

Special Town Meeting
 Monday, November 17, 2014 at 7:00 PM
 Douglas High School Auditorium

Message from the Finance Committee

The Special Town Meeting to be held on November 17, 2014 has eleven articles on the warrant. The first seven articles propose to make transfers and adjustments to the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget that was passed at Town Meeting last May. The eighth article offers to continue to fund the economic development initiative that the town approved in the fall of 2013. The ninth article deals with the acceptance of the Strong Chief Law for our town’s Fire Department. Article ten considers a land purchase by the town and article eleven was submitted by petitioners requesting restrictions on the scheduling of youth activities on Sunday mornings.

Below is a further description of the articles with recommendations by the Finance Committee. Recommendations were not given for Articles 9 & 11 as they were deemed non-financial in nature by the committee.

The Finance Committee strongly encourages your attendance and participation at the upcoming Town Meeting.

- Article 1. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Transfers/Amendments**
- Article 2. Transfer from Free Cash to Stabilization Account (Ambulance Payment)**
- Article 3. Transfer from Free Cash to Stabilization Account (Auction Proceeds)**
- Article 4. Transfer from Davis Street-Gleason Court Water Loop Project to Stabilization Account**
- Article 5. Transfer from Free Cash to OPEB Account**
- Article 6. Waterways-Douglas Dive Rescue Team Account**
- Article 7. Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Budgetary Adjustments**
- Article 8. Economic Development Initiative**
- Article 9. Acceptance of Strong Chief – Fire Department**
- Article 10. Purchase of Property Located at 19 Main Street**
- Article 11. *By Petition - In Support of Strong Families for Responsible Sports Scheduling***

Article 1. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Transfers/Amendments

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds such sums of money as are necessary to fund the following amendments to Article 2 of the Annual Town Meeting of May 5, 2014:

Increase Selectmen’s Expense by	\$3,000
Increase Ambulance Wages by	\$115,000
Increase Debt Expense by	\$228,650
Increase Information Management Wages by	\$3,000
Increase Treasurer/Collector Wages by	\$3,000
Increase School Department Personnel/Expenses by	\$32,000
Increase Municipal Building Expenses by	\$10,000
Increase Highway Maintenance Expense by	\$11,500
Increase BVT. High School Assessment by	\$11,227
Decrease Town Clerk Expenses by	(\$4,000)
Decrease Highway Wages by	(\$6,500)

Or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This article will make adjustments to certain budgets in the FY15 budget. Revenues to fund these changes will be raised and appropriated, and transferred from available funds.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 2. Transfer from Free Cash to the Stabilization Account (Ambulance Payment)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$5,775** from Free Cash to the Stabilization Account, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This amount represents remaining funds in the Ambulance Account at the close of FY2014. These funds are being transferred to the stabilization account to go towards the purchase of the town's newest ambulance.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 3. Transfer from Free Cash to Stabilization Account (Land Auction Proceeds)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$133,000** from Free Cash to the Stabilization Account, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: A portion of the proceeds of the Land Auction held by the Town are being transferred into the Stabilization Account.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 4. Transfer from Davis Street-Gleason Court Water Loop Project to Stabilization Account

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$17,067** from Article 11 of the Annual Town Meeting of May 7, 2012 (Davis Street – Gleason Court Water Loop) to the Stabilization Account, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: The remaining amount from the completed Water Loop project is being returned to the Stabilization account.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 5. Transfer from Free Cash to the OPEB Account

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$33,500** from Free Cash to the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Account, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: These funds represent a portion of the remaining balance of the Health Insurance Account at the close of FY14. The funding of this account is being strongly recommended by our Auditors and Bonding Agencies.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 6. Waterways-Douglas Dive Rescue Team Account

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$6,000** from the Waterways Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Account to a Waterway Dive Rescue Team Account for the purpose of paying costs associated with the purchase of supplies, equipment and training, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: The Town reserves 1/2 of the Boat Excise tax revenue received. Funds from this account are being transferred to the Waterways Dive Rescue Account.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 7. Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget Transfers/Amendments

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$50,000** from retained earnings, to fund the following amendment to Article 5 of the Annual Town Meeting of May 5, 2014:

Increase Water/Sewer Capital Outlay by	\$19,000
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Or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This article will make adjustments to the Water/Sewer Enterprise FY15 budget as well as fund unexpected projects.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 8. Economic Development Initiative

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of **\$25,000** to pay for consultants for planning, grant writing, and other services associated with economic development in the Town of Douglas, under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This funds a comprehensive review of current commercial and industrial zoned parcels by a professional management team. It will provide the Town with facts and describe possible goals for development. This will allow the town to make important decisions relating to Commercial/Industrial Development.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 9. Acceptance of Strong Chief – Fire Department

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws ,Chapter 48, Sections 42, 43, and 44 establishing a Fire Department under the control of the officer known as the Chief of the Department, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This broadens the authority of the Fire Chief, including the generation of Policy recommendations for the Fire/Ambulance Department; the Chief will be solely responsible for the Policies under this law.

Finance Committee voted to give no recommendation since this should have no financial impact.

Article 10. Purchase of Property Located at 19 Main Street

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of **\$70,000** to purchase the property located at 19 Main Street, and as further described in a filing on file in the office of the Town Clerk, or take any other action related thereto.

Explanation: This property is surrounded by Town-owned land; because of this, it is a potentially valuable asset for the Town. The cost of acquiring the property is minimal and lower than the appraised and assessed values.

Finance Committee recommends.

Article 11. By Petition - In Support of Strong Families for Responsible Sports Scheduling

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following article – submitted by Petition:

IN SUPPORT OF STRONG FAMILIES FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORTS SCHEDULING We, the voting citizenry of Douglas, MA do hereby formally petition our local town government board of selectmen and town officials to add a binding vote question to the Special town meeting warrant scheduled for November 17, 2014 which is supporting strong families in our town by requiring the creation of a town bylaw which acts by:

- 1: Prohibiting the scheduling of any “regularly scheduled” town-sponsored school sporting or other activities between the hours of 8 am to 12 noon on any given Sunday throughout the year. To be enacted by the school committee or responsible town officials.
2. Prohibiting any “regularly scheduled” private children’s sports or other private children’s organizations to use the town-owned land or facilities to conduct children’s sports games or children’s activities on any given Sunday throughout the year between 8 am and 12 noon on Sundays. To be enacted by the recreation committee or responsible town officials.

In the context of this petition, “children’s sports or activities” are defined as any gathering or activity that is specifically designed or designated for participation by youth from the ages of <1 to <18 years old, or put more broadly designed for any in those groups who have not yet attained graduation from secondary school to include any “organized” children’s activities. This would not prohibit the un-organized or random use by citizens of any age, at any time according to the town hours of operation but definitely does not allow for “voluntary practices” or “captains practices”. “regularly scheduled” means any regular season events including playoffs, games and practices or other activities which are specifically organized for children. It does not include specially designated annual events such as tournaments and multi-town, county, state or country sponsored organized children’s competitions.

Explanation: Self-explanatory by proponent.

Finance Committee voted to give no recommendation since this should have no financial impact.

Message from the Town Moderator

The Douglas Finance Committee currently has two open spots. If you or someone you know would be a good addition to this very important committee, please visit our Town Website, Douglasma.org or call The Board of Selectman's office to fill out an application.

One of these positions was opened up with the recent resignation of the Finance Committee Chair, Todd Bari. I would really like to point out that Mr. Bari was an amazing asset to this committee and the town. He put in multiple terms during what has been an extremely difficult fiscal time for our community. He approached the position with professionalism, integrity, and intelligence. The town is better for having him.

It is now time for others to step up. We are all busy, every one of us has time commitments such as jobs, kids, hobbies, etc. The pulls on our time are many. I am asking you to find a way to be involved in making your community a better place, as Todd has done. It doesn't have to be Finance Committee, but I promise if you raise your hand and say I want to help, there is a good fit for your talents in town.

Further, I want you to know I am here to help. If you have questions about how Town Meeting is run, or anything about the process, please let me know. I may not always have the answer, but I will always do my best to find out what the answer is!

Thank you!

- Keith Menard, Town Moderator of Douglas

ARRIVE EARLY, it takes time to check in!

Please bring this flyer with you to Town Meeting.



Douglas
29 Depot Street
Douglas, MA 01516



**CURRENT RESIDENT
DOUGLAS, MA 01516**

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Monday, November 17, 2014
Douglas High School Auditorium**