

The Minutes for the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Held on June 21, 2023

The Annual Town Meeting, held at the East Brookfield Elementary School, 410 East Main Street, was called to order by our newly elected Moderator, Shaun Richard, at 7:05 p.m. There were 37 registered voters at that time which satisfied our quorum of 20 set by By-law. More people wandered in for a total of 42 registered voters in attendance. There were six guests present. All were directed to pick up a copy of the Warrant, the budget summary and budget detail, and the Finance Committee's recommendations.

The Meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and then the Moderator's "welcome" message. The Moderator then yielded the floor to the Board of Selectmen Chair, Joseph Fish, who asked for a moment of silence for those eight townspeople we've lost since June of 2022, and expressed condolences to their families and friends on behalf of the Town. Anne Barnes, our former Treasurer was recognized with a standup round of applause for her many years of service in that role (she was not present at the meeting). The floor was then yielded to Finance Committee Chair, Leo Fayard, who then expressed thanks and appreciation to the other members of the Committee, noting their dedication, the Committee's diversity, and their ability to come together in putting together the Town's budget. The Moderator then announced he would like to try something different rather than the usual meeting format which consisted of the reading of the Warrant Greeting and the Directive, noting that the Board of Selectmen's signatures and the Constable's attestation were in order, and then commencing with the individual reading of the 37 articles included on the Warrant. He put forth the option of waiving the reading of the Warrant and instead referencing each Article by number. This would allow more time for any discussion needed and most likely shorten the duration of the meeting. He then requested a motion to this effect.

Finance Committee member Rick Manser moved that the meeting dispense with the reading of the Warrant and with the reading of the Constable's return of service of that Warrant, and further moved that the Moderator not be required to read Articles of the Warrant verbatim, but be allowed to refer to Articles by number and by subject matter or as provided in print to the voters in attendance and further that the amendments need not be read, but are to be voted upon as printed and provided to the voters in attendance. Finance Committee Chair Leo Fayard seconded this motion, a voice vote was taken. The "ayes" had it, the motion carried and was adopted.

Article 1

Note: Finance Committee Clerk, Mark Carpentier, stated he was going to read the Budget Summary rather than the detailed budget, both of which were available for attendees to pick up when they checked in. After reading the Elected Officers' salaries first, he went on to the Summary.

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise, as indicated, the amounts shown in the "Summary Budget Recommendations" and in the column entitled for "FY 2024 Recommend" to defray Town Expenses for the twelve months ending June 30, 2024, and that the annual salaries of elected officers of the Town for the ensuing year be set as follows:

Elected Officer	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2024 Recommend
Town Clerk	\$30,195	\$31,101
Selectmen (3 members)	\$9,151	\$9,426
Chairman (additional)	\$518	\$534
Treasurer	\$18,140	\$18,684
Collector	\$16,726	\$17,228
Assessors (3 members)	\$4,597	\$4,735
Chairman (additional)	\$216	\$223
State Cert. (additional)	\$750	\$750
Board of Health (3 members)	\$1,845	\$1,910
Chairman (additional)	\$273	\$276
Tree Warden	\$349	\$349
Planning Board (5 members)	\$0	\$0
Chairman (additional)	\$0	\$0

A resident asked why the Wiring Inspector wasn't listed here. Town Accountant Donna Couture explained that it's an appointed position and he is paid by the inspection fees, limits for which are set forth in Article 22. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 2

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to the Highway Department for the maintenance of roads. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 3

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 for Chapter 90 Highway Construction & Improvement, the same to be used separately or in addition to sums contributed by the State under Chapter 90, providing such contributions are made. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 4

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to accept all cemetery trust funds received and turned over to the Town Treasurer during the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2023. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 5

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to comply with the provisions of Chapter 41, §4A of the General Laws as follows:

- (a) to authorize the Recreation Committee to employ any of its members on Recreation work and to fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (b) to authorize the Board of Assessors to employ any of its members to perform Cyclical Inspections and to fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (c) to authorize the Board of Assessors to employ any of its members as Working Assessor and fix the rate of pay at not greater than \$41,375 annually.
- (d) to authorize the Cemetery Commissioners to employ any of its members on Cemetery work and fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (e) to authorize the Library Trustees to employ any of its members on Library work and fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (f) to authorize the Board of Health to employ any of its members as Agent and fix the annual rate of pay at \$93.
- (g) to authorize the Board of Health to employ any of its members as Clerk and fix the annual rate of pay at \$283.
- (h) to authorize the Board of Health to employ any of its members to perform clerical services and fix the annual rate of pay at \$8,604.
- (i) to authorize the Conservation Commission to employ any of its members as Clerk and fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (j) to authorize the Park Commissioners to employ any of its members on Park Commission work and fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (k) to authorize the Planning Board to employ any of its members to perform clerical work and fix the rate of pay at the prevailing applicable minimum wage.
- (l) to authorize the Finance Committee to employ any of its members to perform clerical work and fix the annual rate of pay at \$300.

Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 6

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint a Town Counsel for the ensuing year. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 7

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2023, in accordance with the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 44, §4, and to issue a note or notes therefor, payable within one year, and to renew any note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year, in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 44, §17. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 8

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to borrow money in anticipation of reimbursements on Chapter 90 Maintenance or Chapter 90 Construction, for the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2023, in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 44, §6A and the Acts in Amendments thereof, and including in addition thereto, Chapter 849 of the Acts of 1969 as amended, and to renew any note or notes as may be given under the Article for a period of less than one year. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 9

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to hear all reports of committees appointed at any town meeting. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted. There were no reports to be heard.

Article 10

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept any gifts of property or money which might be given to the Town. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 11

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to pass over this Article at this time. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was passed over. ["To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or transfer from Available Funds, a sum of money to the Stabilization Fund Account..." There was no need to do this at this time.]

Article 12

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to appropriate the sum of \$400.00 to pay the expenses of the Town representatives to the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District Committee. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 13

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission to take any action on present or impending grants on Lake Restoration. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 14

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$273,794.00 from the Ambulance Fees Reserved for Appropriation Fund to the Ambulance Operational Expense Account for the Fiscal Year 2024. [Attendees were directed to page 22 of the budget detail.] Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 15

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,351,305.00 to the Regional School Apportionment Account for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2024 Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District assessment. [Attendees were directed to page 22 of the budget detail.] Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 16

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to pass over this Article at this time. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was passed over. [“To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer a sum of money to fund Capital costs associated with the East Brookfield Elementary School for Fiscal Year 2024...”]

Article 17

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$170,000.00 to the Vocational School Account for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2024 costs associated with the education and transportation of East Brookfield Vocational School students. In response to a question from the floor, we were told most of our vocational students are attending Tantasqua. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 18

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,000.00 to the Special Fire Engine Stabilization Account. In response to a question from the floor, we were told that there is currently \$323,000.00 in that account and this would bring it up to \$363,000.00. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 19

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$35,000.00 to the Special Ambulance Stabilization Account. In response to a question from the floor, we were told that there is currently \$170,000.00 in that account and this would bring it up to \$205,000.00. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 20

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$40,000.00 from Free Cash to the Municipal Capital Equipment Stabilization Account. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 21

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to pass over this Article at this time. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was passed over. [“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer a sum of money to the stabilization fund for educational costs...”]

Article 22

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to establish the annual limits shown below for Fiscal Year 2024 for all revolving funds listed in Article 17 of the General By-laws, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, §53 E½, as most recently amended.

Animal Inspector	\$500.00
Treasurer	\$1,000.00
Town Collector	\$15,000.00
Town Clerk	\$3,000.00
Wire Inspector	\$10,000.00
Board of Health	\$10,000.00
Plumbing & Gas Inspector	\$10,000.00

Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 23

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to pass over this Article at this time. It was explained that there is \$7,000 in the Maintenance of Private Roads Account and there is no reason to add more at this time. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was passed over.

Article 24

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from retained earnings the sum of \$267,900.00 to operate the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2023. This Article was amended to read, "...raise and appropriate from user fees..." It was explained that this will include a raise in the user fees: \$2.00/bag and \$160.00 solid waste fee. The contract with the hauler is renegotiated every 5 years. Motion to amend was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was amended. Motion was then made and seconded on the amended article, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the amended article was adopted.

Article 25

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from retained earnings the sum of \$590,128.00 to operate the Water Enterprise Fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2023. This Article was amended to read, "...raise and appropriate from user fees..." The amount was also amended to read, "\$592,631.00" as \$85,933 was added to the Water Superintendent Salary. [Attendees were directed to pages 21 & 22 of the budget detail.] Motion to amend was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was amended. Motion was then made and seconded on the amended article, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the amended article was adopted.

Article 26

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$19,000.00 from Free Cash to purchase two-way radios for the Fire Department and EMS. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 27

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$7,400.00 from Free Cash to purchase a Certified Power Freedom 2 controller for the Highway Department. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 28

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$6,400.00 from Free Cash to purchase a Micro Track Road Master Control for brine for the Highway Department. This piece of equipment and the one in Article 27 will help keep the cost down when treating the roads in the winter. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 29

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$78,000.00 from Free Cash to purchase a new tractor for the Highway Department. John Couture inquired as to whether any AARPA funds were being used for this. The answer from Finance was no. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and only one in opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 30

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$5,000.00 from Free Cash to the Lake Lashaway Community Association for the purpose of invasive weed treatment on Lake Lashaway. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 31

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$17,000.00 from Free Cash to purchase a new server for the Municipal Offices. In response to a question from the floor, we were told that the new server would receive the same support from IT as the old one. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 32

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$10,800.00 from Free Cash to purchase a new server for the Police Department. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 33

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town was asked to vote to transfer the sum of \$30,000.00 from the Solid Waste Retained Earnings to the Solid Waste Recycling & Collection Account. Because this amount was decided to be inadequate, a motion to amend the Article amount to \$45,000.00 was put forth and seconded. There being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was amended. Motion was then made and seconded on the amended article, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the amended article was adopted.

Article 34

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to transfer the sum of \$18,000.00 from Free Cash for installation of an asphalt driveway at the Senior Center and surrounding area. In response to a question from the floor it was noted that the Town owns all but about 18-inches from the chain link fence at the back of the lot. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 35

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to appropriate a sum of money, not to exceed Eight Million Eighty Thousand dollars (\$8,080,000.00) be and hereby is appropriated to pay costs of making various water system improvements, including, but not limited to the construction of a new water treatment plant and the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, is hereby authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, §§7 and 8, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. All, or any portion, of this borrowing may be obtained through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (the "Trust"). The Chair of the Select Board, acting as the Chair of the Select Board or the Board of Water Commissioners, the Treasurer and any other appropriate official of the Town are authorized to execute and deliver any and all agreements and other documents that may be required by the Trust, or by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in connection with any financing to be obtained through the Trust. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount. There was some discussion as to how this amount was arrived at – we are a Tier 2 community and this is an estimate by the engineer. [The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (Trust) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) provide loan forgiveness each year to "Disadvantaged Communities" based on an annual affordability calculation that ranks communities into affordability tiers. The Trust provides a fixed percentage of loan forgiveness based on the affordability tiers and the specific State Revolving Fund program. For more information: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/the-disadvantaged-community-program>] Motion was made and seconded, and there being no further discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 36

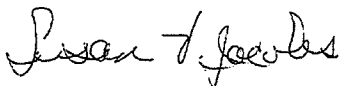
At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town voted to borrow the sum of \$485,000.00 for the design and permitting of a new Water Treatment plant. The project will also include the extension of the existing distribution system to connect to the proposed water treatment plant as needed and all the other related improvements. Motion was made and seconded, and there being no discussion and no opposition, the motion carried and the article was adopted.

Article 37

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town was asked to vote to pass over this article at this time. Town Accountant Donna Couture asked that a motion be made to move forward on this article and not pass over it. [The article in essence called for the Town Collector's demand fee to go from \$5.00 to \$10.00.] After a lot of discussion, Mrs. Couture submitted in writing a motion to amend the current motion of passing over this article to recommend that the Town vote to charge for each written demand issued by the Town Collector a fee of \$10.00 to be added to and collected as part of the tax, as authorized by M.G.L. Chapter 50, §15, effective June 21, 2023. The motion was moved and seconded to amend the motion to pass over this article and move forward with a vote. It being unclear as to the outcome of the voice vote, a hand count vote was called for which showed 16 in favor and 15 opposed. The hand count in favor of amending the article won and the motion to amend the article carried. Motion was made and seconded to vote on the amended article and once again a voice vote was unclear and a hand vote was taken: 16 in favor and 15 opposed. There being no further discussion, and the vote being favorable, the motion carried and the amended article was adopted.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and all being in favor the Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan V. Jacobs
Town Clerk

TOWN OF EAST BROOKFIELD: Annual Town Meeting * JUNE 21, 2023 — FY 2024

Article No.	Total Appropriation	From Tax Levy	From Free Cash	From Other Available Funds	Borrow	Sources of Funding	Sources for Funding
1	\$ 511,636.00	\$ 511,636.00				Raised from FY 2024	General Government
	\$ 978,361.00	\$ 978,361.00				Raised from FY 2024	Public Safety
	\$ 101,958.00	\$ 101,958.00				Raised from FY 2024	Human Services
	\$ 452,300.00	\$ 452,300.00				Raised from FY 2024	Highway & Street Lighting
	\$ 19,405.00	\$ 19,405.00				Raised from FY 2024	Cemeteries
	\$ 101,681.00	\$ 101,681.00				Raised from FY 2024	Library
	\$ 43,005.00	\$ 43,005.00				Raised from FY 2024	Culture and Recreation
	\$ 706,354.00	\$ 706,354.00				Raised from FY 2024	Insurance, Benefits, Retirement
	\$ 15,000.00					Transfer from Free Cash	Reserve Fund
Totals	\$ 2,929,700.00	\$ 2,914,700.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	\$ -		
2	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00				Raised from FY 2024	Highway - Maintenance of Roads
3	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00				Raised from FY 2024	Chapter 90 Highway Construction/Improvement
12	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00				Raised from FY 2024	Town Representatives to SEBRSD Committee
14	\$ 273,794.00			\$ 273,794.00		Ambulance Fees Rescd for Appropriation Fund	Ambulance Operational Expense Account
15	\$ 2,351,305.00	\$ 2,351,305.00				Raised from FY 2024	Regional School Apportionment Account
17	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 170,000.00				Raised from FY 2024	Vocational School Account
18	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00				Raised from FY 2024	Special Fire Engine Stabilization Account
19	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00				Raised from FY 2024	Special Ambulance Stabilization Account
20	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00			From Free Cash	Municipal Capital Equipment Stabilization Account
24	\$ 267,900.00			\$ 267,900.00		Receipts/Retained Earnings	Solid Waste Enterprise Fund
25	\$ 592,631.00			\$ 592,631.00		Receipts/Retained Earnings	Water Enterprise Fund
26	\$ 19,000.00		\$ 19,000.00			From Free Cash	Purchase 2-way radios for FD/EMS
27	\$ 7,400.00		\$ 7,400.00			From Free Cash	Purchase Certified Power Freedom 2 controller for HD
28	\$ 6,400.00		\$ 6,400.00			From Free Cash	Purchase Micro Track Road Master brine control for HD
29	\$ 78,000.00		\$ 78,000.00			From Free Cash	Purchase new tractor for HD
30	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00			Free Cash	Lake Lashaway Comm. Assoc. for invasive weed treatment.
31	\$ 17,000.00		\$ 17,000.00			Free Cash	Purchase new server for Municipal Offices
32	\$ 10,800.00		\$ 10,800.00			Free Cash	Purchase new server for PD
33	\$ 45,000.00			\$ 45,000.00		Sold Waste Retained Earnings	Solid Waste Recycling Collections Account
34	\$ 18,000.00		\$ 18,000.00			From Free Cash	Installation of asphalt driveway at Senior Center
36	\$ 485,000.00				\$ 485,000.00	As a loan	New Water Treatment Plant, etc.
Totals	\$ 4,502,630.00	\$ 2,636,705.00	\$ 201,600.00	\$ 1,179,325.00	\$ 485,000.00		
TOTAL	\$ 7,432,330.00	\$ 5,551,405.00	\$ 216,600.00	\$ 1,179,325.00	\$ 485,000.00		

I hereby certify that the foregoing Appropriations and the provisions for the meeting of the same were voted at the Annual Town Meeting, June 21, 2023.

cc: DOR / attachments, Finance Committee, Treasurer, Accountant, Selectmen

Susan V. Jacobs

Susan V. Jacobs, Town Clerk