



# Town of Hinsdale

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## The Town Administrator's Notes on the FY22 ATM Warrant

May 6, 2022

Hi Everyone:

Below are my notes on this year's Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles. These notes have been compiled after numerous meetings this winter and spring, and unless otherwise stated, they are my opinions.

**Article 1:** Choose a Moderator if the elected one is unavailable.

**Article 2:** This allows the Town to accept Chapter 90 funds for road improvements. The Town receives approximately **\$153,050.00** annually in Chapter 90 funds from the State. The final figure is still pending, but we can receive and use the funds by approving this Article.

**Article 3a:** This Article documents the pay for elected officials, and those amounts are then included in the departmental budget totals below. There is only one change to note. The Town Clerk's salary has been adjusted for the first time in many years. The Select Board and Finance Committee have both endorsed this adjustment.

Elected Officials	FY22	FY23 Requested
Assessors (3)*	\$1500	\$1500
Moderator	\$100	\$100
Select Board Chair	\$3,000	\$3,000
Select Board (2)	\$2,800	\$2,800
Town Clerk	\$7,034	\$10,000
Tree Warden	\$1,500	\$1,500

**Article 3b:** This Article shows each department's FY22 budget request, the percentage change over FY21, and the reason for the difference.

1	Department/Account	FY22	FY23	Change	Notation
2	Legal Counsel	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	0%	
3	Moderator	\$ 100	\$ 100	0%	
4	Select Board & Admin	\$ 137,120	\$ 143,506	4%	
5	Board of Assessors	\$ 72,750	\$ 74,250	2%	
6	Treasurer	\$ 53,759	\$ 62,400	14%	This increase reflects the consolidation of the Treasurer-Collector into one position (see lines 6 and 7).
7	Tax Collector	\$ 27,856	\$ 5,000	-457	
8	Town Clerk/Elections	\$ 14,842	\$ 19,480	24%	This increase is due to a salary adjustment.

1	Department/Account	FY22	FY23	Change	Notation
9	Accounting & Auditing	\$ 70,233	\$ 68,364	-3%	
10	Finance Committee	\$ 300	\$ 300	0%	
11	Planning Board	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	
12	Conservation Committee	\$ 16,400	\$ 17,285	5%	
13	Insurances & Bonds	\$ 88,000	\$ 89,400	2%	
14	Health/Dental Insurance	\$ 169,000	\$ 260,000	35%	This increase is driven by the addition of new staff being added to the health plan and a rate increase.
15	County Retirement	\$ 158,647	\$ 181,221	12%	This increase is due to adding new employees to the ranks.
16	Medicare	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,500	3%	
17	Reserve Fund	\$ 20,000	\$ 30,000	33%	Given the rising costs of goods and services, the SB and FC believe it best to raise the reserve fund.
18	Gas/Diesel	\$ 35,000	\$ 38,500	9%	The fuel budget increase is due to the rise in these costs.
19	Unemployment	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	0%	
20	Town Buildings	\$ 94,390	\$ 103,900	9%	Inflation is the primary cause of this increase.
21	<b>General Government</b>	<b>\$1,000,897</b>	<b>\$1,135,706</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>Notation</b>
22	Public Works/DPW	\$ 396,368	\$ 416,833	5%	
23	Unaccepted Roads	\$ 15,000	\$ -	0%	
24	Winter Roads	\$ 97,500	\$ 97,500	0%	
25	Cemeteries	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,500	20%	This increase is to continue the improvements that have been started in the Maple St. Cemetery.
26	Street Lights	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,600	3%	
27	Town-wide Mowing	\$ 21,030	\$ 21,030	0%	
28	<b>Public Works</b>	<b>\$ 551,898</b>	<b>\$ 558,463</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>Notation</b>
29	Police Department	\$ 339,666	\$ 402,513	16%	This increase is due to Police Reform and reasonable pay adjustments in the new Police Contract.
30	Fire Department	\$ 85,600	\$ 88,600	3%	
31	Ambulance Service	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	0%	
32	Emergency Management	\$ 5,450	\$ 4,000	-36%	This change reflects a reduction in expenses in the past year.
33	Building Inspector	\$ 17,100	\$ 17,570	3%	
34	Gas Inspector	\$ 200	\$ 200	0%	
35	Tree Warden	\$ 11,500	\$ 16,500	30%	This increase restores this budget line after rolling an FY21 saving into the FY22 fiscal year.
36	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>\$ 461,516</b>	<b>\$ 531,383</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>Notation</b>
37	Board of Health	\$ 14,400	\$ 15,300	6%	
38	Veterans Services	\$ 35,300	\$ 26,800	-32%	The Town has a lower number of Veterans living in Town, and that change is reflected in this figure.
39	Lake Management	\$ 26,200	\$ 20,200	-30%	This reflects one less treatment and a hand-cutting plan for phragmites.
40	Animal/Dog Officer	\$ 6,710	\$ 6,892	3%	
41	Transfer Station/Waste	\$ 94,843	\$ 99,585	5%	This increase is due to a rise in hauling costs.
42	Landfill Monitoring	\$ 15,000	\$ -	0%	
43	Council on Aging	\$ 3,075	\$ 3,000	-2%	
44	Visiting Nurse (VNA)	\$ 2,856	\$ 3,142	9%	VNA services are a bit higher than expected this coming year.
45	<b>Health&amp;Human Services</b>	<b>\$ 198,384</b>	<b>\$ 174,919</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>Notation</b>
46	Public Library	\$ 78,165	\$ 83,885	7%	This increase is due to a reasonable wage increase for the staff.
47	Beautification Team	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	0%	
48	CSX Land Rental	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	0%	
49	Berkshire Reg Planning	\$ 1,620	\$ 1,600	-1%	
50	Sports/Rec	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	
51	Community Center	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	0%	
52	<b>Culture and Recreation</b>	<b>\$ 92,985</b>	<b>\$ 98,685</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>Notation</b>
53	<b>Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$2,295,474</b>	<b>\$2,499,156</b>	<b>8%</b>	

**Article 3c:** This Article is the request for education-related expenses. Items i. and ii. are to pay the Town's portion of the Central Berkshire Regional School District (CBRSD) budget. Items iii. and iv. are to pay the tuition and transportation costs of Hinsdale's vocational school students.

Education Costs	FY22	FY23	Change
CBRSD Assessment	\$2,466,553	\$2,568,569	4%
CBRSD Capital	\$274,845	\$271,298	-1%
Voc School Transportation	\$76,194	\$79,626	4%
Voc School Tuition	\$149,432	\$156,976	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,967,024</b>	<b>\$3,076,469</b>	<b>4%</b>

**Article 3d:** This Article is to pay for the Town's current loans and interest.

Debt & Interest	FY22	FY23	Change
Town Hall Loan, Principal	\$8,270	\$8,270	none
Interest-Long Term Debt	\$9,907	\$9,907	none
Interest-Short Term Debt	\$1,500	\$1,500	none
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,677</b>	<b>\$19,677</b>	<b>none</b>

**Article 4:** This amount needed this year to pay the Town's Winter Road budget balance is **\$34,230.77**, a 26% over the FY22 amount. I attribute this to inflation and the experience level of the road crew after the loss of three experienced commercial drivers (Bud Hall, Jimmy Fox, and Scott Forgey). The Superintendent shall send the new crew members to the DOTs Winter Plowing and Road Treatment course offered in the early fall to do better in the coming year

**Article 5:** Article 5 pays for the Town's Sewer system costs.

**a.** Sewer I is a DPW-run system. Users pay all costs for service.

Sewer I	FY22	FY23	%
Salaries	\$12,224	\$16,244	25%
Expenses	\$65,150	\$65,150	none
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$77,374</b>	<b>\$81,374</b>	<b>5%</b>

**b.** Sewer II is a Dalton-owned system that includes several Hinsdale homes. Hinsdale collects the fees from these residents and pays Dalton for the service (less a small administrative services charge).

Sewer II	FY22	FY23	%
Expenses	\$14,448	\$14,882	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,448</b>	<b>\$14,882</b>	<b>3%</b>

**c.** Sewer III is a system run by the Hinsdale-DPW. Users pay all costs for service.

Sewer III	FY22	FY23	%
Salaries	\$28,197	\$35,808	21%
Expenses	\$131,300	\$135,239	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$159,497</b>	<b>\$171,047</b>	<b>+7%</b>

- d. This is pay for the FY2023 sewer loans totaling \$101,699 (\$45,709 for Plunkett and \$55,960 for Ashmere).

**Article 6:** Article 6 pays for the Town's water system, which is also fully supported by the users.

Water Department	FY22	FY23	%
Salaries	\$69,067	\$76,972	10%
Expenses	\$40,550	\$40,550	none
Bond Payments	\$109,459	\$115,959	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$219,076</b>	<b>\$233,481</b>	<b>6%</b>

**Article 7:** Approving this will allow the Town to purchase the Water and Sewer billing/reporting module of SoftRight (the Town's Accounting Software). This will allow staff to immediately find and print bills and information upon request and make billing and tracking payments easier. The cost of **\$9,240** will be split among water and sewer customers.

**Article 8:** Approval of this Article provides the Town with **\$32,500** from Free Cash to cover Infrastructure and Engineering costs throughout the year.

**Article 9:** Approval of this Article for **\$150,000** will allow the Town to complete the MA-DEP mandated capping of the Transfer Station (**\$500,000** in ARPA funding, plus the **\$150,000** for a total of **\$650,000**). We were given until October 31, 2022, to complete this project.

**Article 10:** This will allow the Town to pay the second installment of **\$54,387.56** of our lease-to-own purchase of a large Mack Truck w/complete snow package. The Town agreed to make this purchase last year, and the truck is expected to be delivered anytime this summer (it has been delayed due to supply chain disruptions blamed on the COVID pandemic).

**Article 11:** This Article for **\$11,300** is to pay for the repair of the Maple Street Cemetery Mausoleum, prune the overgrown shrubbery, and purchase a cemetery record-keeping software. Funding this will help improve record keeping and allow residents, family, and friends to search and find information about their loved ones buried in the Town Cemetery.

**Article 12:** This Article for **\$4,600** will pay for an upgrade to the Town's website, making the daily management of information, announcements, and archiving easier for all involved. The new site is expected to live the week after the ATM.

**Article 13:** This **\$21,000** from Free Cash will be used to pay for the anticipated shortfall we anticipate in the current FY22 budget to cover the increase in waste hauling and disposal costs this fiscal year.

**Article 14:** This request for **\$15,000** to pay for removing the next in the series of dead and dying trees identified in last spring's arborist report.

**Article 15:** This request for **\$3,000** from Free Cash will be used to help cover the expenses of the Town's Provisional Police Officers to pay for the cost of having to attend the State-mandated Police Officer's bridge training program, which is now required of all who plan to serve as full-time officers as of FY24.

**Article 16:** This **\$7,000** requested in the Article will be used to pay for the biennial High Hazard Dam Inspections for Plunkett and Belmont reservoirs, required by Dam Safety.

- Article 17:** This Article requests funding to purchase a new tanker truck for the Hinsdale Fire Department. The Fire Department Representatives may provide a more detailed explanation.
- Article 18:** This request from Free Cash is to pay an outstanding **\$216.08** bill from FY21. The payment is owed to Northeast Paving in Lenoxdale for an invoice received in early September 2021, which they claim was caused by a staffing shortage. Approval requires a 4/5ths vote.
- Article 19:** This request is to come from the Water Department's reserve account (*not from Free Cash – my error-BG*) to pay an outstanding **\$1,178.50 bill** from FY21. For water testing, the payment is owed to Howard Laboratories in Hatfield, MA. We received this invoice in late August 2022 due to the lab's error, for which they apologize. Approval requires a 4/5ths vote.
- Articles 20, 21, and 22:**  
These articles are to deposit \$50k into each of the Town's Stabilization accounts (Town, Road, and Capital).
- Article 23:** This article is the first step in a two-step process for the Town to agree to indemnify residents who serve on Town Boards, Committees, Commissions, and posts (whether appointed or elected) from personal financial loss or expense in the event they are named in litigation arising out of their actions or omissions when acting in the scope of their official duties on behalf of the Town. This concern became an issue during the Northgate Special Permitting process, and the Select Board agreed to rectify the situation to protect those serving the Town. I hope you will take the first step by approving this Article.
- Article 24:** Approval of this Article will allow the Town to request an Act of the State Legislature to extend Police Chief Rathbun's eligibility to serve Hinsdale past the mandatory retirement age of 65, in the event the Chief and Town agree to do so. The Select Board and the Chief have decided to pursue this extension if Hinsdale and Dalton agree to merge police departments, but the timing of the merger leaves Hinsdale without a Chief in an interim period. Approving this Article keeps options open yet does not bind the Town or the Chief to any agreement at this time.
- Article 25:** Those who brought it forward may explain this citizen's petition.
- Article 26:** This is proforma.
- Article 27:** This explains the open positions to be filled during the Town election, which takes place the Saturday after the Annual Town Meeting.

I thank you for reviewing this material and hope to see you at the meeting next Wednesday evening.

Best,

Bob Graves