

NOVEMBER 15, 2023 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
SOUTH HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

BACKGROUND MATERIALS
last updated November 1, 2023

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will hear the report of the Town Meeting Advisory Committee, or take any other action relative thereto.

Background: The Town Meeting Review Committee began their work after the 2023 May Annual Town Meeting. The committee plans to produce a report for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting, and an update at this meeting.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to amend the FY2024 Operating Budget by raising and appropriating or transferring available funds to increase the FY2024 Operating budget in the amount of \$61,000 to account for an assistant principal in the school department, or to take any action relative thereto.

Background: Additional funds are being requested for a second Assistant Principal that has been vacant for many years. The \$61k reflects 7 months to cover the position starting as soon as December with an annual cost of \$105k. The funding is from the difference between the revenue projected for state aid in the budget approved by Town Meeting in May 2023 and the actual state aid approved by the Legislature and the Governor in July 2023. The "net" increase in State Aid revenue totals \$110,748.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$35,000 to pay the following bills incurred in prior fiscal years:

School	Eversource	\$35,000
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, or take any other action relative thereto.

Background: Eversource informed the school district in October 2023 that some of the meters have not been working and produced a statement dated 9/28/23 for \$34,662.08. The school department has requested that Eversource break down the bill into FY22, FY23 and FY24 amounts so that only FY22 and FY23 will be paid under this article. When more information is received, a recommendation to modify this article will be made at Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will transfer from Unreserved Free Cash or other Available Funds the sum of \$461,000 to make the following capital purchases, repairs, or replacements:

Town	Street Sweeper	\$385,000
Town/School	Scoreboard	\$46,000
Town/School	Elevators	\$15,000
Town	Historic Commission Study	\$15,000

, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Background: Capital Planning has reviewed the first three items and plans to vote at their November 2, 2023 meeting.

The street sweeper caught on fire last spring and the insurance company is not providing sufficient funds (~11k) to replace the sweeper. This equipment is needed now and also for the spring season, and thus cannot wait until the annual town meeting. This had initially been proposed for the 2023 May meeting but the Town wanted to continue to work with the insurance company.

The scoreboard is a recent addition. The Town became aware of the poor condition as games were being held at the high school field. The Town has sought quotes for a 26 foot, 32 foot and a 36 foot board. The current existing board is 20 feet long, while the one on the baseball field is 28 feet long. The 32 foot for the price and size should be good.

The state Office of Public Safety and Inspections recently informed the Town that it needs to have a Firefighter Service Phase II Stop Switch at Town Hall and the Middle School. The Library already had this done. This needs to be done prior to their 2024 inspection or it will result in a placard. The lowest quote is around \$6k for each with a contingency recommended.

The Historical Commission met on October 19 and voted to recommend that the Town submit a letter of intent for a Historic District Study grant. The last survey and planning grant work was done many years ago, around 2007. That grant provided the resources needed to create an inventory of historic houses in South Hadley Falls. For this grant, the SHHC would also have to complete the MAHC FY 2024 Letter of Intent, by November 15. The warrant would ask Town Meeting for \$15,000 for the grant work. If Town Meeting approves the article, and if the MAHC approves a grant for South Hadley, the SHHC will go ahead with the work, with the understanding that the SHHC will complete the work satisfactorily. At that time, as described in the MAHC announcement, the MAHC will reimburse the Town for 50% (or, \$7,500) of the money allocated by the Town.

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will transfer from WWTP Retained Earnings the sum of \$340,000 to make the following purchases, repairs, or replacements:

Town	Judd Brook	\$300,000
WWTP	Main Street Pump Station Channel Grinder	\$40,000

, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Background: The Judd Brook project was recently bid. Based on the low bid of \$2.2 million, and costs for the administration and oversight of the project, the Town recommends an additional \$300,000 contingency as the project is slated to be completed prior to the next Annual Town Meeting, an issue if additional funding is needed. There is currently about \$785k (the exact figure will be certified by the State this week). The Selectboard has approved \$2.3m in ARPA funds and plans to vote on \$622k in the remaining ARPA funds for this project. That leaves a total contingency fund of \$800k. The other two bids were about \$800k higher than the low bid.

We will need a \$40k appropriation for the remainder of the refurbishing of the Channel Grinder currently off-line at Main Street Pump Station. The original appropriation of \$35,000 at the Annual Town Meeting was to refurbish a portion of this machine. Further improvements beyond this repair will be undertaken in the Main Street Pump Station project currently being discussed.

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will transfer from Unreserved Free Cash or other Available Funds the sum of \$550,000 to the Mosier Stabilization Fund from the following sources:

Town	Unreserved Free Cash	\$550,000
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, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Background: There is \$850k in the Mosier Stabilization Fund. It is estimated that about \$1.5 - \$2m is needed for the Feasibility Study depending on the scope and when the project is bid. Due to higher interest rates and moving town investment funds into higher yielding accounts, the Town will realize almost \$600k in interest funding in FY23. The Town typically budgets \$50k in investment income and received just over \$100k in FY21 and FY22. This article proposes to increase the Mosier fund to \$1.4m. We believe this will make the South Hadley project more favorable when the Massachusetts School Building Authority votes in December 2023 on which projects will move forward. If invited into the process, the Town will have to demonstrate that it has the funding in FY25 (to be voted on at the May 2024 meeting). This helps bring the total closer to what is needed.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will transfer from Unreserved Free Cash or other Available Funds the sum of \$145,453.94 to the Opioid Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Background: Funding was received to the General Fund and realized as Free Cash prior to the start date of the new Opioid Stabilization Fund approved at the May 2023 Town Meeting. This article moves those funds into the new Stabilization Fund.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will impose the local room occupancy excise under G.L.c. 64G, § 3A at the rate of 4 percent, or take any other action relative thereto.

Background: This article is the vote to accept the Mass General Law allowing for the excise tax. The Town can vote the % up to 6% maximum. Selectboard discussed and recommended 4%. The state estimates that the town will receive \$7800 for each 1%. So 4% is \$31,200 annually and 6% is \$46,800 per year.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will impose the First Local Option Community Impact Fee under G.L. c. 64G, § 3D(a) at the rate of 3 percent, or take any other action relative thereto, and when received it shall be appropriated as follows: 100% to affordable housing and public infrastructure.

Background: No properties fall into this category but this has to be approved in order to approve Article 9.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will impose the Second Local Option Community Impact Fee under G.L. c. 64G, § 3D(b) at the rate of 3 percent, or take any other action relative thereto, and when received it shall be appropriated as follows: 100% to affordable housing and public infrastructure.

Background: At least 35% of the revenues must go to affordable housing/public infrastructure projects. The Selectboard voted on 100%.

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will accept G.L. c. 59 sec. 5(K) to allow for the Selectboard to establish a senior tax work off program effective for fiscal year 2025 which begins on July 1, 2024, and further that the Town adjust the exemption and; (1) allow an approved representative, for persons physically unable, to provide such services to the town; and (2) allowing the maximum reduction of the real property tax bill to be \$2,000, or take any other action related thereto.

Background: The Town has been soliciting public input and discussed at several Selectboard meetings. The state also recently increased the maximum amount from \$1500 to \$2000. The rules and regulations would still need to be determined by the Selectboard should Town Meeting approve accepting the Mass General Law. This would be subject to appropriation and the funding would come from the overlay district.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to amend section 7-20 of the General Bylaws by deleting the current language of section 7-20 and replacing it as follows:

Section 7-20 Master Plan Implementation Committee ("MPIC")

A. Purpose

The purpose of the MPIC is to serve as an advisory body to town officials and the community on current and future projects as they pertain to implementation of the Master Plan in accordance with the Master Plan goals and activities. The MPIC assists with coordination and implementation of Town activities that are consistent with the Master Plan.

B. Membership and Organization

(1) Appointment: The Selectboard and the Planning Board shall appoint the members of the MPIC. There shall be no fewer than five members and no more than nine members. All members shall be residents of South Hadley. The initial members shall be appointed for staggered terms no longer than three years each. After the expiration of the first term, the ongoing appointments shall be for three year terms. Jointly, the Planning Board and Selectboard shall fill vacancies on the MPIC.

(2) Liaisons: The Planning Board and Selectboard shall each appoint one member of their respective boards to act as a board liaison with the MPIC.

(3) Officers: The MPIC shall annually elect a chair and a vice chair and clerk.

(4) Quorum: A majority of those members of the MPIC then in office shall constitute a quorum. Actions by the MPIC shall be taken by a majority of those members present at a meeting of the MPIC.

C. Tasks and Responsibilities

The Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair in order to effectuate the Purpose of this bylaw. Such work may include:

(1) Monitoring progress towards goals of the master plan by coordinating with and regularly meeting with entities assigned tasks in the Master Plan.

(2) Identifying successes, progress, and barriers to Master Plan implementation.

(3) Assisting entities to the extent possible in overcoming barriers and addressing challenges, including reporting the same to the Planning Board and Selectboard.

(4) Assist in measuring progress including collecting and reporting data.

- (5) Update Master Plan task matrices on a regular basis and report to stakeholders.
- (6) Coordinate with the Planning Department and Administration, an annual update, discussion and examination of Master Plan activities and goals.
- (7) Encourage outreach and communication with the public to create awareness and provide information and status of MPIC activities.
- (8) Undertake other activities relating to the Master Plan at the request of the Planning Board, Selectboard, or Town Administrator.

D. Reporting

MPIC shall:

- (1) Meet at least once per year jointly with the Planning Board, Selectboard, and Town Administrator.
- (2) Submit written reports at least once per year to the Planning Board and Selectboard.
- (3) Submit a report to the Annual Town Meeting covering the immediate prior year's activities and upcoming year's plans.
- (4) Submit a brief report as part of the annual Town Report.

Background: The Master Plan Implementation Committee voted on amending their bylaw. The Planning Board approved those changes. The Bylaw Review Committee made several changes, in particular, deleting some language that describes the work of MPIC as that typically is not in a bylaw and already determined by Mass General Law. The changes outline in more detail the charge, duties and reporting requirements.