

May 3, 2023 Annual Town Meeting Recap

The Moderator, Adam Shuster, called the May 3, 2023 Annual Town Meeting to order promptly at 7:00 PM. 126 voters were present.

Article 1: Hear Town Reports

We heard from Laurie Tosti, School Committee Chair with a report from the School Committee

Town Manager, Michael Herbert, gave a short report on the Town.

No vote is required on Article 1. Town Meeting moved on to the business of the night.

Article 2: Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Sponsor: Town Manager/Finance Director

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate from available funds and/or transfer from available funds in the treasury such sums of money as are necessary to defray charges and expenses of the town, including debt and interest, for the ensuing fiscal year, or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto.

Article 2 passed unanimously

Article 3: Transfer to OPEB Trust

Sponsor: Town Manager/Finance Director

To see if the Town will transfer \$300,000 from (the) OPEB Contribution Account to the OPEB Trust, or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto.

Article 3 passed unanimously

Article 4: Transfer from Special Education Stabilization to General Fund

Sponsor: Town Manager/Finance Director

To see if the Town will transfer \$250,000 from the Special Education Stabilization Fund to the General Fund, or pass any vote or take any action relative thereto.

Article 4 required a 2/3 vote. The Moderator declared that Article 4 passed.

Article 5: Annual Consent Article – General

Sponsor: Select Board

To see if the Town will vote the following consent articles:

1. Grant Program Authorization
2. Road Contracts
3. Contracts in Excess of Three Years
4. Lease Purchase Agreements
5. Revolving Funds
6. Grant Easements

Article 5 required a 2/3 vote. The Moderator declared that Article 5 passed unanimously.

Article 6: Annual Consent Article: Community Preservation Act

Sponsor: Community Preservation Committee

To see if the Town will vote the following items (full article can be found in the Town Meeting warrant):

1. Community Preservation Funds–FY24 Annual Appropriations
2. Oak Street Bond Payment
3. H.S. Athletic Fields Bond Payment
4. Warren Woods Bond Payment
5. Valentine Estate

Article 6 passed unanimously

Article 7: Appropriate Funds to Restore Antique Fire Truck

Sponsor: Community Preservation Committee

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate up to \$175,000 to enable the Fire Association to complete the restoration of the original 1947 town Mack fire truck and that to meet this appropriation, the sum of up to \$175,000 be transferred from the Historical Resources Reserve Account from the Community Preservation Fund balance, and so long as there is a Grant Agreement executed between the Fire Association and the Community Preservation Committee prior to the disbursement of any funds hereunder and with unexpended funds as of December 31, 2025 being returned to their funding source; or pass any vote or take any other action thereon.

Article 7 passed by a majority

Article 8: Dispose of Real Property: Lease of Main Street Fire Station

Sponsor: Town Manager

To see if the Town will vote to support the Select Board to lease, for a term of up to thirty (30) years, for the Town owned property at 151 Main Street, for use as a tap room and restaurant and other related uses, and for the Select Board in their discretion to enter other related agreements which are necessary to effectuate the lease and on such terms and conditions as the Select Board shall determine to be in the best interest of the Town, or pass any vote or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 8 passed by a majority

Article 9: Establishment of the Capital Stabilization Account Keefe Tech

Sponsor: Keefe Tech

To see if the Town will authorize the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School (Keefe Regional Technical School) District Committee to establish a Capital Stabilization Account for the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School (Keefe Regional Technical School) District, pursuant to Section 16G1/2 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws, or take any action other action or relative thereto.

Article 9 passed by a majority

Article 10: Citizens' Petition

To see whether the Town Meeting will vote to amend the Town Code by inserting a new Section §63-10, Speaking Time, as follows:

§63-10 Speaking Time: Any individual who wishes to address the Town Meeting shall, when recognized by the Moderator, complete their remarks in three (3) minutes, or less, unless extended by leave of the Moderator and yield the floor.

After being counted by tellers Article 10 passed 63-46

Article 11: Remove Police Department from Civil Service

Sponsor: Town Manager

It was determined after the posting of the warrant that Town Meeting action was not required relative to this matter and the article is being withdrawn.

Article 12: Funding for I&I
Sponsor: Town Manager

To see if the Town will appropriate a sum of money to make infiltration and inflow improvements to the Town's sewer system, including improvements for infiltration and inflow reduction purposes that are eligible for loans or other financial assistance through the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's I/I Local Financial Assistance Program - Phase 12 Funding Allocation, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Department of Public Works; to determine whether such amounts should be raised by taxation, borrowing, transfer from available funds or otherwise, and to authorize the Select Board to apply for and accept, any grants that may be available to pay costs of such projects; or pass any vote or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 12 passed unanimously

Article 13: Update Bylaw: Accept Specialized Stretch Code
Sponsor: Sustainability Committee

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 98.7 of the General Bylaws of the Town of Ashland Bylaws, entitled "Stretch Energy Code" as follows:

- a. Section 98.7 change the title to the following: "Stretch Energy Code and Specialized Energy Code"
- b. Add a new Section 98.8 as follows: Specialized Energy Code: The Specialized Energy Code shall be adopted for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, pursuant to the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of September 1, 2023.
- c. Change the existing numbered Section 98.8 Enforcement to 98.9.

or take any other action relative thereto.

After quite a bit of discussion both for and against, the tellers were called to count the votes. **Article 13 failed 59-42**

Article 14: Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by the Town of Ashland
Sponsor: Sustainability Committee/Town Manager

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 98 of the General Bylaws of the Town of Ashland Bylaws to add an Article IV, the details of which area stated on the warrant.

As with the last article, there was much discussion both for and against. **Article 14 passed by a majority**

There was no further business and a motion was made and passed to dissolve Town Meeting
Town Meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.