

# BROOKLINE TOWN MEETING

## NEWSLETTER

### Spring 2026 Annual Town Meeting Highlights

by **Jesse Hefter** (Town Meeting Member - Precinct 14)

June 2, 2026

**Our Spring Town Meeting** occurred over three (3) nights in May 2026. There are various [files on our town's website](#) related to this Meeting, but you need to be a dedicated analyst to review all the information spread across multiple documents and supplements.

Accordingly, this Newsletter aims to provide you with the high-level results of what was discussed and how your elected representatives voted overall (the Town website has published a [master file](#) with how each Town Meeting Member voted if you wish to see the nitty-gritty details).

The Warrant Articles are presented in the order in which Town Meeting discussed them; certain non-voted and procedural articles are not included in this Newsletter.

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### Collective bargaining (Article 2)

Approved (Yes-239; No-0; Abstain-4)

Article 2 seeks to have Town Meeting approve the appropriation of the funds to pay for the adjustment of the collective bargaining agreement between the Town and both the Brookline Engineering Division Associates (BEDA) and the Teamsters (dispatchers).

### Override Stabilization Fund (Article 7)

Approved (Yes-218; No-24; Abstain-5)

After approving approximately \$23.25 million as part of the May 5, 2026 ballot question, the Town plans to deposit certain funds raised from the operating override into this stabilization fund as the monies are collected in 2027. This will allow the Town to more accurately monitor what reserves are available thus making it easier to project what needs to be drawn down in years two and three of the override cycle.

### Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget (Article 8)

Approved (Yes-237; No-1; Abstain-3)

Across all Department and Special Appropriations the total budget for FY27 is **\$439,876,474**.

The high-level breakdown of this total is presented in the following table:

<b>Budget Component</b>	<b>FY27 Amount</b>
Town	\$103,486,124
Schools	\$149,801,900
Total departmental expenditures	<b>\$253,303,025</b>
Total non-departmental expenditures	\$164,163,561
Total general appropriations	<b>\$417,466,585</b>
Total special appropriations	\$22,409,889
Total appropriated expenditures	<b>\$439,876,474</b>

**Special Appropriations:** Separate bonding items passed (Town to borrow money for these items):

- (1) Stormwater improvements (\$500,000) [Yes-238; No-0; Abstain-3],
- (2) Water System improvements (\$2,000,000) [Yes-249; No-0; Abstain-3],
- (3) Wastewater improvements (\$3,000,000) [Yes-250; No-0; Abstain-3],
- (4) Kirrane Aquatic Center (\$3,200,000) [Yes-250; No-0; Abstain-3],
- (5) Envelope/Fenestration for Town and School Buildings (\$2,000,000) [Yes-245; No-3; Abstain-3],
- (6) Building Roof repairs to Town and School Buildings (\$2,000,000) [Yes-241; No-1; Abstain-3].

## Community Preservation Act Committee (Article 9)

Approved (Yes-232; No-8; Abstain-5)

Each year CPAC must allocate at least 10% of the overall yearly revenue to each of its three reserves for Open Space, Community Housing, and Historic Preservation. These monies derive from a 1% surcharge on local property taxes to fund housing, historic preservation,

open space, and recreation related projects. Additionally, CPAC is allowed to spend up to 5% of its yearly revenues for administrative expenses. The balance of the income is placed in a Budgeted (Unallocated) Reserve.

1. Community Housing (2 projects and 1 deposit into a trust for Affordable Housing) – Total Recommended: \$1,976,947
2. Historic Preservation (2 projects) – Total Recommended: \$1,665,398
3. Open Space & Recreation (3 projects) – Total Recommended: \$430,000

The 10 votes appropriate a total of \$8,006,345.

## Resolution: Stipends for Select Board and School Committee Members (Article 23)

Select Board - Approved (Yes-138; No-89; Abstain-15)

School Committee - Approved (Yes-120; No-114; Abstain-13)

This is a proposal that introduces stipends for members of the School Committee and the increase of stipends for Select Board members. This initiative aims to increase accessibility and participation in local governance by compensating elected officials for their time and expertise. As originally drafted, the article advocates for a phased-in implementation of the new stipends, with a proposed final stipend amount of \$35,000 for Select Board members and \$20,000 for School Committee members to be appropriated by July 1, 2029. The amended petitioners' motion instead seeks to increase the stipends for all Select Board members to \$4,999 and to institute \$4,999 stipends for members of the School Committee as well by July 1, 2029.

## Bylaw: Revise a By-law that prohibits members of the Advisory Committee from also serving as a member of any standing Board or Committee having charge of the expenditure of money. (Article 10)

Approved (Yes-222; No-5; Abstain-10)

The Committee on Town Organization and Structure (CTOS) recommends revising Chapter 2.2.1 of the General By-law to revise and clarify which Town officials would be allowed to serve on the Advisory Committee. Article 10 would only prohibit elected Town officials other than Town Meeting members or constables from also serving on the Advisory Committee. Members of all other Town boards, committees and commissions could serve on the Advisory Committee, and vice versa.

Clarify an ambiguous by-law and update it to allow the various appointing authorities, primarily the Moderator and the Select Board, the flexibility to appoint the best candidates to Brookline's various boards, committees and commissions, and to the Advisory Committee.

## Bylaw: Transparency of public record request and responses (Article 12)

Approved (Yes-234; No-0; Abstain-5)

The public has a right to know what Public Records are being requested of the Town, and how quickly, forthrightly, and comprehensively the Town is responding to those requests. The Town of Brookline has chosen not to make neither Public Records requests nor responses publicly available, despite the software's capability of doing so. This bylaw would require that both be made publicly available on a timely basis, and have Brookline join other municipalities including Newton and Framingham (which uses the same software provider as Brookline) that have already enacted these transparency measures.

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## Special Town Meeting

### Article 1 - Chestnut Hill Commercial Overlay Zoning District

Approved (Yes-217; No-20; Abstain-5)

Create a zoning district in the Chestnut Hill area of Brookline on each side of Boylston St (Route 9) north and four districts south of Boylston St for extensive commercial and residential development. The first order of business was a vote on the Advisory Committee's amended version of Article 1 that would have removed the Transit Oriented Mixed-Use (TOM) sub-district from the larger overlay. The TOM is the triangular shaped district at the Northwest corner of Boylston and Hammond (CVS, several two-family homes, and a segment of the Start Market parking lot. The rest of the commercial overlay is south of Rt. 9. This amendment did not pass. The Select Board's version of this Article that includes all four districts in the Overlay Zone was approved.

### Article 2 - Authorization for Agreements

Approved (Yes-232; No-6; Abstain-5)

Authorize the Select Board to sign Memoranda of Understanding documents with property developers to officially initiate the project described and approved in Article 1.

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## **Annual Town Meeting (Continued)**

### **Bylaw: Require CTO&S to Review Government Organization and Structure (Article 11)**

Approved (Yes-233; No-1; Abstain-4)

Perform a decennial review by the Committee on Town Organization and Structure (CTO&S), a body acting as a Moderator-Appointed-Committee of the structure of Town government. The first review will commence in Fiscal Year 2030.

### **Bylaw: Prohibit Civil Immigration Enforcement Activities on Town Property (Article 17)**

Approved (Yes-193; No-35; Abstain-12)

Create a new By-Law restricting the use of Town facilities that, assuming it is approved by the Attorney General's Office, will codify key portions of a Proclamation of the Select Board. That Proclamation performs the following actions:

1. Bars anyone from using any Town facilities as a staging area, processing location, operations base, or the like for any civil immigration enforcement;
2. Declares nonpublic spaces of public buildings to be off-limits to any civil immigration enforcement activity absent a judicial warrant or court order;
3. Require Town employees to document and notify the Town Administrator of any such violations;
4. Declares that violation of this By-Law shall be considered to be civil in nature.

### **Resolution: Memorialize the Town's Resolve against voluntary cooperation with ICE or organizations affiliated with ICE (Article 25)**

Approved (Yes-224; No-13; Abstain-5)

The Resolution (non-binding) provides the following provisions: condemning federal actions that target communities on the basis of race, ethnicity, language or political preferences, calls the state to cease collaboration with ICE and determine if Brookline should remain a member of the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC). Approval of this Resolution will generate a Study Committee to consider what future decisions about BRIC shall be made by Brookline.

## Bylaw: Require Two Additional Office Hours in the Office of the Town Clerk (Article 13)

Approved (Yes-178; No-51; Abstain-5)

Require the Town Clerk Office to be open in the evening two hours each week to allow citizens to avail themselves of the services of the Office. The main motion (Advisory Committee Version) to study the issue and bring back a proposal to a future Town Meeting was approved.

## Bylaw: Amend Zoning Bylaw related to ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) and Bring Brookline into Alignment with State Law (Article 14)

Approved (Yes-233; No-1; Abstain-1)

Comply with current state law that requires each municipality to align with the Massachusetts Affordable Homes Act (House Bill H.4977) and EOHLC's Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Unit regulation (760 CMR 71.00) by right.

## Bylaw: Amend Zoning Bylaw related to Restore the more Permissive Threshold (Article 15)

Approved (Yes-195; No-32; Abstain-6)

Amend the inclusionary zoning provisions of the Zoning Bylaw to increase from 11 to 20 units the threshold at which a project no longer retains the option of making a payment to the Town's Affordable Housing Trust Fund in lieu of providing the required units on site. Make multifamily projects eligible to choose to make cash-in-lieu payments rather than creating on-site affordable housing units. This would increase payments into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). This could also reduce the administrative burden on town staff to track "onesie" and "twosie" affordable units, though eventually the AHTF would support other projects that would need to be tracked.

## Resolution: Annual Commemoration of 9/11 and a Memorial to all those from Brookline, MA who died that day (Article 20)

Approved (Yes-218; No-0; Abstain-5)

This resolution asks the Town to:

1. Commit to erecting a physical memorial in honor of those individuals with ties to Brookline who lost their lives as a result of the events of 9/11/2001 (“the Memorial”) and;
2. That the Select Board establish an Official Annual Town-wide 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony (“the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony”) and;
3. That the Select Board form a 9/11 Memorial Advisory Committee (a) to study and make recommendations in a report to the Select Board about the design, location, funding, and other aspects of the creation of said Memorial and (b) to plan and coordinate the annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony.

## Resolution: Express support for a state health care system that provides access to universal, affordable, and accessible health care for all residents and reduces costs for municipalities. (Article 21)

Approved (Yes-166; No-49; Abstain-3)

This Resolution enjoins the Town to urge the Commonwealth to develop and establish a state health care system that provides access to universal, affordable, and accessible health care for all residents and reduces costs. If approved, the Town would communicate its support of such a state health care system to its State Representatives and State Senator.

## Resolution: Support modernization of Proposition 2-1/2 (Article 22)

Approved (Yes-166; No-49; Abstain-3)

This Resolution asks that:

1. Town Administrator, Select Board, and/or Town Staff evaluate the utility and possibility of constructing a Regional Core Services Municipal Cost Index (the Index); and
2. That Town Meeting recommends the Index incorporate but not be limited to employee compensation (salaries, benefits, steps, lanes, vacation, etc.), capital

improvements (road repair, facilities construction, etc.), utilities, and other significant costs; and

3. That Town Meeting urges the Select Board, the Town Administrator, and/or Town Staff to coordinate with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for the creation of the Index and to enlist the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Collins Center, or any other educational institutions for assistance in gathering and creating a viable Regional Core Services Municipal Cost Index that could be updated on a regular basis for use by Brookline, other municipalities in Massachusetts, and by Massachusetts executive and legislative officials in establishing fiscal policy.

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