



OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD

The Finnerty House

One South Main Street, Post Office Box 670

Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670

Telephone: (413) 323-0403 • Facsimile: (413) 323-0494

WARRANT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

May 11, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Hampshire, ss.

GREETING:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn all the Inhabitants of the Town of Belchertown, qualified to vote in elections of Town officers, to meet at the polling places in said Belchertown, designated by the Select Board, to wit:

IN PRECINCTS A, B, C AND D at Belchertown High School gymnasium, 142 Springfield Road, Belchertown, Massachusetts,

on Monday, the 18th day of May A.D. 2026, at eight o'clock in the forenoon, then and there to give in their votes on one ballot to precinct officers of the several polling precincts of said Town for the following officers, to wit:

One (1) Board of Assessors member for three (3) years; One (1) Board of Assessors member for two (2) years; Two (2) Board of Health member for three (3) years; One (1) Housing Authority member for four (4) years; One (1) Moderator for three (3) years; One (1) Planning Board member for five (5) years; Two (2) School Committee members for three (3) years each and One (1) Select Board member for three (3) years.

The polls will open at eight o'clock in the forenoon and close at eight o'clock in the evening.

And you are further required to notify and warn all the Inhabitants of said Belchertown, qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet at the Belchertown High School auditorium at 142 Springfield Road in said Belchertown, on Monday, the 11th day of May, A.D. 2026, at 7:00 p.m., then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

The text in red is explanatory text for each article. It is not part of the official article and its purpose is to provide more context. This text was written by the Town Manager or the person/department that submitted the article for the Select Board to use in reviewing the articles. It is included here to help our residents when they are making their decisions on how to vote at Town Meeting.

Annual House-Keeping Articles

Article 1 To choose the following named officers by nomination: Two (2) Almoners of the Whiting Street and Mrs. Susan M.D. Bridgman Funds, each for one (1) year; and one (1) Trustee of the Calvin Bridgman Fund for three (3) years.

Trust Funds, first established in 1888, with almoners to be voted at ATM:

- 1. Calvin Bridgman High School Fund. Income to be used in support of a high school.*
- 2. Calvin Bridgman Library Fund. Income to be used in support of the public library.*
- 3. Whiting Street Fund. Income to be used for “relief and comfort of worthy poor in Belchertown.”*
- 4. Susan M D Bridgman Poor Fund. Income to benefit the “worthy poor,” inhabitant in Belchertown, with a percentage of prior year interest to be paid to the library each year.*

Article 2 To hear reports of the Officers of the Town and any Committees that may have been appointed by the Town and act thereon.

Approval of this article is necessary to finalize the Annual Town Report, as prepared by all Town Departments, Committees, Boards, and Commissions. This year, the Report is available for download and only a limited number of copies will be printed for distribution upon request.

Article 3 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Assessors to appoint themselves to work in their various departments for the ensuing fiscal year, at hourly rates not exceeding the following:

- Board of Assessors: \$17.50

or take any other action relative thereto.

The approval of this article allows the members of the Board of Assessors to be compensated for work conducted in their official capacity, primarily for site visits and inspections.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 4 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money to be used by the Board of Assessors for legal counsel in resolving court tax cases,

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article authorizes funds to serve as a placeholder for Board of Assessors legal expenses in resolving court tax cases. Additional funds may be transferred as required.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 5 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate a sum of money from free cash in the treasury or any other available fund, for the Reserve Fund for use by the Finance Committee,

or take any other action relative thereto.

The reserve fund is used for unforeseen “emergency” expenses. Departments in need must request and obtain approval from the Finance Committee to access these funds.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 6 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for and accept funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Highway Improvement Program for use on approved town ways,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Funds received through the Massachusetts Highway Improvement Program are authorized by M.G.L. Ch. 90. These funds are used to repair local roadways and to purchase road building equipment. Access to these funds must be approved at Town Meeting, and the spending is overseen by the Town Manager.

Article 7 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Sale of Cemetery Lots Account a sum of money to the Cemetery Lot Development Account,

or take any other action relative thereto.

At the conclusion of each Cemetery lot sold, a portion of the proceeds is retained and returned to the Public Works Department’s Cemetery Division to develop additional space in our cemeteries for future burials. The passage of this article allows the DPW access to those funds.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Budget, Capital and Financial Articles

Article 8 To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries and compensation of all elected officers of the Town, as provided for by Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended; and to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury, sums of money as may be deemed necessary to defray expenses estimated for the ensuing fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 8 contains a series of separate motions, each of which represents a different Town Department budget including the School Department and Capital improvement projects. Details of these budgets are contained in the Finance Committee’s Report. An affirmative vote must be cast on each motion to approve spending in the respective area of the Town for the upcoming fiscal year.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 9 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate from free cash in the treasury a sum of money to the Stabilization Fund,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Each year, a portion of the certified Free Cash is set aside in the Town's Stabilization Account. The projected Balance after the Annual Town Meeting is \$194,003.00 which is at the lower end of the Division of Local Services recommended percentage of our operating budget.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 10 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money to be used by the Belchertown Cultural Council (BCC) for the purpose of providing engaging arts and cultural programming for the Belchertown community,

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article appears on the warrant each year to provide funding for events organized by the Cultural Council.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 11 To see if the Town will raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money to the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Each year, a portion of the certified Free Cash is set aside in the Town's Other Post Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund. The projected Balance after the Annual Town Meeting is \$387,460 which is considerably lower than the Town's estimated liability of upwards to \$30-mil.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 12 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from free cash in the treasury to fund the following one-time and/or capital items and anything incidental or related thereto:

Item #		Amount
1.	Poll Pad and Printer Upgrades	\$14,400.00
2.	SCBA Compressor	\$63,500.00
3.	Robotic Line Painter for Sports Fields	\$49,000.00
4.	IT Network Maintenance	\$21,400.00
5.	LMTH Meeting Rooms Equipment Upgrade	\$8,800.00
6.	LMTH Acoustic Study	\$10,000.00
7.	CHCS Cafeteria HVAC	\$45,000.00
8.	CHMS Auditorium HVAC	\$45,000.00
9.	CDL Class Vehicle Lift	\$113,239.00
10.	BHS Tennis Court Replacement	\$50,000.00
	Total:	\$420,339.00

or take any other action relative thereto.

The Select Board previously agreed to set aside \$420,339 from Free Cash to fund several capital improvement projects in FY-26. The Items under consideration have been recommended by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and the Town Manager.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 13 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the School Department to enter into an agreement to lease/purchase and equip School Department vehicles and equipment to the provisions of G.L. c.44, §21C for a period in excess of three years, and to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money for the first year payment of such agreement,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Under Massachusetts General Laws, any lease or lease purchase agreement of three years or longer in duration must be approved by the voters at Town meeting. Once this is complete, the Town can execute an agreement with the selected vendor for the desired product. This article is seeking authorization for School Department vehicles.

Article 14 To see if the Town will appropriate a sum of money to fund the following capital projects, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be met by borrowing or otherwise provided; to authorize the Select Board or their designee to enter into any agreements and execute all documents necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote,

Item #		Amount
	<u><i>DPW-Buildings and Grounds.:</i></u>	
1.	HVAC Repair - Police Department	\$200,000.00
2.	Repairs - LMH/Town Hall	\$350,000.00
3.	HVAC Replacement – Fire Department	\$200,000.00
4.	Building Repair, HVAC – Senior Center	\$300,000.00
	<u><i>Fire/EMS:</i></u>	
5.	Fire Hose	\$41,400.00
6.	Lucas CPR Devices	\$89,000.00
7.	Cardiac Monitors	\$248,000.00
	<u><i>School Dept.:</i></u>	
8.	HVAC Replacement, BHS	\$300,000.00
9.	Fire Panel, BHS	\$50,000.00
10.	Sidewalk and Curb Repairs, BHS	\$20,000.00
11.	Fire System Replacement, SRE	\$40,000.00
12.	Sidewalk Repairs, CHCS	\$25,000.00
13.	HVAC Replacement, CHCS	\$500,000.00
14.	Replace Burglary System, SRES	\$20,000.00
15.	Asbestos Tile Abatement and Replacement Flooring, JBMS	\$165,000.00
	Total:	\$2,548,400.00

or take any other action relative thereto.

In Fiscal Year 2027, the Town will be making a final payment, in the amount of \$230,281.88 on an existing capital bond. Borrowing for the items listed in this article will allow the Town to maintain its current level of annual debt service and will provide much needed repairs and equipment across many Town Departments and facilities. The Town was advised by the Massachusetts Division of Local Services in 2021 that it should 'maintain a prudent, consistent debt level so that as debt is retired, new debt is issued'.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 15 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund a sum of money to be used for operations of the Belchertown Community Channel for the ensuing fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Public Education Grant Funds (PEG) are received each year, through our Cable Television agreement with Spectrum Northeast, LLC. The Town receives a percentage of the company's gross receipts to use for the operation of the Belchertown Community Channel (BCTV) for Public Education purposes. These funds do not impact the tax rate and are exclusively raised through customer billing.

Endorsed by Finance Committee, Voted 4-0-0

Article 16 To see if the Town will vote, in accordance with G.L. c 40, §5B, to create a special purpose stabilization fund to be known as the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of providing a reserve for capital expenditures, including the repair, replacement, acquisition, or improvement of Town buildings, facilities, infrastructure, vehicles, or equipment, and for any other capital purpose,

or take any other action relative thereto.

This will allow a dedicated funding set-aside for capital projects and one-time expenditures, allowing additional multi-year funding options for larger projects. If approved, any future funds added to the account will require a majority vote to remove.

Personnel Bylaw Amendments

Note: Articles 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 all relate to proposed changes to the Town's Personnel Bylaws. It is expected that there will be a motion to bundle these articles together for purposes of discussion and vote.

Article 17 To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 91 (Personnel) of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Appendix A (Classification-Compensation Plan for Management, Administrative or Professional Exempt Employees), to read as follows, with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~:

Category and Position

Pay Level or Range

Management, Administrative or Professional Exempt

(Effective ~~7-1-2025~~ through ~~6-30-2026~~)

(Effective 7-1-2026 through 6-30-2027)

Annual Town Meeting Warrant – May 11, 2026 CORRECTED 2026.05.01

Director of Public Works	103,721-132,405	106,832-136,377
Fire Department Deputy Chief	90,511-105,041	93,225-108,193
Police Lieutenant	90,511-105,041	93,225-108,193
Director of Information Technology	86,434-110,337	89,027-113,648
Town Planner	86,434-110,337	89,027-113,648
Town Treasurer-Collector	82,318-105,084	84,787-108,236
Town Accountant	82,318-105,084	84,787-108,236
Building Commissioner	82,318-105,084	84,787-108,236
Director of Assessments	82,318-105,084	84,787-108,236
Human Resource Director	82,318-105,084	84,787-108,236
Conservation Administrator	79,152-101,042	81,526-104,073
Council on Aging Executive Director	79,152-101,042	81,526-104,073
Director of Parks & Recreation	79,152-101,042	81,526-104,073
General Manager, BCTV	76,108-97,155	78,391-100,070
Veterans' Agent	76,108-97,155	78,391-100,070

Category and Position

Pay Level or Range

Classified Nonexempt Employees (Effective September 1, 2013)

Teen Center Assistant	2
Council on Aging Van Driver	2
Nutritional Aide	2
Senior Center Aide	2
Building Custodian	3
Department Clerk	3
Secretary to the Conservation Commission	3
Supportive Day Program Assistant	3
Certified Pool Operator/Maintenance	4
Accounting Clerk	4
Assistant Children's Librarian	4
Facility Maintenance/Recreation Specialist	4
Cook and Assistant Elder Nutrition Program Coordinator	4
Police Grants Clerk	4
Council on Aging Receptionist/Transportation Coordinator	5
Library Department Assistant I	5
Animal Control Officer	5
Accounting Department Assistant	5
Assistant Teen Center Coordinator	5
Administrative Secretary to the Select Board Assistant	5
Department Assistant I	5
Library Technician	5
Transfer Station Supervisor	5
Technical Office Assistant – Inspection Services	5
Technical Office Assistant – Planning	5
Technical Office Assistant/Program Manager	5

Technical Office Assistant	5
Aquatic Coordinator	6
Benefits Coordinator	6
Department Assistant II	6
Department Assistant II/Office Manager	6
Department Assistant/Financial	6
Fire Department Administrative Secretary	6
Teen Center Coordinator	6
Computing Department Technical Assistant	6
Elder Nutrition Program Coordinator	6
Social Services/Outreach Assistant	6
Technical Assistant – Inspection Services and Planning	6
Technical Office Assistant – Assessing	6
Supportive Day Program Coordinator	7
Program and Volunteer Coordinator	7
Assistant Town Clerk	7
Assistant Treasurer/Collector	7
Field Reviewer	7
Assistant Building Inspector	7
Assistant Town Accountant	7
Administrative Assistant	7
Assistant Assessor	7
Part-Time Firefighter/Paramedic	7
Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police/Communications Center Director	7
Network Analyst/Administrator	8
Technical Services Librarian	8
Youth Services Librarian	8
Circulation and Reference Librarian	8
Council on Aging Administrative Assistant	8
Executive Secretary to the Select Board and Town Manager	8
Stormwater Coordinator/Assistant Conservation Administrator	8
Social Services/Outreach Coordinator	9
WWTP Operator II	9
Buildings and Grounds Foreman	9
Highway – Working Foreman	9
Assistant Information Technology Director	9
Grants Coordinator/ Purchasing Agent	9
Public Buildings and Grounds Supervisor	10
Highway Division Supervisor	10
WWTP Operations Supervisor	10
Communications Manager	10

Part Time Employees, Annual Salary Schedule

Director of Emergency Management	\$1000 - \$5,000/year
Director of Civil Defense	\$250
Deputy Director of Civil Defense	\$100
Radio Officer, Civil Defense	\$100

Assisting Member, Civil Defense	\$100
Animal Inspector	\$20 \$25 per inspection
Assistant Animal Inspector	\$20 per inspection
Clerk, Board of Registrars (according to MGL c. 41, ~ 19G)	
Assistant Animal Control Officer	\$2.50 per hour on-call pay and \$25 per action
Dog Pound Keeper	\$5 per dog/per day
Plumbing Inspector	\$35 \$45 per inspection
Gas Inspector	\$35 \$45 per inspection
Electrical Inspector	\$35 \$45 per inspection
Assistant Building Inspector	\$30 \$45 per inspection

Part-Time Hourly Schedule

Election Workers	\$8.00 - \$14.00/hr
Meals on Wheels Driver	\$9.50 - \$11.50/hr
Library Page	\$11.00 - \$16.00/hr
Water Safety Instructor	\$13.00 - \$18.00/hr
Election Workers	\$15.00 - \$20.00/hr
Public Works/Maintenance Seasonal Employee	\$15.00 - \$17.00/hr
Parks and Recreation Seasonal Employee	\$15.00 - \$25.00/hr
Program Instructors (Aquatic, Lifeguard, etc.)	\$15.00 - \$25.00/hr
Recreation Department Maintenance	\$15.00 - \$25.00/hr
Sports Official	\$15.00 - \$75.00/game
Lifeguards	\$16.00 - \$26.00/hr
Swim Team Aide	\$17.00 - \$27.00/hr
Secretary/Assistant to Zoning Board of Appeals	\$17.53 - \$22.41/hr
Beach Supervisor	\$18.00 - \$28.00/hr
Swim Team Assistant Coach	\$18.00 - \$28.00/hr
Swim Team Head Coach	\$20.00 - \$30.00/hr

BCTV Part-Time/Stipend Positions

BCTV Production Assistant	\$16.00-\$20.00 per hour
BCTV Web Manager/Station Assistant	\$16.00-\$20.00 per hour
BCTV Camera Operator/Reporter	\$25.00 per event
BCTV Video Editor	\$40.00 per show
BCTV Event Producer	\$75.00 per event

or take any other action relative thereto.

Annually, the town proposes cost of living adjustments for non-union and contracted employees to align with cost of living adjusts that are agreed to in the various collective bargaining agreements.

Article 18 To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 91 (Personnel) of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Appendix B, Weekly Salary Schedule for Classified Employees, by deleting the Table in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

Effective July 1, 2026 to end June 30, 2027

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
1	13.90	14.29	14.68	15.06	15.48	15.93	16.35	16.80	17.27	17.74
2	18.06	18.57	19.08	19.61	20.14	20.69	21.27	21.84	22.45	23.08
3	20.78	21.36	21.94	22.55	23.17	23.80	24.45	25.13	25.82	26.51
4	23.88	24.54	25.22	25.91	26.64	27.37	28.13	28.89	29.69	30.49
5	26.30	27.00	27.75	28.52	29.28	30.10	30.94	31.77	32.68	33.56
6	28.92	29.70	30.51	31.38	32.23	33.10	34.02	34.97	35.91	36.90
7	31.80	32.69	33.57	34.51	35.44	36.42	37.43	38.45	39.51	40.61
8	33.08	33.99	34.91	35.87	36.87	37.88	38.92	40.00	41.09	42.23
9	34.41	35.36	36.31	37.32	38.33	39.40	40.49	41.59	42.74	43.93
10	36.81	37.81	38.86	39.94	41.01	42.16	43.32	44.52	45.74	46.99

or take any other action relative thereto.

Annually, the town proposes cost of living adjustments for non-union and contracted employees to align with cost of living adjusts that are agreed to in the various collective bargaining agreements.

Article 19 To see if the Town will vote to Amend Chapter 91 (Personnel) of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Section 91-6 (Benefits) Paragraph B(2)(a) (Vacation), with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~:

(2) Vacation.

(a) All regular full-time employees and eligible part-time employees covered by this chapter shall be eligible for vacation leave to be credited on their anniversary date of each month as follows:

[1] Less than and including five years' completed service as of the employee's anniversary date of the month, ~~5/6~~ **1 and 1/4** day per full calendar month employed during that twelve-month period (**or 3 weeks**).

[2] More than five through and including 10 years' completed service as of the employee's anniversary date of the month, ~~1 1/4~~ **1 and 2/3** days per full calendar month employed during that twelve-month period (**or 4 weeks**).

[3] More than 10 years' completed service as of the employee's anniversary date of the month, ~~1 2/3~~ **2 and 1/12** days per full calendar month employed during the twelve-month period (**or 5 weeks**).

~~[4] More than 20 years completed service as of the employee's anniversary date, add one day per year over 20 years to a maximum of 25 days at 25 years.~~

or take any other action relative thereto.

This amendment proposes to increase vacation leave accrual rates for all eligible Town employees and to simplify the vacation leave schedule by consolidating it from four tiers to three. The proposed amendment increases accrual rates across all tiers. These changes are intended to bring the Town's vacation benefits in line with comparable municipalities, support the recruitment and retention of qualified employees, and simplify the administration of vacation accrual.

Article 20 To see if the Town will vote to Amend Chapter 91 (Personnel) of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Section 91-6 (Benefits) Paragraph 7 (Personal Leave), with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~striketrough~~:

- (7) Personal leave. All permanent employees shall be eligible for three paid days personal leave during the fiscal year. An employee wishing to take a personal leave day shall request permission from the head of the department or the supervising committee at least 48 hours in advance, except in emergencies. A regular full-time permanent and eligible part-time employees may earn one additional day of personal leave per year if he/she has used five or fewer days of sick leave during the previous fiscal year. **Personal leave is subject to the probationary period and will be available for use after the employee has passed the probationary period.**

or take any other action relative thereto.

This amendment proposes to codify and clarify the personal leave provisions for permanent Town employees regarding the probationary period restriction.

Article 21 To see if the Town will vote to Amend Chapter 91 (Personnel) of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Section 91-6 (Employee Benefits) Paragraph 13 (Longevity), with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~striketrough~~:

- (13) Longevity.
- (a) All full-time employees covered by this chapter will be eligible for longevity increments as follows:
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| After 10 years of service | \$850.00 |
| After 15 years of service | \$950.00 |
| After 20 years of service | \$1,150.00 |
| After 25 years of service | \$1,500.00 |

or take any other action relative thereto.

This amendment proposes to increase the longevity increment payments made to full-time Town employees in recognition of their long-term service to the Town. The current by-law provides longevity payments at three service milestones, and the proposed amendment adds a fourth milestone. The longevity payment is to recognize and reward employee dedication and long-term commitment to the Town, and to ensure that longevity benefits remain meaningful and competitive with those offered by comparable municipalities.

General Bylaw Amendments

Article 22 To see if the Town will vote, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, §53E ½, to amend the Code of the Town of Belchertown, Chapter 94, Revolving Funds, Section 94-1 establishing and authorizing a revolving fund for the use by the Board of Health as follows:

Program/Purpose	Revenue Source	Authority to spend funds	Use of Funds	Spending Limit	Restrictions
Tobacco Control	Tobacco permit fees and tobacco control violation fines	Board of Health	Tobacco Retailer Trainings; compliance checks; tobacco control signage	\$5,000	None

or take any other action relative thereto.

The Board would like to have a revolving fund for Tobacco in order to use the funding to pay for tobacco retailer trainings (when available); NFG signage and other signage as needed; and for additional compliance checks from Pioneer Valley Tobacco Coalition (as they only do 2 checks a year, and additional checks for youth sales would incur a fee).

Article 23 To see if the Town will vote, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, §53E ½, to amend the Code of the Town of Belchertown, Chapter 94, Revolving Funds, Section 94-1 establishing and authorizing a revolving fund for the use by the Department of Public Works as follows:

Program/Purpose	Revenue Source	Authority to spend funds	Use of Funds	Spending Limit	Restrictions
EV Charging Stations	Receipts from usage fees	Director of Public Works	Operate/Maintain charging stations	\$10,000	None

or take any other action relative thereto.

Using a revolving fund for this purpose will allow fees received for the use of the EV charging stations located in the Town Hall Parking Lot to cover costs associated with providing the service.

Article 24 To see if the Town will vote to add to the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by adding a new Chapter 40, as shown below,

Chapter 40 Boards, Commissions and Committees

Article 1. General Provisions

§ 40-100. Applicability; definitions.

- A. Except as otherwise provided by general or special law, or by these bylaws, or by specific vote of the Town Meeting, all Town boards, committees and commissions, shall be subject to the provisions of this article.
- B. As used in this article, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

APPOINTED BOARD

Any board, committee, commission, or other multiple member body of the Town, however named or constituted, in which the members are appointed rather than elected by all the voters of the Town at a Town Election.

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

The Town Manager, the Select Board or any other officer or board of officers, or combination thereof, responsible for the appointment of members of an appointed board.

BOARD

Any board, committee, commission or other body of the Town, however named or constituted, which is composed of two or more members and has been or is established pursuant to statute, these bylaws, vote of the Town Meeting or vote of the Select Board.

ELECTED BOARD

Any board the members of which are elected by all the voters of the Town at the Town Election.

RESIDENT

A natural person who meets the residency requirements to register to vote in the Town; a Post Office Box address or address used exclusively for mailing purposes is not sufficient.

§ 40-115. Boards; records; annual report; conduct of meetings.

- A.** Every board, whether elected or appointed, shall annually at its first meeting after the annual town election, select a chair, a clerk or secretary and such other officers, if any, as the board shall deem necessary. The clerk or secretary may, but need not, be a member of the board.
- B.** The clerk or secretary shall keep an accurate record of each meeting of the board and shall file such records with the Town Clerk following their approval by the board. All rules and regulations adopted by a board shall likewise be filed with the Town Clerk.
- C.** Every board shall annually file a report of its activities, in form suitable for printing in the Annual Town Report, on or before such date as may be fixed by the Select Board.
- D.** Every board shall conduct its meetings in accordance with the Open Meeting Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as may be amended from time-to-time.

or take any other action relative thereto.

The purpose of this by-law addition is to establish consistency across all Boards, Commissions, and Committees regarding their composition, as well as the creation and retention of minutes, while also promoting transparency. Massachusetts state law requires all public bodies to maintain accurate written records of their meetings, though it does not specify where those records must be kept. Because many matters addressed by boards and committees may be subject to court review on appeal, it is essential to develop a thorough and accurate record that reflects meeting proceedings and supports the decisions and actions taken. Requiring all minutes to be filed with the Town Clerk will ensure they can be publicly posted in a consistent location and manner, improving timely public access and making it easier to confirm that all records are properly filed and available.

Article 25 To see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Belchertown, Chapter 15, Animals, Article 1, §15-6, Violations with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~strike through~~:

§15-6. Violations

Any owner or keeper who fails to comply with any of the following shall be in violation of this article:

- A. Unlicensed dog: a dog, six months or older, which is unlicensed or not relicensed by January 30 each year.
- B. Running at large: to go beyond the boundaries of the owner's or keeper's property unless the dog is in sight and under voice command and does not trespass on private property. Dogs in the act of training, working, hunting, or guarding are excepted.

Exception: All dogs shall be confined within a vehicle in an appropriate, safe manner that prevents escape, or secured by a leash or lead no longer than six feet in length, and under the control of a responsible person while on any public street, road, highway, or parking area where motor vehicles are present. Furthermore, all dogs shall be secured by a leash or lead no longer than six feet in length and under the control of a responsible person **who is capable of restraining the dog**, while walking on any public sidewalk or way; or attending any outdoor function or event within the Town that is open to the public and for which dogs in attendance are allowed. Dogs that are participating or exhibiting in that function are excepted.

- C. To chase a pedestrian, bicycle or any other vehicle.
- D. To bark excessively: a dog that causes a disturbance that interferes with a person's reasonable right to peace or privacy by barking, yelping, whining, howling, growling or otherwise repeatedly making noise for an extended period at any time of the day or night. Noise generated by dogs utilized in the production of crops, livestock or poultry is not subject to this excessive barking section.
- E. Worrying livestock: to worry, tease, threaten, injure or kill another's livestock, fowl or pet.
- F. **Nuisance dog: shall be as defined in G.L. c. 140, §136A, as may be amended from time-to-time. For purposes of this bylaw, to bark excessively shall mean: a dog that causes a disturbance that interferes with a person's reasonable right to peace or privacy by barking, yelping, whining, howling, growling or otherwise repeatedly making noise for an extended period at any time of the day or night.**
- GF. ~~Vicious-Dangerous dog: Shall be as defined in MGL c. 140, §§136A and 157, as may be amended from time-to-time. a dog that attacks, bites or injures human beings, pets, companion animals or livestock or which, because of temperament, conditioning, or training has a known propensity to attack, bite or injure human beings, pets, companion animals or livestock. No dog may be declared vicious if a threat, injury or damage was sustained by a person who, at the time, was committing a willful trespass or other tort upon the premises occupied by the owner or keeper of the dog, or was teasing, tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog or has, in the past, been observed or reported to have teased, tormented, abused or assaulted the dog or was committing or attempting to commit a crime, except as may be provided for in MGL c. 140, § 155. The definition~~

shall not be construed to include dogs that are part of a governmental organization or a trained guard dog in performance of its duties. A trained guard dog is one that comes from a reputable, licensed training facility as defined by MGL c. 129, § 39B.

- HG.** Unvaccinated dog: a dog without proof of current rabies vaccination on file with the Town Clerk.
- IH.** Violation of quarantine: to allow a dog to run at large during the dates of a mandated quarantine following the possibility of exposure to rabies, as indicated by a veterinarian or the Animal Inspector or Board of Health. "Quarantine" is defined by state law as maintenance of a domestic animal in an escape-proof, solid-walled building with a roof, approved by the Animal Inspector of the municipality. The animal may be leash walked by an adult.
- JH.** Order to restrain **and temporary order to restrain:** allowing a dog to continue to run at large or continue behavior which has been determined to violate this article or the Massachusetts General Laws relative to the restraint of dogs, by the **Animal Control Officer or by the Animal Control Advisory Board** in a prior hearing.
- KJ.** Untagged dog: a dog found to be without a collar and attached valid Town license.

or take any other action relative thereto.

Changes to Animal Control By-law are to update our language to reflect Mass General Law.

Article 26 To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 55C, and to establish a trust to be known as the Belchertown Affordable and Resilient Housing Trust Fund, whose purpose shall be to provide for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the Town of Belchertown for the benefit of low and moderate income households, for rehabilitation of affordable housing, including projects to improve energy efficiency, and for the funding of community housing as defined and in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44B; and, in implementation thereof, to see if the Town will vote to amend the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by adding a General Bylaw for these purposes, which will include the establishment of a Board of Trustees to govern said trust, and to authorize the Town Clerk to assign such numbering and to make non-substantive changes to the format of this bylaw in order that it be in compliance with the numbering format of the Town Code,

Town of Belchertown Resilient Housing Trust Bylaw

ARTICLE [#]: BELCHERTOWN AFFORDABLE AND RESILIENT HOUSING TRUST FUND

Section 1. Establishment and Authority

There is hereby established a trust to be called the Belchertown Affordable and Resilient Housing Trust Fund ("the Trust"), pursuant to the authority of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Chapter 44, Section 55C.

The Trust shall be a public charitable trust for the purpose of creating, preserving, rehabilitating, and supporting community housing, as defined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, for the benefit of low- and moderate-income households in the Town of Belchertown.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Trust shall be to provide for the creation, preservation, rehabilitation, and support of existing affordable housing in the Town of Belchertown, with a preference for housing that is climate resilient; to assist in maintaining safe, sustainable, and affordable housing opportunities for the residents of Belchertown; and to benefit households with low and moderate income and for the funding of community housing as defined and in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44B, and for other purposes consistent with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 44, § 55C.

Any funds the Trust receives from the Community Preservation Act, M.G.L. c. 44B, shall be used solely for community housing purposes as defined in that statute and shall remain subject to all statutory restrictions. Funds received from CPA sources shall be accounted for separately, and expenditures shall be reported in accordance with applicable state reporting requirements.

Section 3. Board of Trustees

A. Composition: The Trust shall be managed by a Board of Trustees ("the Trustees") composed of five (5) Trustees,

1. One Trustee shall be a member of the Belchertown Select Board, designated by that Board.
2. One Trustee shall be a member of the Belchertown Planning Board, designated by that Board.
3. Five (5) Trustees shall be residents of the Town of Belchertown appointed by the Town Manager. To the extent possible, the Town Manager shall appoint individuals who possess professional or personal experience in affordable housing, real estate, banking, finance, architecture, law, climate resilience, or social services.

B. Appointment and Term:

1. Except for the initial staggered terms, Trustees shall be appointed by the Town Manager for two-year terms. Trustees may be reappointed for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms.
2. To establish staggered terms, of the initial five (5) Trustees appointed, three (3) shall be appointed for a one-year term and two (2) shall be appointed for a two-year term.
3. Any Trustee who ceases to be a resident of Belchertown shall promptly notify the Trust and the Town Manager in writing and shall be considered to have resigned.

C. Vacancies and Removal of Resident Trustees:

1. In the event of a vacancy due to death, resignation, or any other reason, a successor shall be appointed by the Town Manager to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.
2. The Town Manager may remove any appointed Trustee for cause after that Trustee has been given notice and an opportunity to be heard. Cause may include, but not be limited to, neglect of duty, or four (4) consecutive unexcused absences from Board meetings.

Section 4. Powers of the Board of Trustees

The powers of the Trustees, which shall be carried on in furtherance of the purpose of the Trust as set forth in Section 2, shall include the following:

A. General Powers:

1. To accept and receive money and/or personal property, by gift, grant, contribution, devise, or transfer from any person, firm, corporation, or other public or private entity.
2. To execute assignments, contracts, promissory notes, and other legal instruments necessary or incident to any transaction.
3. To employ advisors, agents, and employees as the Trustees deem necessary, and to pay them reasonable compensation and expenses; provided, however, that the trust shall not agree to compensate such advisors, agents and employees at a rate greater than the Massachusetts minimum wage in effect at the time without the approval of the Town Manager.
4. The Trust may provide financial assistance or support for activities and projects consistent with the purposes of the Trust, including but not limited to: rehabilitation and/or preservation of housing occupied by low- and moderate-income households; improvements that enhance the safety, accessibility, and long-term habitability of housing; weatherization, energy efficiency improvements, and other sustainability upgrades; and/or mitigation of environmental or climate-related risks affecting residential properties.
5. To comprise, attribute, defend, enforce, release, settle or otherwise adjust claims in favor or against the Trust, including claims for taxes, and to accept any personal property, either in total or partial satisfaction of any indebtedness or other obligation, and subject to the provisions of Section 55C, to continue to hold the same for such period of time as the Board may deem appropriate.
6. To make distributions of principal or income, in kind or in cash.
7. To hold all or part of the Trust property uninvested for such time as the Trustees may deem appropriate.
8. To establish rules, regulations, guidelines and/or policies concerning the administration of the Trust and the disposition of Trust assets.
9. All other powers granted to such trusts under M.G.L. c. 44, § 55c not expressly set forth herein are intentionally omitted and are not within the scope of the Trust's authority.

B. Limitations and Required Approvals:

1. Any funds the Trust receives from the Community Preservation Act, M.G.L. c. 44B, shall be used exclusively for community housing and shall remain subject to all the rules, regulations, and limitations of that chapter. Such funds shall be accounted for separately by the Trust, and all expenditures must be reported to the Belchertown Community Preservation Committee for inclusion in its annual state reporting.
2. Any debt incurred by the Trustees shall not constitute a pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town of Belchertown. All documents related to such debt shall contain a statement to this effect, acknowledged by the holder of the debt.
3. The Trust is established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, § 55c and shall exercise only those powers expressly authorized therein or consistent therewith. Without limiting the foregoing, the Trust shall not have the authority to impose, levy, or collect taxes, assessments, or fees upon residents or property within the Town.
4. The Trust's activities shall be limited to the preservation, rehabilitation, and support of existing affordable housing and community housing, including improvements that enhance habitability, accessibility, energy efficiency, and climate resilience; provided, however that any funds appropriated from the Community Preservation Act Fund shall be limited to rehabilitation of housing originally acquired or created with CPA funds. The Trust shall not undertake, sponsor, or develop new housing units.
5. The Trust shall provide financial assistance solely for the benefit of persons who own and occupy residential property, including mobile homes, within the Town of Belchertown who meet applicable income or program eligibility requirements. The Trust shall not provide financial assistance directly to for-profit businesses, commercial entities, or non-residential property owners, except where such entities are acting as agents or contractors in furtherance of an eligible residential housing purpose consistent with this bylaw.

Section 5. Duties and Responsibilities

In addition to exercising the powers set forth herein, the Trustees shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To develop goals and objectives to address the housing needs identified in town housing plans and studies, and through the work of the housing trust.
2. To create and distribute outreach and educational materials regarding housing resources in Belchertown.
3. To seek out and support regional partnerships to provide affordable housing solutions.
4. To report on the work of the Trust at least annually to the Select Board and in the Annual Town Report.

Section 6. Meetings of the Board of Trustees

1. The Trustees shall meet at least quarterly at such time and place as the Chair shall determine. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by any two Trustees.
2. All meetings of the Trust shall be subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, as may be amended from time-to-time. Notice of all meetings shall be filed with the Town Clerk and posted in accordance with the law.
3. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the Trustees then in office. Actions of the Trust shall be approved by a majority vote of those present, provided a quorum exists, unless otherwise specified in this bylaw.
4. The Trustees shall elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk annually.

Section 7. Administration and Finance

A. Custodian of Funds:

The Town Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the Trust and shall maintain separate accounts and records for said funds. The Treasurer shall invest the funds in the manner authorized by M.G.L. c. 44, § 55B and shall disburse funds upon the lawful order of the Trustees.

B. Annual Audit:

The Trustees shall provide for an annual audit of the Trust's books and records, which shall be performed by an independent auditor in accordance with accepted accounting practices. A copy of the audit shall be provided promptly to the Town Manager and the Select Board upon its completion.

C. Declaration of Trust:

The Trustees are authorized to execute a Declaration of Trust and Certificate of Trust, which shall be recorded with the Hampshire Registry of Deeds.

D. Appropriation Not Required

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all monies paid to the Trust in accordance with any zoning bylaw, exaction fee, or private contribution shall be paid directly into the Trust and need not be appropriated or accepted and approved into the Trust. General revenues appropriated into the Trust become Trust property and these funds need not be further appropriated to be expended. All monies remaining in the Trust at the end of any fiscal year, whether or not expended by the Trustees within one year of the date they were appropriated into the Trust, remain Trust property.

E. Taxation

The Trust is exempt from General Laws Chapters 59 and 62, and from any other provisions concerning payment of taxes based upon or measured by property or income imposed by the Commonwealth or any subdivision thereto.

F. Trustee Compensation

Trustees shall not receive a salary, stipend, bonus or other means of compensation for their service as a Trustee, nor shall they be eligible for any benefits from the Town of Belchertown. Trustees may be compensated for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for travel and other Trust-related expenses. All such out-of-pocket expenses shall be fully documented with receipts for expenses prior to payment by the Trust.

G. Conflict of Interest:

The Trust shall be deemed a municipal agency and the Trustees shall be deemed special municipal employees for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 268A.

H. Liability:

The Trust is a public employer and the Trustees are public employees for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 258, the Massachusetts Tort Claims Act.

I. Binding Authority:

Neither the Trustees nor any agent of the Trust shall have the authority to bind the Town of Belchertown, except in the manner specifically authorized herein.

J. Legal Status:

The trust is a governmental body for purposes of sections 23A, 23B and 23C of chapter 39. The trust is a board of the city or town for purposes of chapter 30B and section 15A of chapter 40; but agreements and conveyances between the trust and agencies, boards, commissions, authorities, departments and public instrumentalities of the city or town shall be exempt from said chapter 30B.

Section 9. Duration and Amendments

A. Duration: The Trust shall continue so long as authorized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Trust may be terminated by a majority vote of a Town Meeting. Upon termination, The net assets of the Trust shall be transferred to the Town of Belchertown to be held by the Select Board for purposes consistent with this bylaw and any other purpose authorized by law.

B. Amendments: This bylaw may be amended from time to time by a majority vote of a Town Meeting.

Section 10. Severability

If any provision of this bylaw is held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the bylaw shall not be affected thereby and shall remain in full force and effect.

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article proposes creating the Belchertown Affordable and Resilient Housing Trust under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 55C. If approved, the Trust would focus on helping low- and moderate-income residents maintain and improve their existing homes by supporting projects such as repairs, accessibility upgrades, and energy efficiency

improvements. The Trust would not build new housing or raise taxes, and any funds used would follow all legal requirements. It would be managed by a five-member Board of Trustees to ensure responsible oversight. Overall, the goal is to help residents remain safely and affordably in their homes while strengthening the town's existing housing stock.

Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Article 27 To see if the Town will amend the zoning bylaw, Chapter 145 of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, to change the appointing authority from the Select Board to the Town Manager so as to be consistent with Chapter 44 of the Acts of 2024, the Belchertown Town Manager Act, as shown below with additions shown in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~:

§145-68 There is hereby established a Board of Appeals of three members and three associate members to be appointed by the **Town Manager** ~~Select Board~~, as provided by MGL c. 40A. The Board of Appeals shall have the following powers:

§145-69 B(3) Special Permits

The alternate voting member authorized to act on special permit applications to the Planning Board shall be selected in accord with the provisions of MGL c. 41, § 81A for filling a vacancy occurring in the Board by other than the expiration of a term by appointment of the **Town Manager** ~~Select Board~~ and the members of the Planning Board.

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article implements the provisions of the Special Legislation enacted in 2024, which transferred the appointing authority from the Select Board to the Town Manager. These changes are now being reflected in the Town's Bylaws, as specified in the following two articles. This is a housekeeping measure only, authority currently rest with the Town Manager.

Real Estate Articles

Article 28 To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody and control of an approximately 9.38-acre portion of the Town-owned property identified as Assessor's Parcel 255-121 and described below from the tax custodian for tax title purposes to the Select Board for the purpose of conveyance, and to authorize the Select Board to convey said portion to the Belchertown Economic Development Corporation on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, which portion to be transferred and conveyed is approximately shown as "Parcel D-2" on a plan entitled "ANR Plan Off Turkey Hill Road Belchertown, Massachusetts", dated April 13, 2026, prepared by WSP USA Inc., a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk,

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article is about expanding the potential of a commercial parcel. The EDIC owns a parcel on Turkey Hill Road meant for development, but that has slope and water constraints. The next parcel is a large one owned by the Town that is essentially unbuildable back land. Nine acres of that Town parcel immediately adjacent to the EDIC property are suitable for building, so this request is to transfer ownership of those 9+ acres from the Town to the EDIC. Anticipating this,

last year we changed the zoning of that portion of the Town's property to General Business to match the EDIC property's zoning. The action requested in this article is to transfer ownership of this 9.38 acre portion of the Town's property to the EDIC.

Article 29 To see if the Town will vote to accept as a town public way the roadway known as Pepper Ridge Drive, as heretofore laid out by the Select Board and shown on As-Built Plan for Pepper Ridge Drive, dated October 20, 2025 prepared by RLA, R Levesque Associates, Inc., and recorded at the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 251, Page 21, On November 21, 2025, and authorize the Select Board to acquire, by gift, purchase, and/or eminent domain, the fee to and/or easements in Pepper Ridge Drive for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of Belchertown and any drainage, utility, access and/or other easements related thereto, as shown on said plan,

or take any other action relative thereto.

The last step in the subdivision process is to accept a private subdivision road as a public way. This allows for the town to access State Aid funds for road maintenance and repair. It also allows the stormwater system and any affiliated open spaces to be accessed by the public and maintained by the town. Pepper Ridge Drive has received all applicable signoffs from town departments. Approving of this article will add a total of .30 miles to the town's public way inventory currently eligible for State Aid.

Article 30 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire by purchase, gift, and/or eminent domain the parcels of land located at 12 Old Bay Road and on Old Farm Road and identified on the Belchertown Assessor's maps as Map 105 Parcel 3.01, Map 104 Parcel 17.01, Map 104 Parcel 15, and Map 104 Parcel 7 (partial), for conservation and passive recreation purposes on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, with the care, custody and control thereof to be held by the Conservation Commission pursuant to the provisions of GL c. 40, Section 8C, as it may hereafter be amended and other Massachusetts statutes relating to conservation; to authorize the Select Board and/or the Conservation Commission to apply for, accept, and expend funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or other public or private sources to defray all or a portion of the costs of acquisition, including, but not limited to, grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth under GL c. 132A, Section 11 (the so-called LAND Grants), and/or any other federal, state or other grants or reimbursement programs in any way connected with the scope of this article, and to enter into any and all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate said acquisition; to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds including, without limitations, funds under the Community Preservation Fund, and/or borrow the sum of \$706,000 to fund said acquisition and costs incidental or related thereto; and, further, to authorize the Select Board and the Conservation Commission to convey a conservation restriction on said property to a qualified organization in accordance with G.L. c. 184, §31-33,

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article is for the Town to buy about 50 acres of land for conservation. The owners approached us several years ago about protecting this land. The land is off Old Farm Road. It ranks very highly on the state's BioMap, Natural Heritage, and climate resilience scoring systems. The request in this article is for the Town to authorize buying the land to then be fully reimbursed by a combination of a state Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity grant, a Community Preservation grant, and private fund-raising by the Kestrel Land Trust. If the LAND grant is not awarded, we do not buy the property and there is no risk to the Town. If we are awarded the grant, with the reimbursements, there is no cost to the Town and we can buy an important and beautiful property with public access and existing trail system that fulfills another component of our long-term recreation, climate resilience, and economic development plans. Kestrel Land Trust will hold a conservation restriction on this, assuring greater protection.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 31 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire by purchase, gift, and/or eminent domain the parcels of land located on and off Kimball Street, shown on the Belchertown Assessor Maps as Map 220 Parcels 2, 3, and 4, and Map 213, Parcels 16 and 25, and containing a total of 127 acres, more or less, for conservation and passive recreation purposes on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, with the care, custody and control thereof to be held by the Conservation Commission pursuant to the provisions of GL c. 40, Section 8C, as it may hereafter be amended and other Massachusetts statutes relating to conservation; to authorize the Select Board and/or the Conservation Commission to apply for, accept, and expend funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or other public or private sources to defray all or a portion of the costs of acquisition, including, but not limited to, grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth under Chapter 132A, Section 11 (the so-called LAND Grants), and/or any other federal, state or other grants or reimbursement programs in any way connected with the scope of this article, and to enter into any and all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate said acquisition; to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow the sum of \$790,000 to fund said acquisition and costs incidental or related thereto; and, further, to authorize the Select Board and the Conservation Commission to convey a conservation restriction on said property to a qualified organization in accordance with G.L. c. 184, §31-33.

or take any other action relative thereto.

This article is for the Town to buy about 127 acres of land for conservation. These owners also approached us several years ago about buying this land. The land is off Kimball Street and it abuts our Jabish Brook Conservation Area on one side and Quabbin on the other. The request in this article is for the Town to authorize buying the land to be fully reimbursed by a combination of a state Forest Reserves grant, and private fund-raising by the Kestrel Land Trust. If the Forest Reserves grant is not awarded, we do not buy the property and there is no risk to the Town. If we are awarded the grant, with the reimbursements, there is no cost to the Town and we can buy a forested property that provides important wildlife connections between Quabbin and the Holyoke Range, and that also is another piece of our recreation, climate resilience, and economic development plans. Kestrel Land Trust will also hold a conservation restriction on this, assuring greater protection.

Belchertown Recreation Grant Article

Article 32 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow the sum of Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00), and authorize the Treasurer with the approval of the Select Board to borrow said sum under provisions to G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7, 8, 8C, G.L. Chapter 44B and/or any other enabling authority, for the purpose of planning, designing, improving, renovating and/or equipping the property known as the Chestnut Hill Recreation Area, located on State Street, and identified as Assessor's Parcel 250-13, including, without limitation, installation of a multi-purpose asphalt slab, matching the dimensions of the adjacent existing basketball courts, and resurfacing it to accommodate a variety of recreational activities, and any and all costs incidental or related thereto, provided, however, that no funds shall be expended until the Town has received a grant commitment or allocation for a portion of such costs under so-called PARC Grant Program (301 CMR 5.00).

And authorize the Board of Selectmen and/or its designee to apply for, accept, and expend, on behalf of the Town, funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or other public or private sources to defray all or a portion of the costs of acquisition, including, but not limited to, grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth under the PARC Grant Program, and/or any other federal or state grants or reimbursement programs in any way connected with the scope of this article, and to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary or convenient to effectuate the foregoing project,

or take any other action relative thereto.

The Belchertown Recreation Department is seeking funding through the Small-Town Community PARC State Grant to enhance the CHCS Recreation Parcel, specifically the area adjacent to the basketball courts. Our proposal involves installing a multipurpose asphalt slab, matching the dimensions of the existing basketball courts, and resurfacing it to accommodate a variety of recreational activities. This space is already equipped with lighting, further expanding its potential for community use.

The PARC grant operates as a reimbursement program, with Belchertown eligible for a 68% reimbursement rate. The remaining project costs will be covered by a combination of other grants and recreational revolving funds. To proceed with the grant application, we require a town vote to approve the necessary funding allocation. The details of the required funds are outlined below.

Community Preservation Act Articles

Article 33 To see if the Town will act on the report of the Community Preservation Committee on the Fiscal Year 2027 Community Preservation Budget and to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund, pursuant to G.L. 44B §6, a sum of money to meet the administrative expenses and all other necessary and proper expenses of the Community Preservation Committee for Fiscal Year 2027; and to reserve for later appropriation monies from the Community Preservation Fund annual revenues or available funds for open space, historic resources, and community housing purposes, as well as a sum of money to be placed in the Fiscal Year 2027 budgeted reserve for general Community Preservation Act purposes, as recommended by the Community Preservation Committee,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 34 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$8,913.00 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of preserving and restoring the earliest known map of the Town, created in 1727, known as "Cold Spring Township", and documenting the earliest years of colonial settlement of the Town, and authorize the Select Board to enter into a grant agreement with the Belchertown Historical Association to set forth the terms of said grant,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 35 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$39,412.00 from the Community Preservation Fund for Historic Preservation, and the sum of \$244,049 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating the historic Clapp Memorial Library by replacing 74 windows of the Library with historically accurate and triple-paned glazed windows,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 36 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$9,800 from the Community Preservation Fund for Historic Preservation, for the purpose of preserving and restoring the gravestones at the historic South Street Cemetery and Hillside Cemetery, with said funds to be expended under the direction of the Veterans Graves Officer,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 37 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$24,750 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of purchasing and installing 2 ADA-compliant free-standing bleachers at the outdoor recreational fields on the Town property located at 59 State Street, and costs incidental or related thereto,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 38 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$148,000 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of rehabilitating the baseball facility at the Town property located at 59 State Street and costs incidental or related thereto, including, without limitation, replacing the Green Monster wall with a new structurally stable and weather-resistant wall, installing ADA-compliant bathroom facilities, installing ADA-compliant access walkway, constructing a new storage shed, upgrading utilities, and constructing covered batting cages,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 6-1-0

Article 39 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$99,447 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of creating and equipping a soccer field on the Town property located at 51 State Street and costs incidental or related thereto,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 4-3-0

Article 40 To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$250,000 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of acquiring an affordable housing restriction on the Sportshaven Mobile Home Park property, located at 370 Mill Valley Road, and for the preservation, support and rehabilitation of affordable housing, including, without limitation, the construction of a new potable water well and conveyance system, a new park-wide septic system, full roadway reconstruction and storm water drainage improvements, and anything incidental or related thereto,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 7-0-0

Article 41 To see if the Town will appropriate and transfer the sum of \$400,000 from the Community Preservation Fund, Fund Balance, for the purpose of acquiring permanent affordable housing restrictions on the units to be constructed on the parcels of land identified as Assessor's Parcels 243-178.21, 243-178.02, and 243-178.18, and associated parking and infrastructure, and to obtain a historic preservation restriction on the historical Administration Building, which will be rehabilitated to provide community meeting space, residential amenities, and gathering space,

or take any other action relative thereto.

Endorsed by Community Preservation Committee, Voted 6-1-0