



Select Board Office

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Warrant Article Explanations

May 17, 2022

6:30 P.M.

Article #1 Explanation: Town Election acted on May 10, 2022. For the above individuals: See the ballot posted on the Town of Southwick's web page at www.southwickma.org.

Article #2 Explanation: This is a General Housekeeping Article to authorize the Select Board to operate Town Government.

Article #3 Explanation: This is a General Housekeeping Article to authorize the Select Board to operate Town Government.

Article #4 Explanation: This is a General Housekeeping Article to authorize the Select Board to operate Town Government.

Article #5 Explanation: This is a General Housekeeping Article to authorize the Select Board to operate Town Government.

Article #6 Explanation: This Article requests funding to replace the Town Hall Roof & HVAC systems that are over 25 years old. The roof has developed leaks and HVAC is experiencing components failures on a regular basis. The life expectancies have been met. The need for replacement was identified in the Tighe & Bond Study undertaken to assess all Municipal buildings conditions. Last year 2021 Annual Town Meeting approved funds to design replacements for both Roof and HVAC systems. The Town will build to the latest state building codes.

Article #7 & Article #8 Explanation: These Articles relate to O.P.E.B. updates. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue is requesting communities to re-adopt a newer version of Mass General Law Ch. 32B Section 20. This is to ensure the O.P.E.B. (other post-employment benefits) trust fund cannot be used for any other purposes. It will also allow for the account to accept grants and gifts. The other vote is to ensure OPEB trust fund investments followed State guidelines.

Article #9 Explanation: Approving the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget will allow for the proper allocation of resources for the continuing operation and welfare of the Town, while providing the fundamental fiduciary responsibilities in our current economy.

Article #10 Explanation: This article reauthorizes all Revolving Accounts to operate some town government functions for inspections and services. Without it would require funds to come out of taxation. The Municipal Modernization Act was passed in 2016 which provided for a new manner in which revolving funds are regulated and managed.

Article #11 Explanation: Annual budget as required by State Law. Mandatory 10% reserved for Open Space, 10% reserved for Historic, and 10% reserved for Housing, the remainder in General Unreserved Fund that may be spent on any projects eligible for CPA funds.

Article #12 Explanation: CPC FY 2023 5% Administrative & Operating expenses set aside.

Article #13 Explanation: To see if the Town of Southwick will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$28,000.00 from the Community Preservation Historical Fund to the applicant Jennifer Nolasco, President of the Brass Rail Meeting Houser for the purpose of rehabilitating the lower-level entrance of the building to create a handicap accessible area in order to comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The property is located at 90 Point Grove Road Southwick MA 01077.

Article #14 Explanation: The money being requested is for the third payment on the \$600,000.00 bond that was voted on and issued for the Alum Treatment of the Congamond Ponds in 2020.

Article #15 Explanation: This Warrant Article requests approval of the assessment from the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District for next year's operating budget. The assessment represents the Town's share of the District's operating and capital costs for the upcoming fiscal year.

Article #16 Explanation: This Warrant Article requests approval for the borrowing that the District pursues annually to finance capital improvements and acquisitions. An affirmative vote authorizes the District to borrow funds to pay for the projects and equipment identified in the School Committee's vote.

Article #17 Explanation: This vote accepts a proposed relocation of the Private Way known as White Street and involves multi-party agreement including the Town to resolve a State Land Court litigation.

Article #18 Explanation: This Article amends the current Hawker Peddler Bylaws to add specific hours to limit when solicitors can visit people's homes. It also requires peddlers to submit fingerprints to the Southwick Police Department for State/Federal History Checks.

Article #19 Explanation: The Southwick Planning Board requests consideration of this bylaw in order to define what constitutes a “Major Development” project and the additional required steps that an applicant must take in order to receive land use permits. When applicable, new development and redevelopment projects of sufficient size and/or impact to local infrastructure must undertake community outreach efforts and provide specific data to the Planning Board before an application may be considered complete. Detail on projected infrastructure impacts will be required as well as a description of how impacts would be managed. Under this bylaw, a minimum parcel size of five (5) acres would be required for projects that would be categorized as “Major Development” and a limit to how much of a site could be converted to impervious surfaces, such as pavement and roof areas, would be allowed.

Article #20 Explanation: The current *Wireless Communications Facilities District* bylaw was adopted in 1998 and was revised in 2001 but reflects a time when far fewer individuals owned personal mobile communications devices when compared to today. The wireless communications industry has evolved to a point where, according to Pew research, 97% of Americans now own a cellphone of some kind.

The tower-based technology primarily in use by the wireless telecommunications industry around the turn of the millennium translated to a local bylaw that was focused on the safe and responsible location of individual towers based on an overlay map that identified specific areas where a communications tower could be considered and the site requirements contained in the bylaw. The need for proper siting and management of such facilities remains, but the evolution of technology has led to the use of smaller facility installations in many municipalities – some facilities are even small enough to be sited on an existing utility pole. Furthermore, the Town’s experience under the existing bylaw has revealed that the current mandatory constraints do not allow for an adequate field of alternative sites to be considered.

The proposed bylaw revision will allow for the Planning Board to properly exercise its discretion in determining the adequacy of a site to provide its intended use, will shift the determination of an eligible site away from the rigidity of an overlay map and in its place rely on specific siting requirements, and provide for the responsible permitting (as applicable) for emerging technologies such as Small Wireless Facilities. The proposed revision will also ensure that the bylaw aligns with State and Federal regulations related to wireless communications facilities.

Article #21 Explanation: If Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article 20. *PLANNING BOARD – WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES BYLAW* is approved, the “Wireless Communications Service District Overlay Map” dated April 10, 2001 will no longer be referenced or utilized under Zoning. References to this overlay map under § 185-5. *Districts enumerated; maps* should therefore be deleted if Article 20 passes.