

Spring 2024 Town Meeting Overview

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Town Meeting Logistics

- Annual Town Meeting will be held on Saturday May 11 at Stony Brook Elementary School - 1PM start time with 12PM check-in
- 24 articles on Annual Town Meeting warrant, including 2 citizens petitions
 - Per Town bylaw, finance-related articles will be taken up first, with the remainder being selected by lottery
 - No Special Town Meeting or consent agenda this year
- Warrant available on Town website, in Town offices, and at select local businesses

School Budget Articles

- **Article 3: Cape Cod Tech Operating Budget**
 - Gross operating expenses increasing by 4.4%
 - Brewster's assessment increasing by 3.3% based on Brewster student enrollment decrease of 2 students
- **Article 4: Brewster Elementary Schools Budget**
 - Operating budgets increasing by 13.1%
 - School employee benefits increasing by 11%
 - Town can only fund 4.5% operating increase within levy limit
- **Article 5: Elementary School Operating Override**
 - \$758,091 balance needed to fully fund budget via Prop 2½ override
 - Simple majority vote required at Town Meeting and May 28 local election
 - \$12./1,000 projected impact on FY25 tax rate - approximately \$82.51 permanent increase for the average home tax bill



School Budget Articles

- **Article 6: Nauset Regional Schools Budget**
 - Operating budget assessment increasing by 5.3% net (7.7% gross)
 - Decrease in Brewster's student enrollment share – from 48.1% to 46.4% and decrease in Brewster's share of Nauset budget due to use of statutory assessment formula
 - Brewster's assessment increasing by 9.2%, including 2nd half of Nauset Regional High School renovation project excluded debt (+\$1,297,951)
 - No override needed this year due to \$900k increase in revenues from one-time investment income from high school debt proceeds

Town Budget Articles

- **Article 7: Town Operating Budget**
 - Operating expenses increasing by 5.3%
 - Makes targeted investments in building organizational capacity
 - Departmental details available via Town's award-winning online budget
 - Funding for Brewster Community Pool is separately accounted for
- **Article 8: Water Department Operating Budget**
 - Operating expenses increasing by 2.7%, primarily driven by increases in material and utility costs
 - Offset by 2% annual rate increases – fully self-sustaining
- **Article 9: Golf Department Operating Budget**
 - Operating expenses increasing by 4.9%, primarily driven by significant increases in material and utility costs
 - Offset by 6% rate increases – fully self-sustaining

Capital & Special Projects

- Total recommended appropriation of \$1,436,212 for [Article 12](#), including \$584,000 from certified Free Cash
- Highlights include:
 - Integrated Water Resource Management Planning: \$150,000
 - Nauset Elementary School Regionalization and Efficiency Feasibility Study: \$100,000
 - Elementary School Capital: \$205,000 (Flooring, Painting, Technology, HVAC/Electrical, Security and Textbooks)
 - Continued Stormwater Permit Compliance: \$60,000
 - Fire Department PPE: \$50,000 (Ambulance Receipts)
 - Library Safety and Security Improvements: \$25,000

Capital & Special Projects

- Golf & Water capital paid separately from their retained earnings
- \$3.292M appropriated for capital projects at Fall 2023 STM
- Consistent with our 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan as vetted by Town Finance Team, Select Board, and Finance Committee
- If all capital requests are approved, closing FY24 Free Cash balance will be \$1,197,288

Other Financial Articles

- **Article 1: Unpaid Bills**
 - Standard article authorizing payment of a prior year fiscal bill
- **Article 2: Budgetary Transfers**
 - Standard article authorizing the transfer of funds to cover unanticipated shortfalls in budget
- **Article 14: Cable Franchise Fee**
 - Standard article appropriating revenues collected from the Town's cable license agreement to pay for local cable programming services & equipment
- **Article 15: Recreation Revolving Fund**
 - Increases the spending limit for the Recreation Fund

Community Preservation Act

- Estimated annual revenues for [Article 10](#) of \$1.5M, including projected 20% state match
- Year 2 of new distribution formula and target allocation policy
- Total recommended appropriation of \$1.6M in [Article 10](#), including \$978K to designated reserve funds and \$1.3M to projects, debt and administrative expenses
 - Community Housing - \$20k for Community Development Partnership Housing Institute and \$75k for Town Housing Coordinator
 - Recreation - \$7,500 for Finch Skateboard Park improvements
 - Open Space - \$182k for existing debt service for previously approved conservation land acquisitions
 - Administrative expenses - \$75k (5% of projected revenues)

CPA Land Acquisition



Article 11: Conservation Restriction on 0 & 3571 Main Street

- 12.36 acre parcel, known as Washington Chase Bog, comprised of 7.33 acres of upland and 5.04 acres of wetland - property is located on the north side of Main Street in East Brewster off Route 6A
- \$225k from CPA funds for a conservation restriction from BCT

Preschool Family Support Pilot

- Article 13: Preschool Family Support Pilot Program
- \$250,000 funded from available Overlay account
- Funding for 3 and 4 year old Brewster Families to assist with the cost of childcare
- \$3,000 stipend per eligible child to be determined by lottery
- No income eligibility requirements
- Program to be implemented in Sept. 2024



Tax Work Off Local Options

- **Article 16 Local Option: Senior Tax Work-off Designee**

To allow the Town to designate an approved representative for persons physically unable to provide such services to the city or town in order to receive the real estate tax exemption under the Senior Tax Work-off program

- **Article 17 Local Option: Veteran's Tax Work-Off Designee**

To allow the Town to designate an approved representative for persons physically unable to provide such services to the city or town in order to receive the real estate tax exemption under the Veteran's Tax Work-off Program

Road Improvement Articles

- **Articles 20: Temporary Easements for Millstone Road Improvement Project**
 - Project planned to go out to this summer and begin next fall
 - Small number of residents have not responded to the Town to grant their approval for temporary easements during construction – no permanent easements needed
 - This article would ensure the Town could secure all necessary temporary access
 - All owners will be compensated at same levels
- **Article 21: Private Road Betterment for Vesper Pond Neighborhood**
 - Petition from residents for proposed road and drainage improvements in the Vesper Pond neighborhood
 - Additional authorization for funds to be approved by Town Meeting but paid by private residents under Town's private road betterment program



Article 22: Drummer Boy Park Advisory Committee Report

- March 2023 Special Town Meeting voted to refer the 2021 Drummer Boy Master Plan to a new committee to review the plan and report their findings back to Spring 2024 Town Meeting
- New committee recommends no changes to parking or new paved paths - plus no references to Wing Island access
- Recommendations include low-impact stormwater enhancements, playground improvements, and repurposing the existing building to a shade structure

Citizens Petitions: Short-Term Rentals

- **Articles 23 & Article 24** are related citizens petitions that seek to establish a new registration system for short-term rentals (STRs) and limit the number of STRs owned by residents – articles will be taken up together since they are substantively related
- **Article 23** would require all residents who own short-term rental properties to register those properties with the Town on an annual basis for a fee & it would impose certain conditions and restrictions on the uses of those properties – violations would be subject to \$200/day fines
- **Article 24** would allow full-time residents to own up to 2 STRs and part-time residents to own 1 STR

Questions?

Email: townmanager@brewster-ma.gov

More information: www.brewster-ma.gov

Budget details: <https://stories.opengov.com/brewsterma/published/WLv2YNJWU>