

**WESTWOOD  
FINANCE AND WARRANT COMMISSION**

**WARRANT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**



**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024 - 6:30 P.M.  
WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Norfolk ss:

To either of the Constables of the Town of Westwood in said County, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify the inhabitants of said Town of Westwood qualified to vote in elections and town affairs to meet in the Westwood High School Auditorium, 200 Nahatan Street, in said Westwood on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 6:30 in the evening, there and then to act on the following Articles:

**ARTICLE 1 – Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from existing funds the sum of Two Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,100,000) to pay the costs associated with designing, preparing, and obtaining construction bid documents, for a new Fire Station (Station One), at the existing location of 637 High Street, Westwood and to renovate, refurbish and/or construct temporary quarters at 90 Deerfield Avenue, Westwood, or to take any other action relative thereto.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding	\$2,100,000	Free Cash

**(Select Board)**

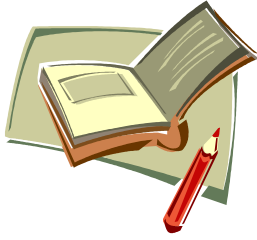
**ARTICLE 2 – Debt Housekeeping – Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle (\$400,000)**

To see if the Town will vote to abandon the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and then transfer the \$400,000 borrowed for that purpose, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town: (i) abandons the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and (ii) transfers the \$400,000 borrowed to pay costs of purchasing the Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which project was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000.

**(Select Board)**



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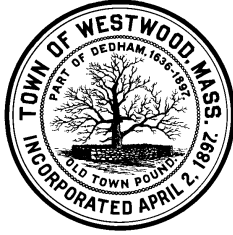
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#### 2023- 2024 FINANCE AND WARRANT COMMISSION

George Hertz, Chair  
Christopher Poreda, Vice-Chair  
William C. Bruce, Jr.  
John Carey  
James Ferraro  
Lauren FitzPatrick  
Seth Frederickson  
Michael Gay  
Caitlyn Jurczak  
George Laham  
George Maroun  
Kristina Patyjewicz  
Sean Weller  
Alexander Yale

Victoria Wong, Administrator



## WESTWOOD FINANCE AND WARRANT COMMISSION

### A MESSAGE TO RESIDENTS FROM CHAIR GEORGE HERTZ & VICE CHAIR CHRIS POREDA

Dear Resident,

On behalf of the 2023/2024 Finance and Warrant Commission, we are respectfully requesting that you attend Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Westwood High School.

The Special Town Meeting Warrant consists of two Articles:

#### **Article 1 - Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from existing funds the sum of Two Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,100,000) to pay the costs associated with designing, preparing, and obtaining construction bid documents, for a new Fire Station (Station One), at the existing location of 637 High Street, Westwood and to renovate, refurbish and/or construct temporary quarters at 90 Deerfield Avenue, Westwood, or to take any other action relative thereto.

#### **Article 2 - Debt Housekeeping-Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle (\$400,000)**

To see if the Town will vote to abandon the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and then transfer the \$400,000 borrowed for that purpose, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

The Finance and Warrant commission previously held a Public Meeting on these Articles and subsequently conducted a Public Hearing on both of these Articles on December 6, 2023. After presentations by the Select Board and Dore & Whittier on Article 1 and the Select Board and town officials on Article 2, members of the Finance and Warrant Commission conducted a Q&A session with the presenters. Members of the public were also given the opportunity to ask questions. The Commission closed the public hearing and deliberated in public about the merit of these two Articles. Subsequently, both of these Articles received a unanimous recommendation for approval by those present.

Following the listing of the articles herein, you will find the Finance and Warrant Commissions recommendations as well as our comments (*italicized text*) summarizing the purpose of the articles and the reasons for the Finance and Warrant Commission's recommendations.

We encourage you to review these two Articles to be voted on at the Special Town Meeting on January 17, 2024 and to attend the meeting and to participate in the decision-making process.

George Hertz Chair  
Chris Poreda Vice Chair



## What happens at Town Meeting?

### A Message from the Town Moderator...

**Our Town Meeting is conducted in accordance with Town Bylaws (ch.138), Massachusetts General Law, and Town Meeting Time. Some matters of procedure are summarized below.**

#### General Information

- Town Meeting is the legislative branch of town government, used to enact local laws, pass budgets and authorize spending of town money. The Westwood Charter calls for an Annual Town meeting to be held on the first Monday in May and a second Annual Town Meeting to be held the second Monday in (unless it falls on a Holiday it shall be the next business day) November. The Select Board may at its discretion cancel the Fall meeting no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> of any given year. The Select Board has the authority to call a Special Town Meeting -when warranted.
- The Moderator presides at Town Meetings and Special Town Meetings, and is responsible for ruling on procedural matters, overseeing orderly debate, and preserving decorum.
- Citizens who are registered to vote in Westwood are entitled to attend, address the meeting, and vote. Guests may attend the meeting but can address the meeting only with the approval of the Moderator.
- Warrant articles are presented in numerical order. A motion to take an article out of order requires a 2/3 vote of those present and voting.
- The January 17, 2024 Special Town Meeting will be held in the Auditorium at Westwood High School, 200 Nahatan Street. Check-In-5:30 p.m., Meeting begins -6:30 p.m.
- One hundred and seventy-five (175) registered voters constitute a quorum as per *Section 138-12* of the Town By-Laws, however as per Chapter 2 of The Acts of 2023 "*An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 To Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for certain other Activities and Projects,*" the Select Board, in consultation with the Moderator, will take this matter up at their January 8, 2024 meeting. They may lower the quorum to not less than 10% of the existing quorum level; historically they have not gone below 25% or 45 voters.

#### Motions, Motions to Amend, and Votes Required

- An article in the warrant states a question for the Town Meeting to answer. A motion is a proposed answer to the question and must be within the scope (intent) of the article.
- The recommendation of the Finance and Warrant Commission is the first motion under an article and is considered the main motion.
- The motion of the Finance and Warrant Commission is open for discussion by the voters.
- Motions to amend the main motion, which are within the scope of the warrant article, may be made on the Town Meeting floor.
- Ordinarily motions require a majority vote of the voters present and voting to pass. Certain motions require a 2/3, 4/5, or even a 9/10 due to provisions of Massachusetts law or the Town Bylaws. The Moderator will announce the voting requirement before each vote is taken.

#### Motions for Indefinite Postponement and Motions to Reconsider

- A motion for indefinite postponement is equivalent to a motion that no action be taken under the article and such motion may not be amended.
- If the voters defeat the motion for indefinite postponement, favorable action on the subject matter of the article requires a motion to that effect.
- A motion to reconsider an article may only occur on the same night the article was voted and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting and shall not be made again.

#### Rules of Debate and Vote Counting

- A voter desiring to speak should rise, await recognition by the Moderator, identify themselves when recognized and stand while speaking.
- Debate will focus on the motion being discussed.
- The Moderator determines whether votes will be taken by Electronic or voice vote. If votes are taken by voice vote the Moderator determines whether the motion carried or was lost. If the Moderator cannot decide by the sound of voices, or if the announcement by the Moderator that the voice vote is doubted by seven (7) or more voters raising their hands for that purpose, the Moderator shall without debate, determine the vote by ordering an electronic, standing, secret ballot vote.

**2024 WARRANT AND FINCOM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING:**

**ARTICLE 1 – Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from existing funds the sum of Two Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,100,000) to pay the costs associated with designing, preparing, and obtaining construction bid documents, for a new Fire Station (Station One), at the existing location of 637 High Street, Westwood and to renovate, refurbish and/or construct temporary quarters at 90 Deerfield Avenue, Westwood, or to take any other action relative thereto.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding	\$2,100,000	Free Cash

**(Select Board)**

**The Finance and Warrant Commission, by a unanimous vote of those present in favor, recommends that the Town so vote.**

*This article represents the next step to address a long standing and urgent capital need for the Town. For years the present Fire Station on High Street (Station One) has been in need of repair or replacement. The current 75-year old structure falls woefully short of meeting the present needs of Westwood and the 21<sup>st</sup> century industry standards for fire departments. The Town took the first steps toward addressing this need in 2013 and 2014 by creating a Public Safety Task Force and performing a Feasibility Study for all Public Safety facilities. Then in 2023, after addressing the needs of the Police Department and replacing the Fire Station in Islington, the Town undertook a Feasibility Study for Station One. In addition, the Town conducted an Operations and Response Time Study for the Fire Department which concluded that a new building should replace Station One at the current site on High Street. The Feasibility Study for Station One was recently completed in October of 2023. We are now at the point where the Town needs to finalize the design of a new Station One and get ready to bid the project for construction. While the design has not yet been finalized, we know that the project will likely cost \$35 to \$40 million. With that cost in mind, a cost of \$3.5 million for final design and bid documents falls in line with the costs of design and bid documents for other recent projects the Town has undertaken. Of course, as always, if the final design of the new Station One results in a project that does not cost as much, the cost of the design and bid documents may be reduced as well.*

*The Town proposes to fund the costs of the final design and bid documents through two sources. First, the Town will use \$1.4 million of the funds received from the State and Federal Governments under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) received during the recent pandemic. These funds are not restricted as to how the Town uses the money and the Commission agrees that this is a good use of these unrestricted ARPA funds. Second, the Town is seeking Town Meeting approval to transfer \$2.1 million from “free cash” for this purpose. The Select Board’s approval of the use of ARPA funds is contingent on the Town approving the transfer of the remaining amount needed under this Article.*

*In addition to replacing Station One at its current location, the project will entail some modest rehabilitation and renovation of the former American Legion Building on Deerfield Avenue for use as a temporary site for Station One. The costs associated with doing that work is anticipated to be a small fraction of the total cost of the project and will result in a building useable by the Town for multiple purposes after construction. The needed rehabilitation work is work that would have to be done anyway to bring that building into compliance with current building code requirements, and that need was known to the Town when it purchased the building. The costs of the design work for that rehabilitation of the American Legion Building are included in the costs being covered by this Article.*

*The Commission thanks Criterion, the Town’s consultant for the Operations Study and Dore & Whittier, the Town’s consultant for the Station One Feasibility Study, for preparing the preliminary design renderings of the exterior of the building. The Commission looks forward to working with the Town in making sure that the*

*project costs are controlled and that elected and appointed town officials and staff, fire department members, as well as the public have ample opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on the final design of both the exterior and interior of the building. The Commission also looks forward to the completion of the project when the Town may reap some benefit in terms of lower insurance costs and a higher fire response rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). All of the Fire Department Studies including the Operations Study, the Location Study and the Feasibility Study are available for residents to review on the Town's Website. Finally, the Finance and Warrant Commission Public Hearing on December 6th included updated presentations by the Select Board and Dore & Whittier on the need and projected costs of the Fire Station One. Residents can watch these presentations on the Westwood Media Center website.\**

*This Article comes before the Town at this Special Town Meeting, rather than at the regular Town Meeting in May in order to facilitate completion of the final design work on a schedule that will allow the Town to more easily complete the project as soon as possible. As stated earlier, the replacement of Station One has been a long-standing and urgent need and waiting until the Town's regularly scheduled Town Meeting would result in several months of delay before construction could begin. While holding a special Town Meeting does result in additional costs to the Town, keeping this project on a time-line for the most expeditious completion is a priority for the Select Board and the Commission agrees.*

*On balance, the Finance & Warrant Commission unanimously recommends that the Town authorize the transfer of the funds under this Article to move this project toward completion.*

## **ARTICLE 2 -Debt Housekeeping - Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle (\$400,000)**

To see if the Town will vote to abandon the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and then transfer the \$400,000 borrowed for that purpose, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

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**(Select Board)**

**The Finance and Warrant Commission, by a unanimous vote of those present in favor, recommends that the Town so vote.**

*This article addresses an issue with the previously authorized purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle. For reasons beyond the control of the Town, the so-called "swap body" vehicle envisioned by the Fire Department in 2021 is no longer available on the market. The Town, however, based on the Town Meeting authority, has already borrowed the \$400,000 for that purpose. Since the Town cannot spend the money it has borrowed for the authorized purpose, Town Meeting must vote to "abandon" the purchase of the vehicle so that the money borrowed for that purpose can be used for another project currently authorized by Town Meeting. State municipal finance law requires that the Town promptly spend money it has borrowed. In this situation, the \$400,000 must be repurposed before April 2024. Therefore, this action cannot wait until the regular Town Meeting in May. This action now in no way suggests that the original request for such a vehicle or the Commission's recommendation that Town Meeting authorize that borrowing was without merit or not justified. We are simply faced today with a situation that requires prompt action to comply with State law.*