

WARRANT FOR

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Saturday, May 11, 2024

9:00 AM

CENTER SCHOOL

403 GREAT ROAD, STOW, MA



ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

Saturday, May 18, 2024

Polls Open 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

CENTER SCHOOL

403 GREAT ROAD, STOW, MA

**PLEASE BRING TO TOWN MEETING
THIS IS YOUR ONLY COPY**

Anyone with a disability requiring special arrangements for Town Meeting should contact Town Clerk Linda Hathaway at (978) 897-5034 by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

In Person Early Voting for the Annual Town Election.
Town Building, 380 Great Road, first floor.

Monday	May 13	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Tuesday	May 14	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Wednesday	May 15	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

On January 9, 2024, the Stow Select Board voted to set the date of the Annual Town Meeting to Saturday, May 11, 2024; pursuant to MGL Chapter 39, Section 9.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN MEETING

Every Town in Massachusetts with a property valuation of over \$1 million is required by state law, MGL Ch. 39, Sec. 16, to have a Finance Committee (Fincom) that shall “consider any or all municipal questions for the purpose of making reports or recommendations to the Town.” According to the Department of Local Services (DLS), the Finance Committee is “the official fiscal watchdog for a Town. Because it is difficult for all taxpayers to be completely informed about every aspect of a Town’s finances, Fincoms were established so a representative group of taxpayers could conduct a thorough review of municipal finance questions on behalf of all citizens.”

With this in mind, the Fincom’s primary responsibility is advisory, to examine the budget and all other warrant articles and make recommendations to the voters on each article. It also administers the Reserve Fund (\$80,000) to provide for urgent and unforeseen expenditures that might arise between Town meetings. Lastly, although it is not required in our Charter, the Finance Committee Annual Report provides the Voters with an overview of the Town’s financial condition.

In Stow, the Moderator appoints five voting members and up to five associate members to the Finance Committee. Any voter registered in Stow is eligible to join. As of the publication date, there are five voting members and zero associate members on the committee.

FY 2023 Review

Town Revenues

Town revenues totaling \$34,834,451.96 in FY23 is a 9.96% increase from FY22, with property taxes mainly funding the town’s operations at just about 89.5% of the total. This percentage is comparable to FY22.

Local receipts decreased by 0.04% for FY23, a decrease of \$722 from FY22. It is worth noting that \$205,215 of Savings and Other Funds was used to balance the budget, a decrease of approximately 84% in use of those funds from FY22. Table 1 shows a comparison of revenue sources for FY23 and FY24.

Table 1

Table 1: Revenue Sources						
	FY22	FY22 % of Total	FY23²	FY23 % of Total	\$ Change FY23 - FY22	% Change FY22 - FY21
Property Tax	\$ 29,945,429	89.13%	\$ 33,420,749	89.82%	\$ 3,475,320	11.61%
Local Receipts	\$ 1,618,391	4.82%	\$ 1,689,100	4.54%	\$ 70,709	4.37%
State Aid	\$ 495,556	1.48%	\$ 517,077	1.39%	\$ 21,521	4.34%
Savings and Other Funds	\$ 1,281,419	3.81%	\$ 1,378,500	3.70%	\$ 97,081	7.58%
Override	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	0.00%
Transfers from Other Funds	\$ 255,306	0.76%	\$ 205,215	0.55%	\$ (50,091)	-19.62%
Total	\$ 33,596,101		\$ 37,210,641		\$ 3,614,540	10.76%
Table 1a: Income Used for Capital Outlays²						
Free Cash for OPEB					\$ 235,000	
Free Cash - for Capital Articles					\$ 868,500	
Free Cash for Sabilization					\$ 275,000	
Total Income Used for Capital Outlays					\$ 1,378,500	

Town Expenditures

Total town expenditures increased by \$1,674,234.96 (5.05%) in FY23 driven by increased spending in a number of budget items:

- \$233,491 (16.41%) decrease in Special Article funding;
- \$564,299 (35.7%) increased assessment for the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School;
- \$22,919 (2.7%) decrease in Capital Spending;

	FY22 Voted ¹	FY22% of Total	FY23 Voted ²	FY23% of Total	\$ Change FY23 - FY22	% Change FY23- FY22
Municipal Govt						
General	\$ 1,885,773	5.69%	\$ 2,155,784	6.18%	\$270,011	14.32%
Public Safety	\$ 2,681,561	8.09%	\$ 2,814,742	8.08%	\$133,181	4.97%
Public Work & Facilities	\$ 1,257,048	3.79%	\$ 1,367,751	3.92%	\$110,703	8.81%
Human Services	\$ 401,630	1.21%	\$ 482,120	1.38%	\$80,490	20.04%
Culture & Recreation	\$ 399,179	1.20%	\$ 488,142	1.40%	\$88,963	22.29%
Town Wide Expense	\$ 1,160,000	3.50%	\$ 1,255,000	3.60%	\$95,000	8.19%
Total Municipal Govt	\$ 7,785,191	23.48%	\$ 8,563,539	24.57%	\$778,348	10.00%
Education						
Nashoba	\$ 18,059,890	54.46%	\$ 18,535,962	53.18%	\$476,072	2.64%
Minuteman	\$ 1,580,804	4.77%	\$ 2,145,103	6.15%	\$564,299	35.70%
Total Education	\$ 19,640,694	59.23%	\$ 20,681,065	59.33%	\$1,040,371	5.30%
Other						
Debt Service	\$ 2,090,130	6.30%	\$ 2,164,020	6.21%	\$73,890	3.54%
Special Articles	\$ 1,422,806	4.29%	\$ 1,189,315	3.41%	-\$233,491	-16.41%
Capital Spending	\$ 846,419	2.55%	\$ 823,500	2.36%	-\$22,919	-2.71%
Recap Items	\$ 1,374,977	4.15%	\$ 1,435,845	4.12%	\$60,868	4.43%
Total Other	\$ 5,734,332	17.29%	\$ 5,612,680	16.10%	-\$121,652	-2.12%
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 33,160,217		\$ 34,857,284		\$ 1,697,067	5.12%

Town Savings

Town savings (Free Cash plus the Stabilization Fund) are “rainy day” accounts that are built up during good times and drawn down in bad times. Free Cash comes from receiving more-than-budget revenue (taxes, state aid, budget money left over from the prior year) and/or spending less than our voted budget. It is annually certified each year by the Department of Revenue (DOR).

Fiscal Year	Free Cash	% of Budget	Stabilization Fund	% of Budget	Total	% of Budget
2023	\$ 1,876,404	5.38%	\$ 950,339	2.73%	\$ 2,826,743	8.11%
2022	\$ 2,049,610	6.18%	\$ 739,085	2.23%	\$ 2,788,695	8.41%
2021	\$ 2,385,510	7.45%	\$ 523,077	1.63%	\$ 2,908,587	9.09%
2020	\$ 2,897,441	8.87%	\$ 520,971	1.59%	\$ 3,418,412	10.46%
2019	\$ 2,735,392	9.00%	\$ 929,062	3.06%	\$ 3,630,835	11.94%
2018	\$ 2,787,417	9.40%	\$ 895,443	3.02%	\$ 3,666,392	12.37%
2017	\$ 2,266,676	8.09%	\$ 878,975	3.14%	\$ 3,132,207	11.18%
2016	\$ 1,890,072	7.03%	\$ 865,531	3.22%	\$ 2,742,691	10.20%
2015	\$ 1,832,298	6.96%	\$ 852,619	3.24%	\$ 2,672,631	10.16%
2014	\$ 1,696,289	6.83%	\$ 840,333	3.38%	\$ 2,476,145	9.97%
2013	\$ 1,395,874	5.94%	\$ 779,856	3.32%	\$ 2,109,184	8.98%

Once certified, Free Cash is available for appropriation throughout the fiscal year, to be spent for any lawful purpose. Every dollar of Free Cash appropriated as revenue in the FY23 budget is a dollar that does not need to be raised and appropriated through taxation.

These savings are a necessity, not a luxury, and accumulate to build a targeted balance or used to fund the next year’s budget. In discussions with Standard and Poor’s leading up to our AAA rating approval, the Town was encouraged to attempt to maintain a stored asset balance of between 5% and 10% of the overall budget.

Property Tax Rate and Property Valuations

The information presented in the table below shows the trends in the tax rate, average single family home valuation and average single family tax bill. While Stow’s tax rate has continued to decrease, our average single family home valuation and tax bill continue to increase year-over-year. The town’s FY2023 tax rate was certified at 18.13 or a 7.89% decrease from FY22.

	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Tax Rate (per \$1,000)	\$ 20.98	\$ 20.13	\$ 20.61	\$ 19.98	\$ 19.56	\$ 18.13
YOY % Change	1.89%	-4.05%	2.38%	-3.06%	-2.10%	-7.31%
Avg Single Family Valuation	\$ 460,309	\$ 483,500	\$ 495,763	\$ 531,500	\$ 556,907	\$ 640,760
YOY % Change	2.45%	5.04%	2.54%	7.21%	4.78%	15.06%
Avg Single Family Tax Bill	\$ 9,657	\$ 9,733	\$ 10,201	\$ 10,619	\$ 10,893	\$ 11,617
YOY % Change	4.39%	0.79%	4.81%	4.10%	2.58%	6.65%

Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Other Post-Employment Benefits (or OPEB) are benefits (other than pensions) that U.S. state and local governments provide to their retired employees.

Table 5: OPEB		
	OPEB Savings	% of Liability
FY23	\$ 1,389,340	14.96%
FY22	\$ 1,081,675	11.65%
FY21	\$ 822,807	8.86%
FY20	\$ 577,144	6.21%
FY19	\$ 329,296	3.55%
FY18	\$ 218,453	2.35%
FY17	\$ 160,028	1.72%
Current OPEB Liability	\$ 9,287,198	

Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget Analysis

Looking forward to the 2025 requested budget and comparing to the 2024 voter-approved budget, key highlights are as follows:

- Total revenue is estimated at \$41,072,538 including unused levy capacity. The primary contributor to the revenue estimates is property tax. Of the \$41M, \$36.6M+ is attributable to property tax, inclusive of the prop 2 ½ increase allowance. In addition, the Town Administrator is estimating the new growth revenue at \$350,000. This projected total FY25 levy limit revenue of \$33,200,847 represents a 3.59% increase over FY24.
- Based on the initial indications from the State regarding State Aide Revenue, we are only estimating a small increase of 2.5% (\$14k+). While the State’s revenues continue to increase in record amounts, the contributions to cities and towns has remained low and with a minimal increase.
- The increase in local receipts (motor vehicle excise tax, permit fees, license fees, etc.) is projected to be 7.87%. This is primarily due to a rise in building permits and interest rates increasing on the town earnings.
- In FY2024, the Town settled an on-going lawsuit regarding Lower Village engineering for \$1M, which was included in the certified Free Cash Amount of \$3,276,056.
- The Town Administrator is proposing to use \$1,896,560 of Free Cash in FY25, which will be applied to the following:
 - Transfer \$200k into the Stabilization Fund;
 - Transfer \$100k into the Capital Stabilization Fund;
 - Contribute \$235k to the OBEP Trust Fund;
 - Use \$1,051,515 to fund the Capital Plan; and
 - Use \$310,045 to fund three non-capital articles.
- FY2025 expenditures are dominated, as is typical, by the Nashoba school assessment at 58.46% of expenditures, followed by the municipal budget, including insurance at 27.42%, the Minuteman assessment at 7.92%, and municipal debt service at 6.20%. As with all three

towns in the Nashoba regional district, Stow's educational expenses are a substantial portion of the total expenditures in any given year and so careful consideration of academic spending can have a dramatic impact on the town budget.

- Total expenditures are expected to increase by 5.03%. While the Nashoba assessment remains the largest line item, from FY2024 to FY2025 the school assessments increased by a combined 6.71%. The budget requests include an 2.5% increase in the municipal budget, a 75% increase in capital expenses, and an almost 30% decrease in special article expenditures.
- The net increase for the FY25 budget is 4.25% over the FY24.

The increase in the municipal budget is driven predominantly as a result of wages with relatively little increase in department expenses. In fact, many of the expense budgets decreased to offset the step increases and COLA of 2.5%.

- There are no new positions being proposed for the municipal budget.

Fiscal Year 2025 Special Articles – Raise & Appropriate

Special articles have decreased from \$763,733 to \$535,950, a decrease of almost 30%. Some highlights to the special articles are:

- The Lake Boon Commission's request for funds to treat water quality and weeds in Lake Boon has increased from \$14,033 in FY24 to \$32,000 for FY25.
- The Historical Commission is looking for \$10,000 to assist with getting the West School on the historical register.
- The amount for funding the Annual Financial Audit has increased by \$10,000.

In the past, the majority of the capital allocation year over year increase is driven by allocation of CPC funds. Omitting the CPC fund usage, significant contributors to the capital allocation is the town's need to replace aging vehicles and infrastructure. Stow tends to maintain vehicles for extended periods, with highway equipment having service lifetimes upwards of 30 years. Having deferred vehicle replacement, the town is now in a place where key pieces of highway equipment and a majority of other municipal vehicles (police cruiser, ambulance, municipal vehicles) are becoming unsafe to operate and must be replaced. Additionally, vehicles are experiencing a 1-2 year backorder. In order to ensure we have vehicles in place, when those aging vehicles can no longer function, we need to order now and get in the replacement queue.

In 2021, the town was allocated \$2.1M in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and as the funds are winding down, in FY25, a number of regular capital expenditures have been proposed by the Town Administrator to fund through the ARPA funds, thereby removing the liability from the Stow taxpayer.

Given the higher than normal Free Cash balance, non-CPC capital, non-ARPA requests have increased. The Town Administrator is recommending a total of \$1,021,515, which will be paid for with certified Free Cash. These requests represent the largest to be paid for with cash:

- Replacement of the Highway Loader at \$241,000 (23.6% of the request)
- Replace the Mechanics Truck at \$110,000 (10.7% of the request)
- Phase 2 of the Replacement of the Interior Doors at Hale at \$100,000 (9.8% of the request)

In FY25, the Town Administrator is proposing we procure a requested Fire Truck through borrowing. This will allow us to sign a purchase order, but not hold up cash, while we wait one to two years for delivery. It will also allow us to repair aging infrastructure within the general fund budget, while budgeting for a principal and interest payment over a number of years and not all at once. The capital borrowing article will be \$990,000 to replace a 2000 fire engine with a 3,000 gallon fire tanker truck.

Conclusion

Coupled with the growth in housing prices, the Town-wide valuation has grown faster than our costs (i.e. budget expenditures growth), allowing the Town to fund approved projects and capital items for the last several years. Moreover, the Town enjoys more than enough stored assets, and could borrow at the lowest rates due to our AAA rating. Moreover, the Town Administrator is estimating a \$1.9M excess Tax Levy capacity. As previously mentioned, this allows the town to borrow money at a more favorable rate.

It is our opinion that this is a fair and accurate picture of the Town's financial state. Whether you are pleased or displeased, the Finance Committee reminds everyone that Town Meeting directly controls the rate of growth of Town expenses. We encourage your participation.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Patuto (Chair), Kevin Gross (Member), Evgenia Petrova (Member), Daniel Petersen (Member)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S FY25 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION LETTER



Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

*380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927*

*Denise M. Dembkoski
Town Administrator*

townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

To: Select Board, Finance Committee, and Stow Residents

From: Denise M. Dembkoski, Town Administrator

Re: FY25 Budget Recommendations

Date: April 2, 2024

The Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Operating Budget process provided an opportunity for management to, once again, undertake an honest assessment of town functions to determine what is working and what changes are necessary. Some of the recommended changes contained within this memorandum will have cost implications for the FY25 budget. Beginning in the FY24 budget, we started making some necessary staffing changes, which would bring the needed staffing levels up to par from an operational standpoint. This FY25 budget includes some modified staffing to take the next step towards our goal of providing the most resources to our residents, while maintaining a streamlined and efficient budget.

Like last year, we are still getting out from under the accumulation of years of conservative budgeting, which while assisting the town in limiting our expenditure outlay and increasing our Unused Levy Capacity to \$2.4M, created other operational issues within the Town. Over the last few years, we took major steps with the addition of an Assistant Town Administrator to function as the Human Resources Director, and were also able to add highway, library staff, as well as facilities and community services staff. This year, we have no new full-time staff being added.

At the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, I presented changes to the Wage & Classification Schedules after a consultant was brought in to review the salaries of non-union staff. With these new schedules in place, employees receive a step increase every other year. Therefore, this year, in addition to the 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), all employees in Grades 6 – 8, who were in steps 1 thru 11 will be granted a step increase. Employees in Grades 1 to 5 will be given the 2.5% COLA, as their next step increase is not until next year (FY26).

The Highway, Fire, and Dispatch Union contracts are currently active. As of the writing of this letter, the negotiations for the Police Union are still ongoing, so we made some assumptions for salary and budgetary purposes.

For FY25, the only personnel adjustments are the following:

- Procurement/Grants Administrator – this position was added in fall 2022 and funded through ARPA funds. For FY24, we continued using ARPA funds to supplement a portion of the salary. For FY25, the entire salary is now contained within the general fund budget.
- As we work to consolidate the Highway and Cemetery Department under a Department of Public Works, we have realigned staff. It was determined that we do not need an Assistant Superintendent, but instead, added more responsibility to the administrative position and upgraded it to the Business Manager. In addition, we added some funds to create a part-time mechanic position. The full-time mechanic has been working on, not only the highway vehicles, but the vehicles for all other departments, saving money on outside repairs and maintenance. This has been extremely beneficial and has saved the departments money, but can only be done as his time allows. Adding a part-time person to assist our Mechanic will allow the DPW to continue servicing all town vehicles and equipment.

I am still working on consolidating all facility expenses. In the past, some buildings had to budget for their own heating, electric, trash pickup, landscaping, while the Town Building and Pompo were consolidated under the facilities budget. Last year, we consolidated a number of expenses into the facilities budget, but there were still some outliers that were adjusted this year. We are also dealing with the rising cost of maintaining our buildings. Between cost escalation and labor shortages, addressing building issues has been a major factor. We have been fortunate to have American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which has been used to cover a lot of our building maintenance issues. However, as those funds are running out, we will need to revert back to relying on the general fund for these matters.

Expenses across all municipal departments remain level. Minimal increases have been added to address contractual increases or unfunded mandates. As mentioned above, there is an increase in our facilities expenses to address rising utility costs and increased repairs. The Town Clerk's expense line increased to account for the Presidential Election in November. Both Police and Fire have an increase in expenses, much of which are contractual, as a result of contract negotiations with personnel in those departments.

Municipal

For the proposed FY25 Budget, municipal salaries account for 54% of the municipal budget and 18% of the entire General Fund Budget. Municipal expenses make up 15% of the municipal budget and only 5% of the overall General Fund Budget. Municipal Insurance and Debt Service represents 31% of the Municipal Budget and 10% of the overall General Fund Budget. The total increase on the municipal side, inclusive of debt is \$215,335, which equates to \$585,905 **less** than the additional revenue we can collect under Prop 2 ½.

This year, the General Fund article requests have decreased from the prior year requests. The total of articles seeking to raise and appropriate from taxes is \$535,950 as opposed to \$763,733 in FY24.

For every one dollar of taxes paid to the Town of Stow, thirty-four (\$.34) cents covers the Municipal Budget, including insurance and non-excluded debt.

Education

As is the case most years, we have received assessments from the two school districts (Nashoba Regional School and Minuteman Vocational) with increases totaling more than \$1.4M combined. This total increase is more than 6.71% over the FY24 assessments and \$650,441 **more** than the increased tax revenue we project under Prop 2 ½. The assessments from the two schools utilizes the entire Prop 2 ½ increase plus more than half a million dollars in other new revenue.

The assessment increase (\$179,527) at Minuteman is mainly due to increased enrollment and fewer out-of-district students attending. Since the new school opened, Minuteman has seen an increase in applications, primarily from member towns. As a result of fewer out-of-district students attending, the member towns need to pay more to cover those costs. Additionally, over the last several years, Stow's enrollment at Minuteman is up to 72 students up from just 19 students five years ago.

The Nashoba increase is not as cut and dry to articulate. They have established their budget with an overall increase of about 6.71% over FY24 (inclusive of Debt Service). As a result of their total budget increase, Stow's assessment (inclusive of debt) has increased 6.67% (or \$1.2M) over the FY24 assessment.

For every one dollar of taxes paid to the Town of Stow, fifty-nine (\$.59) cents goes towards the Nashoba and Minuteman Education Budgets.

The total FY25 Budget recommendation is an increase of 5.03% over FY24. The two schools represent a total of 66% of the General Fund Budget and have an FY25 increase of \$1.4M combined or by 6.71% and the municipal budgets have increased by 2.50% or \$215,335.

For every one dollar of taxes paid to the Town of Stow, seven (\$0.7) cents is used to pay the debt exclusions voted on by the taxpayers at the ballot. For the Fiscal Year 2024 tax rate, there is no debt included for the Randall Library Renovations or the New High School.

There were other small changes within the FY25 Budget Proposal, but all other budgetary impacts were minor, as there are no proposed new programs. During FY25, we will continue to look for ways to make doing business with the Town more efficient while also remaining cost effective.

We ended Fiscal Year 2023 with a very healthy Free Cash balance of \$3,276,056, with \$1M attributable to the Lower Village Legal Settlement the town made. As a result of the healthy available funds, I am supporting appropriating free cash in the amount of \$1.8M through a number of articles, with the majority being for capital projects.

The Capital Plan requests also increased this year. As a result, I am recommending a combination of using free cash and borrowing (and ARPA). The recommendation for funding with free cash is \$1,021,515, which is up from last year's recommendation of \$583,298. And I am recommending one item to be borrowed and paid for within the town's tax levy. That request is for a Fire Pumper for a total of \$990,000. With vehicle and large equipment inventory delays of up to two years, this will allow us to sign a purchase order, but not hold up cash, while we wait one to two years for delivery. It will also allow us to repair aging infrastructure within the general fund budget, while budgeting for a principal and interest payment over a number of years and not all at once. This plan of sharing the expenditures between the town and the taxpayers is looked upon favorably by the rating agencies and is expected to have a positive impact on future borrowings.

In addition to the Capital Plan, I am also recommending \$200k be transferred from free cash into the Stabilization account and \$100k into the Capital Stabilization account to build up our reserves. Also, I am recommending \$235k be transferred to the OPEB account, to continue contributing to our unfunded liability. Finally, I am requesting to fund three articles with free cash. One for \$50k to fund the remainder of funds needed for the Lake Boon Dam Project Manager. In 2023, I brought on a PM to oversee the project from the Town's side and have funded the position through ARPA funds. The availability of ARPA funds will cease before the dam project is finalized. This will allow us to continue having a professional oversee the project for the duration.

I am also recommending \$160,045 be used from free cash to cover the roll out claims of the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group (MNHG), that provides insurance for Stow employees. As of June 30, 2024, they are dissolving and we are obligated to pay claims incurred, but not yet billed. The MNGH actuary calculated the amount each entity owes, and Stow is at \$160k.

Even before we were aware of the MNHG dissolution, we were obtaining quotes to reevaluate the health insurance offered to employees. As of July 1, 2024, we will be changing to the MIIA Health Insurance Group, with level rates to the current plan. As a result, there is only a minimal increase in the health insurance line, just to cover the potential of people taking or switching their plans.

Finally, I am recommending \$100,000 be used from free cash for the Planning Board to complete their work with the Comprehensive Plan.

As the Town Administrator, I am very cognizant of the rising values in Stow and the average tax bill. While each year we evaluate staffing levels to ensure that the service level we provide to our residents continues to increase, but in the most cost-effective and efficient manner, the cost of doing business across the country rises. Municipal Department Heads do a tremendous job of evaluating their departmental costs and cutting where they can. In this environment, having a municipal general fund budget maintain an increase within the parameters of Prop 2 ½ is truly commendable. Departments have absorbed contractual salary increases, rising service costs, and increased expenses and kept the overall municipal side to a minimal increase which I applaud.

I believe this FY25 budget is necessary for effective Town operations and ask for your support. I welcome an opportunity to discuss the FY25 Budget and answer any questions anyone may have.

Thank you.



WARRANT FOR 2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

To either of the Constables of the Town of Stow, or the Stow Town Clerk, in the County of Middlesex,
GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Stow, qualified to vote in Elections and Town Affairs, to assemble in

**CENTER SCHOOL
403 GREAT ROAD, STOW, MA
In said Town on
SATURDAY, THE ELEVENTH DAY OF MAY 2024
AT 9:00 AM**

Then and there to act on the following Articles, namely:

ARTICLE 1. Reports of Select Board and Other Officers and Committees

To hear and accept the reports of the Select Board and other Officers and Committees of the Town for Calendar Year 2023; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Select Board)

The Select Board and other officials including Committees like the Finance Committee produce official reports for the Town. This proforma article calls for the Town to accept and hear these reports.

ARTICLE 2. Reports of Special Committees

To hear and accept the reports of special committees for Calendar Year 2023; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Select Board)

During Calendar Year 2023, special committees were created and the committees produce official reports for the Town to review. This proforma article calls for the Town to accept and hear these reports.

ARTICLE 3. Wage and Salary Schedules for Fiscal Year 2025

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 11 of the General Bylaws of the Town, Personnel Administration, by deleting from Section 20.h. the existing salary Schedules, and inserting in place thereof the following new Schedules; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article.

**FY 2025 SALARY AND WAGE CLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE A**

GRADE	TITLE	DEPARTMENT
Contract	Town Administrator	Administration
Contract	Police Chief	Police
Contract	Fire Chief	Fire
8	Assistant Town Administrator	Administration
	Building Commissioner	Building / Facilities
	Lieutenant	Police
	Highway Superintendent	Highway
7	Principal Assessor	Assessing
	Executive Director	COA
	Conservation Director	Conservation
	Library Director	Library
	Planning Director	Planning
	Recreation Director	Recreation
	Town Accountant	Town Accountant
	Town Clerk	Town Clerk
	Treasurer -Collector	Treasurer / Collector
6	Assistant Facilities Manager / Building Inspector	Building / Facilities
	Town Social Worker	COA
	Procurement & Grants Administrator	Administration
	IT Director	IT
	Stow TV Director	Stow TV
	Land Use Planner/GIS Administrator	Planning
5	Assistant Assessor	Assessing
	Business Manager	Highway
	Business Manager	Police
	Outreach Coordinator	COA
	Assistant Conservation Director	Conservation
	Librarian – Circulation and Tech Services	Library
	Librarian - Youth Services	Library
	Executive Assistant	TA / SB
	Executive Assistant	Health
	Assistant Town Clerk	Town Clerk
	Assistant Treasurer/Collector	Treasurer/Collector
4	Administrative Assistant	Building / Facilities
	Maintenance Craftsperson	Building / Facilities
	Administrative Assistant	COA
	Outreach Worker	COA
	Senior Van Driver - Coordinator	COA
	Payroll Coordinator	Treasurer / Collector
	Administrative Assistant	Recreation

3	Department Assistant Department Assistant Department Assistant Department Assistant Department Assistant Department Assistant Department Assistant Finance Committee Assistant	Assessing CPC COA Library Health Planning TA / SB Finance Committee
2	Custodian Library Aide Stow TV Access Coordinator Stow TV Technical Assistant	Building / Facilities Library Stow TV Stow TV
1	Library Page	Library

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GRADE
Step 1	\$16.73	\$19.24	\$23.09	\$26.55	\$30.53	\$33.58	\$38.62	\$48.28	Step 1
Step 2	\$17.15	\$19.72	\$23.67	\$27.21	\$31.29	\$34.42	\$39.59	\$49.49	Step 2
Step 3	\$17.58	\$20.21	\$24.26	\$27.89	\$32.07	\$35.28	\$40.58	\$50.73	Step 3
Step 4	\$18.02	\$20.72	\$24.87	\$28.59	\$32.87	\$36.16	\$41.59	\$52.00	Step 4
Step 5	\$18.47	\$21.24	\$25.49	\$29.30	\$33.69	\$37.06	\$42.63	\$53.30	Step 5
Step 6	\$18.93	\$21.77	\$26.13	\$30.03	\$34.53	\$37.99	\$43.70	\$54.63	Step 6
Step 7	\$19.40	\$22.31	\$26.78	\$30.78	\$35.39	\$38.94	\$44.79	\$56.00	Step 7
Step 8	\$19.89	\$22.87	\$27.45	\$31.55	\$36.27	\$39.91	\$45.91	\$57.40	Step 8
Step 9	\$20.39	\$23.44	\$28.14	\$32.34	\$37.18	\$40.91	\$47.06	\$58.84	Step 9
Step 10	\$20.90	\$24.03	\$28.84	\$33.15	\$38.11	\$41.93	\$48.24	\$60.31	Step 10
Step 11	\$21.42	\$24.63	\$29.56	\$33.98	\$39.06	\$42.98	\$49.45	\$61.82	Step 11
Step 12	\$21.96	\$25.25	\$30.30	\$34.83	\$40.04	\$44.05	\$50.69	\$63.37	Step 12

SCHEDULE B
SINGLE RATE POSITIONS PAID ANNUALLY

Position Title	Salary
Animal Inspector	1,832
Assistant Registrar of Voters	362
Registrar of Voters	181
Tree Warden	8,200
Veterans' Service Officer	2,502
Fire S.A.F.E. Coordinator	1,000
Fire Training Coordinator	1,000
Fire PPE Coordinator	1,000
Fire Fleet Coordinator	1,000
Fire Water Hole Coordinator	1,000
EMS Coordinator	1,000
EMS Scheduler	1,000
EMS Quartermaster	1,000
Fire Lieutenant (Call)	1,000

SCHEDULE C
PART-TIME/SEASONAL/TEMPORARY RATE SCHEDULE

Grade	Titles in Grade	Steps	FY25
Grade 1	Beach Checkers	1	15.38
	Assistant Camp Counselor	2	15.61
	Student Interns	3	15.84
	Seasonal Trail Stewards	4	16.00
		5	16.15
		6	16.32
Grade 2	Head Counselor	1	16.14
	Junior Lifeguard	2	16.39
	Stow TV Assistant	3	16.64
		4	16.88
		5	17.14
		6	17.39
Grade 3	Lifeguard	1	16.95
	(Senior Lifeguard)	2	17.21
		3	17.47
		4	17.72
		5	17.99
		6	18.27

Grade 4	Head Lifeguard	1	18.22
	WSI Instructor	2	18.49
	COA non-CDL Van Driver	3	18.78
	Apprentice FF Call	4	19.05
		5	19.34
		6	19.63
Grade 5	Water Front Director	1	20.59
	Assistant Camp Director	2	20.90
	COA CDL Van Driver	3	21.22
	EMT Call	4	21.54
	FF - Call	5	21.85
	Auxiliary Police Officer	6	22.18
Grade 6	Camp Director	1	23.68
	Dispatcher part-time	2	24.04
	Per Diem FF/EMT	3	24.40
	FF/EMT (call)	4	24.76
		5	25.13
		6	25.51
Grade 7	Prisoner Watch	1	26.28
	Call Fire Lieutenant	2	26.68
	Police Officer Part time	3	27.08
		4	27.48
		5	27.90
		6	28.32

SCHEDULE D
SINGLE RATE POSITIONS PAID
HOURLY

Position Title			Hourly Rate:
Election Clerical Assistance			15.00
Election Teller			15.00
Election Clerk			18.00
Election Warden			18.00

ARTICLE 4. General Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

To see what sums of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to defray the necessary expenses of the several departments of the Town, as set forth in the following line items; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends XXX of this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This General Fund Budget is being presented at \$34,778,145. The Municipal budget is up at total of 1.88%, with the schools increasing a total of 6.71% for a net increase of 5.03% over Fiscal Year 2024.

In large part, the General Fund Municipal budget line item is the sum of the wage and salaries detailed in Article #3 and all wages covered by Collective Bargaining Agreements, plus expenses of all Town departments. It also contains Town-wide expenses such as property and casualty insurance, debt, technology services, and employee health insurance.

Departmental Salaries make up 54% of the Municipal Budget and 18% of the General Fund Budget.

Departmental Expenses make up 15% of the Municipal Budget and 5% of the General Fund Budget.

Insurance & Debt makes up 31% of the Municipal Budget and 10% of the General Fund Budget.

The School Budgets make up 67% of the General Fund Budget.

Non-Discretionary Items - It is important to recognize that the Town Administrator exercises NO direct control over several budget items including employee pensions, school assessments, the annual debt payment, annual health insurance increases, and state/county charges which are significant budget drivers of the General Budget.

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	<u>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</u>				
Line No.					
	MODERATOR				
1	MODERATOR SALARY	0.00	0.00	0.00	
2	MODERATOR EXPENSES	250.00	250.00	250.00	
	TOTAL MODERATOR	250.00	250.00	250.00	0.00
	TOWN ADMINISTRATION				
3	SELECT BOARD OFFICE WAGES	91,604.00	94,531.00	94,531.00	
4	SELECT BOARD OFFICE EXPENSES	9,450.00	8,450.00	8,000.00	
5	TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SALARY	175,000.00	180,000.00	180,000.00	
6	ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WAGES	94,469.00	96,902.00	96,902.00	
7	PROCURE/GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR WAGES	0.00	76,245.00	76,245.00	
8	TOWN ADMINISTRATOR OFFICE WAGES	67,000.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	
9	TOWN ADMINISTRATOR EXPENSES	17,250.00	17,250.00	17,250.00	
	TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	454,773.00	477,878.00	477,428.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	FINANCE COMMITTEE				
10	FINANCE COMMITTEE WAGES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11	RESERVE FUND	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	
12	FINANCE COMMITTEE EXPENSES	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
	TOTAL FINANCE COMMITTEE	81,000.00	81,000.00	81,000.00	0.00
	TOWN ACCOUNTANT				
13	ACCOUNTANT SALARY	71,770.00	73,923.00	73,923.00	
14	ACCOUNTANT CLERK SALARY	500.00	500.00	500.00	
15	ACCOUNTANT EXPENSES	2,150.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	
	TOTAL TOWN ACCOUNTANT	74,420.00	76,573.00	76,573.00	0.00
	ASSESSORS				
16	PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR'S WAGES	96,589.00	99,096.00	101,577.00	
17	ASSESSORS CLERICAL WAGES	103,384.00	104,213.00	104,614.00	
18	ASSESSORS EXPENSES	16,630.00	17,015.00	17,015.00	
	TOTAL ASSESSORS	216,603.00	220,324.00	223,206.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	TREASURER-COLLECTOR				
19	TREASURER-COLLECTOR SALARY	93,122.00	98,262.00	98,262.00	
20	TREASURER-COLLECTOR CLERICAL WAGES	104,683.00	107,607.00	107,607.00	
21	TREASURER-COLLECTOR EXPENSES	56,282.00	56,575.00	56,475.00	
	TOTAL TREASURER-COLLECTOR	254,087.00	262,444.00	262,344.00	0.00
	INFO TECH				
22	IT CLERICAL WAGES	47,176.00	47,176.00	49,577.00	
23	IT EXPENSES	285,000.00	326,700.00	294,000.00	
	TOTAL INFO TECH	332,176.00	373,876.00	343,577.00	0.00
	TOWN CLERK				
24	TOWN CLERK SALARY	97,584.00	100,051.00	100,051.00	
25	TOWN CLERK OTHER WAGES	67,004.00	70,387.00	70,387.00	
26	ELECTION WAGES	21,000.00	27,143.00	27,143.00	
27	TOWN CLERK EXPENSES	29,234.00	32,672.00	33,042.00	
	TOTAL TOWN CLERK	214,822.00	230,253.00	230,623.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	CONSERVATION COMMISSION				
28	CONSERVATION DIRECTOR	97,010.00	99,526.00	99,526.00	
29	CONSERVATION COMMISSION CLERICAL WAGES	57,363.00	58,904.00	58,905.00	
30	CONSERVATION COMMISSION EXPENSES	8,600.00	8,600.00	8,600.00	
	TOTAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION	162,973.00	167,030.00	167,031.00	0.00
	PLANNING BOARD				
31	TOWN PLANNER	92,105.00	96,428.00	99,251.00	
32	PLANNING BOARD CLERICAL WAGES	111,966.00	106,288.00	108,438.00	
33	PLANNING BOARD EXPENSES	11,300.00	11,300.00	11,300.00	
	TOTAL PLANNING BOARD	215,371.00	214,016.00	218,989.00	0.00
	MUNICIPAL BUILDING				
34	MUNI BUILDING & PROPERTY WAGES	183,648.00	189,177.00	189,177.00	
35	MUNI BUILDING & PROPERTY EXPENSES	220,176.00	230,177.00	255,177.00	
	TOTAL MUNICIPAL BUILDING	403,824.00	419,354.00	444,354.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	OTHER GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
36	TOWN REPORTS EXPENSES	7,500.00	8,500.00	7,500.00	
	TOTAL OTHER GENERAL GOVERNMENT	7,500.00	8,500.00	7,500.00	0.00
	TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	2,417,799.00	2,531,498.00	2,532,875.00	0.00
-	<u>PUBLIC SAFETY</u>				
	POLICE DEPT				
37	POLICE CHIEF SALARY	139,523.00	145,000.00	145,000.00	
38	POLICE & DISPATCH WAGES	1,568,362.00	1,583,559.00	1,590,178.00	
39	POLICE & DISPATCH EXPENSES	109,425.00	121,200.00	124,100.00	
	TOTAL POLICE DEPT	1,817,310.00	1,849,759.00	1,859,278.00	0.00
	FIRE AND EMS				
40	FIRE CHIEF SALARY	110,334.00	113,093.00	113,093.00	
41	FIRE AND EMS WAGES	859,251.00	881,096.00	881,096.00	
42	FIRE AND EMS EXPENSES	89,090.00	95,500.00	95,500.00	
	TOTAL FIRE AND EMS	1,058,675.00	1,089,689.00	1,089,689.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	BUILDING INSPECTOR				
43	BUILDING INSPECTOR WAGES	106,899.00	112,361.00	112,361.00	
44	BUILDING DEPT CLERICAL WAGES	67,463.00	69,162.00	69,162.00	
45	BUILDING DEPT EXPENSES	8,945.00	12,745.00	7,745.00	
	TOTAL BUILDING INSPECTOR	183,307.00	194,268.00	189,268.00	0.00
	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	3,059,292.00	3,133,716.00	3,138,235.00	0.00
	<u>PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES</u>				
	HIGHWAY AND GROUNDS				
46	SUPT OF STREETS SALARY	111,749.00	114,068.00	114,068.00	
47	HIGHWAY & GROUNDS WAGES	735,110.00	684,011.00	715,659.00	
48	HIGHWAY & GROUNDS EXPENSES	179,050.00	184,350.00	179,350.00	
49	SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL EXPENSE	200,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00	
	TOTAL HIGHWAY & GROUNDS	1,225,909.00	1,182,429.00	1,209,077.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	OTHER PUBLIC WORKS				
50	MUNICIPAL LIGHTING	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	
51	GASOLINE & DIESEL FUEL EXPENSE	98,261.00	98,261.00	98,261.00	
	TOTAL OTHER PUBLIC WORKS	105,261.00	105,261.00	105,261.00	0.00
	CEMETERY DEPT				
52	CEMETERY SUPERINTENDENT	87,527.00	92,330.00	92,330.00	
53	CEMETERY SALARY AND WAGES	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	
54	CEMETERY EXPENSES	4,800.00	4,850.00	4,850.00	
	TOTAL CEMETERY DEPT	96,327.00	101,180.00	97,180.00	0.00
	TOTAL PUBLIC WORK & FACILITIES	1,427,497.00	1,388,870.00	1,411,518.00	0.00
	<u>HUMAN SERVICES</u>				
	HEALTH DEPT				
55	HEALTH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	72,462.00	74,315.00	74,620.00	
56	HEALTH DEPARTMENT WAGES	20,435.00	22,233.00	22,792.00	

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
57	HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPENSES	77,290.00	80,599.00	80,599.00	
	TOTAL HEALTH DEPT	170,187.00	177,147.00	178,011.00	0.00
	COUNCIL ON AGING				
58	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SALARY	96,939.00	99,776.00	99,776.00	
59	COUNCIL ON AGING WAGES	237,420.00	245,374.00	245,890.00	
60	COUNCIL ON AGING EXPENSES	12,497.00	13,635.00	13,685.00	
	TOTAL COUNCIL ON AGING	346,856.00	358,785.00	359,351.00	0.00
	VETERANS' DEPT				
61	VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICER SALARY	2,442.00	2,442.00	2,502.00	
62	VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICER EXPENSES	300.00	300.00	300.00	
	TOTAL VETERANS' DEPT	2,742.00	2,742.00	2,802.00	0.00
	TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	519,785.00	538,674.00	540,164.00	0.00
	<u>CULTURE AND RECREATION</u>				

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	LIBRARY DEPT				
63	LIBRARY DIRECTOR SALARY	94,415.00	99,251.00	99,251.00	
64	LIBRARY WAGES	141,212.00	144,826.00	148,401.00	
65	LIBRARY EXPENSES	78,000.00	83,000.00	78,000.00	
	TOTAL LIBRARY DEPT	313,627.00	327,077.00	325,652.00	0.00
	RECREATION COMMISSION				
66	RECREATION DIRECTOR	90,855.00	95,498.00	89,892.00	
67	RECREATION WAGES	14,744.00	15,103.00	15,159.00	
68	RECREATION EXPENSES	24,500.00	24,500.00	24,500.00	
	TOTAL RECREATION COMMISSION	130,099.00	135,101.00	129,551.00	0.00
	LAKE BOON COMMISSION				
69	LAKE BOON COMMISSION EXPENSES	3,067.00	3,200.00	3,200.00	
	TOTAL LAKE BOON COMMISSION	3,067.00	3,200.00	3,200.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	OTHER CULTURE & RECREATION				
70	HISTORICAL COMMISSION EXPENSES	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	
71	MEMORIAL DAY EXPENSES	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
72	LIGHTING OF CLOCK EXPENSES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL OTHER CULTURE & RECREATION	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00	0.00
	TOTAL CULTURE & RECREATION EXPENSES	448,993.00	467,578.00	460,603.00	0.00
	<u>TOWN WIDE EXPENSES</u>				
73	GROUP INSURANCE	1,215,000.00	1,230,000.00	1,230,000.00	
74	INSURANCE AND BONDS	200,000.00	205,000.00	205,000.00	
75	TELEPHONE	15,000.00	15,000.00	18,000.00	
	TOTAL TOWN WIDE EXPENSES	1,430,000.00	1,450,000.00	1,453,000.00	0.00
	MUNICIPAL BUDGET TOTAL	9,303,366.00	9,510,336.00	9,536,395.00	0.00

LINE NO.	DEPARTMENT	FY 2024 ACTUAL BUDGET	FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST	FY 2025 BUDGET TOWN ADMIN RECOMMEND	FY 2025 BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
	<u>EDUCATION</u>				
	SCHOOL DISTRICTS				
76	NASHOBA REG SCHOOL DIST ASSESSMENT	19,059,502.00	21,074,500.00	20,331,656.00	
77	MINUTEMAN VOC TECH ASSESSMENT	2,574,524.00	2,754,051.00	2,754,051.00	
	TOTAL DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS	21,634,026.00	23,828,551.00	23,085,707.00	0.00
	<u>DEBT SERVICE</u>				
	PRINCIPAL				
78	MATURING PRIN LONG-TERM DEBT	1,493,296.00	1,493,296.00	1,517,000.00	
	TOTAL MATURING PRINCIPAL	1,493,296.00	1,493,296.00	1,517,000.00	0.00
	INTEREST				
79	INT ON LONG-TERM DEBT - BONDS	679,441.00	679,441.00	638,043.00	
80	INT ON TEMPORARY LOANS - REVENUE	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
	TOTAL INTEREST ON MATURING DEBT	680,441.00	680,441.00	639,043.00	0.00
	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE	2,173,737.00	2,173,737.00	2,156,043.00	0.00
	TOTAL	33,111,129.00	35,512,624.00	34,778,145.00	0.00

BEGINNING OF CONSENT CALENDAR

ARTICLE 5. Revolving Fund Expenditure Limits

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.44, §53E½, to set the annual spending limits for the following two (2) revolving accounts established in the General By-Laws for Fiscal Year 2025; or take any action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

REVOLVING FUND	SPENDING LIMIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025
Inspection Fees	\$50,000
Advanced Life Support	\$10,000

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a spending limit and has no impact on the tax levy, although fees retained by the Town may increase revenue and reduce expenditures. See Appendix A for Revolving Fund balances.

ARTICLE 6. Stow Cultural Council

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to produce cultural activities and programming in Stow; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

ARTICLE 7. Smart911/RAVE Notification System

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of paying for a town-wide telephonic emergency notification system known as Smart911/RAVE, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

ARTICLE 8. Weights and Measures Testing

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500) to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of funding the Town’s Weights and Measures testing, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Select Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

ARTICLE 9. Transfer to Conservation Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the town will vote to appropriate and transfer from the Conservation Land Maintenance Account to the Conservation Fund the sum of Three Thousand Seven Hundred Forty-Five Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$3,745.50); or take any other action relative thereto.

(Conservation Commission)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

The Conservation Land Maintenance Account is an account which receives fees paid by people to rent garden plots and to lease farmland. The entire balance of this account is transferred annually to the Conservation Fund.

ARTICLE 10. Transfer from Wetlands Protection Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from the Wetlands Protection Fund the sum of Nineteen Thousand Two Hundred Forty-Seven Dollars (\$19,247), as an additional appropriation to the Conservation Commission, to be expended by the Conservation Commission in performing its duties under the Wetlands Protection Act; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Conservation Commission)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

The Conservation Commission is responsible for administering the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, Section 40) as well as the Town of Stow Wetland Protection Bylaw which was adopted by Town Meeting in 1983. Under these laws, the Commission is required to review and issue permits for any proposals to alter or develop land within 100' of wetlands and within 200' of rivers and ponds. This permitting process helps protect the town's drinking water and wildlife habitat, and helps prevent storm damage, pollution and flooding.

The Wetlands Protection Fund receives money from permit application fees. These fees are paid if an applicant wants to alter or develop land within 100' of wetlands and within 200' of rivers and ponds. These funds are to be used for the costs associated with administration of the Wetlands Protection Act.

ARTICLE 11. Addition to Conservation Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to the Conservation Fund; or take any action relative thereto.

(Conservation Commission)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The Conservation Commission is Stow's largest landowner and depends on the Conservation Fund, established in the 1960s, for management of 2000 acres of land and conservation restrictions including our contract Land Steward, trail mowing, hazard tree removal, and occasional expenses associated with land acquisition. The funds also pay for community garden-related expenses, which is partially offset by plot fees. This appropriation will help maintain the fund and replenish the Conservation Land Steward's contracted expense.

The Conservation Fund receives money from the Conservation Land Management account (see Article #9), and from this annual Special Article. The money is used to pay for legal work and for conservation land purchase appraisals, the care of the community gardens, invasive species control, purchase of tools and signage for conservation land and for our Land Steward contract.

ARTICLE 12. Update of Property Valuations

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$23,200), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of updating property valuations in the Town to full and fair cash value, to be expended by the Assessors; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Assessors)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

These funds pay for software maintenance, special appraisals, and listing and valuation services and an occasional consultant. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$23,467.00.

ARTICLE 13. Highway Road Machinery, Private Ways, and Municipal Parking Lots

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sums of money for Highway Department purposes as set forth in the schedule below; or take any other action relative thereto.

1. For the Road Machinery Account \$90,000
2. For Repairs on Private Ways \$15,000
3. For Repairs on Municipal Parking Lots \$10,000

(Highway Department)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This article allows Highway to spend money to repair our private ways, maintain our highway equipment, and make repairs to municipal parking lots on an annual basis. The combined balance in these accounts as of April 1, 2024, is \$55,972.77.

ARTICLE 14. Highway Engineering Fees

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of paying consulting/engineering cost associated with roadways, culverts, and other highway related needs, including any other expenses incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.
(Highway Department)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

Consulting services for engineering for wetland delineation and surveying, plotting existing conditions to fix culvert issues. The Highway Department does not own the necessary equipment to do this in-house. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$3,936.31.

ARTICLE 15. Household Hazardous Waste Collection

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended under the direction of the Board of Health for the purpose of providing for recycling of hazardous material and household hazardous waste collection by membership of the Devens Regional Household Hazardous Products Collection Center; or take any other action relative thereto.
(Board of Health)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

Stow, along with ten other towns, is a member of the Devens Regional Household Hazardous Products Collection Center (Collection Center). This article covers our membership fee. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$2,702.67.

ARTICLE 16. Municipal Solid Waste Disposal

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended under the direction of the Board of Health for the purpose of renting a container and disposing of solid waste which has been dumped on Town land and roadsides; or take any other action relative thereto.
(Board of Health)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This article allows for the disposal of solid waste the Town accumulates from roadsides, etc. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$860.19.

ARTICLE 17. Stow TV Expenses

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, the sum of One Hundred Forty-Seven Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$147,280), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended under the direction of the Local Access Channel Advisory Committee (LACAC) for the purpose of providing for equipment and operating expenses for Stow TV; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Stow TV)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding from this article comes from the local license fee on subscriber cable bills.

Stow TV is managed by LACAC, which receives revenues from the town’s cable customers (as a fee on your cable bill) to pay for its operating expenses. Stow TV is financially self-sustaining as funding for this station is provided through a license agreement originally with Comcast and Verizon.

ARTICLE 18. Holiday Decorations and Lighting Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended by the Highway Department or Town Administrator, for the purpose of purchasing and installing holiday decorations and lights on municipal properties, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Highway Department)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This article covers the holiday lights at the Town Building and the tree in Lower Village. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$2,753.25.

ARTICLE 19. Audit of Financial Records

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for a Town financial audit and other financial-related services; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

ARTICLE 20. Water System Expenses

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended by the Facility Manager, for the purpose of paying expenses related to the operation of the Town’s public water supply systems; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The Town has two public water systems, one at Town Building, the other at Pompositticut Community Center. This article pays for monthly water testing of these systems as required by DEP.

ARTICLE 21. Select Board’s Small Purchases Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of adding to an expense account for use by Stow’s Select Board; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This article funds a Small Purchases fund for projects or to help other Departments with engineering projects. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$1,931.02.

ARTICLE 22. Construction and Maintenance of Water Holes for Firefighting Operations

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended under the direction of the Fire Chief, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining water holes, cisterns and hydrants to support firefighting operations, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Fire Department)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$4,737.01.

ARTICLE 23. Replacement of Personal Protective Equipment for Structural Firefighting

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended by the Fire Chief for the purpose of replacing Personal Protective Equipment for structural firefighting that does not meet National Fire Protection Association Standards; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Fire Chief)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

These funds will allow the department to replace three (3) sets of gear per year. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$7,172.17..

ARTICLE 24. Lake Boon Water Quality Remediation

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$32,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended under the direction of the Lake Boon Commission, for the purpose of weed control, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Lake Boon Commission)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

This money is used to treat weeds in Lake Boon. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$12,177.63.

ARTICLE 25. Planning Board Engineering/Consulting Expenses

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previously appropriations, to be expended by the Planning Board for the purpose of Planning Board engineering/consulting services and master plan expenses; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$37,753.45.

ARTICLE 26. Community Preservation Administration Expenses

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from FY 2025 Community Preservation Fund Annual Reserves the sum of Fifty Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-Four Dollars (\$50,834) to be expended for wages and expenses associated with the creation, implementation and maintenance of Community Preservation programs, in accordance with the provision of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act, including but not limited to office supplies, clerical assistance, property surveys, appraisals, attorney's fees, and other professional services, recording fees, printing and all other necessary and proper expenses for FY 2025, in accordance with a budget prepared for the Town Administrator; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Community Preservation Committee)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding from this article comes from the revenue collected by the 3% Community Preservation Act tax.

Residents pay a separate 3% CPA tax which funds Community Preservation Act (CPA) Programs.

ARTICLE 27. Community Preservation Reserves

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and reserve the following sums for later appropriation monies from the Community Preservation Fund Balance collected from the Community Preservation Act Surcharge, the State Trust Fund Distribution, and FY 2025 Community Preservation Fund Annual Revenues, for 10% allocation to reserve accounts in accordance with the provision of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act, for the undertaking of Community Preservation projects; or take any other action relative thereto.

1. Preservation of Historic Resources	\$101,668
2. Preservation of Open Space	\$101,668
3. Affordable Housing	\$101,668
4. Unreserved	\$660,839

(Community Preservation Committee)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article.

This article does not affect the tax rate as the Article transfers funds to their statutorily defined allocations.

ARTICLE 28. Veterans' Benefits

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, to be expended by the Veteran Service Officer, to provide services to Stow veterans; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The Town pays this budget first and then the State reimburses the Town at 75% of the total.

ARTICLE 29. Online Budgeting Software

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of paying for the annual cost associated with the online budgeting software, including any other expenses related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

These are the subscription costs associated with the budget & capital online software purchased in FY22 after Town Meeting approved funding. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$2,777.25.

ARTICLE 30. Traffic Safety Advisory Funds

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), to be expended under the direction of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, for the purpose of maintaining traffic control equipment and traffic control signage, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Traffic Safety Advisory Committee)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

ARTICLE 31. MS4 Stormwater Permit Requirements

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of implementing the requirements of the Storm Water Management Plan as required by the Town’s storm water discharge permit issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or take any other action relative thereto.

(Highway Superintendent)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released the requirements for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance. The purpose of this funding is to implement the requirements of the Town’s NPDES MS4 Stormwater permit. This will be an on-going expense.

ARTICLE 32. Legal Services

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000), to be added to any balance remaining from previous appropriations, for the purpose of funding the Town’s general legal account; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

There are a number of on-going litigations that are now moving through the courts. The balance in this account as of April 1, 2024, is \$97,190.96 with invoices posted through February 2024.

ARTICLE 33. Transfer to OPEB Trust Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer Two Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$235,000) from Certified Free Cash to the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

OPEB principally involves funding retiree health care benefits, but also may include life insurance, disability, legal and other services. These benefits are provided by State and Local Governments to their retired employees. In FY2019, the Town Administrator engaged a consultant to review and help recommend the ideal amount of money to contribute to the OPEB Trust Fund. The annual OPEB contributions are now derived from that analysis. The current OPEB balance is \$1,676,160.49.

ARTICLE 34. Transfer to Stabilization Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) from Certified Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund account; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

This article would add to our “rainy day” fund and continue to build up our reserves to the target 10% - 15% of the general fund budget. The current balance of the Stabilization account is \$1,176,110.76.

ARTICLE 35. Transfer to Capital Stabilization Fund

(CONSENT CALENDAR)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) from Certified Free Cash to the Capital Stabilization Fund account; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

This article would fund the dedicated stabilization fund for capital expenditures, allowing us to build up a reserve for larger costing capital projects. The current balance of the Capital Stabilization account is \$151,994.69.

CONCLUSION OF CONSENT CALENDAR

ARTICLE 36. Capital Requests – Free Cash

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the monies as set forth below for the purposes indicated in the recommended Capital Outlay Program; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Capital Planning Committee)

	Department	Item	Amount
36-1	Building Department	Replacement Vehicle for inspections services and related equipment	\$60,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-2	Facilities	Finish Painting the exterior of 380 Great Road and all costs incidental and related thereto.	\$30,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-3	Facilities	Add escape and rescue window to the bunk room at the fire station and all costs incidental and related to.	\$25,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-4	Fire Department	Refurbish Engine 12 and all costs incidental and related to.	\$50,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-5	Highway	Replacement of Mechanic's Service Truck (S-15) and all costs incidental and related to.	\$110,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-6	Highway	Replacement of Volvo Loader (L70C) and all costs incidental and related to.	\$241,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		

	Department	Item	Amount
36-7	Highway	Apple Blossom Lane - Resurfacing (First Half) / Crackseal (Second Half) and all costs incidental and related to.	\$50,000
<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			
36-8	Nashoba Regional School District	Center School Booster Pump Upgrades and all costs incidental and related to.	\$55,000
<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			
36-9	Nashoba Regional School District	Hale Middle School Stage Wheelchair Lift Replacement and all costs incidental and related to.	\$32,015
<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			
36-10	Nashoba Regional School District	Hale Interior Doors Replacement Phase #2 and all costs incidental and related to.	\$100,000
<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			
36-11	Nashoba Regional School District	Center School Existing Conditions Assessment and all costs incidental and related to.	\$75,000
<i>The Finance Committee recommends XX of this item. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			
36-12	Nashoba Regional School District	Hale Middle School Existing Conditions Assessment and all costs incidental and related to.	\$73,000
<i>The Finance Committee recommends XX of this item. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>			

	Department	Item	Amount
36-13	Police	Body Worn Cameras and all costs incidental and related to.	\$39,500
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
36-14	Police	New Cruiser and related equipment.	\$81,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee recommends XX of this item. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.</i>		
TOTAL			\$1,021,515

Each numbered item will be considered a separate appropriation. The budgeted amount may be spent only for the stated purpose.

ARTICLE 37. Capital Requests - Borrowing

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and borrow the monies as set forth below for the purposes indicated in the recommended Capital Outlay Program; and that to meet said appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, is authorized to borrow the full amount of such appropriation under General Laws Chapter 44 or any other general or special law or other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Capital Planning Committee)

	Department	Item	Amount
37-1	Fire Department	Replacement of 2000 Fire Engine and related equipment	\$990,000
	<i>The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. The Capital Planning Committee will make their recommendation at Town Meeting. The annual debt payment to cover funding for this article will come from the tax levy.</i>		
TOTAL			\$990,000

The budgeted amount may be spent only for the stated purpose.

Article 37 requires a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote to adopt for borrowing purposes.

ARTICLE 38. Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, Bird Meadow Housing

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) from the Community Preservation Fund reserve for Affordable Housing in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act, to be expended under the direction of the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (“SMAHT”), upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, for continued development of not more than six (6) affordable housing units off Red Acre Road (Bird Meadow), and other costs or fees incidental thereto and to authorize the Select Board, or its designee, to apply for and accept such gifts and grants as may be available for reimbursement to the Town for these purposes; or take any other action relative thereto.

(SMAHT and the Community Preservation Committee)

The Finance Committee recommends XXX of this article. Funding from this article comes from the revenue collected by the 3% Community Preservation Act tax.

ARTICLE 39. Funds for the Restoration of John Randall Portrait

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of Four Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$4,660) from the Community Preservation Fund reserve for Historic Preservation, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act, to be expended under the direction of the Randall Library Trustees, upon the recommend of the Community Preservation Committee, for the purpose of restoring an historic portrait of John Randall and its framing.

(Community Preservation Committee and Randall Library Trustees)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding from this article comes from the revenue collected by the 3% Community Preservation Act tax.

ARTICLE 40. Transfer to the Group Insurance Account

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of One Hundred Sixty Thousand Forty-Five Dollars (\$160,045) to the FY24 Group Insurance Account; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

These funds will be used to cover the roll out claims of the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group that is dissolving as of June 30, 2024.

ARTICLE 41. Lake Boon Dam Project Manager

To see if the Town will transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator, to pay for the services of the Lake Boon Dam Project Manager, including all costs incidental and related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto. (Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

A project manager was retained in May 2023 utilizing ARPA funds. As those funds come to an end at the end of 2024, the dam project is not expected to be completed until 2025 or 2026.

ARTICLE 42. Comprehensive Plan Technical Assistance

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be expended by the Planning Board for Comprehensive Planning Technical Assistance; or take any other action relative thereto. (Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This is a transfer and does not impact the tax levy.

These funds will be used to complete the ongoing revision to the Comprehensive/Master Plan, last updated in 2010. As of April 1, 2024, the process of updating the 2010 Plan is nearly halfway complete, with the consultants providing the Town with an Existing Conditions Inventory, a Public Engagement and Outreach Plan, and an Aggregated Community Engagement Summary expected in June 2024. Funding is needed in order to complete the update to the Comprehensive Plan, as the Town was unsuccessful in securing grant funds for the final two phases of this work.

ARTICLE 43. Complete Streets Construction Administration

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000), to pay the costs of construction administration and any other incidental costs related thereto, for planned sidewalk construction along a portion of Crescent Street funded for construction through the MassDOT Complete Streets Program; or take any other action relative thereto. (Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends XXX of this article. Funding for this article comes from the tax levy.

The request for construction administration will provide the technical construction oversight necessary to construct a Complete Streets Grant Program funded project along Crescent Street, including the construction of sidewalks along the westbound vehicle lane from Warren Road to Hartley Road. The project was awarded funding for the 2024 construction season by the MassDOT Complete Streets Program and was chosen among a list of priority projects in Stow that will advance pedestrian, bike and traffic safety. The State's deadline for the use of construction funds is December 31, 2025.

ARTICLE 44. Personal Property Exemption

To see if the Town will vote to increase the minimum value of personal property subject to taxation under MGL Chapter 59 Section 5 Clause 54 to Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500); or take any other action relative thereto.

(Board of Assessors)

The Finance Committee recommends XXX of this article.

The current exemption amount is \$2,500.

ARTICLE 45. National Guard/Reserve Tax Relief

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 56, whereby the Board of Assessors may grant real and personal property tax abatements up to 100 percent of the total tax assessed to members of the Massachusetts National Guard and to reservists on active duty in foreign countries for the fiscal year they performed such service, subject to eligibility criteria to be established by the Board of Assessors, such authorization to be effective for FY 2025 and FY 2026.

(Board of Assessors)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article comes from the overlay account.

General Laws c.59, §5, cl.56 provides that these abatements may only be authorized by Town Meeting for two fiscal years at a time.

ARTICLE 46. Authorize Lease Agreements for Lake Boon Dam Project

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to lease a portion or portions of 105 Barton Road (Assessor’s Parcel U2-62) and 123 Barton Road (Assessor’s Parcel U2-60), Stow, for parking and construction related activities for the Lake Boon Dam project, for such period of time and upon such terms and conditions as the Select Board shall determine to be appropriate; and further to raise and appropriate, and/or, transfer from available funds a sum of money for the rental associated with said leases; and further to authorize the Select Board to execute any and all instruments to carry out the intent of this Article; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Town Administrator)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. Funding for this article, if needed, would come from grant funding or a previous appropriation for the dam project.

ARTICLE 47. Acceptance of Joanne Drive as a Town Way

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way the roadway known as Joanne Drive, as heretofore laid out by the Select Board and shown on a plan of land entitled “Definitive Subdivision Plan, Joanne Drive, A Planned Conservation Development, Stow, Massachusetts” dated August 4, 2017, prepared by Stamski and McNary, Inc., and recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds as Plan 195 of 2020, said plan on file with the Town Clerk, and authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase, and/or eminent domain, the fee to and/or easements in Joanne Drive for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of Stow and any drainage, access, utility and/or other easements related thereto; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This article has no impact on the tax levy.

ARTICLE 48. Amend Zoning Bylaw Section 3.2.2 Residential District Uses Permitted Subject to Special Permit Granted by the Board of Appeals

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw by Amending Section 3.2.2.8 as indicated below to add the text in bold and underlined; or to take any other action relative thereto.

(Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This article has no impact on the tax levy.

3.2.2.8 For parcels of less than five (5) acres, **commercial** stables, raising or breeding animals for sale, and boarding animals, provided that no such BUILDINGS are located within one hundred (100) feet of a LOT line. The Special Permit Granting Authority may allow BUILDINGS to shelter or maintain animals as defined in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 128, Section 1A, within the one hundred foot (100’) setback, provided that the BUILDING was in existence on or before November 13, 1968, was historically used for such purpose, and the use meets the requirements of the Board of Health; and provided that the Special Permit Granting Authority finds that such use, with any necessary mitigation measures, are in harmony with the character of the neighborhood.

The purpose of this proposed amendment is to align with the Board of Health Regulations on the Keeping of Horses by clarifying that a Special Permit is needed only for commercial stables.

ARTICLE 49. Amend Zoning Bylaw: Firearms Business Use

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to Regulate Firearms Business Uses by Amending Section 1.3 (Definitions), Section 3.6 (Industrial District Uses), Section 3.10 (Table of Principal Uses), and Section 8 (Special Regulations) to add a new Section 8.11 (Firearms Business Uses) as follow; and further that non-substantive changes to the numbering of this bylaw be permitted in order that it be in compliance with the numbering format of the Zoning Bylaw; or to take any other action relative thereto.

(Planning Board)

The Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on this article. This article has no impact on the tax levy.

A) Amend Section 1.3 (Definitions) by adding the following definitions to be integrated in alphabetical order within the existing Section 1.3:

AMMUNITION – As defined or amended by State statute or regulations, including, but not limited to, cartridges or cartridge cases, primers (igniters), bullets, tear gas cartridges, or propellant powder designed for use in any FIREARM.

FIREARM –Any device designed or modified to be used as a weapon capable of firing a projectile using an explosive charge as a propellant, including, but not limited to, guns, pistols, shotguns, and rifles.

FIREARM ACCESSORY – Any device designed, modified or adapted to be inserted into or affixed onto any FIREARM to enable, alter or improve the functioning or capabilities of the FIREARM or to enable the wearing or carrying about one’s person of a FIREARM.

FIREARMS BUSINESS USE– Any of the following uses:

- a. FIREARMS BUSINESS USE: Any retail or wholesale operation involving the purchase or sale, in any amount of FIREARMS or AMMUNITION; sale of FIREARM ACCESSORIES, in any amount; any retail or manufacturing operation involving, in any amount, the repairing, altering, cleaning, polishing, engraving, bluing or performing of any mechanical operation on any FIREARM; and sale of conversion devices, in any amount, such as an auto sear, fuel filters or solvent filters, trigger switches and/or similar products that when combined create a FIREARM.
- b. GUNSMITH – Any retail or wholesale operation involving the repairing, altering, assembling, cleaning, polishing, engraving, bluing or performing of any mechanical operation of any FIREARM.

B) Amend Section 3.6.3 by adding a new Section 3.6.3.12 FIREARMS BUSINESS Use as follows:

3.6.3.12 FIREARMS BUSINESS USE (subject to Section 8.11)

C) Amend Section 3.10 (Table of Principal Uses) by adding the following to be inserted after “Microbrewerys, Craft Brewerys, Brew Pubs” in the “Business & Commercial Uses” Section of Section 3.10 and to add a new footnote 16 as follows:

Principle Uses	Residential	Business	Compact Business	Lower Village Business	Industrial	Commercial	Recreation/Conservation	Floodplain Wetlands	Refuse Disposal	Site Plan Approval
<i>FIREARMS BUSINESS USE</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SPP(16)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>(3)</i>

(16) Subject to Section 8.11.

D) Amend Section 8 (Special Regulations) to include a new Section 8.11 to read in its entirety as stated below:

8.11 FIREARMS BUSINESS USES

8.11.1 Purpose

The purpose of this bylaw is to establish reasonable criteria for the establishment of FIREARMS BUSINESS USES in the Town of Stow to address public safety concerns arising from the operations of such businesses and the potential disruption of peace and quiet enjoyment of the community and to regulate the location, siting, design, placement, security, safety, monitoring, and modifications of FIREARMS BUSINESS USES within the Town of Stow to minimize the adverse impacts of FIREARMS BUSINESS USES on adjacent properties, residential neighborhoods, schools and other places where children congregate, and to protect and promote the quality of the Town of Stow’s neighborhoods, commercial and business districts, conservation land and trails, and the general welfare, health and safety of the citizens of Stow.

8.11.2 Compatibility with State and Federal Laws and Regulations

The provisions of this bylaw are not intended to supersede federal or state laws or regulations except to the extent that any such laws or regulations allow a community to adopt standards more stringent than the minimum standards provided in such laws and regulations.

8.11.3 Applicability

- a. No FIREARMS BUSINESS use shall commence unless permitted by the issuance of a special permit as authorized by this bylaw.
- b. No FIREARMS BUSINESS use shall operate until the operator has obtained all necessary Federal, State, and other required local approvals and licenses.
- c. The establishment and operation of FIREARMS BUSINESS USES shall be subject to continued compliance with all special permits, including any conditions thereof, the provisions of this Section 8.11, any other applicable requirements of the Zoning Bylaw, and all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

8.11.4 Location requirements

- a. No special permit for a FIREARMS BUSINESS use shall be granted where such use would be located within 500 feet of a:
 - i. Residential use, residential zoning district, or mixed-use districts within which residential uses are allowed;
 - ii. Public or private elementary school, middle school, or high school;
 - iii. CHILD CARE FACILITY, including family childcare homes, childcare centers, and/or nursery and/or preschools;
 - iv. Any establishment catering to or providing services primarily intended for minors, including, but not limited to, establishments such as activity centers or commercial recreation centers;
 - v. Church or other religious organizations;
 - vi. Public park or conservation land including a trail network intended for passive or active recreation; or
 - vii. Playground.
- b. The 500-foot distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the STRUCTURE within which the FIREARMS BUSINESS would operate (from the nearest point of the exterior of the tenant space if the FIREARMS BUSINESS is located in a STRUCTURE occupied by multiple tenant spaces), to the nearest boundary line of a LOT in residential use, in a residential zoning district, in a mixed-use district within which residential uses are allowed, or the nearest point of any LOT on which a public or private elementary school, middle school, or high school is located, or to the nearest point of any STRUCTURE containing or associated with other uses listed in Section 8.11.4.a above, provided, however, that if no STRUCTURE is on the property the distance shall be measured to the LOT line of such use.
- c. The commencement of one or more of the uses listed in Section 8.11.4.a above within 500 feet of a proposed FIREARMS BUSINESS USE location during the review of a special permit application for a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE (beginning on the date of submittal), following the issuance of a special permit, or following the commencement of the FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall not invalidate the FIREARMS BUSINESS USE, the special permit issued therefor, or the ability to renew any existing special permit.
- d. No FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall be located within a BUILDING containing residential DWELLING UNITS, including, but not limited to, transient housing, group housing, HOTEL, INN, MOTEL, TOURIST HOME, LODGING HOUSE, BED AND BREAKFAST ESTABLISHMENT OR HOME, and/or dormitories.
- e. There shall not be more than one FIREARMS BUSINESS USE on a Lot.

8.11.5 Administration, Procedure, Findings and Conditions

The Planning Board acting pursuant to Section 8.11, Section 9.2 and G.L. c. 40, §9 may grant, grant with conditions or deny an application for a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE special permit that complies with all applicable requirements of this Zoning Bylaw and State and Federal law. Only an applicant holding a valid, current State license issued pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 140, §122, as applicable, and all required Federal and local licenses is eligible to apply for a special permit pursuant to Section 8.11.

The following additional requirements and provisions shall apply to a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE:

1. Applicants for a special permit pursuant to Section 8.11 are strongly encouraged to meet with the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) at a public meeting to discuss the proposed application for a new FIREARMS BUSINESS and to discuss in general terms the proposed FIREARMS BUSINESS prior to the formal submission of an application.
2. The application for a special permit shall comply with the rules for such applications adopted by the Planning Board and filed with the Town Clerk. In addition, the application for such special permit for a FIREARMS BUSINESS must include the following information:
 - i. Name, residential address, business address, and telephone numbers of the legal owner or owners of the proposed FIREARMS BUSINESS;
 - ii. Name, residential address, business address, and telephone number of the manager of the proposed FIREARMS BUSINESS;
 - iii. Name, residential address, business address, and telephone numbers of all persons having any equity, including beneficiaries or other interest in such FIREARMS BUSINESS, including but not limited to security interest, liens, mortgages, or other interest. In the event that a corporation, partnership, trust, or other entity is listed, the name, residential address, business address, and telephone number of every person who is an officer, director, shareholder, or trustee of the entity must be listed, in order that the SPGA may know who are the persons who actually own and control that FIREARMS BUSINESS;
 - iv. A letter from the Stow Police Department indicating compliance with state FIREARMS license requirements pursuant to G.L. c. 140;
 - v. The total number of employees;
 - vi. Evidence that the applicant has site control and the right to use the proposed site as a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE. Such evidence shall be in the form of a deed, purchase and sale agreement, lease, or other legally binding document. If draft documents are submitted, a letter from the current property owner or lessor shall be included to indicate their intent to provide the applicant with site control;

- vii. The physical layout of the premises including the interior of the STRUCTURE in which the FIREARMS BUSINESS will be located;
- viii. A full description of the intended nature of the FIREARMS BUSINESS;
- ix. An operations and management plan including, but not limited to, a security plan. Documentation shall be included in the application to the Planning Board. Review of the plan may require an on-site inspection of the property. The security plan must include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Names and phone numbers of all management staff and employees.
 - 2. FIREARMS BUSINESS USEs shall conduct criminal history background checks in compliance with state and federal law. The FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall submit written certification that no employees have a past criminal history of felony record.
 - 3. A plan showing exterior ground lighting.
 - 4. Description of security systems and alarms.
 - 5. 24-hour video surveillance system in parking lots, building entrances and exits and transaction or point-of-sale locations.
 - 6. The location of dumpsters, which shall be locked with screening.
 - 7. Floor plan showing interior layout of operation delineating all areas, including but not limited to employee only access areas, storage, administrative, and public access areas.
 - 8. Evidence of after-hours storage of all FIREARMS in locked containers or by otherwise securing the FIREARMS with tamper-resistant mechanical locks.
- 3. The FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall procure and at all times while in operation maintain insurance issued by an insurance company licensed to do business in the Commonwealth, insuring the FIREARMS BUSINESS against liability for damage to property and for injury to, or death of, any person as a result of the theft, sale, lease or transfer, or offering for sale, lease or transfer of a FIREARM or AMMUNITION, or any other operation of the FIREARMS BUSINESS. The limits of liability shall not be less than \$1,000,000 for each incident of damage to property or incident of injury to death to a person; provided however, that increased limits of liability may be required by the SPGA upon a finding that the size of the operation warrants greater liability. Notice of termination of any applicable insurance must be given to the SPGA at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the cancellation. Proof of compliance with this requirement shall be included in the application.
- 4. Applicants must comply with the safety and security requirements set forth in state and federal law, including any firearms security requirements set forth by G.L. c. 140 within the jurisdiction of the Police Department regarding security and conditions of firearms dealer

licenses, as well as any federal security requirements mandated by the ATF as currently in effect.

5. Special Permit Conditions

- i. A FIREARMS BUSINESS use shall be located in, and conduct all operations and transactions within, an enclosed BUILDING; this shall not prohibit operations involving the delivery or receiving of permitted goods and products, which may involve transfer to or from a motor-vehicle outside of an associated BUILDING.
- ii. All publicly accessible BUILDING entrances shall be visible from a public way, a private way with public right of entry, or an easement with public right of entry. The SPGA may impose conditions requiring that fencing or plantings be installed along rear and side lot lines to screen the premises from adjoining properties.
- iii. Drive-through windows and/or any interactions or sales to customers within vehicles are prohibited.
- iv. The days and hours of allowed operation of a FIREARMS BUSINESS shall be approved by the SPGA, but in no event shall a FIREARMS BUSINESS be open to the public, performing deliveries, and/or otherwise operating before 8:00 AM and after 9:00 PM on Mondays through Friday, or before 9:00 AM and after 6:00 PM Saturdays and Sunday.
- v. No person under the age of eighteen (18) shall be permitted on the premises of the FIREARMS BUSINESS unless they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- vi. All FIREARMS BUSINESS uses shall conduct criminal background checks for all employees in accordance with state law.
- vii. There shall only be one FIREARMS BUSINESS USE allowed on a Lot.
- viii. A Special Permit for a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall be valid for one year. The owner of a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall annually apply to the SPGA for renewal of the Special Permit, which renewal shall not exceed one (1) year.
- ix. A Special Permit for FIREARMS BUSINESS USE, if granted, shall at a minimum be issued in the name of a specific individual and is not transferable including upon a sale, transfer, or assignment of the FIREARMS BUSINESS USE. A special permit for a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE may be revoked for violation of the Stow Zoning Bylaw or state and federal law, including, but not limited to, G.L. c. 140, ss. 122B, 130, 131N. Upon expiration or cancellation of the policy of insurance as required herein, and if no additional insurance is obtained, the special permit may be revoked. The SPGA may hold a public hearing with notice, posting and publication as required by G.L. c. 40A, §11 to consider revoking a Special Permit under this paragraph. A concurring vote of 4 members of the SPGA shall be necessary to revoke a special permit for a FIREARMS BUSINESS USE.

6. Mandatory Findings by SPGA- In addition to determining compliance with the requirements and conditions of Section 8.11, 9.2 and all other applicable Sections of the Zoning Bylaw, the SPGA shall not issue a special permit unless without exception it shall find that the proposed use and development:
 - i. Meets all other applicable requirements of the Zoning Bylaw and the permitting requirements of all applicable agencies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town, and will otherwise comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations;
 - ii. Provides adequate security measures to ensure that no staff or patrons will pose a threat to the health or safety of other individuals. In making this determination the SPGA shall consider input from the Stow Police Department, if any; and
 - iii. Adequately addresses issues of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, circulation, parking, and queuing, especially during peak periods at the FIREARMS BUSINESS.

8.11.6 Signage

- a. All SIGNS associated with FIREARMS BUSINESSSES shall comply with Section 6.3 SIGNS of the Zoning Bylaw.
- b. All special permit applications for FIREARMS BUSINESSSES shall include a proposed exterior SIGN package, which may be included as a condition of issuance of the special permit.

8.11.7 Security

- a. FIREARMS BUSINESSSES shall provide the Stow Police Chief, Building Commissioner, and the SPGA with the names, phone numbers and email addresses of all management staff and keyholders to whom one can provide notice if there are operating problems associated with the establishment; this information shall be updated when staff of the FIREARMS BUSINESS changes.
- b. No operator and/or employee of a FIREARMS BUSINESS shall have been convicted of any felony under state or federal law.
- c. Trash dumpsters shall be locked and enclosed by a screening enclosure so as not to be accessible to the public.
- d. The exterior grounds, including the parking lot and landscaped areas, shall be lighted in such a manner that all areas are clearly visible at all times during business hours; all light fixtures shall comply with Section 3.8.1.5 of the Zoning Bylaw.
- e. The FIREARMS BUSINESS shall be equipped with, and the operators of such FIREARMS BUSINESS shall maintain in working order at all times operational security alarms.

- f. A video surveillance system shall be installed and maintained which shall monitor all parking lot areas, main BUILDING entrances and exits, storage areas, and any and all transaction areas for the sale of merchandise. FIREARMS BUSINESSSES shall videotape the point-of-sale of all FIREARMS transactions and maintain videos for six months to deter illegal purchases and monitor employees.

8.11.8 Access to Premises and Information

No FIREARMS BUSINESS USE shall operate unless it has all requisite state and federal FIREARMS licenses under state and federal law. A FIREAMS BUSINESS must notify the Police Chief and SPGA in writing within twenty-four (24) hours of any change in its FIREARMS license status.

8.11.9 No accessory use FIREARMS BUSINESSSES

Use of property as a FIREARMS BUSINESS shall necessarily be deemed a principal use for purposes of the Zoning Bylaw and shall be permitted exclusively in accordance with this Section 8.11. No FIREARMS BUSINESS may be allowed within the Town on the basis that such use qualifies as a permissible accessory use.

8.11.10 Severability

The provisions of this bylaw are severable. To the extent this Bylaw conflicts with G.L. c. 140 or other State laws or regulations currently in effect, the section shall be interpreted to minimize any conflict with State laws or regulations while maximizing the furtherance of the public safety and other public purposes underlying this Bylaw. The invalidity of any Section or provision of this Zoning Bylaw shall not invalidate any other Section or provision hereof.

ARTICLE 50. TOWN ELECTION

To vote by ballot on May 18, 2024, at the Center School, 403 Great Road, in said Town of Stow the following officers and ballot question. The polls are open from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Two members of the Select Board for three years;
One member of the Board of Assessors for three years;
One member of the Board of Health for three years;
One member of the Planning Board for five years;
Two members of the Trustees, Randall Library for three years;
One member of the Nashoba Regional School District Committee for three years;
One member of the Stow Housing Authority for five years.

Ballot Question

Shall this Town approve the charter amendments proposed by the 2023 Annual and Special Town Meetings, summarized below?"

The changes to the Charter were approved at the 2023 Annual and Special Town Meetings, respectively, under Articles 56-60, and Articles 4, 6-8, and 10-14. The proposed revisions include but are not limited to the following. References to the “Board of Selectmen” and “Selectman” have been replaced with references to the “Select Board” and “Select Board Member”. Relative to Town Meeting, the revisions include: clarification of deadlines for submission of citizen petitions; election of a Deputy Moderator; deadline for preparation of the Town budget decreases from 60 days prior to 30 days prior; requires budget summary to be posted on Town Bulletin Board; and requires a notice of intent to call for a special town meeting to be posted on the Town website and official bulletin board. Limited updates were made to the appointing authorities of the Select Board, Town Administrator and Town Moderator. The revisions propose to change the Board of Assessors from an elected board to an appointed board, with no change made to the service of the incumbents. Several revisions were intended to update and clarify provisions of the Charter, including: that the Town Administrator will serve for a term agreed upon by contract; a regional school district committee agreement may establish terms of its own members; operational roles of the Select Board and Town Administrator will be clarified; Select Board will have increased flexibility in the process for searching for a new Town Administrator and appointing an Acting Town Administrator; removes gendered language; clarifies the role of the Planning Board, including primary responsibility for the Master Plan; revises the membership of and process for appointing the Master Plan Committee; renders more practical the process for removing appointees and employees and clarifies that non-reappointment is not the equivalent of removal; updates provisions relative to multimember bodies to be consistent with requirements of the Open Meeting Law; clarifies that action by a multimember body may be taken by the majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum is present; updates definition of “town bulletin board” ; eliminates requirements for publication of certain notices in a newspaper of local circulation; clarifies that multimember bodies can appoint non-voting associate members, as well as subcommittees; updates definition of “master plan” to allow use of words “comprehensive plan”; and requires multimember bodies to annually reorganize.

And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting copies attested by you calling same at the Town Building and at each of at least seven (7) other public places at least seven (7) days before the time of holding said meeting.

Hereof, fail not and make due return of the warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk or Select Board on or before the time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this 23rd day of April in the year 2024.

SELECT BOARD

Cortni Frecha, Chair
Megan Birch-McMichael, Clerk
Hector Constantzos
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
John "JT" Toole

CONSENT CALENDAR PROCEDURES

Each year there are a number of warrant articles, for which past experience suggests that the **action will be routine, non-controversial and predictable**. Again, at this annual meeting, these articles have been selected for inclusion in the Consent Calendar. The use of the Consent Calendar speeds the passage of warrant articles which the Select Board and Moderator, in consultation with Town Counsel and the Finance Committee, believe should generate no controversy and can be properly voted without debate.

The consent calendar will be taken up as one of the first orders of business at the Annual Town Meeting.

There will be a motion to take all of the Consent Calendar articles identified in the warrant and **act upon these as a group by a single brief affirmative main motion**, referred to as the Consent Calendar, which will also contain separate and specific motions for each such article included in the Consent Calendar. The language and the amount of money specified in the Consent Calendar articles as printed in the warrant are subject to change. The motion made at Town Meeting will include any changes.

At the motion of the Consent Calendar, the Moderator will call out the number of each of the articles, one by one. If any voter has doubt about passing any motion or wishes an explanation of any article included in the Consent Calendar, the voter should say the word **“Hold”** in a loud voice when the article number is called by the Moderator.

The Moderator will then inquire as to whether the request to hold is for a question or for debate. If the purpose of the request is merely to ask a question, an attempt to obtain a satisfactory answer will be made, and if this occurs the article will remain on the Consent Calendar. If the purpose of the request is to hold the article for debate, the article will be dropped from the Consent Calendar and restored to its original place in the warrant, to be brought up, debated, and voted on in the usual way. It is hoped that voters will remove articles from the Consent Calendar only in cases of genuine concern.

After calling the individual articles on the Consent Calendar, the Moderator will ask that all articles remaining be **passed as a unit** by vote after a brief affirmative main motion is made inclusive of all articles remaining on the Consent Calendar.

Before Town Meeting, please review the Consent Calendar articles. The articles begin after Article 5 and are marked **“(CONSENT CALENDAR)”** in the upper right-hand corner of the article. Please do your homework before coming to Town Meeting. If you have any questions about the articles included in the Consent Calendar, motion or procedures, please feel free to call the Town Administrator (978-897-2927) **before Town Meeting**.

CONSENT CALENDAR MOTION

I move that the Annual Town Meeting approve Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35 as printed in the warrant, without debate on any such articles, and provided that upon the request of any voter at this meeting made before the vote is taken on this motion, an article shall be dropped from the Consent Calendar and shall be acted upon in the ordinary course and order of business at this Town Meeting.

APPENDIX A – Annual Report of Revolving Funds

Recreation – pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, §53D

FY24 Beginning Balance: \$ 134,264.46
Revenue through March 31, 2024: \$ 198,880.20
Expenses through March 31, 2024: \$ 226,854.90
Balance as of March 31, 2024: \$ 106,289.76

Inspection Fees – pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, §53E-1/2

GAS

FY24 Beginning Balance: \$ 18,923.41
Revenue through March 31, 2024: \$ 4,057.50
Expenses through March 31, 2024: \$ 5,618.50
Balance as of March 31, 2024: \$ 17,362.41

PLUMBING

FY24 Beginning Balance: \$ 37,216.64
Revenue through March 31, 2024: \$ 9,903.60
Expenses through March 31, 2024: \$ 11,599.20
Balance as of March 31, 2024: \$ 35,521.04

WIRING

FY24 Beginning Balance: \$ 40,566.10
Revenue through March 31, 2024: \$ 12,385.80
Expenses through March 31, 2024: \$ 14,063.00
Balance as of March 31, 2024: \$ 38,888.90

Advanced Life Support Services – pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, §53E-1/2

FY24 Beginning Balance: \$ 0.00
Revenue through March 31, 2024: \$ 1,700.00
Expenses through March 31, 2024: \$ 1,700.00
Balance as of March 31, 2024: \$ 0.00

APPENDIX B- Definitions of Commonly Used Terms at Town Meeting

Appropriation – An authorization by the Town Meeting to make expenditures and incur liabilities for specific purposes. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and as to the time when it may be expended.

Assessed Valuation – A valuation set upon real estate or other property by the Assessors as a basis for levying taxes.

Bond – A written promise to pay a specified sum of money by a fixed date, and carrying with it interest payments at a fixed rate, paid periodically. A **Note** is similar, but issued for a shorter period.

Debt and Interest – The amount of money necessary annually to pay the interest and the principal on the Town's outstanding debt. Also known as "Debt Service."

Fiscal Year – The budget period used by the Town running from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next year. At the end of this period, the Town closes its books in order to determine its financial condition and the results of its operation.

Free Cash (Available Funds) – The amount of money left after all prior years' uncollected taxes have been deducted from surplus revenue. This amount may be used as available funds by vote of the Town Meeting.

Overlay – The amount, up to 5% of the tax levy, raised by the Assessors in excess of appropriations and other charges to cover abatements and exemptions.

Overlay Reserve – Unused amount of the overlay for previous years, which the Town may transfer to Surplus Revenue after all abatements for such fiscal year are settled.

Reserve Fund – A fund voted by the Annual Town Meeting and controlled by the Finance Committee for extraordinary and unforeseen expenditures incurred by Town departments during the year.

Stabilization Fund – Special Reserve Fund that can be used by a 2/3 vote of the Town Meeting.

Surplus Revenue – The amount by which cash, accounts receivable and other assets exceed the liabilities and reserves. Used in calculating free cash.

Transfer – The movement of funds from one account to another. Transfers between accounts (other than the Reserve Fund) can be made only by vote of the Town Meeting, unless it is the last two months of the fiscal year.

Unexpended Balance – That portion of an appropriation or account not yet expended. Any such balances left at the end of the fiscal year are generally used as Surplus Revenue in calculating Free Cash.

APPENDIX C - Table of Motions

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Rank		Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	May Reconsider	May Interrupt
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS							
1	Dissolve or adjourn sine die	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
2	Adjourn to fix time or recess	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
3	Point of no quorum	No	No	No	None	No	No
4	Fix the time to (or at) which to adjourn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
5	Question of privilege	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS							
6	Lay on the table	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes	No
7	The previous question	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	No
8	Limit or extend debate	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes	No
9	Postpone to a time certain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
10	Commit or refer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
11	Amend (or substitute)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
12	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	No
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS							
*	Point of order	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
*	Appeal	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	No
*	Division of a question	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
*	Separate consideration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
*	Fix the method of voting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
*	Nominations to committees	No	No	No	Plur.	No	No
*	Withdraw or modify a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No	No
*	Suspension of rules	Yes	No	No	2/3***	No	No
MAIN MOTIONS							
None	Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Var.	Yes	No
**	Reconsider or rescind	Yes	**	No	Majority	No	No
None	Take from the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
None	Advance an article	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No

* Same rank as motion out of which they arise.

** Same rank and debatable to same extent as motion being reconsidered.

*** Unanimous if rule protects minorities; out of order if rule protects absentees.

**TOWN OF STOW
MASSACHUSETTS
2023-2024**

SELECT BOARD

Cortni Frecha, Chair
Megan Birch-McMichael, Clerk
Hector Constantzos
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
John “JT” Toole

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Denise M. Dembkoski

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Brian Patuto, Chair
Kevin Gross
Dan Petersen
Evgenia Petrova