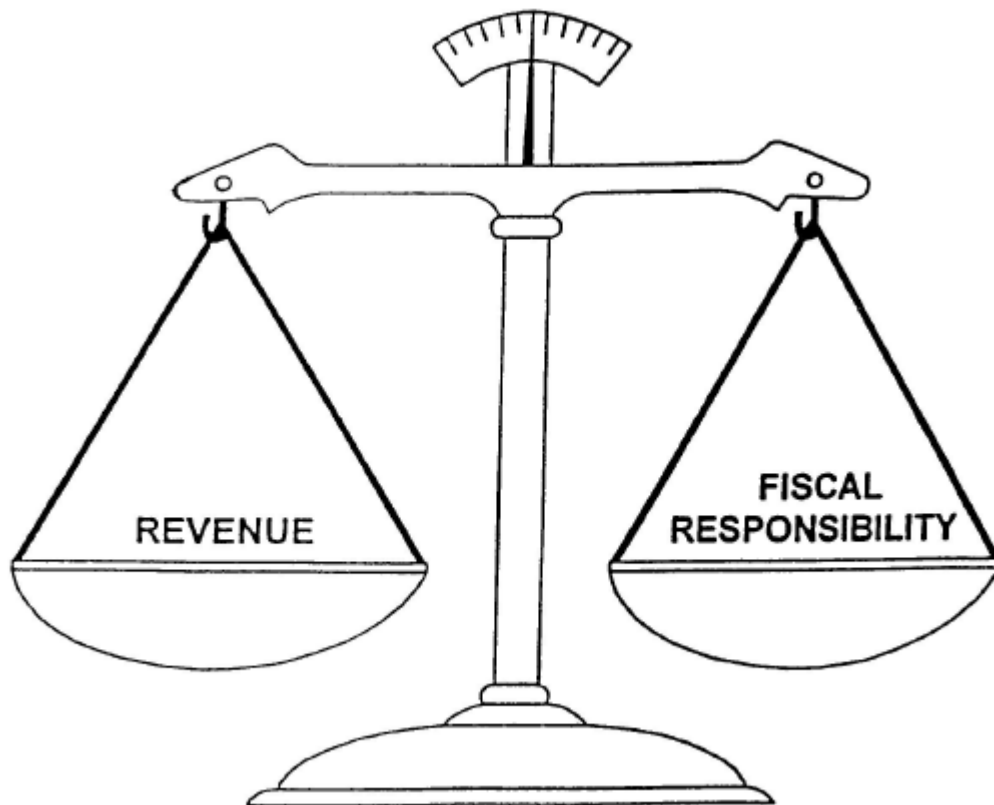


**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
NORTHBRIDGE FINANCE COMMITTEE**



**Spring Annual Town Meeting
Tuesday, May 3, 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

May 2016

Dear Voters:

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

The Town Budget was constructed using the Governor's estimate of Local Aid. Article 3 of the warrant details the proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget of approximately \$40.7 million, which is an increase of approximately \$1 million over the previous year's appropriations. A majority of the budget increase is reflected in the Town's contribution to Education, Public Safety and Insurance related costs.

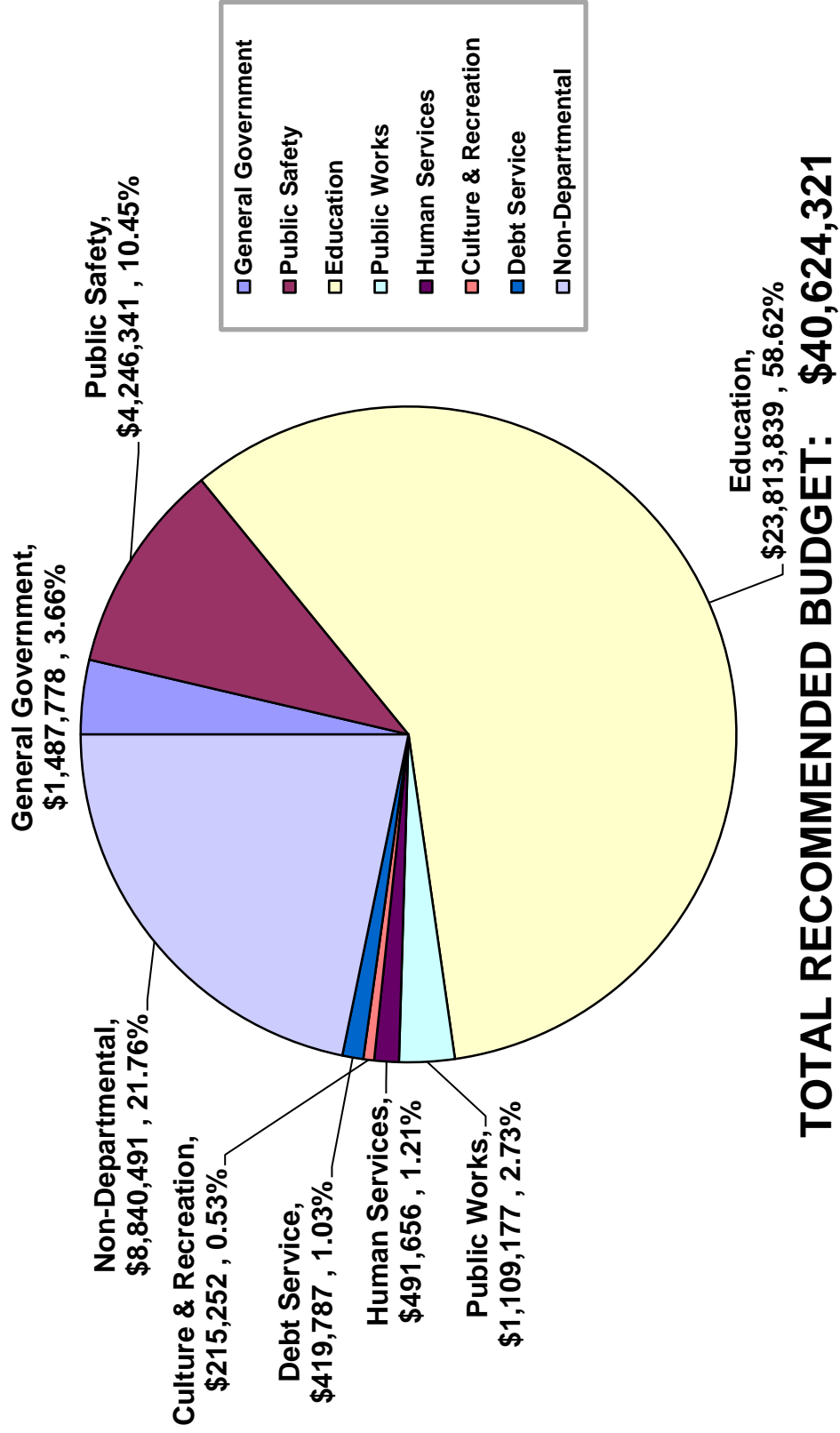
There are articles seeking authorization to fund a feasibility study for the W. Edward Balmer School, build a new building on the existing DPW site and to do repairs to the 3rd floor of the town hall [Great Hall]. In addition to several yearly articles related to the operation of the town government, there are several Planning Board articles.

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

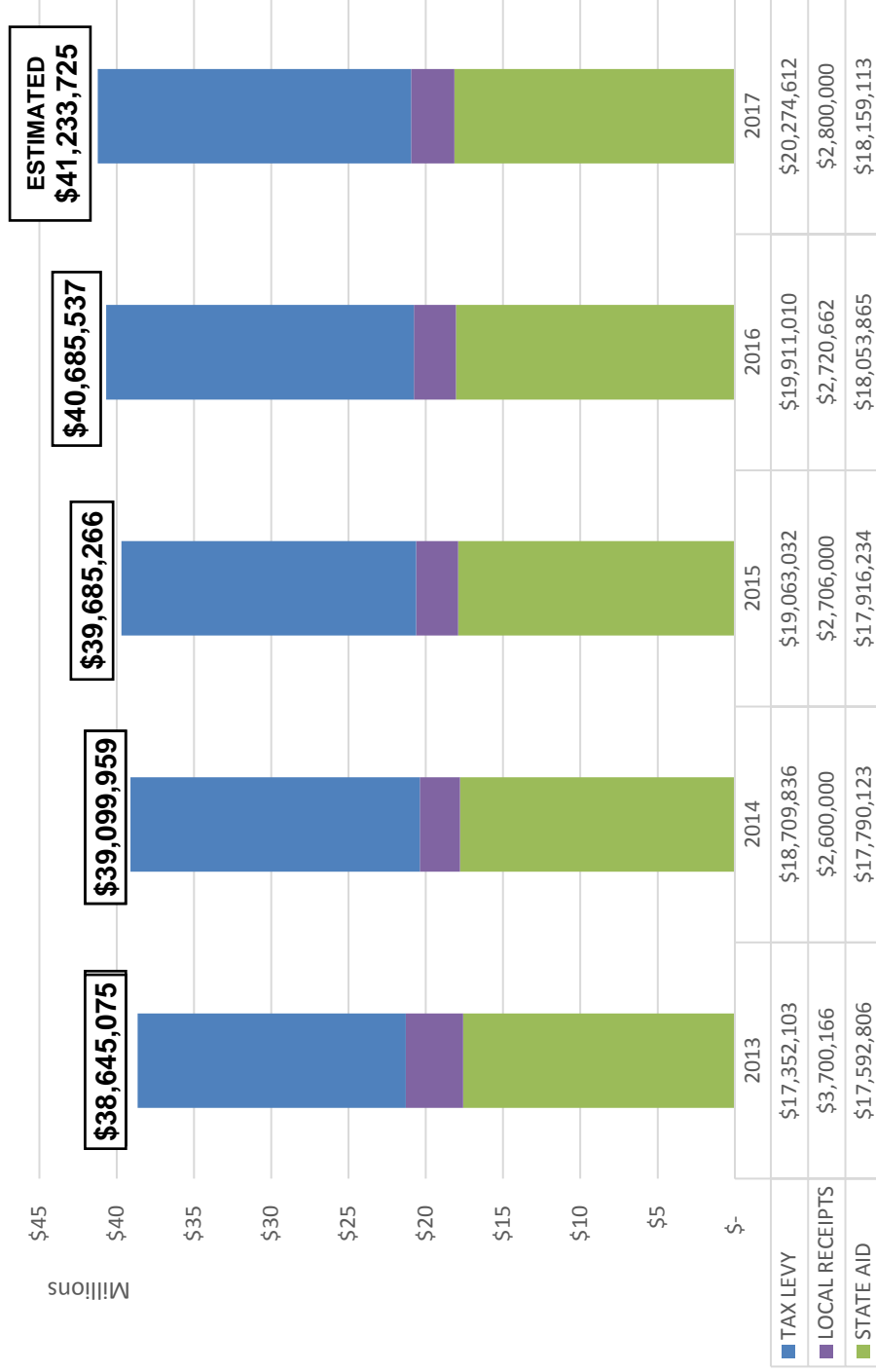
Respectfully submitted,

Plato Adams, Chairman
James Barron
Robert Brochu
Lisa Ferguson
Steven Gogolinski
Christopher Pilla
Christopher Thompson

FISCAL YEAR 2017 RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET

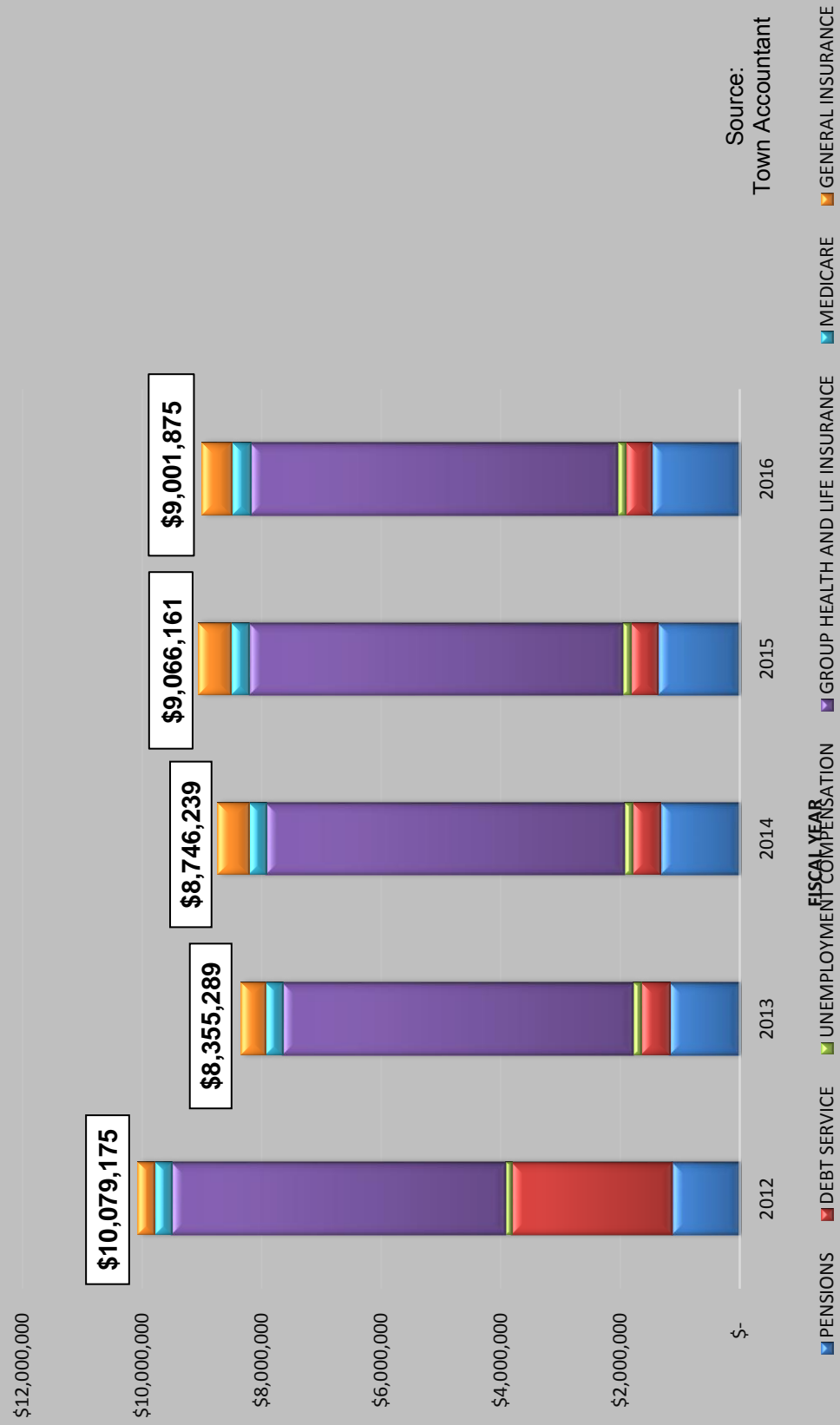


TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE REVENUE SOURCES AND TRENDS FY 2013-2017



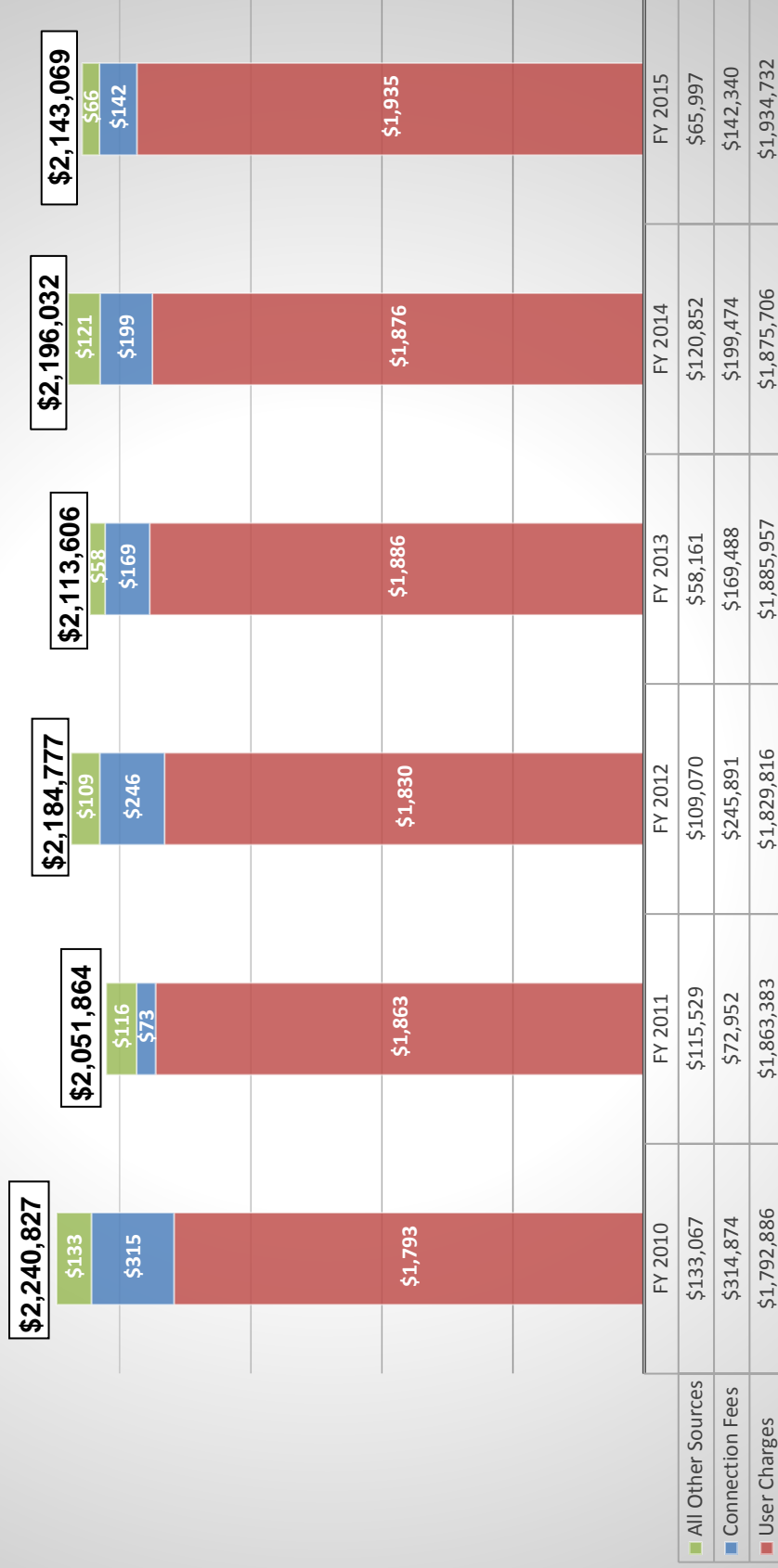
Source:
Town Accountant

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE FIXED COST BY FISCAL YEAR FY 2012 - 2016



Sewer Enterprise Fund Revenues by Source FY 2010-2015

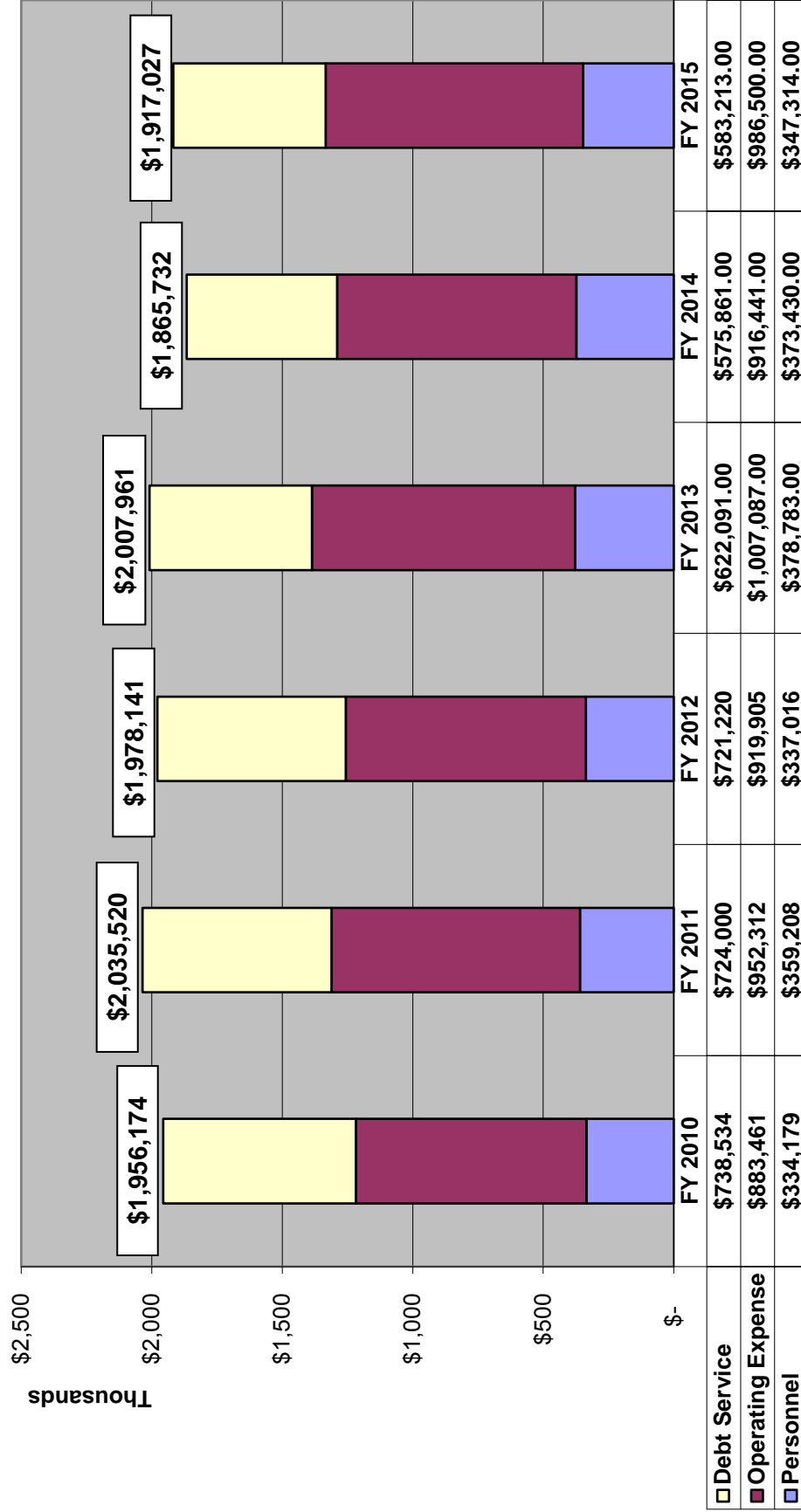
Town of Northbridge
Department of Public Works



Sewer Enterprise Fund Expense Analysis

FY 2010-2015

Town of Northbridge
Department of Public Works



Town of Northbridge

Five Year Capital Plan 2017 - 2021

SUMMARY SHEET

3.2.16

Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Facilities Construction Projects	\$10,360,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$55,242,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Facilities Maintenance Projects	\$4,861,334.00	\$1,918,546.00	\$2,003,981.00	\$677,816.00	\$1,798,378.00
Capital Equipment	\$1,088,000.00	\$722,000.00	\$170,000.00	\$1,225,000.00	\$35,000.00
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$0.00	\$2,270,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,800,000.00
Water Enterprise Fund	\$0.00	\$55,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,250,000.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$16,309,334.00	\$7,965,546.00	\$57,455,981.00	\$1,902,816.00	\$12,883,378.00

**DUE TO THE SIZE OF THIS DOCUMENT, PLEASE SEE FURTHER DETAILS ON OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.NORTHBRIDGEMASS.ORG**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:

Is a blueprint for planning a community's capital expenditures that comprises an annual capital budget and a five-year capital program. It coordinates community planning, fiscal capacity and physical development. While all of the community's needs should be identified in the program, there is a set of criteria that prioritizes the expenditures.

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
WARRANT FOR
SPRING ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 3, 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 the following 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 prior year bills.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee ***supports passing over*** this article because there are no prior year bills. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 2: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2015 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 5, 2015), and under Article 2 of the 2015 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 27, 2015), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article; or take any other action relative thereto.

BUDGET TRANSFERS:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

ASSESSORS

Line 5B: Assessors Expenses

By transferring from Line 4B [Town Accountant Expenses]

the additional sum of

TOTAL GENERAL GOVT.:

\$ 1,000

\$ 1,000

PUBLIC SAFETY:

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Line 14B: Police Expenses

By transferring from Line 14A [Police Personnel]

the additional sum of

\$ 20,000

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Line 15A: Fire Personnel

By transferring from Line 26B [Veterans Expenses]

the additional sum of

\$ 15,000

and

By transferring from Line 41 [Employee Insurance Benefits]

the additional sum of

\$ 13,350

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Line 17B: Code Enforcement Expenses

By **appropriating from Weights and Measures Account**

the additional sum of

\$ 500

TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY:**\$ 48,850****NON-DEPARTMENTAL**

Line 36: Medicare

By **transferring from Line 41 [Employee Insurance Benefits]**

the additional sum of

\$ 15,000

TOTAL NON-DEPARTMENTAL:**\$ 15,000****TOTAL ARTICLE 2: \$ 64,850**

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to allow amendments to the FY 2016 operating budget, which was also amended at the Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting held October 27, 2015.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article authorizes transfers between departmental accounts established in the 2016 budget. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 3: (Finance Committee)

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 Health Insurance Stabilization Fund such sums of money not to exceed \$40,699,321 to defray the necessary and usual expenses of the several departments of the Town for FY 2017, beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017 as follows:

LINE # ACCOUNT NAME	FY 2016 Approved	FY 2017 Recommended	%
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE			
1 SELECTMEN			
1A Personnel	5,150	5,150	
By allocating \$1,150 to the Chairman and \$1,000 to each of the other 4 Selectmen			
1B Expenses	121,485	121,485	
Total Selectmen	126,635	126,635	
2 TOWN MANAGER			
2A Personnel	243,527	249,468	
2B Expenses	12,509	12,509	
Total Town Manager	256,036	261,977	

3 FINANCE COMMITTEE		
3B Expenses	15,000	15,000
Total Finance Committee	15,000	15,000
4 TOWN ACCOUNTANT		
4A Personnel	109,786	115,945
4B Expenses	15,350	15,350
Total Town Accountant	125,136	131,295
5 ASSESSORS		
5A Personnel	155,003	160,928
5B Expenses	12,200	14,025
Total Assessors	167,203	174,953
6 TREASURER/COLLECTOR		
6A Personnel	148,829	150,109
APPROPRIATE FROM PARKING TICKET RECEIPTS		
6A Personnel	5,000	5,000
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
6B Expenses	58,240	61,650
Total Treasurer/Collector	212,069	216,759
7 INFORMATION SYSTEMS		
7A Personnel	72,360	73,616
7B Expenses	67,295	88,688
Total Information Systems	139,655	162,304
8 TOWN CLERK/ELECTIONS		
8A Personnel	113,230	118,120
8B Expenses	33,720	42,645
Total Town Clerk/Elections	146,950	160,765
9 CONSERVATION		
9A Personnel	15,248	30,548
APPROPRIATE FROM WETLAND FEES		
9A Personnel	5,000	5,000
9B Expenses	0	0
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
9B Expenses	1,923	1,931
Total Conservation	22,171	37,479
10 PLANNING BOARD		
10A Personnel	91,073	94,464
10B Expenses	6,227	6,427
Total Planning Board	97,300	100,891
11 ZONING/APPEALS BOARD		
11A Personnel	9,088	8,540
11B Expenses	6,255	6,055
Total Zoning/Appeals Board	15,343	14,595

12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
12A Personnel	0	0
12B Expenses	0	0
Total Economic Development	0	0
13 TOWN HALL/CENTRAL SERVICES		
13A Personnel	24,000	24,000
13B Expenses	43,125	61,125
Total Town Hall/Central Services	67,125	85,125
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	1,390,623	1,487,778
PUBLIC SAFETY		
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
14 POLICE		
14A Personnel	2,343,445	2,415,852
14B Expenses	248,892	248,892
Total Police	2,592,337	2,664,744
15 FIRE		
15A Personnel	507,775	582,504
15B Expenses	131,963	131,482
Total Fire	639,738	713,986
APPROPRIATE FROM AMBULANCE RECEIPTS		
16 AMBULANCE		
16A Personnel	606,553	620,336
16B Expenses	70,000	78,650
Total Ambulance	676,553	698,986
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
17 CODE ENFORCEMENT		
17A Personnel	140,564	139,030
APPROPRIATE FROM WEIGHTS AND MEASURES RESERVE ACCOUNT		
17A Personnel	4,000	5,000
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
17B Expenses	9,865	10,095
APPROPRIATE FROM WEIGHTS AND MEASURES RESERVE ACCOUNT		
17B Expenses	1,500	1,500
Total Code Enforcement	155,929	155,625
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
18 CIVIL DEFENSE		
18A Personnel	3,500	3,500
18B Expenses	9,500	9,500
Total Civil Defense	13,000	13,000
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	4,077,557	4,246,341

EDUCATION**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE****20 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT - SEE NARRATIVE ON PAGES 31 AND 32.**

20	SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	21,829,443	22,254,443
20A	TRANSPORTATION	0	0
20B	TRADE SCHOOL	275,000	300,000
20C	BLACKSTONE REGIONAL	1,152,230	1,259,396
TOTAL EDUCATION		23,256,673	23,813,839

PUBLIC WORKS**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE****21 DPW HIGHWAY DIVISION**

21A	Personnel	500,326	509,699
21B	Expenses	522,273	524,478
21C	Snow/Ice Personnel	75,000	75,000
Total Highway (Includes Snow & Ice)		1,097,599	1,109,177

21 DPW FACILITIES DIVISION

21D	Energy and Utilities	0	0
21E	Building Maintenance (non-personnel)	0	0
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS		1,097,599	1,109,177

BUILDING, PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION COMM.**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE****21F BUILDING, PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION COMM.**

21F	Expenses	0	0
TOTAL BUILD, PLAN, & CONSTRUCT		0	0

HUMAN SERVICES**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE****22 BOARD OF HEALTH**

22A	Personnel	50,229	53,017
22B	Expenses	15,583	15,583
Total Board of Health		65,812	68,600

23 LANDFILL ANALYSIS

23A	Expenses	15,000	15,000
Total Landfill Analysis		15,000	15,000

24 COUNCIL ON AGING		
24A Personnel	143,638	145,548
24B Expenses	20,508	20,508
Total Council On Aging	164,146	166,056
26 VETERANS		
26A Personnel	72,598	42,000
26B Expenses	200,000	200,000
Total Veterans	272,598	242,000
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	517,556	491,656
CULTURE & RECREATION		
RAISE AND APPROPRIATE		
27 LIBRARY		
27A Personnel	144,540	159,352
27B Expenses	25,250	26,500
Total Library	169,790	185,852
28 RECREATION		
28A Personnel	0	0
28B Expenses	12,000	12,000
28C Youth League Equipment	0	0
Total Recreation	12,000	12,000
29 HISTORICAL COMMISSION		
29A Expenses	500	500
Total Historical Commission	500	500
30 MEMORIALS		
30A Soldiers Memorials	5,000	15,000
30B Veterans Celebrations	1,900	1,900
Total Memorials	6,900	16,900
31 RECYCLING		
31A Personnel		
31B Expenses		
Total Recycling	0	0
TOTAL CULTURE & RECREATION	189,190	215,252

DEBT SERVICE**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE**

32 Debt Principal	232,000	232,000
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APPROPRIATE FROM RECEIPTS RESERVED - TITLE V

32 Debt Principal	15,108	15,108
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RAISE AND APPROPRIATE

33 Debt Interest	87,175	72,455
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34 Short Term Interest	20,000	20,000
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35 BVRS Debt	83,487	80,224
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TOTAL DEBT SERVICE	437,770	419,787
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NON-DEPARTMENTAL**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE**

36 Medicare	315,000	345,000
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37 Life Insurance	10,000	10,000
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38 Retirement System	1,470,405	1,529,541
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39 Workers' Compensation	146,000	146,000
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40 Unemployment Comp.	131,300	131,300
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41 Employee Ins. Benefits	5,178,123	5,428,781
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APPROPRIATE FROM AVAILABLE FUNDS [FREE CASH]

41 Employee Ins. Benefits	756,877	756,219
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APPROPRIATE FROM OVERLAY SURPLUS

41 Employee Ins. Benefits	50,000	50,000
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APPROPRIATE FROM HEALTH INSURANCE STABILIZATION

41 Employee Ins. Benefits	150,000	0
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RAISE AND APPROPRIATE

42 Property & Liability Ins.	356,400	356,400
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43 Reserve for Wage Adj.	12,500	12,500
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44 Stabilization Fund	0	0
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45 Reserve Fund	50,000	50,000
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46 Retirement Benefits	24,750	24,750
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TOTAL NON-DEPARTMENTAL	8,651,355	8,840,491
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TOTAL	\$ 39,618,323	\$ 40,624,321
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TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article is the Town's Omnibus Operating Budget Article for FY 2017, which cannot exceed \$40,699,321. Sewer and Water are enterprise funds that are approved by separate articles.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to establish the Fiscal Year 2017 budget in an amount not to exceed \$40,699,321. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 4: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from the Retained Earnings Account of the Sewer Enterprise Fund a sum of money to operate the Sewer Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,170,000 for expenses and debt service to operate the Sewer Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2017, said sum to be offset by the sum of \$2,100,000 from betterments and other revenues received by the Sewer Enterprise Fund during Fiscal Year 2017, and \$70,000 to be transferred from the Retained Earnings Account of the Sewer Enterprise Fund, said appropriations to be used for the following purposes:

Wages and Salaries	\$ 392,540
Expenses	\$ 797,629
Interest on long term debt	\$ 119,234
Sewer maturing principal	\$ 617,037
Total: \$1,926,440;	

and to transfer \$243,560 from said \$2,170,000 to the General Fund as reimbursement for shared costs and fringe benefits.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to appropriate funding in the amount of \$2,170,000 for the operation of the Sewer Enterprise Operation. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 5: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from the Retained Earnings Account of the Water Enterprise Fund a sum of money to operate the Water Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,648,668 for expenses and debt service to operate the Water Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2017, said sum to be offset by the sum of \$1,648,668 from revenues received by the Water Enterprise Fund during Fiscal Year 2017, said appropriation to be used for the following purposes:

Wages and Salaries	\$ 24,713
Expenses	\$1,544,281
Interest on long term debt	\$ 6,788
Water maturing principal	\$ 41,788
Total: \$1,617,570;	

and to transfer \$31,098 from said \$1,648,668 to the General Fund as reimbursement for shared costs and fringe benefits.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to appropriate funding in the amount of \$1,648,668 for the operation of the Water Enterprise Operation. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 6: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money and such additional funds as may become available from the Commonwealth's Department of Transportation, Chapter 90 Bond Issue proceeds, to be used by the Department of Public Works for the repair and maintenance of Town roads in conformance with MGL and further

to see if the Town will vote to meet said appropriation by borrowing and to authorize the Treasurer/Collector, with approval of the Board of Selectmen, to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor in anticipation of the receipt of said State Aid; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article is an annual request to authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend Chapter 90 State Road funds for FY 2017.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article allows for the expenditure of Chapter 90 road funds and allows the Treasurer to borrow in anticipation of receiving Chapter 90 funds. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 7: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer/Collector to enter into a compensating balance agreement or agreements for FY 2017, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53F of the M.G.L.; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article authorizes the Treasurer/Collector to enter into agreements with banks and to manage Town funds.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This is an annual article that allows the Treasurer to enter into agreements with banks to manage Town funds. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 8: (Playground and Recreation Commission)

To see if the Town will vote to reauthorize a revolving account pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53E 1/2 for the Playground & Recreation Commission, to which account shall be credited any grants, donations, program user fees and fund raising proceeds received by said Commission and from which funds may be expended by said Commission to maintain the Town's playgrounds and recreation fields, to make improvements thereto and to purchase, lease or rent equipment and support facilities for programs and activities taking place thereon provided, however, that the total amount which may be expended from the account in FY 2017 is \$20,000; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is for the annual reauthorization of the Playground & Recreation Commission's revolving account not to exceed \$20,000.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This is an annual reauthorization of the Playground and Recreation Commission's revolving account. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 9: (Board of Health)

To see if the Town will vote to reauthorize a revolving account pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53E ½ for the Northbridge Board of Health to receive funds received from food related permit fees, plan reviews, and non-compliance fees and to authorize the Northbridge Board of Health to spend these funds to carry out the duties of the Board of Health including but not limited to inspections, plan reviews, purchasing of supplies and any other administrative related costs, provided, however, that the maximum amount of money that may be expended from the account for FY 2017 is \$20,000; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is for the annual reauthorization of the Board of Health's revolving account not to exceed \$20,000.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to reauthorize the revolving account for the Northbridge Board of Health for fees from food related permit fees, site stickers and non-compliance fees to carry out the duties of the Board of Health. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 10: (Board of Health)

To see if the Town will vote to reauthorize a revolving account pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53E ½ for the Northbridge Board of Health to receive funds from the sale of compost site stickers and to authorize the Northbridge Board of Health to spend these funds to carry out the duties of the Board of Health including but not limited to the salary of the compost site monitor, the purchase of supplies and any other administrative related costs, provided, however, that the maximum amount of money that may be expended from the account for FY 2017 is \$10,000; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is for the annual reauthorization of the Board of Health's revolving account not to exceed \$10,000.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to reauthorize the revolving account for the Northbridge Board of Health for fees from the sale of compost site stickers to carry out the duties of the Board of Health. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 11: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2015 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 5, 2015), and under Article 2 of the 2015 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 27, 2015), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article, by transferring a sum of money to the Compensated Absences Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2015 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 5, 2015), and under Article 2 of the 2015 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 27, 2015), by transferring a sum of money to the Compensated Absences Fund.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to fund the future payments of accrued liabilities for compensated absences such as sick or vacation time for employees who terminate employment. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in the amount of \$24,750. The vote was unanimous

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 12: (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 undesignated fund balance (free cash), and/or transfer from the Stabilization Fund a sum of money for the Compensated Absences Fund for FY 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury, and/or transfer from the undesignated fund balance (free cash), and/or transfer from the Stabilization Fund a sum of money for the Compensated Absences Fund for FY 2017.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article authorizes funding of the compensated absences account for Fiscal Year 2017 in the amount of \$25,000. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 13: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money, and/or amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2015 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 5, 2015), and under Article 2 of the 2015 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 27, 2015), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article, to transfer 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 a sum of money, and/or amend the votes taken under Article 3 of the 2015 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 5, 2015), and under Article 2 of the 2015 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 27, 2015), to transfer a sum of money, to the Stabilization Fund.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee ***supports passing over*** this article. At this time there are no funds to be transferred to the Stabilization Fund. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 14: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Pine Grove Cemetery Trust to fund operations of the Pine Grove Cemetery for FY 2017 beginning July 1, 2016 and ending on June 30, 2017, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to transfer a sum of money to the Pine Grove Cemetery Trust Fund to fund operations of the Pine Grove Cemetery for FY 2017.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to transfer funds from the Pine Grove Cemetery Trust to fund the operations of the cemetery during Fiscal Year 2017. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in the amount of \$45,000. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 15: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer a sum of money from the Town Building Maintenance Fund, established pursuant to Chapter 438 of the Acts of 2012, for maintenance of Town-owned buildings and facilities in Fiscal Year 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks to transfer a sum of money from the Town Building Maintenance Fund for maintenance of Town-owned buildings and facilities in FY 2017.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks funds totaling \$39,213 for the maintenance of Town-owned buildings. These funds are derived from the payment in lieu of taxes on the existing solar farm. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 16: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 64L, §2, authorizing the imposition of a local sales tax in the statutory amount of .75% on the sale of restaurant meals originating within the Town, such tax to take effect January 1, 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 64L, §2, authorizing the imposition of a local meal sales tax in the statutory amount of .75% on the sale of restaurant meals originating within the Town, such tax to take effect January 1, 2017.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks the acceptance of the provisions of G.L. c. 64L, Section 2, which allows for the imposition of a local meal sales tax. The Town has future unfunded liabilities estimated to be in excess of \$70 million. Passage of this article will generate additional revenue to be used in the annual budget and will create better flexibility to look at funding this future debt. It is estimated by the Department of Revenue that the sales tax will generate more than \$100,000 annually. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) refer to benefits, other than pensions that government employees earn while actively working, but don't receive until they retire. Typically included are insurance coverage for health, dental, vision, prescription drugs, etc. for retirees, their spouses and in some cases for their beneficiaries. Every two years, municipalities are required to complete an actuarial analysis to identify their total OPEB costs, which represents a future liability. This liability, most commonly referred to as the Unfunded OPEB cost, is currently \$70,729,271. Most often, cities and towns treat OPEB as an operating expense and as individual employees retire, cover the incremental cost in the annual budget. A few communities have chosen to set up and appropriate to reserve accounts in accordance with a plan to fully fund the liability over time.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 17: (Building, Planning and Construction Committee)

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 for the purpose of financing the design and construction of a DPW Building at 11 Fletcher Street, including renovation of the current administration building and garage, permitting, site improvements and soil remediation,

said sum to be expended under the direction of the Building, Planning and Construction Committee, and that to meet this appropriation the Treasurer/Collector, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, be authorized to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, section 7(3) and 3(A), as amended, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; to authorize the Board of Selectmen, and any other appropriate officials of the Town, to apply for and accept any forms of financial assistance that may be available to the Town on account of this project from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its Rural Development programs, and in connection therewith to enter into any necessary agreements with the USDA for a loan, and otherwise to contract with the USDA with respect to any such loan or loans; and to authorize the Building, Planning and Construction Committee to take any action necessary to carry out this construction and renovation project provided, however, that no debt shall be incurred hereunder unless and until the Town first votes to exempt from the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½, so-called), the amounts required to pay the principal and interest of said debt; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to finance the design and construction of a DPW Building at 11 Fletcher Street, including renovation of the current administration building and garage, permitting, site improvements and soil remediation. The article also authorizes the Treasurer/Collector to borrow and authorizes the Board of Selectmen, and any other appropriate officials of the Town, to apply for and accept any forms of financial assistance that may be available from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its Rural Development programs, and to enter into any necessary agreements with the USDA for a loan, and otherwise to contract with the USDA with respect to any such loan or loans. It further authorizes the Building, Planning and Construction Committee to take any action necessary to carry out this construction and renovation project provided, however, that no debt shall be incurred hereunder unless and until the Town first votes to exempt from the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½, so-called), the amounts required to pay the principal and interest of said debt. SEE BOARD REPORT TO TOWN AT OCTOBER 28 AGENDA

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks to authorize funding for a new DPW building at 11 Fletcher Street and the renovation of existing buildings if appropriate. The Finance Committee **recommends passage** of this article in an amount not to exceed \$2.5 million. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 18: (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, a sum of money for the purpose of funding the repair and renovation of the Great Hall at the Northbridge Town Hall, including design, preparation of bid documents, construction oversight and all other associated costs, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Board of Selectmen and/or the Building, Planning & Construction Committee; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This article seeks 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, a sum of money for the purpose of funding the repair and renovation of the Great Hall at the Northbridge Town Hall, including design, preparation of bid documents, construction oversight and all other associated costs. Funds to be expended under the direction of the Board of Selectmen and/or the Building, Planning & Construction Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks funding for the renovation of the third floor of the town hall in the amount of \$175,000. The funds will be used for plaster and paint. Funding will be \$100,000 from free cash and borrowing of \$75,000. The Town will be applying or a grant. The Finance Committee **recommends passage** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**ARTICLE 19: (Planning Board)**

To see if the Town will vote to accept as a public way the remaining portion of Fairway Drive, located within the Shining Rock Golf Community Development, from its intersection with Sand Trap Court and Clubhouse Lane to the boundary line between the Towns of Northbridge and Upton, Massachusetts, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen, and as shown on a plan entitled "Street Acceptance Plan Fairway Drive Northbridge, Massachusetts Owned by Norwood Cooperative Bank," dated November 11, 2014, a copy of which plan 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 gift, purchase or eminent domain said public way easement for the purposes 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 Fairway Drive [Shining Rock Golf Community] as a public way. The Planning Board will provide a recommendation at Town Meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: This article seeks acceptance of a portion of a street in the Shining Rock Development. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:**ARTICLE 20: (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] by designating "Stores usually selling a combination of 2 or more of the following: dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware and food" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 Zoning District, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S), as follows:

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Retail and Service:												
Stores usually selling a combination of 2 or more of the following: dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware and food [Amended 10-23-2007 ATM, Art. 12]	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	S P	P	S (3)	S (3)	--

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] by designating "Stores usually selling a combination of 2 or more of the following: dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware and food" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 Zoning District, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S).

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 21: (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] by designating "Establishment primarily selling food and drink for home preparation and consumption or on its premises" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S), as follows:

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Retail and Service:												
Establishment primarily selling food and drink for home preparation and consumption or on its premises [Amended 10-23-2007 ATM, Art. 12]	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	S P	S P	S (3)	S (3)	--

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] by designating "Establishment primarily selling food and drink for home preparation and consumption or on its premises" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S).

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 22: (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] by designating "Miscellaneous business offices and services" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 Zoning District, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S), as follows:

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Retail and Service:												
Miscellaneous business offices and services [Amended 10-23-2007 ATM, Art. 12]	--	--	--	--	--	--	P	S P	P	S (3)	S (3)	--

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] by designating "Miscellaneous business offices and services" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-2 Zoning District, whereas such use is currently allowed by special permit (S).

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 23: (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] by designating "Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-1, B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts, whereas such use is currently not permitted (--), as follows;

USE	ZONING DISTRICT											
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3 (1)	I-1	I-2	H
Retail and Service:												
Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses [Amended 2-21-2012 STM, Art. 3]	--	--	--	--	--	--	-- P	-- P	-- P	S	P	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] by designating "Office for administrative, executive, professional, sales and other similar uses" as a use allowed by-right (P) within the B-1, B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts, whereas such use is currently not permitted (--).

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 24: (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 173 of the Code of Northbridge, Section 173-4 [Establishment of Zoning Map] by extending the Business-Two (B-2) Zoning District along Church Street to include the property shown on Assessors' Map 14 as Parcel(s) 162 & 160, the former Milford Regional Medical Center located at 18 & 28 Granite Street, which property is currently included in the Residential-Three (R-3) Zoning District; 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 173-4 [Establishment of Zoning Map] by extending the Business-Two (B-2) Zoning District along Church Street to include the property shown on Assessor' Map 14 as Parcel(s) 162 & 160, the former Milford Regional Medical Center located at 18 & 28 Granite Street, which property is currently included in the Residential-Three (R-3) Zoning District.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 25: (School Committee)

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 School Building Committee for the costs of a feasibility study relating to the replacement of the W. Edward Balmer Elementary School located at 21 Crescent Street, in Whitinsville, Massachusetts and as further described as parcels 138 (21.04 ac.) & 141 (9.04 ac.) on the Town of Northbridge Assessors' Map 7, for which feasibility study the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, with the understanding that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in connection with the feasibility study in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this article is to appropriate the sum of \$775,000 by transferring from the undesignated fund balance (free cash), the sum of \$350,000 and by borrowing the sum of \$425,000; to conduct a feasibility study relating to the W. Edward Balmer Elementary School. The Town will participate in a grant reimbursement program with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) which will reimburse part of the cost of the feasibility study. The current estimated reimbursement rate for our town for 2016 is approximately 57% of eligible costs. While the town has to vote to approve the full amount of \$775,000, the net cost to the town after reimbursement will be much less. The feasibility study is a required element of the grant reimbursement program. The purpose of the study is to assess the needs and future status of the Balmer Elementary School building. The study will also consider, among other things, a potential grade reconfiguration to assess if the building project should include a grade span beyond grades two through four, such as a building that serves the needs of preschool through grade five. Funds to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks funding for a feasibility study by the School District for the W. Edward Balmer School. There is an estimated reimbursement by the Commonwealth of 57%. The study will be funded by \$350,000 from free cash and borrowing of \$425,000. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article in the amount not to exceed \$775,000. The vote was unanimous. See the School District Website for additional information.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 26: (Petition)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for the purpose of purchasing a LUCAS CPR Device for use by the Northbridge Fire Department; or take any action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: The purpose of this petition article is to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for the purpose of purchasing a LUCAS CPR Device for use by the Northbridge Fire Department.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks funding for the purchase of a Lucas CPR machine. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article in the amount not to exceed \$14,000 from Ambulance Receipts. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 27: (Petition)

To see of the Town will vote to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article II (Definitions), §173-2B, by inserting the following defined term:

Contractor's Yard: Premises, other than a construction site on which a building permit is in force, used by a building or construction contractor or subcontractor, or any other tradesman or landscaper, principally for storage of equipment and supplies, fabrication of subassemblies, and parking of equipment used by such contractor, subcontractor, other tradesman or landscaper, whether conducted inside or outside of a building; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This petition article seeks to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article II (Definitions), §173-2B, by inserting the following defined term: Contractor's Yard: Premises, other than a construction site on which a building permit is in force, used by a building or construction contractor or subcontractor, or any other tradesman or landscaper, principally for storage of equipment and supplies, fabrication of subassemblies, and parking of equipment used by such contractor, subcontractor, other tradesman or landscaper, whether conducted inside or outside of a building.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER'S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 28: (Petition)

To see of the Town will vote to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article V (Use Regulations), §173.12, by inserting the following in the Table of Use Regulations:

Use												
Wholesale and Manufacturing:	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3	I-1	I-2	H
Contractor's Yard	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S	S	S	S	--

Or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER'S SUMMARY: This petition article seeks to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article V (Use Regulations), §173.12, by inserting "Contractor's Yard" in the Table of Use Regulations and by designating "Contractor's Yard" as a use allowed by Special Permit (S) within the B-2, B-3, I-1 and I-2 Zoning Districts.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 29: (Petition)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article VIII (Off-Street Parking and Loading), §173-27C, by inserting the following in the Table of Off-Street Parking Standards under the category “Industrial and institutional”:

Contractor’s Yard	1 per 750 square feet of nfs
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Or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER’S SUMMARY: This petition article seeks to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw, Article VIII (Off-Street Parking and Loading), §173-27C, by inserting “Contractor’s Yard – 1 per 750 square feet of nfs” in the Table of Off-Street Parking Standards under the category “Industrial and institutional”.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The article seeks to amend the zoning bylaws. The Finance Committee *recommends passage* of this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

ARTICLE 30: (Petition)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the donation of approximately 127 acres of open space land located off of Hill Street and Prospect Street, in and around the subdivision known as “The Hills at Whitinsville”; or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER’S SUMMARY: The purpose of this petition article is for the Town to accept the donation of approximately 127 acres of open space land located off of Hill Street and Prospect Street, in and around the subdivision known as “The Hills at Whitinsville”.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee *supports passing over* this article. The vote was unanimous.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS:

The Town of Northbridge Department of Public Works: New Vehicle Storage Building & Existing Building Renovations



The Project: To build a new vehical storage building to shelter the DPW's 20 plus vehicles, and to renovate and upgrade the building systems of the current building. All alternative sites and options have been studied and it is believed the current DPW site is the most logical choice.

Location: Current DPW site (Fletcher Street)

Cost: \$2.5 Million (estimated construction cost)

TaxPayer Cost: \$TBD

Background: For several years it has been recognized that the 1941 DPW building is in need of upgrades and that a building to store the town's fleet of approximately 20 vehicles, several of which are over-sized, is a wise investment.



In 2012, HKT Architects completed a large scale study concluding that the current location is a suitable site, however, the design generated at that time was large and costly.

In 2014, the Town of Northbridge examined purchasing the Douglas Road site and revamping it to meet the DPW needs on a smaller scale, however, the vote was lost mainly due to the location.

Now, several years have gone by and several thousands of dollars have been spent, yet the DPW is still in need of a vehicle storage building and renovations to their building. The DPW is once again seeking Voter approval to protect the Town's investments, and to increase the efficiency of the DPW operations through quality systems and structures.

Why is this needed: To protect hundreds of thousands of tax dollars that have been invested in DPW vehicles, and to increase existing building efficiencies.

Why a New 6,000 sq. ft. Vehicle Storage Building?

- Many of the new and over-sized vehicles currently sit outside in the elements or in unheated, carports as they are too large to fit in the existing building.
- The expensive carports are relatively fragile in strong winds and snow and must be replaced.
- Vehicles are not ready to roll when needed. They must themselves be cleaned off of snow.
- Although the diesel engines are plugged in, they often do not start in extreme temperatures.
- Dangerous conditions exist when staff must climb on the large vehicles in a blizzard to try and clean them off.

Why Renovations to the Existing Building?

- The 1941 building is sorely lacking in many areas.
- The building's heating ventilation and electrical systems are out of date.
- The sanitary facilities are original.
- Floor drains are closed due to location near the river, resulting in mechanics lying on the floor in puddles of water to repair vehicles.
- The building has air quality concerns and staff inhales diesel exhaust daily.
- The heating systems and windows are inefficient.
- One room functions as kitchen, eating area, and tools and parts storage.
- What is currently functioning as a kitchen is out of code.
- The roof and masonry walls leak.
- Explore the option of relocating offices, restrooms and breakroom space into new building.

Why on this Site?

- Land was deeded to the Town by the Whitins for exclusive use as a DPW Highway Garage.
- Already an established site. Is a "DPW Neighborhood."
- It is more cost effective to stay at this site than purchase another site and start new.



Oversized vehicles stored in carports



Vehicles stored in the elements



DPW office and storage building



Approximate location of new storage building



Kitchen



Opposite side of the kitchen



Meeting room



Lavatory

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
PROPOSED DPW FACILITY PROJECT

\$2,500,000
ESTIMATED DEBT SERVICE OVER 5 YEARS

**TAX IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY HOME
VALUED AT \$269,000:**

AVERAGE OF \$98.45 EACH YEAR OR \$24.61 QUARTERLY

\$2,500,000
ESTIMATED DEBT SERVICE OVER 10 YEARS

**TAX IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY HOME
VALUED AT \$269,000:**

AVERAGE OF \$51.55 EACH YEAR OR \$12.89 QUARTERLY



The Northbridge Public Schools

Town of Northbridge

87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588 (508) 234-8156 FAX (508) 234-8469 www.nps.org

Dr. Catherine Stickney, Superintendent
Kathleen Perry, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Amy McKinstry, Director of Curriculum
Melissa Walker, Business Manager

March 22, 2016

Dear Community Members:

Over the past two years, the School Department has reduced a level services budget by approximately \$1.35 million. These budget cuts not only included the elimination of 23 positions, but also reductions to activities such as athletic offerings and services such as transportation. In addition to budget reductions, fees to families have been increased. New fees, such as transportation have been added, and existing fees, such as athletics, activities, and preschool tuition have been increased resulting in an additional \$142,000 of revenue.

When planning for the FY2017 budget began, the School Committee was adamant that they wanted the Leadership Team to put forth a budget that provided for the same level of services in FY2017 that were being offered in FY2016; the Committee did not want a third straight year of budget reductions. The Committee encouraged the Leadership Team to reprioritize resources and reorganize staff as necessary to meet student needs, but to stay within the confines of a level services budget.

The level services budget that the Superintendent recommended to the School Committee, and the budget that the School Committee adopted, reflects an increase of \$1.1 million or 4.35%. This increase is primarily made up of three categories: salaries, special education out of district tuition/transportation, and in district transportation. These three categories make up 101% of the total budget increase, meaning that all other categories in the budget netted a decrease.

Five existing staff positions were reorganized to better address existing priorities.

1.0 FTE Grade 1 Teacher → 1.0 FTE ELL Teacher: Due to the FY2016 Kindergarten class being smaller in enrollment than in past years, the District is able to reduce a Grade 1 Teacher in FY2017 and still maintain current class size. This reduced position will be converted into an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher. The District is facing an increased need for ELL support based upon a growing enrollment of ELL students. The number of ELL students has grown from 21 students in FY2014 to 35 students in FY2015 to 53 students in FY2016.

1.0 FTE Kindergarten Teacher → 1.0 FTE Kindergarten Inclusion Teacher: A second year of low Kindergarten enrollment is anticipated. Due to the intensive special needs of a large number of preschool students entering Kindergarten, and to more effectively meet the needs of Kindergarten inclusion students, the District is reducing a Kindergarten Classroom Teacher and converting that position to a Kindergarten Special Education Inclusion Teacher. Low enrollment will allow for this switch without a negative impact on class size.

1.0 FTE High School Art Teacher → 1.0 FTE High School Culinary Teacher: In an effort to provide elective options to a broader group of high school students, one of the two art teachers at the High School will be reduced and a Culinary Teacher position, which was reduced two years ago, will be added back into the budget. Restoring this culinary position will allow the High School to expand its Career Academy offerings.

1.0 FTE High School Special Ed Teacher → 1.0 FTE MS Special Ed Teacher: The teacher for the Middle School alternative program had transitioned with students up to the High School. Now that the students have integrated into high school classes, the teacher will transition back to the Middle School to work with another group of students.

0.2 FTE High School AP Math Teacher → Reduced from Budget: A retiree had returned to the High School to teach AP math courses. A current High School Math Teacher has completed the training necessary to take over teaching these AP math classes.

Unfortunately, for the fourth year in a row, the Governor's proposed Chapter 70 funding has only increased by the minimum required amount per student. For FY2017, this amount is \$20 per student, or \$46,840 total. Fortunately, the Town was able to increase its contribution to the school department resulting in the total appropriation for the school department increasing by \$425,000. This increase was certainly helpful as the Governor's proposal also decreases funding for our Kindergarten grant by just over \$20,000.

Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable trend that shifts the funding sources of our operating budget where less is being funded from state aid and more is being funded from town contribution and school department revolver accounts. For example, in FY2013, Chapter 70 funded 63% of our operating budget, while in FY2017, it will fund 58%. In FY2013, the school revolver accounts funded approximately 8% of the operating budget, while in FY2017, they will fund 11%. The shift in funding to the revolver accounts is not sustainable. In FY2017, the School Department projects incoming revolver revenue to be approximately \$1.7 million. However, the District will need to spend \$2.9 million from the revolver accounts to balance the budget. While this scenario is projected to leave a \$1 million balance in the reserves, it is not a viable funding mechanism for FY2018. Without factoring in an increase in revenue OR expenses for FY2018, the District could potentially be faced with a deficit over \$1 million because there will not be enough money in the revolver accounts to fund FY2018 to the same extent the revolvers funded FY2017.

We are pleased to be able to offer a level services budget for FY2017 and maintain the services we are currently offering our students. While we always wish to improve upon and enhance our programs, we are cognizant of the fiscal challenges we face. We are committed to working with the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, parents, staff, students, and community members to garner support for education so the Northbridge Public Schools can continue to provide a high quality educational program to the students of Northbridge.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Catherine Stickeny

Superintendent of Schools

Michael LeBrasseur

School Committee Chair

Melissa Walker

Business Manager

A COMPLETE DETAILED LINE ITEM BUDGET IS AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE WWW.NPS.ORG
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Excellence - Accountability - Collaboration: "Every Student, Every Classroom, Every Day"

**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
2017 TOWN DEBT
DRAFT DOCUMENT**

	<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>EXCLUDED</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>INTEREST</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1	School Land Acquisition	YES	90,000.00	8,700.00	98,700.00
2	TITLE V	NO	10,421.00 4,687.00	-	15,108.00
3	Town/School Roof Plans	NO	11,000.00	4,312.00	15,312.00
4	Police Roof	YES	11,000.00	4,843.00	15,843.00
5	Middle School Roof	YES	113,000.00	51,415.00	164,415.00
6	Fire Roof	NO	7,000.00	3,185.00	10,185.00
7	BVRVTHS Expansion	YES	-	80,224.00	80,224.00
					<hr/> 399,787.00

TOTAL PRINCIPAL FY'17: 247,108.00

TOTAL INTEREST FY'17: 152,679.00

TOTAL EXCLUDABLE DEBT FY'17 355,805.00 A

A: Amount excluded is reduced due to Bond Premium on the refinance of the school land debt in FY'15. The amount for FY'17 is \$3,377 and is required by DOR.

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.

ENTERPRISE FUND

Accounts for activities for which a fee is charged to external users for goods or services. Accounts for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises - where the intent of the governing body is that the costs (expenses including depreciation) of providing goods and services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges.

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.

NET ASSETS UNRESTRICTED (formerly Retained Earnings)

An equity account reflecting the accumulated earnings of an enterprise fund that may be used to fund capital improvements, to reimburse the general fund for prior year subsidies, or to reduce user charges and to provide for enterprise revenue deficits (operating loss).

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.

USER CHARGES/FEES

A municipal funding source where payment is collected from the user of a service to help defray the cost of providing the service.

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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SAVE THE DATE

MAY 3, 2016

Spring Annual Town Meeting

To: Postal Customer