



FINANCE COMMITTEE

Town of Grafton

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Recommendations of the Finance Committee for the Articles prepared for the Warrant of the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for October 16, 2017:

Article 1 Receive Reports Of Offices, Boards and Committees

Finance Committee recommends acceptance of any reports presented.

Article 2 Amend Town Charter

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 2 as written.

This is a housekeeping article to clean up the Charter for mistakes such as spelling and capitalization errors.

Article 3 Amend Town Charter-Section 3-4 School Committee

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 3 as written.

The re-wording eliminates confusion by clearly stating that there **will be** a School Committee.

Article 4 Amend Town Charter – Section 3-5 – Town Clerk

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 4 as written.

The Town Clerk's position has become technical in nature over the past several years. It is important to have a Town Clerk that understands the complexities of the job and has prior experience and certifications as a Town Clerk. To accomplish this, Candidates need to be properly vetted. This would be accomplished through the appointment process.

Article 5 Amend Town Charter – Article 3 – Elected Officials

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 5 as written.

The Planning Board performs a very important function for the Town. Planning Board is an impartial body charged with implementing and determining Land Use Policy for the Town. For this reason, the registered voters of Grafton need to have a say in the individuals serving the Town in this very important role.

Article 6 Amend Town Charter – Section 3-2 (D) Appointment

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 6 as written.

Since the Finance Committee opposes passage of Articles 5, this Section of the Charter should not be changed and the Planning Board should remain elected.

Article 7 Amend Town Charter – Section 3-1: Elective Offices

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 7 as written.

Since the Finance Committee opposes passage of Articles 5, this Section of the Charter should not be changed and the Planning Board should remain elected.

Article 8 Amend Town Charter- Section 2-3(B) Finance Committee

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 8 as written.

This article clears up language presently in the Charter concerning the Finance Committee's duties and responsibilities.

Article 9 Amend Town Charter – Section 5-6: Board of Sewer Commissioners

The Finance recommends passage of Article 9 as written.

This article is a housekeeping article and updates the Town Charter to reflect current practice.

The Board of Sewer Commissioners is a three member Board appointed by the Town Administrator.

Article 10 Amend Town Charter – Sections 7-5 and 7-9

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 10 as written.

This article updates the Town Charter to add the Town's Website to the definition of "Local Newspaper" since public meeting notices and advertisements are also placed on the Town's website in addition to the local newspapers. It also updates the procedures governing multiple member bodies so that all agendas are posted in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws.

Article 11 Amend Town Charter- Article 8- Transitional Provisions

Finance Committee recommends passage Article 11 as written.

This article serves to clarify language in the Charter concerning Transitional Provisions, and makes clear which town positions the Board of Selectmen appoints, and which town positions the Town Administrator appoints.

Article 12 Amend Town Charter – Article 4: Town Administrator

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 12 as written.

The revisions clarify the role, composition and timing of the Screening Committee; removes outdated references to the Town Administrator's salary; and more appropriately calibrates experience and education for candidates for the Town Administrator position.

Article 13 Adjust FY18 Operating Budget

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 13 as written.

Article 13 requests the transfers among these accounts:

\$3,500 from Recreation Expenses to Article 6, May 2016 Ferry Street Fence

Replacement;

\$2,600 from Board of Selectmen Salaries to Unclassified Expenses;

\$2,600 from Veterans Services Personnel to Veterans Services Expenses

These transfers result in no additional spending and adjust the budget that was approved at the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting to reflect updated estimates of spending within the departments noted.

Article 13 also requests that the Town appropriate \$139,400 by raising and appropriating \$59,400 and transferring from Free Cash \$80,000:

\$30,000 – Highway Personnel

\$17,500 – Nelson Library Personnel

\$11,900 – Nelson Library Expenses

\$25,000 – South Grafton Community House Expenses

\$50,000 – Town Administrator Expenses

\$5,000 – IT Expenses

The \$30,000 is to cover the hiring of a replacement Highway Department Head as the current head will be retiring in December. The \$17,500 and \$11,900 are to cover expenses at the Nelson Library that were initially thought to be covered by the interest earned on the funds held by the Trust. The \$25,000 is an estimated amount to be used to clean up asbestos discovered in the building. The \$50,000 is to cover the removal of unsafe structures at 24 Cortland Way. This amount will be paid back to the Town. The \$5,000 is needed to perform a software upgrade. The Finance Committee believes that these transfers and additional appropriations are appropriate responses to changed circumstances.

Article 14 Prior Fiscal Year Bills

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 14.

Finance Committee understands that this article will be passed over at Town Meeting since there are no bills to pay from prior fiscal years.

Article 15 Fire Department Retirement

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 15 in the amount of \$1,400.00.

The Town adopted the practice of providing a one-time reward of \$100 per year of volunteer firefighting service. Free Cash is the funding source for this article. Currently, the balance in this account is \$25.00.

Article 16 Sick and Vacation buyback

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 16 as written in the amount of \$23,000.00.

Town By-Law includes paying for unused sick and vacation days upon retirement with the Free Cash as its funding source.

Article 17 Funding for Follette Street Well Project

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 17 in the amount of \$10,000.00. Free Cash will be the source of funding for the Follette Street Well Project to continue the DEP mandate to monitor this well for groundwater contamination.

Article 18 Purchase of Snow Plow Operations Equipment

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 18 as written. The anticipated sum of \$35,000.00 from free cash is necessary to equip the DPW's snow removal fleet appropriately. The Town was able to purchase the trucks with Chapter 90 Funds. Chapter 90 funds did not cover the purchase of the snow plows.

Article 19 CPC Affordable Housing Reserve

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 19 in the amount of \$47,682.90. This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservation Act funds for affordable housing purposes.

Article 20 CPC Open Space Reserve

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 20 in the amount of \$47,682.90. This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservation Act funds for open space purposes.

Article 21 CPC Historic Preservation Reserve

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 21 in the amount of \$47,682.90. This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservation Act funds for historical preservation purposes.

Article 22 Fund for CPA Purposes

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 22 in the amount of \$182,305.32. This article is a routine procedural article necessary to set aside Community Preservation Act funds for future use.

Article 23 CPC Affordable Housing Transfer

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 23 as written. This article transfers \$48,643.00 from the CPA Reserve to the Grafton Affordable Housing Trust. This transfer is ordinarily reviewed at the May Town Meeting and was inadvertently left of the warrant last Spring

Article 24 CPC Stone Arch Bridge Project

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 24 as written. This article appropriates the sum of \$120,000 from the CPC Undesignated Fund for completion of the Stone Arch Bridge project.

Article 25 Road Improvement Stabilization Fund

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 25 in the amount of \$1,500,000.00. Funds raised for road repair through the 2014 override are accumulated in the Roads Stabilization Fund. These funds cannot be put to work repairing roads until they are transferred out of this Stabilization Fund to the Road Improvement Capital Expenditures Fund at a town meeting. Article 25 transfers \$1,500,000.00 to the Road Improvement Capital Expenditures fund. Passage of Article 25 requires a two-thirds majority vote.

Article 26 Sale of Surplus Equipment

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 26. This article authorizes the Board of Selectmen to sell equipment exceeding the price of \$5,000.00 that is no longer needed by the Town.

Article 27 Increase Limit for Sale of Surplus Equipment

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 27 as written. This is a housekeeping article to simplify common processes.

Article 28 Solar Tax Agreement

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 28 as written. This article will authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into tax agreement with the owners of the solar photovoltaic energy facility located at 207 Providence Road. By authorizing the Board of Selectmen to enter into this agreement, the Town will have a known in lieu of tax payment over the next twenty-five years from the Operator of the facility and allow the Town to plan its finances accordingly.

Article 29 Brookmeadow Village Roadway Acceptance

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 29. The roadways have met all the requirements, including a Certificate of Completeness granted by the Planning Board, for being accepted as Town Ways. The Board of Selectmen has reviewed the Certificate of Completeness and has voted to accept these road ways.

Article 30 South Grafton Water District Hydrants

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 30 as written. This article provides acceptance of additional hydrants to the Town's hydrants list from the South Grafton Water District.

Article 31 Fund Audience Response Systems Voting Devices

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 31 in the amount of \$7,000.00. This article is funded by Free Cash to extends "clicker" coverage to every one of the 665 seats in the new high school auditorium. The clickers offer very quick counts and anonymity for voters.

Article 32 Portable Police Radios

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 32 in the amount of \$5,200.00. Free Cash will provide the funding for these radios that were budgeted previously to be purchased, but were not and the sum was directed to free cash.

Article 33 Fund Part-time Economic Development Coordinator

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 33 in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00. This is an opportunity for Grafton to put a stronger focus on economic development that will greatly benefit the Town.

Article 34 North Grafton Transit Village Overlay District

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 34 as written. This article will enable development of the old State Hospital property on Pine Street, with a mixed use type of development that will bring significant advantages to the Town. Finance Committee understands that there will be amendments to correct some minor details to ensure that this will work as intended.

Article 35 Sales Partnership With The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 35 in the amount of \$100,000.00. This article will raise and appropriate \$100,000.00 to enter into this sales partnership that is in the interests of economic development in Grafton.

Article 36 Design and Engineering for Route 30

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 36 in the amount of \$50,000.00. This design and engineering study will be funded by Free Cash and will further the interests of economic development along Route 30.

Article 37 Lease 3000 Gallon Fire Tanker Engine

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 37 in the amount of \$130,542.00. This purchase, funded by Free Cash and left over Capital Funds, is made in conjunction with the Town's capital plan for the replacement of aging fire equipment.

Article 38 Staffing Study- Grafton Fire Department

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 38 as written. This article appropriates \$15,000.00 from free cash to complete a staffing study of the Grafton Fire Department.

Article 39 Environmental Phase I And Market Study-27 Upton Street (DPW Site)

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 39 in the amount of \$10,000.00. This article is funded by Free Cash to determine the environmental status of 27 Upton Street since it is in the long-term interests of economic development in Grafton.

Article 40 Fund Feasibility/Schematic Design Of North Street Elementary Window and Door Replacement Project

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 40 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

The replacement of these 48 year old windows and doors has been requested by the School Department for several years within the Capital Improvement Plan but has not been able to be funded based on where it fell in the need/cost analysis process. The Town recently applied for a grant in conjunction with the MSBA that would allow the Town to receive 52% reimbursement for the 106 windows and 14 exterior doors that are in need of replacement. The Town has passed through Phase I of the study by the MSBA that has tagged North Street Elementary School needs as a viable project to be awarded the grant. The next Phase is to undergo a design and feasibility study funded by the Town costing approximately \$50,000.00 to be transferred from Free Cash. The Finance Committee believes that this project should be approved in conjunction with the MSBA to take advantage of the grant funding as well as the energy cost savings that the Town will benefit from going forward.

Article 41 Remediation Of Contaminated Well -159 Millbury St.

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 41 in the amount of \$20,000.00.

The Town Administration considers it at least possible that run-off from snow remediation efforts has negatively impacted well-water at 159 Millbury Street. It is in the interests of Town residents that 159 Millbury Street is connected to town water.

Article 42 Long Range IT Account

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 42 in the amount of \$25,000.00.

This article appropriates \$25,000 from Free Cash to fund the Long-Range Information Technology Maintenance Account.

Article 43 Appropriation to Stabilization Fund

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 43 in the amount of \$200,000.00.

Using Free Cash to reimburse this account continues sound financial practices that maintain Grafton's favorable bond rating by maintaining a stabilization account with a total between five and ten percent of the town budget. This article serves to reimburse funds spent on Snow and Ice Removal Expenses incurred from the previous fiscal year.

Article 44 Appropriation To OPEB Trust Fund

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 44.

Finance Committee understands that this article will be passed over at Town Meeting.

Finance Committee does, however, agree that we need to analyze the Town's exposure to liabilities resulting from retirees' health insurance and other post retirement costs. OPEB (Other Post-employment Benefits) are benefits that an employee (Municipal and School) begins to receive at the start of retirement. This does not include pension benefits paid to the retired employee.

