



Town Administrator's Explanations for Annual Town Meeting - April 23, 2024

ARTICLE 1. To elect the officers and vote on questions on the Official Ballot: April 24 Wednesday 12 – 8 PM

- ARTICLE 2. To hear the reports of the Town Officers and Committees and act thereon. (in the green Town Report)
- ARTICLE 3. This is where you fund the FY25 operating budget (as printed on pages 166-182 in the green Town Report). The budget comes from taxes, except for the Community Preservation Committee that is paid for by CPA surtax & the Tri Town Ambulance budget uses 75% of their calendar year revenues to reduce their requested budget (25% set aside for future capital purchases by the TTA).
- ARTICLE 4. This is our annual contribution to a maintenance and upgrade account for the Community Center. It is jointly funded by the Chilmark Town Affairs Council in lieu of rent for the summer program use of the property. This has doubled from last year.
- ARTICLE 5. This is a Reserve Fund that is controlled by the FINCOM to pay for emergency or unanticipated expenses during the fiscal year. It is created each April at ATM for the ensuing budget cycle starting July 1st.
- ARTICLE 6. This would continue funding the liability carried on our books for the paid sick time and vacation for benefitted employees. Doing this supports our AAA bond rating and is a recommendation of our auditors.
- ARTICLE 7. This is our annual contribution to the Town's general savings account for major expenses. It has been used for capping the landfill, building projects, replacing old fire engines, and paving roads. Once put into the Stabilization Fund, a two-thirds vote is required to spend these funds. This is a practice that helps to stabilize the tax rate and maintain our high (AAA) bond rating.
- ARTICLE 8. This requires a 2/3rd vote and would purchase a Ford Lightning F-150 Electric Vehicle. This would be the first EV for the town and follows on a town meeting discussion the last time the police department purchased a replacement vehicle.
- ARTICLE 9. This requires a 2/3rd vote and would purchase gear & equipment for the new fire engine 121.
- ARTICLE 10. This article allows our town to participate in the Town of Oak Bluffs' grant to assess disaster resilience including access to the island hospital.
- ARTICLE 11. The Opioid Crisis in the United States cost communities and citizens untold amounts. As part of a settlement agreement that we participated in, we are receiving (relatively small) amounts from pharmacy groups. We are obligated by court order to isolate these funds and use them only in support of substance abuse programs. This vote will allow the town to comply with the court order and state laws. The amount listed in "C." needs to be **amended to \$2,994.05** *It is my expectation that the Select Board will authorize the Board of Health to enter into an island-wide memorandum of understanding to use these funds for island programs.*
- ARTICLE 12. This continues our project to fund adult education through the island school system using a vendor.

- ARTICLE 13.** The Dukes County Sheriff operates the Island's Regional 911 center and emergency dispatch. Since its change to a state agency, the Sheriff has been seeking local funding to bridge a budget gap to operate this service. The towns have agreed to a formula to share maintenance costs between the island towns. This is contingent on all six towns' approval.
- ARTICLE 14.** This combines funding for Dukes County Social Services. Chilmark has funded First Stop, Healthy Aging, and CORE for a number of years, SUD and Dukes County Social Service for five years, and the Homelessness Initiative was added two years ago. The last item, contribution to the county operating budget needs to be **amended down to \$13,754.60**. This brings the total down to **\$54,726.60**
- ARTICLE 15.** The town hall PCs are between 6 and 11 years old and are becoming more expensive to maintain than replace.
- ARTICLE 16.** The town hall photocopier/scanner/fax/network printer is reaching five years of service. We try to replace this unit every five years if possible. It has been cheaper to buy and own it for this period than to enter into three-year leases. We won't replace this until we have to, but it may need to happen before the 2025 ATM.
- ARTICLE 17.** The Building Inspector has asked to purchase a Ford Maverick SUV to share with the Facilities Manager. This article is in error. The vehicle requested is a Hybrid and not a plugin or electric vehicle (EV). The current state contract price has risen to \$29,668.35. This article will need to **be amended to change it to a Hybrid vehicle and asking for \$30,000**.
- ARTICLE 18.** This is a request of the Library and Facilities Manager to reduce problems experienced with the library toilets getting clogged.
- ARTICLE 19.** The future use of the old Menemsha School Playground (current Police Station) is being discussed and your input will be welcome. In the meantime, the "big toy" wooden playground equipment is unsafe and considered dangerous.
- ARTICLE 20.** The HVAC at the Menemsha School (Police Station) has reached 15 years in age, and was recommended to be replaced last year.
- ARTICLE 21.** This would continue the Fire Department's purchasing of replacement "bunker gear" worn by firefighters. New NFPA guidelines have been calling for each firefighter to have gear of less than 15 years in age, and those active inside burning buildings to have two sets of personal protective equipment.
- ARTICLE 22.** This would purchase an off road UTV for the North Road Fire Station to provide coverage to that section of town and use the slip-on firefighting equipment funded last year. The Fire Association purchased the first UTV using donations and it is stationed at the Cross Road Fire Station for South Shore rescues.
- ARTICLE 23.** This would provide storage for the Harbor Department and Comfort Station summer operations.
- ARTICLE 24.** This would replace the failing metal rail on the salt marsh side of the Basin Road "bridge".
- ARTICLE 25.** This is a request of the Harbor Master to reduce obstructions in the old pipes to the septic tank, and improve septic flow at the Comfort Station.

- ARTICLE 26.** From the Harbor Master “Complete necessary dock maintenance in excess of our 30K Harbor Pilings line within the Harbor Department Budget. This will include replacing all staircases along Dutcher Dock, replacing the sleepers under the decking on the floating section of the Transient Yacht Dock, replacing one support pile near Crab Creek, and raising the elevation of the Channel Dock.”
- ARTICLE 27.** The State gave the town two solar school zone traffic light assemblies to replace the 20+ year old AC powered units. This would pay a local electrician to install the two solar lights.
- ARTICLE 28.** The Master Plan Sub Committee and the Planning Board made proposals to the Select Board for improvements in Menemsha. The Select Board had public meetings and site visits to the Basin Road area. It was agreed with residents of the area to adjust signage, relocate speed feed-back signs and install traffic tables across Basin Road at the deli and before the bridge with the goals of slowing vehicular traffic and improving pedestrian safety. This would pay for the speed tables and related work to implement some of the recommendations.
- ARTICLE 29.** The town hired a Facilities Manager last year. The first assignment of this position was to survey the town owned buildings and facilities and then create a long-term plan for the major work and regular maintenance needed. While the plan is still being assembled by the Facilities Manager (with assistance from the Building Inspector, Ann Wallace, and vendors) it has identified some large ticket items that will require engineering and designs. This article will create funding for the approved plan in the next fiscal year where the work exceeds the particular department’s budget line. Once the Facilities Manager has completed her draft plan, it will be taken to the Energy Committee for alignment with our 2030/2040 energy aspirations and the 2050 federal guidelines. The proposed plan will be reviewed by the Finance Committee for its financial impact & scheduling. The final adoption will be by the Select Board. All of these are public meetings and you are encouraged to participate.
- ARTICLE 30.** The town has been collecting Rooms Excise tax for many years at 4%. Originally, it was only from the Inns in town. Chilmark was an early adopter of adding the Short Term Rentals to the Inns. These excise funds are collected by the state department of revenue quarterly from homeowners, and remitted to the town during the next quarter.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/room-occupancy-excise-tax>

- *The state’s room occupancy excise tax rate is 5.7%. Note that while the statute provides for a 5% rate, an uncodified surtax adds .7% to that rate.*
- *In addition to the state excise, Massachusetts cities and towns are permitted to charge a local room occupancy excise tax up to 6%*
- *In Barnstable, Nantucket and Dukes Counties an additional 2.75% may be charged for the Cape Cod and Islands Water Protection Fund beginning July 1, 2019. Currently this applies for all Barnstable County municipalities.*
- *Beginning July 1, 2019, for short-term rentals only, cities and towns are permitted to charge an additional community impact fee up to 3% if an operator has more than one property in that locality or is renting an owner-occupied 2 or 3 family house on a short-term rental basis.*

This proposal from the Housing Committee is for the revenue generated by the 2% increase (from 4 to 6%) be annually deposited into the town’s Molly Flender Affordable Housing Trust fund. This would create an annual revenue stream of approximately \$200,000 for Affordable Housing projects, in addition to the annual CPA surtax (60% is approximately \$188,000).

- ARTICLE 31.** This would allocate CPA revenues. These thirteen items were recommended by the relevant committees and subject to a public hearing held by the Community Preservation Committee. This does not affect the tax rate as it spends the CPA surtax.
- ARTICLE 32.** This was submitted to the Select Board on petitions signed by over 100 town voters. It was combined during the warrant writing. “13” creates a town committee with various duties and responsibilities related to tennis court operations. “14” adopts state law allowing the creation of Revolving Funds to receive fees, charges, or receipts from <tennis> programs and allow the committee to expend those revenues subject to state laws, and a not-to-exceed amount voted at annual town meeting each year.
- ARTICLE 33.** This is part of an effort to improve public accessibility and handicapped access to public facilities. The effort is working to make Chilmark a more inclusive community, advance our open space and recreation plan (OSRP), and coordinate with the Dukes County Associate Commissioner for Disabled island report “A Beach within Reach Initiative”. The first improvements being undertaken are to the pathway onto the Menemsha Beach using “MobiMats”. This recycled plastic material has been successful in other cape and island towns/conservation properties to allow wheel chairs and pedestrians beach access. Also planned are improvements to the existing wooden boardwalk, and the purchasing of replacement beach capable wheelchairs and flotation devices.

In May the Select Board will be making annual appointments. Please write the board ASAP if you wish to be reappointed, or appointed new, to any town boards, committees or commissions. townadministrator@chilmarkma.gov

As this evening comes to a close please take a moment to acknowledge the passing of former town board members/volunteers

**Edward “Ted” Mayhew, Beth Flanders Campbell, Jennie Greene,
J. B. Riggs Parker, and Will Parry.**

We appreciate their contributions to our community and hope their examples motivate others to participate in town affairs.

Thank you to

Pamela S. Goff

**for her 41 years as a Conservation Commissioner, 38 years as our Land Bank Commissioner,
and her service as a member of the Select Board**