

EXPLANATIONS
2024 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Introduction

As is the custom, we are providing a brief explanation of each article and line item in the warrant.

Budget Summary

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget, including the operation of the Richmond Shores sewer system, the ambulance, and several proposed capital expenditures, is \$8,905,319, or an increase of \$353,391, 4.1%. The Selectmen and the Finance Committee continue to present to you a balanced budget that does not rely on the use of reserves to fund operational costs while providing the services residents expect from town government. This year's budget includes a 3% salary increase for non-school employees as well as increases in our insurance assessment. However, once again you will see that many of our non-salary related line items have been level funded (or reduced in some cases) from their Fiscal Year 2024 levels. The School Committee's Fiscal Year 2025 request from the town budget is \$4,409,491, an increase of \$192,918, or 4.58% over total school appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Sewer Budget is \$226,000 This budget funds the costs of operating the system as well as debt payment associated with the system's design and construction. All these costs are borne by the users of the system.

The breakdown of the revenues that will be required to meet the proposed expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 in comparison to Fiscal Year 2024 are as follows:

<u>Source of Revenue</u>			Percent change of Revenues	2025 Percentage of <u>Total</u> <u>Revenue</u>
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>		
Real and Personal Property Taxes (Tax Levy)	\$6,262,278	\$6,528,120	4.2%	73.2%
Non-Property Tax (State Aid, Local Receipts, Transfers, Other)	\$2,289,650	\$2,377,199	3.8%	26.8%
Totals	\$8,551,928	\$8,905,319	4.1%	100%

Again this year, Town Meeting consideration of the warrant articles will be done using the “consent calendar” approach. The Moderator will ask the town meeting attendees for permission to consider Articles 1-3 together, which will allow discussion of any of the articles under a single motion and will ask for a vote on all three articles on the same motion. In addition, in order to save time at the town meeting, the Moderator will not read all of the line items, but will read the heading of each section of line items and ask for any “holds” for each section. He will reserve any held line items for further discussion after seeking approval of any “non-held” line items and then proceed to discuss and vote on any held line items individually. For more information about the town budget process, please contact the Selectmen's Office.

Consent Calendar- Articles 1-3

Article 1- Repair highways and care for cemeteries

This is a standard article from year to year authorizing the Selectmen to supervise the highways and cemeteries.

Article 2- Revolving Funds

This article establishes revolving funds that receive certain revenues and it authorizes expenditure of these funds without further appropriation. This article also establishes the limits of each revolving fund.

Article 3- Transportation Bond

This is a standard article allowing the Town to spend a state grant for road construction and repair. The Town's share for fiscal year 2025 is estimated to be \$162,117.

Article 4- Line Items

This article raises and appropriates the funds for the general operational expenses of the town. Only items that are raised and appropriated from taxes appear in this article. Items that call for other methods of funding, such as transfers between accounts, require separate articles. Also, pursuant to Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the General Laws, we have shown each elected officer's salary below each applicable line item on the warrant. *(All line items below are recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Assessors Salaries: \$3,600- These are the annual salaries of the Assessors with \$1200 per Assessor. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
2. Assessors Expenses: \$21,500- This account pays for the Assessors' office supplies, map updating, contracted services, software licenses, and other expenses. \$6,500 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 per increased costs of software programming.
3. Assessor Contracted Services: \$44,220- This account pays for the contract between the Town and Regional Resource Group (a private contractor), for the Assessing services it provides to the Town. A contractual decrease of \$780 from Fiscal Year 2024.

4. Audit: \$15,000- To be used to fund the annual audit of the town's books using the town's outside auditor, Thomas P. Scanlon, CPA. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
5. Longevity/Vacation Buyout: \$12,000- We offer longevity stipends to employees after a certain number of years of service. Three employees are eligible for longevity. Also all non school personnel are eligible for one week buy back vacation. \$4,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 to budget for vacation and sick buyout of anticipated employee retirement.
6. Moderator Salary: \$500- The Moderator is entitled to a \$500 salary. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
7. Selectmen Salaries: \$5,250- These are the annual salaries of the Selectmen at \$1,750 per Selectman. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
8. Selectmen Expenses: \$4,500- This account pays for meetings, mileage, trainings, dues, and other expenses of the Selectmen. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
9. Town Clerk Salaries: \$17,390- This is the salary line for the Town Clerk, who is the town's official record keeper and license issuer. This line includes a 3% salary increase and a \$5,121 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024 as this no longer includes the assistant salary (which has been moved to Administrative Assistant/COA Director – Line #16)
10. Town Clerk Expenses: \$9,000- This pays for software licensing, maintenance of voting machines and poll pads, mileage, dues, and other Town Clerk expenses. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
11. Treasurer/Collector Salary: \$66,950- This is the annual salary of the Treasurer/Collector, who manages the town's financial transactions, provides benefits management for all employees including payroll, and oversees properties placed in Tax Title, and collects all personal, property, motor vehicle excise taxes and sewer fees. 3% increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
12. Treasurer/Collector Expenses: \$13,000- This account pays for meetings, conferences, mileage and other expenses of the Treasurer/Collector. Tax Collection services was added to this budget line rather than keep it separate for more accurate accounting. \$5,000 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024 to reflect actual town spending more accurately.
13. Tax Title Expense: \$4,000- This was a special article last year and is built into the budget this year and is used to cover legal costs of the tax taking process. Fees are collected once a closing and pay-off are completed. This can, however, take years.
14. Town Accountant Salary: \$63,109- This is the annual salary of the Town Accountant, who maintains the town's accounts, prepares the weekly warrant that the Selectmen sign to approve payment of the town's bills, and who files regular reports with the Department of Revenue. 3% increase from Fiscal Year 2024.

15. Town Accountant Expenses: \$1,500- This account pays for training, meetings, mileage, and other expenses of the Town Accountant. \$500 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024.
16. Administrative Assistant: \$53,560- This position has become a combined Administrative Assistant/Council on Aging Director as well as Assistant Town Clerk. Additionally, this position answers the phones at Town Hall, assists residents, and serves as general clerical staff for all offices including Board of Health, and Conservation. Salaries from Lines 9 and 29 have been added here. \$32,960 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
17. Town Counsel: \$35,000- This amount is used for Town Counsel and Special Town Counsel services, who advise and defend the town in legal matters. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
18. Town Report: \$4,000- This is the cost of printing the annual town report. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
19. Town Hall: \$50,000- This account pays for utilities, routine maintenance, cleaning, and other goods and services at the Town Hall/Library. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
20. Elections and Board of Registrars: \$10,000- This account pays for the expenses involved in conducting elections, registering voters, and maintaining the street list. \$2,000 increase over Fiscal Year 2024 due to increased number of elections during the Presidential Election year.
21. Town Administrator: \$88,730- This is the annual base salary of the Town Administrator (a contracted position) who oversees the day-to-day operations at Town Hall, supervises Town Staff and Sewer personnel, and serves as the Harbormaster. 3% salary increase over Fiscal Year 2024.
22. Town Administrator Expenses: \$3,000- This account pays for meetings, conferences, mileage and other expenses of the Town Administrator. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
23. Conservation Commission: \$3,500- This account pays for meetings, conferences, mileage, supplies and other expenses of the Conservation Commission. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
24. Conservation Agent: \$24,000- This line item is to fund the services of the Conservation Agent. \$2,782 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
25. Historical Commission: \$500- This account pays for copying, membership, meetings and other expenses of the Historical Commission. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
26. Planning Board: \$285- This account pays for annual subscriptions, meetings, and other expenses of the Planning Board. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

27. IT Services: \$22,000- This account is for our contracted IT services currently with Brainspiral Technologies. It covers the expenses related to server maintenance and support, workstation maintenance and support, and overall IT support for all town owned buildings.
28. Technology Hardware and Software: \$22,000- This account is used to pay for the replacement and/or repair of workstations, copiers, printers, including any software purchases, in all town owned buildings. \$12,300 decrease due to changing of software companies from Fiscal Year 2024.
29. COA Director/Administrative Assistant: This is a combined position. Please see explanation in Line 16.
30. Council on Aging: \$2,500- This account pays for the various programs offered by the COA, including senior lunches, health programs and the van program. No change from Fiscal Year 2024. The council also receives funding from a state grant and has access to a revolving fund.
31. Veterans' Agent Salary: \$500- This is the annual salary for the Town's Veterans' Agent, now contracted through the City of Pittsfield. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
32. Stationery and Office Supply: \$7,000- This account pays for paper, pens, pencils, postage, toner, and similar expenses at Town Hall. \$2,000 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024 to reflect actual town spending more accurately.
33. Town Facility Maintenance: \$25,000- This account pays for routine maintenance for all town facilities and properties. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
34. Legal Advertising: \$5,000- This account pays for the many legal ads that the town runs each year, ranging from invitations for bids to notices of public hearings. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
35. Training: \$4,000- This pays for most training/continuing education opportunities for town officers and employees. No change from Fiscal Year 2024
36. Office Equipment: \$3,500- This pays for office equipment and furniture, and related expenses. \$600 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024 to reflect actual town spending more accurately.
37. Website Hosting: \$1,900- This is the annual cost of hosting our Town's website and includes technical support. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

PROTECTION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTY

38. Police Chief Salary: \$2,400- This is the annual salary of the Police Chief, who issues firearms permits, arranges traffic details, and other matters. \$340 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
39. Deputy Police Chief Salary: \$2,000- This is the annual salary of the Deputy Police Chief, who issues firearms permits, arranges traffic details, and other matters under the supervision of the Police Chief mainly during the winter months. \$500 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
40. Police Department Expenses: \$1,000- This account pays for the equipment and supplies used by the department, such as badges and firearm licensing supplies. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
41. County Communications: \$14,756- This account pays Richmond's share of the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department to operate the 911 emergency dispatch system. \$292 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 which includes a 2% increase.
42. Constable Expenses: \$500- This account remains to pay for Constable uniforms as they still work the elections. Salaries are paid for out of the Elections budget. No change from Fiscal year 2024.
43. Animal Control Officer Salary: \$5,000- This is the annual salary for the Animal Control Officer. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
44. Animal Control Officer Expenses: \$500- This pays for gloves, rabies shots, boarding of animals and other expenses of the Animal Control Officer. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
45. Fire Department: \$79,500- This account pays for fuel, truck and equipment maintenance, training, stipends and other expenses of the Fire Department. This is a \$9,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 to cover the increase in costs of hose testing and equipment maintenance.
46. Fire House Rent: \$14,620- This account pays the rent to the Trustees of the Volunteer Fire Department for use of the building. \$220 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 per lease agreement.
47. Emergency Management: \$3,500- This account pays for equipment and supplies for this department, which provides assistance and direction during natural disasters, storms and other emergencies. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
48. Fire Chief/EMD Salary: \$17,912- This is the annual salary of the Fire Chief/EMD which is a part-time, non-benefit eligible position. \$522 increase from Fiscal Year 2024
49. Tree Warden: \$7,500- These funds are used for contracting with a tree service to remove problem trees. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

- 50. Building Inspector Salary: \$8,384- This is the Building Inspector's annual salary. \$3% increase from Fiscal Year 2024
- 51. Building Inspector Expenses: \$4,500- This account pays for training, expenses and mileage of the Building Inspector and Alternate. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
- 52. Alternate Building Inspector: \$300- This is the annual salary of the Alternate Building Inspector, who fills in if the Building Inspector is not available or has a conflict of interest. No change from Fiscal Year 2024
- 53. Zoning Enforcement Officer Salary: \$4,489- This is the annual salary of the ZEO, who ensures that building projects and proposed uses conform to the Zoning Bylaw. \$3% increase over Fiscal Year 2024.
- 54. Zoning Enforcement Officer Expenses: \$500- This account pays for meetings, mileage and other expenses of the ZEO. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
- 55. Inspection Services: \$100- This is for inspections by the plumbing, wiring, gas and oil burner inspectors and their alternates on projects, such as town projects, where there is no fee tendered. They receive \$45 per inspection. All other compensation for the inspectors comes from the revolving inspection account, where fees for services are paid to the town and are turned around and paid to the inspectors. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- 56. Board of Health Salaries: \$850- This is the annual salary account to be divided among five board members. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
- 57. Board of Health Expenses: \$4,000- This account pays for meetings and other expenses of the Board of Health. No change from Fiscal Year.
- 58. Board of Health Contracted Services: \$24,460- This account covers the cost of additional inspectional services provided to the Board of Health by the Berkshire Public Health Alliance. This includes a contractual increase, as well as an increase in duties for Community Health Programs. \$1,427 increase from Fiscal Year 2024
- 59. Stray Animals: \$100- This account will help pay any costs associated with retrieving stray animals, usually farm animals. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
- 60. Rubbish Disposal: \$249,107- This account pays for the collection and disposal of the town's garbage and recyclables, as well as participation in the regional Household Hazardous Waste collection days. 3% increase over Fiscal Year 2024 per contract.

61. Veterans' Aid: \$9,500- This account pays for financial assistance to veterans as required by state law. The State reimburses the Town for 75% of the assistance costs incurred assisting veterans. No change from Fiscal 2024

HIGHWAYS

62. Machinery Maintenance: \$70,000- This account pays for the upkeep and repair of equipment and trucks. \$5,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 due to the increased cost of replacement parts.
63. Road Construction: \$125,000- This account, combined with state transportation bond funds, pays for road construction and re-construction. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
64. Road Maintenance: \$32,500- This account pays for routine road maintenance. \$2,500 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 due to line painting cost increases.
65. Town Garage: \$12,900- This account pays for heating fuel, and other expenses at the Town Garage. \$1,650 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
66. Winter Roads: \$160,000- This account pays for the plowing and sanding of the roads, including the costs of salt and sand. \$10,000 increase due to increased costs in material. Salt has increased by \$20/ton.
67. Gravel Roads: \$55,000- This account pays for the maintenance of the gravel roads. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
68. Salaries: \$298,667- This account is used to pay the road crew salaries. \$14,127 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
69. Overtime: \$30,000- This account covers the costs of overtime in the department. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
70. Fuel: \$42,000- This account covers the costs of fuel used by multiple town departments. \$4,200 decrease from Fiscal Year 2024 to reflect actual town spending more accurately.
71. Utilities: \$12,060- This covers the costs of utilities such as electric, cable, phone, and internet. \$1,960 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.
72. Private Roads: \$3,500- These funds are used to help Richmond Shores and the Whitewood Association maintain their private roads, pursuant to Chapter X of the Town Bylaws. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
73. Beaver Control: \$4,000- This is the account to handle the beaver related problems that the town has had in recent years. Much of this funding pays for an agreement with a contractor

to maintain several water control devices in water bodies where beavers have set up housekeeping. \$500 increase from Fiscal Year 2024.

74. Town Beach: \$18,000- This account pays for the expected lifeguards and equipment costs involved in running the Town Beach. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

CULTURE & RECREATION

75. Recreation Committee: \$3,750- This account pays for the various recreation programs offered by the town, except for the Town Beach, which is operated by the DPW and funded under a separate line item. The committee also has access to a type of revolving fund that allows it to receive and spend program fees. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
76. Memorial Day: \$200- This account pays for flowers, markers and flags for Memorial Day. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
77. Library: \$78,786- This account pays the salaries and operating costs of the Library. A 2.2% increase of \$1,719 from Fiscal Year 2024.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

78. Berkshire County Retirement: \$247,546- This account is Richmond's share paid to the Berkshire County Retirement System to contribute towards the expected retirement costs of town's municipal employees. Teachers are covered under a separate retirement system administered by the state. \$145 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 due to an increase in the annual assessment.
79. Group Insurance: \$194,000- This account pays for the town's share of the health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance for non-school employees. The cost for school personnel is included in the school budget. \$40,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024. This line is estimated based on the number of anticipated policies for the coming year and a 7.93% rate increase.

TOWN INSURANCE

80. Insurance and Bonding: \$130,000- This account pays for the Town's insurance policies, including motor vehicle, property, public liability, worker's compensation, and officers' bonds. \$3,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 which includes a factor based on the average loss percentage of the town.

UNCLASSIFIED

81. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission: \$1,198- This is the county's regional planning agency that reviews projects and assists cities and towns on planning and zoning matters. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

82. Cemetery Superintendent Salary: \$2,500- This is the annual salary of the Cemetery Plot Manager. \$8,000 decrease from Fiscal Year. Mr. Parsons has retired. Duties are now handled with an outside vendor and the Department of Public Works Superintendent.
83. Cemetery Expenses: \$10,500- This account pays for the equipment and supplies in maintaining the cemeteries. \$8,000 increase from Fiscal Year 2024 which includes the salary from the prior line for mowing expenses now covered by the Department of Public Works.
84. Unemployment Reserve: \$2,500- This amount will help to cover the town's liability if a non-school employee files an unemployment claim. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
85. Medicare: \$45,000- This account pays the town's matching share of Medicare costs. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
86. Group Purchasing: \$800- This pays for the town's membership in the regional group purchasing program. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
87. Richmond Pond Ramp Monitors: \$5,000- This pays the wages for the summer boat ramp monitors who under state regulation are required to certify that all water vessels launched from the state boat ramp are free from weeds and zebra mussels. The State of Massachusetts provides partial funding of the costs associated with the administration of this program. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.
88. Miscellaneous Expenses: \$700- This pays for miscellaneous expenses that may arise and cannot be covered by any other funding source. No change from Fiscal Year 2024.

Article 5- Debt Service payment To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$430,200** to pay for debt service for the new Town Hall, Library, Community Center
(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)

Article 6 Highway Department Equipment Purchase To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of **\$50,000** for the purchase of a new tractor and brush cutter attachments This tractor will replace the 1968 Ford open cab tractor that we use during the summer with a new closed cab tractor. The current tractor requires a lot of extra costly maintenance after every use. This will allow the town to be able to use two tractors to make road grading, roadside mowing and brush cutting more efficient. It will also save the town money with repair parts and down time to make the repairs. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 7- Ambulance Equipment Purchase To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of **\$57,000** to cover the cost of a Defibrillator machine and necessary accessories. This will allow the Ambulance to perform more life saving techniques without having to wait for a different ambulance to meet them. *(Recommended for Approval by*

the Finance Committee)

Article 8- Ambulance - \$210,000 from the ambulance receipts account to the ambulance expense account for the operation of the Richmond Ambulance service, the maintenance of the town ambulance, and for payments to County Ambulance and to other ambulance services providing backup and advanced life support to the Richmond Ambulance service, with any unexpended balance to be returned to the ambulance reserve account. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 9- Sewer Enterprise Fund: \$226,000

This will fund all expenses, salaries and debt service associated with the operation of the sewer system. The revenues to fund the sewer come from fees and betterments from the users (department receipts). Any funds not expended in upcoming fiscal year will revert to the sewer enterprise and become the retained earnings in future fiscal years. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 10- School Budget: \$4,409,491 This represents a 4.58% increase over the Town's Fiscal Year 2024 school appropriation. While the total school budget exceeds the amount to be voted, the difference will be made up through the use of School Choice monies, grants, and other school revenues. Below is a comparison of the accounts between the Fiscal Year 2024 budget and the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Each account group has several sub-accounts which are not shown for space reasons. A full breakdown of the budget can be viewed on the school's website: www.richmondconsolidatedschool.org

	FY 2024	FY 2025
School Committee Accounts	\$12,830	\$12,830
Superintendent Accounts	\$114,363	\$71,985
Special Education Accounts	\$576,006	\$571,967
Principal Accounts	\$180,615	\$206,033
Supply Accounts	\$40,000	\$40,000
Teaching Accounts	\$1,749,569	\$1,759,479
Library Services	\$10,925	\$10,990
Professional Development Accounts	\$28,800	\$29,300
Technology Accounts	\$24,000	\$24,000
Health Accounts	\$70,698	\$71,367
Transportation Accounts	\$271,195	\$278,069
Activity Advisor	\$22,500	\$22,500
Tuition Accounts	\$590,072	\$904,887
Food Service Supervisor	\$61,328	\$51,328
Operations & Maintenance Accounts	\$318,185	\$334,031
Employee Benefits and Insurance Accounts	\$592,136	\$651,350
Unemployment Accounts	\$5,000	\$5,000
Contingency Accounts	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>
Total	\$4,678,222	\$5,055,116
Less School choice, grants and pre-school revenue	\$461,649	\$645,625
Amount raised and appropriated by the Town (Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)	\$4,216,573	\$4,409,491

Article 11 – School HVAC To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of **\$75,000** for the School HVAC upgrades. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 12 – School HVAC To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Stabilization the sum of **\$25,000** for the School HVAC upgrades. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Article 13- OPEB: \$5,000 transferred from free cash will continue funding towards the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, established under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 32B, Section 20 *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 14- Reserve Fund -\$20,000 Transfer free cash to the reserve fund. This funds unexpected expenses with the approval of the Finance Committee. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 15 - Fuel Emergency Assistance Program: \$6,000

This is a fund to help low income Richmond residents in times of emergency. Each winter we are able to supplement the amount given to low income residents who receive federal fuel assistance funds through Berkshire County Community Action.
(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)

Article 16- Treatment of Weeds in Richmond Pond: \$5,000

Systemic and spot treatment of Richmond Pond to control invasive species. No monies were spent in FY24 and will be carried forward. Any additional funds needed will be covered by the Richmond Pond Association. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*.

Article 17 - Vital Records Restoration To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of **\$8,500** to preserve deteriorating vital records books. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 18 – \$30,000 startup software costs

The Town is switching software companies for collecting/accounting software and payroll. This software will be a savings for the Town but has one-time start-up costs to convert data from the existing software. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 19 – \$25,000 Dead or dying trees

This will cover costs associated with removal or trimming of dead or dying trees town – wide.
(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)

Article 20 – To see if the Town will vote to create a special Stabilization Fund for the purpose of town needs related to departments of Highway and Public Safety. *(Recommended for Approval*

by the Finance Committee)

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Article 21 – To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Town Hall Stabilization the sum of **\$89,000** to the newly created Highway and Public Safety Stabilization. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Article 22 – To see if the Town will vote to create a special Stabilization Fund for the purpose of town needs related to Ambulance Department. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Article 23 – To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Town Hall Stabilization the sum of **\$10,000** to the newly created Ambulance Stabilization. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Article 24 – To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Certified Free Cash the sum of **\$923** for prior Fiscal Year Invoices. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 25 – To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the Legislature to enact special legislation which provides that, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the board of trustees of the town of Richmond Free Public Library may invest any present or future gifts and donations received by and for the library in a separate interest-bearing account, or take any other action in relation thereto. This will allow the town to petition special legislature to allow funds donated to the Town library to be invested and maintain its own interest which is currently not allowed by law. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 26 – To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L c. 44 Section 54 (b) which became effective July 1, 2023 to allow Town trust funds to be invested in accordance with G.L. c. 203C, the so called “Prudent Investment Rule”, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Voting yes for this article will allow our town to invest our trust funds, including cemetery perpetual care funds, unless otherwise provided or directed by the donor of the funds under the Prudent Investment Rule. Prudent investing allows for much greater investment diversification opportunities than what is currently allowed under the MA Legal List of Investments. Where appropriate, Prudent investing allows investment managers to use diversified mutual funds, ETFs, individual stocks, bonds, alternative investments, etc. Previously, these municipal funds had to adhere to a very short and restrictive list of stock and bond investments by law. Prudent investing does not inherently mean more risk in the investment portfolio, it simply means that

there are greater investment options, which allows for reduced concentration risk and an overall more balanced portfolio allocation. *(Recommended for Approval by the Finance Committee)*

Article 27 – To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Town Bylaw by adding a new section 11 to Chapter X Miscellaneous called Short Term Room Rentals. A copy of this proposed bylaw is on file with the Town Clerk.

The Town is proposing a general bylaw to allow for enforcement measures of short – term rental properties throughout Town. This bylaw has rules and regulations attached to it along with annual license renewal instructions, fines for violations, and a complaint process for residents if there are concerns. This bylaw will allow short term rentals in all zoning districts by right for up to 80 days, anyone wishing to rent our more than 80 days will be required to apply for a special permit.

Article 28 – To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Zoning Bylaw by inserting the words “for more than 80 days in a calendar year” to section 4.8 A Permitted Principal Uses 13. Short Term Room Rental Business to read as follows:

13. Short-Term Room Rental Business for more than 80 days in a calendar year provided that:

TWO – THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

This article makes the zoning bylaw coincide with the proposed new Short-Term Room Rental General Bylaw

Ballot Question 1.

Shall section 5, Clause 41C1/2 of G.L. c. 59, added by chapter 139, Section 41 of the Acts of 2006, granting real estate property tax reductions to qualifying senior citizens, be accepted?

A yes vote on this question will allow the Town to be able to make changes to the circuit breaker qualifications to allow more residents to qualify for tax exemptions. The changes to the circuit breaker would have to be voted on at a town meeting after the adoption of the above reference legislation.