

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting – June 5, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Edward Goddard at 7:01 PM at the King Philip Regional High School Auditorium. As of June 5, 2023 there were 9,518 registered voters of which 124 were in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Wrentham Public School Chorus. The Chorus also started off the Town Meeting with the 1st ever rendition of the 350th Anniversary song, “Wrentham Oh Wrentham” directed Ms. Melanie Mariotti and accompanied by Mr. Michael McGuire on guitar. The audience gave a standing ovation. Tellers appointed were Riley Odams and Ray Palmer.

The warrant was properly posted and all motions were received in a timely fashion. Selectman, Michelle Rouse motioned to waive the reading of the Town Meeting Warrant.

The Moderator announced the appointments to the Finance Committee: Christopher Pflum and Dwayne Hancock. He introduced the Assistant Town Administrator, Greg Enos. He recognized the recent elected officials and thanked George Smith and Trevor Knott for their time on the Board of Health and KP School Committee and Mr. Paul Zinni, KP School Superintendent. During the meeting, he welcomed State Senator Rebecca Rausch and State Representative Marcus Vaughn.

Mr. Goddard gave condolences on their loss to the families of Mr. Richard Bergman and David Ross.

TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Article 1 – Move that the Town accept the 2022 Annual Town Report.

Passed unanimously.

Article 2 – Move that the Town vote to fix the salary and the compensation of elected officials as provided in MGL c.41, Sec. 108:

Town Clerk	\$82,754
All Other Elected Officials	\$0.00

Passed unanimously.

Article 3 – Move that the Town vote to appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$251,871 to snow and ice expense for FY2023.

There were two questions pertaining to raising the budgeted line item in small increments in the upcoming fiscal years.

Passed unanimously.

Article 4 – Move that the Town vote to appropriate by transfer from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings the sum of \$19,365 and from Free Cash the sum of \$1,393 to fund unpaid bills from prior fiscal years.

DPW – Expenses - \$19,365
Insurance & Employee Benefits - \$1,393

Passed unanimously.

Article 5 – Move that the Town vote to approve the Town of Wrentham’s Water Enterprise Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the sum of \$2,979,082 as shown in the Wrentham Finance Committee’s Recommendations under Table B-1.

The appropriation will be allocated as follows:

To direct expenses the sum of	\$2,351,119
By transfer to the general fund for indirect expenses the sum of	\$627,963
<i>Said sum is to be sourced as follows:</i>	
From Water Enterprise Revenue the sum of	\$2,904,082
By transfer from the Water Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Water Enterprise Operation Capital Budget the sum of	\$75,000

Passed unanimously.

Article 6 – Move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate or transfer the sum of \$51,740,706 to fund the Town’s Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) to be expended as follows:

General Government	\$4,039,109
Public Safety	\$7,673,897
Public Works	\$2,566,485
Human Services	\$502,477
Culture & Recreation	\$586,520
Education – Wrentham	\$13,923,350
Education – King Philip Regional	\$12,245,845
Education – Tri-County, Norfolk Agricultural	\$1,339,193
Debt Service	\$309,445
Insurances & Employee Benefits	\$8,554,385
Total General Fund Expenses	\$51,740,706

and that the forgoing appropriation be sourced as follows:

Raise and Appropriate the sum of	\$48,552,717
Appropriate by transfer from the Ambulance Receipts Reserve Account to the Fire Department's Salary Accounts the sum of	\$1,040,000
Appropriate by transfer from the Cemetery Receipts Reserve Account the sum of	\$10,000
Appropriate by transfer from the Septic Loan Program the sum of	\$10,026
Appropriate by transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund the sum of	\$627,963
Appropriate by transfer from unappropriated funds in the treasury the sum of	\$1,500,000

There were some holds placed on some of the line items and questions were answered by the Finance Director, Michael King and Town Administrator, Kevin Sweet.

Passed unanimously.

Article 7 – Move that the Town raise and appropriate \$398,450 to pay costs of acquiring an equipped ALS Ambulance for the use of the Fire Department, and that to meet this appropriation, the Town Administrator, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is authorized to obtain said amount through a lease purchase financing agreement as permitted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §21C, or any other enabling authority; the term of such lease purchase agreement not to exceed the useful life of the ALS Ambulance as determined by the Town Administrator; that the Town Administrator, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is authorized to execute and deliver such lease-purchase agreement and any and all other related documents which shall contain such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen shall approve.

Passed unanimously.

Article 8 - Move that the Town vote to transfer from available funds in the treasury the sum of \$1,055,891 for the following capital items:

Department	Item	Cost	Source
Council on Aging	HVAC Replacement	\$85,000	Free Cash
Facilities	Replace Two (2) Gas Fire Heater Units at Wastewater Treatment Plant	\$35,000	Free Cash
Public Safety – Fire	ALS Ambulance (Lease Payment 4 of 5)	\$57,258	Ambulance Receipts
Public Safety – Fire	Engine 2 (Lease Payment 5 of 7)	\$83,633	Free Cash
Schools	Fire Escapes – Vogel Building	\$75,000	2017 Bond Premiums
Public Works	Mobile Column Lifts	\$56,000	Free Cash
Public Works	Supplemental Ch. 90 Funds for Road & Sidewalk Improvements	\$350,000	Free Cash
Public Works	Supplemental Ch. 90 Funds for Road & Sidewalk Improvements	\$100,000	Overlay Surplus
Public Works	Loader (Split between Free Cash/Water/Premiums)	\$77,842.01	2017 Bond Premiums
Public Works	Loader (Split between Free Cash/Water/Premiums)	\$29,157.99	Free Cash
Water	Loader (Split between Free Cash/Water/Premiums)	\$107,000	Retained Earnings

Passed unanimously.

Article 9 – Move that the Town appropriate by transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$750,000 to be allocated to the Town’s Capital Stabilization Fund and General Stabilization Fund as follows:

Stabilization Account	Amount	Source
Capital Stabilization	\$550,000	Free Cash
General Stabilization	\$200,000	Free Cash

Passed unanimously.

Article 10 – Move that the Town vote to transfer available funds from Free Cash the sum of \$40,000 and to transfer from Water Retained Earnings the sum of \$60,000 to the Town’s “Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB)” trust fund established by Town Meeting in June 2012.

There was a question regarding what other Towns balances were in comparison to Wrentham’s balance.

Passed unanimously.

Article 11 – Move that the Town vote to rescind the existing Recreation Revolving Fund authorized in 1991 pursuant to MGL c. 44 §53D, transferring the balance to a new MGL c. 44 §53E ½ Recreation Revolving Fund and amend Chapter 18 §7E of the authorized Revolving Funds, of the General Bylaws of the Town of Wrentham by adding one revolving fund to the table as follows:

(1) Revolving Fund	(2) Department, Board, Committee, Agency, or Officer Authorized to Spend from Fund	(3) Fees, Charges, or Other Receipts Credited to Fund	(4) Program or Activity Expenses Payable from Fund	(5) Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable from Fund	(6) Other Requirements /Reports	(7) Fiscal Years
Recreation	Recreation Department / Recreation Commission	Revenue from Recreation Dept. Activities	Part-time wages & Operational Expenses	\$400,000		Fiscal Year 2024 and sub- sequent years

There was a question regarding the annual/maximum expenses for this account.

Passed unanimously.

Article 12 – Move that the Town vote to authorize the total expenditures for the following revolving funds pursuant to MGL c. 44, Section 53E ½ for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, to be expended in accordance with the bylaws heretofore approved.

Fund	Approved Total Expenditures
Police Equipment	\$50,000
Recycling and Solid Waste	\$50,000
Firearms Licenses	\$30,000
Wrentham Cultural Council	\$10,000
Communications	\$30,000
Public Health Alliance	\$125,000
Recreation	\$400,000

Passed unanimously.

Article 13 – Move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$42,528, for the purpose of programs and projects set out in the Massachusetts State-Subdivision Agreement for Statewide Opioid Settlements and the National Opioid Settlement Agreement to combat the opioid epidemic.

There was a question on where the funds would be transferred to. Mr. Sweet stated the Town Accountant would create a new account.

Passed unanimously.

Article 14 – Move that the Town vote to appropriate by transfer from Ambulance Receipts the sum of \$48,264 to fund the settlement of the Wrentham Fire Union contract negotiations for FY2024.

Passed unanimously.

Article 15 – Move that the Town vote to appropriate or reserve from the Community Preservation Fund annual revenues in the amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee for administrative expenses, committee preservation projects and other expenses in Fiscal Year 2024:

Appropriations:

From FY2024 estimated revenues for committee administrative expenses:	\$15,000
From FY2024 estimated revenues for bond payments	\$51,000

Reserves:

From FY2024 estimated revenues for Historic Preservation Reserve:	\$37,200
From FY2024 estimated revenues for Community Housing Reserve:	\$37,200
From FY2024 estimated revenues for Open Space Reserve:	\$37,200
From FY2024 estimated revenues for Budgeted Reserve:	\$194,400

Passed unanimously.

Article 16 – Move that the Town vote to authorize the Town Administrator, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 164, § 134(a), to initiate the process to aggregate the electrical load of interested electricity consumers in the Town, and to enter into agreements for services to facilitate the sale and purchase of electric energy and other related services.

There was a question on whether this would reduce residents’ electric bills, Mr. Sweet said this would be a multi-year process to be able to negotiate better rates.

Passed unanimously.

Article 17 – Move that the Town allow the Board of Selectmen to request the State Legislature to increase the number of alcohol licenses for on-premises consumption for the Town of Wrentham by 7 additional licenses for alcohol.

There were a couple of question regarding the state quota to which Mr. Sweet explained.

Passed unanimously.

Article 18 – Move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for a special act reading as follows:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, William McGrath Chief of the Police Department of the Town of Wrentham, may continue to serve in such position until reaching the age 70 (June 3, 2030), until the date of his retirement, or until the date he is relieved of his duties by the Town Administrator of the Town of Wrentham at his discretion, whichever occurs first; provided, however, that he is mentally and physically capable of performing the duties of his office. The Town Administrator may, at the Town's own expense, require that William McGrath be examined by an impartial physician designated by the Town Administrator to determine such capability.

No further deductions shall be made from the regular compensation of William McGrath under Chapter 32 of the General Laws for any service subsequent to William McGrath reaching age 65, and upon retirement, he shall receive a superannuation retirement allowance equal to that which he would have been entitled had he retired upon reaching age 65.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

There were questions on superannuation and whether this applied to Mr. McGrath specifically. Mr. Sweet answered the question.

Passed unanimously.

Article 19 – Move that the Town of Wrentham charge for each written demand by the collector a fee of \$15.00 to be added to and collected as part of the tax, as authorized by M.G.L. c. 60, Sec. 15, effective July 1, 2023.

Passed unanimously.

Article 20 – Move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for a special act reading as follows:

"SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the positions and persons holding all titles below the rank of Chief and which are full - time sworn members of the fire department, of the Town of Wrentham shall be exempt from chapter 31 of the General Laws.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this act shall not impair the civil service status of any person holding the positions of regular and permanent members of the fire department, persons holding the titles

below the rank of Chief of the fire department, of the Town of Wrentham on the effective date of this act.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon its passage.";

And (a) to authorize the General Court to make clerical and editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Board of Selectmen approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court, and the Board of Selectmen shall be authorized to approve amendments which shall be within the scope of the general public objectives of the petition; and (b) to further authorize the Board of Selectmen to take any and all other action necessary or advisable to remove the positions of regular and permanent members of the fire department, persons holding the titles below the rank of Chief of the fire department, in the Town of Wrentham from Civil Service.

Passed unanimously.

Article 21 – Move that the Town vote to accept the provisions of MGL c53, Section 9A.

Passed.

Article 22 – Move that the Town vote to delete Paragraph A of Section 383-3 – Other Charges of the Town Code as it pertains to additional collection fees for failure to license dogs.

Passed unanimously.

Article 23 – No action taken.

Motion by Selectman Harrington to adjourn sin die at 8:37 p.m. *Motion carries.*

A True Copy, Attest: _____
Cynthia L. Thompson, Town Clerk