November 9, 2026 Special Town Meeting

Understanding the Warrant Articles

Prepared by the Warwick Finance Committee

The Warwick Finance Committee prepared this guide to help residents understand the articles before them at the November 9, 2026 Special Town Meeting. It provides plain-language explanations of what each article proposes, why the action is being requested, and what a YES or NO vote would mean.

Articles 1 and 2 – Snow and Ice Funding and Stabilization

At the May 2026 Annual Town Meeting, residents addressed the Town's FY2026 Snow and Ice deficit of $126,587.94.

The funding plan approved at that meeting included:

- Article 22: Voters authorized raising and appropriating $87,257 toward the deficit.
- Departmental transfers: The remaining $39,330.94 was covered through transfers from other departmental budgets.

After the Annual Town Meeting, Warwick received $146,663.80 through the state's Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP). This grant covered the entire FY2026 Snow and Ice deficit of $126,587.94.

In July 2026, the Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS) issued Bulletin BUL-2026-04, providing accounting guidance for municipalities receiving WRAP reimbursements. The guidance explains how municipalities should account for the reimbursement and how previously funded Snow and Ice deficits are treated, depending on the original funding source.

The $87,257 approved at the May Town Meeting was authorized for a specific purpose: helping pay the Snow and Ice deficit. Now that the WRAP grant has covered the deficit, the Town is asking voters to take two separate actions:

- Article 1 reverses the original $87,257 appropriation approved in May under Article 22.
- Article 2 asks voters to approve a new appropriation of $87,257 to the Town's Stabilization Fund.

Why are both articles necessary?

The WRAP grant covered the entire Snow and Ice deficit, changing the Town's original funding picture. The $87,257 approved in May was specifically authorized to help pay that deficit. It was not originally appropriated to Stabilization.

The November warrant therefore asks voters to reverse the original authorization and approve a new use for the $87,257.

The two votes work together: Article 1 reverses the original appropriation, and Article 2 authorizes a new appropriation to Stabilization. The Town is asking voters to approve these actions so that the local funding previously authorized for Snow and Ice can instead be appropriated toward rebuilding the Town's financial reserves.

In short: The state grant covered the Snow and Ice deficit. The Town is asking voters to reverse the original $87,257 appropriation and approve a new appropriation of that amount to Stabilization.

Reference: Massachusetts Division of Local Services, Bulletin BUL-2026-04, FY2026 Snow and Ice Amortization, July 2026.

Article 1 – Reverse the May 2026 Snow and Ice Appropriation

WHAT THE ARTICLE DOES

This article asks voters to reverse the $87,257 appropriation authorized at the May 2026 Annual Town Meeting under Article 22. Because the WRAP grant covered the entire FY2026 Snow and Ice deficit, the original local appropriation is no longer needed for that purpose.

Vote required: Two-thirds

What a YES vote does: Reverses the previous authorization to raise and appropriate $87,257 for the Snow and Ice deficit.

What a NO vote does: Leaves the original May 2026 authorization unchanged.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION

On September 3, 2026, the Finance Committee voted to rescind its previous recommendation concerning Article 22 of the May 2026 Annual Town Meeting, which authorized raising and appropriating $87,257 for the FY2026 Snow and Ice deficit, and to recommend raising and appropriating that same amount to the Stabilization Fund.

This action established the Committee's recommendation on both parts of the proposed approach: reversing the original Snow and Ice appropriation and appropriating the $87,257 to Stabilization.

Article 2 – Appropriate $87,257 to the Stabilization Fund

WHAT THE ARTICLE DOES

This article asks voters to authorize a new appropriation of $87,257 to the Town's Stabilization Fund.

The Stabilization Fund is the Town's general financial reserve. It provides a source of funds for unexpected expenses and future financial needs. Money in Stabilization is not automatically available to spend; future use requires appropriate Town Meeting authorization.

Vote required: 90%

What a YES vote does: Authorizes the Town to raise and appropriate $87,257 to the Stabilization Fund.

What a NO vote does: Does not authorize the $87,257 appropriation to Stabilization.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION

On September 3, 2026, the Finance Committee voted to recommend raising and appropriating $87,257 to the Stabilization Fund. The Committee believes rebuilding the Town's reserves should be a priority whenever financial circumstances allow.

Article 3 – Use CDBG Funds to Pay Prior-Year Bills

WHAT THE ARTICLE DOES

This article asks voters to authorize the use of $3,113.13 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pay bills remaining from prior fiscal years. These include Highway flagger certification expenses and Verizon bills.

CDBG is grant funding, rather than money raised through the Town's regular property taxes. This article would allow the Town to use the identified grant funds to pay these outstanding bills.

Vote required: 90%

What a YES vote does: Authorizes the Town to use $3,113.13 in CDBG funds to pay the identified prior-year bills.

What a NO vote does: The bills would still need to be paid, and the Town would need to identify another funding source.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION

The Finance Committee supports paying these identified prior-year bills from the available CDBG funds. The Committee has not taken a formal vote on this article.

Article 4 – Franklin County Technical School Building Project Debt Exclusion

Town Meeting will be asked to pass over Article 4 on November 9, 2026. No vote on the FCTS debt exclusion will take place at this meeting.

Warwick is responsible for its share of the costs associated with the Franklin County Technical School building project. These costs are separate from the Town's regular operating budget and will create future financial obligations through the District's capital assessment.

What is a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion?

A Proposition 2½ debt exclusion is a local financing mechanism that allows a town to raise property taxes above its annual levy limit for the purpose of paying debt service on a specific capital project.

The additional tax authority is limited to the project and the period needed to pay its debt. It is not a permanent increase to the Town's general operating levy limit.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION

The Finance Committee supports using a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion to finance Warwick's share of the Franklin County Technical School building project when the matter is brought before voters. The Committee has not taken a formal vote on this specific financing position.

The Committee supports this financing approach as a way to address the Town's share of a major capital project separately from its regular operating budget.

What do the current projections show?

The attached Warwick-specific debt-service schedule is an initial planning projection prepared by UniBank Fiscal Advisory Services, dated March 18, 2026.

It shows Warwick's projected annual debt service, including an estimated $2,803 in FY2028, increasing over the following years.

These figures are estimates, not final costs. Actual debt service will depend on final project costs, borrowing, interest rates, financing terms, and the assessment formula.

IMPORTANT: The FCTS debt exclusion will be considered at a later Town Meeting. Passing over Article 4 on November 9 does not approve the debt exclusion or its associated tax impact.

Article 5 – Designation of Handicapped Parking Spaces

WHAT THE ARTICLE DOES

This article asks voters to adopt a bylaw governing parking spaces designated for people with disabilities.

Under the proposed bylaw:

- Designated handicapped parking spaces are reserved at all times for vehicles displaying handicapped license plates or a state-issued handicapped placard.
- The restrictions apply to designated spaces on public and private ways or properties.
- Unauthorized parking in a designated space carries a $200 fine.
- The Police Department and officers assigned to traffic duty are authorized to remove or arrange for the towing of unauthorized vehicles.
- The vehicle owner is responsible for the costs of removal and storage.

What a YES vote does: Adopts the proposed bylaw, including the parking restrictions, $200 fine, and towing authority.

What a NO vote does: Does not adopt the proposed bylaw.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION

The Finance Committee has not taken a formal vote on this proposed bylaw. The Committee supports the Warwick Police Department and efforts to ensure that the Town's parking regulations remain consistent with and compliant with Massachusetts law.

The proposed bylaw would establish a specific local enforcement mechanism for unauthorized parking in designated accessible spaces, including a $200 fine and explicit towing authority. Adoption would help ensure that designated accessible spaces remain available for those legally entitled to use them.

Supporting Documents Attached

1. Massachusetts Division of Local Services, Bulletin BUL-2026-04 – FY2026 Snow and Ice Amortization.
2. Warwick-specific FCTS projected debt-service schedule.
3. Proposed bylaw: Designation of Handicapped Parking Spaces.

Warwick

Potential annual share of FCTS project debt service

ASSESSMENT SHARE	PROJECTED PRINCIPAL	PROJECTED DEBT SERVICE
1.21%	$1,507,866	$2,776,914

Planning estimate only: projected debt service will change if final project costs, financing terms/timing, interest rates, or the assessment formula and underlying data change.

Annual Projection

Fiscal Year	Projected Debt Service	Fiscal Year	Projected Debt Service
2028	$2,803	2045	$92,821
2029	$41,901	2046	$92,809
2030	$65,034	2047	$92,881
2031	$89,111	2048	$92,847
2032	$94,070	2049	$92,828
2033	$94,013	2050	$92,879
2034	$94,053	2051	$92,871
2035	$98,323	2052	$92,922
2036	$92,750	2053	$92,842
2037	$92,815	2054	$92,875
2038	$92,908	2055	$92,826
2039	$92,867	2056	$92,876
2040	$92,816	2057	$91,197
2041	$92,752	2058	$87,196
2042	$92,794	2059	$50,905
2043	$92,812	2060	$14,935
2044	$92,924	2061	$3,658
		TOTAL	**$2,776,914**

Source: UniBank Fiscal Advisory Services, Inc. (3/18/2026). Projected assessment share shown above is 1.21% of the district total in the source projection.

Supporting Document 3

Designation of handicapped parking spaces.

A. It shall be unlawful to park a motor vehicle in a parking space reserved and designated for use by vehicles of handicapped persons, whether located on public or private ways or properties, unless authorized to do so by the terms of this section or the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Spaces designated for handicap parking are to be used ONLY by vehicles displaying handicap license plates, or a state issued handicap placard. Spaces designated as handicap parking are reserved at all times.

B. A fine of $200 shall be imposed for the unauthorized parking of a motor vehicle in a space reserved and designated for use by vehicles of handicapped persons, pursuant to the authority of MGL c. 40, § 21.

C. The Police Department and all members thereof assigned to traffic duty are hereby authorized to remove and tow away, or have removed and towed away by commercial towing service, at the sole expense of the owner of said motor vehicle, any motor vehicle left unattended or parked in a parking space reserved and designated for use by a vehicle of a handicapped person, unless said vehicle shall be designated as a vehicle of a handicapped person. Motor vehicles so towed away shall be stored in a safe place and restored to the owner or operator thereof upon payment by the owner or operator of the expenses incurred in said removal and storage.