

# *Special Town Meeting*

## *January 17, 2026*

*The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by the Town Moderator Lucia Casey at the Somerset Berkley Regional High School Performing Arts Center as called for by the Warrant, duly posted as required by Massachusetts General Laws followed by announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Moderator.*

Article 1. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay the following bills incurred in a prior fiscal year, or take any action relative thereto.

APPROPRIATION	EXPENSES
#145 Treasurer/Collector	\$564.00
#175 Planning Board	\$300.00
#176 Zoning Board of Appeals	\$1,200.00
#210 Police Department	\$4,159.00
#215 Dispatch	\$455.00
TOTAL	\$6,678.00

**The Advisory & Finance Committee by a majority recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$6,678.00 for the purpose as written in this article, and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash (Vote 6-1)**

***Motion Article 1: A motion was made by Selectman Smith and seconded by the floor that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$6,678.00 for the purpose of paying bills of a prior fiscal year as written in the article, and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash. Discussion followed.***

***A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to move the question.***

***The Moderator called for the vote on Article 1 as written. The Moderator reminded the body that this article is a 9/10 vote. Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 119 votes cast; 112- yes, 7- no. Moderator declared that Article 1 passes.***

Article 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay a bill incurred in a prior fiscal year, received from D.D.S. Industries, Inc., or take any action relative thereto.

The Advisory & Finance Committee unanimously recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$524.00 for the purpose as written in this article, and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash (Vote 7-0)

*Motion Article 2: A motion was made by Superintendent Jeffery Schoonover and seconded by the floor that that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$524.00 for the purpose of paying a bill of a prior fiscal year as written in the article, and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash. Discussion followed. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 2 as written. Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 171 votes cast; 147- yes, 24- no. Moderator declared that Article 2 failed. The Moderator reminded the body that 9/10 vote is required to pass. The motion failed.*

**A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to reconsider Article 2.**

*The Moderator called for a vote to reconsider Article 2. Vote Totals 153 votes cast; 122- yes, 31- no. Moderator declared that reconsideration for Article 2 passed.*

**The Moderator called for a vote on Article 2 as reconsidered written. Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 203 votes cast: 188- yes, 15- no. The Moderator declared the motion passed.**

Article 3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money to pay the following bills incurred in a prior fiscal year, received from various vendors, or take any action relative thereto.

VENDOR NAME	EXPENSES
Bristol County Sheriff's Office	\$608.00
Environmental Resource Associates	\$655.00
FedEx	\$59.00
KP Law	\$8,083.00
Miguel Plumbing & Heating	\$1,260.00
Nadeau Tree Service	\$8,000.00
RI Analytical	\$100.00
Sigma Water Safety	\$70.00
Somerset Police	\$512.00
TOTAL	\$19,347.00

**The Advisory & Finance Committee will have a recommendation at Special Town Meeting**

*Motion Article 3: A motion was made by Water and Sewer Commissioner Robert Lima and seconded by the floor that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$19,347.00 for the purpose of paying bills of a prior fiscal year as written in the article, and that said sum be transferred from retained earnings in the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund. Discussion followed. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 3 as written and recommended. The Moderator reminded the body that 9/10 vote is required to pass. Vote Totals 203 votes cast; 177- yes, 26- no. Moderator declared that Article 3 failed.*

*A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to reconsider Article 3.*

*The Moderator called for a vote to reconsider Article 3. Vote Totals 196 votes cast; 177- yes, 26- no. Moderator declared that reconsideration for Article 3 passed.*

*A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to move the question.*

*The Moderator called for a vote on Article 3 as reconsidered written and recommended. Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 199 votes cast: 168- yes, 28- no. The Moderator declared the motion failed due to the 9/10 requirement.*

*A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to reconsider Article 3. The Moderator called for a vote on reconsideration of Article 3. The Moderator declared that reconsideration Article 3 passed by a majority voice vote.*

*A motion was made on by the floor and seconded by the floor to amend article 3 to pay all of the past due water department invoices with the exception of the KP law invoice.*

*A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to move the question.*

*The Moderator called for a vote on Article 3 as amended. Vote Totals 201 votes cast: 54- yes, 147- no. The Moderator declared the motion failed.*

*The Moderator called for a vote on Article 3 as reconsidered written and recommended. Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 206 votes cast: 190- yes, 16- no. The Moderator declared the motion passed.*

*A motion was made on by the floor and seconded by the floor to move up article 9.*

*The Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 172 votes cast: 115 – yes, 57- no. Moderator declared the motion carries.*

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Article 9. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation in the form set forth below, authorizing the Town to establish a Somerset Business Incentive Grants Trust Program to advance the public purpose of promoting economic development in the Town and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as trustees thereof, among other related matters; provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the requested legislation, unless the Board of Selectmen approves amendments to the legislation before enactment by the General Court within the scope of the general public objectives of the petition, and to authorized the Board of Selectmen to approve such amendments, or take any action relative thereto.

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF SOMERSET TO ESTABLISH THE SOMERSET BUSINESS INCENTIVE GRANTS TRUST

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

SECTION 1. There shall be established within the town of Somerset a municipal trust, known as the Somerset Business Incentive Grants Trust, hereinafter referred to as the trust, to advance the public purpose of promoting economic development in the town of Somerset.

SECTION 2. The purpose of the trust shall be to provide funds for economic development in the town of Somerset through grants to qualifying businesses to enable such businesses to locate and operate in the town of Somerset, which shall serve the public interest and address a community need.

SECTION 3. The Somerset board of selectmen shall serve as trustees of the trust. Within 6 months of the effective date of this act, the trustees shall execute a declaration of trust governing the trust and may from time to time amend the same. The trust and any declarations thereto shall be filed with the town clerk. The trustees shall dispense funds as grants as they shall deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of the trust, consistent with rules therefor adopted by said trustees.

SECTION 4. The trust shall, at minimum, provide grants to businesses located within the town of Somerset for (i) improvements to business signs and façades visible from public ways; (ii) rental assistance for retail stores serving or proposed to serve the general public; and (iii) equipment expense reimbursement for retail stores proposed to serve the general public. The recipient of any grant shall execute a grant agreement in favor of the trust, which shall set forth the purpose for which the grant is awarded and the terms and conditions associated with the grant, including a requirement that in the event all or a portion of the funds are not used for the purposes consistent with this act, such funds shall be returned to the trust.

SECTION 5. The trust shall be separate and apart from the General Fund of the town of Somerset. The treasurer/collector of the town of Somerset shall be the custodian of the trust consistent with section 46 of chapter 41 of the General Laws. The trust shall receive and hold all gifts and grants made to the trust as well as money appropriated by the town to the trust. Money in the trust shall be available for expenditure by the trust for the purposes set forth in this act, and subject to any restrictions contained in any gift or grant, without the need for further appropriation by town meeting.

SECTION 6. The trust, by and through its trustees, may:

- (a) disburse funds consistent with the requirements of the trust; provided, however, that the maximum amount that can be granted to any one applicant is \$20,000, unless town meeting

shall by bylaw authorize a higher amount, in the initial annual aggregate amount of \$250,000 unless otherwise provided;

(b) establish grant program parameters such as guidelines, limits, eligibility, and location requirements, eligible uses of funds, and any other parameters deemed necessary to ensure the objectives of the trust established hereby;

(c) accept and receive money by gift, grant, contribution, bequest, or transfer from any person, firm, corporation, or other public or private entity or any other source; provided, however, that a record of any restrictions on any contribution to the trust shall be maintained; and

(d) execute, acknowledge, and deliver contracts, grant agreements, and other instruments, sealed or unsealed, necessary, proper, or incident to a transaction in which the trustees engage for the accomplishment of the purposes of the trust.

SECTION 7. The trust shall be exempt from chapters 59 and 62 of the General Laws and from any other general or special law concerning payments of taxes based upon or measured by property or income imposed by the commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof.

SECTION 8. The books and records of the trust shall be audited annually by an independent auditor in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

SECTION 9. The trust may act and do things necessary or convenient to carry out the purposes expressly granted in this act.

SECTION 10. If the trust is terminated by majority votes of the trustees and town meeting, occurring within 60 days of each other, the remaining funds in the trust shall be returned to the town of Somerset and held by the board of selectmen for economic development purposes.

SECTION 11. This act, being necessary for the welfare of the commonwealth and the town of Somerset and its inhabitants, shall be liberally construed to affect its purposes.

SECTION 12. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee by a majority recommends that the Town vote to approve this article. (Vote 5-1)**

***Motion Article 9: A motion was made by Selectman Costa that this article be indefinitely postponed and seconded by the floor. Discussion followed. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on motion of indefinite postponement. Vote Totals 153 votes cast; 142- yes, 11- no. Moderator declared that the motion carries.***

***A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to not reconsider articles 1,2,3 and 9. The Moderator called for a vote. The Moderator declared that the motion passed by a majority voice vote.***

***A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to move up article 5. The Moderator called for discussion. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote. The Moderator declared that the motion passed by a majority voice vote.***

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Article 5. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Somerset School Committee for the windows and door replacements and related scope at the North Elementary School located at 580 Whetstone Hill Road in Somerset, MA, which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be sole responsibility of the Town. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of the fifty-eight and 37 hundredths percent (58.37%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee unanimously recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,290,470.00 for the purpose of this article and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash. (Vote 7-0)**

***Motion Article 5: A motion was made by Superintendent Jeffrey Schoonover and seconded by the floor that the Town transfer from free cash and appropriate the amount of two million two hundred ninety thousand, four hundred seventy one dollars (\$2,290,471) for the purpose of paying costs for the window and door replacement and related scope at the North Elementary School located at 580 Whetstone Hill Road, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the Somerset School Committee. The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town; provided further that any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of fifty-eight and thirty-seven hundredths percent (58.37%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA; and that the amount of appropriation authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the Town and the MSBA. Discussion followed.***

***A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to table article 5. The Moderator called for a vote. Vote Totals 178 votes cast; 57- yes, 121- no. Moderator declared that the motion failed.***

***Discussion continued on the original motion. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 5 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 184 votes cast; 152- yes, 32- no. Moderator declared that the article passes.***

***A motion was made by the floor and seconded by the floor to not reconsider article 5. The Moderator called for a vote. The Moderator declared that the motion passed by a majority voice vote.***

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Article 4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of paying the costs related to capital improvements and maintenance compliant with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) at various Town facilities that include, but are not limited to, the maintenance, repair, upgrades, and or replacement of elevators, ramps, railings, hardware, signs, illumination, and all incidental costs or expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee will have a recommendation at Special Town Meeting.**

***Motion Article 4: A motion was made by Selectman Souza and seconded by the floor that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 for the purpose as written in the article, and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash. Discussion followed. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 4 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 145 votes cast; 127- yes, 18- no. Moderator declared that the article passes.***

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Article 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of purchasing and installing traffic and speed signs at various school locations throughout Town, including any incidental costs or expenses, or take any action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee unanimously recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$32,800.00 for the purpose of this article and that said sum be transferred from Free Cash. (Vote 7-0)**

***Motion Article 6: A motion was made by Superintendent Jeffrey Schoonover and seconded by the floor that the Town appropriate the amount of thirty-two thousand, eight-hundred (\$32,800) dollars for the purpose of purchasing and installing eight (8) school zone flashing beacons with school zone and radar speed feedback signs, including any incidental costs or expenses, and that said sum be transferred from free cash. Discussion continued. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 6 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 140 votes cast; 114- yes, 26- no. Moderator declared that the motion carries.***

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7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money necessary to carry out changes for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 in the collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Somerset and the Water Department & Water Pollution Control Union – Laborers International Union of North American, or take any action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee unanimously recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$164,00.00 for the purpose of this article and that said sum be transferred from Retained Earnings in the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund. (Vote 7-0)**

*Motion Article 6: A motion was made by Water and Sewer Commissioner Mr. Lima and seconded by the floor that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$164,000.00 to fund the first two years of the cost items associated with the collective bargaining agreement between the Town and Laborers International Union of North America for the period of 7/1/2024 through 6/30/26, and that said sum be transferred from retained earnings in the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund. Discussion continued. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 7 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 116 votes cast; 103- yes, 13- no. Moderator declared that the motion carries.*

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8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of paying costs associated with the Fiscal Year 2023 Community Project Funding Grant project, including the Town's required share for a federal grant and all incidental costs or expenses, or take any action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee unanimously recommends that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$800,000.00 for the purpose of this article and that said sum be transferred from Retained Earnings in the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund. (Vote 7-0)**

*Motion Article 8: A motion was made by Water and Sewer Commissioner Steven Cadorette and seconded by the floor that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$800,000.00 for the purpose as written in the article, and that said sum be transferred from retained earnings in the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund. Discussion continued. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 8 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 123 votes cast; 113- yes, 10- no. Moderator declared that the motion carries.*

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Article 10. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Somerset Zoning By-law to delete in its entirety Section 9.5 Slades Ferry Crossing District, as voted under Article 4 of the Warrant of the Special Town Meeting of May 20, 2013, and inserting in place thereof, Section 9.5 Slades Ferry Crossing District available at the Town Clerk's office for review, or take any action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee has no recommendation on this article. (Vote 7-0)**

*Motion Article 10: A motion was made by Selectman Costa that this article be indefinitely postponed and seconded by the floor. The Moderator called for a vote. The Moderator declared that the motion passed by a majority voice vote.*

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Article 11. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Somerset Bylaw Regarding the Dates of Town Elections and Annual Town Meetings, as voted under Article 23 of the Warrant of the Annual Town Meeting of May 15, 2017, by adding the following sentence after the first full sentence: "Commencing in 2026, the annual town business meeting shall take place on a date in May as determined by the Board of Selectmen notwithstanding anything in this bylaw to the contrary."; or take any action relative thereto.

**The Advisory & Finance Committee has no recommendation on this article. (Vote 7-0)**

***Motion Article 11: A motion was made by Selectman Smith that the Town vote to approve the amendment to the Town of Somerset Bylaw Regarding the Dates of Town Elections and Annual Town Meetings, as written in the article and seconded by the floor. Discussion continued. Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote on Article 11 as written and recommended. Vote Totals 113 votes cast; 91- yes, 22- no. Moderator declared that the motion carries.***

The Moderator entertained a motion to dissolve the Special Town Meeting of January 17 at 12:43 PM on January 17, 2026, all articles having been acted upon. The motion was so moved and seconded by several from the floor. The Moderator declared the meeting dissolved by a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Attendance: 231

A true copy attest;

Caitlin Hadala,  
Town Clerk