



TOWN OF BLACKSTONE
WARRANT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
May 28, 2024
7:30 PM

Worcester, SS:

To either of the Constables of the Town of Blackstone in the County of Worcester.

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify the inhabitants of Precinct #1, Precinct #2 and Precinct #3 in the Town of Blackstone, qualified to vote in Town Affairs to meet in the Blackstone-Millville Regional Molony-Sullivan School Auditorium in said Town of Blackstone on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. then and there to act upon the articles of the Warrant.

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Collector to use all means of collecting taxes that a Treasurer may use when appointed Collector or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

The Town has accepted M.G.L. c. 41, § 38, which provides that the Town may authorize its collector of taxes to use all means of collecting taxes which a town treasurer may use when appointed a collector of taxes. These means are dictated by M.G.L. c. 60, § 90, which allows the collector to issue warrants to collect to a deputy collector in the same form and conferring the same powers as warrants by assessors to collectors.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be deemed necessary to fix the salaries of all elected and appointed Town officers and to defray Town expenses for all departments, including the Reserve Fund, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025 and to determine how such sums of money should be raised, whether from the current tax levy, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing or otherwise, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

Towns are required to set the salary and compensation of all elected and appointed officers of the town at the annual town meeting and determine the Town's operating budget for the fiscal year.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to compensate the members of Boards and Committees of the Town of Blackstone for their services and to set the amount of said compensation; said compensation set by Town Meeting to be paid in four (4) equal installments provided, however, that no such installment shall be paid a) to a member who has not attended at least 60% of the meetings of the respective Boards and Committees (excluding, however, any meetings not attended by such member due to the provisions of

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A) in the twelve (12) month period prior to March, June, September and December, as the case may be, if such member has been a member for twelve (12) or more months prior to each of said dates; or b) to a member who has not attended at least 60% of the meetings of the various Boards and Committees (excluding, however, any meetings not attended by such member due to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A) in the period prior to each of said dates if such member has not been a member for twelve (12) or more months prior to each of said dates, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

Article IX, §C9-14 of the Town Charter provides that "All Town officials who receive remuneration shall be compensated in an amount approved annually by Town Meeting."

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to compensate the members of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee for their services as such members and to set the amount of said compensation at \$1,500.00 per member and \$1,800.00 for the Chairman, such compensation to be paid in three (3) equal installments in the months of July, November and March provided, however, that no such installment shall be paid a) to a member who is not in attendance of at least 60% of the meetings of the District School Committee (excluding, however, any meetings not attended by such members due to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A) in the twelve (12) month period prior to July 1, November 1 or March 1, as the case may be, if such member has been a member for twelve (12) months or more months prior to each of said dates; or b) to a member who has not attended at least 60% of the meetings of the District School Committee (excluding, however, any meetings not attended by such member due to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A) in the period prior to each of said dates, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

Article IX, §C9-14 of the Town Charter provides that "All Town officials who receive remuneration shall be compensated in an amount approved annually by Town Meeting."

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to overlay town streets and roads to be determined by the Board of Selectmen, or for the construction, reconstruction and improvement of public ways and street drainage systems and to determine how such sums may be raised, whether by advancement from Town Treasury, or by borrowing in anticipation of reimbursement by the Commonwealth, or otherwise, by the Treasurer, with approval of the Board of Selectmen, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article allows the Town to raise, appropriate, or transfer funds to overlay town streets and roads, or for construction, reconstruction and improvement of public ways and street drainage systems.

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into contracts on such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen may determine for the construction, reconstruction and improvements of public ways, street drainage systems and sidewalks throughout the Town, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

Per M.G.L. c. 40, § 4, the Town has the power to make contracts on terms and conditions authorized by Town Meeting, as long as such contracts are a legal exercise of the Town's corporate powers.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, or eminent domain an easement or easements for the purpose of construction, installation, maintenance and repair of municipal drainage, sewer water systems, and roadways, and to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds a sum of money to fund such acquisitions or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Two Thirds Vote Required

Article Summary:

M.G.L. c. 40, § 14 allows the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by purchase or eminent domain, any easement within the town for any municipal purpose. The statute requires Town Meeting to authorize and appropriate funds for the acquisition.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$150,000 to fund FY2025 expenses of the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, as established by the vote under Article 29 of the May 28, 2019 Annual Town Meeting, pursuant to Mass General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53F 3/4, said appropriation to be funded by fees received pursuant to the Town's cable licensing agreement and cable franchise agreement, with the fund to begin operation for FY2025 effective July 1, 2024, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

The Town voted in 2019 to accept M.G.L. c. 44, § 53F^{3/4}, which authorizes the Town to establish as separate revenue account known as the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, to reserve cable franchise fees and cable-related revenues. Moneys in the Fund may only be appropriated for cable-related expenses consistent with the franchise agreement, including, but not limited to: (i) support of public, educational, or governmental access ("PEG access") cable television services; (ii) monitor compliance of the cable operator with the franchise agreement; or (iii) prepare for renewal of the franchise license.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to set an expenditure limit on the Library Revolving Fund set forth in § 5-33.1 of the General Bylaws in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, Section 53 E ½ up to the maximum amount of \$3,000 during Fiscal Year 2025 or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Library Trustees)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

M.G.L. c 44, § 53E^{1/2} gives towns the power to establish departmental revolving funds. A revolving fund established under this Section is accounted for separately from other town funds and is funded by fees, charges or other receipts from the departmental programs or activities supported by the revolving fund. Interest earned on revolving fund revenue goes to the town's general fund. The Town has a Library Revolving Fund for receipts from the use of Library copiers, printers, and facsimile machines. Section 53E^{1/2} requires Town Meeting to vote on the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow a sum of \$500,000 for pavement reconstruction, paving, and/or sidewalks on Milk Street, Valley Street, Windsong Drive, and areas of Bellingham Road, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Director of Public Works)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would provide funding for road repair and reconstruction on Milk St, Valley St, Windsong Dr, and some areas of Bellingham Road.

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$126,500 for engineering for sidewalks on Federal Street, contingent upon the Town receiving a \$500,000 Complete Streets grant, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This article would pay for engineering costs for the sidewalks on Federal St as noted in the Town's Prioritization Plan. This article is contingent upon the Town being awarded a \$500,000 grant through the Complete Streets program through the state.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$175,000 for the purchase of a new truck with sander body and plow package and any other related costs, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article allows the DPW Director to purchase a new truck with sander body and plow package to replace a 25-year-old sander for the DPW.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$90,000 for the purchase of a new 1-ton dump truck with plow and any other related costs, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article allows the DPW Director to purchase a new 1-ton dump truck with plow to replace a 2012

1-ton dump truck.

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$200,000 for new well site exploration and any other related expenses, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would allow the Town's Water Department to start looking for additional water sources due to the dropped capacity of wells and the increased population.

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to borrow, raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$700,000 for painting the Lincoln Street Water Tank, and any other related costs, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required (Two-Thirds Vote Required for Borrowing)

Article Summary:

This Article allows the Water Department to have the Lincoln Street water tank repainted as the tank is now 25 years old.

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to borrow, raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds and appropriate the sum of \$500,000 for repairs to the Main Lift Sewer Station and any other related costs, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required (Two-Thirds Vote Required for Borrowing)

Article Summary:

This Article would allow the Sewer Department to refurbish the Main Lift Sewer Station as this pump station is over 40 years old and is need of repair.

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$90,600 for the purpose of asset management initiatives for the public water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, including improvements to the town's Geographic Information Systems (GIS), document management, and planning work relative to the Town's stormwater system assets, such sum to be expended under the direction of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners for engineering services for the asset management project, and to authorize the town to enter into agreement for grant and/or loan dollars from the MA DEP State Revolving Loan Fund or take any action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the DPW Director)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would allow the Town to begin a project reviewing the assets of the public water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure throughout Town. The Town may be eligible for a reimbursement grant through the Massachusetts DEP State Revolving Fund for a portion of the expenses. This project may include up to 60% grant funding and an additional 20% in-kind services contribution from town staff.

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$5,000 for the purchase of teletypewriter (TTY) phone devices, services, and related equipment or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Disability Commission)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would appropriate funds for the Town to purchase teletypewriter phone devices for all town departments including Town offices, Police Department, Fire Department, DPW, Historical, and Library as recommended in the ADA Transition Plan from 2006.

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of \$30,000 for the removal and flush cut of approximately 125-150 trees on the Chestnut Street Landfill to comply with the 08 February 2023 Department of Environmental Protection Corrective Action Plan or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Health)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would appropriate funds so the Board of Health can continue with the work at the Chestnut Street Landfill in order to comply with the DEP Corrective action plan.

ARTICLE 20. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money in the amount of \$250,000 as the Town's investment into the State Retiree Benefit Trust Fund ("SRBT Fund"), or take other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

The State Retiree Benefit Trust Fund (SRBTF) is an investment vehicle established by Massachusetts law that enables government entities of the Commonwealth to invest funds set aside to fulfill other-post-employment-benefits (OPEB) for retirees such as healthcare or dental coverage in retirement.

ARTICLE 21. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$74,300 into the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB Fund) of the Blackstone Millville Regional School District established under General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 20, said funds to be used only to pay some portion of health benefits for retirees from the Blackstone Millville Regional School District or take any other action relative thereto

(Submitted by the Blackstone Millville Regional School District)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would appropriate funds to the Blackstone Millville Regional School District OPEB Fund, which is separate from the Town's OPEB fund referenced in previous articles.

ARTICLE 22. To see if the Town will vote to approve the \$10,000,000 debt authorized by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee on February 15, 2024 and amended by its actions of March 14, 2024 to pay costs of roof reconstruction and the replacement

to energy efficient rooftop HVAC units at the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, located at 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, or to take any other action relative thereto. Such debt approval by the Town to be contingent upon the District's ability to secure grant approval from the Massachusetts School Building Authority Accelerated Repair grant program.

(Submitted by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District)
Two-thirds Vote Required

Article Summary:

Our regional vocational technical system rarely seeks support for debt projects and has not sought a bond for some twenty years. With the recent reopening of the Commonwealth's Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair program, BVT wishes to enable its thirteen municipalities to secure eligibility under the state's reimbursement program. In addition, the District shall pursue various energy reimbursement grants to further reduce debt obligation. A preliminary step in this process includes authorization by local town action for the District for bond approval. Blackstone would be responsible for 5.0% of the borrowing with the remaining 95.0% being owned by the other 12 towns in our partnership. The anticipated bond would fully cover repairs to BVT's roof and the associated HVAC units which protect the delicate technical equipment in place at the school. Actual bond exposure would be reduced via payments received by the Commonwealth and other rebate style sources. The debt would only be utilized and be limited for the purpose identified. This is a rare opportunity to protect your vocational technical facility.

ARTICLE 23. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$75,000 to purchase a command vehicle for the Fire Department, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Fire Chief)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article allows the Fire Department to purchase a command vehicle to replace the current support vehicle that is over 15 years old that needs repair.

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town will vote to borrow, raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$475,000 for the purchase of a new ambulance and related equipment, or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Fire Chief)
Majority Vote Required (Two-Thirds Vote Required for Borrowing)

Article Summary:

This Article allows the Fire Department to purchase a new ambulance to replace the 2014 ambulance that is starting to show age and wear. Due to demand and supply chain issues that continue, the order to receive this vehicle is approximately 2-3 years.

ARTICLE 25. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money to the stabilization fund or take any other action in relation thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

Stabilization funds are in the nature of rainy-day funds typically used for unforeseen or high-cost expenditures, because a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required to later transfer money out of such funds.

ARTICLE 26. To see if the Town will vote to increase the maximum amount of the Senior Tax Work-Off Program by amending its acceptance of Article 10 of the November 14, 2012 Special Town Meeting by replacing “by an amount not to exceed \$1,000 in a given tax year” with “by an amount not to exceed the maximum reduction allowable under G.L. c. 59, § 5K, as that statute may be amended”, or take any other action relative thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

The Town established a Senior Tax Work-Off Program in 2012 by accepting the provisions of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5K. At the time, the statute limited the maximum amount of the property tax reduction under that program to \$1,000 per homeowner. The statute has now been amended to allow a maximum reduction of \$2,000 per homeowner participating in the program. The proposed amendment would allow the Town to increase the maximum reduction available under its program and would not require a further Town Meeting vote if the statutory maximum changes again in the future.

ARTICLE 27. To see if the Town will vote to increase the maximum amount of the Veterans Tax Work-Off Program by amending its acceptance of Article 11 of the November 14, 2012 Special Town Meeting by replacing “by an amount not to exceed \$1,000 in a given tax year” with “by an amount not to exceed the maximum reduction allowable under G.L. c. 59, § 5N, as that statute may be amended”, or take any other action relative thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

The Town established a Veterans Tax Work-Off Program in 2012 by accepting the provisions of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5N. At the time, the statute limited the maximum amount of the property tax abatement under that program to \$1,000 per homeowner, and the program was limited to veterans only. The statute has now been amended to allow a maximum abatement of \$1,500 per homeowner participating in the program and has expanded the program to include a spouse of a veteran in the case where the veteran is deceased or has a service-connected disability. The proposed amendment would allow the Town to increase the maximum reduction available under its program and would not require a further Town Meeting vote if the statutory maximum changes again in the future.

ARTICLE 28. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Conservation Commission to accept as a gift of land the property located on Blackstone Street identified as Parcel A-R, on a plan entitled "Approval Not Required Plan of Old Lincoln Street in Blackstone, MA Owned By Cora Lane Group", which plan is dated September 11, 2023 and recorded in the Worcester County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 973, Plan 102, and which parcel contains 91,959 square feet, more or less, for conservation and passive recreation purposes under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, and on such other terms as the Conservation Commission shall deem to be in the best interests of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Majority Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would allow the Conservation Commission to accept the gift of land noted above for conservation and passive recreation purposes. This acceptance would then require an approval from the Board of Selectmen.

ARTICLE 29. To see if the Town will vote to amend § 5-15 of the General Bylaws as follows:
§ 5-15 Manner of Voting

When a question is put, the sense of the meeting shall be determined by electronic voting, or, as ~~the Moderator may deem~~ necessary **because of unavailability or technical malfunction of the electronic voting system**, by the voices of the voters, and the Moderator shall declare the vote as it appears to him. If the Moderator is unable to decide the vote by electronic voting, sound by the volume of the voices, or if his decision is immediately questioned by seven or more voters rising in their places for that purpose, the Moderator shall determine the vote either by ordering a show of hands or by a standing vote and he shall appoint tellers to make and return the count, or the meeting itself may specifically order, by proper motion in due order, that the vote on any motion shall be taken by a "yes" and "no" written ballot which shall be prepared by the Clerk in printed or mimeographed form in two divisible sections, one section with the word "yes" and the other with the word "no." The section showing the desired vote shall be detached by the voter and handed to the teller, and the unused section shall be retained by the voter.

(Submitted by the Board of Selectmen)
Two-Thirds Vote Required

Article Summary:

This Article would require electronic voting as the primary means of voting at Town Meeting unless a system for electronic voting is not available or having technical problems.

Hereof, fail not and make do return of this Warrant with doings thereon, to the Town Clerk at or before the time of said meeting.

And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting up true and attested copies thereof in each of the following names and places in Blackstone fourteen (14) days at least before the day fixed for such meeting at the Municipal Center on St. Paul Street and at Fire Station #2, Rathbun Street and the A.F. Maloney School on 200 Lincoln Street and also by publication no less than fourteen (14) days before the day fixed for such meeting in that newspaper having the largest circulation in the Town .

Given under our hands this 9th day of April in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty - four.

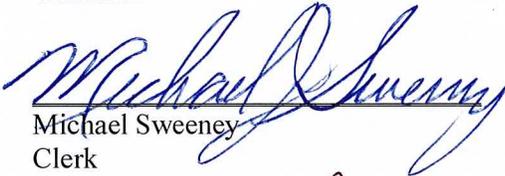
SELECTMEN OF BLACKSTONE



Brian Scanlan
Chairman



Daniel P. Keefe
Vice-Chairman



Michael Sweeney
Clerk

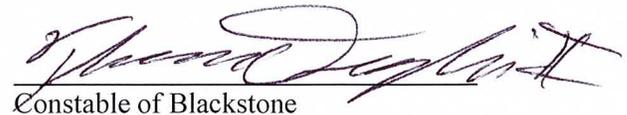


Mary Bulso
Member



Tanya Mourato Polak
Member

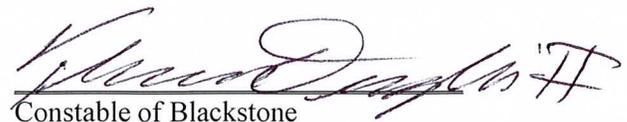
A true copy attest:



Constable of Blackstone

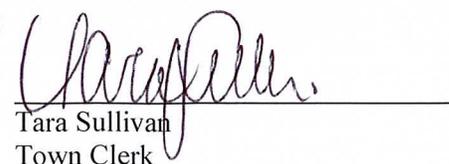
Worcester, SS:

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, I have this 10th day of April 2024 notified the inhabitants of Precinct #1, Precinct #2 and Precinct #3 in the Town of Blackstone by posting up true and attested copies of the within warrant at the within named places and by publication as within directed.



Constable of Blackstone

A TRUE COPY OF THE WARRANT AND RETURN:



Tara Sullivan
Town Clerk