

# *Town of Acton*



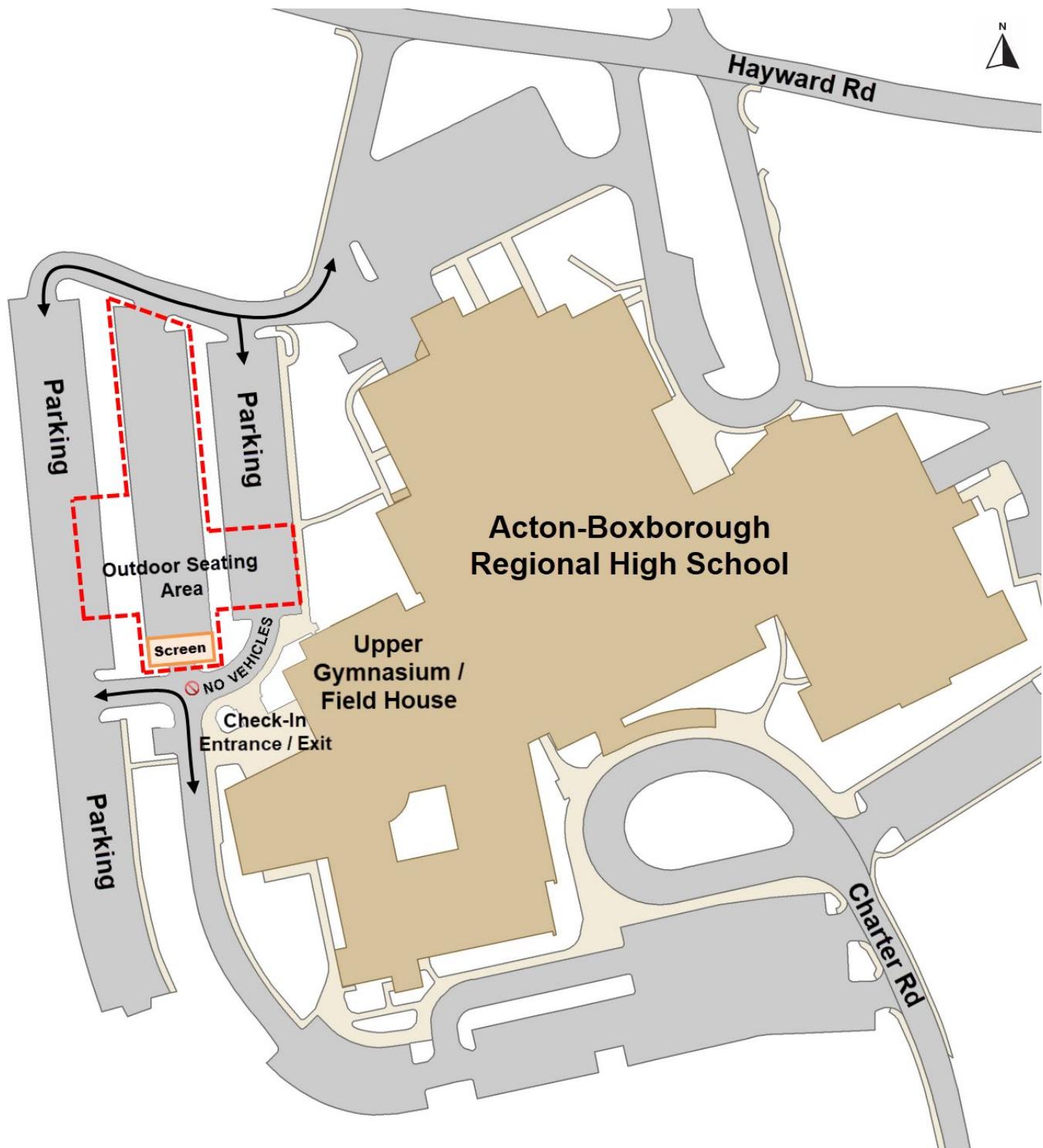
## *2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant*

The Annual Town Meeting will begin at 6:00 PM on Monday, June 21 in the  
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School  
Upper Gymnasium (Indoor Seating) and the  
Adjacent Parking Lot (Outdoor Seating)

36 Charter Road

## Town Meeting Location

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# *Table of Contents*

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Article Index.....	4
Select Board's Message .....	5
Town Moderator's Message .....	7
Town Manager's Message .....	8
Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Background .....	12
Finance Committee's Message .....	16
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District .....	21
Town of Acton Multi-Year Financial Model .....	27
Free Transportation to Town Meeting .....	28
Volunteers Sought .....	28
Message from Acton Nursing Services.....	29
Consent Calendar .....	30
Annual Town Meeting Warrant .....	31
Articles .....	32
Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Municipal Finance.....	85
Moderator's Rules and Parliamentary Procedure .....	91
Internet & Telephone References.....	95
Emergency Notification Systems .....	97
Volunteer Application.....	99
Online Bill Payments .....	101

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# Article Index

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\* Article is on Consent Calendar

# Article submitted by Citizens' Petition

<b>Article</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 *	Choose Town Officers .....	32
2	Town Operating Budget.....	33
3	Town Capital, Infrastructure, Studies and Improvements.....	34
4	Town Capital, Infrastructure, Studies and Improvements.....	37
5	Wastewater Treatment System Rehabilitation .....	41
6	Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Assessment .....	42
7	Minuteman Regional School District Assessment .....	42
8	Acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restriction – Stonefield Farm .....	43
9	Community Preservation Program – Direct Appropriations from Fund Balances.....	45
10	Sidewalk Acquisition – 78 Taylor Road .....	53
11	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Drive-up Window Facilities .....	54
12	Release of Restriction – 127 Strawberry Hill Road .....	56
13	Amend General Bylaws – Regulation of Fossil Fuels Infrastructure.....	58
14	Home Rule Petition – Building with Clean Energy to Regulate of Fossil Fuels Infrastructure.....	62
15	Authorize Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreements for Solar Facilities.....	63
16	Authorize Solar Contract – Low Income Community Shared Solar Facility.....	64
17	# Non-Binding Resolution – Dog Park Funding and Relocation.....	65
18	# Amend Town Charter – Electing Planning Board Members .....	67
19	# Non-Binding Resolution – Electing Planning Board Members .....	68
20	* Amend General Bylaws – Terminology of the Select Board.....	69
21	* Amend General Bylaws – Department Revolving Funds .....	70
22	* Real Property Disposition – 26 Carlisle Road .....	71
23	* Budget Transfer.....	72
24	* Authorize Collective Bargaining Agreement.....	72
25	* Commuter Lot & Station Maintenance .....	73
26	* Septage Disposal Enterprise Budget .....	74
27	* Transfer Station and Recycling Enterprise Budget .....	75
28	* Sewer Enterprise Budget.....	76
29	* Ambulance Enterprise Budget .....	77
30	* Transportation Enterprise Budget .....	78
31	* Revolving Fund Budgets.....	79
32	* Hear and Accept Reports .....	80
33	* Authorize Easements.....	80
34	* Highway Reimbursement Program (Chapter 90).....	81
35	* Insurance Proceeds.....	81
36	* Gifts or Grants.....	82
37	* Federal and State Reimbursement Aid.....	83
38	* Performance Bonds.....	83
39	* Sale of Foreclosed Properties.....	84

# *Select Board's Message*

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This Town Meeting Warrant is your invitation to participate in the legislative portion of Acton's Town government. Acton citizens have a cherished tradition of governing themselves by means of an open Town Meeting. We encourage all Acton residents to attend. All registered voters are urged to participate in the debate and vote on the Articles presented. Other residents, even if they are not registered voters, are invited to attend and observe, or to view the proceedings on our government cable television channels, Comcast channel 99 and Verizon channel 41.

## **Town Meeting Dates, Times and Location**

The Annual Town Meeting will begin Monday, June 21 at 6:00 PM in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Upper Gymnasium/Field House. Town Meeting is expected to conclude in a single evening. Come early to get checked in by the Town Clerk's staff and to obtain additional information. Check-in will take place on the outdoor plaza of the Upper Gymnasium.

Many of the articles in this Warrant relate to matters which are routinely addressed every year, such as the municipal operating budget, regional school district assessments, and enterprise and revolving fund budgets. Other articles relate to issues and matters that are new or unique this year. Although some articles, such as zoning or bylaw amendment proposals, do not involve appropriation of funds, much of the Annual Town Meeting's attention is focused on fiscal matters.

## **Town Meeting Warrant and Procedures**

The Town Meeting Warrant is the agenda for the meeting. It is drawn up by the Select Board from various proposals made by the Select Board, the School Committee, other Boards, staff and citizens. The Select Board determines the order that the articles appear in the Warrant. Articles will be considered in that order unless the Moderator, or the Meeting itself, changes that order. Each article is intended to give fair notice of the topic to be discussed and voted upon, thus any motion made at Town Meeting under one of these articles must be found by the Moderator to be within the scope of the printed article. At Town Meeting, the motion made under each article will describe the specific proposed action. The wording of the motion, and any amendments that might be offered to the main motion, may differ from the exact wording of the article, but as indicated above must be within the scope of the article. Accordingly, it is suggested that each attendee listen closely to the reading of the motion, and any amendments made before voting.

Your attention is invited to the Warrant section on Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure, serving as a basic guide to Town Meeting process written by the Town Moderator. The best debate is conducted by those who have informed themselves concerning the issues. Informed debate is delayed when speakers rise only to ask basic questions that could be individually addressed. To assist speakers to inform themselves in advance, and to avoid delays during the meeting engendered by persons seeking basic information, the Select Board strongly encourages and solicits questions in advance concerning any of the proposed Articles. Information regarding the Articles may be obtained from any of the contacts listed after each Article summary, or a general inquiry may be made to the Town Manager's Office at (978) 929-6611 or [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) for an appropriate referral.

## **Thank You to Our Volunteers**

In addition to trying to balance our budgetary needs against limited resources, another necessity for the healthy function of our local government and community is the flow of active, interested citizens willing to volunteer their time, talents, and energy to participate as members of the Town's many volunteer regulatory

and advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees. Volunteers are the very foundation of our government, and as the needs of the Town expand, so does the need for volunteers. No special knowledge is necessary to volunteer, only an interest to serve the community and advance the public good, combined with a willingness to learn. The rewards may be intangible, but are very real.

We encourage you to volunteer by reviewing the list of opportunities available on our website at <http://www.actonma.gov/volunteer>. The application is available online as well as an appendix in this Warrant. Handwritten applications may be submitted to the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall or handed to any Select Board Member during Town Meeting. Please consider helping your Town by volunteering some time – we believe you will find it very rewarding.

Jon Benson, Chair  
Dean A. Charter, Vice-Chair  
David D. Martin, Clerk  
Joan Gardner  
Jim Snyder-Grant

**Select Board**

## *Town Moderator's Message*

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Dear Acton Voters,

I am looking forward to seeing many of you as we gather soon for our annual town meeting. This face to face practice of direct democracy with our neighbors is an old fashioned form of government that cannot be done remotely or asynchronously. It allows us to see and listen to each other and to then consider the merits brought up in debate - even if no minds were changed, we may better understand why our neighbors may vote differently than we do.

The meeting will be Monday, June 21 at 6:00 PM at the Acton Boxborough Regional High School Field House and parking lot. Current public health and safety precautions in place on the day of the meeting will be observed. Touchless check in will be at the entrance to the Field House (upper gym) outside. People can then choose whether to go inside and sit at the designated distance or to be outside sitting at the designated distance. Both locations will be connected through audio and video, talk to text translation, and microphones for voters to speak. Chairs will be placed in the parking lot at appropriate intervals, but people wanting to be outside may bring their own chairs to put in those spots. Insect repellent and umbrellas may also be needed, as the outdoor space will not be covered. The meeting will be streamed on Acton TV for those wishing to watch.

I will hold a moderator's meeting for presenters on Wednesday, June 16 at 7 PM via Zoom. Presenters should submit the slides they plan to use at Town Meeting by June 14. The presentations for articles will be recorded and available online through Acton TV by June 14. Thank you to Acton TV for supporting this important service.

To join the Zoom webinar, please use the link <https://actonma.zoom.us/j/92993042713>, or call in by telephone to (646) 876-9923 and enter ID #929 9304 2713. Telephone users may dial \*9 to request to speak after joining the meeting. Computer and app users may use the "raise hand" feature to request to speak.

To make the meeting as efficient as possible, the following steps will be taken:

- Presentations will be available online by June 14 for voters to review and contact the presenters with questions prior to the meeting if possible.
- Twenty-one of the 39 articles are on the consent agenda. Voters will have the opportunity to hold out an article, but if you have questions that could be answered prior to the meeting, please contact the sponsor if possible. Once the list has been reviewed and any articles held out for individual discussion, those articles will be voted as a block.
- The article sponsors will have up to 5 minutes to present. Voters including con presenters will have up to 2 minutes to make their point or to ask their questions..
- Voting will be by a combination of voice and holding up large colored tickets.

As we continue to safeguard public health and honor our democratic process, let us gather with good intention to conduct our legislative session thoroughly yet efficiently.

Sincerely,  
Jo-Ann Berry  
Town Moderator

# *Town Manager's Message*

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June 7, 2021

Dear Residents of Acton:

On March 1, 2021, I presented the Town Manager's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022 to the Board of Selectmen. The Board voted to support this budget on April 12, 2021 and the Finance Committee voted to support this budget on June 1, 2021. The presentation of Acton's first 10-year Capital Improvement Plan was on March 29, 2021 and this document is available online at <http://www.actonma.gov/townmanager>.

This budget is reflective of the goals of the Select Board and is responsive to the needs of the community. Highlights in the FY22 budget include investments consistent with goals related to infrastructure and public safety. Also included are sustainability measures, creating new resources to support diversity and equity efforts, increased resources to address mental health needs, funding for non-participating items for the Kelley's Corner Infrastructure project, economic development initiatives, continued funding towards the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability, and sustaining excellent service levels. Also included is funding necessary for matching funds to support the Town seeking a grant to remove the hazardous portions of the dam on River Street.

## **COVID-19 Impact on Acton and the FY22 Budget**

Through a combination of hard work and innovation, we have persevered through a once-in-a-generation public health crisis and found ways to effectively operate in a new normal. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have implemented several budget controls including a hiring freeze and spending freeze since March of 2020. These controls helped to secure a substantial expense turn back at the end of FY20 which has helped to shore up our reserves. These controls also left many positions unfilled, and many normal expenses and programs deferred or discontinued. These disruptions have been challenging for all of us. I am proud of the way that this organization has met these challenges and have continued to provide excellent services to our community. In the budget book published on March 1, 2021 we included a special collection of images and photos called "Acton Response to Covid-19 Pandemic".

We received from the federal government a direct allocation of CARES Coronavirus Relief Funds in the amount \$2,092,925. We were able to utilize this funding to cover all unbudgeted expenses related to responding to the pandemic. Since this pandemic was also a declared federal disaster, we were able to seek reimbursement from FEMA for many of our response expenses. As a result of this funding support and the significant financial controls referenced earlier, we are projecting a turn-back at the end of FY21 which will help support the replenishment of our reserves. We have also been notified that through the recently adopted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that Acton may be receiving more than \$6M in direct relief to help support our response and recovery efforts over the next three years. Additional details are expected to be released on how these funds may be used and we intend to work with the Select Board to invest this new resource in the highest areas of need.

## **FY22 Budget**

The recommended municipal operating budget including subsidies for FY22 is \$36,992,835, a 2.69% increase over FY21. The operating budget addresses multiple challenges as discussed further below and is generally consistent with Finance Committee recommendations related to operating budget increases. As part of the recommended FY22 Capital Improvement Plan we are proposing to seek borrowing authorization for \$3,117,000 General Fund projects which would result in debt service costs in the amount of \$213,997. Additionally we are proposing \$601,000 in capital projects to be funded from existing reserves along with

continuing to fund maintenance items within the operating budget and targeted investments in capital from other sources as described in more detail below. As shown in the table below, the total request, when factoring in recommended capital, and subsidies to enterprise funds, is \$37,807,832, a 2.56% increase over the total Town appropriations for FY21.

	FY22	FY21	\$ Change	% Change
Municipal Operations:	\$36,617,835	\$35,615,202	\$1,002,633	2.82%
Subsidies:	375,000	410,000	(35,000)	-8.54%
<b>Municipal Operating Budget:</b>	<b>36,992,835</b>	<b>36,025,202</b>	<b>951,418</b>	<b>2.69%</b>
<b>Capital:</b>	<b>814,997</b>	<b>840,000</b>	<b>(25,003)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$37,807,832</b>	<b>\$36,865,202</b>	<b>\$942,630</b>	<b>2.56%</b>

## Proposed FY22-FY31 Capital Improvement Plan

The Town of Acton's ten-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) comprises three main components: the FY22 capital budget and the mid- and long-term project plans. The proposed FY22 capital budget (as detailed below) is actionable and will be considered by Town Meeting and, if approved, expended in the upcoming fiscal year. The CIP itself does not authorize expenditures, but instead serves as a roadmap for future investments and a foundation upon which to build longer term planning efforts. Each year, as part of the annual capital budgeting process, Town leadership and department staff will review the CIP and adjust the scope, cost, and timing of projects as needed. While the long-term CIP can contain planned replacements of major assets with known lifespans, such as a fire pumper truck, it also can include anticipated replacement of assets based on observed trends and expected deterioration, as is often the case with bridges and roadways where annual inspections allow for trend-based projections. Trends in expenditures are also used to project future capital replacement and maintenance needs as well; while a specific need may not yet be identifiable, the Town can realistically assume that a certain amount of funding for building maintenance and fleet replacement will be an annual requirement.

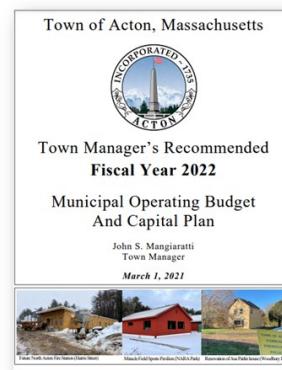
## Investing in Community Priorities

We used caution as we planned for the FY22 budget. While revenues through the first two quarters of FY2021 are stable, there is still economic uncertainty that may impact our budget. Additionally, there are needs of the organization that were either expressed previously or that have emerged recently related to new goals and policy directives.

Funding was limited as we developed this budget but we maximized our utilization of resources, made adjustments to better align resources with needs, and as result were able to identify resources to invest in programs and initiatives that are community priorities. In the budget book which is found online at <http://www.actonma.gov/townmanager> we highlighted and provided detail about ten of these investments as well as other new features described further below.

During the course of the current fiscal year, we have successfully:

- Transformed our organization into 100% remote working capable
- Established a new service called the Acton Town Services Hotline
- Created the Acton Boxborough Littleton Maynard Westford Regional Grant Program to distribute \$1.6M in CDBG-CV funding awarded from the Department of Housing and Community Development



- Reorganized Cross Town Connect to reduce costs of services
- Successfully and safely held four elections
- Hired Acton's first Sustainability Director
- Maintained the Town's AAA Bond rating
- Provided nearly \$165,000 in grants to 43 small businesses in Acton that were negatively impacted by COVID-19
- Celebrated ground breaking at the new North Acton Fire Station on Harris Street
- Celebrated grand opening with a ribbon cutting at NARA Park Sports Pavilion
- Completed a study to improve parking infrastructure at our busy South Acton Commuter Rail Station. The town purchased a property next to the station last year and most of this work is focused on how to best utilize this new property for parking and potentially other needs for commuters.

The proposed FY22 budget will continue these successful initiatives and allow for new initiatives led by our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers.

### **New Features in the FY2022 Budget:**

Last year we implemented a web-based solution called ClearGov which provides easy-to-understand, interactive view of our budget demographics and more. Visit [www.actonma.cleargov.com](http://www.actonma.cleargov.com) to view this tool. As part of this budget, I am pleased to announce the availability of several new features to improve transparency for residents to learn more about our budget and expenditures

1. A comprehensive 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan contains detailed information about infrastructure and recommended investments over the next ten years based on a town-wide needs analysis.
2. Enhanced departmental information in the budget book including changes to the department and divisions pages to reflect the actual organization structure of the organization and make it easier to review all of the programs in each budget
3. New performance metrics from each department showing trends year over year
4. Enhanced org charts and reporting on number of employees shown as full time equivalents (FTE) for each department
5. A new section on revenue assumptions and financial analysis
6. A new section showing all grants received and a new [Grant Tracker tool](#) that is updated regularly and shows all of the grants we have received.

### **Maximizing resources through reorganization and realignment, and reenvisioning services**

The FY22 budget maximizes the resources available by continuing to reshape and reenvision how we deliver services. We continue to work towards identifying opportunities to consolidate resources, share services, supplies, and in some cases personnel to achieve cost savings while maintaining high-level service. A reorganization of the administrative staff in public works led to establishment of a business office with dedicated support for all public works divisions without increasing personnel. A reallocation of staffing resources in the Green Advisory and Emergency Management, Fire Department budgets created capacity to fund the recently created Sustainability Director position and better aligns our organizational structure with the needs of the organization. The continued collaboration on Veterans services with the Town of Boxborough helps offset the cost of providing services to Acton as Boxborough covers a portion of salary and expenses. Other regionalization opportunities are continually being explored including a feasibility study to regionalize public safety communications with the Town of Concord.

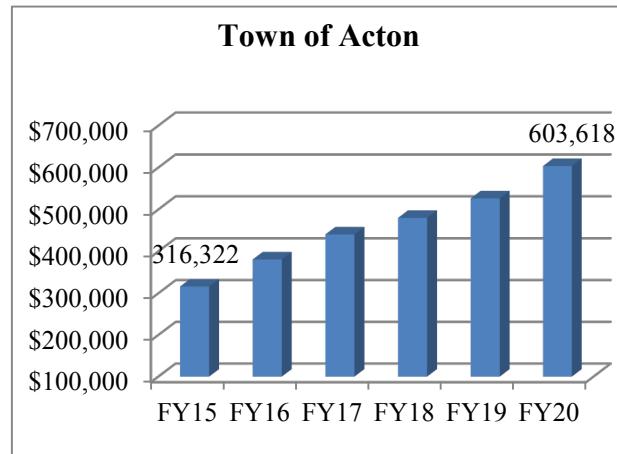
## Leveraging Grants and External Funding to Offset Local Investments

Departments have also worked hard to pursue grants and we continue to leverage substantial resources to reduce the need to rely on local taxation. The Kelley's Corner Project is an example of how we are leveraging external resources to make substantial investments in Acton. Also, the Town of Acton has been awarded a \$2.75 million grant provided by the MassWorks Infrastructure Grant Program to support the development of affordable housing at Powder Mill Place. With the grant funding, the Town will work to make intersection, sidewalk and streetscape improvements, along with upgrades to the Middle Fort Pond Wastewater Treatment Facility. The funds will help support the connection of the 230 unit housing development to existing wastewater systems, as well as make additional infrastructure improvements that will allow for better traffic flow and improved pedestrian and motorist safety. This work aligns with a [Powder Mill Road Corridor Study](#) underway with the Town of Maynard.

A \$160,000 dispatch grant and \$30,000 tax and livery grant will help fund public transportation programs for Acton and its regional partners. To view a full list of grants recently awarded to the town go to our new Grant Tracker which may be found at <http://www.actonma.gov/grant>

## Property Tax Relief

There are several tax relief options available to residents that are overseen by the Assessor's Office. The chart (at right) shows a 90% increase in dollars granted for tax exemptions in the last five years. We also have a tax deferral program for seniors with income of not more than \$40,000 per year. There is a "Temporary Hardship" exemption that allows for temporary relief during difficult times. This temporary relief is granted under the discretion of the Board of Assessors which considers age, income, and other circumstances. The Board of Assessor generally reviews the situation to determine whether it's a long-term or short-term hardship and acts accordingly. Go to [actonma.gov/taxrelief](http://actonma.gov/taxrelief) to view a comprehensive resource for all of the property tax exemptions available to Acton residents. We intend to continue to advertise the availability of all of these programs to assist those in need. If you have any question about these tax relief programs please contact the Assessor's office 978-929-6621.



## Summary

I would like to thank the Select Board for its leadership and the Town's Department and Division Heads, and staff for their professionalism and work to prepare this budget. I look forward to seeing you all at Town Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

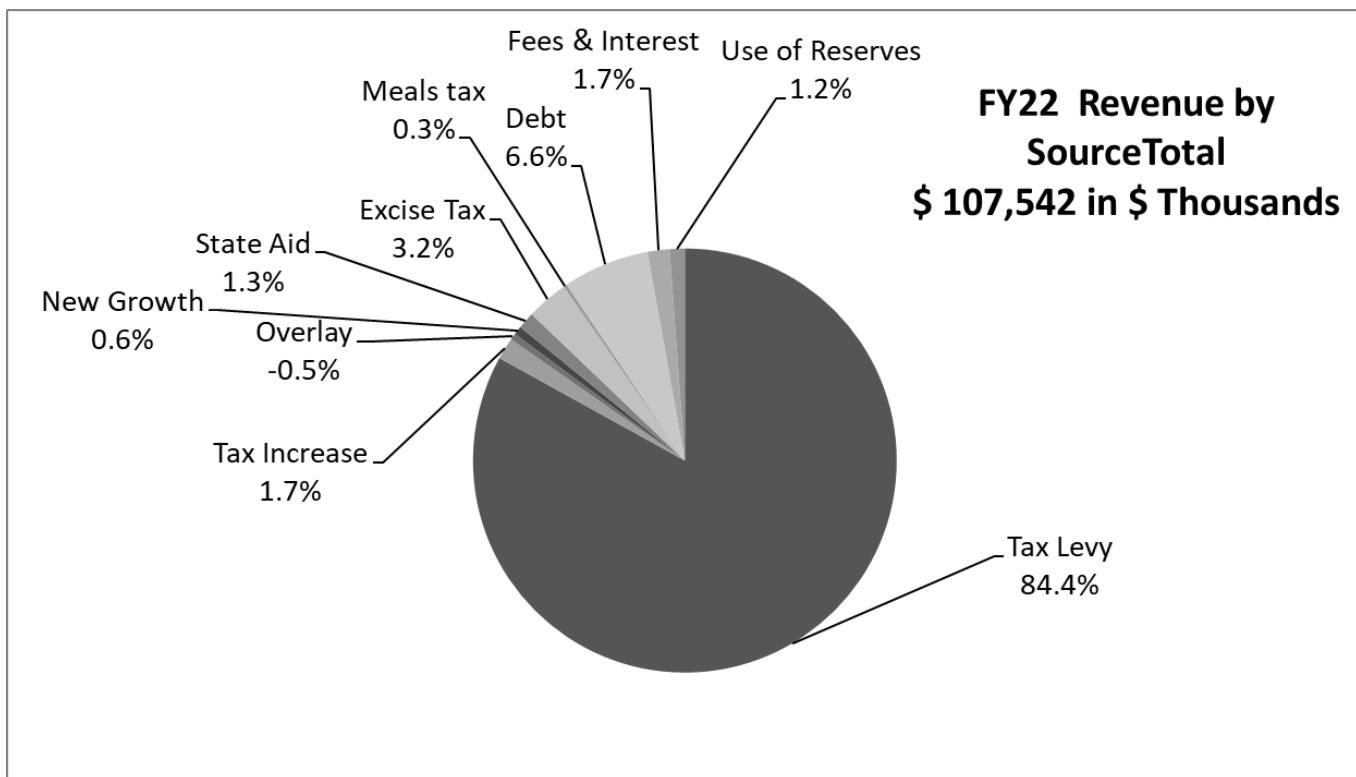


John S. Mangiaratti  
Town Manager

## *Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Background*

The numbers contained in these next few pages for FY22 (the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021) are derived from the Acton Leadership Group plan, which does not include Enterprise Funds and Revolving Funds. Because this document only pertains to Acton's revenues and expenses, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget is shown as the assessment which is Acton's share of the total spending less revenue which the school district receives.

### **What Are Our Sources of Revenue?**



Most (84 percent) of our revenue comes from local property taxes, which is comprised of three components:

1. **Property Tax Levy** – the existing assessed property taxed at the current rate per thousand
2. **New Growth** – additional assessed value from new homes, additions to homes, and changes in parcels.
3. **Tax Increase** – typically a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  percent increase allowed on the property tax levy, but in FY 22 the increase will be 2 percent

In this case Debt refers to the additional taxes that are earmarked to pay for the debt service of past building projects that were authorized by the voters as debt exclusions from Proposition 2.5%.

In FY22 debt service accounts for 6.6% and includes the new Douglas Gates Twin School and the North Acton Fire Station, both of which are under construction.

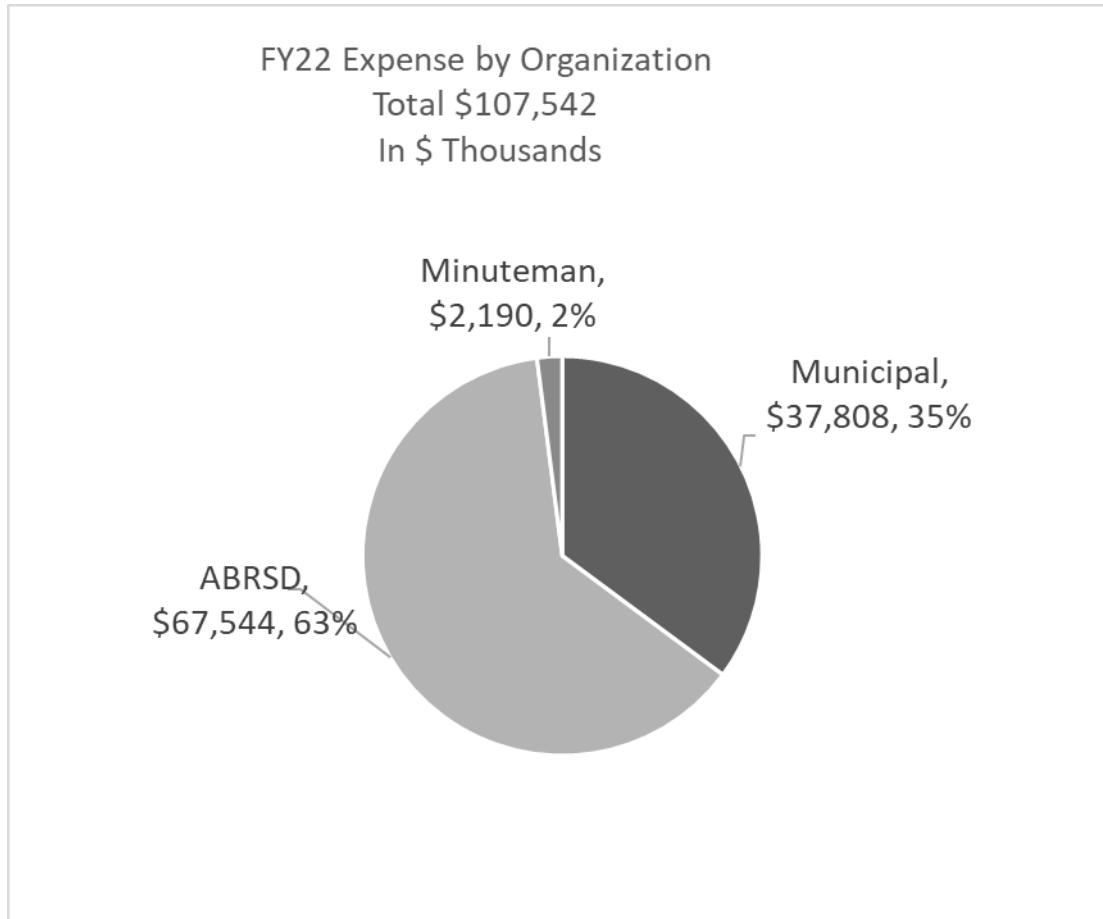
State aid to the Town accounts for nearly 1.3 percent of the total. State aid to education is a total of \$18,000,000 and is revenue to the school district and included in the assessment as an offset to expenses.

The FY22 Budget includes revenue from the local option meals tax for \$290,000, and \$300,000 from the Nursing Service.

Other categories of revenue include excise taxes, which are assessed on motor vehicles and trailers, and account for 3.2 percent of our total revenue. Fees and interest account for 1.7 percent of revenue. Acton collects fees for various permits, vital records, and licensing. Interest varies year-to-year depending on the interest rate and the amounts deposited.

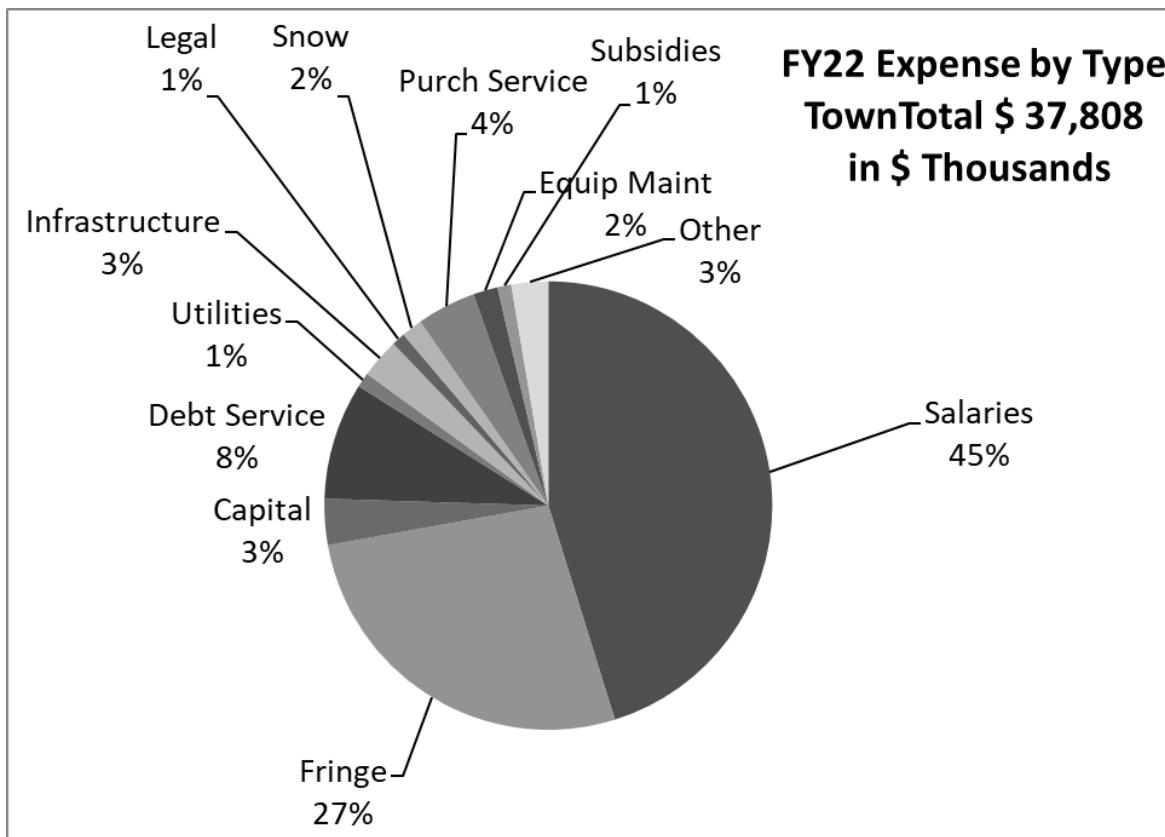
In this year's budget, reserves account for 1.2 percent of the total revenues and will be used to fund capital needs.

### **Which Town and School Entities Spend Our Money?**



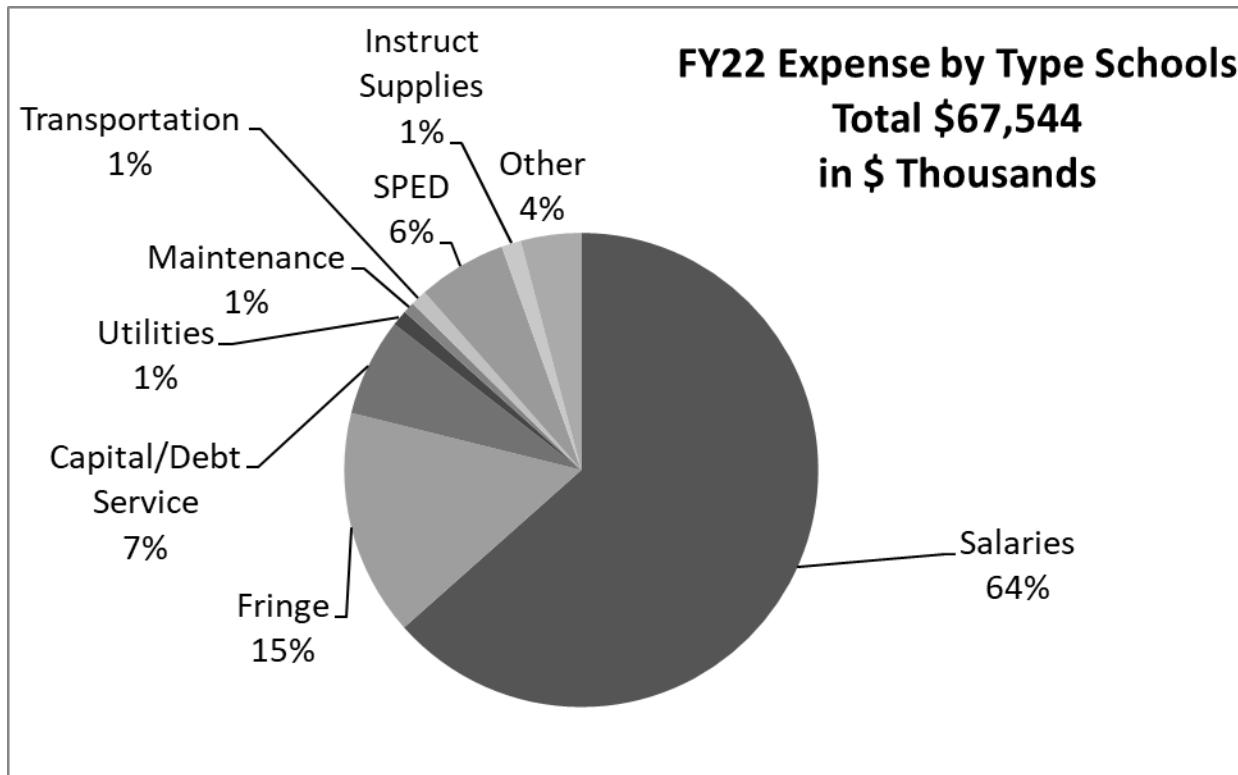
The town's revenues support three budgets within our town. 65 percent of our expenditures support education priorities: Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools assessment (63 percent of expenditures), and Minuteman Regional School District assessment (2 percent of total expenditures). The municipal government (which funds police, fire, highway, library, health, planning and other general government services) accounts for the remaining 35 percent of the total expenditures.

## What Does the Municipal Government Spend Our Money For?



Approximately 72 percent of the Town spending goes to salaries and benefits, the cost for the people who provide services to the residents. Capital and debt service accounts for 11 percent and Infrastructure cost accounts for 3 percent of the spending. This category includes the maintenance and improvement of roads, sidewalks, buildings, grounds, and information technology.

## What Does the School District Spend Our Money For?

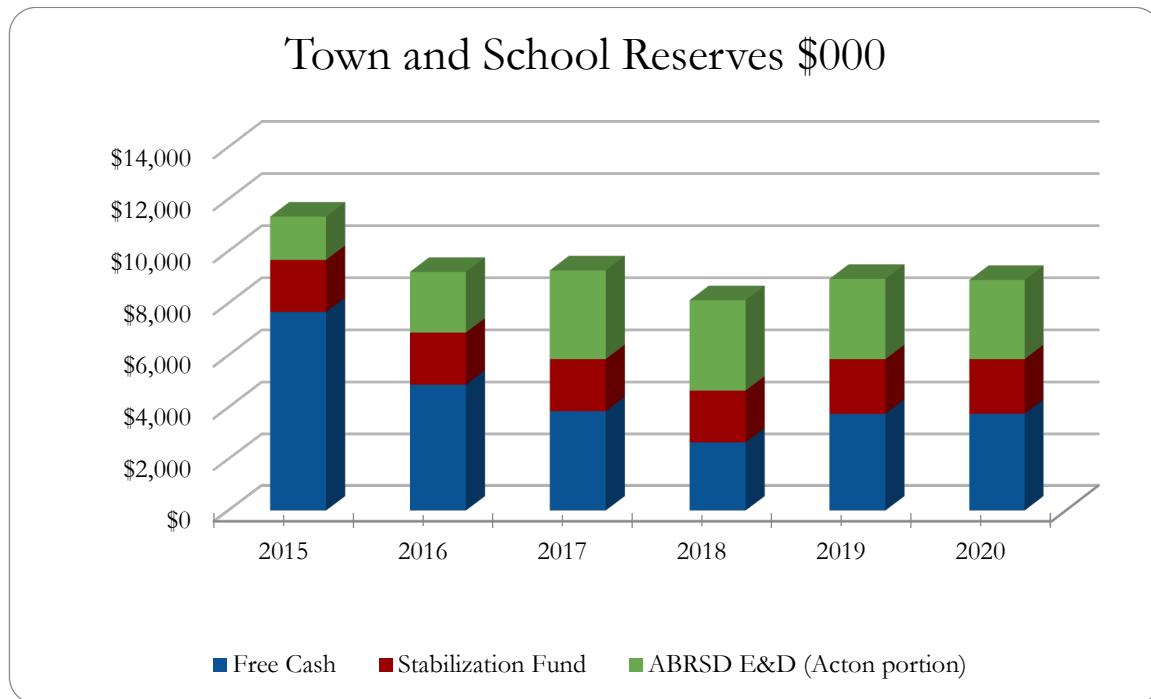


As with the Town, the largest category is the cost of people to provide services to our students. Salaries and benefits account for more than 79 percent of the total. Special education accounts for 6 percent, and capital and debt service accounts for 7 percent. The assessment total is the net amount paid by Acton taxpayers after subtracting revenue that the region receives mostly aid from the State (approximately \$18 million) and the Boxborough share (approximately \$12 million). The percentages in the above chart are based on the total ABRSD budget.

## *Finance Committee's Message*

### **Financial Condition**

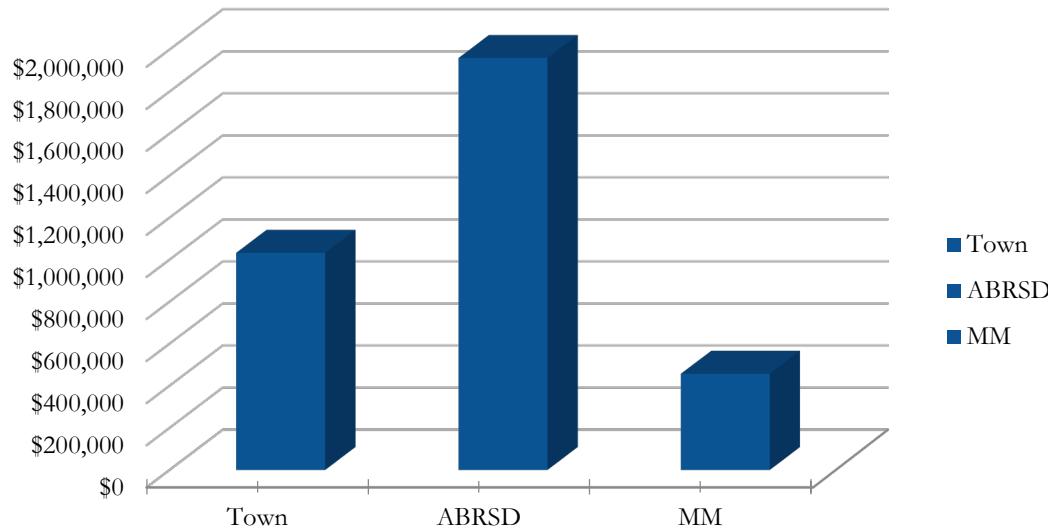
Acton continues to be in a very sound financial position. Both the Town of Acton and the Acton Boxborough Regional School District have been rated AAA by Standard & Poor's. The Town continues to have a strong tax collection rate, which is a sign of the financial health of the residents. At \$5.8 million of combined Free Cash and Town Capital Stabilization Fund, reserves represent 15.9% of the municipal budget and 5.4% of total projected Acton spending for FY22. This is well ahead of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue guidelines of 5% of the municipal budget. The Town's financial health is strong.



### **FY2022**

The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022 is \$107,541,663, which is an increase of \$3,284,399 or 3.15% over the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

## FY22 Spending Increase in \$000



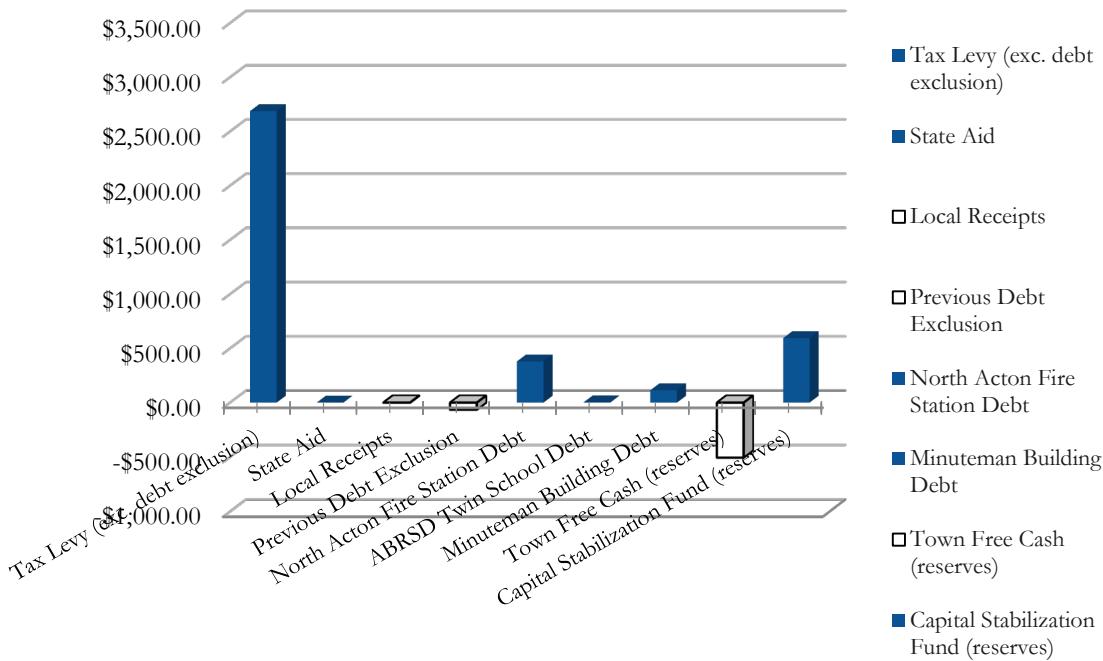
The Town operating budget is up by \$951,418 or 2.69%. Capital spending decreased by \$25,003 or 2.97%. Fiscal Year 2022 marks the first year of capital spending based on the Town's new Capital Improvement Plan. Included in the capital expenditure of \$814,997 is \$213,997 which is interest on \$2,436,000 in capital projects that are proposed to be bonded.

The total operating budget for the Acton Boxborough Regional School District increased by \$2,806,521 or 2.99%. After accounting for the School District's revenue, reserve use and cost shifts per the regional agreement, the total assessment for Acton increased by \$1,959,879 or 2.99%. This budget includes a decrease of 8 full time employees. Total salary increases make up 78.5% of the change.

The Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School assessment increased by \$456,890 or 28.26%. The majority of increase is a result of the increased attendance of Acton students and the decrease in the number of Towns in the district.

The increase in budgets will be met by the revenue changes shown in the following chart.

## Municipal Funding Source Changes Compared to FY2021 in \$000



Proposition 2½ allows for the tax levy to be increased by 2.5% per year. This year Acton will increase taxes less than the allowed 2.5%. Taxes could have increased an additional \$454,000 under Proposition 2½.

New Growth is the value of new building not previously included on the tax rolls.

Local receipts include excise taxes, permits, and other fees. These have declined due to the pandemic. The Town is keeping a close eye on this number. There are sufficient reserves to cover a shortfall if one were to occur.

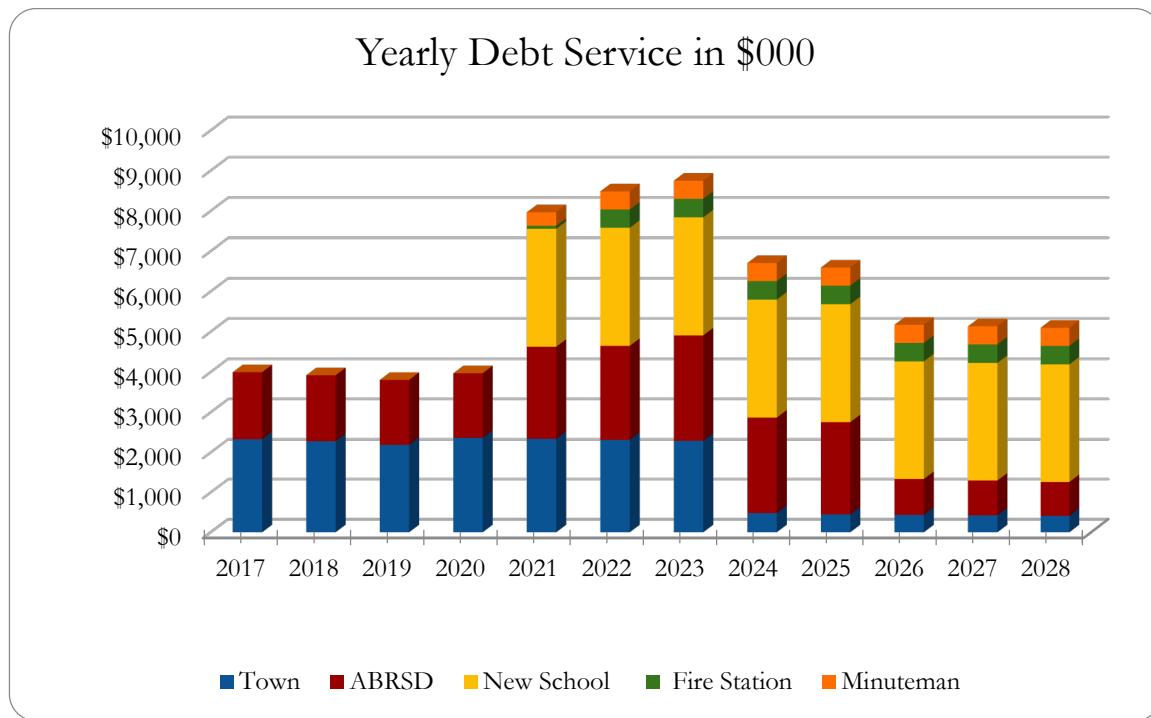
Debt exclusions are debt that Town meeting has agreed to pay for outside of the tax levy increase allowed by Proposition 2 ½. This means that debt exclusion payments are not limited by the Proposition 2 ½ tax levy increase. Once this debt is fully paid off, it is no longer part of the tax bills. In Fiscal Year 2022, debt exclusion payments have dropped with a decrease in payments for the Public Safety Building and the Junior and Senior High Schools.

As a result, the average single-family tax bill will increase by \$408 or 3.26% from \$12,502.79 in FY21 to \$12,910.71 In FY22.

## Future Considerations

The Acton Leadership Group Plan follows this message. In addition to the FY22 budget, it contains projections for the following two years. The projected increases in the municipal budget and ABRSD assessments have decreased compared to last year's plan to reflect projections more in line with recent spending for the Town and the expected increase in the share of students attending ABRSD from Boxborough. These projections are based on a careful review of the trends in revenue and the key cost drivers in our budgets. Based on this analysis, an override for operating costs is not anticipated at this time.

The costs of the borrowing for the Douglas/Gates Twin School Building and the North Acton Fire Station have been finalized with borrowing at very low interest rates. These debts are now a part of future taxes in the form of debt exclusions. It is important to remember that there are existing bonds that are coming to the end of their term. This is why you see the decrease in the total debt payments starting in FY2024 on the chart below.



## OPEB

We appreciate the continued funding of our Other Post Employment Benefit liability. The Town is in an excellent position and the School District is making good progress when compared to other communities in the commonwealth. Continuing to pay towards this future liability serves the Town in the short term when it comes to borrowing and will be of great service in the longer term when payments will not have to come out of immediate taxation. It would be a mistake for this to ever be seen as a source of short-term savings.

## **Reserve Funds**

As stated in the past, the Finance Committee has concerns with using Reserve Funds to fund operating budgets. Fiscal Year 2022 represents a move towards the use of reserve funds purely for capital expenses. In line with the newly revised Finance Committee policy limiting Free Cash use, the budget includes a fiscally sound level of Free Cash use and the start of using the Capital Stabilization Fund. The 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan that the Town has developed allows for planned use of money from the Capital Stabilization Fund that has otherwise been sitting around.

## **Long Term Outlook**

The Multi Year ALG Plan in this warrant shows deficits in future years. The cost escalation assumptions are greater than what the Finance Committee recommends but are lower than in previous models. The committee would like to see a continued use of reserves purely for capital expenses. We believe that the Town and the Acton Boxborough Regional School District will reduce costs through the ALG process in future years without requiring an override.

Now that a Capital Improvement Plan has been created and the Capital Reserve Fund is being used, plans to replenish that fund should be developed.

## **Summary**

This past year has been an interesting year. The Town and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District have paid for the additional expenses from the Covid-19 virus largely through the support of Federal and grants.

The Finance Committee welcomes and supports the Town's development of a Capital Improvement Plan. The planned use of the long dormant Capital Stabilization Fund reserves will allow the tax payers' money to be used in a thoughtful, forward looking way rather than simply being held by the Town. At the same time, the Finance Committee's recommended limited use of Free Cash keeps the Town in a sound position to respond to any emergencies that arise.

Not only were the tax implications of the future year's budget taken into account in finalizing the numbers that will be voted on during Town Meeting, but also the impact of the potential for additional Covid-19 expenses was ever present during deliberations. The economic impact of the pandemic and result of last year's large tax increase on the tax payers were a significant driver towards the final budget numbers leading to a tax increase lower than allowed by Proposition 2½. As a community we have entered a phase of both maintaining our current services and infrastructure while responding to the unexpected (hopefully) post-pandemic future that we are facing.

## **The Finance Committee**

Christi Andersen – Chair, Christine Russell – Vice-Chair, and Adam Nolde – Clerk

Members: Jason Cole, Steve Noone, Mike Majors, Dave Wellinghoff,  
Sahana Purohit, and Roland Bourdon

# *Acton-Boxborough Regional School District*

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May 25, 2021

Citizens of Acton and Boxborough,

Our school budget was developed through the work of the administrative team, and incorporates feedback from the School Committee and community representatives. In developing the FY22 budget, we have prioritized developing a budget that simultaneously:

- maintains educational programs needed to support students as we emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic and the unprecedented disruption associated with the last 15 months of school closures and pandemic schooling
- responds to the impact of the pandemic on the financial position of our communities and citizens.

The administration was particularly sensitive to the impact of our budget on taxpayers as a result of the community's support of the Douglas-Gates building project and with knowledge that residents' recent tax bills reflected the impact of this project. To this end the proposed budget reflects increases in fixed costs, but proposes no new staffing or programmatic growth.

## **Uncertainty of the Pandemic and Assumptions**

A budget is based upon a set of assumptions about how schools will operate during a given period. In normal times, there is a balance of known and unknown variables that help develop these assumptions. The COVID-19 Pandemic has significantly shifted the balance of these variables in favor of the unknown, and there is still information about our operations next fall that remains unknown.

This budget assumes a full return to school next fall. We also know that we will see a wider range of student social emotional and academic needs than we have seen before. We continue to learn more about these needs, and possible state or federal relief, over the course of summer and into fall. As we do, we will continue to be flexible in allocating resources *within* this proposed budget to best meet our students' needs. We will continue to keep the school committee and our community apprised of any changes as we progress through spring and summer.

## **FY22 Budget Overview**

The FY22 Budget totals \$99,719,222, an increase of 2.90% from FY21. This represents NET increases in general operating expenses, a resumption of Capital Improvement Plan funding and a decrease of 2.0 FTE due to enrollment.

Over the last several years, the District benefitted from greater than average increases in revenues including transportation reimbursement, investment income, and Circuit Breaker reimbursement. Unlike previous years, the District anticipates a decline in state and other revenues for FY22. This decline in revenues shifts a greater burden of the school budget onto the communities and helps to explain why the assessment increases are greater than the District's overall budget increase.

The overall increase in assessments to the communities from FY21 is 3.23%, which represents an increase of 2.99% to Acton and 4.56% to Boxborough. It is important to note that last year represented the final year of the cost shift from Boxborough to Acton per the Regional Agreement. This year represents the first year since full regionalization where assessment increases are based solely on enrollment. It is also important to note that enrollment projections for the next several years indicate a continued increase in the proportion of students residing in Boxborough, and this will be an important consideration for the District and communities.

## **FY22 Budget Process**

The process for developing the FY22 budget began in Fall 2021. This was a collaborative venture that included District administrators, staff, the School Committee and their Budget Subcommittee and included the following key actions:

- Understanding the historic nature of the pandemic and its unprecedented disruption to our students' education
- Considering the financial impact of the pandemic and school building project on taxpayers and the communities
- Planning for ongoing financial commitments such as employee contracts and benefits
- Consideration that Acton is at its tax levy limit and therefore has limited ability to raise revenues from taxes
- Soliciting feedback from a variety of stakeholders including the Budget Subcommittee, School Committee, and local officials

The Preliminary Budget evolved over multiple iterations during the last several months. The Preliminary Budget was based upon discussions with the School Committee, administration and staff, as well as an analysis of historical budget trends and patterns, and included the use of the best available information to date regarding projected revenues. The discussion included feedback from the Budget Subcommittee, Capital Subcommittee, school and district administrators, local officials, and staff regarding the development of budget priorities, staffing requests, and capital improvements.

Once developed, the Superintendent's Preliminary Budget was presented publicly in order to solicit additional feedback. This feedback was then reviewed by the Budget Subcommittee and administrative team and ultimately developed into the Superintendent's Recommended Budget. The recommended budget was presented to the School Committee on March 4, 2021. The Public Budget Hearing, as required by law, was held on March 18, 2021 after which the School Committee voted to adopt this budget.

## **FY22 Budget Guidelines (Adopted Fall '20)**

The following budget guidelines were developed in collaboration with the Budget Subcommittee and the School Committee at previous meetings prior to the development of our Preliminary Budget:

- Develop a flexible budget that is responsive to uncertainty caused by the pandemic and allows for a variety of educational models for FY22.
- Assume uncertainty with regard to state and federal funding for schools.
- Adequately fund education programs designed to expedite recovery from the pandemic, and ensure effective services and supports are in place for all students' social-emotional and academic needs.
- Evaluate opportunities to use existing resources to align services and supports across the district in a fiscally sustainable manner that balances student needs with the economic interests of the communities.
- Consider funding directly allocated to programs that support students with IEPs, English Learners, students whose families may be income insecure, students of color, or other groups who may have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and school closures.
- Prioritize anti-bias, anti-racist strategic initiatives.
- Evaluate Kindergarten Enrollment Projections carefully in light of fluctuations in Kindergarten enrollment due to the Pandemic.
- Evaluate All Day Kindergarten tuition in light of assumed resumption of All Day Kindergarten during FY22.
- Maximize opportunities to leverage alternative revenue sources, including, but not limited to state and federal grants.
- Monitor strategic use of reserves in light of economic uncertainty.
- Evaluate strategies to replenish revolving accounts that have been negatively impacted by pandemic-related costs and reduced revenues.
- Resume funding of the Capital Improvement Plan in order to fully implement planned improvements.

## The District Strategy for Improvement

This Spring, the School Committee adopted a five year District Strategy for Improvement. The strategy, under development for two and a half years due to the pandemic, is intended to improve learning through four key goals. The goals are intended to help our schools emerge successfully from the pandemic and continue our long-term path to outstanding schools for all students. The strategy also articulates initiatives intended to accomplish each of the four goals. Taken as a whole, the initiatives are designed to work together:

Engaged Learning	Inclusive Practices	Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes	Social-emotional Learning (SEL)
Improve cognitive, behavioral and emotional engagement in learning by increasing the variety and relevance of learning experiences.	Ensure that all students, staff, and families feel welcomed and included by strengthening school culture and climate and intentionally implementing culturally-responsive instructional practices and materials.	Ensure that every student has access to equitable opportunities and outcomes, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race, disability, gender identity or other differentiating characteristics.	Improve social-emotional development through an aligned continuum of skills, instruction, and support for students PK-12.

## Summary

Rarely has educational planning been such a moving target as we have seen over the last twelve months and we believe that this will continue to be the case as we plan for 2021-22. Our primary goal in establishing this Recommended Budget was to create a budget that was responsive to the circumstances of our students, the citizens and our communities. We know that our understanding of students' educational needs and the services and supports they need to recover from pandemic schooling will continue to evolve over the course of the spring and into summer. We also anticipate that we will gain a clearer understanding of state requirements and any additional state or federal relief as we progress through the spring. Therefore, we anticipate that we will continue to evolve our programming *within* the proposed budget as we plan for next year and will keep the school committee and community apprised of these changes.

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH Regional School District**  
**Calculation of Regional Member Assessments**

%'s represent: 3-year average of total K-12 student enrollment by Town  
 3-year K-12 average with 5% reduction to Boxborough\*\*

**T/M Voted  
 Final Budget  
 FY2021**

**(March 18)  
 Final SC Vote  
 FY2022**

**ACTON**

**BOXBOROUGH**

<< 84.11% << 15.89%  
 << 89.11% << 10.89%

EXPENDITURES INSIDE DEBT LIMIT (Prop. 2-1/2):

a **OPERATING BUDGET (Recurring Non-Capital Expenditures)** **90,708,592** **93,132,616** 78,335,447 14,797,169  
*Increase over prior year* **2.67%**

**CAPITAL BUDGET, INCLUDING DEBT SERVICE -**

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Plan - Debt Service	<b>900,000</b>	<b>904,750</b>	761,001	143,749
Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Plan - Current Year Projects	<b>-</b>	<b>350,000</b>	294,391	55,609
Lower Fields Construction Debt Service **	<b>96,118</b>	<b>119,018</b>	106,059	12,959

EXPENDITURES OUTSIDE DEBT LIMIT (Prop. 2-1/2):

RJ Grey Junior High Construction Debt Service **	<b>375,720</b>	<b>378,320</b>	337,127	41,193
Senior High Construction/Renovation Debt Service **	<b>1,386,280</b>	<b>1,385,480</b>	1,234,625	150,855
Douglas/Gates Twin School Construction Debt Service	<b>3,445,991</b>	<b>3,449,038</b>	2,901,045	547,993

b **CAPITAL AND DEBT BUDGET** **6,204,109** **6,586,606**

a+b **GROSS DISTRICT BUDGET (ABRSD Appropriation)** **96,912,701** **99,719,222** 83,969,695 15,749,527  
*Increase over prior year* **6.52%** **2.90%**

ADD - Allocated Debt Service Budgeted by Both Towns (see Credit below)	<b>729,458</b>	<b>654,567</b>	550,568	103,999
	<b>97,642,159</b>	<b>100,373,789</b>	A	84,520,263
				<b>15,853,526</b>
				<b>15.79%</b>

**LESS - STATE AID AND OTHER REVENUES**

CHAPTER 70 AID	<b>15,345,811</b>	<b>15,341,311</b>		
REGIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION AID	<b>2,097,225</b>	<b>1,930,403</b>		
CHARTER SCHOOL AID	<b>50,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>		
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	<b>567,500</b>	<b>532,500</b>		
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>18,060,536</b>	<b>17,904,214</b>		

**LESS - USE OF DISTRICT RESERVES**

EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY (E&D)	<b>1,145,000</b>	<b>1,245,000</b>		
STABILIZATION FUNDS (Transportation, Capital)	<b>n/a</b>	<b>350,000</b>		
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>1,145,000</b>	<b>1,595,000</b>		

<b>TOTAL REVENUES AND RESERVE USE</b>	<b>19,205,536</b>	<b>19,499,214</b>	B	16,401,125
				<b>84.11%</b>
				<b>15.89%</b>

**FUNDING FROM MEMBER TOWNS (ASSESSMENTS):**

GROSS REGIONAL APPROPRIATION less REVENUES (A minus B)	<b>78,436,623</b>	<b>80,874,575</b>	68,119,138	12,755,437
CREDIT - Debt Service Paid Directly by Both Towns (see above)	<b>(\$729,458)</b>	<b>(654,567)</b>	(575,209)	(79,358)
				<b>no longer applicable beginning in FY2022</b>

<b>NET ASSESSMENT AMOUNT DUE FROM BOTH TOWNS</b>	<b>\$ 77,707,165</b>	<b>\$ 80,220,008</b>	<b>\$ 67,543,928</b>	<b>\$ 12,676,080</b>
				<b>84.20%</b>
				<b>15.80%</b>

<b>TOTAL INCREASE FROM PRIOR YEAR ASSESSMENT - \$</b>	<b>4,949,626</b>	<b>2,512,843</b>	<b>1,959,879</b>	<b>552,964</b>
<b>TOTAL INCREASE FROM PRIOR YEAR ASSESSMENT - %</b>	<b>6.80%</b>	<b>3.23%</b>	<b>2.99%</b>	<b>4.56%</b>

**ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN:**

CAPITAL BUDGET ASSESSMENT COMPONENT - \$	<b>6,204,109</b>	<b>6,586,606</b>	<b>5,634,248</b>	<b>952,358</b>
CAPITAL BUDGET COMPONENT INCREASE - %		<b>6.17%</b>	5.80%	8.37%

OPERATING BUDGET ASSESSMENT COMPONENT - \$	<b>71,503,056</b>	<b>73,633,402</b>	<b>61,909,680</b>	<b>11,723,722</b>
OPERATING BUDGET COMPONENT INCREASE - %	<b>2.67%</b>	<b>2.98%</b>	2.74%	4.26%

**Projected Apportionment of Regional Assessments**

Based on future K-12 enrollment projections by NESDEC

	<b>Acton      Enrollment</b>	<b>Acton      Assessment</b>	<b>Boxborough      Enrollment</b>	<b>Boxborough      Assessment</b>
FY2022	4236	84.20%	810	15.80%
FY2023	4192	83.69%	831	16.31%
FY2024	4154	83.37%	853	16.63%
FY2025	4146	82.80%	873	17.20%
FY2026	4146	82.18%	905	17.82%
FY2027	4154	81.52%	940	18.48%

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
Comparative Budget Summary by Character Code**

	FY2019 Budget	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Budget	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Budget	FY2022 Proposed	Year-to-Year Budget Variance	% Chg.
Salaries, Teaching - 01	37,016,494	37,095,832	38,644,222	38,609,860	40,299,131	41,746,672	1,447,541	3.6%
Salaries, Principals - 02	2,447,883	2,450,914	2,509,716	2,543,422	2,564,667	2,630,818	66,151	2.6%
Salaries, Central Administration - 03	1,306,890	1,300,646	1,327,515	1,338,814	1,354,186	1,397,176	42,990	3.2%
Salaries, Support Staff - 04	11,772,279	11,379,419	12,353,716	12,230,913	12,723,045	13,069,156	346,111	2.7%
Salaries, Athletics - 05	627,874	608,746	691,197	580,778	695,099	714,711	19,612	2.8%
Salaries, Buildings - 06	818,672	804,320	950,523	916,291	963,741	1,017,230	53,489	5.6%
Salaries, Custodial - 07	1,559,721	1,464,521	1,576,310	1,476,407	1,574,089	1,703,681	129,592	8.2%
Salaries, Home Instruction - 08	8,500	1,231	-	211	3,000	1,000	(2,000)	n/a
Salaries, Misc. Student Services - 09	345,591	269,599	313,000	270,441	234,000	277,000	43,000	18.4%
Salaries, Subs Miscellaneous - 11	69,603	14,684	61,428	35,581	8,000	15,000	7,000	87.5%
Salaries, Subs Instructional - 12	702,095	764,726	593,200	533,242	699,000	692,500	(6,500)	-0.9%
Salaries, Overtime - 13	233,215	312,904	186,985	178,516	191,250	222,000	30,750	16.1%
Stipends, Curriculum/Instruction - 14	189,500	160,693	175,399	188,884	174,200	175,500	1,300	0.7%
Fringe, Course Reimbursement - 15	56,000	69,624	56,000	68,573	105,000	105,000	-	0.0%
Fringe, Health Insurance - 16	8,072,389	7,568,255	7,432,894	7,610,197	7,910,233	8,596,603	686,370	8.7%
Fringe, Health Insurance, Retiree - 17	946,579	955,541	1,120,175	1,009,558	1,098,823	1,186,423	87,600	8.0%
Fringe, Life/Disability Insurance - 18	44,520	42,775	45,856	41,513	45,856	46,841	985	2.1%
Fringe, Unemployment Insurance - 19	40,000	48,377	40,000	92,439	40,000	100,000	60,000	150.0%
Fringe, Workers Compensation - 20	515,574	440,589	420,978	392,186	443,290	453,290	10,000	2.3%
Fringe, Middlesex Cty. Retirement - 21	2,513,393	2,468,034	2,663,092	2,615,376	2,845,329	3,179,811	334,482	11.8%
Fringe, Medicare - 22	827,105	859,053	872,871	889,688	934,500	955,000	20,500	2.2%
Contributions, OPEB Trust Fund - 23	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	771,511	(128,489)	-14.3%
Instruction Supplies - 24	1,175,651	1,386,133	1,294,641	1,253,359	1,247,750	1,324,862	77,112	6.2%
Instruction Textbooks - 25	252,269	234,753	262,398	160,297	258,813	191,534	(67,279)	-26.0%
Instructional Services - 26	468,500	427,242	713,000	589,664	657,700	668,700	11,000	1.7%
Other, Capital Outlay - 27	90,292	542,315	89,000	898,100	1,073	70,890	69,817	n/a
Other, Capital - CIP - 28	1,000,000	819,862	1,203,100	264,510	2,000	345,250	343,250	n/a
Other, Debt Service - 29 (see Note)	1,872,518	1,872,518	1,911,218	1,886,218	6,204,109	6,236,606	32,497	0.5%
Other, Property/Casualty - 30	152,000	175,925	225,000	176,594	231,125	231,125	-	0.0%
Other, Maint Buildings/Grounds - 31	795,945	963,979	810,445	1,071,102	741,400	765,500	24,100	3.3%
Other, Maintenance Equipment - 32	158,211	124,015	187,465	132,494	205,875	162,035	(43,840)	-21.3%
Other, Legal Service - 34	175,000	71,872	140,000	83,591	115,000	115,000	-	0.0%
Other, Admin Supplies - 35	830,884	747,305	761,983	816,010	707,582	749,201	41,619	5.9%
Other, Athletic Supplies - 36	71,524	70,223	78,060	66,119	100,750	98,850	(1,900)	-1.9%
Other, Custodial Supplies - 37	155,000	148,313	155,000	140,477	155,000	155,000	-	0.0%
Other, Spec Ed Transportation - 38	1,624,768	1,623,965	1,705,000	1,619,950	1,877,463	1,756,981	(120,482)	-6.4%
Other, Student Transportation - 39	1,126,572	1,089,655	1,076,902	968,657	1,084,344	1,097,546	13,202	1.2%
Other, Travel, Conferences - 40	236,570	187,890	215,906	158,131	153,399	177,125	23,726	15.5%
Other, Spec Ed Tuition - 41	5,161,531	5,506,413	4,855,000	5,714,174	4,515,197	4,282,022	(233,175)	-5.2%
Other, Utilities - 42	1,310,000	1,325,727	1,310,000	817,155	1,310,000	1,081,500	(228,500)	-17.4%
Other, Telephone - 43	134,001	94,716	128,617	70,969	116,099	78,799	(37,300)	-32.1%
Other, Sewer - 44 (see Note)	286,333	280,350	286,333	255,511	286,333	282,400	(3,933)	-1.4%
Assessments - 48	628,479	575,434	637,466	639,931	634,750	790,873	156,123	24.6%
Other, Miscellaneous - 49	1,567	(811)	500	806	500	500	-	0.0%
Other, Covid Contingency - 99					500,000	-	(500,000)	n/a
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>88,721,492</b>	<b>88,248,278</b>	<b>90,982,111</b>	<b>90,306,707</b>	<b>96,912,701</b>	<b>99,719,222</b>	<b>2,806,521</b>	<b>2.90%</b>

**Comparative Revenue Summary by Category**

	FY2019 Budget	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Budget	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Budget	FY2022 Proposed	Year-to-Year Budget Variance	% Chg.
Chapter 70 - Foundation Aid	14,968,061	15,042,706	15,187,441	15,185,301	15,345,811	15,341,311	(4,500)	-0.03%
Regional Transportation Aid	1,362,757	1,644,872	1,907,131	2,185,943	2,097,225	1,930,403	(166,822)	-8%
Charter Reimbursement Aid	32,361	18,262	30,000	82,427	50,000	100,000	50,000	100%
Medicaid Reimbursement	150,000	296,228	200,000	150,028	250,000	250,000	-	0%
Investment Earnings	100,000	366,157	200,000	391,536	300,000	265,000	(35,000)	-12%
Rental Income and Other	-	16,586	10,000	23,212	17,500	17,500	-	0%
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>16,613,179</b>	<b>17,384,811</b>	<b>17,534,572</b>	<b>18,018,447</b>	<b>18,060,536</b>	<b>17,904,214</b>	<b>(156,322)</b>	<b>-0.87%</b>

# Town of Acton Multi-Year Financial Model

Prepared by the Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee

Town Meeting Recommendation for FY22 as of May 27, 2021

Estimates for FY23 and FY24 are for planning purposes only, and are subject to change.

Summary	Tax Recap FY21	Projection FY22	Projection FY23	Projection FY24	
<b>Municipal Funding Sources:</b>					
Tax Levy (excluding debt exclusion)	\$ 89,471,735	\$ 92,159,103	\$ 95,495,153	\$ 98,600,032	
State Aid	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000	
Local Receipts	\$ 5,561,973	\$ 5,561,968	\$ 5,561,968	\$ 5,561,968	
Debt Exclusion	\$ 2,475,848	\$ 2,410,612	\$ 2,336,107	\$ 1,685,139	
North Acton Fire Station Debt	\$ 75,000	\$ 454,000	\$ 459,000	\$ 459,000	
ABRSD Elementary School Debt	\$ 2,929,370	\$ 2,931,650	\$ 2,931,650	\$ 2,929,100	
Estimate of Minuteman Building Project Debt	\$ 335,426	\$ 449,303	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	
SBAB Reimbursement	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000	
Add: Stabilization (for capital)		\$ 658,997			
Add: Town Free Cash (for capital)	\$ 1,163,738	\$ 595,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	
<b>Acton Total Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$ 104,334,090</b>	<b>\$ 107,541,633</b>	<b>\$ 110,554,878</b>	<b>\$ 113,006,239</b>	
<b>Allocation to Budgets</b>					
<b>Municipal Budget</b>	<b>\$ 36,865,202</b>	<b>\$ 37,807,832</b>	<b>\$ 38,942,067</b>	<b>\$ 40,110,329</b>	
Municipal Budget % Change	2.80%	2.56%	3.00%	3.00%	
<b>Total Municipal Budget</b>	<b>\$ 36,865,202</b>	<b>\$ 37,807,832</b>	<b>\$ 38,942,067</b>	<b>\$ 40,110,329</b>	
Municipal Budget % Change - With New Debt	2.80%	2.56%	3.00%	3.00%	
<b>ABRSD Assessment (net of E&amp;D usage)</b>	<b>\$ 62,654,679</b>	<b>\$ 64,612,278</b>	<b>\$ 66,807,456</b>	<b>\$ 69,076,527</b>	
ABRSD Operating Budget % Change	2.73%	2.67%	3.40%	3.40%	
ABRSD Elementary School Debt	\$ 2,929,370	\$ 2,931,650	\$ 2,931,650	\$ 2,929,100	
<b>Total ABRSD Assessment</b>	<b>\$ 65,584,049</b>	<b>\$ 67,543,928</b>	<b>\$ 69,739,106</b>	<b>\$ 72,005,627</b>	
ABRSD Assessment % Change - With New Debt	7.10%	2.99%	3.25%	3.25%	
<b>Minuteman Assessment</b>	<b>\$ 1,397,557</b>	<b>\$ 1,740,570</b>	<b>\$ 2,346,298</b>	<b>\$ 2,425,726</b>	
Minuteman Assessment % Change	20.07%	24.54%	34.80%	3.39%	
Estimate of Minuteman Building Project Debt	\$ 335,426	\$ 449,303	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	
<b>Total Minuteman Assessment</b>	<b>\$ 1,732,983</b>	<b>\$ 2,189,873</b>	<b>\$ 2,796,298</b>	<b>\$ 2,875,726</b>	
Minuteman Assessment % Change - With New Debt	19.05%	26.36%	27.69%	2.84%	
<b>Total Acton Budgets</b>	<b>\$ 104,257,234</b>	<b>\$ 107,541,633</b>	<b>\$ 111,477,471</b>	<b>\$ 114,991,682</b>	
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 76,855</b>	<b>\$ (0)</b>	<b>\$ (922,593)</b>	<b>\$ (1,985,442)</b>	
<b>Table 6 Data</b>					
<b>ABRSD Funding Sources:</b>		FY21 ABRSD Revenues	FY22 ABRSD Revenues	FY23 ABRSD Revenues	FY24 ABRSD Revenues
State AID Ch.70	\$ 15,345,811	\$ 15,345,811	\$ 15,496,000	\$ 15,280,000	
Transportation	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225	
Regional Bonus Aid & Misc Revenue	\$ 567,500	\$ 567,500	\$ 617,500	\$ 275,000	
Charter School Aid	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000	
Excess & Deficiency (Acton share est. @ 84.8%)	\$ 966,000	\$ 846,000	\$ 845,000	\$ 432,480	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 19,026,536</b>	<b>\$ 18,906,536</b>	<b>\$ 19,105,725</b>	<b>\$ 18,119,705</b>	
<b>Additional OPEB Contribution</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>	
<b>Town of Acton - Tax Impact</b>		FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Total Valuation ('000s)	\$ 4,743,584	\$ 4,878,044	\$ 5,023,260	\$ 5,173,957	
Tax Rate	\$ 20.23	\$ 20.29	\$ 20.38	\$ 20.26	
SF Value	\$ 617,888	\$ 636,425	\$ 655,517	\$ 675,183	
% Change in SF Value	0.83%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	
SF Tax Bill	\$ 12,503	\$ 12,911	\$ 13,359	\$ 13,682	
% Change in SF Tax Bill	6.05%	3.26%	3.47%	2.42%	
\$ Change in SF Tax Bill	\$ 713	\$ 408	\$ 448	\$ 323	

## *Free Transportation to Town Meeting*

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*Don't miss Town Meeting because you can't get a ride!*

### **CrossTownConnect**



**Your Community, Your Transportation, Your Way**

The Town of Acton is offering **free** door-to-door van rides to Town Meeting.

CrossTown Connect will have a driver covering the hours from 4:30 PM – 10:30 PM for the night of Town Meeting. The dispatch service will be open for reservation until 12:00 PM on Friday, June 18th. Rides can be booked with the CrossTown Connect dispatch at (978) 844-6809. There will be no charge to passengers for any of these Town Meeting trips. When the van is not in use between 4:30 PM to 10:30 PM, it will be parked in the Acton-Boxborough High School parking lot where Town Meeting is being held.

## *Volunteers Sought*

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Do you want to get involved in making Acton a better place to live? There are many boards and committees in town run by volunteers, and many of them are in need of new members. This is your chance to make a difference! There are both ad hoc and ongoing committee slots available. Examples include the Volunteer Coordinating Committee, the Planning Board, the Historic District Commission, and the Recreation Commission. There is sure to be a board that can use your knowledge and skills.

To learn more, visit the Volunteer Coordinating Committee page on the Town website at <http://www.actonma.gov/volunteer>. There is no better way to give back to your community than volunteering. Applications may be filed online from the Town's website at <http://www.actonma.gov/formcenter/town-managers-office-5/volunteer-application-43>.

## *Message from Acton Nursing Services*

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Acton Nursing Services (ANS) continues its 95 year tradition of providing public health and home health care services to Acton. The location at 30 Sudbury Road Rear, Acton in the Human Services and Senior Center Facility has made it easy for more people to learn about its services. Acton Nursing Services offers comprehensive Home Health Care, podiatry and blood pressure clinics, and health and wellness information. Durable medical equipment loans are also available. For more information about any health needs, contact Acton Nursing Services at 978-929-6650 or visit online at [www.actonnursingservices.com](http://www.actonnursingservices.com).

Acton Nursing Services is not only a town treasure but is highly regarded. ANS earned a rating of 4 stars (out of 5) for Quality of Patient Care as most recently reported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This is an important achievement since the Massachusetts average is 3 stars and the National average is 3.5 stars. ANS patients gave ANS very high performance ratings on the Patient Satisfaction Survey; 93% of patients who responded would recommend ANS to friends and family. On all individual measures ANS performed better than the Massachusetts averages, which in most instances, are above the National averages.

Acton-Boxborough High School parents should also appreciate that Acton Nursing Services is the key to the delivery of the ImPACT® baseline testing for concussion risk assessment. ANS has conducted the ImPACT® baseline test for the past two school years for freshmen students at ABRHS. ImPACT® is the most scientifically validated computerized neurocognitive test used by more than 7,400 high schools and 1,000 colleges and universities to help evaluate and manage suspected concussions. The test tracks a student's symptoms and measures multiple aspects of cognitive functioning, including attention span, working memory, sustained and selective attention time, non-verbal problem solving, and reaction time. In the event of a concussion, students can then take a post-concussion test to compare to their ImPACT® baseline test that was given at the start of their high school careers. For more information, to request your child's baseline results or to schedule a post-concussion test, please contact Acton Nursing Services at 978-929-6650.



## *Consent Calendar*

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In an effort to make Town Meeting more efficient, the Consent Calendar or Consent Agenda is used. The Select Board chooses articles that are usually recurring and that are not expected to generate controversy. The articles are voted as a unit and passed without debate.

The Town Meeting will begin with a single Consent motion that will include Article 1. The Consent articles are indicated with an asterisk (\*) in the Article Index as well as in the title of each article.

The Moderator will read out the numbers and titles of the articles. If two or more voters object to an article being included in the consent agenda, they may call out “Hold.” This may be because there is a question or a voter feels discussion and debate is warranted. The Article will be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Once any articles have been held out from the Consent Agenda, the Moderator will call for the vote on the remaining articles as a unit.

Please review the articles and motions. Summaries are also included with each article. Motions for consent articles are included under the text of each article. All other motions will be available on a separate handout at Town Meeting. Articles and motions must be substantially similar.

If you have any questions about any articles, motions, or procedures, please contact the official listed in the summary of the article or the Town Manager’s Office at [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) or 978-929-6611 before Town Meeting.

Jo-Ann Berry  
Town Moderator

*“Be sincere, Be brief, Be seated.”*  
– Franklin Delano Roosevelt

# *Annual Town Meeting Warrant*

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One or more of the following symbols may appear following an Article number:

*	This article is on the Consent Calendar
#	This article was submitted by Citizens' Petition

One or more of the following recommendations may appear at the end of an Article's summary:

<b>Recommended</b>	This board voted to <u>recommend</u> passage by Town Meeting.
<b>Not Recommended</b>	This board voted to <u>not recommend</u> passage by Town Meeting.
<b>Deferred</b>	A recommendation will be made by this board when the Article is considered at Town Meeting.
<b>No Recommendation</b>	This board voted to make no specific recommendation to Town Meeting.



*Town of Acton  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ss.*

To either of the Constables of the Town of Acton, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify the legal voters of said Town of Acton, qualified to vote at Town Meetings for the transaction of Town affairs, to meet at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Upper Gymnasium in said Acton on **Monday, June 21, 2021 at 6:00 PM**, then and there to act on the following articles:

# *Articles*

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## **Article 1 \*** (Majority vote)

### **Choose Town Officers**

To choose all necessary Town Officers and Committees and to fix the salaries and compensation of all the elective officers of the Town as follows:

Moderator	\$ 20.00 per Town Meeting session
Select Board, Chair	\$ 750.00 per year
Select Board, Member	\$ 650.00 per year

, or take any other action relative thereto.

### **Motion & Nominations**

Move that the Town fix the compensation for elected officers as shown in the Article.

Mr. Benson nominates William Mullin of Wilson Lane, Acton, for the position of Temporary Moderator, term to expire 2022.

Melissa Loporto, Trustee of the West Acton Citizens Library, nominates Dorothy Curtis of 616 Massachusetts Ave, Acton, for the position of Trustee of the West Acton Citizens Library, term to expire 2024.

Michael Gowing, Trustee of the Elizabeth White Fund, nominates Catherine C. Longwell of 9 Kennedy Lane, Acton, for the position of Trustee of the Elizabeth White Fund, term to expire 2024.

Thomas Matthews, Trustee of the Acton Firefighters' Relief Fund, nominates Brent E. Carter of 7 Dogwood Drive, Townsend, for the position of Trustee of the Acton Firefighters' Relief Fund, term to expire 2024.

Jennifer Smith, Trustee of the Charlotte Goodnow Fund, nominates Thomas Ryder, of 5 Old Oregon Trail, Acton, for the position of Trustee of the Charlotte Goodnow Fund, term to expire 2024.

### **Summary**

This article provides for the election of a Temporary Town Meeting Moderator (General Bylaws § A8), Trustees of the Town's various trust funds and establishes the salaries of the Town's elected officials.

Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**  
**Recommended**

**Finance Committee**  
**Deferred**

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**Article 2**  
(Majority vote)

**Town Operating Budget**

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, transfer and/or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$36,617,835 to defray the necessary expenses of the departments, offices and boards of the Town, exclusive of the Regional School budgets, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Summary**

This Article requests funds for the municipal operating budget. The standard motion for the municipal budget appropriation may include the transfer of other monies such as Cemetery Trust Funds and Wetland Filing Fees.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, and/or appropriate from available funds a sum of money to be expended by the Town Manager for the purchase, replacement, study, design or implementation of programs, vehicles, equipment, improvement of facilities or infrastructure as listed below, including related incidental costs, or take any other action relative thereto.

<b>Funded from Free Cash, Requiring a Majority Vote</b>		
<b>A.</b>	Diversity Officer Study and Implementation	\$ 85,000
<b>B.</b>	Tree Assessment	\$ 30,000
<b>C.</b>	Dog Park Grant Match	\$ 21,000
<b>D.</b>	Vacant Storefront Program	\$ 20,000
<b>Sub-Total Projects Funded from Free Cash</b>		<b>\$ 156,000</b>
<b>Funded from Stabilization Fund, Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote</b>		
<b>E.</b>	Sidewalks	\$ 90,000
<b>F.</b>	Brush Chipper	\$ 70,000
<b>G.</b>	Net Zero Vehicle Replacement Program	\$ 50,000
<b>H.</b>	Complete Streets Program	\$ 50,000
<b>I.</b>	Fire Alarm Systems for Existing Fire Stations	\$ 50,000
<b>J.</b>	Sustainability Program	\$ 50,000
<b>K.</b>	Fire Tools	\$ 30,000
<b>L.</b>	Forklift	\$ 30,000
<b>M.</b>	Police Technology	\$ 25,000
<b>Sub-Total Projects Funded from Stabilization</b>		<b>\$ 445,000</b>
<b>Total of Proposed Projects</b>		<b>\$ 601,000</b>

## Summaries

## **A. Diversity Officer Study and Implementation**

Consistent with the Select Board's Policy Against Racism, this funding would address issues surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion. The proposed \$85,000 will build internal capacity to address needs that have been identified including the recommendations from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission that are expected this fall. The new funding will support the following initiatives:

- Review recommendations from DEIC and implement with policy direction from the Select Board
- Conduct a needs assessment and make recommendations for the preferred way to include a diversity officer position into our organizational structure
- Conduct a robust recruitment and screening process to select a person to serve in this newly created role.

## B. Tree Assessment

The Town commissioned an assessment of the trees located in the street rights-of-way (ROW) in 2018. This project will continue this effort to provide a thorough assessment for each public shade tree to promote public safety and tree preservation measures. Understanding an urban forest's structure and health can promote management decisions that will improve the urban forest as well as human health and environmental quality.

### **C. Dog Park Grant Match**

In 2019, the Select Board approved a \$2 per dog license increase to help fund future maintenance needs at a proposed future dog park. This new revenue is supporting a \$4,000 increase to the Natural Resources maintenance budget. This funding will be dedicated for dog park needs. Through the capital program we are also proposing an additional \$21,000 in FY22 for a total of \$25,000 to serve as a match for the proposed Stanton Foundation Grant which will be sought for design and construction of the dog park.

### **D. Vacant Storefront Program**

Over the last several years we have focused on finding ways to support our local business community and develop programs and initiatives that help retain existing businesses and attract new commercial investments in the community. In the FY22 budget \$20,000 is proposed to support a new vacant storefronts program. This request is for matching funds that will allow the Town to apply to the state Economic Assistance Coordinating Council for certification to designate Great Road as a Certified Vacant Storefront District. This state program makes available \$10,000 in tax credits to business owners to move into a storefront that has been vacant for a year or longer. A municipality must create a district and have matching funds identified and available prior to any businesses being able to qualify as a project. Vacant storefronts in Acton are prevalent and noticeable, and given the current economic conditions exacerbated by COVID-19, the number of vacant storefronts is expected to increase. As of August 2019, there were 8 storefronts along Great Road that had been vacant for a year or longer, and therefore would be eligible for a state tax credits if Acton were successful in certifying Great Road as a Vacant Storefronts District with the EACC. The state program requires municipal matching funds, which would be provided to new tenants as forgivable loans if the business stays in the location for five years.

### **E. Sidewalks**

This funding continues a commitment to focus resources on multiple sidewalk segments located on high priority streets as determined by the work of the former Sidewalk Committee. Sidewalk projects take time, as they are contingent upon planning and design, approval from abutting property owners, and ultimately funding availability.

### **F. Brush Chipper**

This brush chipper is about 30-years old brush chipper and utilized by the DPW Trees & Grounds Division. This equipment is critical for their daily work and storm emergencies. The existing equipment has outdated safety & operation equipment and it's becoming difficult to find replacement parts.

### **G. Net Zero Vehicle Replacement Program**

The ten-year capital improvement plan includes a vehicle replacement program to replace our entire fleet with more efficient vehicles and as many electric and hybrids as practicable. This request of \$50,000 is for the first year of the program. We are proposing to acquire a  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton hybrid and a fully-electric passenger car to replace two large SUVs. The replacement of these two vehicles is projected to save at least 10,000 pounds of CO2, 540 gallons of fuel, and \$1,400 in fuel costs per year. The cost of these vehicles will potentially be offset with a proposed Green Community Grant and incentives from the Mass EV program. In addition to emission savings and a demonstrated commitment to clean transportation, the new EV will provide a unique opportunity for Town staff to test drive the vehicle, learn to use an EV charger, and offer the chance for residents to learn about EVs. And as we work to ultimately replace all heavy vehicles with more efficient options, the  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton hybrid will allow Town staff to test the vehicle's capacity and operational performance. This will also help Acton prepare for the acquisition of heavier hybrids and fully electrified vehicles as these become available in the market.

## **H. Complete Streets Program**

Complete Streets and intersection design and construction projects would continue a commitment to substantially invest in creating walkable and safer streets throughout Acton.

## **I. Fire Alarm Systems for Existing Fire Stations**

Installation of fire alarm systems in three existing fire stations (furnish & install panel, complete wiring). The existing three fire stations do not have a fire alarm system. Currently, when firefighters are out on a call, the buildings are unoccupied and unprotected. These facilities are vulnerable to loss of life and property.

## **J. Sustainability Program**

The FY22 budget includes \$50,000 for implementing sustainability program initiatives such as maintaining our greenhouse gas emissions inventory, installing electric vehicle chargers (which will be subsidized by utility incentives), implementing nature-based solutions such as the proposed tree planting project at Jones Field, funding to improve our ability to seek grants that require matching funds, and to cover incremental costs of making purchase decisions that incorporate sustainability best practices.

## **K. Fire Tools**

New technologies in vehicle construction makes it necessary to upgrade our extrication tools to keep pace. Modern battery-operated extrication tools are made with today's vehicles in mind. They are stronger, faster and quieter with no hose line to restrict the user. They will replace older gasoline-powered extrication tools. These tools help us save lives, do not generate carbon monoxide at the scene of an emergency, and create less noise pollution while operating.

## **L. Forklift**

The forklift is a critical piece of equipment utilized by all the Public Works divisions on a daily basis. The existing forklift is over 20 years old and needs major work. The lift mast is at the end of its service life which presents a safety risk.

## **M. Police Technology**

This capital item is to replace mobile computers in police cruisers that were purchased over ten years ago and are past their useful life.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

Select Board Member: David Martin: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**

**Recommended**

**Finance Committee**

**Recommended**

**Article 4****Town Capital, Infrastructure, Studies and Improvements**

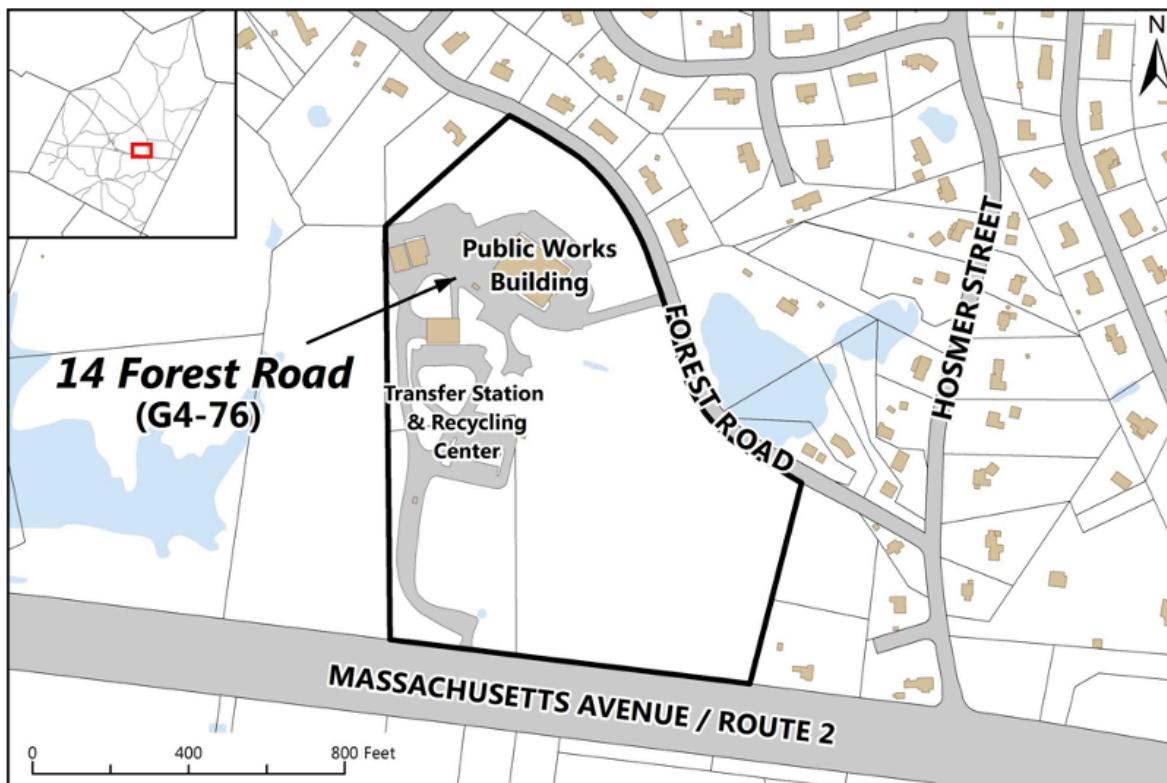
(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, appropriate from available funds and/or borrow a sum of money to be expended by the Town Manager for the purchase, replacement, study, design or implementation of programs, improvement of facilities or infrastructure as listed below, including related incidental costs, or take any other action relative thereto.

<b>A.</b>	Public Works Facility & Transfer Station Design	\$ 1,000,000
<b>B.</b>	Kelley's Corner Pedestrian Lights	\$ 979,470
<b>C.</b>	Acton Center Traffic Redesign Construction	\$ 886,000
<b>D.</b>	53 River Street Dam Removal Grant Match	\$ 250,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 3,115,470</b>

**Summaries****A. Public Works Facility & Transfer Station Design**

A feasibility study was conducted to provide an architectural and engineering evaluation and to recommend improvements to the Department of Public Works (DPW) Facility and the Transfer Station and Recycling Facility. This proposed funding will allow the project to proceed to the next phase of the design. This project is reflective of a short-term goal of the Select Board, and will also align with the Town's Environmental Sustainability policy in that the design will consider elements that would support a net zero energy building and the use of green technology in the design and construction of the new building.



## B. Kelley's Corner Pedestrian Lights

This article funds 59% of the total anticipated cost of the pedestrian light poles in the Kelley's Corner Infrastructure Improvement project (intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street as well as Community Lane). The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) have invested over \$18 million dollars into the project to assist with engineering design and to fully fund construction. The primary components for pedestrian light pole fixtures are considered a non-participating cost by the State and are required to be funded by the local municipality; MassDOT will fund 41% of the remaining components for the pedestrian light poles. This funding incorporates \$473,700 of prior capital article appropriations with \$505,770 of new borrowing to complete the work.

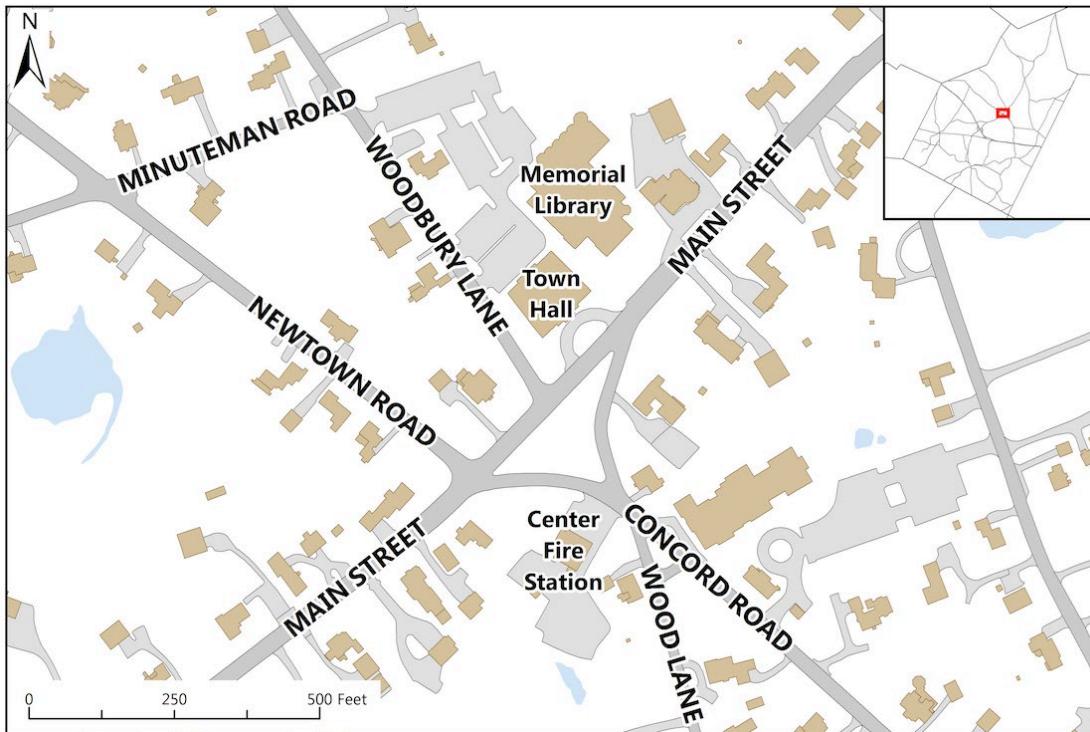
The community driven design process, represented in the Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative Plan, found that residents desired a streetscape that includes attractive and appropriate street lighting to create a consistent, pedestrian scaled band of well-lit spaces along the street edge. Implementing pedestrian light poles for the entire length of the project will provide equitable pedestrian safety, and will help to establish the look and feel of the future Kelley's Corner. Pedestrian light poles will be the uniquely consistent element in the physical landscape signifying that one has arrived in a distinct and important place in Town.

The State is willing to fund the 41% of the remaining components for the pedestrian light poles if they are included in the project now; MassDOT will not fund its portion for potential future pedestrian light poles. If the Town wanted to add light poles at a future date without State funding, it would cost the Town considerably more, be more difficult to physically construct and would require ripping up sections of the completed project to install not only the light poles but also the infrastructure.

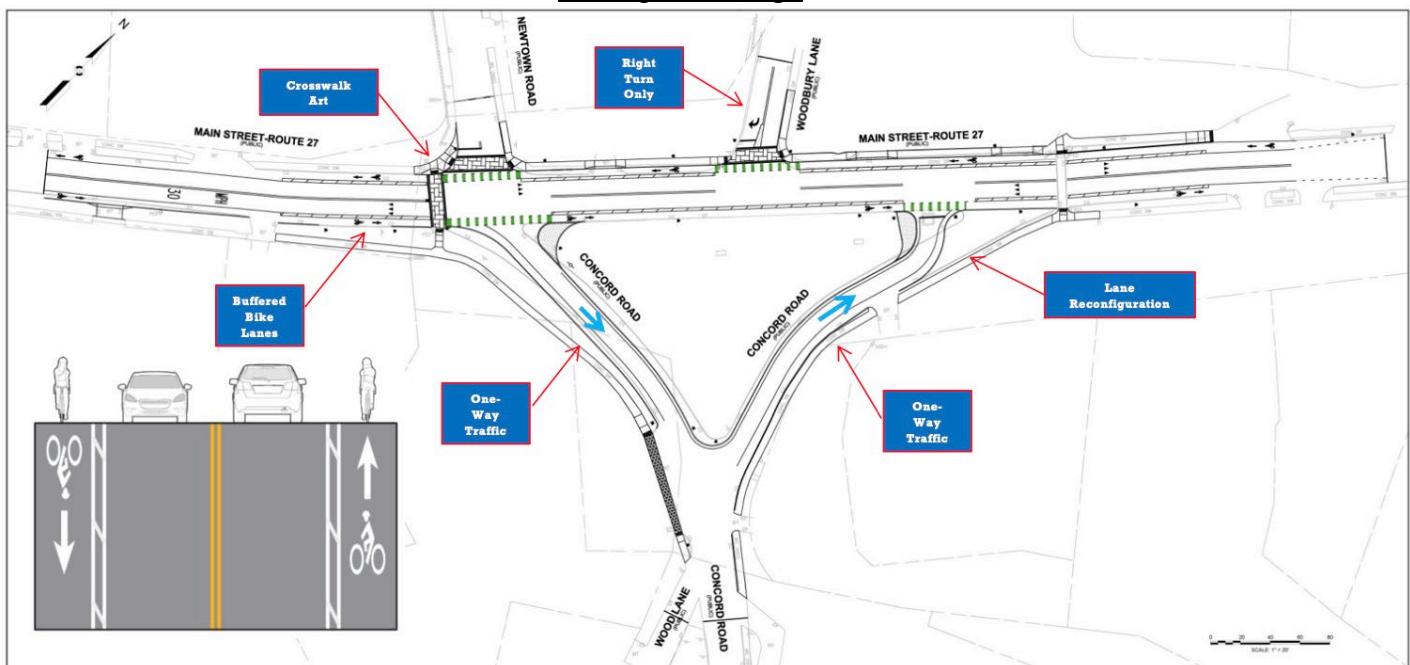


### C. Acton Center Traffic Redesign Construction

This funding would provide for roadway improvements in Acton Center. A traffic study and design work will soon be completed, and this project will begin construction on improvements for enhanced safety and vehicular and pedestrian flow. This project aligns with goals from the Acton Comprehensive Community Plan.

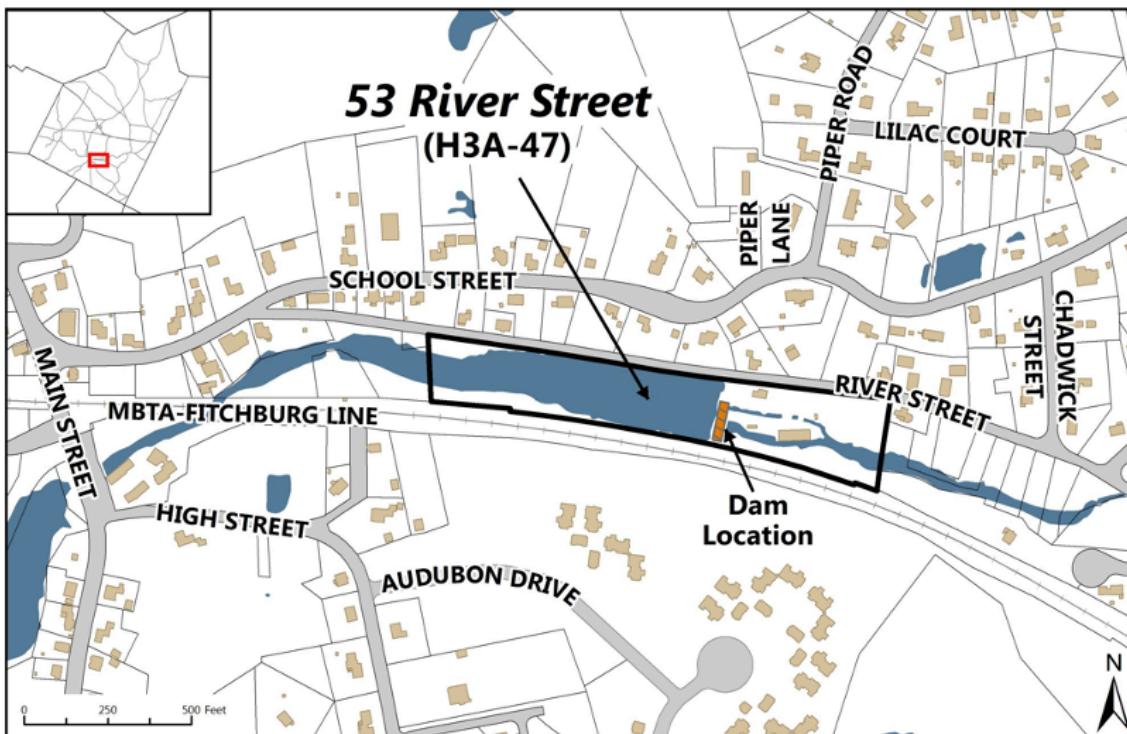


Conceptual Design



#### D. 53 River Street Dam Removal Grant Match

This article would provide funding for matching funds so that the Town may seek a grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA's) Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program. This work will allow the Town to move forward with stream restoration and the creation of an historic park.



Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Dean Charter: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**  
**Recommended**

**Finance Committee**

**Not Recommended: Item A**  
**Recommended: Items B, C, D**

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## **Article 5      Wastewater Treatment System Rehabilitation** (Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, appropriate from available funds, or borrow a sum of money to be expended by the Town Manager for the purpose of financing the planning, design, and construction of Wastewater Treatment System Rehabilitation Project, or any portion thereof, including, without limitation, the acquisition by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine, real property interests in land as may be necessary or appropriate, and all other costs and any related expenses thereof as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 29C, § 1; and to determine whether any premium received by the Town 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 the vote in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws c. 44, § 20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount; or take any other action relative thereto.

### **Summary**

Since 2002, the Town has owned and operated a public sewer system which currently serves South Acton, Kelley's Corner and the Acton-Boxborough School Campus. The Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) has had no significant upgrades since its construction started in 2000 and is approaching 20-years of operation where equipment and associated infrastructure are at the end of their design life. MassDEP required an engineering evaluation that outlined what modifications (if any) were required to ensure that the facility could remain in compliance with its groundwater discharge permit. This effort was completed in August 2019 and summarized in a report entitled Comprehensive Plant Evaluation (CPE). This project consists primarily of the Phase 2a Recommendations as identified in the CPE Report. MassDEP is requiring that this rehabilitation project be completed in order to ensure that the treatment facility continues to operate reliably and adequately treat wastewater.

The total project cost is estimated at \$6,200,000 and will be funded as follows:

- \$4,500,000 SRF Low Interest Loan (20 years at approximately 2% interest)
- \$900,000 MassWorks Grant
- \$300,000 Sewer Reserves Fund
- \$500,000\* Powder Mill Apartments Mitigation (\*In addition the developer is rehabilitating and upgrading two downstream sewer pumping stations.)

If approved, the debt service on the SRF loan will be covered by the Sewer Enterprise Fund.

Direct Inquiries to:      John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member:      David Martin: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u><b>Select Board</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>	<u><b>Finance Committee</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>
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## Article 6 (Majority vote)

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Assessment

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, transfer and/or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$67,543,928 to defray the necessary expenses of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto.

## Summary

This Article requests funds for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Assessment. This assessment, voted by the Acton-Boxborough Regional District School Committee, is governed by the terms of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Agreement. The capital portion of the assessment covers the District's budgets for debt service and capital outlays; the operating assessment covers personnel and all non-capital operating costs.

Direct Inquiries to: Peter J. Light, Superintendent: [plight@abschools.org](mailto:plight@abschools.org) / (978) 264-4700  
Select Board Member: David Martin: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Finance Committee  
Recommended Recommended

## Article 7 (Majority vote)

# Minuteman Regional School District Assessment

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, transfer and/or appropriate from available funds, the sum of \$2,189,873 to defray the necessary expenses of the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District, or take any other action relative thereto.

## Summary

This Article requests funds for the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District Assessment. This assessment, voted by the Minuteman School Committee, is governed by the terms of the Minuteman Regional School District Agreement.

Direct Inquiries to: Dr. Edward A. Bouquillon, Superintendent  
[ebouquillon@minuteman.org](mailto:ebouquillon@minuteman.org) / (781) 861-6500  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Recommended Finance Committee Recommended

To see if the Town will vote to:

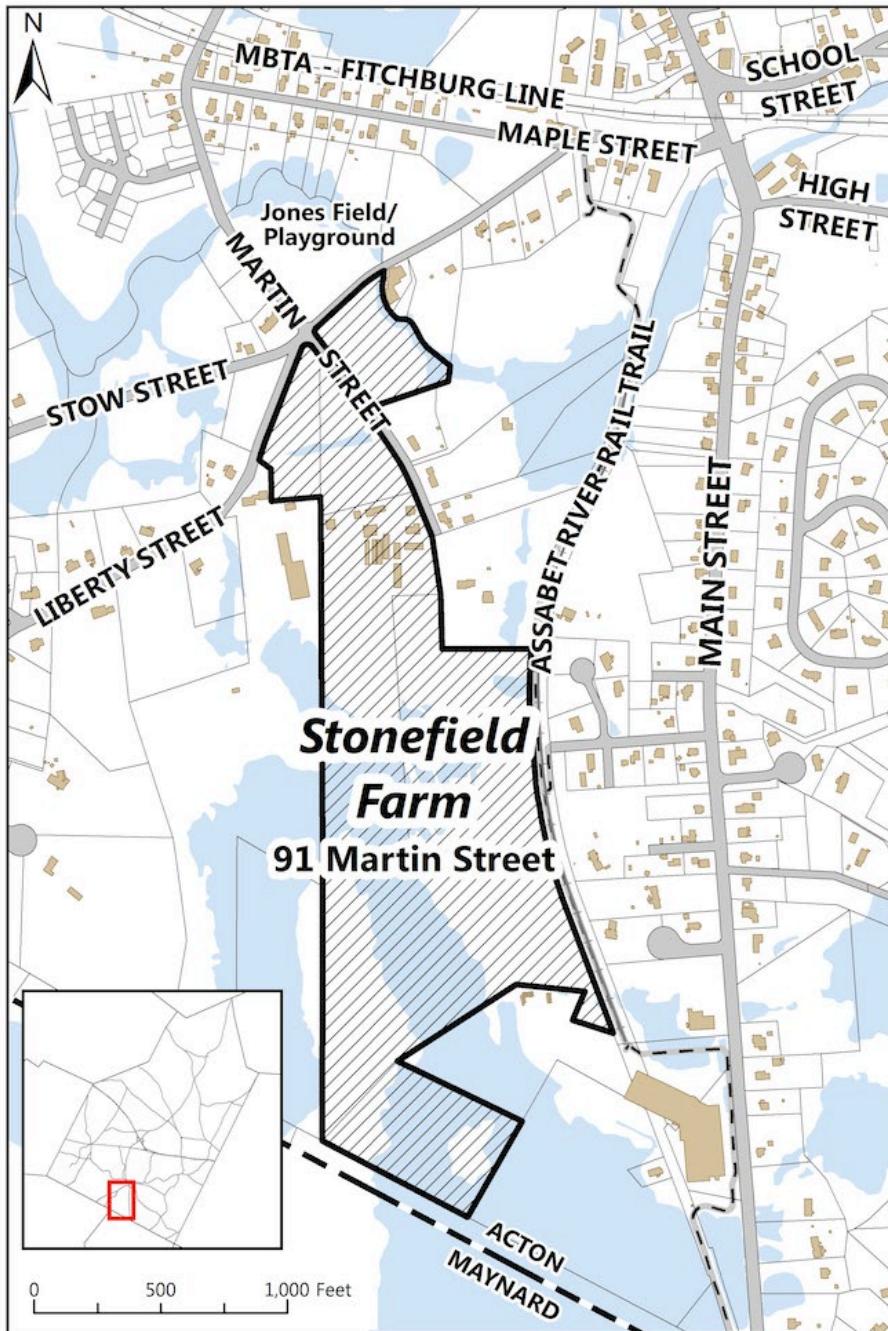
- (a) authorize the Select Board to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine, an Agricultural Preservation Restriction, Conservation Restriction, and easements for trail access over approximately 51± acres of the real property land located at 79, 91, and 99 Martin Street, 10 Liberty Street, and 36 Stow Street, Acton, Massachusetts and depicted on Assessors' Map H2 Parcels 61, 94, 101, 128 and Map H2-A Parcel 66, under M.G.L. c. 44B, the Community Preservation Act;
- (b) appropriate the purchase price of \$1,230,000 and all necessary and appropriate transaction costs for said purchase of such restrictions and easement rights including, without limitation, costs for due diligence, legal services, bonding, and its monitoring and enforcement, and other transaction, acquisition and related costs and to meet this appropriation transfer, appropriate and expend, pursuant to the April 28, 2021 favorable recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee from the existing Community Preservation Fund Open Space Set Aside balance of \$1,901,659.73, and to transfer, appropriate and expend said amount, and further to raise, appropriate, transfer from available funds or accept gifts and grants of such additional funds as are necessary to accomplish the purposes of this article;
- (c) authorize the Select Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Agricultural Commission to submit on behalf of the Town any and all applications deemed necessary for grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the United States, under the Self-Help Act (M.G.L. Chapter 132A § 11) and/or any other state or federal programs including those in aid of conservation or agricultural land acquisition, and to transfer, appropriate and expend any said amount so received consistent with this article;
- (d) authorize and direct the Select Board in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44B, § 12(b), to delegate the management of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Conservation Restriction to the Agricultural Commission or Conservation Commission subject to the perpetual Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Conservation Restriction as aforesaid; and
- (e) authorize the Select Board, the Town Manager, the Treasurer, the Agricultural Commission and the Conservation Commission, as appropriate, to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect this article;

or take any other action relative thereto.

### **Summary**

The recommended appropriation of \$1,230,000 from the Open Space Set Aside Fund will fund the purchase of an Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Conservation Restriction on the 51.5-acre Stonefield Farm property in South Acton in association with the purchase of the property by the Boston Area Gleaners, a non-profit, food rescue and hunger relief organization.

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Conservation Restriction will preserve in perpetuity approximately 28 acres of the Farm for Agricultural Use. It will also preserve in perpetuity approximately 23 acres of the Farm for Conservation Purposes, support sustainable agriculture and hunger relief organizations in the region, encourage continued and new farming enterprises through educational and volunteer opportunities, support regional farms through partnerships with the Boston Area Gleaners and will create passive recreational opportunities, including potential hiking trails within the conservation lands and direct trail linkage between the Assabet River Rail Trail and future farm stand operations.



Direct Inquiries to:

Kristen Guichard, AICP, Planning Director:

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Select Board Member:

David Martin: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

Select Board  
Recommended

Finance Committee  
Recommended

To see if the Town will appropriate or set aside for later appropriation, and authorize and direct the Select Board and the Town Manager to expend or set aside, from the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund balances as set forth herein, the amounts listed below for community preservation purposes, with such expenditures to be subject to conditions listed in the Article's Summary and to be further specified in award letters from the Community Preservation Committee, with each item considered a separate appropriation;

<b>FY 2020 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND BALANCES</b>	
<b>FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues</b>	
Community Preservation Fund Surcharge Collected in FY 2020	\$ 1,082,385.53
State Community Preservation Trust Fund Receipt, October 2020	\$ 247,192.00
<b>Other FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Components</b>	
Interest Earned in FY 2020 (less abatements and exemptions)	\$ 140,399.17
Unencumbered FY 2020 Fund Balance	\$ 9,061.52
Recapture of unspent previous years' project appropriations	\$ 242,842.92
<b>Total - FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Balance</b>	
	<b>\$1,721,881.14</b>
<b>FY 2020 Open Space Set-Aside</b>	
Set-Aside Fund Balance from appropriations for the Acquisition, Creation, and Preservation of Open Space and its Rehabilitation and Restoration	\$ 1,901,659.73
<b>Total FY 2020 Open Space Set-Aside Fund Balance</b>	
	<b>\$1,901,659.73</b>
<b>FY 2020 Historic Resources Set-Aside</b>	
Set-Aside Fund Balance from appropriations for the Acquisition, Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Historic Resources	\$ 0.00
<b>Total FY 2020 Historic Resource Set-Aside Fund Balance</b>	
	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>FY 2020 Community Housing Set-Aside</b>	
Set-Aside Fund Balance from appropriations for the Acquisition, Creation, Preservation, and Support of Community Housing	\$ 0.00
<b>Total FY 2020 Community Housing Set-Aside Fund Balance</b>	
	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>APPROPRIATIONS FROM FY 2020 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND BALANCE</b>	
<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Recommended Amounts</b>
<b>Set-Aside Appropriations for</b>	
A. Acquisition, Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Historic Resources	\$ 68,311.75
B. Acquisition, Creation and Preservation of Open Space, and its Rehabilitation and Restoration	\$ 393,000.00
<b>Spending Appropriations</b>	
C. Town of Acton – Regional Housing Services (1 Year)	\$ 34,000.00
D. Community Housing Program Fund	\$ 40,000.00

E. Acton Housing Authority – 348-364 Main Street Development	\$ 500,000.00
F. Town of Acton - Pencil Factory Bridge: Phase 1 Design	\$ 44,000.00
G. Town of Acton - Preliminary Archaeological and Historical Review	\$ 10,000.00
H. Acton Historical Society – Textiles and Clothing Collection	\$ 10,646.00
I. Town of Acton – 53 River Street Historic Park	\$ 100,000.00
J. Town of Acton – Gardner Playground: Phase 2	\$ 100,000.00
K. Town of Acton – NARA Sports Pavilion	\$ 240,000.00
L. Town of Acton – Jones Playground Surfacing Expansion	\$ 115,000.00
<b>Administrative Appropriation</b>	
M. A fund for CPC direct expenses and for reimbursing the Town of Acton for administrative services and operating expenses provided in support of the Community Preservation Committee	\$ 66,478.88
<b>Total Recommended Appropriations from FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 1,721,436.63</b>
<b>APPROPRIATION FROM OPEN SPACE SET-ASIDE FUND BALANCE</b>	
N. Wright Hill Open Space Land Acquisition – Debt Service	\$ 76,800.00
O. Piper Lane Open Space Land Acquisitions – Debt Service	\$ 59,900.00
<b>Total Recommended Appropriations from the Open Space Set-Aside Fund</b>	<b>\$ 136,700.00</b>
<b>APPROPRIATION FROM COMMUNITY HOUSING SET-ASIDE FUND BALANCE</b>	
	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Recommended Appropriations from the Community Housing Set-Aside Fund</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>APPROPRIATION FROM HISTORIC RESOURCES SET-ASIDE FUND BALANCE</b>	
	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Recommended Appropriations from the Historic Resources Set-Aside Fund</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>Resulting Fund Balances</b>	
Resulting FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Balance	\$ 444.51
Resulting Balance in the Set-Aside Fund for the Acquisition, Creation, and Preservation of Open Space, and its Rehabilitation and Restoration**	\$ 927,959.73
Resulting Balance in the Set-Aside Fund for the Acquisition, Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Historic Resources	\$ 68,311.75
Resulting Balance in the Set-Aside Fund for the Acquisition, Creation, Preservation, and Support of Community Housing	\$ 0.00

\* Pursuant to Town Charter Section 6-5 that the appropriation to the Community Housing Program Fund shall not lapse three years and one month following the effective date of the vote on this article, and that this appropriation and all prior appropriations to the Community Housing Program Fund shall continue to be available for the purpose specified until expended for that purpose or until the CPC recommends and Town Meeting votes to rescind the appropriation of any unspent funds appropriated for this purpose,

And, whereas Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B requires that the Town appropriate for spending, or set-aside for future spending, from the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues at least 10% for open space, 10% for historic resources, and 10% for community housing;

And, whereas the recommended appropriations for open space, historic resources, and community housing each meet or exceed 10% of the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues;

And, whereas Town Meeting may vote to delete or reduce any of the recommended amounts;

Therefore, in the event that recommended amounts are deleted or reduced, vote to appropriate as a set-aside for future spending from the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Balance the minimum necessary amounts to allocate not less than 10% of the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for open space (\$132,957.75), not less than 10% of the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for historic resources (\$132,957.75), and not less than 10% of the FY 2020 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for community housing (\$132,957.75), or take any other action relative thereto.

\*\* The resulting balance in the Open Space Set-Aside of \$927,959.73 includes the \$1,230,000 appropriation from Warrant Article 8 for the Stonefield Farm Agricultural Preservation Restriction. If Article 8 fails, the resulting fund balance would be \$2,157,959.73.

### **Summaries**

This article would make appropriations from the Town's Community Preservation Fund balance, and from the Community Preservation Set Aside Funds. All items listed are recommended by the Community Preservation Committee.

In 2002, the Town adopted the Community Preservation Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B (CPA). This established Acton's Community Preservation Fund through a 1.5% annual surcharge on real estate property tax bills with certain exemptions, and made the Town eligible to receive annually additional monies from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, which are added to the Town's Community Preservation Fund. Under the CPA, the Community Preservation Fund may be used to acquire, create and preserve open space; to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources; to acquire, create, preserve and support community housing; to acquire, create, preserve, rehabilitate and restore land for recreational use; to rehabilitate and restore open space and community housing that were acquired or created with Community Preservation Funds; and for certain related expenses in support of the foregoing. Community housing is defined as housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

Local adoption of the CPA established the Acton Community Preservation Committee as a statutory committee under the Act (Chapter S of the Bylaws of the Town of Acton). The Community Preservation Committee's duties under the law are to study the needs, possibilities, resources, and preferences of the Town regarding community preservation; to engage in an open and public process of deliberation and consult with other Town Boards and Committees; and to make recommendations to Town Meeting for appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund.

In October 2020, the Community Preservation Committee published its 2020 Community Preservation Plan (<https://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6645/2021-CPC-Plan---FINAL-10-28-20>) with guidelines for the submission of projects seeking funding. The Committee received twelve applications for funding of proposed projects and programs. The Committee reviewed the applications, interviewed proponents, and solicited legal opinions on the proposals to help evaluate their eligibility under the Act. This article represents the Committee's overall recommendation for appropriations, which includes recommended funding from the available Community Preservation Fund balances for the proposed projects

and programs, debt service on a prior year bond, and administrative program support. The recommended funding levels may differ from the amounts requested by the projects' proponents; some of the proposed projects have undergone transformations from how they were proposed originally; and some proposed projects were not recommended for funding.

All recommended amounts are "up-to" spending limits. Savings, if any, will be available for future appropriations. The recommended appropriations leave a remaining Community Preservation Fund balance of \$444.51 that is available for future Town Meeting appropriations in all eligible funding categories under the Act.

The CPA states that Town Meeting may delete or reduce any of the recommended appropriations, but may not add new items or increase the recommended appropriations. It requires that the Community Preservation Committee recommends and that Town Meeting appropriates in each fiscal year the spending of not less than 10% of the annual revenues in the Community Preservation Fund (\$132,957.75 in FY 2020) for each of the following: open space; historic resources; and community housing. The Committee's recommendations meet the required funding levels. The Committee may also recommend eminent domain taking by the Town of interest in real property (not recommended this year), the borrowing of funds for Community Preservation (not recommended this year), and an appropriation of not more than 5% of the annual revenues of the Community Preservation Fund for the Committee's administrative and operating expenses (\$66,478.88). The Community Preservation Committee recommended \$66,478.88, which is 5% of the annual revenues of the Community Preservation Fund.

A total of \$242,842.92 has been recaptured from unspent prior years' Community Preservation project appropriations and moved to the Community Preservation Fund. The recapture of prior year project appropriations can result in spending less than the statutory minimum 10% in any particular fiscal year for historic resource, open space, or community housing projects. This article makes set-aside fund appropriations as necessary to compensate for such shortfalls in prior years.

#### **A. Acquisition, Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Historic Resources Set-Aside**

This year the total recommended appropriation for historic preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration projects is less than the statutory 10% minimum. To make up for this shortfall, the Committee recommends that Town Meeting also set-aside \$68,311.75 to the Set-Aside Fund for the Acquisition, Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Restoration of Historic Resources.

#### **B. Open Space Set-Aside**

The current Open Space Set-Aside Fund balance is \$1,901,659.73. This item proposes to add \$393,000 to that fund balance. Town Meeting, with the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, may appropriate spending from the Open Space Set-Aside Fund for the purpose of acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation or restoration of open space. In this article, the Committee recommends such spending.

#### **C. Town of Acton – Regional Housing Services**

The recommended appropriation of \$34,000 from the Community Preservation Fund would continue the Town's participation in a Regional Housing Services Program for the year to assist with meeting the administrative, compliance and monitoring needs for the Town's existing affordable housing units and to further regional housing goals and efforts.

This year the Town is requesting the same level of service hours as last year for the year to continue covering supportive housing services that historically have been performed by the ACHC.

The Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) is currently located at 37 Knox Trail in Acton and is managed by Concord's Director of Planning and Land Management. The Office assists with affordable housing matters in the participating towns – Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston. This innovative regional approach to managing the administration of local affordable housing programs was developed with the assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), funded by the State's District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program, and launched on July 1, 2011.

During the term of the agreement, the Regional Housing Services Office will provide core housing services to Acton totaling 420 hours per year with the specifics of services negotiated by the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) and the Acton Planning office. Such services may include, for instance, checking compliance with regulatory agreements; monitoring of affordable housing units; updating and reconciliation of local housing inventory records with those maintained by the Department of Housing and Community Development; project-review assistance; maintenance of ready-buyer lists; assistance with affordable housing lotteries and resales; and conducting homeownership training.

The Regional Housing Services Office website (<http://www.rhsohousing.org/>) offers a variety of information designed to help local officials, and current and prospective residents. The information on the website includes regularly updated affordable housing inventories for each town, a listing of affordable housing opportunities that are currently accepting applications, and a section on resident services with local resources and contact information. The website also has a secure access section for RHSO and town staff for easy access to unit level data for ownership units with purchase information, contact history, and key documents (permits, regulatory Agreements, deeds, and deed riders) for projects and owners. This allows each participating town online access to the confidential information the RHSO staff maintains.

CPA funds can be used for the “preservation and support of community housing.” Where this funding request is for a program whose goal is to assist Acton’s housing programs, ensure compliance with restrictive covenants, preserve Acton’s prior investments in affordable housing, including zoning concessions under M.G.L., Ch. 40B, and further affordable housing solutions for the region, it is preserving and supporting community housing as provided in the Act.

#### **D. Community Housing Program Fund**

The recommended \$40,000 appropriation from the Community Preservation Fund replenishes the existing Community Housing Program Fund for "the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing in the Town of Acton." The Fund was first established with a CPA appropriation in 2004. It is used to finance affordable housing initiatives and other activities in “support of community housing” eligible for CPA funding under definition in the statute. The Fund is managed by the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) for community housing initiatives and activities recommended by the ACHC or any other community housing entity approved by the Select Board. Expenditures from this Fund must be approved by the Select Board.

This recommended appropriation funds the continuation of the ACHC’s past and current programs, which for example includes the purchase or subsidy of Acton Housing Authority’s low income rental units; selling price, closing cost, mortgage payment and other subsidies to first time homebuyers of affordable units; capital improvement assistance for affordable units; funding and grant support of housing studies and plans; and pre-development funding for senior rental projects.

## **E. Acton Housing Authority – 348-364 Main Street Development**

The recommended appropriation of \$500,000 is to pay for pre-development costs for the development of 40 units of elder/disabled affordable rental housing at 348-364 Main Street.

The housing units will be for low-income households whose income is below 60% of median income. Four of the units will be barrier free, all will be universally accessible and 8-10 will be for households under 30% median income. Two of the units will be two-bedrooms to allow for live-in aide and six of the units will be set aside for households under 60 with disabilities.

The entire development cost will be approximately \$15,000,000 and the Community Preservation funds will leverage millions in state and private financing. The Acton Housing Authority proposed building 38-40 units of affordable rental housing on Main Street in response to the Town of Acton’s Request for Information issued in 2018. Several meetings and hearings were held to elicit input from the community on the best uses for the town owned land at 348-364 Main Street. The Acton Housing Authority currently has over 100 local senior households on its waiting list.

## **F. Town of Acton – Pencil Factory Bridge: Phase 1 Design**

The recommended appropriation of \$44,000 will make one of Acton’s important historical resources, the North Acton Pencil Factory, more accessible to the general public. The project will create a 320 foot accessible path through the Pencil Factory historical site, from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), over Nashoba Brook via a new bridge, and to the informational kiosk located on the Trail through Time (TTT).

The project will be completed in two phases:

Phase 1 (2021): Design & Permitting Documents

Phase 2 (2022): Bidding & Construction

The \$44,000 appropriation is for Phase 1 of the project.

## **G. Town of Acton – Preliminary Archaeological and Historical Review**

The recommended appropriation of \$10,000 will establish an Acton Historical Commission Survey Fund, to be administered by the Acton Historical Commission. The funds would be used exclusively for “quick turnaround” professional archaeological/cultural resource assessments to provide a preliminary assessment of the likelihood of finding significant archaeological or historical assets as a result of an application to a Town department for further development. Such engagements would require only 1-2 days of field work and result in a written report. Estimates from local firms put the cost of such work at \$1,100 - 1,500 per day. It is anticipated that there might be just one or two such instances per year.

## **H. Acton Historical Society – Textiles and Clothing Collection**

The recommended appropriation of \$10,646 will assist the Acton Historical Society (AHS) to review and revitalize the AHS’s historic costumes and textiles collections, both in terms of our acquisition policies as well as best practices for management, storage, preservation, and display. Of special importance is to make this collection accessible to the Acton community to further our understanding of the rich history of our town.

In 2021, one Acton Community Preservation Plan’s goal is to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources that are significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of Acton, specifically the AHS’s collection of textiles, fabrics, and historical clothing. This project has two qualifying components: preservation and community outreach.

## **I. Town of Acton – 53 River Street Historic Park**

The recommended appropriation of \$100,000 will assist the town in the 53 River Street Dam project with the final design and permitting.

In February 2020, the town received \$112,000 grant through the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program to subsidize the 53 River Street dam removal. The scope of the project includes:

- Finalize dam removal engineering design
- Permitting
- Dam and building removal
- Stream restoration
- Site restoration
- Final park design
- Park construction

This request is to complete the engineering and permitting of the dam removal portion of the project. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$1,300,000 exclusive of park creation. The Town hopes to find grants to fund the work. The Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program has been identified as the most likely funding source, with grant awards up to \$1,000,000 available.

## **J. Town of Acton – Gardner Playground: Phase 2**

The recommended appropriation of \$100,000 will be used for the purchase and construction of new play structures which was one of the outcome results from the Master Plan and Land Survey for the revitalization of Gardner Field. Gardner Field is located in West Acton at 530–532 Massachusetts Ave. A Master Plan was created by Lemon Brooke to perfect the strategy, plans, and design of a new park. The existing park equipment is 24 years old, deteriorating and not currently accessible. Gardner Field is within walking distance of the neighboring Acton-Boxborough Schools.

## **K. Town of Acton – NARA Sports Pavilion – Phase 2**

The recommended appropriation of \$240,000 would complete Phase 2 of the NARA Sports Pavilion “south building” in its entirety. In 2016, the Recreation Department requested CPA funding for renovation of two modular houses comprising the Sports Pavilion, and was awarded funding for approximately half the project. In 2019, the Recreation Department requested the remaining funding, but again was awarded half of the request. The south building (Phase 2) will house an urgent need for a NARA Summer Camp office, onsite Recreation office, snack bar and a basement for storage of valuable recreation equipment. Both buildings will also serve as a shelter for campers in the event of severe weather. At this time, the south building (Phase 2) only has the exterior complete. Funding is critical to the completion of the interior of the south building.

## **L. Town of Acton – Jones Playground (54 Martin Street) Surfacing Expansion**

The recommended appropriation of \$115,000 would fund poured rubber surfacing around all play structures at the current site of the Jones Field Playground. The poured rubber surfacing will allow for people with all abilities to access every piece of equipment at all access points. In addition to accessibility, the poured rubber is also a safer form of surfacing from all fall heights from the structures.

Located in South Acton, Jones is the sole municipal playground in that area of Town, convenient to many South Acton neighborhoods. In keeping with the Town’s recreation goals in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, as well as the expressed desire of many residents, a fully accessible playground is greatly needed.

## **M. Administrative and Operating Expenses**

The recommended appropriation of \$66,478.88 is 5% of the FY 2020 revenues in the Community Preservation Fund (local surcharge and State trust fund receipts). The funding is to help the Town with administrative and legal expenses incurred in connection with the support of the Community Preservation Committee and Program, and to pay for any Community Preservation Committee direct expenses. The Act provides that up to 5% may be spent on administrative and operating expenses.

## **N. Wright Hill Open Space Land Acquisition – Debt Service**

The recommended appropriation of \$76,800 from the Open Space Set-Aside Fund will pay for the anticipated fifth annual payment on the 15-year bond for the Wright Hill Open Space land acquisition. The 2014 Annual Town Meeting authorized the Treasurer to borrow for a repayment term of not less than 15 years and not more than 20 years up to \$990,000 for the Wright Hill Open Space land.

## **O. Piper Lane Open Space Land Acquisition – Debt Service**

The recommended appropriation of \$59,900 from the Open Space Set-Aside Fund will pay for the anticipated first annual payment on the 15-year bond for the Piper Lane Open Space land acquisition. The 2020 Annual Town Meeting authorized the Treasurer to borrow for a repayment term of not less than 15 years and note more than 20 years up to \$600,000 for the Piper Lane Open Space land.

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Select Board Member: Dean Charter: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u><b>Select Board</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>	<u><b>Finance Committee</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>
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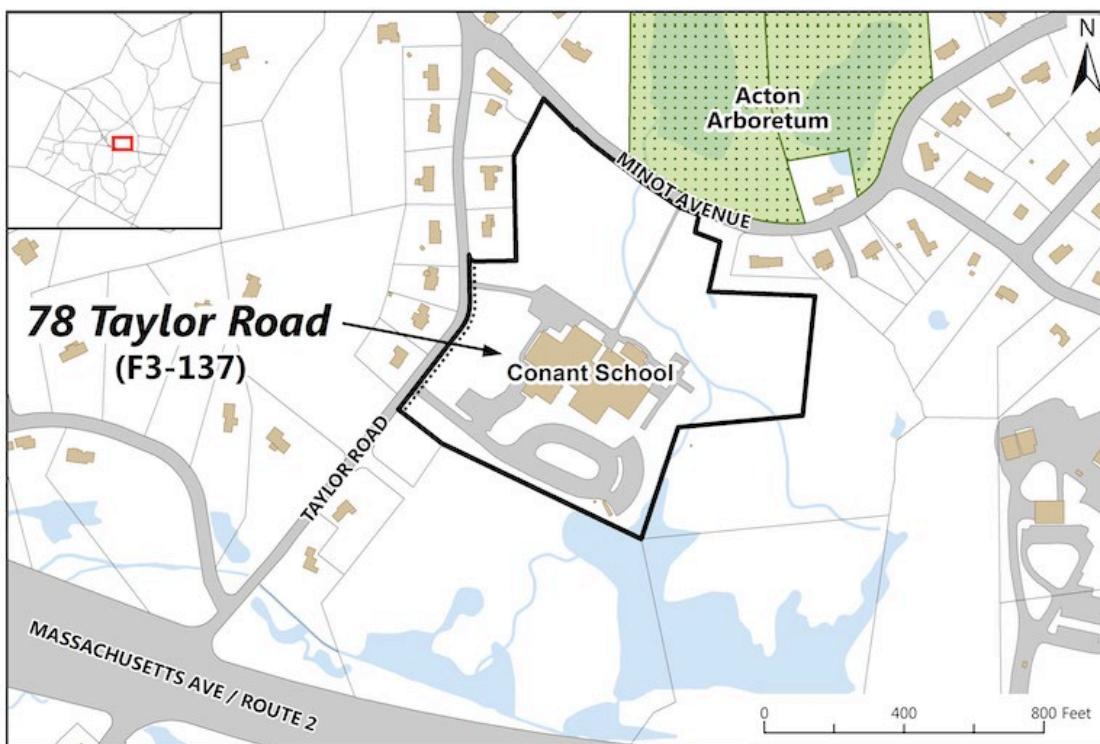
**Article 10****Sidewalk Acquisition – 78 Taylor Road**

(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise and to accept deeds of easement interests or fee simple interests, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine, for all purposes which streets, sidewalks and ways are now or hereafter used in the Town, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine and in a final location(s) as the Select Board may determine, on, across, over, or under a portion of the land n/f of The Town of Acton pursuant to Deed recorded in the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds at Book 11464, Page 274, located at 78 Taylor Road and shown as Parcel 137 on the Town of Acton Atlas Map F-3; and further to see if the Town will raise, appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds or accept gifts for this purpose, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Summary**

The Department of Public Works is planning to build a sidewalk on Taylor Road to improve pedestrian safety near the Conant School. This article will help secure the necessary authorization to utilize a portion of land in front of 78 Taylor Road large enough to construct a 5-foot wide sidewalk along the roadside leading to the school.



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Select Board Member: David Martin: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**  
Deferred

**Finance Committee**  
Deferred

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 3.8, ACCESSORY USE Regulations, of the Zoning Bylaw as set forth below:

A. Deleting Section 3.8.2.2, Drive-up facilities for banks, in its entirety, and renumber sections 3.8.2.3 through 3.8.2.8.

*[Note—Section 3.8.2.2, currently reads: Drive-up facilities in a bank.]*

B. In Section 3.8 ACCESSORY USE Regulations, insert a new subsection as follows:

3.8.5 In the Office, Business, Industrial and Village Districts, drive-up window facilities for banks, pharmacies, and restaurants shall require a Special Permit from the Select Board and shall be subject to the following:

- a) Drive-up windows shall be integrated with and attached to the principal BUILDING.
- b) Drive-up windows for pharmacies and restaurants shall be located within one drive-up lane, but are allowed up to two drive-up lanes prior to the first window; banks have no such limitation.
- c) Parapets or canopies located over any part of the drive-up window facility shall be made of a durable and weatherproof material consistent with the building material and style to which it is attached; fabric or temporary awnings are not permitted.
- d) No signage shall be located on a drive-up window facility parapet or canopy.
- e) Drive-up windows for restaurants may include one additional menu SIGN than normally allowed under Section 7.5.9. Such sign may be a FREESTANDING SIGN or WALL SIGN and is limited to a DISPLAY AREA of 10 square feet. Menu SIGNs shall comply with Section 7 of this Bylaw.
- f) No additional curb cuts shall be allowed for the purpose of accommodating a drive-up window facility.
- g) Drive-up windows shall be located along only one side of the BUILDING and shall not be located along or within 10 feet of the front façade of a BUILDING; for corner lots, the front façade shall be considered any side of the BUILDING facing a STREET.
- h) The location of the drive-up lane shall be part of and accessible from the parking lot, and designed in a manner to avoid queuing into a pedestrian walkway, crosswalk, access drive or STREET.
- i) The drive-up speakers shall use automatic volume control system to adjust to ambient noise levels. The maximum level shall be set at 54 dBA at a distance of 32 feet from the speaker.
- j) In the Village and Kelley's Corner Districts, drive-up windows are subject to the following additional standards and requirements:

a. The drive-up windows shall be located in the rear of the BUILDING unless the special permit granting authority finds that pedestrian safety would not be impacted, and that no other alternative locations are possible. In the case where the special permit granting authority finds that these conditions are met, a drive-up window facility may be allowed on the side of the BUILDING as defined in Section 5.2.5. If located on the side of a BUILDING, no portion of a drive-up window facility shall be counted to meet the BUILDING design criteria set forth in sections 5.5B.1.2(g)(i) and 5.6.3.4.

, or take any other action relative thereto.

### **Summary**

This article responds to the needs and desires identified in a public outreach effort conducted in the fall and winter of 2020. The outreach effort, conducted by the Town Planning Division and consultants, Community Circle, evaluated if a potential zoning amendment to allow drive-up windows for pharmacies and restaurants would be advantageous for the town to pursue at 2021 Annual Town Meeting. The outreach workshops and surveys indicated strong support to pursue expansion of drive-up window facilities. Currently, drive-up windows are only allowed for banks. The proposed bylaw allows for drive-up windows for banks in Village Districts where they are currently prohibited, and allows for drive-up windows for pharmacies and restaurants in all districts where these uses are allowed. The amendment includes provisions for design and siting of the drive-up window facilities and requires a special permit for drive-up windows in all Zoning Districts.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Dean Charter: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u> Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u> Recommended</b>	<b><u>Planning Board</u> Recommended</b>
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To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to release, on such terms and conditions as it may determine, that certain restriction held by the Select Board dated December 26, 1986 and recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds at Book 18573, Page 60 (the “Restriction”), which Restriction encumbers that certain property known and numbered as 127 Strawberry Hill Road in Acton, Massachusetts, further identified as Parcel 12 on Town Atlas Map F5, or to take any other action relative thereto.

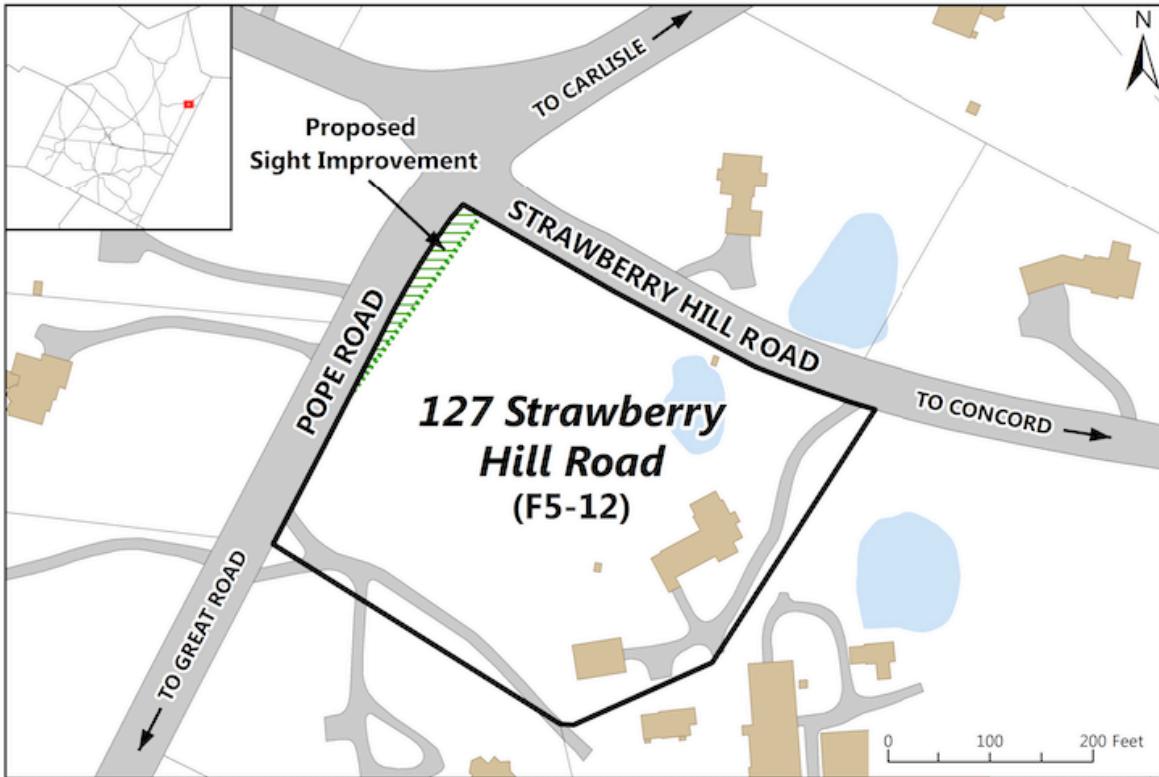
### **Summary**

The Article to release the restriction at 127 Strawberry Hill Road is a housekeeping process to clear this parcel's title of a likely-unenforceable 200-foot setback building setback restriction. In return, the Town will receive a permanent easement along the Pope Road side of this parcel to improve the sight lines at that hazardous intersection.

In 1986, the Board of Selectmen placed a building setback restriction on this and several other parcels when this area of land was subdivided. In 1989, the Board of Selectmen exempted this property from the same restriction. As the property went in and out of foreclosure in the early 1990s, this exemption was not properly recorded on the deed, and thus persists to this day. Town and Title Counsels have researched and predict a high degree of difficulty to enforce such a restriction without a discovery of facts. To determine the answer would require litigation at large expense, and it is highly-probable that the Town would lose the case.

The property owners wish to divide their land into two lots, with each lot conforming to applicable zoning requirements. Their intent is to sell the newly-created lot as a new building lot for one single-family home. No special permit or subdivision approval would be required. Removing this unenforceable restriction would allow a new home to be situated apart from the new easement along Pope Road, but not so close to the existing historic home as to detract from its aesthetics.

The Town and the property owners wish to avoid court action and have cooperatively agreed that, in return for a properly recorded release from the 1986 restriction (affirming the 1989 release), the Town will receive an approximately 40-foot sight line easement to improve the intersection. It is not a unique situation that the Town dispense with unnecessary encumbrances previously placed upon private property. In this situation, it is unique that the Town will gain the ability to implement long-overdue public safety improvements at the Pope Road/Strawberry Hill Road intersection.



Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Joan Gardner: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Recommended Finance Committee Recommended

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To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town by adding Chapter AC, “Regulating Fossil Fuel Infrastructure in Buildings,” to read as follows, or take any other action relative thereto.

## **Chapter AC. REGULATING FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE IN BUILDINGS**

### **AC1. Purpose**

This Bylaw is adopted by the Town of Acton to protect health and safety, and the natural environment, and to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate change, thereby threatening the Town and its inhabitants.

### **AC2. Definitions**

**2.1** “Effective Date” shall mean December 1, 2022, or six months following the date by which the Town is authorized by the Massachusetts General Court to regulate fossil fuel infrastructure, whichever is later.

**2.2** “New Building” shall mean a new building as defined in the Acton Zoning Bylaw, Chapter M of the General Bylaws of the Town of Acton, associated with a building permit application filed on or after the Effective Date.

**2.3** “On-Site Fossil Fuel Infrastructure” shall mean piping, for fuel gas, fuel oil, or other fuel hydrocarbons, that is in a building, in connection with a building, or otherwise within the property lines of premises, extending from a supply tank or from the point of delivery behind a gas meter or the customer-side gas meter.

**2.4** “Major Renovation” shall mean a renovation project associated with a valid building permit application filed on or after the Effective Date of this chapter that:

1. for existing structures regulated by the current edition of the International Residential Code as amended by 780 CMR 51: Massachusetts Residential Code, includes the reconfiguration of space and/or building systems, in which the Work Area, not including any added space, is more than 75% of the Gross Floor Area of the principal dwelling, as defined in Section 1.3.7 of the Acton Zoning Bylaw, prior to the project; and
2. for existing structures regulated by the current edition of the International Building Code as amended by 780 CMR 34: Massachusetts Commercial Code, includes the reconfiguration of space and/or building systems, in which the Work Area, not including any added space, is more than 50% of the building floor area prior to the project, as defined by the Massachusetts Building Code.

**2.5** “Work Area” shall mean the portions of a building affected by renovations for the reconfiguration of space and/or building systems, as indicated in the drawings associated with a building permit application. Areas consisting of only repairs, refinishing, and/or incidental work are excluded from the Work Area.

### **AC3. Applicability**

**3.1** This chapter shall apply to all building permit applications for New Buildings and Major Renovations proposed to be located in whole or in part within the Town, except that this Chapter shall not apply to:

- A. Utility service piping connecting the grid to a meter, or to a gas meter itself;
- B. Piping required to:
  - i. fuel backup electrical generators, outdoor cooking appliances, or appliances for outdoor heating; or
  - ii. produce potable or domestic hot water from centralized hot water systems in buildings with a floor area of at least 10,000 square feet, provided that the Engineer of Record certifies that no commercially available electric hot water heater exists that could meet the required hot water demand for less than 150% of installation or operational costs, compared to a conventional fossil-fuel hot water system;
- C. The extension or modification of heating systems via HVAC system modification, or modification of radiator, steam, or hot water piping, provided new fossil fuel piping is not installed; or
- D. Repairs of any existing portions of a fuel piping system deemed unsafe or dangerous by the Plumbing and Gas Fitting Inspector.

### **AC4. Enforcement**

**4.1** As of the Effective Date, no building permit shall be issued by the Town for the construction of New Buildings or Major Renovations that include the installation of new On-Site Fossil Fuel Infrastructure that is subject to this Chapter, except as provided for in Section AC3 “Applicability” and Section AC5 “Waivers.”

**4.2** The Town Manager, or their designee, shall publish and present an annual report to the Select Board quantifying the number and locations of residential building permit applications for new and major renovation projects exceeding 75% of the original gross floor area, and the number and locations of commercial building permit applications for new and major renovation projects exceeding 50% of the building floor area prior to the project; the number of new and major renovation projects requesting a waiver from this Chapter, the disposition of those waivers, the reasons for granting or denying those waivers, and the square footage of each project for which a waiver is granted.

**4.3** The Select Board may adopt reasonable regulations to implement this Chapter.

### **AC5. Waivers**

**5.1** The Building Commissioner may grant a waiver subject to the requirements of this Chapter in the event that compliance with the provisions of this Chapter makes a project financially infeasible or impractical to implement. Compliance with this Chapter may be considered infeasible if, without limitation:

- A. as a result of factors beyond the control of the applicant, the additional cost of the project over the long term, including any available subsidies, would make the project economically unviable; or
- B. technological or other factors would make the project unsuitable for its intended purpose.

**5.2** Waivers from compliance with this Chapter may be subject to reasonable conditions. Where possible, waivers shall be issued for specific portions of a project that are financially infeasible or impractical to implement under the requirements of this Chapter, rather than entire projects.

**5.3** Waiver requests shall be supported by a detailed cost comparison, including available rebates and credits. A waiver request may be made at any time and may be based upon submission of conceptual plans.

**5.4** In considering a request for a waiver, the Building Commissioner may consider as a factor the requesting party's status as a non-profit or government-sponsored affordable housing entity.

**5.5** The Select Board shall, prior to the Effective Date, issue and may thereafter amend, guidance regarding the granting of waivers and describing reasonable conditions that may be placed on a waiver.

## **AC6. Appeals**

An applicant may appeal a decision of the Building Commissioner concerning the grant or denial of a waiver pursuant to Section 5 to the Select Board, or its designee, within 30 days of the decision.

### **Summary**

Approval of this article, plus authorization by the Massachusetts Legislature, would require builders of all new construction and major rehabilitation of existing buildings not to pipe in any fossil fuels (primarily gas, oil, and propane), or to obtain a waiver. Approval of this article would support the transition to non-fossil-fueled systems for heating, cooling, hot water, and appliances.

According to the Town of Acton 2019 greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, roughly 41% of all GHG emissions come from fossil fuels used in buildings in Acton. The shift to electrically powered buildings, as outlined in the GHG inventory, would help reduce these emissions, and would help fight climate change. This article aligns with the Town's Environmental Sustainability Policy, and with the Climate Emergency Declaration, which received near-unanimous approval at the Special Town Meeting on September 8, 2020.

The article does not affect existing buildings. No existing gas or oil infrastructure would be required to be removed unless a home or structure is part of a major renovation project that meets the definition of "significant rehabilitation" (see below). Similarly, there are no restrictions on gas or oil furnace/boiler upgrades, as long as they are not part of major rehabs.

The bylaw would apply only to infrastructure (piping) on the "customer side" of the gas meter. It expressly exempts piping for emergency generators, for central hot water in large buildings, and in some other circumstances.

The Acton Building Commissioner would review any requests for waivers, and would grant them whenever the use of fossil fuels would be necessary to avoid creating technical or financial infeasibility for the building project. Appeals of any Building Commissioner decision could be made to the Select Board, which would be tasked (prior to bylaw enactment) with generating guidelines for the waiver and appeals processes.

“Significant rehabilitation” is defined as follows: (1) for one- and two-family homes, the construction work area must comprise more than 75% of the building’s original floor area; (2) for rehabs of commercial and multi-family (3 or more units) buildings, the construction work area must comprise more than 50% of the original building floor area to trigger application of the bylaw.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b>
	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>

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To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the Massachusetts General Court to enact legislation in substantially the form below, and further to authorize the Select Board to approve amendments to said legislation before its enactment by the General Court that are within the scope of the general objectives of this motion; or take any other action relative thereto.

***AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF ACTON TO ADOPT AND ENFORCE LOCAL  
REGULATIONS RESTRICTING NEW FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE IN CERTAIN  
CONSTRUCTION***

*Be it enacted as follows*

**SECTION 1.** Notwithstanding chapter 40A, section 13 of chapter 142, and chapter 164 of the General Laws, the State Building Code, the Fuel and Gas Code, or any other general or special law or regulation to the contrary, the Town of Acton is hereby authorized to adopt and further amend general or zoning bylaws that restrict new construction or major renovation projects that do not qualify as fossil-fuel-free.

**SECTION 2.** Notwithstanding section 7 of chapter 40A of the General Laws, or any other general or special law or regulation to the contrary, the Building Commissioner of the Town of Acton, or any designee thereof, shall be authorized to enforce restrictions on new building construction and major renovation projects that do not qualify as fossil-fuel-free, including through the withholding or conditioning of building permits.

**SECTION 3.** As used in this Act, the term “fossil-fuel-free” shall mean new building construction or major renovation that results in an entire building or an entire condominium unit that does not utilize coal, oil, natural gas, other fuel hydrocarbons, or other fossil fuels in support of its operation after construction.

**SECTION 4.** This Act shall take effect upon its passage. Any bylaws previously approved by the Acton Town Meeting that accomplish the goals set forth in Sections 1 through 3 herein, including without limitation Chapter AC of the General Bylaws of the Town of Acton as approved by the 2021 Acton Town Meeting, are hereby ratified.

**SECTION 5.** If any provision or section of this act is invalidated, the remainder shall survive in full force and effect.

**Summary**

Approval of this article would permit the Town to make a special request to the Massachusetts Legislature to allow Acton to enact the bylaw summarized in Article 13. Arlington, Lexington, Concord, Cambridge, Newton and Brookline are taking a similar two-step approach: passing bylaws to regulate fossil fuel infrastructure, and passing special requests to the state legislature (via “home rule petition”) to allow municipalities to enact their respective bylaws.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b>
	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>

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To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 59, Section 38H of the Massachusetts General Laws, and Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 45 (as amended by Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy) to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and enter into any payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) agreements with the owners or operators of solar photovoltaic energy generation and/or storage facilities for solar and energy storage facilities to be located on non-Town-owned property within the Town of Acton, all on such terms and conditions as the Town Manager shall deem to be in the best interest of the Town and as approved by the Select Board, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Summary**

Approval of this article would authorize the Town Manager to execute PILOT agreements with developers, owners and operators of solar generation and energy storage facilities located on non-Town owned property within the Town of Acton. The Town enters into PILOT agreements with solar developers to set accurate and consistent tax revenue payments over the life of a project (typically 20 years). Prior Town Meeting votes have authorized the Town Manager and Select Board to enter into PILOTs for solar facilities on Town-owned property. This article would give the Town more flexibility to enter into PILOTs for projects not located on Town property.

Once a PILOT is approved, the Town receives a fixed amount of taxes for the solar facilities over the lifetime of the project, beginning when the project reaches commercial operation. PILOTs would cover the personal property associated with solar generation and energy storage facilities. If a developer does not also own the land on which solar and energy storage facilities are located, then taxes on the land would be subject to a separate tax bill and not included in a PILOT.

The Town Manager, Town Assessor and Town Counsel would review proposed PILOT agreements to ensure that payments and terms are appropriate, and consistent with Commonwealth Department of Revenue requirements. The Town Manager would present the draft PILOT to the Select Board for review and approval, to then be executed by the Town Manager.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u><b>Select Board</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>	<u><b>Finance Committee</b></u> <b>Recommended</b>
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To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to negotiate and enter a Solar Energy Benefit Distribution Agreement of up to twenty years with Syncarpha Solar, LLC, the developer of solar photovoltaic energy generating facilities to be developed on real property owned by the W.R. Grace & Co. at 50 Independence Road, upon such terms and conditions as the Town Manager and the Select Board shall deem to be in the best interest of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

**Summary**

Approval of this article would authorize the Select Board to execute a Solar Energy Benefit Distribution Agreement of up to twenty years with Syncarpha Solar, LLC a subsidiary of Syncarpha Capital (“Syncarpha”), the developer of a solar energy project with a co-located energy storage system to be built at 50 Independence Road (Assessor’s Map Parcel Number I4-5, south of the MBTA railroad tracks). W.R. Grace & Co. owns the real property on which the solar facilities will be located.

The purpose of the Solar Energy Benefit Distribution Agreement is to provide energy savings to qualifying low-income customers in Acton enrolled in the Town’s municipal aggregation program, Acton Power Choice. If the Town executes the Solar Energy Benefit Distribution Agreement, it would work with Syncarpha to qualify the facility as a Low Income Community Shared Solar Tariff Generation Unit under the Commonwealth’s solar program, known as SMART. If the facility qualifies as such, then Syncarpha would receive SMART tariff revenues and then distribute energy savings each month to Acton Power Choice. Acton Power Choice then would pass these savings on to qualifying low-income customers on their energy bills. These energy savings would result in bill credits for low-income customers of approximately \$35 per month. This article would also authorize the Town to amend the Acton Power Choice municipal aggregation plan, if necessary, to facilitate the distribution of energy savings to low-income customers.

The Solar Energy Benefit Distribution Agreement is not yet final, and is being reviewed and negotiated by the Town Manager and Town Counsel before presentation to the Select Board.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Deferred</b>
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**PETITION FOR TOWN MEETING ACTION**

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED RESIDENTS AND REGISTERED VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF ACTON  
DO HEREBY SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING PETITION FOR TOWN MEETING VOTE:

To vote on eliminating the amended additional \$21,000 from the town budget for funding the Stanton grant match for the dog park and also move to require the Select Board and the Dog Park Committee to conduct a complete review with comprehensive due diligence between no less than three locations for a possible dog park. To be presented to the residents of Acton for a formal vote on a proposed dog park location.

The residents of Acton have not been able to vote for or against the proposed dog park location at the intersection of route 27 and route 2 directly across from the off ramp from route 2. There are many reasons why this location is not suitable, and the Acton residents need to be aware of the issues before this location gains funding.

The Dog Park Committee is seeking funding from the Stanton Foundation to build a dog park. The foundation will pay up to \$250,000 of the construction costs for only the park itself. This funding will only pay for the actual dog fence and everything else inside of that fence. It will NOT pay for parking, landscaping, outbuildings, sidewalks or any other infrastructure enhancements to make this location safe, attractive and usable. This additional expense will be borne by the town and would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

All the neighbors and abutters to the proposed dog park location are not in favor of this site. The Acton Housing Authority has formally voted against the dog park for two reasons, it will be located on the land adjacent to their building site where their septic system will be placed, and they do not want the overflow parking from the dog park for liability reasons. The Select Board and the Dog Park Committee have ignored these facts and are pushing forward regardless.

Isaac Davis Way residents, who own the driveway located between the Acton Housing Authority site and the proposed dog park site, have not granted the town permission to use their driveway as the entrance to the dog park parking lot. The Isaac Davis Way residents hold the title and all ownership rights to the driveway. This was negotiated with the prior owner, is recorded in the Deed of Records with the State of Massachusetts and runs with the land for eternity. The liability if someone gets hurt while on the driveway is too high and the residents are not willing to take that risk.

The proposed dog park site is not safe. The town had a traffic and safety study done with the previous owner and the location was graded an “F”. The morning, afternoon and weekend traffic is too heavy to handle the increase from the Housing Authority site and a dog park. The site, being adjacent to the off ramp from route 2, will welcome unwanted visitors and is too exposed. Dogs will get off leash and run into traffic, per council from the local dog wardens from neighboring towns.

Acton has 1600 acres of conservation land with paths, open fields and parking for residents to walk their dogs on or off leash.

Town residents need to be involved in the location of the dog park. The Select Board and the Dog Park Committee did a cursory analysis of several locations, mostly by drive-by and influential decisions from town officials. At NO time was there a complete comparison or any due diligence done by either party to

determine the best possible location. We are requesting a proper selection process where the town residents get to vote on the location.

The town of Acton spent \$1,800,000 buying the two Main street locations. The Housing Authority is paying close to \$1,000,000 for their site, the dog park is looking for the town to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for their site after the Stanton foundation funds the dog park. The town manager has an opportunity to generate income on the proposed dog park site by moving Kennedy Landscape Center (current tenant) to the dog park site where they will pay rent and the town can start to recoup additional funds to offset the Main street purchase.

The owner of Acton Critter Sitters, Clare Siska, sits on the Dog Park Committee, was the former Chairperson and founder of the committee, and has 12 employees, each walking multiple dogs at surrounding dog parks and on town conservation land. This constitutes a major conflict of interest. Officials from surrounding towns who have dog parks, say the majority of users are people with unruly and poorly trained dogs as well as professional dog walkers who need a controlled location to keep track of their clients' pets. The Town of Acton should not be responsible for providing and paying for a secure location for professional dog walking companies to use while they are getting paid for their service.

We the undersigned residents and voters in Acton, request that the Finance Committee remove the dog park funding from the town budget. We would also request that the location of the Acton Dog Park be moved to a safer location, better suited for the proper recreational intent, determined through a proper analysis and due diligence format.

Direct Inquiries to: Matthew Post, [mrp.pa2010@gmail.com](mailto:mrp.pa2010@gmail.com) / (978) 835-1887  
Select Board Member: Joan Gardner: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> <b>Not Recommended</b>	<u>Finance Committee</u> <b>Not Recommended</b>
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## Article 18 #

## **Amend Town Charter – Electing Planning Board Members**

(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 2-1 “Elected Officials” of the Acton Charter by adding the following line to the table in that section:

	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	LENGTH OF TERM (YEARS)
Planning Board	5	5

And further to amend Section 4-2 "Appointment Powers, Selectmen" of the Charter of the Town of Acton, by deleting the Planning Board from this Section.

## Summary

This article, if approved, would change the Planning Board from an appointed board to an elected board. The Acton Planning Board, per Massachusetts General Laws is required to "make careful studies of the resources, possibilities and needs of the town." The Acton Planning Board by its own declaration does not do any planning. Even though the data used for Acton 2020 Master Plan is over ten years old, the Acton Planning Board has not even initiated an updated town-wide Master Plan. Despite the fact that a new Master Planning process has not been started, members of the Acton Planning Board have been repeatedly reappointed to Acton Planning Board. Despite not doing any planning, and/or having little if any real planning experience of any kind or, the ability to read developer plans, Acton Planning Board members have been repeatedly reappointed to the Acton Planning Board. We believe it is time for the voters to decide who sits on the Planning Board and decide if, when, and how "careful studies" will be conducted, and whether or not developer applications will be approved. We believe it is time for the Acton Planning Board members to answer to the voters directly.

In order to become effective, this question will also appear on, and must be approved by, the ballot at the 2022 Annual Town Election.

Direct Inquiries to: Terra Friedrichs, terraf "at" compuserve dot com / (978) 808-7173  
Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> Not Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Not Recommended
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Per Massachusetts General Law, we formally request a warrant article to be placed on the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant for Acton Town Meeting members to whether to ask the Board of Selectmen/Selecboard to prepare a warrant article for a future Town Meeting to allow Town Meeting members to whether or not to make the Acton Planning Board elected by the voters, rather than appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Reasoning:

The Acton Planning Board per Mass General Law is required to "make careful studies of the resources, possibilities and needs of the town..." The Acton Planning Board by its own declaration, doesn't do any planning. Even though the data used for Acton 2020 Master Plan is over 10 years old, the Acton Planning Board has not even initiated an updated town wide Master Plan. Despite the fact that a new Master Planning process has not been started, members of the Acton Planning Board have been repeatedly reappointed to Acton Planning Board. Despite the lack of doing any planning, and/or having little if any real planning experience of any kind or, the ability to read developer plans, Acton Planning Board members have been repeatedly reappointed to the Acton Planning Board. We believe it's time for the voters to decide who sits on the Planning Board and decides if and when and how "careful studies" will be conducted, and whether or not developer applications will be approved. We believe it's time for the Acton Planning Board members to answer to the voters directly.

This article, is non-binding. This article, if passed, would not change law. This article, if passed, would NOT commit the town to anything. While we hope that the BoS will respect Town Meeting's vote on this matter, and prepare an article for Town Meeting to consider. If passed, the BoS can legally ignore the vote of this current article. The intent of this article is to inform the BoS whether this Town Meeting wants to consider a binding article on the matter of an elected Planning Board.

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Select Board Member: Jim Snyder-Grant: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> <b>Not Recommended</b>	<u>Finance Committee</u> <b>Not Recommended</b>
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To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town by replacing the phrase "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board," the term "Selectmen" to "Member," and/or other context-appropriate terminology as appearing throughout the Bylaws, consistent with the Town Charter change voted at the September 2020 Special Town Meeting and ratified at the 2021 Annual Town Election, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town amend the General Bylaws as set forth in the Article.

**Summary**

This article proposes to amend the General Bylaws of the Town to be consistent with the recent change to the Town Charter, renaming the "Board of Selectmen" to the "Select Board," and renaming of Board members from "Selectmen" to "Members." These amendments would have no impact on the roles or authorities of the Board or its members. Please note this Article does not apply to the Zoning Bylaw, which will be addressed independently at a future Town Meeting.

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**

**Recommended**

**Finance Committee**

**Recommended**

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**Article 21 \* Amend General Bylaws – Department Revolving Funds**  
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws, Chapter Y – Department Revolving Funds, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, Revolving Funds, as amended by appending the following row to the table in Section 5, “Authorized Revolving Funds,” or take any other action relative thereto.

Public Shade Trees	Public Works Department	Receipts from permit fees, penalties or fines, gifts or contributions, grants or awards	Costs of new or replacement plantings and related maintenance	FY 2022, et seq.
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**Motion**

Move that the Town adopt the General Bylaws amendment as set forth in the Article.

**Summary**

This Article would authorize a new revolving fund for operation of the public shade tree program. For reference, the column titles of the table to be appended are:

<u>A</u> Revolving Fund	<u>B</u> Entity Authorized to Spend	<u>C</u> Receipts Credited to Fund	<u>D</u> Expenses Payable from Fund	<u>E</u> Fiscal Years
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Annual spending limits for all revolving funds will be voted in the Revolving Fund Budgets article.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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**Recommendations:**    Select Board Recommended    Finance Committee Recommended

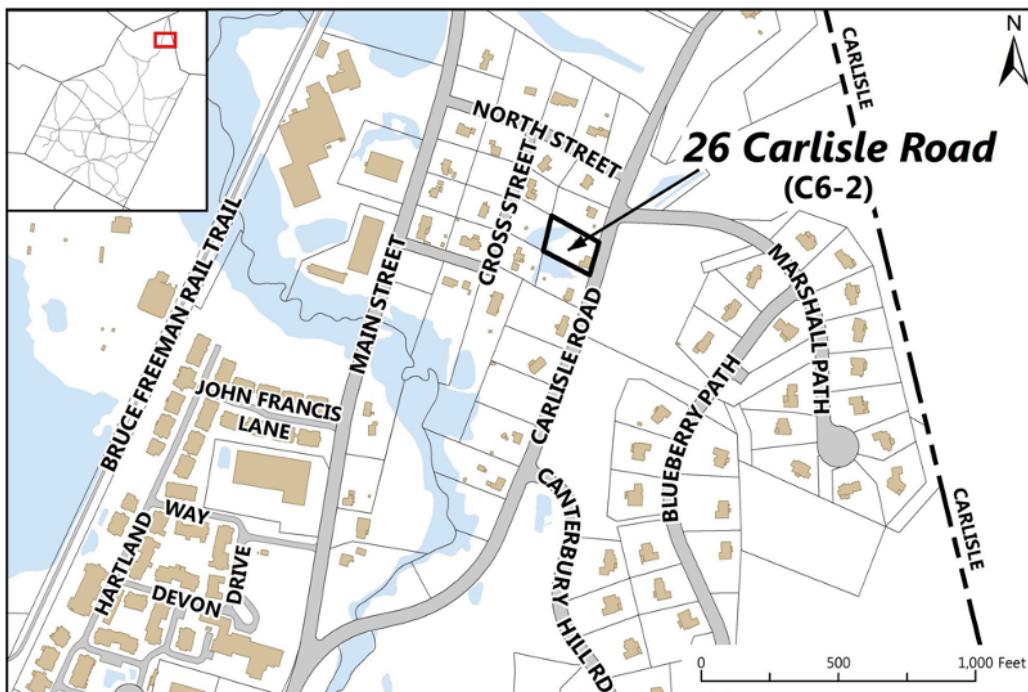
To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to transfer the real property shown as Parcel 2 on the Town of Acton Atlas Map C6 and in the deed recorded at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in Book 70151, Page 123, which land is currently held for general municipal purposes, from the current custodian to the Select Board for the purpose of conveyance, and to authorize the Select Board to convey such land for affordable housing purposes on such terms and conditions and for such consideration, which may be non-monetary consideration, as the Select Board may determine, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town authorize the transfer of the real property shown as Parcel 2 on Town of Acton Atlas Map C6 from its current custodian to the Select Board for the purpose of conveyance, and authorize the conveyance of that property as set forth in the Article.

**Summary**

The property at 26 Carlisle Road is a three bedroom single family house, approximately 1,156 square feet of living area on an approximately 1/3 acre lot. The property that was taken for non-payment of taxes in 2017. The house was vacant for many years before the Town took possession and is considered a complete tear-down. In January the Select Board directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals to dispose of the property for affordable housing purposes. There was one respondent to the RFP, Habitat for Humanity. At its meeting on May 3, the Select Board reviewed the proposal from Habitat for Humanity to rebuild the property as a three bedroom, two bathroom single family home that will be included on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The Board voted to declare the property at 26 Carlisle Road as surplus property and to accept the proposal from Habitat for Humanity contingent on a Town Meeting vote.



Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
 Select Board Member: Dean Charter: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:**

**Select Board**  
**Recommended**

**Finance Committee**  
**Recommended**

**Article 23 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Budget Transfer**

To see if the Town will appropriate from available funds a sum of money to defray necessary expenses above the amount appropriated at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town take no action.

**Summary**

This article is routinely placed on the Warrant to allow Town Meeting to transfer funds and supplement monies, if necessary, to cover expenses in the current fiscal year.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Recommended
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**Article 24 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Authorize Collective Bargaining Agreement**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the cost items contained in Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town and its Highway, Municipal Properties and Cemetery personnel union (AFSCME) as filed with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town authorize the first year cost items contained in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town and the Highway Department, Municipal Properties Department and Cemetery Department (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1703).

**Summary**

This article requests authorization to fund the collective bargaining agreement cost items under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 150E, Section 7. When a tentative agreement is reached with a union, the Town will bring a request for the financial elements of the agreement to the first available Town Meeting for approval. If the funding is approved, the Town is obligated to fund the remaining years of the contract. If the funding request is rejected by Town Meeting, the parties must return to the bargaining table for further negotiations.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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**Article 25 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Commuter Lot & Station Maintenance**

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds a sum of money to be expended by the Town Manager for the service fees, operation, maintenance or improvement of facilities and infrastructure at the South Acton Commuter Lot, including all costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town raise from department receipts and appropriate \$149,762 for the purposes set forth in the Article.

**Summary**

This Article funds elevator maintenance, utilities, debt service and banking service fees for the operation of the commuter parking lot. Revenue in this fund is composed of fees from parking meters, resident and non-resident parking stickers and bicycle locker rentals.

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>		<b><u>+/–</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>
	<b>2020</b>	Fund Balance	\$ 365,342
		+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 283,689
		– Budgeted Expenses:	
		Lot Maintenance	\$ 60,415
	<b>2021</b>	Transfer to Transportation	\$ 160,000
		Debt Service 19 Maple St	\$ 11,000
		Service Fees	\$ 58,792
		= Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 358,824
	<b>2022</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 113,476
		– Budgeted Expenses:	
		Lot Maintenance	\$ 60,000
		Debt Service 19 Maple St	\$ 89,762
		= Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 322,538

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b>
	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

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To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of septage disposal, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 F $\frac{1}{2}$ , Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town raise from department receipts and appropriate \$157,382 to operate the septage waste disposal program.

**Summary**

This Article requests that the receipts from septage haulers, licensing of septage haulers, licensing of septic system inspectors, licensing of septic installers, and disposal works construction permit fees be used for the purpose of allowing septage collected within Acton to be taken to a water pollution abatement facility and to maintain the Town's septage waste disposal program. These fees will be deposited in a separate account and may be expended to pay part or all of the anticipated costs of septage waste disposal. If income in any year is in excess of expenses, the excess shall be deposited in a separate fund and used for capital expenditures of the enterprise fund or to reduce user fees. Fund status is noted below (for budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>		<b><u>+/–</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>
<b>2020</b>	Certified Fund Balance		<b>\$ 90,051</b>
<b>2021</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue + Use of Retained Earnings – Budgeted Expense = Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 136,000 \$ 23,783 \$ 159,783 \$ 90,051	
<b>2022</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue – Budgeted Expense = Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 157,382 \$ 157,382 \$ 90,051	

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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**Recommendations:** **Select Board** **Finance Committee**  
**Recommended** **Recommended**

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To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, and transfer a sum of money for the purpose of solid waste disposal and recycling in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 F½, Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

Motion

Move that the Town raise \$585,000 from department receipts, transfer \$147,613 from retained earnings and appropriate \$732,613 for the purpose of solid waste disposal and recycling, and further that the Town authorize the Town Manager to lease on such terms and conditions as he may determine vehicles and equipment for a period not to exceed five years, and to sell, trade or otherwise dispose of vehicles and equipment being replaced and to expend any proceeds so received.

Summary

This Article requests funding for the Town's solid waste disposal and recycling operations. The citizens of Acton who use the Transfer Station fund 100% of the costs of the operations from fees. The fees are deposited in a separate account and expended to pay the expenses of solid waste disposal. If income in any year is in excess of expenses, the excess shall be deposited in a separate fund and used for future expenditures of the enterprise fund or to reduce user fees. Fund status is noted below (for budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>+/–</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
<b>2020</b>		\$ 475,846
	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 542,000
	+ Use of Retained Earnings	\$ 239,426
<b>2021</b>	– Budgeted Operations Expense	\$ 591,426
	– Budgeted Capital Expense	\$ 190,000
	= Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 475,846
<b>2022</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 585,000
	– Budgeted Operations Expense	\$ 552,613
	– Budgeted Capital Expense	\$ 180,000
	= Estimated Fund Balance	\$ 328,233

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Finance Committee  
Recommended Recommended

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of operating and maintaining a sewer collection and treatment facility, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 F $\frac{1}{2}$ , Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town raise \$1,870,421 from department receipts, transfer \$268,542 from retained earnings and appropriate \$2,138,963 for the purpose of operating the sewer system.

**Summary**

This article requests funding for operation of the municipal sewer system. Sewer charges, private sewer treatment plant fees, connection fees, sewer inspector fees, betterments, State and Federal aid for sewers, and any other income derived from the operation of the municipal sewer system will be deposited in a separate account and may be expended to pay part or all of the anticipated costs of sewerage disposal for the system. Fund status is noted below (for budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>		<b><u>+/−</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>
<b>2020</b>	Certified Fund Balance		\$ 1,039,374
	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 1,780,000	
	+ Use of Retained Earnings	\$ 387,251	
<b>2021</b>	− Budgeted Operations Expense	\$ 1,972,251	
	− Budgeted Capital & Studies	\$ 195,000	
	= Estimated Fund Balance		\$ 1,039,374
<b>2022</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 1,870,421	
	− Budgeted Operations Expense	\$ 1,863,963	
	− Budgeted Capital & Studies	\$ 275,000	
	= <b>Estimated Fund Balance</b>		<b>\$ 770,832</b>

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b>
	<b>Deferred</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

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**Article 29 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Ambulance Enterprise Budget**

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, and transfer a sum of money for the purpose of health care, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 F½, Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town raise \$1,000,000 from department receipts, raise \$150,000 from general revenues, transfer \$326,770 from retained earnings and appropriate \$1,476,770 for the purpose of operating the ambulance service.

**Summary**

This article requests an appropriation to operate the Town's ambulance service. The enterprise fund includes the salaries and benefits for nine Firefighter/EMT Paramedics allocated to this fund. Charges for ambulance service and any other income derived from the operation of the ambulance service will be deposited in this fund and used for expenditures of the enterprise fund or to reduce user fees. Fund status is noted below (for budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>		<b><u>+/—</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>
<b>2020</b>	Certified Fund Balance		<b>\$ 610,365</b>
	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 1,100,000	
	+ Use of Retained Earnings	\$ 128,723	
<b>2021</b>	+ General Fund Subsidy	\$ 150,000	
	— Budgeted Expense	\$ 1,378,723	
	= Estimated Fund Balance		<b>\$ 610,365</b>
	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 1,000,000	
	+ General Fund Subsidy	\$ 150,000	
<b>2022</b>	— Budgeted Operations Expense	\$ 1,281,570	
	— Budgeted Capital	\$ 195,200	
	= Estimated Fund Balance		<b>\$ 283,595</b>

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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**Recommendations:** Select Board Recommended Finance Committee Recommended

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To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, transfer or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of transportation services, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 F $\frac{1}{2}$ , Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town raise \$220,000 from department receipts, raise \$225,000 from general revenues, and appropriate \$445,000 for the purpose of operating the transportation service.

**Summary**

The transportation program has been funded through Annual Town Meeting appropriations since 2009. This article will continue the Transportation Enterprise Fund from which all transportation programs will operate. Acton's current transportation program includes three on-demand services (commonly referred to as MinuteVan) and two fixed-route services (Acton Rail Shuttle and Cross-Acton Transit). All of these programs run Monday through Friday and are dedicated to meet the needs of commuters, local travelers, seniors, and people with disabilities. Matching funds for portions of the programs are received from the Lowell Regional Transit Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>		<b><u>+/–</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>
<b>2020</b>	Certified Fund Balance		\$ 16,066
	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 187,630	
	+ General Fund Subsidy	\$ 260,000	
<b>2021</b>	+ Transfer from Commuter Lot	\$160,000	
	– Budgeted Expense	\$ 607,630	
	= Estimated Fund Balance		\$ 16,066
<b>2022</b>	+ Budgeted Revenue	\$ 220,000	
	+ General Fund Subsidy	\$ 225,000	
	– Budgeted Expense	\$ 445,000	
	= <b>Estimated Fund Balance</b>		<b>\$ 16,066</b>

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Recommended Finance Committee Recommended

## Article 31 \*

## Revolving Fund Budgets

To see if the Town will vote to limit the total amount that may be expended from the revolving funds for the Historic District Commission, Building Department, Health Department, Transportation Service, Fire Department and Public Works Department as noted in the FY22 Authorized Expense column in the table below, or take any other action relative thereto.

Fund Balance 6/30/2020	FY21 Budgeted Revenue	FY21 Budgeted Expense	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/2021	FY22 Estimated Revenue	FY22 Authorized Expense
<b>Historic District Commission</b>					
\$ 2,405	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 2,405	\$ 200	\$ 200
<b>Building Department</b>					
279,522	288,166	288,166	279,522	287,637	287,637
<b>Hazardous Materials Inspection</b>					
23,786	65,325	65,325	23,786	42,959	42,959
<b>Food Service Inspection</b>					
26,988	60,609	60,609	26,988	53,328	53,328
<b>Stormwater</b>					
141,613	83,902	83,902	141,613	84,548	84,548
<b>Sealer of Weights and Measures</b>					
83,180	25,326	25,326	83,180	25,900	25,900
<b>CrossTown Connect</b>					
90	180,000	180,000	90	180,000	180,000
<b>Fire Alarm Network</b>					
146,594	95,115	95,115	146,594	65,115	65,115
<b>Roadway Maintenance</b>					
68,417	47,000	47,000	68,417	47,000	47,000
<b>Public Shade Trees</b>					
	N/A	N/A	N/A	25,000	25,000
				<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 811,687</b>
					<b>\$ 811,687</b>

## Motion

Move that all revolving funds be authorized and continued in the amounts, for the purposes, and with the limits on the total amount that may be expended as set forth in the Article.

## Summary

This Article limits on an annual basis the amount that may be expended from each of the respective revolving funds. All monetary figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

**Recommendations:** Select Board Finance Committee  
Recommended Recommended

**Article 32 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Hear and Accept Reports**

To see if the Town will accept reports and hear and act upon the report of any committee chosen at any previous Town Meeting that has not already reported, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town accept the reports of the various Town Officers and Boards as set forth in the 2019 Town Report and that the Moderator call for any other reports.

**Summary**

This article provides for the acceptance of the Annual Town Report, any other reports Town Boards and Committees may need to offer, and to offer for acceptance any reports of committees chosen at previous Town Meetings.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> <b>Recommended</b>	<u>Finance Committee</u> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 33 \***  
(Two-thirds vote)

**Authorize Easements**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to grant, abandon or acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise and to grant, terminate or accept deeds of easement interests for streets, trails, drainage, sewer, utility or other public purpose, on such terms and conditions and in a final location or locations as the Select Board may determine, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Moves that the Town authorize the grant, termination or acquisition of easements as set forth in the article.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<u>Select Board</u> <b>Recommended</b>	<u>Finance Committee</u> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 34 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Highway Reimbursement Program (Chapter 90)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money for highway improvements under the authority of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, and any other applicable laws, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town authorize the Town Manager to accept Highway funds from all sources and that such funds are hereby appropriated for highway purposes.

**Summary**

Each year, the State provides communities with reimbursement for certain highway projects. The State Legislature annually establishes the level of highway improvement funds available to cities and towns under the so-called “Chapter 90” Program. This process is not completed until after Acton’s Annual Town Meeting; therefore, we are unable to specify a dollar amount at Town Meeting. State law requires that these State Highway Reimbursement Funds be appropriated by Town Meeting. The purpose of this article is to make that appropriation and allow the Town to fully utilize whatever level of appropriation the State may make available during the upcoming fiscal year. If Town Meeting were to not adopt this article, it is conceivable that monies allocated to Acton may be redistributed to State projects or other cities and towns.

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 35 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Insurance Proceeds**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the proceeds of any insurance policy reimbursements of costs incurred as a result of any covered loss, including without limitation any liability insurance, property insurance, casualty insurance, workers’ compensation insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, automobile insurance, police and fire injury and medical costs, and any other insurance of any name and nature whatsoever, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town Manager is authorized to accept insurance proceeds of any name and nature whatsoever from all sources and such funds are hereby appropriated.

**Summary**

According to Massachusetts General Laws, some reimbursements received from insurance carriers require appropriation. This article would authorize the Town Manager to expend such reimbursements.

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 36 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Gifts or Grants**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the proceeds of any gifts or grants accepted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A as amended, and any interest thereon, and that, consistent with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 4A, the Select Board or Town Manager are authorized to enter into an agreement or agreements on behalf of the Town, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board or the Town Manager may determine, for the stated purposes of the gifts or grants, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the proceeds of any gifts or grants from any source accepted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53A, and any interest thereon, are hereby appropriated for the stated purposes of the gifts or grants, and may be expended with the approval of the Select Board or otherwise as stated in Section 53A.

**Summary**

Section 53A authorizes Town officers and departments to accept “grants or gifts of funds from the federal government and from a charitable foundation, a private corporation, or an individual, or from the commonwealth, a county or municipality or an agency thereof” and to expend said funds for the purposes of such grant or gift with the approval of the Select Board or otherwise as specified in the statute. The Department of Revenue has previously taken the position that certain such funds may require appropriation in certain circumstances. This article provides that appropriation so that those funds may be expended for their stated purposes.

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 37 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Federal and State Reimbursement Aid**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate any Federal Government and State Government reimbursement for costs incurred as a result of any declared emergencies or other occurrence, and that, consistent with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 4A, the Select Board or Town Manager are authorized to enter into an agreement or agreements on behalf of the Town, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board or the Town Manager may determine, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town Manager is authorized to accept Federal and State reimbursement funds from all sources and that such funds are hereby appropriated for the purposes outlined by such reimbursement.

**Summary**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) each provide planning and mitigation monies to cities and towns, and each reimburses for certain costs during declared emergencies. In addition, monies may be distributed for Homeland Defense, other Federal programs and other State programs. This article would authorize the Town to expend all such monies.

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 38 \***  
(Majority vote)

**Performance Bonds**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the proceeds of any performance bonds for the purposes stated in said bonds available as a result of any default, non-performance or other covered conditions, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move that the Town appropriate the proceeds of any performance bonds, for the purposes stated in said bonds, available as a result of any default, non-performance or other covered conditions.

**Summary**

The Department of Revenue has issued an opinion that the Town cannot expend performance bonds without appropriation. This article would authorize the Town Manager to expend funds secured from performance bonds provided by or on behalf of contractors and others to secure the performance of obligations by such persons to the Town.

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Select Board Member: Jon Benson: [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) / (978) 929-6611

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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b><u>Select Board</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>	<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b> <b>Recommended</b>
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**Article 39 \***  
(Two-thirds vote)

**Sale of Foreclosed Properties**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to dispose of foreclosed properties acquired by the Town for nonpayment of taxes in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion**

Move in the words of the Article.

**Summary**

This article grants authority to the Select Board to sell and convey properties that the Town has obtained via tax foreclosure.

Direct Inquiries to: John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager: manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611  
Select Board Member: Jon Benson: sb@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611

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**Recommendations:**      **Select Board**      **Finance Committee**  
                                  **Recommended**      **Recommended**

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And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting attested copies thereof fourteen days at least before the time of said meeting, in not less than six public places in Town, to be designated by the Select Board.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at or before the time of said meeting.

Given under our hands at Acton this seventh day of June, 2021.

Jon Benson, Chair  
Dean A. Charter, Vice-Chair  
David D. Martin, Clerk  
Joan Gardner  
Jim Snyder-Grant

**Select Board**

A true copy, Attest:



Constable of Acton

# *Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Municipal Finance*

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**Abatement:** A complete or partial cancellation of a tax bill imposed by a governmental unit; applicable to tax levies and special assessments.

**Appropriation:** An authorization granted by a legislative body to make expenditures and to incur obligations for specific purposes. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and the time when it can be expended. Any amount that is appropriated may be encumbered.

A warrant article appropriation is carried forward from year to year until spent for the designated purpose or transferred by town meeting vote to another account.

**Assessed Valuation:** The value placed upon a particular property by the local Board of Assessors for the purpose of apportioning the town's tax levy among individual property owners equitably and in accordance with the legal requirement that property be assessed at "full and fair cash value", certified periodically by the Commonwealth's Commissioner of Revenue (no less frequently than once every three years).

**Available Funds:** Balances in the various fund types that represent non-recurring revenue sources. As a matter of sound practice, they are frequently appropriated to meet unforeseen expenses, for capital expenditures or other onetime costs. Examples of available funds include free cash, stabilization funds and overlay surplus.

**Audit:** Work done by accountants in examining financial reports, reviewing compliance with applicable laws and regulations, reviewing effectiveness in achieving program results. A basic audit examines only the financial reports and legal compliance. An outside Certified Public Accountant (CPA) audit is directed primarily toward the expression of an opinion as to the fairness of the financial statements and submission of a management letter. An auditor must be independent of the executive branch of government. A state auditor, private CPA or public accountant, or elected auditor meets this test.

**Balance Sheet:** A statement that discloses the assets, liabilities, reserves and equities of a fund or government unit at a specified date.

**Bond:** A means to raise money through the issuance of debt. A bond issuer/borrower promises in writing to repay a specified sum of money, alternately referred to as face value, par value or bond principal, to the buyer of the bond on a specified future date (maturity date), together with periodic interest at a specified rate.

**Bond Authorization:** The action of town meeting authorizing the executive branch to raise money through the sale of bonds in a specific amount and for a specific purpose. Once authorized, issuance is by the treasurer upon the signature of the Select Board.

**Bond Issue:** Generally, the sale of a certain number of bonds at one time by a governmental unit.

**Bond Rating (Municipal):** A credit rating assigned to a municipality to help investors assess the future ability, legal obligation, and willingness of the municipality (bond issuer) to make timely debt service payments. Stated otherwise, a rating helps prospective investors determine the level of risk associated with a given fixed-income investment. Rating agencies, such as Moody's and Standard and Poors, use rating systems, which designate a letter or a combination of letters and numerals where AAA is the highest rating and C1 is a very low rating.

**Budget:** A plan of financial operation embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period and the proposed means of financing them. A budget may be preliminary (the financial plan presented to the town meeting) or final (the plan approved by that body).

**Capital Budget:** A plan of proposed capital outlays and the means of financing them for the current fiscal period. It is usually a part of the current budget.

**Capital Exclusion:** A vote to exclude from the levy limit the cost of a capital project. This exclusion only affects the levy limit for the year in which the project was undertaken.

**Cemetery Land Fund:** A fund established to which revenues are earmarked for the acquisition of land development costs on designated cemetery land purchases.

**Cherry Sheet:** An annual statement received from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue detailing estimated receipts for the next fiscal year for the various state aid accounts and estimated state and county government charges payable by the Town in setting the tax rate. The actual receipts and charges may vary from the estimates.

**Classification:** The division of the real estate tax and personal property voted by the Select Board. The Select Board may choose one rate for residences, another rate for business, and another rate for open space.

**Collective Bargaining:** The process of negotiating workers' wages, hours, benefits, working conditions, etc., between an employer and some or all of its employees, who are represented by a recognized labor union, regarding wages, hours and working conditions.

**Community Preservation Act (CPA):** Enacted as MGL Ch. 44B in 2000, CPA permits municipalities accepting its provisions to establish a restricted fund from which monies can be appropriated only for a) the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space; b) the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources; and c) the acquisition, creation and preservation of land for recreational use; d) the creation, preservation and support of community housing; and e) the rehabilitation and restoration of open space, land for recreational use and community housing that is acquired or created using monies from the fund. The local program is funded by a local surcharge up to 3 percent on real property tax bills and matching dollars from the state generated from registry of deeds fees.

**Community Preservation Fund:** A special revenue fund established pursuant to MGL Ch. 44B to receive all monies collected to support a community preservation program, including but not limited to, tax surcharge receipts, proceeds from borrowings, funds received from the Commonwealth, and proceeds from the sale of certain real estate.

**Debt Exclusion:** A vote to exclude from the levy limit the costs of debt service for capital projects. This exclusion remains in effect for the life of the debt only.

**Debt Service:** The repayment cost, usually stated in annual terms and based on an amortization schedule, of the principal and interest on any particular bond issue.

**Encumbrance:** Obligations such as purchase orders, contracts, salary commitments which are chargeable to an appropriation and for which a part of the appropriation is reserved.

**Enterprise Fund:** A standalone fund with its own assets, liabilities, fund balance, revenues and expenses in which a municipal service is operated as a business unit. Costs of the service are primarily recovered from user charges, and may be supplemented by general revenues.

**Equalized Valuation:** The value of all property as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue biennially, to place all property in the state upon an equal footing, regardless of date of assessment.

**Excess and Deficiency (E&D):** Also called the "surplus revenue" account, this is the amount by which cash, accounts receivable, and other assets exceed a regional school district's liabilities and reserves as certified by the Director of Accounts. The calculation is based on a year-end balance sheet which is submitted to the Department of Revenue by the district's auditor, accountant, or comptroller as of June 30. The regional school committee must apply certified amounts exceeding five percent of the district's prior year operating and capital costs to reduce the assessment on member cities and towns.

**Excess Levy Capacity:** The difference between the levy limit and the amount of real and personal property taxes actually levied in a given year.

**Exemptions:** A discharge, established by statute, from the obligation to pay all or a portion of a property tax. The exemption is available to particular categories of property or persons upon the timely submission and approval of an application to the assessors. Properties exempt from taxation include hospitals, schools, houses of worship, and cultural institutions. Persons who may qualify for exemptions include disabled veterans, blind individuals, surviving spouses, and seniors.

**Expenditure:** The spending of money by the town and schools for the programs or projects within the approved budget.

**FTE:** A full-time equivalent employee based on a 40-hour work week. May be one or more employees, but the total weekly hours equal 40.

**Fiscal Year ("FY"):** A 12-month period, beginning July 1 and ending June 30, to which the annual budget applies and at the end of which a governmental unit determines its financial position and the results of its operations. The designation of the fiscal year is that of the calendar year in which it ends; for example, FY17 or FY 2017 is the fiscal year which begins July 1, 2016 and ends June 30, 2017.

**Free Cash:** Certified as of each July 1 by the State, this is the portion of Undesignated Fund Balance available for appropriation. It is not cash *per se*, rather it is approximately the total of cash and receivables less current liabilities and earmarked reserves, reduced also by reserves for uncollected taxes.

**Fund:** An accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts that is segregated for the purpose of carrying on identified activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with specific regulations, restrictions or limitations.

**General Fund:** The fund into which the general (non-earmarked) revenues of the town are deposited and from which money is appropriated to pay expenses.

**General Obligation Bonds:** Bonds issued by the Town that are backed by the full faith and credit of its taxing authority.

**Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA):** This organization provides leadership to the government finance profession through education, research and the promotion and recognition of best practices.

**Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB):** The ultimate authoritative accounting and financial reporting standard-setting body for state and local governments.

**Joint Labor Management Negotiation Process:** A negotiation process available to Police and Fire Unions, which utilizes Commonwealth of Massachusetts' mediators and arbitrators. If an arbitration decision is issued, it is binding upon the Executive Branch (The Select Board and Management Staff). Further, the Executive Branch must fully support such an arbitration decision before Town Meeting, even if they believe such a decision is not in the best interest of the Town.

**Level-Service Budget:** A budget that describes the funding required for maintaining current levels of service or activity, plus cost increases for contractual and mandated obligations. It brings previously-approved programs forward at existing levels of service.

**Levy Ceiling:** A levy ceiling is one of two types of levy (tax) restrictions imposed by MGL Ch. 59 §21C (Proposition 2½). It states that, in any year, the real and personal property taxes imposed may not exceed 2½ percent of the total full and fair cash value of all taxable property. Property taxes levied may exceed this limit only if the community passes a capital exclusion, a debt exclusion, or a special exclusion. (See Levy Limit)

**Levy Limit:** A levy limit is one of two types of levy (tax) restrictions imposed by MGL Ch. 59 §21C (Proposition 2½). It states that the real and personal property taxes imposed by a city or town may only grow each year by 2½ percent of the prior year's levy limit, plus new growth and any overrides or exclusions. The levy limit can exceed the levy ceiling only if the community passes a capital expenditure exclusion, debt exclusion, or special exclusion. (See Levy Ceiling)

**Local Aid:** Revenue allocated by the Commonwealth to cities, towns, and regional school districts. Estimates of local aid are transmitted to cities, towns, and districts annually by the "Cherry Sheets." Most Cherry Sheet aid programs are considered general fund revenues and may be spent for any purpose, subject to appropriation.

**M.G.L.:** Massachusetts General Laws.

**New Growth:** The additional tax revenue generated by new construction, renovations and other increases in the property tax base during a calendar year. It does not include value increases caused by normal market forces or by revaluations. New growth is calculated by multiplying the assessed value associated with new construction, renovations and other increases by the prior year tax rate. The additional tax revenue is then incorporated into the calculation of the next year's levy limit.

**Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB):** The set of benefits, other than pensions, that government employees earn while actively working, but do not receive until they retire. Typically included is health insurance coverage for retirees, their spouses and in some cases their beneficiaries.

**Operating Budget:** A plan of proposed expenditures for personnel, supplies, and other expenses for the coming fiscal year.

**Overlay:** (Overlay Reserve or Allowance for Abatements and Exemptions) An account established annually to fund anticipated property tax abatements, exemptions and uncollected taxes in that year. The overlay reserve need not be funded by the normal appropriation process, but rather is raised on the tax rate recapitulation sheet, and cannot exceed an amount deemed reasonable by the Commissioner of Revenue.

**Overlay Surplus:** Any balance in the overlay account of a given year in excess of the amount remaining to be collected or abated can be transferred into this account. Within 10 days of a written request by the chief executive officer of a city or town, the assessors must provide a certification of the excess amount of overlay available to transfer. Overlay surplus may be appropriated for any lawful purpose. At the end of each fiscal year, unused overlay surplus is “closed” to surplus revenue, i.e., it becomes a part of free cash.

**Override:** A vote to increase the amount of property tax revenue that may be raised over the levy limit.

**Personnel Services:** The cost of salaries, wages and related employment benefits.

**Purchased Services:** The cost of services that are provided by a vendor.

**Property Tax Bill:** The amount produced by multiplying the assessed valuation of property by the tax rate. The tax rate is expressed per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, for example:

House Value:	\$ 300,000	
Tax rate:	\$ 10	which means \$10 per thousand
Levy:	\$ 10	multiplied by \$300,000 and divided by \$1,000
Result:	\$ 3,000	

**Raise:** A phrase used to identify a funding source for an expenditure which refers to money generated by the tax levy or other local receipt.

**Reserve Fund:** A fund appropriated each year that may be used only by vote of the Finance Committee for “extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.”

**Revolving Fund:** Those funds that may be used for special uses. For example, Recreation fees may be paid into a revolving fund, and expenditures can be made without appropriation with the approval of the Town Manager. Revolving funds are established by state law or town bylaw. Some revolving funds must be annually reauthorized by Town Meeting.

**Stabilization Fund:** A fund designed to accumulate amounts for capital and other future spending purposes, although it may be appropriated for any lawful purpose (MGL Ch. 40 §5B). Stabilization funds may be established for different purposes, and interest generated by such funds is added to and becomes part of the stabilization fund. A two-thirds vote of town meeting is required to establish, amend the purpose of, or appropriate money into or out of the stabilization fund.

**Tax Levy:** Total amount of dollars assessed in property taxes imposed by the Town each fiscal year.

**Tax Rate:** The amount of property tax stated in terms of a unit of the municipal tax base; for example, \$14.80 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of taxable real and personal property.

**Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet (Recap Sheet):** A document submitted by a city or town to the Department of Revenue in order to set a property tax rate. The recap sheet shows all estimated revenues and actual appropriations that affect the property tax rate.

**Tax Title (or Tax Taking):** A collection procedure that secures a city or town's lien on real property and protects the municipality's right to payment of overdue property taxes. Otherwise, the lien expires if five years elapse from the January 1 assessment date and the property has been transferred to another owner. If amounts remain outstanding on the property after issuing a demand for overdue property taxes and after publishing a notice of tax taking, the collector may take the property for the city or town. After properly recording the instrument of taking, the collector transfers responsibility for collecting the overdue amounts to the treasurer. After six months, the treasurer may initiate foreclosure proceedings.

**Tax Title Foreclosure:** The procedure initiated by a city or town treasurer in Land Court or through land of low value to obtain legal title to real property already in tax title and on which property taxes are over due. The treasurer must wait at least six months from the date of a tax taking to initiate Land Court foreclosure proceedings (MGL Ch. 60 §65).

**Triennial Certification:** The Commissioner of Revenue, through the Bureau of Local Assessment, is required to review local assessed values every three years and to certify that they represent full and fair cash value (FFCV). Refer to MGL Ch. 40 §56 and Ch. 59 §2A(c).

**Trust Fund:** In general, a fund for money donated or transferred to a municipality with specific instructions on its use. As custodian of trust funds, the treasurer invests and expends such funds as stipulated by trust agreements, as directed by the commissioners of trust funds or by town meeting. Both principal and interest may be used if the trust is established as an expendable trust. For nonexpendable trust funds, only interest (not principal) may be expended as directed.

**Turn Back:** Unexpended funds of a prior fiscal year operating budget are returned to the Town, which ultimately revert to Free Cash.

**Underride:** A vote by a community to permanently decrease the tax levy limit. As such, it is the opposite of an override. (See Override)

**Unreserved Fund Balance or Surplus Revenue Account:** The amount by which cash, accounts receivable and other assets exceed liabilities and restricted reserves. It is akin to the stockholders equity account on a corporate balance sheet. It is not, however, available for appropriation in full because a portion of the assets listed as "accounts receivable" may be taxes receivable and uncollected. (See Free Cash)

**Warrant:** An authorization for an action. For example, a town meeting warrant establishes the matters that may be acted on by that town meeting. A treasury warrant authorizes the treasurer to pay specific bills. The assessors' warrant authorizes the tax collector to collect taxes in the amount and from the persons listed, respectively.

# *Moderator's Rules and Parliamentary Procedure*

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New England Town Meeting is each voter's opportunity to serve as their own legislator without an elected representative who may or may not represent their views. Town Meeting is designed to be a deliberative practice of democracy so that various perspectives can be heard on a subject. While many come to the meeting with their minds set, they may still be persuaded that their neighbor has a valid view and change their vote. Or not change their vote. This interaction among neighbors allows us to have a better understanding of why others vote a different way.

Town Meeting is the culmination of multitudes of volunteer hours of our fellow residents working on many issues and projects to make life better in Acton. These range from sidewalks to master plans, from ad hoc committees for a specific purpose to permanent boards and committees such as the economic development committee or the historical commission. They don't all bring articles to Town Meeting, but when a committee or board does bring forward an article for your discussion and vote, it represents hundreds or thousands of hours of work focused on making Acton a better place.

With the low percentage of voters typically present at Town Meeting some have expressed that the true sentiments of the voters cannot be known. However, the opportunity for any registered voter of the town to participate is available not only at Town Meeting but throughout the year in the committee process where items of interest and concern are discussed, vetted, and questioned. Any resident, whether they are a registered voter or not, may ask questions or add to the discussion in person or through email, and at least for now, over Zoom. Many committees and boards are looking for members. Anyone can apply through the Volunteer Coordinating Committee to be considered for a committee that best suits their interests. Through this ongoing process, the Town Meeting, and sometimes ballot votes, the consensus of the town can be known. A project that fails often returns with improvements in a later year.

Town Meeting is governed by rules taken from:

- Massachusetts General Laws (MGL)
- Town Bylaws
- Town Meeting Time (published by the Massachusetts Moderators Association)
- Local tradition and precedent including Moderator's judgement

## **Moderator's Rules Summary**

1. Those wishing to provide handouts or other informational material should consult with the Town Clerk and/or Moderator in advance of the meeting. Flyers and other informational material are allowed as long as they are issued by Town Boards or Committees and/or related directly to the business of Town Meeting. The name of the sponsoring organization must appear on the flyer/handout. No political flyers or signs will be allowed inside the building in which Town Meeting is held.
2. To put motions into play, the Moderator reads the article which then must be seconded. Anyone can call out "second." The motion is what is voted on and may be a bit different than what appears in the warrant, though it should be substantially similar. The motion will appear on the front screen visible to the audience as it is being read and at the end of any presentation on the article.
3. Once the motion is made and seconded, the mover speaks first. Movers of articles are generally allowed 5 minutes to make their presentation to the meeting. If additional time is needed for more complicated articles, they must discuss it with the Moderator prior to the meeting. The Moderator holds a meeting usually the week before Town Meeting in order to review presentations and to answer presenters' questions. If someone wishes to make a rebuttal or "con" presentation, they must attend the meeting

and follow the rules regarding presentations. Rebuttal presenters will be allowed 5 minutes. If there are multiple parties wishing to rebut, the total time of their presentations will be 5 minutes. All presenters should attend this meeting.

Next, the appropriate Town Boards (usually Selectmen and Finance Committee) state their recommendations on the motion. Following this, discussion is open to town meeting members.

4. All comments and questions must be relevant to the article being considered. All speakers must be polite and respectful. Comments may not be about other people. The purpose of Town Meeting is to discuss policies and ideas, not people. Rude or disrespectful comments will be ruled out of order.
5. Any registered voter may speak to an article. If you wish to make a comment or ask a question, approach a pro, con, or question microphone and wait to be recognized by the Moderator. We will attempt to accommodate those who cannot access a microphone by use of a portable mike. If you wish to be recognized and cannot go to a mike, raise your hand to request a portable mike. Once recognized, state your name and street before making your comment or asking your question. You will have 2 minutes to speak. All remarks and questions are addressed to the Moderator. If you have a question, the Moderator will determine who should respond.
6. The Moderator will accept a motion to cut off debate (“move the previous question”) once there has been sufficient debate to inform the Town Meeting members of the pros and cons of the motion. Moving the previous question requires a second, is non debatable, and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. In the absence of a motion to move the previous question following a robust discussion, the Moderator may determine, usually through a show of hands, that most of the voters have decided how to vote and the vote will be taken at that time.
7. Voting on motions will be by a combination of voice and holding up the large colored cards distributed at voter check in. The tellers may assist in the count if needed. Results will be declared by the Moderator as required by law.

The following are the more formal parliamentary procedures drawn from *Town Meeting Time*:

## More Formal Parliamentary Procedure

There are many types of motions that may come before a meeting. The table below is far from all inclusive but indicates the most commonly used motions.

Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Quantum of Vote Required	May Reconsider	May Interrupt
<b>Dissolve</b>	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
<b>Fix the Time to Adjourn</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
<b>Lay on the Table</b>	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	Yes	No
<b>Previous Question</b>	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	No	No
<b>Limit Debate</b>	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	Yes	No
<b>Postpone to a Time Certain</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
<b>Amend</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes *	Majority	Yes	No
<b>Postpone Indefinitely</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	No
<b>Point of Order</b>	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
<b>Main Motion</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Yes	No
<b>Reconsider</b> **	Yes	Yes	No	Two-thirds	No	No

\* In Acton, we generally do not accept amendments to amendments as it too confusing.

\*\* Controlled by Town Bylaw – 2/3 vote same night; 3/4 Vote, plus posting on ensuing nights.

Some of the motions listed above may not be totally understandable in table form only. The following elaboration may help.

The motion to **dissolve** ends the Town Meeting and is appropriate only when all business is completed.

**Fix the time to adjourn** is a motion often made by the Select Board and indicates when a given Town Meeting session will end and when the next session will begin.

**Lay on the table** is a motion used to end debate temporarily or permanently on a given motion. A motion laid on the table may remain there forever or may be retrieved by the appropriate “take from the table” vote.

**The previous question** cuts off debate immediately and causes a vote on the article or amendment under discussion.

**Limit debate** is a motion generally used to put a specific time limit on a motion or time limits on individual speakers.

**Postpone to a time certain** is a motion generally used to rearrange the order of the articles (or a single article) in the warrant.

**Amend** – Many types of motions can be amended or altered to bring them to an even higher state of perfection. Of course, since amendments are a little like “beauty being in the eye of the beholder,” they sometimes fail to pass. In any event, after the amendment is disposed of by a vote, the primary motion, either so amended or not, comes back to the assemblage for further discussion and vote.

**Postpone Indefinitely** serves the same basic purpose as laying a motion on the table except that it is debatable and requires only a majority vote. If the postpone motion carries, the motion to which it applies is dead – in parliamentary terms, at least.

**Point of Order** – Anyone at any time may rise to a point of order and interrupt the speaker, simply stating, “Point of order, Mr. Moderator.” The Moderator will immediately stop discussion, listen to the point of order and rule on its validity. Points of order may relate to many issues, for example, the right of a speaker to the floor, proper procedures, indecorous conduct or rarely, but within the realm of possibility, some error that the Moderator is committing.

**Main Motions** are made when no other business is pending and are the devices used to bring the warrant articles to the Town Meeting floor for discussion.

**Reconsideration** may be used to bring an article (or motion) which has already been disposed of back for a second time. If reconsideration is passed, it nullifies the previous vote and the article is re-discussed and re-voted. Many people feel that reconsideration is unfair, but it is a valid procedure and is occasionally used. In Acton, a Town Bylaw controls the vote quantum rather than Town Meeting Time. Anyone who wishes to reconsider a motion, particularly on a different night from the original vote, would be well-advised to consult the Town Clerk on proper procedures.

Town Meeting should be enjoyable and efficient in conducting its business and as Moderator I will strive to meet those goals. I have prepared additional information regarding Town Meeting, information regarding presentations, and other helpful information which may be found on the town’s web site: [www.actonma.gov](http://www.actonma.gov).

Thank you,

Jo-Ann M. Berry  
Town Moderator

# *Internet & Telephone References*

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Official Town of Acton Website	actonma.gov
Document Management System ("Docushare")	doc.actonma.gov
Geographic Information System ("GIS")	actonma.gov/gis

The Town maintains electronic mail distribution groups for all Boards, Committees and Commissions, as well as Departments. These groups are commonly referred to as "e-mail shells."

E-mails sent to shells are automatically forwarded to all members of the committee who have provided their e-mail address to the Town.

Using e-mail does *not* satisfy Open Meeting Law requirements (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, Section 23B). Please direct questions regarding this law to the Town Clerk.

To use a shell, send your e-mail to the address listed in the center column of this table. When replying to an e-mail sent to a shell, it is recommended that you use the "Reply to All" function of your e-mail program so that all members are copied on your reply.

<u>Department, Board or Committee</u>	<u>E-mail address</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Acton 2020 Implementation Committee	acton2020@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6440
Acton Community Housing Corporation	achc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Acton Leadership Group	alg@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Acton Nursing Services Advisory Committee	ansac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6650
Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council	abcc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Appeals, Zoning Board of	boa@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Assessor Department	assessor@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6621
Assessors, Board of	bas@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6621
Building Department	building@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6633
Cable Advisory Committee	cac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Cemetery Department	cemetery@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6642
Citizens' Library Department, West Acton	wacl@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6654
Clerk Department, Town	clerk@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6620
Collector Department	collector@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6622
Commission on Disability	cod@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6633
Community Preservation Committee	cpc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Community Resources Coordinator	lducharme@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6651
Conservation Commission	conscom@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6634
Council on Aging Board	coa@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6652
Council on Aging Staff (Senior Center)	seniorcenter@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6652
CrossTown Connect (Transportation)	ctc@actonma.gov	(978) 844-6809
Design Review Board	drb@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Economic Development Committee	edc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6440
Engineering Department	engineering@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6630
Finance Committee	fincom@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Fire Department	fire@actonma.gov	(978) 929-7722
Geographic Information Systems	gis@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6612
Green Advisory Board	gab@actonma.gov	(978) 929-7744
Health, Board of	boh@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6632
Health Department	health@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6632

Health Insurance Trustees	hit@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Highway Department	highway@actonma.gov	(978) 929-7740
Historic District Commission	hdc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Historical Commission	hc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Housing Authority	office@actonhousing.net	(978) 263-5339
Human Resources Department	hr@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6613
Information Technology Department	it@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6612
Land Stewardship Committee	lsc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6634
Land Use Department	lud@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6440
Manager's Office, Town	manager@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Memorial Library Department	library@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6655
Memorial Library Trustees	mlt@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6655
Municipal Properties Department	mp@actonma.gov	(978) 929-7744
Natural Resources Department	nr@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6634
Nursing Department	nursing@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6650
Open Space Committee	osc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6634
Parking Clerk	parkingclerk@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Planning Board	pb@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Planning Department	planning@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6631
Police Department	police@actonma.gov	(978) 929-7711
Recreation Commission	reccom@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6640
Recreation Department	recreation@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6640
School Committee, A-B Regional	abrsc@abschools.org	(978) 264-4700
School Committee, Minuteman		(781) 861-6500
Select Board	sb@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Senior Taxation Aid Committee	stac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6621
South Acton Train Station Advisory	satsac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6630
Town Manager	manager@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Town Moderator	moderator@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Transportation Advisory Committee	tac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6630
Treasurer's Advisory Committee	trac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Veterans Service Officer	vso@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6614
Volunteer Coordinating Committee	vcc@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6611
Water Resources Advisory Committee	wrac@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6632
West Acton Citizens' Library	wacl@actonma.gov	(978) 929-6654

### Connect with the Town of Acton



[actonma.gov](http://actonma.gov)



[twitter.com/  
actonmagov](http://twitter.com/actonmagov)



[facebook.com/  
actonmagov](http://facebook.com/actonmagov)



[instagram.com/  
actonmagov](http://instagram.com/actonmagov)

# *Emergency Notification Systems*

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The Town of Acton is committed to delivering timely and important information to its residents. Several emergency notification systems are operational within the Town of Acton providing varying degrees of information for those who need it.

Examples of Emergency Notifications include:

- Shelter Locations
- Missing Persons
- Utility Outages
- Bomb Threats
- Road Closures
- Other emergency incidents where rapid and accurate notification is essential for life safety
- Evacuation Notices
- Floods
- Fires
- Drinking Water Contamination
- Hazardous Materials Incidents



## **Blackboard Connect (Also known as Reverse 911)**

The Blackboard Connect system is a high-speed telephone communication service for emergency notifications. The system allows authorized Town officials to disseminate voice messages to every telephone number stored in the notification database in a matter of minutes. It also allows us to target specific geographic areas of the Town or a defined radius around an incident.

While we receive telephone record updates from Verizon to populate our contact database, please do not assume your phone number or e-mail address is included. Just as citizens may choose to opt *out* of these notifications, citizens in these categories are particularly invited to *add* their information to the database:

- Use a cellular phone as their primary phone
- Have unlisted phone numbers
- Have changed their phone number or address within the last year
- Have recently moved, but kept the same listed or unlisted phone number
- Wish to receive text and/or email messages in addition to telephone calls
- Receive their phone service over the internet (e.g. Verizon FIOS, Comcast XFINITY, Vonage)

In recent years, many people have converted their telephone service to Internet-based Voice-over-IP systems such as Vonage, Comcast XFINITY, and Verizon FIOS. While traditional land-lines are powered from the phone company's central office, these newer technologies rely on power supplied at the premise. These services typically connect through a device in the home that is equipped with a backup battery that will last about four to eight hours. That means corded phones using this service will work without your home's electric power for a limited amount of time. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that you register your cellular phone number in addition to your primary home number. During extended power outages, the Town has opened public "charging stations" where residents can charge their cellular phones and other electronic devices at Town facilities that are backed up by generator power.

We encourage residents to update their own information including adding cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses by visiting the Town's website at <http://www.actonma.gov/cty>. Here, you can register, review, and update your contact information. Residents without access to the Internet may accomplish this by calling the **Information Technology Department** at **(978) 929-6612** or by visiting Town Hall.

The Town's official website is continually updated with emergency information as soon as it is made available. We encourage residents to utilize the "Notify Me" feature to receive e-mail alerts when emergency information is added or updated on our site. You can do this by visiting the website at <http://www.actonma.gov> and clicking on the "Notify Me" link.

### Connect with the Town of Acton

 <a href="http://www.actonma.gov">actonma.gov</a>	 <a href="https://twitter.com/actonmagov">twitter.com/actonmagov</a>	 <a href="https://facebook.com/actonmagov">facebook.com/actonmagov</a>	 <a href="https://instagram.com/actonmagov">instagram.com/actonmagov</a>
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### Mobile Message Boards

The Town maintains several trailer mounted, solar powered LED message boards. They are routinely used to alert motorists to road closures and construction work, to announce Town meetings and events, direct traffic during elections and special events and, most importantly, display pertinent instructions and information during emergency situations. While the mobile message boards can be dynamically deployed, during a Town-wide emergency, such as a weather related event, these boards will primarily be staged at the following, or similar high-profile, locations:

- Acton Public Safety Facility – 371 Main Street
- The intersection of Great Road and Main Street (Routes 2A and 27)
- The School Campus entrance, Massachusetts Avenue (Route 111) at Charter Road



### Acton TV Government Cable Channel

The Town of Acton Government Cable Channel will be continually updated with the latest emergency instructions and notifications. The Government Channel can be found on the following channels depending on your cable system provider:

**Comcast:** Channel 99

**Verizon FIOS:** Channel 41

# *Volunteer Application*

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## VOLUNTEER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Town Hall  
472 Main Street  
Acton, MA 01720

E-mail: [vcc@actonma.gov](mailto:vcc@actonma.gov)  
Telephone: (978) 929-6611  
Fax: (978) 929-6350

Residents interested in serving on a Town Board, Committee or Commission are asked to complete this form and forward it to the Office of the Town Manager at Town Hall.

(Please print or type)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Name** Title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.) / First / Last / Suffix (Sr., Jr., III, etc.)

---

**Address** Number / Street

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---

**Contact** E-mail Address / Telephone Number(s) (Home, Business, Cell, etc.)

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Please indicate below, in order of preference, the Board, Committee or Commission that is of interest to you: \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you previously been a member of a Board, Committee or Commission (either in Acton or elsewhere)? If so, please list the Board name and your approximate dates of service: \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any time restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are you a United States Citizen? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a Documented Resident Alien of Acton? \_\_\_\_\_

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How long have you lived in Acton? \_\_\_\_\_ In Massachusetts? \_\_\_\_\_

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Present occupation and employer (Optional: Attach résumé) \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you or your employer have any current or potential business relationship with the Town of Acton that could create a conflict of interest? \_\_\_\_\_

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Education or special training: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please list below any additional information or comments that may help in the matching of your interests with the most appropriate Board/Committee, such as civic experience, special interest/hobbies, etc.:

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Thank you. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact a member of the Volunteer Coordinating Committee. Current membership may be obtained through the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall, manager@actonma.gov / (978) 929-6611.

The space below is for use by the Volunteer Coordinating Committee and the appointing body to record the status of your application.

<b>VCC Interview</b>	<b>Appointing Body</b>
Applicant Called _____	Select Board / Manager / Moderator _____
Schedule Date & Time _____	Interview Date _____
Recommendation _____	Appointed Date _____
Term _____	
Board, Committee or Commission _____ _____ _____ _____	Member / Alternate / Associate Member / Alternate / Associate Member / Alternate / Associate Member / Alternate / Associate Notification of Appointment Received by VCC _____ Committee Notified _____ Applicant Notified _____
Recommendation Sent _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> No openings at this time	

# *Online Bill Payments*

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*Pay Real Estate or Personal Property Tax Bills, Motor Vehicle Excise bills, or  
Sewer Operation and Maintenance Bills Online*

**[www.actonma.gov/payonline](http://www.actonma.gov/payonline)**

The Town of Acton is pleased to offer an easy and secure way to view, print, and pay real estate and personal property tax bills, motor vehicle excise bills and sewer operation and maintenance bills online. We support electronic presentment (viewing) and billing, as it is more convenient for our residents and better for the environment. Online presentment and payment eliminates the need to print and receive paper bills (except for motor vehicle excise bills, which the State requires be mailed).

The Town, in partnership with City Hall Systems, a web-based, electronic invoice presentment and processing company, offers online payment of the above bills via either EFT/ACH electronic checks (i.e. electronic fund transfers from your bank checking or savings accounts) or Visa or MasterCard credit/debit cards. The Town feels that this service presents the best value for online presentment and payments for our residents. City Hall Systems uses the highest standards in Internet security, provides ease of use and convenience to all our residents, for, in some instances, little more than the cost of a postage stamp.

- Access, view and pay your tax bills or sewer operation and maintenance bills online
- Available 24 hours/7 days from anywhere you have access to the Internet
- Paying your bill online is faster and, in some instances, cheaper than writing and mailing a check
- You may choose to eliminate paper invoices to reduce clutter and help the environment (except motor vehicle excise bills, which the State requires be mailed)
- You have the option to pay immediately, schedule a payment, or sign up for Auto-Pay
- You can pay with electronic check, or Visa or Master Card credit/debit cards

Please note: This service begins with, and goes forward from, the FY 2015 fourth quarter Real Estate and/or Personal Property tax bills, Sewer Operation and Maintenance bills, and any subsequent calendar year 2015 Motor Vehicle Excise bills. Any prior billing and/or payment activity that pre-dates July 1, 2013, will not be available online, and must involve the Town of Acton Collector's Office at (978) 929-6622.

For more details on payment options, fees and frequently asked questions, please see the Town website at:

**[www.actonma.gov/payonline](http://www.actonma.gov/payonline)**



**TOWN OF ACTON**  
472 MAIN STREET  
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 01720  
TELEPHONE (978) 929-6620  
FAX (978) 929-6340  
clerk@acton-ma.gov

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June 7, 2021

Middlesex, ss.

I have served the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, to be held June 21, 2021 by posting an attested copy of the same at six (6) of the public places of said town fourteen (14) days before the time of holding such meeting as directed.

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Constable

Warrants posted in six (6) public places as follows:

Nagog Woods Post Office, Town Hall, West Acton Post Office, Center Post Office, Center Library and Public Safety Facility;

As well as the Town Web Page.

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Constable

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