

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
MONDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2022

Moderator: George Miller
Attendance: 107

Town Clerk: Heather J. Almy

Called to order 7:37PM

Moderator started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

Moderator, George Miller made a motion and it was seconded to read the warrant as printed in its entirety, so moved

Article 1 Selectman Larabee made a motion and it was seconded to hear the report of the Finance Committee.

Report was read by Joe Freitas, Chairman of Finance Committee

**Town of Berkley
Finance Committee**

Good Evening,

Tonight's Special Town Meeting signifies the close of the FY2023 budget season. Articles 2 and 3 will address the budget surplus of \$70,177 that was left over from June's Annual Town Meeting. The majority of appropriations represent either the successful conclusion of contract negotiations or the reinstatement of line items to their appropriate level. It is important to note that taxation is in no way affected by tonight's warrant articles. Having reviewed each of the listed items, this board finds them to be necessary and fully supports the adoption of articles 2 and 3.

Along with an adjustment for additional new growth, the Town of Berkley finds itself with a modest budget surplus at the Special Town Meeting. The Finance Committee recommends the transfer of the remaining \$28,523 into stabilization. Once transferred into stabilization, it cannot be removed without a simple majority vote. * Tonight you will hear a different total of \$31,023 from the Board of Selectmen in which adds an additional 2500.00. The Finance Committee supports any additional funding from the Board of Selectmens Budget to be placed into the Stabilization Account.

This committee supports the purchase of an ambulance for the Fire Department through the use of Ambulance User Fees. The article does not impact taxation, nor does it affect the budget surplus while providing the Fire Department with a critical piece of equipment. Ambulance User Fees have been an important source of revenue growth for the

Town in recent FYs and the Finance Committee believes that this purchase will help drive revenue growth further.

The Finance Committee is also monitoring a few fiscal obstacles in coming FYs, none larger than the payment of the new Bristol-Plymouth High School. With that in mind, this Committee supports the passage of Article six with the hope of defraying some portion of the costs associated with that project. While the inclusion of the new member town may not reduce our share by a substantial number, any savings would be welcome.

The Town of Berkley remains in a sound financial position and continues to work towards the eventual elimination of its structural deficit. Berkley has reduced the use of available funds in its operating budget by nearly \$150,000 over the past two years. This committee voices its support for fiscal conservatism whenever possible and will continue to do so in future FYs. There are challenges on the horizon in the coming years, but this board remains confident that progress will continue in FY 2024.

It has been our honor to serve the Town of Berkley.

Joseph Freitas, Chairman
 Matthew Chabot, Vice Chairman
 Michelle Hamilton, Secretary
 Nancy Gajoli, Member
 Tabitha McCrohan, Member

Article 2 Selectman Cochrane made a motion and it was seconded that the Town raise and appropriate from available FY23 funds the following amounts to pay unpaid bills from the prior fiscal year:

Department/account	Name	Description	amount
Selectmen- office supply	W.B Mason	supplies/files cabinets	2227.00
Selectmen- Dues/Subscriptions/Memberships	Local IQ	Public Hearing AD	429.60
Town Counsel- Legal	Mead Talerman & Costa	Town Counsel Legal	1567.50
Misc.-In-line of duty Injury Fund	Chubb Police & Fire	Deductibles IOD	1608.80
Data Processing- Record Archiving	Access	Record Archiving	574.00

Totaling \$6406.90

Explanation: Invoices for various departments did not get paid prior to the close of fiscal year 2022, and need approval by town meeting to pay them as old bills. **Nine-tenths vote required.**

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 3 Selectman Larabee made a motion and it was seconded that the Town vote to raise and appropriate from available FY23 funds the following amounts:

Communications	8,182.00
Town Clerk- Clerical	678.00
Library- Clerical	1,458.00
Town Collector-Clerical	1,616.00
Building Department- Clerical	942.00
Emergency Medical Services- Call EMT	15,000.00
Fire Department- Callmen	1,500.00
Assessors- Salary Town Assessor	756.38
Selectmen- Salaries Clerical	3,043.40
Building Department-Salaries Building Inspector	520.00
Assessors Office- Software	3,700.00
Town Treasurer- other charges	1,100.00
Selectmen- Town Administrator Search	1,800.00
Miscellaneous- In-Line of Duty Injury fund	1,391.00
Stabilization	31,023.00

Totaling : \$ 72,709.78
and transfer the following sums,:

Transfer From	Transfer to	Amount
Town Accountant Salary	Town Accountant Expense	2,500
Police Department Salary	Police Department Expense	5,750
Ambulance User Fees	Emergency Medical Services Salary	28,000
Comcast Cable Account	Cable Access TV Salary	16,350

Explanation: This motion will appropriate from available funds to fund contractual increases for the Clerical Union, 911 operators Union, Building Inspector Contract, Town Assessor Contract, Selectmen’s Admin Assistant Contract, which all renewed for 1 year, provide additional funding to the Fire

Department for both EMT and Firefighter call personnel, provide one half years funding to the Assessors Office for Nearmap Software, provide funding for the Selectmen to hire a company for the search and hiring of a new Town Administrator, provide additional funding in the “In-line of Duty Injury fund” account to cover co-pays for injured on duty claims, and increase the Unfunded Liability account. The Motion will also transfer from available funds from the Town Accountant Salary to the expense line for training for the Accountant, and Assistant, Transfer from the Police Salary to Expense for the expense of the Police Chief Assessment , Transfer from the Ambulance User Fees one-half years Salary for an Executive Assistant for the Fire Department, and transfer from the Comcast Cable Account to Cable Access TV Salary account for the Cable TV Manager.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 4 Selectmen Cochrane made a motion and it was seconded to move to indefinitely postpone Article 4.

Explanation: Because the Capital Improvement Planning Committee has insufficient membership to constitute a quorum, no report has been issued.

Selectmen Cochrane explained further. No other discussion, Motion carried unanimously.

Article 5 Selectmen Larabee made a motion and it was seconded that the Town transfer from the Ambulance User Fees Account the sum of \$400,000 for the purchase of a new ambulance for the Fire Department.

Explanation: This will fund the needed capital expenditure for the Fire Department to purchase a new ambulance for the department.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 6 Selectman Cochrane made a motion and it was seconded that the Town vote to accept the Amended Agreement of the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School District as approved by the Bristol-Plymouth Regional School Committee on May 4, 2022, which included the addition of the Town of Freetown as a new member of the District.

Explanation: An affirmative vote on this article will allow the Town of Freetown to become a member of the Bristol-Plymouth Regional School District.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 7 Selectman Larabee made a motion and it was seconded that the Town vote to accept MGL Chapter 41, Section 110A, to authorize the Town Clerk's office to remain closed on all Saturdays and to treat Saturdays as a legal holiday for the purposes of calculating the time for filing matters in that office per statute.

Explanation: Chapter 41, Section 110A, of Massachusetts General Laws allows, by Town Meeting vote, any public office in a city or town to remain closed on Saturdays, with Saturdays treated as a legal holiday for the purpose of calculating certain deadlines.

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 8 Selectman Cochrane made a motion and it was seconded to indefinitely postpone Article 8

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

Article 9 Selectman Larabee made a motion and it was seconded to indefinitely postpone Article 9

No discussion, Motion carried unanimously

A motion was made to adjourn and it was seconded.
Time adjourned 7:53PM

A True Copy Attest

*Heather J. Almy
Town Clerk*