

Annual Town Meeting
Princeton, MA 01541
June 11, 2024

Warrant duly posted:	May 31, 2024
Inhabitants notified by website posting:	May 31, 2024
Advisory Board Hearing:	May 28, 2024
Quorum needed:	93
Voters Present:	240
Moderator:	Harry Pape
Checkers/Counters:	Debra Brenner, Gregory Miranda, Frances Thomas, Lynne Grettum
Acting Constable:	Chief Paul Patriarca
Meeting called to order:	6:20 PM
Meeting dissolved:	9:12 PM

All votes were taken by voice vote unless otherwise noted.

All articles are approved by Advisory Committee except where noted.

The Town Counsel was present.

The Moderator opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the full warrant.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 6:22 PM

The Moderator read the charge to the Constable, and the Return of the Warrant.

The Moderator asked that all first time attendees and non-voters identify themselves for the tellers.

The Constable for the meeting was identified by the Moderator as Police Chief, Paul Patriarca.

The Selectboard awarded the Citizen of the Year certificate to John Mirick.

The Moderator read the results from the May 13, 2024 Annual Town Election.

ARTICLE 1. Moved and seconded to hear the reports of the Town Officers and any outstanding committees and act thereon.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 6:35 PM

ARTICLE 2. Moved and seconded that the Town vote under the provisions of G.L. c. 41, §108, to fix the salaries of the following Town Officers for the ensuing year (FY25):

	<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)

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 6:36 PM

ARTICLE 3. The Moderator went through each Department of the FY25 budget to allow voters the opportunity to request that a department or departments be HELD for discussion. Voters requested that the following two budget items be considered separately and these items were HELD for discussion:

Ambulance
Wachusett Regional School

Excluding held items, moved and seconded to approve the balance of the budget for FY25, to raise and appropriate **\$6,738,047.77** and to transfer the sum of **\$150,000** from **Free Cash** to reduce the FY25 tax rate and to appropriate **\$140,340.00** from Ambulance Receipts for a total of ***\$7,028,927.77** including debt and interest, and to provide for a reserve fund, for the ensuing fiscal year (FY25), as set forth in the warrant and in the corrected handout sheet. *Correction is highlighted.*

**Town Clerk Note: There was a Scrivener’s error that was projected for public viewing and voted on that increased the raise & appropriate by \$540.00. Following the dissolution of town meeting, the Division of Local Services was consulted. The Division of Local Services advised that the number that is voted on is reported on the tax rate recap. Any excess unspent will flow to free cash.*

The Moderator declared the vote CARRIES at 6:45 PM

Moved and seconded to approve the ambulance budget of \$380,817.00.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 6:54 PM

An amendment was moved and seconded to reduce the Wachusett Regional School Discretionary Line funding request by \$200,000.00 so that it reads \$1,220,262.00 and to adjust the Wachusett Regional Total from \$6,106,079.00 to an amount of \$5,906,079.00. An objection was made to the amendment on the floor.

After further discussion, it was moved and seconded to amend that motion by approving the Wachusett Regional School budget as printed in the warrant.

The Moderator declared the vote CARRIES via electronic vote at 7:47 PM (Yes-199, No-33)

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	(2,598.26)	31,959.83	-7.52%
Expense	37,556.39	-	37,556.39	0.00%
Sub-Total	73,614.48	(2,598.26)	71,016.22	-3.53%
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%

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
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%
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 HELD	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%
SCHOOLS				
Wachusett Regional School				
Wachusett Minimum Contribution	4,009,651.00	213,710.00	4,223,361.00	5.33%
Operations Assessment	1,147,884.00	125,000.00	1,272,884.00	10.89%
Transportation	380,628.00	185,062.00	565,690.00	48.62%
Long Term Debt	103,356.00	(59,212.00)	44,144.00	-57.29%
Wachusett Regional Total HELD	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%

DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
PUBLIC WORKS				
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%
DEPARTMENT	FY24 BUDGET VOTED	FY25 CHANGES / GROWTH	FY25 Total Budget Request	FY 24 to FY 25 % INCREASE
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%
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%

ARTICLE 4. RECURRING BUSINESS – Moved and seconded to approve Article 4 as proposed in subsections A through E.

- A.

VOTED 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 appropriation for the FY25 trash operating budget is \$10,000 to be appropriated from the Solid Waste Enterprise account. Any balance in said account is to be carried forward to subsequent years.
- B.

VOTED to transfer \$10,000 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.
- C.

VOTED to raise and appropriate \$50.00 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.
- D.

VOTED to transfer \$2,047 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.
- E.

VOTED 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.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 7:52 PM

ARTICLE 5. DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS AUTHORIZATION

The Moderator read Article 5 and announced there was a scrivener’s error in the motion. The correct date should be changed from July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2024. After the scrivener’s error was noted, a motion was made and seconded 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.

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

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 7:55 PM

A motion was made and seconded to move to advance to Article 18 and article 19.

The Moderator declared the motion CARRIES via electronic vote at 7:56 PM (Yes-163, No-48)

ARTICLE 18. Moved and seconded to accept the provisions of MGL Chapter 90 §17C, allowing the Select Board 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 Does Not Approve

The Advisory Committee noted that they did not approve because they would like a list of roads that may be affected.

After further discussion, a motion was moved and seconded to move the question and vote on the main motion.

The Moderator declared the vote to move the question UNANIMOUS at 8:18 PM

The Moderator declared the main motion CARRIES via electronic vote at 8:18 PM (Yes-136, No-70)

After the Moderator read article 19, A motion was made and seconded to pass over Article 19. After discussion, the motion was put to vote.

The Moderator declared the vote to pass over FAILED via electronic vote at 8:22 PM (Yes-73, No-105)

ARTICLE 19. Moved and seconded to accept the provisions of MGL Chapter 90, §18B, allowing the Select Board to establish designated safety zones which shall be posted as having a speed limit of 20 miles per hour.

Advisory Committee Does Not Approve

The Moderator declared the vote CARRIES via electronic vote at 8:38 PM (Yes-126, No-41)

ARTICLE 6. Moved and seconded to 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. *Requires 2/3rd majority to pass.*

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

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:40 PM

ARTICLE 7. Moved and seconded to transfer \$2,500 from free cash 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.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:47 PM

ARTICLE 8. Moved and seconded to transfer **\$12,150 from free cash** from available funds to update the Princeton Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:48 PM

ARTICLE 9. Moved and seconded to **PASS OVER** Article 9, To see if the Town will vote to accept G.L. c.64L, §2(a) to impose a local meals excise tax.

Advisory Committee Does Not Approve

The Moderator declared the vote CARRIES at 8:49 PM

ARTICLE 10. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$5,000** from **free cash** to pay for costs associated with the September 11, 2023 flood.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:50 PM

ARTICLE 11. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$100,000** from **free cash** to the Infrastructure Stabilization Account.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:51 PM

ARTICLE 12. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$100,000** from **free cash** to the Stabilization Account.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 8:51 PM

ARTICLE 13. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$75,000** from **free cash** for grant writing services and to provide a grant match for various unspecified grant programs.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the motion on the floor by changing the language in the article, deleting the language in the motion referring to “for grant writing services and.” After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to vote on the amendment.

The Moderator declared the vote FAILED at 8:57 PM

After further discussion, moved and seconded to vote on the main motion.

The Moderator declared the vote CARRIES at 8:58 PM

ARTICLE 14. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$14,450** from **free cash** to purchase software for the Fire Department.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 9:05 PM

ARTICLE 15. Moved and seconded to **transfer \$10,000** from **free cash** for resurfacing the driveway entrance at Woodlawn Cemetery

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 9:08 PM

ARTICLE 16. Moved and seconded to **PASS OVER** Article 16, 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.

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 9:10 PM

ARTICLE 17. Moved and seconded 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".

The Moderator declared the vote UNANIMOUS at 9:11 PM

A motion was made and seconded to dissolve the meeting.

The Moderator declared the vote was Unanimous.

Meeting was dissolved at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alissa K. Horsung
Alissa K. Horsung, Town Clerk
Town of Princeton