



TOWN OF HAMPDEN

FALL SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

November 3, 2025

EXPLANATIONS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Disclaimer: The amounts, if any, listed below for each article are estimates and are subject to change. If there is any discrepancy between the warrant article or a motion made during the Town Meeting and this document then the warrant article/motion controls.

Article 1. Amend the Hampden General Bylaws for a 6:30 PM Annual Town Meeting Start Time:

Time: This article requests that voters approve starting the Spring Annual Town Meeting at 6:30 pm instead of the current 7:00 pm start time.

No funds requested.

Article 2. Additional Funding for the Town House Maintenance Account – Facilities Manager:

This article requests that voters approve additional funding for the Facilities Manager position. The additional funding will allow the position to be full-time for the remainder of the fiscal year, with the hope that it will continue to be full-time in future fiscal years. The integration of the former Thornton Burgess School into the Town's portfolio of buildings has created a need for a full-time Facilities Manager to supervise, manage, and coordinate the maintenance and upkeep of all Town buildings. This position has been vitally important for the conversion of the former Thornton Burgess School to new town administrative offices.

The estimated funding request is \$38,008.

Article 3. Additional Funding for the Insurance Account – Employee Benefits: This article requests that voters approve additional funding for the Employee Benefits account. A town employee unexpectedly retired at the beginning of the fiscal year requiring the buyout of certain paid leave time owed to the employee equal to the amount requested.

The estimated funding request is \$56,000.

Article 4. Transfer from the County Retirement Account to the Council on Aging Account:

This article requests that voters approve the transfer of surplus funds in the current fiscal year operating budget from the County Retirement account to the Council on Aging Account. In prior fiscal years, the Hampden Senior Center received federal funds to hire an Outreach

Coordinator to help seniors in need. The federal funds have been cut so additional funds are needed to make up the difference. Instead of seeking to raise the additional funds through taxes, the Selectboard is proposing to shift surplus funds from the County Retirement account to make up the difference.

No new funds are requested. The estimated transfer request is \$7,500.

Article 5. Repurpose Funds for the HVAC System Replacement at the Hampden Senior Center: This article requests that voters approve the use of previously approved and available funds for the replacement of the HVAC system at the Hampden Senior Center. Article 18 of the May 12, 2025, Annual Town Meeting approved \$140,000 to “replace and/or repair the roof, windows, bathrooms and septic system.” The Senior Center Building Committee has identified the replacement of the HVAC system as a higher priority than the aforementioned uses and is requesting that voters allow those funds to be spent on the replacement of the HVAC system. The total HVAC system replacement project request is \$250,000, with \$120,000 from this article and another \$130,000 from the next article.

No new funds are requested. The estimated amount to be made available for the project is \$120,000.

Article 6. HVAC System Replacement at the Hampden Senior Center: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money to replace the HVAC system at the Hampden Senior Center. (See description from Article 5 above).

The estimated funding request for this article is \$130,000.

Article 7. HVAC System Installation at the New Hampden Town Hall (Formerly Thornton Burgess School): This article requests that voters approve a sum of money to install new HVAC system at the new Hampden Town Hall (formerly Thornton Burgess School). Certain areas of the building already have heating and air conditioning (front school offices and five additional classrooms), the remainder of the rooms within the building have heating only. The funds requested will allow for heating, cooling and humidity control in the library space (approximately 8,000 square feet) and seven additional classrooms. As a means to keep costs lower, the remainder of the building (gymnasium, auditorium, 9 vacant classrooms, maintenance areas, storage areas) will remain as heating only. The estimated breakdown of the funding request is \$226,754 for the library space and \$70,000 for the remaining spaces.

The estimated funding request for this article is \$300,000.

Article 8. Electrical Upgrades and New Signage at the Hampden Transfer Station: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money to extend the electrical service to the Transfer Station shed to allow the operation of an electric heater for the employees during the winter and to purchase new directional signage to improve the operation of the facility.

The estimated funding request for this article is \$10,000.

Article 9. Purchase of a New Police Cruiser: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money to purchase a new police cruiser for the Hampden Police Department.

The estimated funding request for this article is \$70,000.

Article 10. Purchase of a Front Loader.: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money to purchase a front loader for the Hampden Highway Department.

The estimated funding request for this article is \$175,000.

Article 11. Purchase of a Pickup Truck: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money towards the purchase of a pickup truck for the Hampden Parks & Recreation Department to replace the existing pickup truck.

The estimated funding request is \$20,000.

Article 12. Sidewalk Improvements at Centennial Commons: This article requests that voters approve a sum of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to replace the sidewalks at Centennial Commons. This project is requesting CPA funds under the affordable housing category.

The estimated CPA funding request is \$42,823.

Article 13. Construct New Turnaround at the Old Cemetery: This article requests that voters approve a sum of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to construct a cul-de-sac in the southwest section of the Old Cemetery. This project is requesting CPA funds under the historic preservation category.

The estimated CPA funding request is \$27,000.

Article 14. Accept Local Room Occupancy Tax: This article requests that voters approve a local room occupancy tax of six percent (6%). If this article is adopted the tax will apply to room rentals of 90 days or less in hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and lodging houses. The excise tax will be collected by the operator of the business and paid to the Commonwealth who will pass along the funds to the Town as additional local revenue to the Town.

No funds requested.

Article 15. Transfer from Free Cash to the Water Department Expansion Project: This article requests that voters transfer a sum of money to pay for the costs associated with the Scantic Valley Water District expansion project. This article is best characterized as a housekeeping article with the following explanation. Article 20 of the October 29, 2024, Fall Special Town Meeting authorized the transfer of \$650,000 from the General Stabilization account to reduce the tax rate with the intent of using the funds to pay down the debt on the water district expansion project. For technical reasons, the MA Department of Revenue did not allow the

Town to make the debt payment last fiscal year and instead directed the Town to wait until the following fiscal year to make the payment from available funds generated through Free Cash. The adoption of this article will satisfy the request from MA Department of Revenue and allow the Town to fulfill the intent of the voters from the earlier Special Town Meeting.

No new funds are requested. The estimated transfer request is \$650,000.

Article 16. Transfer from Free Cash to Reduce the Tax Rate: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money from the Free Cash account to reduce the tax rate for the current fiscal year (2026). Any amount of funds appropriated pursuant to this article will reduce the tax burden on residents for the current fiscal year.

The estimated funding request for this article is TBD

Article 17. Transfer from the General Stabilization Fund to Reduce the Tax Rate: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money from the General Stabilization account to reduce the tax rate for the current fiscal year (2026). Any amount of funds appropriated pursuant to this article will reduce the tax burden on residents for the current fiscal year.

The estimated funding request for this article is TBD

Article 18. Transfer from Free Cash to the General Stabilization Fund: This article requests that voters approve a sum of money from the Free Cash account to be transferred to the General Stabilization account. Any amount of funds appropriated pursuant to this article will be moved to the Town's stabilization account and saved for future expenses.

The estimated funding request for this article is TBD.