

Town of Blackstone
Annual Town Meeting
May 28, 2024
7:30 pm



FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ARTICLE 1 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to authorize the Collector to use all means of collecting taxes that a Treasurer may use when appointed Collector.

ARTICLE 2 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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.

ARTICLE 3 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to authorize the members of Boards and Committees of the Town of Blackstone to be compensated 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.

ARTICLE 4 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to authorize the members of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee to be compensated for their services as such members and to set the amount of said compensation at \$1500.00 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 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 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) 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.

ARTICLE 5 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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.

ARTICLE 6 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into contracts for the construction, reconstruction and improvements of public ways, street drainage systems and sidewalks throughout the Town.

ARTICLE 7 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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.

ARTICLE 8 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to 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 $\frac{3}{4}$, 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,

ARTICLE 9 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to authorize expenses from the Library Revolving Fund established pursuant to Article IV, Section 5-33.1 of the General Bylaws in accordance with M.G.L. c44, Section 53 E1/2 up to the maximum amount of \$3,000 during FY2025.

ARTICLE 10 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$500,000 for pavement reconstruction, paving, and/or sidewalks on Milk Street, Valley Street, Windsong Drive, and areas of Bellingham Road .

ARTICLE 11 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash a sum of money in the amount of \$126,500 for engineering for sidewalks on Federal Street, contingent upon the Town receiving a \$500,000 Complete Streets grant.

ARTICLE 12 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate from the Capital Trust the sum of \$175,000 for the purchase of a new truck with sander body and plow package and any other related costs.

ARTICLE 13 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$90,000 for the purchase of a new 1-ton dump truck with plow and any other related costs.

ARTICLE 14 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from water and sewer retained earnings the sum of \$200,000 for new well site exploration and any other related expenses.

ARTICLE 15 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to borrow and repay from the water enterprise fund the sum of \$700,000 for painting the Lincoln Street Water Tank and any other related costs.

ARTICLE 16 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to borrow and repay from the sewer enterprise fund the sum of \$500,000 for repairs to the Main Lift Sewer Station and any other related costs.

ARTICLE 17 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from the water and sewer retained earnings 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.

ARTICLE 18 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$5,000 for the purchase of teletypewriter (TTY) phone devices, services, and related equipment..

ARTICLE 19 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the 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.

ARTICLE 20 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$226,000 and \$24,000 from sewer and retained earnings as the Town's investment into the State Retiree Benefit Trust Fund.

ARTICLE 21 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash 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.

ARTICLE 22 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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 for 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. 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.

ARTICLE 23 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$75,000 to purchase a command vehicle for the Fire Department.

ARTICLE 24 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to borrow and repay from ambulance receipts \$475,000 to purchase a new ambulance and related equipment.

ARTICLE 25 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$3,000 to the Stabilization Fund.

ARTICLE 26 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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".

ARTICLE 27 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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".

ARTICLE 28 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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.

ARTICLE 29 The Finance Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Town 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.