

TOWN OF DALTON  
 BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS  
 MAY 6, 2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

**MOTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS**

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 1. *[citizen petition and motion: no Town motion or explanation]*

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 2. *I move that the Town fix the maximum amount that may be spent during fiscal year 2025, beginning on July 1, 2024, for the revolving funds established in town by-laws for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers, with such expenditure limits to be applicable for each fiscal year until such time as Town Meeting votes, prior to July 1 for the ensuing fiscal year, to revise the same, as follows:*

<u>Revolving Fund</u>	<u>FY25 Spending Limit</u>	<u>Disposition of FY25 Fund Balance</u>
Plumbing Inspector	\$15,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Electrical Inspector	\$10,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Tree Warden/ Planning Board	\$5,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Cemetery Department	\$2,500.00	Balance up to \$2,500.00 available for expenditure, remainder reverts to the General Fund
Council on Aging - Transportation	\$20,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Council on Aging - Programs	\$15,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Cemetery Department	\$5,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Legal Advertising	\$3,000.00	Balance up to \$3,000 available for expenditure, remainder reverts to the General Fund
Parks Maintenance	\$2,000.00	Balance available for expenditure
Highway Department (Boom Mower)	\$9,000.00	Balance available for expenditure

Section 53E½ of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws authorizes the establishment of revolving funds for certain town departments with specific receipts credited to each fund, the purposes for which each fund may be spent and the maximum that may be spent from each fund for the fiscal year. A yes vote sets spending limits for several Revolving Funds for departments, which receive and expend revenues for a particular purpose.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 3. *I move that the Town adopt the "Schedule of Compensation for Elected Officials" for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 as follows: Moderator \$448, Town Clerk \$64,424, Select Board Chair \$5,129, and the other four Select Board members \$4,080 each, for a total of \$86,321.*

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 108 requires that the Town vote to establish the salaries of elected officials. A yes vote establishes the schedule of salaries presented above.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 4. *I move that the Town raise and appropriate the amounts set forth in the printed report of the Finance Committee for Fiscal Year 2025, totaling \$10,147,991; for the several*

*purposes therein itemized, each numbered item being considered as a separate appropriation, and that the same be expended only for such purposes.*

A yes vote on the Town FY 2025 Operating Budget appropriates the above total for all town departments, boards and commissions, including contractual and intergovernmental services and payment of principal and interest on debt. See the Report of the Finance Committee included in the Town Report for a more detailed explanation of this Article. This budget does not include schools and accounts appropriated under other Articles. A yes vote, without amendments, authorizes the operating budget as presented. It provides a pay raise for all Town employees based on a recent classification and compensation study. The overall Town Budget, not including schools, has an 8.1% increase this year; last year's increase was 10.1%.

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 5. I move that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,907,993 for the purpose of paying the Town's share of the Operating Budget of the Central Berkshire Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.*

A yes vote adopts the CBRSD operating budget for Dalton as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Over 5 years, Dalton students have been 62% of the total number of students. Excluding capital expenses, but including the transportation assessment of \$301,101 (see Article 6), the Town's share of the CBRSD budget rose from \$9,064,671 to \$9,209,094, an increase of 144,423, or 1.59%, from the previous fiscal year.

The *total* CBRSD operating budget will increase by \$692,302, to \$30,993,748 or 2.2%. Total operating revenues primarily *coming from town assessments* increased by \$352,567, or 1.9%, to \$17,858,188. Overall, the District proposes using a total of \$1,262,796 from its excess and deficiency fund (the District's version of free cash), an increase of \$12,913, or 1.03% from the prior year, in its FY25 budget. See the Report of the Finance Committee and the CBRSD Budget, which were included in the Town Report, for a more detailed explanation of this Article.

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 6. I move that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$301,101 for the purpose of paying the Town's share of the Transportation Budget of the Central Berkshire Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.*

A yes vote appropriates \$301,101 for the purpose of paying the Town's share of the FY 2025 CBRSD Transportation Budget. The proposed assessment is 3.7% lower than the previous fiscal year, a decrease of \$11,284. See the Report of the Finance Committee and the CBRSD Budget, which were included in the Town Report, for a more complete explanation of this Article.

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 7. I move that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,327,950 for the purpose of paying the Town's share of the Capital Budget of the Central Berkshire Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.*

A yes vote appropriates \$1,327,950 for the purpose of paying the Town's share of the FY 2025 Capital Budget of the Central Berkshire Regional School District for previously approved projects. Two of the payments are for debts excluded from the provisions of Proposition 2½ (debt-excluded projects do not permanently increase the limit on the Town's levy (tax)): Wahconah Renovation (for demolished WRHS), \$59,518, and Wahconah High School Building, \$1,263,700. The sole non-debt-excluded project is Becket/ Washington Renovation, at \$4,732. See the Report of the Finance Committee and the CBRSD Budget, which were included in the Town Report, for a more complete explanation of this Article.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 8. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$60,000 from Free Cash to Account 132, the Reserve Fund, for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2024.*

A yes vote authorizes the transfer of \$60,000 from Free Cash to the Reserve Fund. Transfers from available funds do not have an impact on the tax rate. The Finance Committee transfers money from the Reserve Fund to expenditure accounts to pay for unforeseen expenses throughout the fiscal year. This Article has been reduced \$5,000 from last year.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 9. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$200,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of reducing the expected tax rate increase in Fiscal Year 2025.*

A yes vote transfers \$200,000 from Free Cash in the Treasury for the purpose of reducing the expected tax rate increase in Fiscal Year 2025. This is intended to offset the expected grant for Dispatch services; if the usual grant were for some reason not to be given, the Town would cover the expenses, and this transfer would cease.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 10. *I move that the Town appropriate the sum of \$120,797 for Fiscal Year 2024 and \$214,429.17 for Fiscal Year 2025 from available funds, to be reimbursed by a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in accordance with Chapter 90, Section 34 of the Massachusetts General Laws.*

A yes vote authorizes expenditures of \$120,797 in the current fiscal year and \$214,429.17 for Fiscal Year 2025 to be reimbursed via "Chapter 90" grants. The additional \$120,797 this year comes from the transportation portion of the "Fair Share" tax passed by Massachusetts voters. The grants will be used primarily for highway repaving projects. The annual allocation is based on miles of roadway, population, and employment. The Highway Superintendent prepares a schedule of projects to be approved by the Town Manager and Select Board as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 11. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$70,853 from the Sewer Stabilization Fund to pay the City of Pittsfield for the additional costs of sewage treatment in the 2023 fiscal year.*

The annual bill from Pittsfield for sewage treatment was higher than originally estimated by the City. Each year, the Town pays for the prior year's usage, based on a bill from the City of Pittsfield. For FY 2023, the estimate was \$70,853 lower than the final bill.

#### TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED FOR AUTHORIZATION

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 12. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$600,000 from Free Cash to the following stabilization funds: \$250,000 to the Capital Stabilization Fund; \$250,000 to the Sewer Stabilization Fund; and \$100,000 to the General Stabilization Fund.*

A yes vote moves the amounts specified into the stabilization funds specified.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 13. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$200,000 from Free Cash to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust Fund for the purpose of reducing the unfunded actuarial liability of the cost of retiree health insurance and other post-employment benefits.*

A yes vote authorizes the transfer of Free Cash cited above to the established OPEB trust fund. Retiree health care benefits are now funded on a “pay as you go” basis. With sufficient on-going funding, the Town would be able to pay all future benefits out of the trust. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board now requires that the total projected cost of post-employment benefits be reported on financial statements. Our current OPEB liability is fully funded, though we expect to add some funds every year to account for increases in health care costs and to maintain a positive balance in case of a loss of value to our investments.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 14. *I move that the Town rescind the unutilized balance of several prior years’ borrowing authorizations for completed capital improvement projects as follows:*

<b>Date of Authorization</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Amount to be Rescinded</b>
6/27/2011	Highway Garage Door/Rain Gutters	\$ 7,125.00
10/29/2013	Sewer System Engineering Study	\$ 12,006.00
6/27/2016	Sewer/Drainage Project	\$ 21,642.00
6/27/2016	5-Ton Dump Truck/Related Equipment	\$ 272.00
11/14/2016	Sewer Interceptor Emrg. Repairs Flansburg & Willis Drains	\$ 34,586.00
5/1/2017	Old Dalton High Demolition	\$ 38,779.00
6/26/2017	Highway Gasoline Pump & Piping	\$ 1,543.00
6/22/2020	5-Ton Plow Truck/Related Equipment	\$ 5,890.00
6/22/2020	Pedestrian Flasher Install - Project mostly funded by a grant	\$ 60,896.00
6/22/2020	COA Ford Transit Connect	\$ 7,141.00
6/28/2021	Sewer System Evaluation Survey	\$ 2,526.00
	<b>Total Authorized Debt to be Rescinded</b>	<b>\$ 192,406.00</b>

A yes vote rescinds the amounts reported above, thereby reducing the total amount of authorized and unissued debt. Taking these amounts off the books will improve the Town’s financial position and credit rating.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 15. *I move that the Town create, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.44, §53(4), a new special revenue fund, to be known as the Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Fund, which may be expended for all of the purposes allowed by law, including those outlined in applicable opioid settlement documents, a document prepared by the Substance Abuse Bureau of the Commonwealth’s Office of Health and Human Services Department, and consistent with any state guidelines or regulations further clarifying allowable uses of opioid settlement funds; and further, to dedicate to such fund, without further appropriation, 100% of the opioid settlement funds received by the Town; and further, to transfer the sum of \$5,440.28 from Free Cash and any additional funds received or to be received by the Town from opioid settlements resulting from the Town’s participation in the national Opioid Multi-District Litigation into said Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Fund.*

The Town is part of a legal settlement agreement with the manufacturers and sellers of opioid medications. The manufacturers and sellers were found responsible for damages resulting from the over-prescription and distribution of opioids, and the settlements provide annual payments to towns that signed on. This article provides an account to receive those payments, which will be used for the purposes allowed, including opioid education and mitigation.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 16. *I move that the Town transfer from the Capital Stabilization Fund the sum of \$302,077, including \$73,694 to purchase and equip a new cruiser for the Police Department; \$163,783 to purchase and equip a new pickup truck for the Department of Public Works, and \$64,600 to purchase and equip a sidewalk and road repair paver for the Department of Public Works, including all incidental and related costs.*

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED FOR AUTHORIZATION

These are the only three items representing regular capital improvements for the Town. The cost for the pickup truck itself is \$61,885; the rest of the truck total of \$163,783 is added equipment.

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 17. *I move that the Town authorize the Select Board to purchase an easement for Town drainage on a parcel of land owned by L. P. Adams, situated on Housatonic Street, being Assessors' Map 113, Lot 96, such conveyance to be for such consideration, which may be nominal consideration, including all costs incidental and related thereto, and upon such others terms and conditions as the Select Board shall deem advisable; to transfer a sum of up to \$20,000 from Free Cash for this purpose; and to execute any and all documents related thereto.*

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 18. *I move that the Town authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase, eminent domain, or otherwise, two easements for drainage on parcels of land as follows: (1) off North Street, being Assessors' Map 103, Lot 19; and (2) 152 Orchard Road, being Assessors' Map 111, Lot 72, such conveyance to be for such consideration, which may be nominal consideration, including all costs incidental and related thereto, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Select Board shall deem advisable; to transfer a sum of up to \$20,000 from Free Cash for this purpose; and to execute any and all documents related thereto.*

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 19. *I move that the Town transfer the sum of \$495,023 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Program and Fiscal Year 2024 items, as follows, including all incidental and related costs:*

*For Fiscal Year 2025:*

*For the Department of Public Works (total: \$259,483):*

- 1) Final Engineering Work for Orchard Road project (\$100,000);*
- 2) Engineering and design for Transfer Station renovation and upgrade (\$68,000);*
- 3) Replace two Town Garage doors (\$23,780);*
- 4) Pine Grove Park: general repair and rehabilitation (\$20,000);*
- 5) Line and paint basketball court at Pinegrove Park (\$11,150);*
- 6) Transfer Station: purchase recycling containers (\$19,000);*
- 7) Transfer Station: purchase pre-fabricated swap shop shed (\$10,000); and*
- 8) Leaf-blower for use by Cemetery, Parks and Roads Departments (\$7,553).*

*For the Town Manager's Office (total \$40,040):*

- 1) Updated computer hardware (\$20,040); and*
- 2) Provide seed money to assist residents with condemned housing (\$0).*

*For the Buildings and Grounds Department (total \$109,500):*

- 1) Design and installation of heat pumps for third floor of Town Hall (\$65,000);*

- 2) *Engineering and cost estimate for Town Hall roof section reinforcement (\$40,000); and*
- 3) *Shredding of outdated Town Hall documents (\$4,500).*

*For the Historic Commission:*

- 1) *Re-painting the Hoose House (\$4,000).*

*For the Green Committee:*

- 1) *Electric vehicle chargers at the Senior Center (new location) (\$37,000).*

*For the Open Space Committee:*

- 1) *Partially reimbursable cost for invasive species removal at The Pines (\$20,000).*

*For Fiscal Year 2024 (total \$45,000):*

*For the Town Manager's Office (total \$45,000):*

- 1) *Reimbursement for deposit on real estate purchase (\$25,000); and*
- 2) *Provide funding for grant application for re-building Walker Brook culverts (\$20,000)*

A yes vote funds the projects listed above. Any particular item may be treated separately by moving to take it up for discussion. The item listed in the warrant as #1 under the Buildings and Grounds Department is not being proposed for funding at this time due to a lack of cost information, so there are three items instead of four being proposed for the Buildings and Grounds Department. The Finance Committee has voted to strike \$20,000 proposed by the Select Board for the condemned houses fund.

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 20. I move that the Town authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts for a term of more than three years for the purpose of providing software, operations, management and maintenance support for the Town's electric-vehicle charging stations.*

The immediate need is for Senior Center electric vehicle chargers. Any contract over three years requires approval from Town Meeting. This article would authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts of more than five years for all future vehicle charging stations; the standard agreement is for five years.

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 21. I move that the Town approve the Central Berkshire Regional School District Amended Regional Agreement as presented by the School Committee which will be on file at the Dalton Town Clerk's Office, Superintendent of Schools Office and the Dalton Public Library.*

*MOTION FOR ARTICLE 22. I move that the Town recess until MONDAY MAY 13, 2024 at 11:00 O'CLOCK A.M. to 7:00 O'CLOCK P.M. to meet in the DALTON SENIOR CENTER, 40 Field Street Extension, to choose and elect the following Town Officers and the determination of such other matters as are by law required to be determined by ballot:*

- |                                             |                    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>(1) MEMBER SELECT BOARD</i>              | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(1) MODERATOR</i>                        | <i>FOR 1 YEAR</i>  |
| <i>(2) MEMBERS DALTON HOUSING AUTHORITY</i> | <i>FOR 5 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(1) CEMETERY TRUSTEE</i>                 | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(1) MEMBER PLANNING BOARD</i>            | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(3) LIBRARY TRUSTEES</i>                 | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(4) MEMBERS FINANCE COMMITTEE</i>        | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |
| <i>(1) TOWN CLERK</i>                       | <i>FOR 3 YEARS</i> |