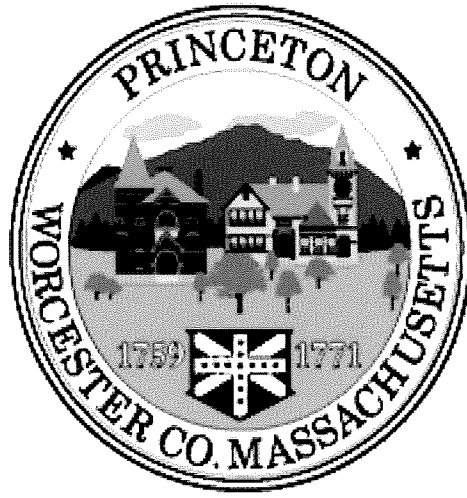


ANNUAL TOWN MEETING



**TOWN OF PRINCETON
THOMAS PRINCE SCHOOL**

June 11, 2024

6:00 P.M.

The Advisory Committee hearing on this warrant will be held on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. virtually. The meeting link can be found on the town website calendar.

TOWN WARRANT
TOWN OF PRINCETON
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Worcester, ss.

To any Constable of the Town of PRINCETON in the County of WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Princeton who are qualified to vote in elections and town affairs, to meet at:

**Thomas Prince School
170 Sterling Road
Princeton, Massachusetts**

on **TUESDAY THE 11TH DAY OF JUNE, 2024**, at 6:00 P.M. to act on the following articles of Town affairs:

ARTICLE 1. To hear the reports of the Town Officers and any outstanding committees and act thereon.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote under the provisions of G.L. c. 41, §108, to fix the salaries of the following Town Officers for the ensuing year (FY25); or to take any other action relative thereto.

	<u>FY 24</u>	<u>FY 25</u>
Moderator	\$ 25	\$ 25
Selectboard	\$ 3,600 (\$1,200 per member)	\$ 3,600 (\$1,200 per member)
Assessors	\$ 1,500 (\$500 per member)	\$ 1,500 (\$500 per member)

This article establishes the salaries of paid elected officials.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the treasury a sum of money including debt and interest, and to provide for a reserve fund, for the ensuing fiscal year (FY25); or to take any other action relative thereto.

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
Moderator				
Salary	25.00	-	25.00	0.00%
Expense	86.00	14.00	100.00	16.28%
Sub-Total	111.00	14.00	125.00	12.61%
Selectboard				
Salaries	3,600.00	-	3,600.00	0.00%
Expense	6,185.00	500.00	6,685.00	8.08%
Sub-Total	9,785.00	500.00	10,285.00	5.11%
Town Administrator				
Salary	109,304.42	3,279.13	112,583.55	3.00%
Assistant To Town Administrator	24,700.00	5,147.00	29,847.00	20.84%
Expense	3,423.50	-	3,423.50	0.00%
Sub-Total	137,427.92	8,426.13	145,854.05	6.13%
Reserve Fund				
Expense	75,000.00	-	75,000.00	0.00%
Town Accountant				
Salary	49,200.00	1,800.00	51,000.00	3.66%
Admin Asst Wages	21,259.94	(21,259.94)	0.00	-100.00%
Expense	21,953.00	1,000.00	22,953.00	4.56%
Sub-Total	92,412.94	(18,459.94)	73,953.00	-19.98%
Board of Assessors				
Board Salaries	1,500.00		1,500.00	0.00%
Department Salary	34,558.09	901.74	35,459.83	2.61%
Expense	37,556.39	-	37,556.39	0.00%
Sub-Total	73,614.48	901.74	74,516.22	1.22%
Treasurer/Tax Collector				
Department Salary	120,318.01	9,785.59	130,103.60	8.13%
Expense	20,793.00	12,225.00	33,018.00	58.79%
Sub-Total	141,111.01	22,010.59	163,121.60	15.60%
Town Counsel				
Expense	35,000.00	-	35,000.00	0.00%
Information Technology				
Salaries	28,962.46	7,998.00	36,960.46	27.62%
Info Tech Expense	36,557.00	(600.00)	35,957.00	-1.64%
Sub-Total	65,519.46	7,398.00	72,917.46	11.29%
Administrative Assistants				
Salaries	27,670.29	830.11	28,500.40	3.00%
Expense	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	28,170.29	830.11	29,000.40	2.95%
Town Clerk				
Salary	46,280.73	13,456.87	59,737.60	29.08%
Expenses	5,800.00	1,250.00	7,050.00	21.55%
Sub-Total	52,080.73	14,706.87	66,787.60	28.24%

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
Elections & Registration				
Salaries	4,000.00	2,000.00	6,000.00	50.00%
Expense	11,240.00	5,200.00	16,440.00	46.26%
Sub-Total	15,240.00	7,200.00	22,440.00	47.24%
Conservation Commission				
Expense	970.00	-	970.00	0.00%
Environmental Action Committee				
Expense	970.00	-	970.00	0.00%
Planning Board				
Expense	1,810.51	-	1,810.51	0.00%
Board of Appeals				
Expense	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
Open Space Committee				
Expense	985.00	-	985.00	0.00%
Agricultural Commission				
Expense	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	0.00%
Town Building Operations				
Salaries	54,396.63	1,631.90	56,028.53	3.00%
Expense	69,451.00	-	69,451.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	123,847.63	1,631.90	125,479.53	1.32%
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT:	855,555.97	41,659.40	897,215.37	4.87%
PUBLIC SAFETY				
Police				
Police non-union Salaries	229,674.10	(35,408.51)	194,265.59	-15.42%
Police Union Salaries	757,174.08	50,380.98	807,555.06	6.65%
Expense	246,223.54	53,287.76	299,511.30	21.64%
Sub-Total	1,233,071.72	68,260.23	1,301,331.95	5.54%
Fire Department				
Salaries	181,231.68	5,345.00	186,576.68	2.95%
Expense	129,954.78	(5,370.00)	124,584.78	-4.13%
Sub-Total	311,186.46	(25.00)	311,161.46	-0.01%
Ambulance				
Salaries	255,600.00	57,532.00	313,132.00	22.51%
Expense	67,685.00	-	67,685.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	323,285.00	57,532.00	380,817.00	17.80%
Regional Services				
Animal Inspector Salary	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
Animal Control Expense	13,673.50	-	13,673.50	0.00%
Emergency Dispatch	91,857.00	16,009.20	107,866.20	17.43%
Sub-Total	106,030.50	16,009.20	122,039.70	15.10%
Emergency Response				
Emergency Mgt. Exp.	4,918.20	2,500.00	7,418.20	50.83%
Emergency Notification Sys	4,349.00	-	4,349.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	9,267.20	2,500.00	11,767.20	26.98%
Tree Warden				
Salary	1,665.00	-	1,665.00	0.00%
Expense	11,750.00	-	11,750.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	13,415.00	-	13,415.00	0.00%
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY:	1,996,255.88	144,276.43	2,140,532.31	7.23%

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
SCHOOLS				
Wachusett Regional School				
Wachusett Minimum Contribution	4,009,651.00	213,710.00	4,223,361.00	5.33%
Discretionary	1,147,884.00	272,378.00	1,420,262.00	23.73%
Transportation	380,628.00	37,684.00	418,312.00	9.90%
Long Term Debt	103,356.00	(59,212.00)	44,144.00	-57.29%
Wachusett Regional Total	5,641,519.00	464,560.00	6,106,079.00	8.23%
Montachusett Reg. Vocational	415,820.00	(3,592.00)	412,228.00	-0.86%
Smith Vocational	63,648.00	(63,648.00)	-	-100.00%
TOTAL SCHOOLS:	6,120,987.00	397,320.00	6,518,307.00	6.49%
PUBLIC WORKS				
Highway				
Salaries	479,859.35	29,441.26	509,300.61	6.14%
Expense	331,933.22	6,640.78	338,574.00	2.00%
Road Reconstruction	250,000.00	-	250,000.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	1,061,792.57	36,082.04	1,097,874.61	3.40%
Snow/Ice Removal				
Expenses	261,335.00	-	261,335.00	0.00%
Street Lights				
Expenses	7,100.00	-	7,100.00	0.00%
Wachusett Earth day	2,275.92	56.90	2,332.82	2.50%
Wachusett Greenway	832.00	-	832.00	0.00%
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS:	1,333,335.49	36,138.94	1,369,474.43	2.71%
ENVIRONMENTAL				
Expense	55,545.00	10,871.00	66,416.00	19.57%
PFA's Monitoring/Testing	318,800.00	105,197.00	423,997.00	33.00%
PFA's Water/Filters	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0.00%
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL:	384,345.00	116,068.00	500,413.00	30.20%
HUMAN SERVICES				
Council on Aging				
Salary	47,810.88	1,434.33	49,245.21	3.00%
Expense	67,692.22	(8,468.88)	59,223.34	-12.51%
Sub-Total	115,503.10	(7,034.55)	108,468.55	-6.09%
Veterans Services				
Salary	7,000.00	200.00	7,200.00	2.86%
Expense	33,950.00	9,250.00	43,200.00	27.25%
Sub-Total	40,950.00	9,450.00	50,400.00	23.08%
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES:	156,453.10	2,415.45	158,868.55	1.54%

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
CULTURE & RECREATION				
Library				
Salaries	140,796.78	4,223.90	145,020.68	3.00%
Expense	67,168.00	-	67,168.00	0.00%
Sub-Total	207,964.78	4,223.90	212,188.68	2.03%
MISC/Band Concerts	2,440.00	-	2,440.00	0.00%
Parks & Recreation				
Salaries	20,997.60	-	20,997.60	0.00%
Expense	21,819.34	-	21,819.34	0.00%
Sub-Total	42,816.94	-	42,816.94	0.00%
Historical Commission	1,500.00	-	1,500.00	0.00%
Town Celebrations	4,050.00	1,500.00	5,550.00	37.04%
TOTAL CULTURE & RECREATION:	258,771.72	5,723.90	264,495.62	2.21%
DEBT & INTEREST				
Lease-Front End Loader	85,331.00	(59,225.00)	26,106.00	-69.41%
Thomas Prince/Green Repair	113,300.00	(2,200.00)	111,100.00	-1.94%
PFAS Remediation	163,172.00	15,568.00	178,740.00	9.54%
Broadband Make Ready	112,300.00	(3,000.00)	109,300.00	-2.67%
Fire Truck Debt/Int	58,753.00	-	58,753.00	0.00%
Bagg Hall Stab. Debt/Int	155,071.00	(3,750.00)	151,321.00	-2.42%
Salt Shed Debt/Int	17,855.00	(450.00)	17,405.00	-2.52%
General Interest/Borrowing Fees	25,000.00	-	25,000.00	0.00%
TOTAL DEBT & INTEREST:	730,782.00	(53,057.00)	677,725.00	-7.26%
MISCELLANEOUS				
Retirement	340,439.00	36,423.00	376,862.00	10.70%
Town Insurance	125,000.00	-	125,000.00	0.00%
Health Insurance	328,454.85	45,686.89	374,141.74	13.91%
Life & Fringe	9,900.00	-	9,900.00	0.00%
FICA/Medicare	47,900.39	4,448.36	52,348.75	9.29%
Wage/Salary Reserve	25,000.00	-	25,000.00	0.00%
Energy Reserve	25,000.00	-	25,000.00	0.00%
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS:	901,694.24	86,558.25	988,252.49	9.60%
TOTAL BUDGET:	12,738,180.40	777,103.37	13,515,283.77	6.10%

This article establishes the FY 25 operating budget for town departments. The FY 25 recommended budget is \$13,515,283.77

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 4. RECURRING BUSINESS

- A. To see if the Town will vote to establish the FY25 trash operating budget. Receipts for trash disposal services received in FY25 and all subsequent fiscal years are to be deposited into a trash enterprise fund account established in FY08. Appropriations from said account are to be made at either the annual or special town meetings for the purpose of paying for the proper disposal of solid waste generated within the town. The requested funds will be appropriated from the Solid Waste Enterprise account. Any balance in said account is to be carried forward to subsequent years; or to take any other action relative thereto.

The Town directly pays Wheelabrator Millbury, Inc., which operates the trash incinerator for solid waste disposal. This article allows the town to receive and deposit into this account offsetting payments from trash haulers. \$10, 000 is requested for the FY 25 trash-operating budget.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

- B. To see if the town will vote to transfer a sum of money from free cash to be deposited in the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund in order to offset future health insurance costs for retirees; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this will authorize a contribution to a trust fund established by the May 2011 Annual Town Meeting to fund future health insurance liabilities for retirees, similar to the way future pension obligations are funded. \$10,000 is requested for FY 25.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

- C. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to the Goodnow Book Expense Account for the purchase of books for the Library, as required by the terms of the Goodnow Deed of Gift; or to take any other action thereto.

The Deed of Gift requires an annual payment of \$50.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

- D. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from free cash to the School Septic System Stabilization Fund for the purpose of reserving funds for the replacement and/or repair of the septic system at the Thomas Prince School; or to take any other action relative thereto.

The Town and the Wachusett Regional School District signed a Maintenance Agreement, which provides for an annual payment in the amount of \$2,047 to the Town of Princeton from the Wachusett Regional School District to be put toward the replacement or repair costs of the septic system at the school.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

- E. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to contract with and accept any grants from the Mass. Department of Transportation-Highway Division for the construction of any road or related work that may be allotted to the Town for the ensuing year; or to take any other action relative thereto.

This article authorizes the Selectboard to accept any grants or contracts with the state for road or road-related projects.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 5: DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS AUTHORIZATION

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the following expenditure caps for revolving funds for certain town departments under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 53E ½ for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024; or to take any action relative thereto.

Revolving Fund	Authorized to Spend Fund	Revenue Source	Use of Fund	FY 2024 Spending Limit	FY 2025 Spending Limit
Building Department	Bldg. Inspector Town Admin.	Fees from Bldg, Wiring, and Plumbing Permits	To Pay Administrative & Inspector Salary & Expenses	\$55,000	\$55,000
Library	Library Director, Town Admin.	Copy Machine, Fax, Fines and Fees	Defray Operational Expenses	\$4,000	\$4,000
Parks and Recreation (P&R)	P&R Commission Chairman, P&R Director, and Town Admin.	Fees Collected from Recreational Programs	Provide Recreational Programs & Pay Salaries	\$20,000	\$20,000
Parks and Recreation (P&R)	P&R Commission Chairman, P&R Director, and Town Admin.	Fees Collected from Recreational Programs	Maintenance of Parks Pay Salaries	\$20,000	\$20,000
Board of Health	Board of Health Town Admin.	Permits & Inspections	Salary & Expense	\$21,000	\$21,000
Cemetery	Cemetery Comm. Chairman, Town Admin.	Burial Fees	Salary & Expense	\$10,000	\$10,000
Fire Department	Fire Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Town Admin.	Fees from Fire Permits	To Pay Administrative & Inspector Salary & Expenses	\$8,500	\$8,500
Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission Chair, Town Admin.	Lease Payments from Four Corners Hayfields	To Pay for the Upkeep of & Improvements to Conservation Property	\$3,500	\$3,500
Council on Aging	Chairman Director Town Admin	Fees Collected from Programs and donations	Provide Programs and defray expenses	\$0	\$3,500
Maximum Spending					\$145,500

All departments having revolving accounts were asked to complete a FY 25 budget request. The spending limits were adjusted for each account to match revenue anticipated and available for each fund, as well as budgets requested, with minor exceptions. Please note that the Municipal Modernization Act of 2016 changed the procedures for Revolving Funds, requiring that a By-Law be established for revolving funds. A By-Law was established at the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will authorize, under G.L. c. 44, § 21C, upon the recommendation of the Selectboard, the following lease purchase financing agreements for the acquisition of equipment that may be acquired through the issuance of debt under G.L. c. 44, the term of such agreement not to exceed the useful life of the equipment or improvement as determined by the Selectboard, and to authorize the departments below to enter into such agreements on behalf of the Town, subject to appropriation for the first year payments of the agreements as stated below; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Equipment / Capital Asset	Max Term	Authorized Department	Appropriation
Police Cruiser (1)	3 years	Police	FY 26
Pick Up Truck	3years	Highway	FY 25

Approval of this article will authorize lease purchasing of vehicles and equipment as outlined above. Funding for lease purchases is included in the highway department operating budget beginning in FY 25, and will be added to the Police Department operating budget in FY 26. This article requires a 2/3 vote under G.L. c. 44, § 21C.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to provide a cash match for the 2024 Mass Trails Grant for the “Thomas Prince School Nature Trails: Universal Access Feasibility Study” and to authorize the Selectboard to accept and expend such a grant; or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will provide a \$2,500 cash match for the 2024 Mass Trails Grant.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to update the Princeton Hazard Mitigation Plan, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will provide \$12,500 to update the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. The town is required to update the plan every 5 years in order to be eligible to apply for certain grants. The Town received a \$5,850 grant for planning assistance for the update.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to accept G.L. c.64L, §2(a) to impose a local meals excise tax, or take any other action relative there to.

Acceptance of G.L. c.64L, §2(a) will allow the Town to impose a local meals excise tax of 0.75%.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Does Not Approve

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to pay for costs associated with the September 11, 2023 flood, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of the article will transfer \$200k from Free Cash to cover flood damage costs for the flood that occurred on 9/11/2023.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to the Infrastructure Stabilization Account, or take any other action relative thereto,

Approval of this article will transfer \$100k from Free Cash into the Infrastructure Stabilization Account.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to the Stabilization Account, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will transfer \$100k from Free Cash into the Stabilization Account.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds for grant writing services and to provide a grant match for various unspecified grant programs, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of the article will transfer \$75,000 from free cash into an account for grant writing assistance and to provide monetary grant matches for various unspecified grant opportunities that arise throughout the year as approved by the selectboard.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to purchase software for the Fire Department, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will transfer funds from free cash for new software. The Fire Department is requesting funding for new software to improve the efficiency of the department and to provide requested data for fire and ambulance services. The requested amount is \$14,450.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds for resurfacing the driveway entrance at Woodlawn Cemetery, or take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will transfer \$10,000 from free cash for resurfacing the driveway apron at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to accept G.L. c. 60, § 23B, setting the fee for municipal lien certificates at \$25 for unimproved land and for lots with a 1-, 2- or 3- family residence; \$100 for lots with residences for 4 or more families; \$150 for land with a commercial, industrial or public utility structure; and \$50 for farms, forest land and other real property; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Acceptance of this G.L will increase the fees for municipal lien certificates.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to amend Sections 1(B) and 1(C) of Chapter X of the General Bylaws, concerning driveway opening permits, by striking the word "Selectboard" where it appears and replacing it in each case with the words "Highway Superintendent"; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Approval of this article will amend the General Bylaws to allow the Highway Superintendent to approve all driveway entrance permits instead of the Selectboard.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Approves

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 90, §17C, allowing the Selectboard to establish a speed limit of 25 miles per hour on any roadway inside a thickly settled or business district other than a state highway; or to take any other action relative thereto.

This article is proposed in response to speeding complaints in several areas of town. Acceptance of G.L. c. 90, §17C will allow the Selectboard to establish a speed limit of 25 miles per hour on any roadway inside a thickly settled or business district other than a state highway.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Does Not Approve

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 90, §18B, allowing the Selectboard to establish designated safety zones which shall be posted as having a speed limit of 20 miles per hour; or to take any other action relative thereto.

This article is proposed in response to speeding complaints in several areas of town. Acceptance of G.L. c. 90, §18B will allow the Selectboard to establish designated safety zones, which will have posted speed limits of 20MPH.

Advisory Committee Opinion: Does Not Approve

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting attested copies thereof seven days at least before the time of said meeting at Bagg Hall, Thomas Prince School, and the Princeton Post Office.

Hereof fail not, and make return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of said meeting, as aforesaid.

Given under our hands on this 29th day in May 2024:

PRINCETON SELECTBOARD



Robert Cumming, Chair



Karen Cruise, Vice Chair



Philip Gott, Clerk

Seal

I have this day posted the above warrant at Bagg Hall, Thomas Prince School, and the Princeton Post Office.

Date: 5/31, 2024


Constable