



**Article 1.** This is the election of officers for the ensuing year. (Page 208) Tuesday April 30<sup>th</sup> 7 AM – 8 PM CCC

**Article 2.** This is the time for town committees to make oral reports to the Town Meeting. Reports are available on-line at <http://www.chilmarkma.gov>

**Article 3.** This asks for your permission to fund the annual operating budget of the town. These amounts are printed in the Town Report on pages 171.

**Article 4.** This is our annual contribution to a maintenance and upgrade account for the Community Center that is jointly funded by the Chilmark Town Affairs Council. *There is a typographical error in this article, it will need to be amended on the floor to “transfer from available funds in the treasury” instead of from “General Fund Account 145-9291-5700” as was the source last year.*

**Article 5.** This is a \$40,000 Reserve Fund that is controlled by the FINCOM to pay for emergency or unanticipated expenses during the fiscal year. It is created each year for the ensuing budget cycle.

**Article 6.** The County Pest Management program has been used by the town around Menemsha Harbor & the Chilmark School and is available to the public on a fee-basis. All schools are mandated by the state to have an Integrated Pest Management Plan. The county program has supported the island towns and schools by providing services at no cost. The county has asked the towns to take over the funding of the Pest Management program. This year the towns are asked to fund 100% of the cost to provide this service.

**Article 7.** The Dukes County Health Council created the Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP) in 1999 because of the high number of medically uninsured people on Martha’s Vineyard. People who live on the Island were twice as likely as other Massachusetts residents not to have health insurance, including children. The goal of the VHCAP is to assist residents of Martha’s Vineyard to obtain affordable, high-quality health care. The VHCAP is a program of Dukes County in partnership With Island Health, Inc. and is housed on county property. It is funded by the towns using the 50% population & 50% Equalized Valuation formula requested by Chilmark.

**Article 8.** This is our regular annual contribution to the town’s savings account to replace old fire engines. Once put into the Stabilization Fund, it requires a two-thirds vote to spend these funds in the future. This is a practice that helps to stabilize the tax rate and maintain our high-bond rating. We try to do this every year when possible. This requires a two-thirds vote.

**Article 9.** This is our fifth year putting money aside to fund the future health care cost of our retirees. We have over \$430,000 invested in a regionally managed trust fund. This is a practice that helps to maintain our high-bond rating. We are planning on putting another \$50,000 in this trust at the Special Town Meeting this fall. *The Department of Revenue informed us Thursday that “Free Cash” was lower than expected because tax revenue collected in August 2012 was not allowed to be counted towards FY12 revenue. This article will return at the fall Special Town Meeting to be fully funded at \$100,000.*

**Article 10.** The town had a plan on repaving One Mile a Year in place so that over 20 years we would repave all our public roads. We stopped a few years ago when no roads were in terrible condition and the state stopped providing chapter 90 road funds. As the price of oil skyrocketed, so did the price of paving. The Superintendent of Streets requested paving projects in each of the last 3 years and we deferred the work into the future. We are now proposing to repair ½ of Tabor House Road starting at the North Road end.

**Article 11.** This is critical infrastructure for Chilmark as the sole access to Menemsha. This article would repave a section of North Road beginning near DH’s Hill Road, down to the Homeport side of the intersection with Basin Road. While I grew up calling it Menemsha Hill, the Moderator corrected me. It is DH’s Hill.

*Future road projects expected to be next in line are: the other ½ of Tabor House Road, and Sections of Middle Road above Keith’s Farm and West of Meeting House Road.*

**Article 12.** Last year the parking lines were difficult to see and we were told that parking rules might be unenforceable. So we need to freshen up the paint. But since the Menemsha Parking lot was laid out 20 years ago by a group of local volunteers, we are currently attempting to redesign the layout with the help of the MV Commission staff.

- Article 13.** The town has been using the same tax assessing software since the mid-eighties. That, and the low number of comparable sales, contributed to the unnecessary obstacles which directly delayed the town's ability to issue our tax bills in a timely manner this year. We hope to purchase new software that is more understood by the state and provides our assessors with the necessary upgrades. We are purchasing this now to be ready next year for the beginning of a new round of revaluation that you will be asked to fund at the Special Town Meeting in the fall.
- Article 14.** **We need to amend this to be "FY2014".** This is the article we started voting on at the fall special town meetings, and on the advice of the state, it was moved to the Annual Town Meeting every year. It allows the Town Meeting to access the CPA funds collected in the fiscal year, rather than delaying that access by a year. It is based on the Community Preservation Committee's estimate for FY 2014. This does not affect our tax rate.
- Article 15.** This would spend CPA funds to continue the Community Preservation Committee's program of restoring artifacts and documents owned by the MV Museum.
- Article 16.** This would spend CPA funds to continue the Community Preservation Committee's program of restoring the windows in the County Courthouse in Edgartown.
- Article 17.** This would equip our second fire engine with the same units used by all the other fire departments on the island allowing for better mutual aid and safer fire suppression operations.
- Article 18.** PPE is the safety clothing and gear each fire fighter must have; It includes the jacket and pants called "bunker gear", gloves, nomex hood, fire boots, eye protection, and a helmet at the minimum level.
- Article 19.** During the wrap up of the West Dock Pier Connector construction we needed to hire a plumber to make the final connections and repair a line damaged by the fire. This contractor helped us out at the last minute with his crew and then didn't send us a bill for the work for many months. We owe the plumber for his good work and timely assistance.
- Article 20.** For the past few years, as we have made incremental changes to the town's zoning, the Planning Board has been asked by members of the public to take a complete look at our zoning bylaws and regulations. With changes in various technologies, is the town doing the best it can? We hope to review this and more with the help of the public and consultants.
- Article 21.** The police department has a 2011 Ford Expedition as a marked patrol unit, a 2010 Ford Explorer, and 2005 & 2006 Ford Crown Victoria marked police cruisers. The two sedans have approximately 150,000 miles on each and are at the end of their useful lives. This article would replace one of them.
- Article 22.** This is the annual cost for Chilmark to participate in the special response team, the drug task force and other island wide cooperative law enforcement efforts.
- Article 23.** This would mostly re-shingle the front of the police station. It is requested by the Police Chief and Town Custodian.
- Article 24.** The current copier provides copy, fax and document printing for the town hall and other departments. It is over six years old and spends much of its time lately jamming. This brings any project or meeting preparation to a standstill.
- Article 25.** Chilmark is part of the Tri Town Ambulance service. We have three ambulances; one stationed in each town. Two of the ambulances have been purchased by the towns and the third was given by the federal government to the Tribe who donated it to us. The three towns have historically split the cost of a new ambulance in equal thirds. This article will be authorizing the use of funds from the ambulance revenue to pay for a portion of a new ambulance. The remaining balance will be split between the three towns (next article).
- Article 26.** This would fund Chilmark's third of the balance remaining to purchase and equip the new ambulance. We expect the need to replace another ambulance within two years. After that, Tri Town has begun a 15 year capital plan for the replacement of their three ambulances and two chase-vehicles. Once a plan is accepted by the FINCOM and Selectmen, I hope to start a third Stabilization Account for Tri Town Ambulance like West Tisbury has had for a number of years.
- Article 27.** This would use money from the ambulance revenues to provide the local match required for Tri Town to receive three advanced life support defibrillators as part of an island wide grant.

- Article 28.** When the Town Hall was renovated in 2003, we chose to not replace the existing shingles on the old part of the building and just repaint. It is time to replace them. This would also address the infrequent but stubbornly persistent leak above the new windows facing Beetlebung Corners. It is requested by the Town Custodian.
- Article 29.** This would fund Chilmark's share of the Schematic Design Phase of the new Superintendent's building on the high school campus. There would be a further vote to authorize work beyond that point.
- Article 30.** The town has sent out its real estate tax bills twice a year, with due dates of November 1 and May 1 most years. This is called "Semi-Annual". In recent years we have had to borrow internally to pay quarterly assessment when the tax bills didn't go out at their usual time and income was delayed. When we had large amounts of free cash on the books this was easy. As the budgets have been tightened and the economy has shrunk, our free cash has too. This year when the state failed to approve our tax rate for months, we had to issue preliminary tax bills in the fall and then were delayed again by the state until June. This caused us to borrow in anticipation of revenue and to not be able to count revenue collected in late August as part of FY12. When the Treasurer asked to budget \$3,000 for annual borrowing costs, we reexamined our options. We found that a recent law change allowed towns to issue "Semi-Annual Preliminary" tax bills every year if they adopted that provision. We compared this to issuing "Quarterly" tax bills. We found that the new option would help us avoid borrowing in the fall and would not create additional hard and soft costs that "Quarterly" bills would. It was also determined that "Quarterly" billing would not prevent our borrowing in the fall to cover assessments.

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→ *State Supplied Explanation from IGR 12-203 posted during budget hearings* ←

**TOWN OF CHILMARK  
PROPOSAL TO CHANGE TAX BILLING FY2014**

**TAXPAYER INFORMATION ON PRELIMINARY TAX PAYMENT SYSTEM**

Your community is discussing the adoption of a new semi-annual preliminary tax payment system, which will affect your property tax bills for Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014). This enclosure explains how this new system will work.

**BENEFITS FROM THE NEW SYSTEM**

Under the old system, property tax payments were due twice a year, ideally November 1 and May 1. In practice, communities frequently issued their tax bills at different times during the year. As a result, taxpayers were often uncertain when their bills would be issued and had difficulty in planning their payments. Also, communities were forced to borrow money to have sufficient funds to meet their bills.

The new preliminary billing system has been shown in a number of other Massachusetts communities to provide the following advantages:

- Greater certainty in payment due dates for taxpayers.
- More even distribution of income for cities and towns.
- Significant reduction -- even elimination -- of costly municipal borrowing in anticipation of tax revenues.

**HOW PRELIMINARY TAX PAYMENT SYSTEM WILL WORK**

Under the preliminary tax payment system, you will be sent a preliminary tax bill each year by July 1.

Your preliminary tax will be based on the adjusted net tax owed (including any betterments, special assessments and other charges added to the tax) on your property for the prior fiscal year and as a general rule will be no more than half (50%) of that amount. Adjustments are made for any abatements or exemptions granted in the prior year, and any tax increases allowed under Proposition 2½ for the current fiscal year. Your preliminary tax will be payable in a single installment due on October 1.

**Example: If your Fiscal Year 2013 tax was \$2000 (including any betterments, special assessments and other charges added to the tax), and you were granted an abatement of \$400, your FY13 net tax due was \$1600. After a tax increase adjustment of 2.5%, your adjusted FY13 net tax due would be \$1640 and your Fiscal Year 2014 preliminary tax would in most instances be no more than \$820. This \$820 would be payable in a**

## single installment due on October 1, 2013.

If for some reason preliminary tax bills were mailed after August 1, you would have until November 1 (or 30 days after the bills are mailed, if later) to pay the entire \$820.

Your actual tax bill will then be sent to you on or about December 31. This bill will show the assessed valuation of your property, the tax rate and the amount of property taxes you owe for the fiscal year, including any betterments, special assessments or other charges that are added to the tax. The tax bill will also show the amount of the preliminary tax billed earlier as a credit against your actual tax for the year. The balance of your tax must be paid by April 1.

**Example: If your actual Fiscal Year 2013 tax bill is \$2100 and you had previously been billed \$820 in preliminary taxes for the year, you would have a remaining balance of \$1280. This \$1280 balance would be payable on April 1, 2013.**

If for some reason actual tax bills were mailed after December 31, you would have until May 1 (or 30 days after the bills are mailed, if later) to pay the entire balance of \$1280.

## LATE PAYMENTS

Under the preliminary tax payment system, interest on late tax payments will be charged for the number of days that the payment is actually delinquent. For example, if the actual tax is due on April 1 and it is not timely paid, interest will be charged from that date until the date the payment is made.

## ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PRELIMINARY TAX SYSTEM

Will the new system affect the amount of property taxes I pay for the year?

No. The amount you pay is the same under either system. Either way, the amount is based on the valuation of your property and the tax rate. The tax rate reflects the level of taxes needed to fund local budget decisions and must still be within the limits of Proposition 2½.

Will the new system affect my right to seek an abatement or exemption?

No, these rights are unchanged. Once the actual tax bills are mailed, you will still be able to file an abatement application with the assessors if you wish to contest your assessment.

Applications for abatement must be filed on or before April 1, 2014 unless the actual bills are mailed after December 31, 2013. In that case, abatement applications must be filed on or before May 1, 2014, or the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the bills are mailed, whichever is later.

Applications for personal exemptions and the residential exemption must be filed within three months of the date the actual tax bills were mailed. All other exemption applications are due the same date as abatement applications.

If you have additional questions before the Annual Town Meeting, you should contact Tim Carroll at 508-645-2101 [execsec@chilmarkma.gov](mailto:execsec@chilmarkma.gov) or read the state informational guidance release document at <http://www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/publ/igr/2012/igr12-203.pdf>

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**Article 31.** This zoning bylaw seeks to create a new section that addresses the size of residential buildings, requires a special permit process in some cases, and creates living area cap. Please see the Planning Board handout. It requires a 2/3 vote.

**Article 32.** This zoning bylaw seeks to define a detached bedroom, define Total Living Area, and limit the permitted use to one detached bedroom. Please see the Planning Board handout. It requires a 2/3 vote.

*Thank you for attending the 2013 Annual Town Meeting. If you would like to serve on a town committee, please write the Board of Selectmen.*