



**Town of Otis, Massachusetts
Annual Town Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2022**

Selectboard: Larry Southard Chair, Gary Thomas, Therese Gould
Finance Board: Therese Gould Chair, Heather Gray, Absent Jill Moretz
Moderator: Blake Middleton
Town Administrator: Brandi Page
Town Clerk: Lyn O'Brien
Town Counsel: Jeremia Pollard
Board of Registrars: Marjorie Middleton, Emily Piacquadio, Absent Jill Moretz

Total Registered Voters: 1254
Total Registered Voters in Attendance: 66

Meeting called to order by the Moderator at 7:00 pm in the Otis Town Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

A moment of silence was held for those who have passed away.

The Moderator asked everyone to use the microphone and direct questions to the Moderator.
Voters will need to hold up their yellow card to vote and to be recognized.

The Moderator stated this is his last term.

The Moderator appointed Marjorie Middleton and Emily Piacquadio as counters.

The Moderator confirmed with the Town Clerk a quorum was present.

A motion was made to dispense with the reading of the remainder of the warrant and proceed to act on Article 1.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 1: Town Reports

To receive the reports of the various Town Officers and act thereon.

A motion was made to accept Article 1.

The motion was seconded.

Article 1 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 2: General Fund Operating Budget

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate such money as may be necessary to defray the Town's expenses for this fiscal year. See appropriations list attached at end of Warrant. \$5,978,732.06

A motion was made to accept Article 2 unanimously.

The motion was seconded.

Article 2 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 3: Revolving Funds

There are hereby established in the Town of Otis pursuant to the provisions of G.L. Ch. 44, 53E 1/2, the following Revolving Funds:

Plumbing/Gas	Fees & Charges for Plumbing/Gas Inspections
Wire Inspector	Fees & Charges for Wire Inspections
Fire Department Inspections	Fees & Charges for Fire Inspections
Sanitation Inspector	Fees & Charges for Sanitation Inspections
Recreation Commission	Fees & Charges for Recreation Programs
Demolition Debris Removal	Fees & Charges for Transfer Station Demolition Debris
Cemetery	Fees & Charges for Cemetery Commission Expenses
Tax Title	Fees & Charges for Tax Title Expenses

Section II: Expenditures from each revolving fund set forth herein shall be subject to the limitation established by Town Meeting or any increase therein as may be authorized in accordance with G.L. Ch. 44, 53E 1/2 .

Plumbing & Gas Inspector	\$15,000.00
Wire Inspector	\$15,000.00
Fire Department Inspections	\$6,000.00
Sanitation Inspector	\$9,000.00
Recreation Commission	\$5,000.00
Demolition Debris Removal	\$25,000.00
Cemetery	\$2,000.00
Tax Title	\$10,000.00

A motion was made to accept Article 3.

The motion was seconded.

Article 3 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4: Waste Water Enterprise Fund

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$68,400.00 for the operation and maintenance of the municipal sewer system and to meet the appropriation, transfer funds from the sewer user fees.

A motion was made to accept Article 4.

The motion was seconded.

Article 4 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 5: Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$174,540.00 for the purpose of paying the principal and interest due in fiscal 2023 for the John Deere Grader and the KME Fire Truck, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 5.

The motion was seconded.

Article 5 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6: Wind Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$430,572.50 in fiscal 2023 for paying the principal and interest for the Wind Project Bond; funds to be transferred from the Wind Municipal Light Plant.

A motion was made to accept Article 6.

The motion was seconded.

Article 6 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 7: Broadband Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$212,000.00 for paying the principal and interest due in fiscal 2023 on funds borrowed for the Otis Fiber Bond; funds to be transferred from the Wind Municipal Light Plant.

A motion was made to accept Article 7.

The motion was seconded.

Article 7 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8: Road Repair and Paving

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of repairing and paving portions of Reservoir Road and Algeria Road including costs incidental and related thereto, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum equally from Free Cash (\$250,000) and Stabilization (\$250,000).

2/3 vote required

A motion was made to accept Article 8.

The motion was seconded.

Article 8 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 9: Town Ways and Bridges-CH90

To see if the Town will vote to accept any and all funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Transportation (Mass DOT), under provisions of Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair and construction of Town ways and bridges.

A motion was made to accept Article 9.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: What is the amount? \$177,398.00

Article 9 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 10: Maintenance Truck

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$70,000 for the purpose of purchasing a truck for the maintenance department, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 10.

The motion was seconded.

Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: Waste Water/Water Operator Truck

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$35,000 for the purpose of purchasing a truck for the Waste Water/Water Operator, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash-

A motion was made to accept Article 11.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: Didn't we buy a new highway truck last year and transfer the old one to Waste Water? Brandi explained we did purchase a new highway truck and just took possession of it 2 months ago. Keith has been using the old waste water truck and he just took possession of the old highway truck. Both of those trucks are in such bad repair that they will both go to surplus.

Article 11 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12: Fire Proof File Cabinet

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,000 for the purpose of purchasing the Town Clerk a fire proof file cabinet, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 12.

The motion was seconded.

Article 12 passed.

ARTICLE 13: Mass Historic Grant Matching Funds

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$25,868 for the purpose of matching the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Grant awarded for the East Otis School House in the amount of \$101,500.00, said sum from Free Cash. In addition to the Town's contribution, The Otis Preservation Trust will transfer \$15,000 to the Town.

A motion was made to accept Article 13.

The motion was seconded.

Article 13 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 14: St. Paul's Building Use

To see if the Town will vote to accept the use of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, which was transferred to Town ownership in November, 2019 as a center for the community's use for social, cultural and educational purposes.

A motion was made to accept Article 14.

The motion was seconded.

Article 14 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 15: Sandisfield Citizen Petition

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following petition which amends the Regional School District Agreement by adding the following provision: "All motions on Committee business shall be decided by a majority vote of the quorum in attendance, unless otherwise required by law, provided that at least one Committee member from each town votes on the prevailing side of any such motion. This should apply to setting the agendas for future meetings as well."

This article is not supported by the Selectboard

A motion was made to accept Article 15.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: What does prevailing mean? One member from the other town needs to be part of the majority. Therese Gould explained the Selectboard does not support this because the school committee is to represent the school and the children in it. They are not elected to represent the town.

Jessica Drenga, School Committee member, stated the issue is based on population and Otis has 4 members and Sandisfield has 3. A voter added the towns agreed on this 25 years ago based on population.

Carol Lombardo, School Committee Chair, expressed her concerns and hope for the School Committees from both towns to work together for the best interest of the school.

Article 15 failed; defeated unanimously.

ARTICLE 16: Resolution In Support of the Fair Share Amendment

To see if the Town will vote to support the following petition;

WHEREAS, In June of 2021, with a vote of 159 in favor and 41 opposed, the Massachusetts Legislature's Constitutional Convention voted to place the Fair Share Amendment on the November, 2022 state wide ballot; and

WHEREAS, To help all families and build a stronger economy for everyone, we must have quality public education, including our public colleges and universities; and safe and reliable public transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, We must make long term investments in public education to help students academically, socially, and emotionally, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, We must reduce tuition and fees charged in our public education institutions in order to make higher education affordable and reduce student debt; and

WHEREAS, We have a backlog of neglected and substantially impaired public transportation infrastructure in need of repair and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, We must have safe, modern, and reliable public transportation infrastructure including roads, bridges, trains, buses, and trail ways for biking and walking; and

WHEREAS, Additional state revenue is needed to improve public schools, Pre-K through 12, and make higher public education more affordable, and reinvest in our public transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, Massachusetts needed additional investment in public education and transportation infrastructure to ensure a more equitable and long lasting economy for everyone; and

WHEREAS, Our highest income residents pay a lower share of their income in state and local taxes than the majority of taxpayers;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That during the 2022 Otis Annual Town Meeting residents of Otis discuss and show support for the adoption of the proposed Fair Share Amendment that would create an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million

dollars and dedicate these funds raised by this tax for quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of public roads, bridges and public transportation.

A motion was made to accept Article 16 as published in the warrant.

The motion was seconded.

Article 16 passed, 9 opposed.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn O'Brien, Town Clerk