

**TOWN OF OXFORD
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 8, 2024**

At the Annual Town Meeting duly called and held in the Oxford High School, 100 Carbuncle Drive, Oxford, MA, on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 7:00PM the following ARTICLES were voted on in a legal manner. There was a quorum present (100 Voters = quorum); 304 voters were present.

Checkers:

Robert W. Krasinskas
Juliana Masley
Peter Charles Standrowicz
Rose M. Wing

Tellers:

Debra King
Shelley L. Lambert
Alison Joy Lavallee
Debra Rose McDonald
Emmy Marie Monticelli
Sheila M. Thomas
Laura Beth Wilson

The Town Moderator, Cheryll Anne Leblanc, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

The Town Moderator noted the receipt of the return of the posting of the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting by the Constable.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dennis Lamarche. The National Anthem was played and the Color Guard presented the colors.

There was a moment of silence for former residents, employees and volunteers who have passed.

The boundaries of the Auditorium were outlined by the Moderator to include all of the floor area. The audience was advised of the fire evacuation routes.

The Moderator introduced Town Officials and Board Members.

ARTICLE 1. To hear the reports of Town Officers or Committees.

None being made.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to pay unpaid bills of a prior fiscal year; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

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MOTION MADE: That the sum of Four Thousand One Hundred Six Dollars and Eighty-Seven Cents (\$4,106.87) be appropriated from Sewer Retained Earnings for sewer operations and maintenance invoices from Weston and Sampson.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to meet the State's share of the cost for Town roadway maintenance and repair, such amount to be reimbursed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as State Highway Aid (Fiscal Year 2025 Chapter 90 Apportionment); or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the DPW Director, Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the sum of Five Hundred Three Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Six Dollars and Fifty-Nine Cents (\$503,846.59) be appropriated from State Highway Aid (FY25 Chapter 90 Program) as printed in the warrant.

MOTION PASSED BY MAJORITY VOTE.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, §53E 1/2 to establish the Fiscal Year 2025 spending limits for the following revolving funds established in the Oxford General By-Laws CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE, Revolving Funds, as follows:

Wiring Inspector Fees: One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00)

Plumbing Inspector Fees: Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00)

Gas Inspector Fees: Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00)

Building Inspector Fees: Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00)

Sealer of Weights and Measures: Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00)

Utilities: Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00)

Animal Control: Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00)

Board of Health: Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00)

Rocky Hill Yard Waste Facility Fees: Twenty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred (\$29,500.00)

or act thereon.

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*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That Article 4 be adopted as printed in the Warrant.

MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, §53E½ to establish a new revolving fund, to be known as the Emergency Address Funding Account; and further, to amend the Oxford General By-Laws CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE, Revolving Funds accordingly as shown in the document on file in the Office of the Town Clerk; and further establish the Fiscal Year 2025 spending limit as follows, or act thereon:

Emergency Address Funding Account: Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00)

*Sponsored by the Fire Chief and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That Article 5 be adopted as printed in the Warrant amending Chapter 74 of Town's Bylaws.

MOTION PASSED.

Approved by the Attorney General on July 19, 2024.

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to the Compensated Absence Fund; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) be transferred from Free Cash and be appropriated to the Compensated Absence Fund for Fiscal Year 2025.

MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to the Stabilization Fund, for Fiscal Year 2025; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

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MOTION MADE: That the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) be transferred from Free Cash and be appropriated to the Stabilization Fund for Fiscal Year 2025.

**MOTION MADE TO LAY THE QUESTION ON THE TABLE PASSED BY A 2/3 VOTE
DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR.**

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

MAIN MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate a sum of money to the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund, for Fiscal Year 2025; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the sum of Seventy Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00) be transferred from Free Cash and be appropriated for the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund for Fiscal Year 2025.

MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 9. To determine what sum of money the Town will vote to appropriate from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, established by a vote of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, Article 13, as authorized by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, §53F 3/4, as amended, to fund PEG access programming, as well as certain other municipal cable related expenses for Fiscal Year 2025; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the sum of One Hundred Fifty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Nine Dollars (\$159,709.00) be appropriated from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund to the Fiscal Year 2025 PEG Access Budget.

MOTION PASSED.

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ARTICLE 10. To determine what sums of money the Town will raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt and interest, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 (Fiscal Year 2025); or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the Town appropriate funds in amounts not to exceed those set forth in the Finance Committee Recommendation Column of the printed budget for the several purposes therein itemized, and to meet said appropriations as follows:

Raise through taxation	\$46,677,917.00
Transfer from Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	\$825,000.00
Transfer from WRTA Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	\$25,000.00
Raise through Sewer Enterprise Receipts	\$473,665.00
Raise through Water Enterprise Receipts	\$61,457.00
Transfer from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings	\$22,032.00
Total	\$48,085,071.00

FIRST AMENDMENT MADE: That the Town vote to amend the School Department general fund appropriation from \$20,849,707 to \$21,359,503 which is an increase of \$509,796.

The Moderator chose to allow non-resident Town Department Heads to speak to their individual budgets.

Presentation made by the Superintendent, Michael Lucas, concerning the School Department Budget.

POINT OF INQUIRY: That all department heads be allowed to discuss their budgets.

Presentation made by the Fire Chief, Laurent McDonald, concerning the Fire Department Budget.

Presentation made by the Police Chief, Michael Daniels, concerning the Police Department Budget.

Presentation made by the DPW Director, Kevin Duffy, concerning the DPW Budget.

Presentation made by the Principal Assessor, Alexander Sendzik, concerning the Assessors Budget.

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Presentation made by the Animal Control Officer, Kathleen Flynn, concerning her Animal Control Budget.

Presentation made by the Community Center Director, Shelley Lambert, concerning the Community Center Budget.

Presentation made by the Senior Center Director, Laura Beth Wilson, concerning the Senior Center Budget.

Presentation made by the Library Director, Brittany McDougal Bialy, concerning the Library Budget.

Presentation made by the Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen, Laureen Gilbert, concerning the Board of Selectmen Budget.

Presentation made by the Treasurer/Collector, Cheyenne Cusson, concerning the Treasurer/Collector Budget.

Presentation made by the Human Resource Specialist, Joanne Frederick, concerning the Human Resource Department.

Presentation made by the Veteran's Director, David Adams, concerning the Veteran's Budget.

Presentation made by the Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer, Patrick Dahlgren concerning the Land Management Budget.

Presentation made by the Town Planner, Eric Rumsey, concerning the Planning Departments Budget.

Presentation made by the Town Clerk, Michelle Jenkins, concerning the Town Clerk Budget.

Presentation made by the Finance Director, Katherine McKenna, concerning the School Department Budget.

Motion was made to allow Dennis Fitzgibbon, Chair of the Fire Fighters Unions, to speak concerning the Fire Departments Budget.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

MOTION MADE TO TAKE A SECRET BALLOT ON THE AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 10 FAILED.

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE MAIN MOTION PASSED.

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SECOND AMENDMENT MADE: That the main motion be amended by striking the words, “3,325,473” from the Fincom approved, General Government total and by substituting the words, “2,975,473”.

MOTION MADE TO POSTPONE ARTICLE 10 TO JUNE 26, 2024, AT 7PM AT THE OXORD HIGH SCHOOL, 100 CARBUNCLE DRIVE FAILED.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

MOTION TO POSTPONE ARTICLE 10 TO JUNE 26, 2024 FAILED.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

SECOND AMENDMENT FAILED, 77 voting in favor, 168 voting opposed

THIRD AMENDMENT MADE: That the Town take \$509,796 out of the Stabilization Fund to balance the FY25 Budget.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

THIRD AMENDMENT PASSED.

ALTERED MAIN MOTION WITH AMENDMENTS: To determine what sums of money the Town will raise by taxation or transfer from available funds and appropriate to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt and interest, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 (Fiscal Year 2025); or act thereon.

Raise through taxation	\$46,677,917.00
Transfer from Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	\$825,000.00
Transfer from WRTA Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	\$25,000.00
Transfer through Stabilization	\$509,796.00
Raise through Sewer Enterprise Receipts	\$473,665.00
Raise through Water Enterprise Receipts	\$61,457.00
Transfer from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings	\$22,032.00
Total	\$48,594,867.00

MAIN MOTION WITH AMENDMENTS PASSED. A 2/3 vote was declared by the moderator.

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ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation or transfer from available funds or borrow and authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to issue a note or notes and/or bond or bonds and appropriate a sum of money for the Capital Outlay Program for Fiscal Year 2025, including any incidental and related expenses; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That the sum of Two Million Fifteen Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Eight Dollars (\$2,015,968.00) be transferred from Free Cash and appropriated for the following items, each item being considered a separate appropriation:

DPW-Roadway/Dam/Bridge/Culvert Engineering, Repair, Restoration and Improvements	\$500,000.00
DPW - Building Improvement Fund	\$475,000.00
DPW - Replace Bulk Fuel Storage & Fueling System	\$450,000.00
DPW - Fleet Repair/Replace	\$130,000.00
DPW - Greenbriar Restroom Facility	\$105,000.00
EMS/Fire - Forestry 2 Replacement	\$250,000.00
Police - Weapons Replacement	\$55,968.00
Townwide - Green Communities Local Match	\$50,000.00

AMENDMENT MADE: That the Town vote amend the main motion by striking the DPW – Building Improvement Fund - \$475,000.

AMENDMENT FAILED.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

MAIN MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a lease purchase financing agreement in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, §21C for a period of up to 5 years to lease police vehicles; and further to appropriate a sum of money for the first year payment therefor, with funding for such amount included within the Fiscal Year 25 budget; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Police Chief, Town Manager and Finance Director
Finance Committee Recommends*

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MOTION MADE: That the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 44, §21C, or any other enabling authority, to enter into a lease purchase financing agreement for the acquisition of police vehicles for the Police Department, the terms of such agreements as stated being less than the useful life of the equipment, the funding of the first year payment for such lease purchase financing agreements having been provided within the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

MOTION PASSED. A 2/3 vote was declared by the Moderator.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to increase the Gross Receipts limits and Whole Estate limits to the maximum allowable limits for the property tax exemption granted to eligible senior citizens under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41C, by adjusting the following factors in accordance with said statute:

3) increasing the amounts contained in subclause (B) of said first sentence of said statute whenever they appear in said subclause with respect to gross receipts from all sources that such eligible person had, in the preceding year, from \$13,000 to \$20,000, or if married, combined gross receipts with their spouse from \$15,000 dollars to \$30,000; and

4) increasing the amounts contained in subclause (C) of said first sentence of said statute whenever they appear in said subclause with respect to the whole estate, real and personal, of such eligible person from \$28,000 dollars to \$40,000 or if married, from \$30,000 to \$55,000, provided that real property occupied as their domicile shall not be included in computing the whole estate except for any portion of said property which produces income and exceeds two dwelling units; said adjustments to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2024; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Principal Assessor, Finance Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That Article 13 be adopted as printed in the Warrant.

MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the continued service of Mr. Craig Gagner, a current uniformed member of the police department of the Town of Oxford, to continue in his prior position at the police department until he reaches 68 years of age or he is relieved of his duties, whichever occurs first; provided, however, that Craig Gagner is mentally and physically capable of performing the duties of the position; And further provided that the Town, at its own expense, may require that Craig Gagner be examined by an impartial physician designated by the Town to determine his capacity; such authorization to be in accordance with and contingent upon the passage of special legislation currently pending before the General Court as House Docket Number 4716; or act thereon.

*Sponsored by the Police Chief and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

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MOTION MADE: That Article 14 be adopted as printed in the Warrant.

MOTION MADE TO MOVE THE QUESTION PASSED.

MAIN MOTION PASSED.

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town’s general By-Laws, Chapter 32, Street and Sidewalks, Section 3 by deleting the language contained therein in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following new text; or act thereon:

Whenever the Department of Public Works is about to construct or resurface any street or way, the Department will, before beginning the work, give reasonable notice of such intention to other departments and corporations affected thereby and to all abutting owners. After such notice has been given no department, corporation, or person shall for a period of three years break up or disturb the surface of said street or way within the area so constructed or resurfaced except in the case of reasonable necessity as determined by Superintendent of Streets.

In the event an excavation is permitted during the three-year moratorium, the contractor shall conduct the work and restoration as directed by the Superintendent of Streets. In such circumstances, the Superintendent of Streets may require curb-to-curb restoration and that the permanent patch be treated by a process that will ensure that the patch is integrated into the existing bituminous surface. The restoration work shall be warrantied and maintained by the contractor for a period of either not less than the remainder of the in-place moratorium, or two years after the completion of the work, whichever is longer.

*Sponsored by the DPW Director and Town Manager
Finance Committee Recommends*

MOTION MADE: That Article 15 be adopted as printed in the Warrant with the insertion of the words, “no less than 30 days” after the words “reasonable notice” in the first sentence.

MOTION PASSED.

Approved by the Attorney General on July 19, 2024.

MOTION MADE TO TAKE ARTICLE 7 OFF THE TABLE PASSED.

At 11:48PM, it was voted to dissolve the Annual Town Meeting.

True Copy

Attest:

Michelle A. Jenkins, CMC, Town Clerk