

WARRANT FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
December 12, 2022
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

WORCESTER: SS

BOYLSTON

To either of the Constables of the Town of Boylston in the County of Worcester within the Commonwealth aforesaid:

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Boylston aforesaid, qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs, to meet at the **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING** on **Monday the twelfth (12th) day of December, 2022, at seven o'clock (7:00) P.M.**, at the Tahanto Regional High School Auditorium, 1001 Main Street, Boylston, MA, to take any action relative to the business of the Town as set forth in Articles one (1) through five (5) of this Warrant; and if necessary, at its adjournment which shall be Tuesday, the thirteenth (13th) day of December, 2022 at seven o'clock (7:00) P.M. at the Tahanto Regional High School Auditorium;

Voters of the Town of Boylston, Massachusetts, met in the auditorium of Tahanto Regional High School according to legal notice on December 12th, 2022. With 91 registered voters (2.22% turnout), the required quorum was met. Selectmen Matthew Mecum, Seth Ridinger, and James Underwood were present. Also present were Town Administrator April Steward, Town Counsel Stephen Madaus, and Town Clerk Dawn Porter.

Kimberly Kohler, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Ms. Kohler stated that the calling of the meeting and officer's return of service were in order as required.

A MOTION by Seth Ridinger to waive the reading of the Warrant was made and a second from the audience was made. Vote on the MOTION passed unanimously.

The Moderator set the bounds of the hall, the Pledge of Allegiance was said, and introductions were made.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds in the Treasury and appropriate a sum not to exceed One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,300,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new Radio Communications System for the Police Department, Fire Department, Highway Department, and the Light Department; or act in any other way thereon.

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Finance Committee Recommendation: Finance Committee recommends approval.

MOTION was made by Finance Committee Member David Butler that the Town transfer from available funds in the Treasury a sum not to exceed One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,300,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new Radio Communications System for the Police Department, Fire Department, Highway Department, and the Light Department. Dave explained that by doing this rather than borrowing, the Town would save a minimum of \$40,000 in the first year with similar savings in following years. Being able to pay for the project rather than borrow is the result of fees collected from several large construction projects happening within Boylston. MOTION was seconded.

Kimberly Kohler opened the floor for questions and commentary. Voters expressed concern regarding lack of transparency surrounding the project. Many voters expressed their disapproval of the wording set forth in last May's Annual Town Meeting Warrant, noting that it was not specific with regard to the location of one of the telecommunications towers which is being constructed off Stiles Road. Stiles Road neighbors expressed concern for public safety as the tower is set to be constructed in a densely populated area and

they asked why letters about the project were not mailed to abutters. Selectman James Underwood indicated that notice was given to Boylston residents in the form of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, which was properly served. He also noted the many meetings held by the Board of Selectmen regarding the project dating back prior to COVID. Voters asked about the permitting process for the project and its status. Town Counsel Stephen Madaus explained that the Building Inspector issued a building permit for the project this week and the Town has a contractor in place. He also noted that the Town had received a letter from the attorney for abutters who are challenging the municipal exemption used for the project as set forth in the Town's Zoning By-Laws.

Discussion was contentious, but a MOTION was made and seconded to move the Article. The MOTION passed, but the vote was contested by residents who weren't familiar with Town Meeting guidelines and felt that they were not given a fair opportunity to vote.

Town Counsel agreed that Town Meeting By-Laws provide for a motion to reconsider, requiring a 2/3 affirmative vote. The Town Moderator entertained a MOTION for reconsideration of Article 1, which was seconded. In a counted vote, 40 for reconsideration and 50 against, the MOTION to reconsider did not pass.

The original MOTION approving Article 1 passed.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds in the Treasury and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$1,351.25 for the purpose of paying the following prior fiscal year bills; or act in any other way thereon.

- Coastal Medical Billing, Invoice #34810, dated June 30,2022, for \$1,351.25

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Finance Committee Recommendation:

MOTION was made by James Underwood that the Town vote to transfer from available funds in the Treasury and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$1,351.25 for the purpose of paying a prior fiscal year bill: Coastal Medical Billing, Invoice #34810, dated June 30, 2022. MOTION was seconded.

Finance Committee Member Howard Drobner stated the Finance Committee recommends approval.

MOTION passed.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Ambulance Receipts Reserved and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$11,000 for unexpected repairs to both ambulances, equipment replacement, and to purchase additional medication to be carried on both ambulances; or act in any other way thereon.

Sponsor: Fire Department

Finance Committee Recommendation:

MOTION was made by Fire Chief Joe Flanagan that the Town transfer from Ambulance Receipts Reserved and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$11,000.00 for unexpected repairs to both ambulances, equipment replacement, and to purchase additional medication to be carried on both ambulances. MOTION was seconded.

Finance Committee Member Howard Drobner stated that the Finance Committee recommends approval.

MOTION passed.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to amend Article I of the General Bylaws by inserting in Section 4 a new subsection 4.8 after subsection 4.7 therein, to be entitled “Community Preservation Committee”, which shall establish and authorize a Community Preservation Committee to operate in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of Chapter 44B of the General Laws; or act in any other way thereon.

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Finance Committee Recommendation:

MOTION was made by Seth Ridinger that the Town amend Article 1 of the General Bylaws by inserting in Section 4 a new subsection 4.8 after subsection 4.7, to be entitled “Community Preservation Committee”, which shall establish and authorize a Community Preservation Committee to operate in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of Chapter 44B of the General Laws. MOTION was seconded.

Voter Christi Stille, Scar Hill Road, made a MOTION to amend Article 4 to ensure that one of the four at-large members be appointed by the Board of Selectmen from among the Boylston Library Trustees or the Boylston Library Foundation. MOTION was seconded.

There ensued a brief discussion and then Dawn Porter read the amended MOTION in full.

MOTION did not pass.

Vote was then taken on the original MOTION, which did pass.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds in the Treasury and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$34,000 for the purpose of conducting a facility assessment at Boylston Elementary, or act in any other way thereon.

Sponsor: Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee

Finance Committee Recommendation:

MOTION was made by Matt Mecum to pass over Article 5 as Northbridge Partners, who have a building project on Pine Hill Drive, have generously offered to fund the study. MOTION was seconded.

The Moderator called for a vote and the Article was passed over.

MOTION was made to adjourn the meeting. A second was made. Vote on the MOTION. MOTION passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned by the Moderator at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn A. Porter
Boylston Town Clerk