

Annual Town Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
June 27, 2020

81 Voters present

Moderator Richard Tracy called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. and welcomed everyone to the 242<sup>nd</sup> Annual Town Meeting. He reminded everyone of the notice from the Governor to wear a facial mask and remain six feet apart. He announced a professional sound crew provided microphones and sound. Bill asked that microphones not be touched and facial masks may be removed to speak. He asked for and received approval for nonresidents to speak including Librarian Meaghan Schwelm, Administrative Assistant Cheryl Provost, Hampshire Regional and Westhampton Elementary School Officials. He announced two sani-cans are on site and one restroom in the school is available. The local Board of Health is available to sanitize the sani-cans between uses.

ARTICLE 1: To hear and act on all reports presented at said meeting.

**Moderator announced the 2019 Annual Report provided at check in. He asked for any corrections or additions. There was none.**

ARTICLE 2: To elect by ballot necessary officers to serve in the ensuing year and to cast their votes on question 1:

Selectboard	One for three years
Board of Assessors	One for three years
Board of Assessors	One for two years
Planning Board	Two for three years
Planning Board	One for two years
Finance Committee	Three for three years
Westhampton Elementary School Committee	Two for three years
Westhampton Elementary School Committee	One for two years
Hampshire Regional School Committee	One for three years
Hampshire Regional School Committee	One for one year
Moderator	One for one year
Tree Warden	One for one year
Library Trustees	Two for three years
Constable (South District)	One for three years

**Question 1:**

Shall the Town of Westhampton be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to pay costs to purchase a four-wheel drive pickup truck for the Highway Department?

YES ☐ NO ☐

**Moderator explained the article is announcement of Annual Town Election to elect town officials and vote on Question 1.**

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to leave the care of the highways in charge of the Selectboard.

**Motion made and seconded to move article as read. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 4: To vote in compliance with Section 108, Chapter 41 G.L., which requires that salaries of elected officials be fixed by vote of the Town.

Motion made and seconded that the town approve the salaries of elected officials as:

Salaries Elected Officials	Chair	Members	FY2021
Moderator			509.00
Selectboard (3)	2,083.00	1,585.00	5,253.00
Assessors (3)	3,190.00	2,852.00	8,894.00
School Committee (5)	492.00	276.00	1,596.00
Tree Warden			686.00

Motion carried.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, such sum of money as may be necessary to defray Town charges in the ensuing year.

Motion made and seconded that the town approve to raise and appropriate the budget as recommended by the Finance Committee all items that are not a separate article vote.

Moderator asked if there were specific questions on any line item, they would be held (H) for further discussion. He then proceeded to read each line number to hear for holds.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
COUNSEL FEES	20,000.00		
SELECTMEN EXPENSE	5,800.00		
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	2,100.00		
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	41,988.00	H	
TOWN ACCOUNTANT SALARY	16,599.00		
TOWN ACCOUNTANT EXPENSE	4,200.00		
ASSESSOR EXPENSE	15,000.00		
ASSESSOR ASSISTANT	15,578.00		
FIELD REVIEW CONVERSION	12,500.00	H	
TREASURER SALARY	16,599.00		
TREASURER EXPENSE	7,000.00		
TAX TITLE EXPENSE	3,500.00	H	
TAX COLLECTOR SALARY	16,599.00		
TAX COLLECTOR EXPENSE	18,670.00		
TAX TAKING EXPENSES	800.00		
TOWN CLERK SALARY	14,195.00		
TOWN CLERK EXPENSE	5,800.00		
CLERK, BOARD OF REGISTRARS	100.00		
CONSERVATION COMMISSION	225.00		
ZONING BOARD	600.00		
PLANNING BOARD EXPENSE	300.00		
HIGHWAYS			
HIGHWAY SALARIES	237,645.00		
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	7,426.00		
HIGHWAY MATERIALS	93,505.00		
ROAD MACHINERY	42,742.00		
ROAD MACHINERY FUEL	43,050.00		
SNOW REMOVAL	100,000.00		
ROAD MACHINERY BLDGS	29,887.00		
TRANSFER STATION EXPENSES	79,006.00		
HILLTOWN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COOP	7,529.00		
SCHOOLS & LIBRARIES			
LIBRARY	106,859.00		
VETERANS			
VETERANS EXPENSE	14,460.00		
VETERANS AGENT SALARY	1,863.00		
MEMORIAL DAY	200.00		
CULTURAL COUNCIL	75.00		
CEMETERIES			
CEMETERY SALARY	6,800.00		
CEMETERY COMMISSION	481.00		
PROTECTION OF PERSONS & PROPERTY			

POLICE CHIEF SALARY	33,878.00	
POLICE DEPARTMENT	81,410.00	
FIRE CHIEF	13,428.00	
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR	2,600.00	
FIRE DEPARTMENT	42,200.00	
SAFETY COMPLEX	13,500.00	
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	9,250.00	
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COORDINATOR	5,200.00	H
INSPECTORS COMPENSATION	6,000.00	
BUILDING INSPECTOR/COMMISSIONER SALARY	24,000.00	
INSPECTORS EXPENSE	9,200.00	
TREE WARDEN EXPENSE	2,600.00	
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	879.00	
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER SALARY	1,830.00	
ANIMAL CONTROL/INSPECTOR EXPENSE	1,043.00	H
BOARD OF HEALTH SALARY	1,285.00	
BOARD OF HEALTH EXPENSE	500.00	
FOOTHILLS HEALTH DISTRICT	22,538.00	
<b>DEBT &amp; INTEREST</b>		
DEBT (HIGHWAY TRUCK & LOADER)	144,428.00	
DEBT (DESIGN & ENGINEERING PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX)	167,000.00	
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	2,801.00	
<b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>		
INSURANCE & BONDS	87,570.00	
TOWN OFFICES	28,573.00	
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT	11,108.00	
COUNCIL ON AGING	3,025.00	
COUNCIL ON AGING COORDINATOR	4,590.00	
HISTORICAL	1,200.00	
COUNTY RETIREMENT	217,213.00	
PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION	274.00	
GROUP INSURANCE	395,000.00	
OPEB TRUST FUND	5,000.00	
MEDICARE	30,000.00	
RESERVE FUND	15,000.00	
<b>NON-OPERATING (CAPITAL)</b>		
TOWN HALL/ANNEX REPAIRS	600.00	
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>2,374,404.00</b>	

#### **Holds explained:**

**Administrative Assistant – Increase is for additional hours (from 27.5 to 30 per week).**

**Motion made and seconded to fund Administrative Assistant at \$41,988.00. Motion carried.**

**Audit – increase is for audit of fiscal year 2020. Previous budgets were for half the cost of audit for one year.**

**Field Review Conversion – cost associated with conversion from state assessing software program to a contracted assessing software program. The state will not be providing support to their old system and they contracted with a software company through a state bid. There is no cost for the conversion to that system; however, it has been unsuccessful in starting up. The town contracted with a software company experienced in assessing programs. The cost covers the set-up of the software, review of records, and first year of support.**

**Tax Title Expense – costs associated with legal and court expenses for the collection of delinquent taxes in liens.**

**Emergency Services Coordinator – previously an unpaid position and separate from the Emergency Management Director. Municipalities must comply with OSHA regulations as of last year. More paperwork with that and strict state regulations. In charge of first responders, Emergency Medical Technician training, liaison with ambulance service,**

infectious control officer. Job equates to average of 5 hours weekly. Proposed budget is \$100.00 weekly.

**Animal Control/Inspector Expense – costs associated with certifications, training, rabies vaccination, and equipment.**

**Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money to meet Westhampton's share of Hampshire Regional School District's assessment for Fiscal 2021, or any lesser sum as may be certified by the District, provided that any such certification shall be made prior to the establishment of the tax rate, and to meet this appropriation, a sum of money be raised by taxation, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,380,138.00 for Westhampton's share of Hampshire Regional School District's assessment for Fiscal 2021, or any lesser sum as may be certified by the District, provided that any such certification shall be made prior to the establishment of the tax rate. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of \$13,400.00 to meet Westhampton's share of Hampshire Regional School District's capital request for heating and cooling system repairs for Fiscal 2021, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,400.00 for Westhampton's share of Hampshire Regional School District's capital request for heating and cooling system repairs for Fiscal 2021. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for the Elementary School, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,804,844.00 for the Elementary School. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for Vocational school tuition, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$375,000.00 for vocational school tuition. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for Vocational school transportation, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,104.00 for the vocational school transportation. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or otherwise provide a sum of money to pave the rear parking lot of the Westhampton Elementary School and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to table the article. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for a Financial Audit for the Town, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$14,500.00 for a financial audit for the town. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money as may be certified from available funds, due to the Town as Chapter 90 Highway funds, from the Transportation Bond Issue, or take any other action in relation thereto.

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**Motion made and seconded to appropriate a sum of \$185,427.00 as may be certified from available funds, due to the Town as Chapter 90 Highway funds, from the Transportation Bond Issue. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for the procurement of a new generator for the highway department garage, and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town transfer \$30,000.00 from Free Cash for a new generator for the highway department garage. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money for the procurement of a new four-wheel drive pickup truck for the highway department and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, by borrowing, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto. (2/3 majority required for borrowing authorization).

**Motion made and seconded that the town appropriate and borrow up to \$120,000.00 for a new 4 WD pickup truck for the highway department and to authorize the Treasurer, with approval of the Selectboard, to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for that purpose, as authorized by General laws Chapter 44 § 7, or any other general or special law, contingent upon passage of a debt exclusion ballot question. Motion carried as Moderator declared by unanimous vote.**

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money to establish and fund a new account for ambulance services, as provided by an agreement with the City of Easthampton, and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town authorize and fund a new Ambulance Service Account by a transfer of \$10,000.00 from Ambulance Receipts Reserved, and raise and appropriate \$15,000.00, to pay for ambulance services provided by the City of Easthampton. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money to establish and fund a new account for Building Commissioner services, and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to table the article. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money to establish and fund a salary account for an Assistant Town Clerk, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to table the article. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, a sum of money to establish and fund an account for town consultant/planning services, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded that the town raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000.00 to establish and fund an account for town consultant/planning services. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or otherwise provide a sum of money to replace the slate roof of the town hall with an asphalt shingle roof and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds, by

borrowing, or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto. (2/3 majority required for borrowing authorization).

**Motion made and seconded that the town transfer \$90,000.00 from Free Cash to pay for a roof replacement at the Town Hall and Annex. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide \$20,000 to hold in anticipation of unemployment benefits for Town employees in accordance with Chapter 151A of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

**Motion made and seconded to move article as read. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to re-authorize a revolving fund not to exceed \$2000 for the Fire Department, under MGL Chapter 44, sec 53 E1/2, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to move article as read. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to re-authorize a revolving fund not to exceed \$6000 for the Westhampton Cemetery, under MGL Chapter 44, Sec 53 E1/2, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to move article as read. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to re-authorize a revolving fund not to exceed \$8,000.00 for the Police Department School Resource Officer payroll, under MGL Chapter 44, sec 53 E1/2, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to move article as read. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to transfer \$0.00 from Free Cash to the stabilization Fund. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from Free Cash to balance the budget, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Motion made and seconded to transfer \$123,000.00 from Free Cash to balance the budget. Motion carried.**

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to adopt a resolution submitted by petition as follows.

## **RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE PROTECTION OF POLLINATORS AND ENHANCEMENT OF POLLINATOR HABITAT**

WHEREAS, Bees and other pollinators are a crucial component of a healthy ecosystem and a vital link in our food system, providing the pollination responsible for over three quarters of the world's plant species, and for one out of every three bites of food that we eat, and WHEREAS, pollinator populations are in sharp decline due to human land use practices that are causing ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation, the expansion of pesticide use by consumers and professionals, and the spread of pathogens and parasites, and WHEREAS, extensive research has documented that neonicotinoids and other systemic pesticides have been shown to cause illness and death to honey bees, native bees, butterflies, moths, other insect pollinators, and beneficial insects, and WHEREAS, guidelines for land management best practice are available which allow residents, businesses, farms, and towns to manage their land in ways that increase pollinator forage and nest sites while decreasing maintenance costs.

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by this Town Meeting that the Town of Westhampton is hereby declared a Pollinator-Friendly Community and that the town encourages the adoption of policies and practices that support pollinator health by minimizing the use of insecticides.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE Town of Westhampton will set an example by adopting the pollinator friendly practices below and urges property owners, residents, town departments, and business owners to adopt pollinator-friendly practices including:

- \*Planting more pollinator-supporting forage on their property, emphasizing native plant species, and adopting organic or chemical-free lawn and landscaping practices;
- \*Avoiding the planting of flowering plants which are treated with systemic insecticides and avoiding the use of seeds coated with systemic neonicotinoid;
- \*Avoiding the use of insecticides, including systemic insecticides, on their property;
- \*Reducing mowing and scheduling mowing when it will have the least probability of reducing forage for pollinators.

The Town Clerk is requested to send copies of this Resolution to Governor Charles Baker, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux, State Senator Adams Hinds, and State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa.

**Motion made and seconded that the town adopt a resolution endorsing the protection of pollinators and enhancement of pollinator habitat.**

**Discussion opened. Barbara Pelissier, petitioner, explained the heart of the petition is to consider the pollinators when making decisions on mowing, and use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.**

**Arguments for:**  
**Protection for natural pollinators, non-binding (does not create a new bylaw), non-enforceable, no effect on Right To Farm Bylaw, establishes grounds for discussion and sets intention.**

**Argument Against:**  
**Not enough information to base decision on, roadside hazard if mowing delayed, potential effect on farmers, potential requirements on town if similar act is passed at state level.**

**Discussion continued around supporting the idea of protecting pollinators in concept. The Selectboard made a commitment to research what will best fit the town and revisit the matter at a Special Town Meeting in the fall.**

**Motion made and seconded to amend the article that the town create a committee appointed by the Selectboard, to research this, working with the Conservation Commission. Motion failed.**

**Motion made and seconded to table the article. Motion carried.**

RECAPITULATION	
Article 4 Salaries of Elected Officials	16,938
Article 5 Budget	2,374,404
Article 6 Hampshire Regional HS Budget	1,380,138
Article 7 Hampshire Regional HS Capital	13,400
Article 8 Elementary School	1,804,844
Article 9 Vocational Tuition	375,000
Article 10 Vocational Transportation	60,104
Article 12 Financial Audit	14,500
Article 16 Ambulance Service	15,000
Article 19 Consulting/Planner	6,000
Article 21 Unemployment	20,000
Total raise and appropriate [recap pg.4 (B)]	6,080,328

Article 19 Ambulance Receipts Reserved [recap pg.4 (D)]	10,000
Article 25 Stabilization fund	0
Article 20 Chapter 90 Available Funds [recap pg.4 (D)]	185,427
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS [recap pg.4 (A)]	6,285,575
Article 26 from Free Cash to balance budget [recap pg.2]	123,000
Article 14 & 20 from Free Cash for specific purpose	120,000
Article 15 Borrowing Authorization [recap pg.4 (I)]	120,000

Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to dissolve the Annual Town Meeting at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Cheryl A. Provost  
Town Clerk