

**Town of West Brookfield  
Administrative Warrant  
Special and Annual Town Meeting Article Summaries**

Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026  
Location: West Brookfield Elementary School

*To the Voters of West Brookfield:*

*I have prepared an administrative warrant that provides you with a brief summary of each article up for vote this evening. The intent is to break them down into laymen's terms to give you a clearer understanding of the articles presented to you. I hope that you find this document to be helpful.*

*Sincerely,*

*Theresa A. Cofske, Town Administrator*

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

**Article 1: Supplemental Appropriations**

The purpose of this article is to supplement certain line items in the current fiscal year's budget (Fiscal Year 2026) to fund additional expenses associated with those specific Town Departments.

**Article 2: Unpaid Bills**

These funds are needed to pay for bills received after the close of Fiscal Year 2025.

**Article 3: Other Post Employment Benefits**

Employees of state and local governments may be compensated in a variety of forms. In addition to a salary, many employees earn benefits during their years of service that will not be received until after their employment with the government ends. The most common type of these post-employment benefits is a pension.

Post-employment benefits other than pensions generally take the form of health insurance and dental, vision, prescription, or other healthcare benefits provided to eligible retirees, and may also include some type of life insurance. As a group, these non-pension benefits are referred to as Other Post-Employment Benefits (“OPEB”).

***THIS ARTICLE IS EXPECTED TO BE INDEFINATELY POSTPONED DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF FUNDS***

#### **Article 4:Accrued Unpaid Liabilities and Compensated Absences**

Accrued unpaid liabilities and absences are accounting concepts related to employee benefits.

- **Accrued Unpaid Liabilities:** Refers to liabilities that accumulate over time but are not yet payable. These include things like vacation pay, sick pay, and bonuses that are earned but not yet taken.
- **Absences:** Refers to paid time off, including vacation, sick leave, and personal leave. These are considered compensated absences and may create liability for the Town.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of recognizing these liabilities is to ensure that employees receive their rightful benefits when they take time off.

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#### **Article 5: Transfer to General Stabilization Fund**

A stabilization fund is a special reserve fund into which monies may be appropriated and reserved for later appropriation for any lawful municipal purpose.

Monies accumulated in a stabilization fund carry forward from one fiscal year to another. Interest earned from the investment of monies in the stabilization fund remains with that fund.

Stabilization funds allow a town to save money for future years or can avoid borrowing in some instances.

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**Article 6: Transfer to Capital Stabilization Fund**

A Capital Stabilization Fund is a special reserve fund into which monies may be appropriated and reserved for later appropriation for lawful municipal capital needs purposes.

Monies accumulated in a stabilization fund carry forward from one fiscal year to another. Interest earned from the investment of monies in the stabilization fund remains with that fund.

This fund is used to defray the cost of new equipment, building repairs, and capital improvements to town land and buildings to the extent that these costs may be funded by the Fund's balance.

In addition, these funds allow a town to save money for future years or can avoid borrowing in some instances.

***THIS ARTICLE IS EXPECTED TO BE INDEFINATELY POSTPONED DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF FUNDS***

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**Article 1: Local Election**

Identifies the various newly elected positions including Selectmen, Assessor, Board of Health, Common Committee, Library Trustees, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Quaboag Regional School District Committee, and Water Commissioners,

**Article 2: Annual Town Reports**

Review and accept annual reports from town officials and committees detailing their work over the past year.

**Article 3: Pay for Elected Officials**

Sets the salaries for elected officials for FY2027 (starting July 1, 2026). Please note that while most salaries listed will remain the same as voted last fiscal year there is one Board whose salary will decrease from the amount listed on the warrant. The Board of Selectmen have agreed to decrease the salaries as follows:

	FY2026	FY2027
Selectmen, (each) 2 Members	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Selectmen, Chair	\$1,500.00	\$0.00

**Article 4: Town Budget**

The FY2027 Operating Budget presented in the Omnibus is a reduced budget. This reduction is necessary because expected revenues are not sufficient to cover the increasing costs required to operate the Town effectively. In addition, the failure of the Proposition 2½ override created further financial constraints, resulting in a budget process that required difficult decisions and reductions across every department.

The first motion seeks approval of the Town’s FY2027 Operating Budget in the total amount of **\$9,766,350.11**. The general fund operating budget covers the schools, municipal offices, departments, boards and committees, personnel payroll, required employee health insurance, Town insurance policies (liability, auto, workers’ compensation, etc.), and various other municipal services. This budget is funded primarily through taxation, totaling **\$9,674,034.11** this year

To help offset costs and reduce the impact of departmental cuts to the best extent possible, supplemental funds from trust funds, unused monies in prior articles, and other departmental sources are being used to support the proposed budget. Careful effort has been made to ensure a **balanced FY2027 Town Operating Budget without using FREE CASH**. The supplemental funds being used, include the following amounts and sources:

- **\$10,000.00** from Surplus Overlay funds to help offset some of the Assessor's budget
- **\$10,500.00** from Perpetual Care to help offset some of the Cemetery budget
- **\$4,800.00** from Gilbert Salary Trust to help offset some of the Library Salary
- **\$37,707.00** from the Library Incentive Grant and Municipal Equalization Grant to offset some of the Library Budget
- **\$3,000.00** from Massachusetts Broadband Institute and MassTech Collaborative to offset some of the Library Budget
- **\$8,000.00** from Library Donations Books Account to offset some of the Library Budget
- **\$2,000.00** from 6/7/16 ATM Art.# 25 Master Plan
- **\$1,068.00** from Assessors Triennial Revaluation
- **\$477.00** from 6/3/26 ATM Art.# 10 Town Hall Security/Police Dept. Evidence Room Upgrade
- **\$4,264.00** from 6/4/24 ATM Art.# 8 Town Clerk Cabinets
- **\$10,500.00** from the Water Enterprise Fund for indirect costs associated with the Water Department Budget (Indirect costs are costs associated with services provided to the water enterprise from the Accounting and Treasury Departments)

The total amount of the above supplemental funds is **\$92,316.00**.

The second motion will seek approval of the Water Enterprise FY2027 budget in the amount of **\$613,863.00** funding all operating, personnel payroll and the department's required employee health insurance and insurance policies (liability, auto, worker's compensation), and other needs necessary to provide town water supply and services. This budget is funded by the town water system users. The revenue is collected through billing to users. This budget is not paid through taxation.

The third motion will seek approval of the PEG FY2027 budget in the amount of **\$79,500.00** funding all operating costs of the West Brookfield Community Cable Access Television Program. The costs include studio costs, filming costs and program broadcasting. This budget is funded by the revenue generated (franchise fees) from the contract between Charter Communications and the Town of West Brookfield for this specific purpose. This budget is not paid through taxation.

## **Article 5: Spending Limits on Revolving Funds**

Establishes annual spending caps for these funds:

- Cemetery – \$16,000
- Stormwater – \$25,000
- Tree Warden – \$10,000
- Recreation Programs - \$15,000

A revolving fund is an account that may be set up by a municipality for one of its departments. Monies received in connection with a departmental program or activity may be deposited into the revolving fund, and then money from the fund can be applied directly, without further appropriation, to support that program or activity. The departmental revolving fund must be authorized on an annual basis at a special town meeting or the annual town meeting.

Please note, the above listed limits set have remained the same each fiscal year.

## **Article 6: Private Road Repairs**

Adds funds to pay for repairs to private roads in town.

***THIS ARTICLE IS EXPECTED TO BE INDEFINATELY POSTPONED DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF FUNDS***

## **Article 7: Building Maintenance**

This article adds \$10,000 to the Town's existing Building Maintenance account to support necessary upkeep and minor repairs to public buildings. The funding comes from unspent money in a previous year's article that is no longer needed for its original purpose, allowing those remaining funds to be repurposed for this maintenance work.

**Article 8: Town Roads Maintenance**

This article adds \$25,000 to the Town’s existing Town Roads Maintenance account to support necessary upkeep and minor repairs to public roadways. The funding comes from unspent money in a previous year’s article that is no longer needed for its original purpose, allowing those remaining funds to be repurposed for this maintenance work.

**Article 9: Capital Projects**

Funds town projects and equipment purchases. **There will be two (2) separate motions for this article (Town Capital Improvements & Water Department Capital Improvements).**

*Pertaining to Motion #1:*

Below is a list of the capital projects/items for FY2027 and the requested amounts requested to cover those costs as recommended by the Capital Improvement Committee:

Project/Purchase	Amount	From Funding Source
Route 9, Phase II Additional Funding (required by MassDOT)	\$35,500.00	Capital Stabilization
Fire Department – Five (5) Sets of Turnout Gear and Helmets	\$25,435.00	Capital Stabilization

**Total Capital Budget needs for FY2027: \$60,935.00**

Funding Source: Transfer from the Capital Stabilization Fund

*Pertaining to Motion #2:*

Below is a list of the capital projects/items for FY2027 and the requested amounts requested to cover those costs as recommended by the Water Commissioners:

Cybersecurity improvements	\$10 ,000	To comply with DEP requirements to protect water systems from cyber-attacks.	
Ware Point treatment plant upgrades and improvements	\$30,000	To begin implementation of recommendations from ongoing facility assessment. This 40-year-old facility, that is the Town’s primary water supply, needs upgrades in order to remain reliable and in compliance with drinking water regulations.	
Leland Road Treatment Plant	\$30,000	For unanticipated incidental costs for construction of Leland Road Treatment Plant that may not be covered by grant or loan.	
Insertion valve	\$15,000	To allow water main shutdown for safe hydrant replacement and prepare for future water main replacement on Milk Street and Front Street.	
New Utility Truck	\$60,000	To replace the Water Department’s primary vehicle. The current utility truck is 11 years old and is also used for plowing in addition to emergency and routine Water Department activities.	

**Total Capital Budget needs for FY2027: \$145,000**

Funding Source: Transfer from Water Stabilization Fund

**Article 10: General Bylaw Amendment – Renaming of the Board of Selectmen to the Select Board**

This article is an amendment to the entire General Bylaw that simply changes the name “Board of Selectmen” to the gender-neutral term “Select Board” throughout the town’s General Bylaws. It also updates “Selectman/Selectmen” to “Select Board Member(s)” and allows the Town Clerk to make small wording adjustments to keep the bylaws consistent. No powers or responsibilities of the board change.

**Article 11 – Long Hill Road Bridge Replacement Land Rights**

This article allows the Town to give the Select Board permission to obtain any land rights needed to replace the Long Hill Road Bridge over the Quaboag River. These rights may include small pieces of land or easements for construction access. The Board would be allowed to obtain these rights by gift, purchase, or if necessary, by eminent domain, and to spend the funds (\$12,000) required to do so. The goal is to ensure the bridge project can move forward safely and legally.

**Article 12: Amend West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws – Section 5. Special Requirements**

This article, submitted by the Planning Board, proposes a change to the Town’s Zoning Bylaws by removing the requirement for a Minor Site Plan Review from Section 5. The Planning Board no longer conducts minor reviews and believes the requirement creates an unnecessary obstacle for applicants seeking permits for uses already allowed under the zoning regulations. Major Site Plan Review requirements will remain in place.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 6:00pm and voted in favor of presenting this article for vote at Annual Town Meeting.