$11,551.22	\$3,259.07
Perch Community Solar	151888 6/21/2023	\$14,796.87	\$9,319.97
Perch Community Solar	154235 7/20/2023	\$9,787.93	\$6,135.70
Global Montello	23311464	\$7,997.09	\$4,730.81
Milford Regional Medical	Voucher 62 9/21/2023	\$1,680.14	\$1,680.14
Orion Emergency Services	Voucher 63 9/21/2023	\$326.06	\$326.06
Eversource	6/8/2023	\$197.36	\$197.36
Clocktower Technology	24944	\$1,681.20	\$1,681.20
Clocktower Technology	24996-M	\$2,164.31	\$2,164.31
Clocktower Technology	25037	\$1,627.20	\$1,627.20
Clocktower Technology	25077	\$1,627.00	\$1,627.00
Reliant Medical Group	6/30/2023	\$1,161.00	\$1,161.00
Galls	24477939	\$239.99	\$239.99
Comcast Business	6/14/2023	\$14.36	\$14.36
TOTAL PRIOR YEAR BILLS		\$63,405.41	\$35,613.67

or take any other action related thereto.

Glenda Hazard, Select Board Chair, moved to vote, pursuant to M.G.L. c.44, §64, to authorize payment of the prior year invoices as printed in the warrant and, further, to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$35,613.67 to pay said invoices.

(9/10th VOTE REQUIRED)

VENDOR	INVOICE # DATE	INVOICE TOTAL	APPROPRIATION AMT.NEEDED
Direct Energy/NRG	HS33706497 6/29/2023	\$291.08	\$165.11
Perch Community Solar	145309 4/20/2023	\$8,262.60	\$1,284.39
Perch Community Solar	148616 5/19/2023	\$11,551.22	\$3,259.07
Perch Community Solar	151888 6/21/2023	\$14,796.87	\$9,319.97
Perch Community Solar	154235 7/20/2023	\$9,787.93	\$6,135.70
Global Montello	23311464	\$7,997.09	\$4,730.81
Milford Regional Medical	Voucher 62 9/21/2023	\$1,680.14	\$1,680.14
Orion Emergency Services	Voucher 63 9/21/2023	\$326.06	\$326.06
Eversource	6/8/2023	\$197.36	\$197.36
Clocktower Technology	24944	\$1,681.20	\$1,681.20
Clocktower Technology	24996-M	\$2,164.31	\$2,164.31
Clocktower Technology	25037	\$1,627.20	\$1,627.20
Clocktower Technology	25077	\$1,627.00	\$1,627.00
Reliant Medical Group	6/30/2023	\$1,161.00	\$1,161.00
Galls	24477939	\$239.99	\$239.99
Comcast Business	6/14/2023	\$14.36	\$14.36
TOTAL PRIOR YEAR BILLS		\$63,405.41	\$35,613.67

The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.

(NOTE: THE PRIOR YEAR BILLS LISTED IN THE MOTION ARE THE SAME AS PRINTED IN THE WARRANT)

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

**ARTICLE 3
PRIOR YEAR FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME EXPENSES
(Select Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds such sums of money necessary for the purpose of paying overtime expenses for Fire Department personnel, said expenses having been incurred in Fiscal Year 2023, or take any other action related thereto.

Glenda Hazard, Select Board Chair, moved to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$5,296.64 for the purpose of paying personal service expenses for Fire Department personnel, said expenses having been incurred in Fiscal Year 2023.

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

**ARTICLE 4
SUPPLEMENT FY 2024 BUDGETS
(Select Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds such sums of money necessary for the purpose of supplementing the following FY 2024 Operating Budgets:

- Town Clerk Salaries & Wages – “Assistant” line item – to bring the Assistant Town Clerk’s salary into compliance with the Classification and Compensation Plan adopted under Article 27 of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, retroactive to July 1, 2023.
- Fire Department Salaries & Wages – “Permanent” line item – to fund salary increases negotiated with the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, retroactive to July 1, 2023
- Treasurer/Collector Salaries & Wages – “Permanent” line item – to fund a salary increase negotiated with the Treasurer/Collector, retroactive to July 1, 2023

or take any other action related thereto.

Glenda Hazard, Select Board Chair, moved to transfer the sum of \$47,722.00, of which \$30,506.00 to be transferred from those funds as appropriated under Article 2 of the May 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting account 400 – Public Works, and \$17,216.00 to be transferred from Free Cash, for the purpose of supplementing FY 2024 Operating Budgets as voted under Article 2 of the May 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting, as listed below:

- ***Town Clerk Salaries & Wages – “Assistant” line item – the amount of \$3,080.00 to bring the Assistant Town Clerk’s salary into compliance with the Classification and Compensation Plan adopted under Article 27 of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, retroactive to July 1, 2023.***
- ***Fire Department Salaries & Wages – “Permanent” line item – the amount of \$44,642.00 to fund salary increases negotiated with the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, retroactive to July 1, 2023***

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

**ARTICLE 5
RESCIND BORROWING AUTHORIZATION
(Town Treasurer)**

To see if the Town will vote to rescind borrowing authorizations for unissued debt that have been determined to no longer be needed for the completion of the various projects or purchases for which the debt was authorized, or take any other action related thereto.

Bernard J. Stock, Select Board, moved to rescind borrowing authorizations for unissued debt that have been determined to no longer be needed for the completion of the various projects or purchases for which the debt was authorized, as listed below:

PURPOSE	DATE OF VOTE	ARTICLE	AMOUNT AUTHORIZED	BALANCE UNISSUED TO BE RESCINDED
Septic Betterments	5/17/2011	6	\$200,000	\$200,000
Memorial School Roof	11/19/2013	2	\$269,617	\$64,418
Freedom Street Bridge	3/9/2016	2	\$500,000	\$76,924
Library Building Repairs	6/19/2018	4	\$150,000	\$11,000
Departmental Equip.	6/19/2018	4	\$1,025,000	\$233,000
Road Construction	6/19/2018	4	\$1,100,000	\$124,076
TOTAL				\$709,418

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

**ARTICLE 6
PAY OFF DEBT AND INTEREST
(Town Treasurer)**

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay off debt and interest for various projects and/or purchases authorized by prior Town Meeting votes, or take any other action related thereto.

Bernard J. Stock, Select Board, moved to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$382,500 said sum of money being necessary to pay off debt and interest on various projects and/or purchases authorized by prior Town Meeting votes, as set forth below:

TOWN MEETING DATE/ ARTICLE NUMBER	DEPARTMENT	PURPOSE	AMOUNT TO BE PAID OFF
6/19/18 Article 4	School	Various	\$141,000
6/19/18 Article 4	Police/Town Clerk/Highway	Equipment	\$108,500
5/16/23 Article 13	Highway	Vactor Truck	\$133,000
TOTAL			\$382,500

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

ARTICLE 7 CLOSE OUT ACCOUNTS (Select Board)

To see if the Town will vote to close out certain accounts authorized by Town Meeting vote where the purposes for which funds were appropriated have been fulfilled, as listed below:

STM 10/16/21 Art. 6 Network Server	\$220.82
STM 11/18/14 (adjourned to 12/1/14) Art. 3 Town Hall Cleanup	\$7,324.55
STM 10/16/21 Art. 6 Tree Preservation/Protection	\$890.28
STM 3/26/22 Art. 1 Electronic Permitting Software	\$56,000.00
ATM 5/24/22 Art. 2 Prior Year Bills	\$6.03
STM 11/14/22 Art. 1 Prior Year Bills	\$417.14
ATM 5/17/16 Art. 22 Weed Control Hopedale Pond	\$7,165.00
STM 3/26/22 Art. 1 Fire Chief's Vehicle	\$2,217.24
STM 11/12/19 Art. 10 Catherine St & Overdale Pkwy paving	\$23,357.60
TOTAL	\$97,598.66

or take any other action related thereto.

Bernard J. Stock, Select Board, moved to close out certain accounts authorized by Town Meeting vote where the purposes for which funds were appropriated have been fulfilled, as listed below:

STM 10/16/21 Art. 6 Network Server	\$220.82
STM 11/18/14 (adjourned to 12/1/14) Art. 3 Town Hall Cleanup	\$7,324.55
STM 10/16/21 Art. 6 Tree Preservation/Protection	\$890.28
STM 3/26/22 Art. 1 Electronic Permitting Software	\$56,000.00
ATM 5/24/22 Art. 2 Prior Year Bills	\$6.03
STM 11/14/22 Art. 1 Prior Year Bills	\$417.14
ATM 5/17/16 Art. 22 Weed Control Hopedale Pond	\$7,165.00
STM 3/26/22 Art. 1 Fire Chief's Vehicle	\$2,217.24
STM 11/12/19 Art. 10 Catherine St & Overdale Pkwy paving	\$23,357.60
TOTAL	\$97,598.66

The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.

(NOTE THAT THE ACCOUNTS LISTED IN THE MOTION ARE THE SAME AS THOSE LISTED IN THE WARRANT).

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 8 AMEND FY 2024 WATER DEPARTMENT BUDGET (Water Department)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the FY24 Water Department budget as voted under Article 3 of the May 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting in order to properly allocate intended appropriations for the Wages and Expenses line items for reason that, although the total Water Department appropriation of \$1,417,281 was correct, the Wages and Expenses line items were incorrect, as shown below:

	<u>Appropriation As voted 5/16/23</u>	<u>Corrected Appropriation</u>
Wages	\$379,902	\$370,902
Expenses	\$666,550	\$566,550

or take any other action related thereto.

Bernard J. Stock, Select Board, moved to amend the FY24 Water Department budget as voted under Article 3 of the May 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting in order to properly allocate intended appropriations for the Wages and Expenses line items for reason that, although the total Water Department appropriation of \$1,417,281 was correct, the Wages and Expenses line items were incorrect, as shown below:

	<u>Appropriation</u> <u>As voted 5/16/23</u>	<u>Corrected</u> <u>Appropriation</u>
Wages	\$379,902	\$370,902
Expenses	\$666,550	\$566,550

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

ARTICLE 9 ACQUIRE ACCESS EASEMENT (Water Department)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain, an access easement, containing 229 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Easement Plan of Land 3 Crockett Circle Hopedale, Mass.," dated September 26, 2023, prepared by Guerriere & Halnon, Inc., on file with the Town Clerk; and to authorize the Select Board to take such actions and execute such documents as are deemed necessary to acquire said easement, upon such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, or take any other action related thereto.

Scott Savage, Select Board, moved to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase or eminent domain, an access easement, containing 229 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Easement Plan of Land 3 Crockett Circle Hopedale, Mass." dated September 26, 2023, prepared by Guerriere & Halnon, Inc., on file with the Town Clerk; and to authorize the Select Board to take such actions and execute such documents as are deemed necessary to acquire said easement, upon such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate.

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
2/3 MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

ARTICLE 10
ESTABLISH AID TO THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED TAXATION FUND
(Select Board)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c.60, §3D and, in accordance therewith, establish an Aid to the Elderly and Disabled Taxation Fund for the purpose of defraying the real estate taxes of elderly and disabled persons of low income, said fund to be administered in accordance with the statute, or take any other action related thereto.

Scott Savage, Select Board, moved to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c.60, §3D and, in accordance therewith, establish an Aid to the Elderly and Disabled Taxation Fund for the purpose of defraying the real estate taxes of elderly and disabled persons of low income, said fund to be administered in accordance with the statute.

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

ARTICLE 11
PURCHASE FIRE TRUCK
(Select Board)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum of money to be expended by the Select Board to purchase a fire truck, or take any other action related thereto.

Scott Savage, Select Board, moved to appropriate \$768,587 to be expended by the Select Board for the purchase of a fire truck, including all costs incidental and related thereto, \$263,283 of which to be transferred from those funds appropriated for a streetlight project under Article 2 of the October 24, 2020 Special Town Meeting, the streetlight project having been abandoned and no outstanding liability remains; and further to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow \$505,304 pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44 §7(1) or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds and notes of the Town therefor.

***The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
2/3 MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.***

ARTICLE 12
WATER DEPARTMENT TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES
(Water Department)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from Water Department Retained Earnings to fund the purchase of technology upgrades for the Water Department and any associated costs, or take any other action related thereto.

Scott Savage, Select Board, moved to transfer \$52,000.00 from Water Department Retained Earnings to fund the purchase of technology upgrades for the Water Department, including all costs incidental and related thereto.

The Finance Committee recommends favorable action.
The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Eugene Phillips thanked the town residents and town officials for their attendance. A motion to dissolve the Warrant was made, seconded and carried. Meeting was dissolved at 7:31 PM.

A True Record

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa M. Pedroli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa M. Pedroli CMC/CMMC
Hopedale Town Clerk