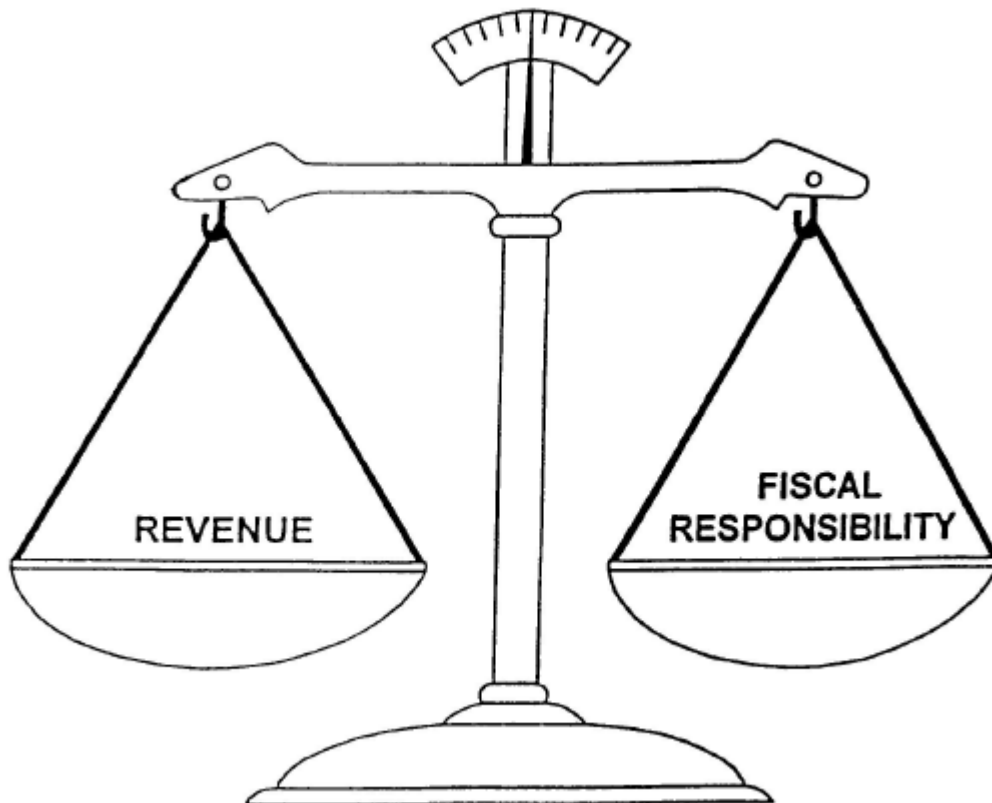


**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
NORTHBRIDGE FINANCE COMMITTEE**



**Fall Annual Town Meeting
Tuesday, October 24, 2017
7:00 p.m.**

**Northbridge Middle School Auditorium
171 Linwood Avenue
Whitinsville, MA**

October 2017

Dear Voters:

Enclosed is the warrant for the Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting along with a short summary prepared by the Town Manager, and recommendations of the Finance Committee for each article.

The warrant addresses both financial and non-financial issues. Voters are being asked to consider budget appropriations and transfers, the review and replacement of the current streetlights with more efficient LED streetlights, underground utility work at the DPW project and some repair and replacement of items at the middle school. Also, there is an article asking for the acceptance of a donation of land in a subdivision, street acceptances and some zoning changes.

Please review the information in this booklet, make note of any questions you might have and bring the booklet with you to Town Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Plato Adams, Chairman
James Barron
Lisa Ferguson
Steven Gogolinski
Jill Meagher
Christopher Pilla
Christopher Thompson

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE

**WARRANT FOR
FALL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2017 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 2, 2017), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article, to raise and appropriate, and/or to transfer from available funds in the Treasury and/or the Health Insurance Stabilization Fund to supplement appropriations under the Omnibus Budget Article; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to amend the FY 2018 Budget approved at the Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 2, 2017).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

SELECTMEN

Line 1B: Selectmen Expenses
By **raising and appropriating**
the additional sum of

Total Selectmen \$10,000
\$10,000

TOWN MANAGER

Line 2A: Town Manager Personnel
By **raising and appropriating**
the additional sum of
and

\$ 5,000

Line 2B: Town Manager Expenses
By **raising and appropriating**
the additional sum of

\$ 5,000

Total Town Manager: \$10,000

TOTAL GENERAL GOVT.: \$20,000

PUBLIC WORKS:

DPW HIGHWAY DIVISION

Line 21B: DPW Highway Expenses
By **raising and appropriating**
the additional sum of

\$25,000

TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS: \$25,000

CULTURE AND RECREATION:

LIBRARY

Line 27B: Library Expenses
By **transferring from Line 27A [Library Personnel]**
the additional sum of

\$25,000

Total Library: \$25,000

the additional sum of

\$25,000
Total Library: \$25,000

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Line 29A: Historical Commission Expenses

By **raising and appropriating**

the additional sum of

\$3,500
Total Historic Commission: \$3,500

TOTAL CULTURE AND RECREATION: \$28,500

TOTAL ARTICLE 1: \$73,500

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. These budget adjustments will allow for the increased cost of a new audit firm; the adjustment to the Town Manager's salary; replacement of LED street lights; pay for books; and the hiring of a consultant for the historic district review. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 1.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 2: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court to adopt special legislation, in substantially the following form, authorizing the Town to deposit receipts under M.G.L Chapter 64L, §2 "Local Meals Tax," in the fund to be used for the "Other Post-Employment Benefits" (OPEB) obligation of the Town of Northbridge, provided, that the General Court may make such revisions of form as it deems appropriate within the scope of the legislation without the need for a further vote of the Board of Selectmen; or take any other action relative thereto:

An act relative to the funding of the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund in the Town of Northbridge.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the town of Northbridge is hereby authorized to deposit into its other post-employment benefits liability trust fund (OPEB fund) established under and pursuant to section 20 of chapter 32B of the General Laws all sums received for the local sales tax on restaurant meals pursuant to section 2 of chapter 64L of the General Laws, for the purpose of meeting the town's OPEB obligations.

Section 2. The town treasurer shall deposit into the OPEB fund all sums received by the Town pursuant to said section 2 of chapter 64L, and said sums and any interest thereon shall become part of the fund and may be appropriated and expended in accordance with said section 20 of chapter 32B.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks authorization for the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court to adopt special legislation for the purpose of placing the proceeds collected from the "Local Meals Tax" directly into a fund to be used for the liability of the "Other Post-Employment Benefits" obligation of the Town of Northbridge.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article is to dedicate funds from the meals tax to the Other Post-Employment Benefit account. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 2.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 3: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or borrow, and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury, and/or transfer from the undesignated fund balance (free cash), or any combination thereof, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Department of Public Works for the purpose of funding the purchase of existing streetlights from National Grid and the conversion of existing streetlights to energy efficient and long lasting LED fixtures; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks money to fund the purchase of existing streetlights from National Grid and the conversion of existing streetlights to energy efficient and long lasting LED lights. Funds are to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article is to support the project to replace streetlights with LED lights. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 3 in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 4: (School Committee)

To see if the Town will vote to raise & appropriate, and/or transfer from the unexpended undesignated fund balance (free cash), and/or transfer from the Stabilization Fund, and/or transfer from other available funds in the Treasury a sum of money for the purpose of repairing plaster and reinforcing drop ceilings in the 1905 section of the Middle School, and making repairs and upgrades to the Middle School Auditorium, including repairing/replacing the sound system, carpet, and seating, said funds to be expended under the direction of the School Committee; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks funding for the purpose of repairing plaster and reinforcing drop ceilings in the 1905 section of the Middle School, and making repairs and upgrades to the Middle School Auditorium, including repairing/replacing the sound system, carpet, and seating. Funds are to be expended under the direction of the School Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article is for the repair/replacement or purchase of items for the middle school. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 4 in the amount not exceed \$200,000.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING ARTICLE 4 ON PAGES 9 & 10.

ARTICLE 5: (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way, Wilson Street, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen, a copy of which layout is on file with the Office of the Town Clerk, and further authorize the Board of Selectmen, in the name and behalf of the Town, to acquire by purchase, eminent domain, gift or otherwise, easements in said way for the purpose for which public ways are used in the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to accept Wilson Street, located within the Presidential Farms subdivision, as a public way. The Planning Board will provide a recommendation at Town Meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This is a street acceptance article. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 5.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 6: (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way, a portion of Roosevelt Drive, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen, a copy of which layout is on file with the Office of the Town Clerk, and further authorize the Board of Selectmen, in the name and behalf of the Town, to acquire by purchase, eminent domain, gift or otherwise, easements in said way for the purpose for which public ways are used in the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to accept a portion of Roosevelt Drive, located within the Presidential Farms subdivision, as a public way. The Planning Board will provide a recommendation at Town Meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This is a street acceptance article. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 6.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 7: (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will vote to accept, as a donation, one or more parcels of land within the Hills at Whitinsville subdivision development located off Hill Street; Marston Road; Nathaniel Drive; Hillcrest Road; Morgan Road; Prospect Street; Quarry Road; and Hillview Lane, being seven (7) parcels, containing approximately 115 acres as shown on plan entitled "Plan of Land" prepared by Heritage Design Group, LLC, a copy of which is on file with the Office of the Town Clerk, said land being shown on Northbridge Assessors' Map 15 as Parcels 82, 170, 169, 214, 215, 216, & 217; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all action and execute all documents necessary and appropriate for such acceptance and acquisition; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to accept 7 parcels of land containing approximately 115 acres located within the Hills at Whitinsville subdivision. This article also authorizes the Board of Selectmen to take all action and execute all documents necessary and appropriate for such acceptance and acquisition.

SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING ARTICLE 7 ON PAGE 11.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. This article is for the acceptance of a donation of land of approximately 115 acres in the Hills at Whitinsville subdivision. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 7.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 8: (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 173 of the Code of Northbridge, Section 173.12 [Table of Use Regulations] to allow “*Amusement and recreation services*” within the Industrial One (I1) and Industrial Two (I2) Zoning Districts by special permit of the Planning Board, whereas said use is currently allowed in only the Business One (B1), Business Two (B2) and Business Three (B3) Zoning Districts, as follows:

§173.12 Table of Use Regulations

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3	I-1	I-2	H
Retail Services												
Amusement and recreational services	--	--	--	--	--	--	S	S	S	<u>S (10)</u>	<u>S (10)</u>	--

Notes: (10) Use allowed by Special Permit of the Planning Board

,or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER’S SUMMARY: This article seeks to amend Zoning Bylaw Section 173.12 [Table of Use Regulations] to allow “*Amusement and recreation services*” within the Industrial One (I1) and Industrial Two (I2) Zoning Districts by Special Permit. Said use is currently allowed in the Business One (B1), Business Two (B2) and Business Three (B3) Zoning Districts.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. This article is to amend the zoning bylaws to allow recreational use in an I-1 and I-2 zones by special permit. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 8.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 9: (Building, Planning and Construction Committee)

To see if the Town will vote to grant all necessary easements required for underground utility lines and services of National Grid (electric), Verizon (telecommunications), and Charter (cable TV/internet services) to service the DPW facilities located at 11 Fletcher Street, said lines and services to be installed to replace services that are currently provided on overhead poles that are scheduled to be removed by the utilities, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all action and execute all documents necessary in connection therewith; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks Town Meeting approval for the Town to grant all necessary easements required for underground utility services provided by National Grid (Electric), Verizon (Telecommunications), and Charter (Cable TV/Internet Services) to service the DPW facilities located at 11 Fletcher Street. Utility services are currently provided by an overhead pole line, which will be removed by National Grid.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article allows for all necessary easements for underground utilities at the DPW project. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 9.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 10: (Building, Planning and Construction Committee)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow the sum of \$50,000, to be expended under the direction of the Building, Planning and Construction Committee to fund the costs of underground utility services installation by National Grid (electric), Verizon (telecommunications), and Charter (cable TV/internet services) for the DPW facility project at 11 Fletcher Street, including all related work and associated design changes; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the DPW building project scope to cover the costs for underground utility services provided by National Grid (Electric), Verizon (Telecommunications), and Charter (Cable TV/Internet Services) as well as additional related work and design changes. Funds are to be expended under the direction of the Building, Planning and Construction Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article is for funds to be expended in conjunction with the underground utilities at the DPW project, Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 10.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR ARTICLE 10 ON PAGES 12 & 13.

Article #4 – School Committee

The School Committee is requesting funding to make repairs and improvements to the Northbridge Middle School. Originally, the focus of the article was on repairing plaster and reinforcing drop ceilings in the 1905 section of the Middle School and making repairs and upgrades to the Middle School auditorium sound system, carpet and seating. While getting updated prices on the costs associated with these projects, it was determined that while the plaster, drop ceilings, and sound system costs could fit within the amount of funding available, the costs associated with replacing the carpeting and seating in the auditorium exceeded the amount of available funds. A lesser scope of only addressing the carpeting and seating in the lower half of the auditorium was explored, however, the cost associated still came in higher than the funds available. As such, the School Committee is proposing an alternate capital project on the priority list, which is replacement of Middle School lockers.

There are concerns with the plaster in the 1905 section of the Middle School. Pieces of plaster have released and fallen from the ceiling. This has happened both in classrooms and in hallways. In the classrooms, there is risk of the plaster falling from the ceiling, through the drop ceiling tiles, and onto the classroom desks and floors. The Committee is seeking funding to remove the existing drop ceiling tile in two classrooms, replace it with vinyl coated sheetrock ceiling tile, and reinforce the grids that holds up the ceiling tile. If additional plaster falls from the ceilings in these classrooms, the heavier duty ceiling tile will prevent that plaster from coming through the drop ceiling. In the hallways, the Committee is seeking funding to address areas of plaster that are loose or cracked. The damaged sections of plaster will be cut out, removed, and patched.



The sound system in the Middle School auditorium does not currently work and a portable sound system needs to be brought in for all events (including Town Meeting) in order to speak to an audience. The current sound system is antiquated and parts are obsolete. Additionally, the speakers are blown. The system needs to be upgraded with digital technology. The upgrade will not only benefit the school and the students, but also the community and rental groups who utilize the facility.



With the exception of three sections, student lockers throughout the building are in major need of replacement. Many of the lockers are original to the building and well past their expectancy. The lockers have been repaired to the greatest extent possible; however, in many cases, doors do not fit properly, lockers either do not open or do not close, latches do not latch, and replacement handles and springs are no longer available. As the lockers require a complete replacement, the Committee is requesting funding to remove the existing lockers and install new replacement lockers in their place.



A total of \$200,000 in funding is being requested through Article 4 in order to make the aforementioned repairs and replacements.



NbridgeGIS –Parcel/Structures/Resource Areas/Ortho –Data layers

The Hills at Whitinsville		
Definitive Subdivision		
Planned Unit Development/Special Permit		
[NOV 1997/AUG 2000]		
Open Space	Map-Parcel	Acres (±)
OS1	15-82	0.59
OS2R	15-170	4.18
OS3	15-169	20.83
OS4	15-214	2.79
OS5	15-215	75.35
OS6	15-216	3.43
OS7	15-217	8.35
Total:		±115.85

*Delineation/depiction meant to represent layout as shown on Heritage Design Group plan entitled "Plan of Land" & legal descriptions submitted

ARTICLE 10 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Town of Northbridge Department of Public Works

11 Fletcher Street, P.O. Box 88

Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588-0088

Tel. No. (508) 234-3581 – Fax. No. (508) 234-0807

James Shuris, P.E., MBA

Director of Public Works & Town Engineer

MEMORANDUM

Date: 19 September 2017

To: Plato Adams, Chairman - Finance Committee

From: James Shuris, P.E., MBA
Director of Public Works & Town Engineer

**RE: 24 October 2017 - Fall Town Meeting
Article 10 (Building Planning and Construction Committee) - \$50,000
Additional DPW Building Project Scope – Underground Utility Services**

Dear Mr. Adams:

I am writing to provide additional information concerning the above referenced Article 10 “to fund the additional DPW building project scope to cover costs for underground utility services by National Grid (Electric), Verizon (Telecommunications) and Charter (Cable TV/Internet Services), and additional related work & design changes...” These changes resulted from both National Grid requirements and unforeseen field conditions that were determined during construction.

During the removal/clearing of town-owned trees and sloped excavations for the new retaining structure behind the new building, it was determined that the existing overhead utility pole and line services onto the DPW site did not have an easement through private property to connect to the utility pole on Fletcher Street, and would not be readily accessible for future service. In addition, when performing sloped excavations for the installation of the new retaining structure behind the new DPW building it was determined that the existing overhead utility pole was leaning excessively and was unstable (see attached photograph).

The new plan is to replace the existing overhead pole line services per direction of National Grid, install a new overhead utility pole at the entrance to the DPW site and to run underground services to the new building with onsite utility easements for utility services.

The estimated cost to perform the additional DPW building project scope is \$50,000.00 and is broken down as follows:

Design & Engineering:	\$ 5,000.00
National Grid:	\$13,000.00
Eversource:	\$ 2,000.00
J.J. Cardosi Contractors:	<u>\$30,000.00</u>

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$50,000.00

Please contact me if you should have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Shuris', written over the typed name.

James Shuris, P.E., MBA
Director of Public Works & Town Engineer

cc: Adam Gaudette, Town Manager
Michael Beaudoin, BPCC Chairman

SOME COMMON TOWN FINANCE TERMS

APPROPRIATION

An amount of money voted to be spent for specific purposes.

ARTICLES

Each of the numbered items of business in the Warrant is called an Article. Articles for a town meeting are submitted to the selectmen by boards, departments, and by citizens of Northbridge. All Articles must be voted upon; none can be withdrawn from the Warrant.

CHERRY SHEET

The cherry colored form received each year from the state listing the town's State Aid and county and state charge against the town.

FISCAL YEAR

July 1st through June 30th and normally designated by the year in which it ends.

FREE CASH – AVAILABLE FUNDS

Surplus revenue less all uncollected taxes from prior years. A source for funds at special town meetings, special projects, or lowering the tax rate. Actual amount is determined at the close of each fiscal year. Free Cash should be thought of as being the town's "Savings Account"

GENERAL FUND

The fund into which the general (not-earmarked) revenues of the town are deposited and from which money is appropriated to pay the general expenses of the municipality.

LOCAL RECEIPTS

Money collected by the town departments for Automobile Excise taxes, licenses issued by the clerk's office, Parks and Recreation activities, etc.

OVERLAY

The amount raised by the Assessors in excess of appropriations and other charges to cover abatements granted and avoiding fractions.

OVERLAY SURPLUS

The accumulated amount of the not used overlay for various years which may be used for extraordinary or unforeseen purposes or voted into the Reserve Fund.

OVERRIDE

A referendum question on the ballot in a general election which allows a town to assess taxes in excess of the allowable 2 ½ % yearly increased allowed by law. Override questions must specify the purpose of the override and require a majority vote for approval.

RESERVE FUND

A fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures. A sum may be appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting not to exceed 5% of the tax levy of the preceding year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED)

Special Education is a program that serves students who have disabilities that impair learning. The town is partially reimbursed through Chapter 70 based on availability of funds and through recently enacted circuit breaker legislation.

SURPLUS REVENUE

The amount by which cash, accounts receivable and other assets exceed liabilities and reserve (a bookkeeping item not be confused with Available Funds.) Actual amount is determined at the close of each fiscal year.

TAX LEVY

The revenue a community can raise through real estate and personal taxes. This is limited by Proposition 2 ½ but can be increased by an override.

TRANSFER

The authorization to use an appropriation for a different purpose or from the Reserve Fund for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.

WARRANT

The list of items, known as Articles, to be considered at the town meeting is called the Town Warrant. The only business that may be considered is that listed in the Town Warrant.

**Presort Standard
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Whitinsville, MA
01588**

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 24, 2017

Fall Annual Town Meeting

**To: Postal Customer
Whitinsville, MA 01588**