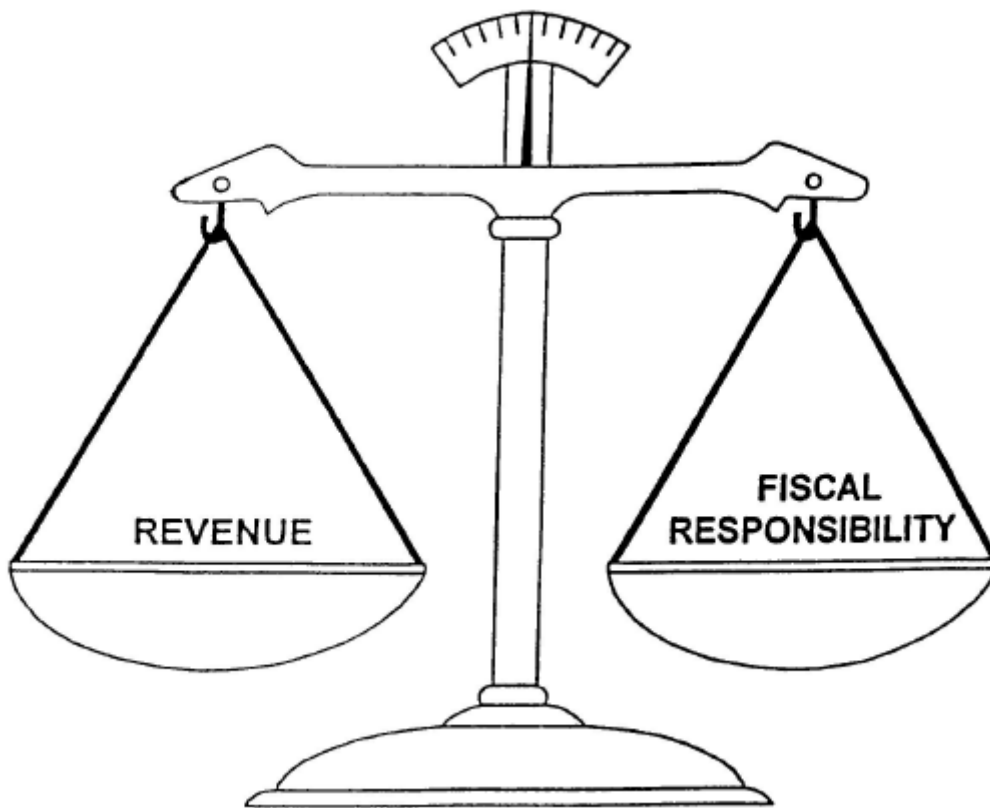


**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE  
NORTHBRIDGE FINANCE COMMITTEE**



**Fall Annual Town Meeting  
Tuesday, October 25, 2016  
7:00 p.m.**

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

# THINK

## VOTERS CHECK LIST

### To be considered on each vote:

1. IS IT NECESSARY? Or is it something that is not really needed or perhaps already being provided by a private or public group?
2. CAN WE AFFORD IT? Remember, there is no limit to what we would like, but there is a limit to what we can afford.
3. WHAT WILL IT COST ULTIMATELY? Many proposals are like icebergs - only a small fraction of the total is apparent on the surface.
4. HOW WILL IT AFFECT BASIC LIBERTIES? If it imposes unreasonable or illegal restraints on your life or that of others, it should be vigorously opposed.
5. IS IT IN THE BALANCED BEST INTEREST OF ALL? If it is designed to benefit a small group or special interests, while taking unfair advantage of others, work for its defeat.
6. IS IT A "FOOT-IN-DOOR" PROPOSITION? Compromising a little now may bring an oppressive burden later, either in more regulation or more taxes or a combination of both.
7. DOES IT PLACE TOO MUCH POWER IN THE HANDS OF ONE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP? Once decisive power is granted to a non-elected public official, a commission or a municipal authority, the private citizens may lose effective control.
8. DOES IT RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE MINORITY? This is a cornerstone of our Republic.
9. IS ITS APPEAL BASED ON EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA OR FACTS? The farther a proposition gets away from facts, the more critical one should be.
10. DOES IT SQUARE WITH YOUR MORAL CONVICTIONS? If so, fight for it. If not, oppose it.

*From Finance Committee Handbook*

October 2016

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 several financial and non-financial issues. Voters are being asked to consider budget appropriations and transfers, the purchase of a new Dump Truck, a Pumper Truck and the repair of the World War I Memorial in Rockdale. There are articles asking for the acceptance of a donation of land in Rockdale and funding for the update of the Town's Master Plan. There also are requests to amend the Town's bylaws related to the Heritage zone and a new bylaw proposed to create a "stretch energy code".

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  
Christopher Pilla  
Christopher Thompson

**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE**

**WARRANT FOR  
FALL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.**

**ARTICLE 1: (Board of Selectmen)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury and/or transfer from the unexpended appropriated funds of one or more of the departments of the Town various sums of money and authorize the payment of prior year bills; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** This article seeks authorization to pay a bill or bills of a prior year. If there are no bills of a prior year, this article will be passed over at town meeting.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The finance committee supports *passing over* this article because there are no prior year bills to be paid. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to pass over Article 1.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 2: (Board of Selectmen)**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2016 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 3, 2016), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article, to raise and appropriate, and/or to transfer a sum or sums of money from the undesignated fund balance (free cash) 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 2017 Budget approved at the Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 3, 2016) as follows:

**BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT:**

**TOWN MANAGER**

Line 2B: Town Manager Expenses

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$10,000

**Total General Government: \$10,000**

**PUBLIC SAFETY:**

**POLICE**

Line 14B: Police Expenses

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$16,000

**AMBULANCE**

Line 16B: Ambulance Expenses

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$22,000  
**Total Public Safety: \$38,000**

**EDUCATION:****SCHOOL DEPARTMENT** - (See page 9 for additional information)

Line 20: School District

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$175,000  
**Total Education: \$175,000**

**HUMAN SERVICES:****BOARD OF HEALTH**

Line 22B: Board of Health Expenses

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$6,500  
**Total Human Services: \$6,500**

**NON-DEPARTMENTAL:****PROPERTY & LIABILITY INS.**

Line 42: Property &amp; Liability Ins.

By **raising and appropriating** the additional sum of \$10,000  
**Total Non-Departmental: \$10,000**

<b>TOTAL ARTICLE 2:</b>	<b>\$239,500</b>
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**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. Budget adjustments totaling \$239,500 will allow for the hiring of a consultant as part of the hiring process for a new fire chief, the purchase of a fingerprint scanner and tasers, cardiac monitor and defibrillators, additional funds credited to the school budget, kiosks and supplies for a needle drop-off program, and an increase in property and liability insurance due to the increases in workers compensation insurance. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 2.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 3: (Board of Selectmen)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury and/or transfer from the unexpended appropriated funds of one or more of the departments of the Town, a sum of money to the Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** This article seeks to raise and appropriate \$125,000 to place into the Stabilization Fund. The fund acts as a cushion in the event the Town experiences a drop in revenue or can be used for emergency situations that arise unexpectedly that were not budgeted for in a given year. At the close of Fiscal 2016, the balance in the Stabilization Fund was \$1,848,503.00.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. These funds totaling \$125,000 will allow for additional funds to be placed in the stabilization fund to be used to support any future needs of the community. The current stabilization fund balance is approximately \$1.8 million. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 3.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 4: (Board of Selectmen)**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the conveyance of land located at 2219 Providence Road from the George Marston Whitin Memorial Community Association Inc. (Whitin Community Center) to the Town of Northbridge, and authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept said conveyance on behalf of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** The purpose of this article is to approve the conveyance of land located at 2219 Providence Road, Northbridge, from the Whitin Community Center to the Town of Northbridge. This article further authorizes the Board of Selectmen to accept it on behalf of the Town.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article allows for the conveyance of land located at 2219 Providence Road from the George Marston Whitin Memorial Community Association Inc. to the Town. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 4.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 5: (Board of Selectmen)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money for the purpose of financing the purchase of a Dump Truck for use by the Highway Division of the Department of Public Works; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** This article seeks funding to finance the purchase of a dump truck for use by the Department of Public Works Highway Division.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article allows for financing the purchase of a Dump Truck for use by the Highway Division in an amount not to exceed \$65,000. This will replace a 2005 Dump Truck currently in use. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 5.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 6: (Board of Selectmen) - (See page 10 for further information)**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a new Section 7-900 of the Town of Northbridge General Bylaws, entitled "Stretch Energy Code," as follows, with an effective date of January 1, 2017, for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy, pursuant to Appendix 115.AA of the Massachusetts Building Code, 780 CMR, the Stretch Energy Code, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto; or take any other action relative thereto:

## § 7-901 Definitions

**International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)** - The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is a building energy code created by the International Code Council. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency, and is updated on a three-year cycle. The baseline energy conservation requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code are the IECC with Massachusetts amendments, as approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards.

**Stretch Energy Code** - Codified by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards as 780 CMR Appendix 115.AA of the 9th edition Massachusetts Building Code, the Stretch Energy Code is an appendix to the Massachusetts Building Code, based on further amendments to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to improve the energy efficiency of buildings built to this code.

## §7-902 Purpose

The purpose of 780 CMR 115.AA is to provide a more energy efficient alternative to the Base Energy Code applicable to the relevant sections of the building code for new buildings.

## §7-903 Applicability

This code applies to residential and commercial buildings. Buildings not included in this scope shall comply with 780 CMR 13, 34, 51, as applicable.

## §7-904 Stretch Code

The Stretch Code, as codified by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards as 780 CMR Appendix 115.AA, including any future editions, amendments or modifications, is hereby made a part of the Town of Northbridge General Bylaws. The Stretch Code is enforceable by the Inspector of Buildings.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** The purpose of this article seeks town meeting approval to adopt new Section 7-900 of the Town of Northbridge General Bylaws, entitled "Stretch Energy Code" effective January 1, 2017, for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. This article will allow for the adoption of a new section in the Northbridge General Bylaws entitled "Stretch Energy Code." Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 6.

## VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

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## ARTICLE 7: (Board of Selectmen) - (See page 10 for further information)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$550,000 to purchase a 2017 Fire Department Pumper Truck and associated appurtenances and equipment, contingent upon the passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2½, so-called; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** This article seeks funding in the amount of \$550,000 to purchase a 2017 Pumper Truck and associated appurtenances and equipment to be used by the Northbridge Fire Department. This article is also subject to passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2½.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. These funds will be used to purchase a new Fire Department Pumper Truck in an amount not to exceed \$550,000. The purchase is contingent upon the passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2½. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 7.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 8: (Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials)** - (See page 10 for further information)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to finance the restoration and repair of the Rockdale World War I Memorial at the Rockdale Common, located at the intersection of Providence Road and School Street, contingent upon the passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2½, so-called; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** This article seeks funding in the amount of \$100,000 to finance the restoration and repair of the World War I Memorial at the Rockdale Common located at the intersection of Providence Road and School Street. This article is also subject to passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2½.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. These funds will be used to repair the Rockdale World War I Memorial at the Rockdale Common. These repairs are contingent upon the passage of a capital outlay expenditure exclusion under Proposition 2 ½. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 8.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 9: (Planning Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of hiring a consultant to assist the Planning Board in the preparation of a Master Plan for the Town of Northbridge pursuant to MGL CHAPTER 41, SECTION 81D [Master plan; economic development]; or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY:** The purpose of this article is to fund the cost of a consultant to assist the Planning Board in the preparation of a Master Plan for the Town of Northbridge pursuant to MGL Chapter 41, Section 81D [Master Plan; economic development].

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$35,000. These funds will be used to hire a consultant to assist the Planning Board in the preparation of the Master Plan. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 9.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 10: (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 “Miscellaneous business offices and services” by right in the Heritage (H) zoning district, and to designate “Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses” as a use allowed by-right (P) within the Heritage (H) zoning district, whereas such use is currently allowed only by special permit, as follows:

**1. Amend Zoning Bylaw Chapter 173 Section 173-12 [Table of Use Regulations] as follows:****a. Retail and Service-**

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
Retail and Service:	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Miscellaneous business offices and services	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	S (3)	S (3)	-- <u>P</u>

[Amend Section 173-12 by ALLOWING “Miscellaneous business offices and services” **by-right (P)** within the Heritage (H) Zoning District whereas such use is currently **not permitted (--)**.]

**b. Retail and Service-**

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
Retail and Service:	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	P	P	S	P	<u>S</u> <u>P</u>

[Amend Section 173-12 by ALLOWING “Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses” **by-right (P)** within the Heritage (H) Zoning District whereas such use is currently permitted **by special permit (S)**.]

Or take any other action relative thereto.

**TOWN MANAGER’S SUMMARY:** This article seeks to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 173 of the Code of Northbridge, Section 173-12 [Table of Use Regulations] to allow “Miscellaneous business offices and services” by-right (P) in the Heritage (H) zoning district whereas such use is not currently permitted (--), and to designate “Office for administrative executive, professional, sales and other similar uses” as a use allowed by-right (P) within the Heritage (H) zoning district whereas such use is currently allowed only by special permit (S).

**FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee **recommends passage** of this article. This article seeks to amend the Zoning Bylaws related to uses in Heritage (H) zoning district. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 10.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 11: (Planning Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way, the remaining portion of Shining Rock Drive, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen, a copy of which layout is on file with 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 the remaining portion of Shining Rock Drive 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 article seeks to accept as a public way the remaining portion of Shining Rock Drive. Vote: The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support Article 10.

**VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**

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**ARTICLE 2**

**BUDGET TRANSFER**

**SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

Due to an increase in the Chapter 70 calculation from a minimum increase of \$20 per pupil to \$55 per pupil, Northbridge received an additional \$81,970 in Chapter 70 education aid. The School Committee is requesting that this additional Chapter 70 aid, along with some additional funding for capital items, be added to the School Department's appropriation. Of the \$175,000 increase to the School Department's appropriation, the School Committee will utilize approximately \$82,000 to fund the department's operational budget and approximately \$93,000 for capital items. The Committee will be replacing a 2001 maintenance work van; purchasing two ride-on floor machines, one to replace the original ride-on floor machine at the High School and one to replace an existing walk-behind floor machine at the Middle School; conducting baseball field repairs at the Middle School field; and purchasing two vehicles for the special education program to help reduce out of district transportation costs.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### **STRETCH ENERGY CODE**

Article 6, to adopt the Stretch Energy Code, is one of the conditions to becoming a Green Community in the Commonwealth. Designation as a Green Community will allow Northbridge to receive grant funds to implement energy upgrades in order to reduce the use of electricity and fossil fuels resulting in municipal savings in future years.

This article will adopt a base energy building code to increase energy savings in new residential homes and businesses. Builders will be eligible to receive cost incentives and rebates to offset energy enhancements in construction projects. If adopted, this program would go into effect in January 2017.

## **ARTICLES 7 AND 8**

### **(CAPITAL EXCLUSIONS)**

The capital exclusion articles for the Fire Department Truck and the Rockdale World War I Memorial involves a one-time increase of \$122 in property taxes for one year for an average single family home valued at \$269,000.

Last year's capital exclusion for the purchase of equipment would reduce this year's property tax increase by \$70, which would equate to a net increase of \$52 for an average single family home for one year or \$13 per quarterly tax bill.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **ROCKDALE WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL**

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW**

The Rockdale World War I Memorial appears to have been built in 1922. Over the years it has been repaired, but badly. In 2000, the Northbridge Building Planning and Construction Committee retained a Monument Repair Expert to evaluate all of the monuments in Northbridge. At the time, the WWI Monument was considered to be in poor condition with an estimated repair cost of \$20,000. With 15 more years of exposure, the cost is now estimated to be \$100,000.

The focus of the project is to restore the Rockdale World War I Memorial in Northbridge, Massachusetts. The location of the Memorial is at the corner of School Street and Providence Road. The intent of the project is to maintain the original design and construction of the monument but to disassemble it, provide a new foundation and plaza, and reassemble it. The existing stone monument and balustrade may be of a type such as Milford Pink, Kershaw, or Stony Creek. It is not known at this time if the same granite is available.



Cracking of the mortar and the concrete is extensive and permits the entry of water. The continual freezing and thawing also accelerates the deterioration of the monument.



The floor of the monument is cracked in a number of places. An earlier repair was improper, so the failure is both spreading and increasing in severity.



Cracking along the joints is extensive and the old repairs are now also failing.

## **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 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**Presort Standard  
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01588**

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**OCTOBER 25, 2016**

**Fall Annual Town Meeting**

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