

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
WARRANT
APRIL 25, 2005
7:30 PM**

ARTICLE 58: BURGESS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of FORTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$40,000.00) to the Burgess Elementary HVAC Improvement Account #13002-53226 for the purpose of updating the HVAC system at Burgess Elementary School; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Burgess School Committee

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Recommendation to be provided at Town Meeting. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Recommendation to be provided at Town Meeting.

Summary: This article is to provide funding to make improvements to the HVAC system at Burgess Elementary School to address concerns raised by the Board of Health.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The Finance Committee made a substitute motion (unanimously) that no action be taken on this article. With no other substitute motions, there was no action taken on this article.*

ARTICLE 59: GASOLINE ACCOUNT

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of TWENTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$20,000.00) to the Central Purchasing – Gasoline Account #19152-54800 for the purpose of paying additional costs for all town vehicles associated with higher gasoline prices; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Finance Director

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: Gasoline prices have increased during the course of the year and the annual cost for the Town has increased significantly. The Finance Director and DPW Director reviewed expenses to date for all town departments and estimate that an additional \$20,000 will be necessary to ensure there are sufficient funds for the remainder of the year.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was unanimous in approving this article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 60: ACCEPTANCE OF MGL CH. 59, SECTION 5(54)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5(54) and establish \$1,000 as the minimum value of personal property subject to taxation; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Finance Director

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: The Town currently mails personal property tax bills to individuals in amounts as low as \$1.71 with a payment of \$0.86 due in two installments. Acceptance of this provision of MGL would allow the Town to eliminate the cost and time involved with collection of such small amounts. In FY05, the Town issued 27 bills with values less than \$1,000. In FY05, the total impact to Town revenues would be \$322.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the Town Meeting was unanimous in favor of the article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 61: ACCEPTANCE OF MGL CHAPTER 59, SECTION 57B

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 57B which would require a bill for real estate or personal property taxes, in an amount not in excess of fifty dollars to be paid in a single payment on November 1st or 30 days after the bill was mailed, whichever is later; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Finance Director

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: Acceptance of this provision of MGL would prevent the Town from having to bill twice per year on minimal tax bills of \$50 or less, saving postage and administrative costs.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was unanimous in approving this article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 62: TRUCK SCALES

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of FOURTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$14,000.00) to the Police Supplies Account #12102-54000 for the purpose of replacing the truck scales used by the Police Department; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Chief of Police

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: The Chief of Police made a request to the Betterment Committee to include new truck scales from Betterment Funds. The Betterment Committee did not believe this fit into the legal uses of the funds, but recommended that it be included in the Special Town Meeting warrant. The initial cost of \$14,000 would be offset by fines from overloaded trucks. In the past fiscal year, the Police Department issued fines of \$36,700 (approximately \$22,000 collected) in the past fiscal year using truck scales borrowed from the Town of Auburn. The old truck scales that Sturbridge owns were purchased in the mid-1980's and cannot be certified, which is necessary to ensure tickets/fines will be upheld.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was to approve the article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 63: RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$15,000.00) to the Unclassified Reserve Fund Account #19102-57800 for the purpose of replenishing the Reserve Fund for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2005; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Finance Committee

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: The Town budgets \$35,000 per year to the Reserve Fund for the Finance Committee to consider unforeseeable, emergency expenses. During the past year, these expenses have been higher than in prior years. The Finance Committee has asked for additional funding to ensure any emergency purchases between the Town Meeting and end of the fiscal year can be addressed.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was to approve the article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 64: ZBA/PLANNING BOARD CLERK TRANSFER

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED TWENTY TWO AND 66/100 (\$1,822.66) to the Zoning Board of Appeals Salaries/Wages Account #11761-51130 and the sum of NINETY TWO AND 12/100 (\$92.12) to the Planning Department

Salaries/Wages Account #11751-51130 for the purpose of reimbursing the Clerk's Salary Account for additional hours paid from these accounts for the comprehensive permit issued for Windgate at Sturbridge; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Town Planner

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary: The Clerk for the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Department had to put in extra hours during the course of this comprehensive permit application process. These extra hours were charged to the salaries/wages accounts, but will leave these accounts short at the end of the fiscal year, reducing the availability of the Clerk. Administrative fees collected and deposited in the General Fund on this application were \$8,900.00.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was to approve the article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

**ARTICLE 65
HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SIGNS**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund the sum of FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$5,000.00) for the purpose of purchasing and installing interpretive signs to be placed at four historically significant public places. These areas are the Snellville School (Senior Center), North Cemetery, Town Common (near the bandstand) and Center School; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Community Preservation Committee & Historic Commission

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary – The four signs would be purchased from the Community Preservation Act funds and read as follows:

The Sturbridge Common

Public land since the town's founding and first formally surveyed in 1762, the Common has been used for many purposes through the centuries. The Sturbridge militia mustered here and marched east to join the New England army outside Boston in April, 1775. Cattle pens once crowded the open field during the annual Sturbridge Fairs of the 19th century. A three-story privately-owned shoe factory operated for nearly 50 years against the high banking on top of which now stands the Library. Today, the Common continues to evolve. From craft fairs to concerts to outdoor weddings, it is a busy place in warmer months. The Joshua Hyde Library, the Civil War Soldiers' Monument, the Town Hall, the Center School, and the Old Burying Ground all occupy Common ground.

The Center School

Built in 1855 on the site of the original Meeting House, the Center School helped the town to consolidate outlying one-room district schools. It served as a site for elementary education until the 1950s, when the Burgess Elementary School was constructed. Since that time, the Center School housed several town offices, including the Sturbridge Police Department. The adjacent Old Burying Ground was the town's first cemetery, and is the final resting place for many of the early settlers, including Experience Deneson Wheelock, "the first Childe Born in this Town".

The North Cemetery

By the 1840s, the town's growth made this second cemetery a necessity, and it remains in current use. Here, monuments are of a different style from those in the Old Burying Ground, and many display elements of high Victorian design. Of particular interest is the double lot of uniform gravestones erected for Civil War veterans by the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic. That Sturbridge post was named for J. Arthur Johnson, a first sergeant who was killed just short of his 25th birthday in 1864 while leading Company E of the 50th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry at Spotsylvania Courthouse in Virginia. He too is buried in the North Cemetery with many of his comrades.

The Snellville School

Built in 1874 in the section of town named for the nearby Snell Manufacturing Company, the school has since served as center of community activity. At various times the school has hosted the Grand Army of the Republic, the Women's Relief Corps, the Sons of Union Veterans, the Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Fiskdale American Brass band, and Methodist Church Services. Although supplanted by Burgess Elementary School in 1958, the building has since been used by the Boy and Girl Scouts, Civil Defense, and the Sturbridge Art Association. At present, it is the home of the Sturbridge Senior Center.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was to approve the article as written as declared by the Moderator.*

ARTICLE 66

FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of EIGHT THOUSAND EIGHTEEN AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$8,018.00) to the following accounts:

12201-51130	Fire Department Salaries and Wages	\$6,873
12202-57000	Fire Department Other Charges	\$1,145

for the purpose of funding 9 weeks of an 11 week training program for a Sturbridge Firefighter at the Massachusetts Fire Academy; or take any action in relation thereto.

Sponsor: Fire Chief

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written. Vote 7-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

That the Town vote to approve the article as written.

Summary – The Fiscal Year 2006 budget included the full cost of training for the 11 week training program for one firefighter at the Massachusetts Fire Academy. The slot available for a Sturbridge Firefighter was moved up from Fiscal Year 2006 to a class starting in May, 2005 and extending until July 15, 2005 (two weeks into FY06). Accordingly, the budget for FY06 has been reduced by 9/11th of the expense (\$9,800) and is included in this article, while 2/11th remains in the FY06 budget to cover expenses incurred during the first two weeks of July.

VOTE OF THE TOWN MEETING: *The vote of the town meeting was unanimous in approving this article as written as declared by the Moderator.*