

TOWN OF LENOX
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – May 5, 2022

At 7:08 p.m. the Annual Town Meeting held at the Lenox Memorial Middle High School was called to order by Moderator John J. McNinch. A quorum for the meeting was met with over 137 present at the opening. Selectmen Chair Marybeth Mitts welcomed everyone and thanked the Town Staff and the Selectmen for all the help they have given her over this past year. She also thanked Fran Sorrentino for supplying the Town Officials on stage with water for the last 26 years and Richard Defazio for all the research he initiated allowing us to begin using electronic voting (clickers). Thank You All!!!

Christopher J. Ketchen, Town Manager shared a power point presentation explaining the budget process to voters and showing where their tax dollars are being used.

ARTICLE 1. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the warrant and return of service thereof and to authorize the moderator, pursuant to MGL Chapter 39, Section 15, to declare a 2/3rds vote on voice votes if he deems it so.

ARTICLE 2. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to raise and appropriate funds for the operating expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2023 as printed in the warrant.

DEPARTMENT ACCOUNT	FY 22	FY 23
	<u>JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022</u>	<u>JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023</u>
1. Admin. & Finance	264,824	345,247
2. Town Clerk	71,858	83,997
3. Town Treasurer/Collector	140,608	169,632
4. Compensation Reserve	70,000	90,000
5. Operations Support	98,393	99,118
6. Elections & Registration	14,400	16,675
7. Economic Dev/Advertising	112,682	122,500
8. Town Debt & Interest	13,000	237,000
9. Audit, Reserve Account	786,882	841,262
10. Insurance & Bonds, OPEB	756,790	799,786
11. Land Use Department	461,642	531,388
12. Town Buildings	94,507	98,080
General Government Subtotal	2,885,586	3,434,685
13. Police Department	1,279,643	1,374,042
14. Fire Department	634,184	653,274
15. Emergency Management	33,622	35,100
16. Ambulance Squad	490,602	583,830

Public Safety Subtotal	2,438,051	2,646,246
17. Vocational Education	191,360	197,101
Education Subtotal	191,360	197,101
18. Highway Department	672,360	731,546
19. Snow & Ice	257,005	257,005
20. Cemetery	32,398	32,397
Public Works Subtotal	961,763	1,020,948
21. Board of Health	198,284	213,893
22. Veterans Services	53,206	30,372
Human Services Subtotal	251,490	244,265
23. Community Center	418,499	449,092
24. Cultural Council Grants	5,000	5,000
25. Cultural District	7,500	7,500
26. Academy Building	7,774	7,774
27. Historical Commission	23,450	25,950
28. Celebrations	2,200	2,200
Cultural & Recreation Subtotal	464,423	497,516
29. Lenox Library	421,004	443,400
Lenox Library Subtotal	421,004	443,400
Totals	\$7,613,677	\$8,484,161

APPROVED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
APPROVED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE

HOLDS/QUESTIONS on the Department Accounts:

Robert Reidel, 423 New Lenox Rd., asked why the Veterans Services budget is much lower this year. Town Manager Ketchen stated there are fewer Veterans in Lenox, thus the reduction. Hank Maimin, 32 Hubbard St., noted that the budget is 870,000.00 more (11.43%) than last year and he commended the boards for doing a great job!

Robert Hackmann, 34 St. Ann's Ave. asked about the Town Debt Services & Interest line item. Town Manager Ketchen reminded voters that last year many bonds were approved allowing us to take advantage of low interest rates being offered.

School Committee Chairman Robert Vaughan presented Article 3 on behalf of the School Committee. He thanked the retirees and Staff for their service. This budget is a 4.91% increase from last year. This is more than the 3% the Town requested. The Board of Selectmen did not support the budget the school presented and Selectmen William David Roche stated the reasons. He noted our public buildings need to be brought into the future, especially our Public Safety buildings and with these expenses looming, the Selectmen could not support more than a 3% increase.

Kristine Cass, Chair of the Finance Committee explained why the Committee did not support the increased School Budget and how the Committee would like to see the School Committee budget process become sustainable. She feels this School Committee's process of budgeting is not responsible.

After much debate, Brendan Mathews, 15 Beecher Ln., called the question which was 2nd and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 3. It was moved, seconded and approved to raise and appropriate the sum of \$14,198,680 for the operating expenses of the school department for the Fiscal Year 2023.

There was a request to use the "clickers".

YES – 83%

NO – 17%

ARTICLE 4. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to make the following appropriations to fund the Fiscal Year 2023 budget for the Sewer Department;

1. Sewer Operations	\$939,800
2. Debt Service	\$778,362
3. Capital Expenditures	<u>\$220,000</u>
	\$1,938,162

And further, to provide for said appropriations from the following sources of revenue and available funds.

User Charges	\$1,718,162
Retained Earnings	<u>\$ 220,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,938,162

ARTICLE 5. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to make the following appropriations to fund the Fiscal Year 2023 budget for the Water Department;

1. Water Operations	\$624,475
2. Debt Service	\$862,902
3. Capital Expenditures	<u>\$ 45,000</u>
	\$1,532,377

And further, to provide for said appropriations from the following sources of revenue and available funds.

User Charges	\$1,487,377
Retained Earnings	<u>\$ 45,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,532,377

ARTICLE 6. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the Town accept funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges.

ARTICLE 7. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$1,314,200 for the following capital expenditures:

1. Highway Department Expenditures	\$ 325,000
2. Cemetery Department Expenditures	\$ 50,000
3. School Department Expenditures	\$ 370,200
4. Fire Department Expenditures	\$ 285,000
5. Police Department Expenditures	\$ 25,000
6. Land Use Expenditures	\$ 5,000
7. Community Center Expenditures	\$ 54,000
8. Town Buildings Expenditures	\$ 50,000
9. Academy Building Expenditures	\$ 150,000

ARTICLE 8. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the Town transfer from the Community Preservation Fund the amount of \$760,059.35 as recommended by the Community Preservation Committee.

CPA FY23 Funding Recommendations

	Funding Amount	Funding Source
CPA Category: Historic Preservation		
The Mount	\$125,000	Historic Preservation Reserve
Annual Library Debt Service	<u>\$118,500</u>	Historic Preservation Reserve
Total Category Amount	\$243,500	
CPA Category: Community Housing		
Pennrose LLC	\$500,000	Community Housing Reserve
Administrative Expenses	\$ 16,559.35	Unrestricted Fund
Total Expenditures	\$760,059.35	
CPA Reserves (10% of Annual Revenues)		
Historic Preservation	\$ 33,118.70	FY23 Annual Revenues
Community Housing	\$ 33,118.70	FY23 Annual Revenues
Open Space & Recreation	<u>\$ 33,118.70</u>	FY23 Annual Revenues
	\$ 99,356.10	

ARTICLE 9. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to transfer \$100,000 from the Community Preservation Unrestricted Fund Balance to the CPC Community Housing Fund for future housing projects.

ARTICLE 10. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to transfer from Free Cash \$175,000 to be placed in the Fire Engine Stabilization Account.

ARTICLE 11. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in the Ambulance Stabilization Account.

ARTICLE 12. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$315,000 for FY22 Operating Budget Expenditures.

\$ 250,000 Restore funding to Other Post
Employment. (OPEB) Benefits & Trust.
\$ 65,000 Town Manager salary adjustment
due to termination of shared services
agreement.

ARTICLE 13. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to disband the Affordable Housing Committee, since its purpose is being fulfilled and actions now undertaken by the Affordable Housing Trust. (Petition article)

ARTICLE 14. It was moved, seconded and tabled to adopt regulations regarding the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in pet stores as attached to the May 5, 2022 Town Meeting warrant. (Citizens Petition article)

It was voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting 8:52 PM and to reconvene on Monday, May 9, 2022 at the Lenox Town Hall for the purpose of voting for Town Officers.

A true copy.

Attest: Kerry L. Sullivan
Kerry L. Sullivan, CMMC
Lenox Town Clerk