



TOWN OF HULL NEWSLETTER

TOWN HALL'S OFFICIAL VOICE

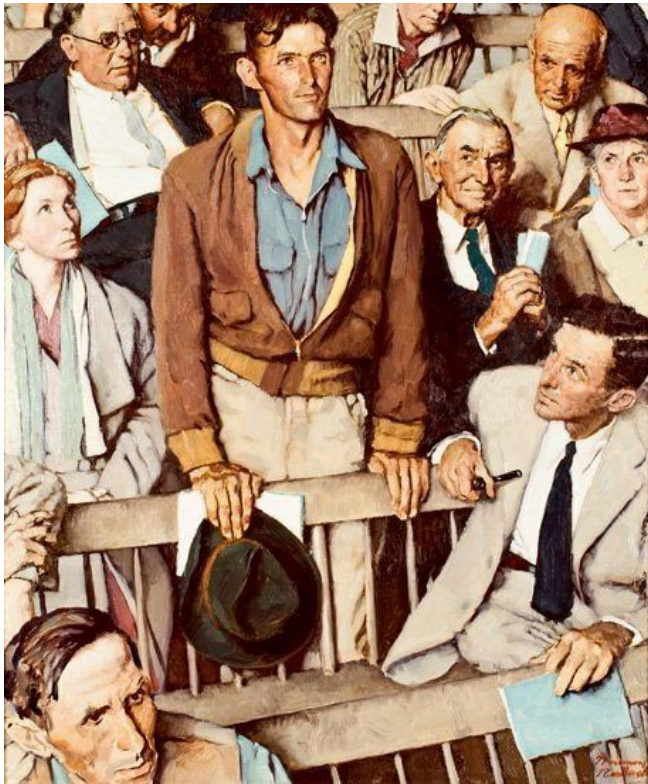
WELCOME TO THE OFFICIAL TOWN OF HULL NEWSLETTER *Town Meeting Special Edition - April 23, 2024*

Town Meeting Special Edition

Monday, May 6, 2024 • 7:00 PM • Hull High School

"Here in this ancient American assembly, you can make your voice heard as you and your neighbors decide the course of the government closest to you."

- Citizen Guide to Town Meeting



"Town Meeting," Norman Rockwell

WHAT'S IN THE WARRANT?

The Town Meeting warrant contains 36 articles. The full 2024 warrant and other relevant documents and matters can be found on the Town of Hull's Town Meeting webpage.

In addition to the Town Budget ([Article 8](#)), other high-profile Articles requiring Town Meeting approval include zoning by-laws to permit Accessory Dwelling Units ([Article 29](#)), complying with the MBTA Communities Zoning Law; ([Article 30](#)); establishing a Floodplain Overlay District ([Article 31](#)); and amending the Marijuana Overlay District ([Article 32](#)); as well as appropriations of Community Preservation Funds ([Article 13](#)); increasing the Town's Stabilization Fund ([Article 15](#)); continuing the Town's litigation efforts to recover funds from the Crescent Beach Seawall Project; ([Article 17](#)); improving the Town's capital planning ([Article 19](#)); and the timing and fees for project applications made to the Town ([Article 28](#)).

These and other Articles in the Warrant are looked into in more detail below.

CONSENT AGENDA

ARTICLES 1-6, 9, 11, 14 & 26

As explained in the Town Moderator's Message in the Warrant, Town Meeting will be using a Consent Agenda, as authorized by the bylaw change voted at the August 2023 Special Town Meeting. The Consent Agenda is widely used in other towns, it permits the Moderator, after consultation with the Chair of the Select Board and Advisory Board, to place a number of Articles which are considered to be non-controversial or standard housekeeping articles, including certain enterprise accounts (Articles 9 & 11, funded in part by fees) together for a single vote without discussion or debate. Hopefully, this will lead to a more efficient meeting, allowing more time for discussion on the remaining articles.

Variations of the Consent Agenda are also used by the State Legislature during its annual budget deliberations when the House of Representatives votes on Consolidated Amendments and the Senate acts on Bundled Amendments.

Those articles on the Consent Agenda include:

Articles 1-6 relative to accepting town department reports; and contracting for work done by the Commonwealth.

Article 9 to fund the Harbormaster's Department.

Article 11 to fund Cable Television Public, Educational and Governmental Access operations.

Article 14 relative to the base amount on the COLA adjustment is calculated.

Article 26 relative to managing the Town Treasurer's checking accounts.

TOWN BUDGET

ARTICLE 8

The most important action Town Meeting takes each year is the approval of the Town Budget. Article 8 in this year's Warrant calls for the approval of the Town of Hull's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. As highlighted in the March Town Newsletter, Town Manager Jennifer Constable presented her first Town Budget (FY2025) recommendation to the Select Board and Advisory Committee on February 21st. The presentation laid out her financial policies, capital improvement plan, and long-range financial forecast for the town.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

ARTICLE 13

Hull, and each municipality that adopted the Community Preservation Act, established a Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation, and a Community Preservation Committee to make recommendations on CPA projects for the Town's approval. Part A of the Article approves the CPA's funding from the Town, and Part B approves the allocations recommended by the CPC that range from \$10,000 to study the feasibility of establishing a dog park to \$85,000 for the restoration of the historic Boathouse at Pemberton Point.

Operational & Capital Expense Highlights



OPERATIONAL

- 4 Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Staff Increases HFD – 2 FF Paramedics/EMT Positions
- Legal Staff Model Adjustment
- Buyouts (*retirements, sick/vacation time*)
- Create Separation Pay Line Item
- Add PT, Hull TV Position
- Fully Staffed, @ COA, HMLP, Most Departments

CAPITAL

- Relocation/Closure of Town Hall/Senior Center to MMS (SB)
- MMS Maintenance/Repairs
- Library Boiler Replacement
- Online permitting and general government software
- Seawall Repair & Maintenance
- Ambulance Replacement
- Establish a Capital Stabilization Fund
- Increase General Stabilization Fund
- Public Safety Facilities Feasibility Study

3/13/24

Article 8, Town Budget

FUNDS

ARTICLES 15, 18 & 20

Stabilization Fund (Article 15)

The Town's Stabilization (or Rainy Day) Fund are monies held in reserve for unforeseen expenditures. Stabilization Funds are a recognized practice of good fiscal management and help municipalities secure good bond credit ratings. This Article would add \$100,000 to the fund bringing it into Town Manager Jennifer Constable's stated goal of holding 3-5% of the Town's budget in reserve.

Capital Stabilization Fund (Article 18)

This article approves the creation and funding of a Special Purpose Stabilization Fund for capital planning as called for and budgeted by the Town Manger in her FY 2025 Town Budget Recommendations. The fund will also support the work of the new Capital Improvement Planning Committee being proposed in Article 19. This Fund is specifically for future planning and is therefore separate and apart from the Town Stabilization Fund subject to Article 18.

Opioid Special Revenue Fund (Article 20)

This Article formally establishes a fund to hold Hull's allotment of the Commonwealth's share of the financial settlement with the states by manufacturers of opioids for use to treat and combat substance use and addiction.

CAPITAL PLANNING

ARTICLE 19

The new Capital Improvement Planning Committee established in this Article will replace the Town's moribund Capital Outlay Committee. In addition to the five members that include the Town Manager, School Superintendent, and one member each of the Select, Advisory and Planning Boards (each to be appointed by their respective boards), the Select Board will also appoint two Town residents. The Committee will be charged with annually ascertaining the Town's capital improvement needs for the succeeding five years.

BONDING

ARTICLES 21-25

Taking out loans or issuing bonds is one way municipalities help pay for their capital needs. Just as individuals have personal credit ratings, so do municipalities. Hull's excellent AA rating is the second highest a municipality can receive and makes the Town an attractive investment eligible for low-interest loans. There are four Articles in the Warrant that seek approval for the Town to borrow.

Public Safety Facility Feasibility Study (Article 21)

This article seeks \$150,000 for a feasibility study on a new public safety facility housing both the Hull Police and Fire Departments.

Hull Community Television Media Center (Article 22)

This Article allows the Town to seek funds to equip, outfit and update Hull Community Television in its coverage of Town board and committee meetings and other community events and activities including Hull High sports.

Pemberton Float (Article 23)

The commuter boat float off the pier at Pemberton Point, a key component to easier access to Boston for Town residents, needs repair. While the Town is actively meeting with the MBTA on cost-sharing, it remains incumbent on Hull to seek Town Meeting authorization to fund that repair in a timely manner.

Middle School Retrofit (Article 24)

The Town seeks to relocate Town Hall, located on Atlantic Ave., to the Memorial School, located on Central St. The current, substantially-aged Town Hall building and its systems are in need of extensive rehabilitation and are becoming unsuitable for current operations. Relocation to the Memorial School will provide safe, suitable office and community space for Town Hall operations as well as create an opportunity for much needed community program and meeting space. Approval of funding will enable this transition and bring the new opportunities to fruition.



Nantasket Avenue Seawall (Article 25)

State and Federal grants are expected to cover over \$9 million (or two-thirds) of the \$14 million cost of repairing 1,675 feet of seawall along Nantasket Avenue opposite Mariners Park facing Boston Light. This Article will allow the Town to raise its share of the cost.

APPLICATION FEES AND TIMING

ARTICLE 28

Certain land and structural work performed by property owners that may impact natural resources protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Act and other applicable laws require a Notice of Intent (NOI) be filed with the Town's Conservation Commission prior to beginning work. Article 28 establishes a fee structure for those who file After-the-Fact applications.

ZONING

ARTICLES 29, 30, 31, 32

Accessory Dwelling Units (Article 29)

The ADU Article would permit primary homeowners of single-family residences to add and rent out an accessory dwelling unit within the residence. The benefit of this change is to increase the Town's housing stock without the added congestion and help owner occupants generate rental income. The Article caps the total ADU permits at 100, to be issued in yearly increments of 10.

MBTA Community Zoning (Article 30)

A new state zoning requirement that MBTA communities have at least one zoning district of reasonable size near the MBTA facility in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right has been in the news a lot lately and was a feature story in the Town's March Newsletter. This impacts all communities that benefit from MBTA services, including Hull and every other municipality on the South Shore. Town Meeting is being asked to adopt changes proposed to the Town's Zoning Map to put Hull in compliance. Failure to comply puts the Town in jeopardy of being able to apply for and receive grants from the Commonwealth which the Town has aggressively pursued and received over the years including several that offset the cost of other articles on the warrant.

Floodplain Overlay District (Article 31)

Surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and vulnerable to increasingly high seasonal tides, it is imperative that Hull continues to be proactive in managing and updating local flood maps both to ensure public safety and remain in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

Marijuana Zoning (Article 32)

These zoning (32-A) and definitions (32-B) proposals are to rectify and clarify procedural issues in the Article passed in a Special Town Meeting in 2023 intended to allow two cannabis retail establishments but not cultivation, testing, manufacturing, on-site consumption or other activity defined in the by-law.



Scan to access the Town Meeting webpage



Copyright (C) 2024 Town of Hull. All rights reserved.