

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
S.S. FRANKLIN

To either of the Constables of Warwick, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town who are qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to MEET AT THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL 41 WINCHESTER RD ON MONDAY MAY 5, 2025, AT 7 P.M. Then and there to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1: Shall the Town vote to allow a brief five-minute oral report on progress to date of the Six Town Regional Planning board and its work on a new regional school district formation; or take other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Town approve the proposed changes (attached) to the Franklin Council of Government's Charter; or take any other action related thereto? (2/3 vote required)

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town accept the reports of Town Officers and Committees for 2024 or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town authorize the Selectboard to apply for and accept private, state, and federal grants, and to expend any monies received as set forth in the appropriate grant application, or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town vote to allow town boards and commissions to appoint one of its members to a position under their supervision as allowed by MGL Chapter 268A, section 21A, or take any other action relative thereto?

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town vote to allow the Selectboard to appoint one of its members to a position under their supervision as allowed by MGL Chapter 268A, section 21, or take any other action relative thereto?

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town grant an ethics exemption under MGL Chapter 268A, section 20 to Selectboard member Brian Snell to be compensated for work as an education planner and teacher for Warwick School District and set compensation at up to \$25 per hour, not to exceed \$15,000 per fiscal year, beginning in July 2025; or take any other action relative thereto?

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town vote to reauthorize the following spending limits for the revolving funds for certain town departments under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 53E ½ for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, or take any action relative thereto:

- A. Health Inspections - \$2,000
- B. Cemetery Burial Fund - \$2,000
- C. Public Hearings - \$3,000

- D. Plumbing and Gas Inspections - \$4,000
- E. Building Cleaning - \$2,000
- F. Forestry Committee - \$5,000
- G. Dog Fund - \$2,000
- H. Fire Inspections - \$2,000
- I. Planning Board Zoning Program - \$2,000
- J. Highway Machinery - \$100,000
- K. Electrical Inspections - \$5,000
- L. Field Driver - \$2,000
- M. Zoning Board of Appeals - \$10,000
- N. Tree Warden - \$2,000
- O. Recreation Committee - \$5,000
- P. Election - \$1,500
- Q. Senior Lunch - \$20,000
- R. Cafe - \$6,000
- S. Solar and Renewable Energy - \$100,000
- T. Police Detail Vehicle - \$5,000
- U. Police Detail - \$200,000

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be necessary to defray expenses, the amount estimated by the Selectboard and the Finance Committee for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2025, for the purposes designated in the budget that follows, or any other amounts for such purposes, which shall not exceed the amounts stated in the column designated "FY 2026 requested"?

This article shall also act to fix the salaries and compensation of elected officials as required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 41, Section 108.

Requested salaries and compensation for elected officials:

Moderator \$140 (1)	Selectboard \$2400 (3)
Assessors \$1500 (3)	Town Clerk/Webmaster \$17305 (1)
Tree Warden \$1200 (1)	Board of Health \$1500 (3)
Cemetery Commission \$600 (3)	School Committee \$1000 (5)

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town appropriate \$38,000 to operate the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund effective July 1, 2025, and that \$15,000 be raised from taxation and \$23,000 be raised from departmental receipts; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town appropriate \$100,000 to operate the Broadband Enterprise Fund effective July 1, 2025, and that \$80,000 be raised from departmental receipts and \$20,000 be appropriated from Broadband Free Certified Free Cash; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to fund the Warwick Community School Improvement Account established by vote of the Annual Town Meeting held May 3, 2004; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 to the Assessor's Revaluation Account; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town raise and appropriate \$3000 to the Landfill Monitoring Fund established May 4, 2015, to pay for post closure monitoring at Warwick's former landfill; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town raise and appropriate \$10,000 to audit town accounts; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town raise and appropriate \$800 to Household Hazardous Waste expense; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town raise and appropriate \$10,000 for After School and Summer programming for children; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 18: Shall the town approve payment of the prior fiscal year bills from EDP Solar for Net Meter Credits at the school and town hall totaling \$3,877, such payment from existing funding; or take any other action related thereto? (90% vote required)

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town transfer \$59,249 from Stabilization to pay off the principal balance in full that is owed on the KIA electric school bus: or take any other action related thereto? (2/3 vote required)

ARTICLE 20: Shall the town raise and appropriate \$4,000 to account 01-951-5700-201803 the Environmental Cleanup Fund, or take any other action related thereto?

Article 21: Shall the Town amend the Town of Warwick General Bylaw, entitled "Stretch Energy Code" and replace it with a new General Bylaw entitled "Specialized Energy Code" for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, pursuant to the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of January 1, 2026, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action related thereto?.

ARTICLE 22: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to enter into a long-term commitment to Municipal Decarbonization (defined as the elimination of on-site burning of fossil fuels in municipal buildings and vehicles) by 2050 in accordance with Commonwealth of MA climate goals and as they relate to achieving CLIMATE LEADER STATUS; or take any other action related thereto?

ARTICLE 23: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to accept, on behalf of the Town and in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 3, the gift of the First Parish Meeting House and known as Unitarian Church located on Town-owned Common at 0 Orange Rd from First Parish and Religious Society to be held and maintained for public purpose including historical preservation, public assembly, cultural programs, and to authorize the Selectboard to take any actions necessary to effectuate said gift,

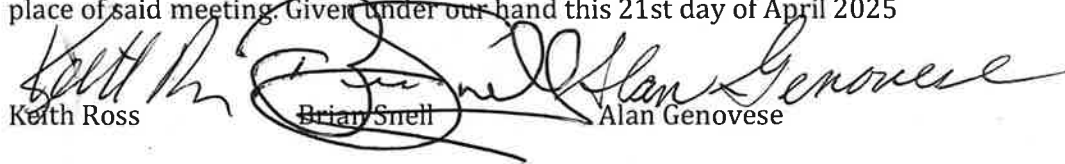
including but not limited to entering any agreements and other paperwork necessary to complete the transfer; or take any other action relative thereto

ARTICLE 24: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to accept, on behalf of the Town and in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 3, the gift of whatever right, title, or interest the First Parish and Religious Society may hold in a parcel of land consisting of approximately 32 acres located on Hastings Pond Road, Book 11111 page 1111 and shown on the Town of Warwick Assessors Map 108 as Lot 104, said interest currently held in the name of the Estate of Wheelock, such acceptance to be without warranty or representation as to title, and to authorize the Selectboard to take any and all actions necessary or appropriate to effectuate the acceptance and future management of said interest, including but not limited to entering any agreements and other paperwork necessary to complete the transfer such that income be held in a restricted fund and used solely for the maintenance, preservation, repair, and care of the building known as the First Parish Meetinghouse, located on the Town Common; or take any other action relative thereto?

ARTICLE 25: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard to accept, on behalf of the Town and in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A and Chapter 40, Section 3, a gift of cash or investments from First Parish and Religious Society to be held in a restricted fund and used solely for the maintenance, preservation, repair, and care of the building known as the First Parish Meetinghouse, located on the Town Common, and to authorize the Treasurer, under the direction of the Selectboard, to establish such a fund and expend monies from it for said purposes; or take any other action relative thereto?

ARTICLE 26: Shall the Town vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 64G, Section 3A, thereby imposing a local room occupancy excise tax at the rate of six percent (6%), or any other amount, on the total amount of rent for each short-term rental unit within the Town of Warwick, effective as of July 1, 2025 and further, to authorize the Town Treasurer to take any necessary actions to ensure collection and remittance of such tax; or take other action relative thereto?

Hereof fail not and make return of this warrant with our doings thereon at the time and place of said meeting. Given under our hand this 21st day of April 2025


Keith Ross Brian Snell Alan Genovese

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting up attested copies thereof at Town Hall, the Senior Center (Town Hall Dining Hall), the Transfer Station and the Warwick Free Public Library seven (7) days before the date of the meeting, as within directed.

FRANKLIN S.S.

Pursuant to the within warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of WARWICK by posting attested copies of the same at the Town Hall, the Senior Center

Notes on Articles for Town Meeting Consideration

Article 1 is not an actionable item so seeks your approval to receive an up-to-date report from the Six Town Planning Board. They are working on a proposal to merge three school districts—Warwick, Pioneer (our former district), and Gill-Montague. You will be asked to give unanimous consent, or alternatively vote, to allow a very brief presentation on the matter that is expected to be put to a vote in November.

Article 2 proposes an amendment to the foundational charter document of our regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Warwick is a member and the council was formed as a successor to Franklin County government when counties were eliminated in Massachusetts. The amendment is primarily housekeeping, meant to modernize and timeproof the charter. A COG representative will be present to answer any questions.

Article 3 asks the town meeting to accept the reports of the committees, boards, and officers for Fiscal Year 2024, which ended on June 30, 2024. These are the reports included in the printed town report.

Article 4 seeks authorization for the Selectboard to apply for and expend grant funds. Grants function as gifts and often come with conditions. This article gives the Selectboard the authority to accept and use these funds in accordance with the grantor terms.

Article 5 is a routine authorization that supports small-town governance. It allows for the practical functioning of boards without the necessity of hiring external professionals. Though this article has been passed in prior years, an explanation remains useful for context.

Article 6 addresses a legal restriction in state ethics law that prevents individuals from holding multiple appointed positions. Exceptions exist for very small towns like ours. The Selectboard may issue such exemptions—except for themselves. In the case of the Selectboard, the exemption must come from a vote of Town Meeting.

Article 7 is related to Article 6 and establishes boundaries / terms for any employment by Selectboard members under that exemption. Although setting these terms is usually a Selectboard responsibility, the town meeting (TM) must do so when the matter pertains to Selectboard members themselves.

Article 8 concerns the town's revolving funds, which are used for programs that generate revenue and allow spending up to a town-meeting-set ceiling. These funds cannot run into deficit. On the other hand even if funds are collected expenditure must be no more than the ceiling so it's critical that their caps are high enough to allow expenditures once the revenue is collected. This year, caps are being raised for the senior lunch program (from \$12,000 to \$20,000), and solar and renewable energy (from \$50,000 to \$100,000). It's important to remember that revolving fund expenditures do not affect the tax levy—they are supported by their own revenues.

Article 9 presents the general operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which begins on July 1. Unlike special money articles for projects, any money not spent during the fiscal year goes back into the pot and becomes part of the town's certified free cash.

Articles 10 and 11 pertain to enterprise funds, which are self-contained business entities within the town budget. Warwick uses these for the solid waste transfer station and Warwick Broadband. Enterprise funds operate like municipal businesses with their own revenues and expenses. The transfer station currently runs at a predictable loss, and we are proposing to fund the expected \$15,000 shortfall now rather than retroactively.

Article 12 funds the capital improvement account for the Warwick Community School. A decade ago, we appropriated just \$15,000 annually while the building was newer. Now that the facility is over 25 years old, maintenance needs are growing. The account currently holds about \$35,000, and this article will help ensure we can handle major repairs without calling a special town meeting or dipping into reserves.

Articles 13, 14, and 15 distribute the costs of recurring but infrequent obligations across multiple years. These include the triennial property revaluation, biennial landfill monitoring, and a town audit conducted every three years. Spreading the costs annually helps avoid spikes in any single year.

Article 16 provides funding for the household hazardous waste collection, which is matched by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, effectively doubling the program's impact.

Article 17 supports the town's afterschool and summer programming for children. We have relatively few children in our town contrasted with the adult population. This funding ensures we offer above-average educational and social opportunities for children and their parents. Though originally funded with federal COVID relief and Economic Recovery grants, this is not the first time local tax dollars have been granted for the activities.

Article 18 seeks authorization to pay overdue electricity bills that were unintentionally overlooked. The town buys net metering credits at a 25% discount, and while the credits have been received, the bills need to be paid using existing departmental funds. This article requires a 90% supermajority, as it authorizes retroactive payments for Town Hall and school electricity.

Article 19 proposes paying off the electric Kia school bus early which we acquired with an enabling vote to borrow, rather than spreading payments over four or five years.

Article 20 funds the annual fee to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for monitoring groundwater pollution at the former McKnight property on Wendell Road. The town took ownership of this property through tax title and did not cause the pollution, but under state law, we are responsible for monitoring and mitigating it. Fortunately, we have received help from the Franklin Regional Council of Government Planning Department, MA DEP and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in conducting site assessments. The town is an innocent party having taken this property for unpaid taxes and with no anticipatory reuse. This contrasts with

normal environmental law that says if there's pollution on your land whether you caused it or not, you own it.

Article 21 proposes that the town adopt the Specialized Energy Code as part of its building code. This code applies only to new construction and does not affect accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or all-electric homes, which are typically less expensive to build. For new homes that include fuel-burning appliances and are located on sunny sites, the code requires the installation of solar panels and pre-wiring for future electric appliances. However, it cannot mandate the orientation or placement of the home to make this requirement feasible. The typical pre-incentive cost of a solar PV installation is about \$16,000, with further reductions available through tax credits and rebates. Electric appliances also have rebates. We are considering adopting this code to be eligible for grants that will pay for solar systems on the school and Fire Station. These solar systems will pay to heat and cool the buildings by reducing or eliminating the electric bill.

Article 22 gives the Selectboard the authority to commit the town to a 2050 goal of eliminating fossil fuel use in municipal buildings and vehicles. It establishes a hierarchy for vehicle purchases: if a suitable electric vehicle is available, it must be purchased; if not, a plug-in hybrid should be considered; and if neither is viable, other options may be explored.

Articles 23, 24, and 25 concern the First Parish Meetinghouse, known to many as the Unitarian Church. Article 23 asks whether the town will accept the gift of this historic building. The nonprofit board offering the gift also holds financial investments and a parcel of land on Hastings Pond Road. If accepted, proceeds from timber sales or land disposition would be restricted to maintaining the meetinghouse. The building stands on the town common and houses the town clock. Accepting the property now—while there is a willing and organized board—could prevent future deterioration and costly demolition.

Finally, **Article 26** asks whether the town wants to impose a local tax on short-term rentals, such as Airbnb and VRBO. Warwick is currently the only town in Franklin County, which is not doing so. The tax is collected by the state Department of Revenue, which then distributes the proceeds to the town. Though revenues may be modest, they are effectively "found money" with no administrative burden.