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*Tom M. Deen*

Town Clerk

Special Town Meeting Warrant – Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm

Town of Chester

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Hampden, SS:**

To any of the Constables in the Town of Chester in the County of Hampden,

**Greetings:**

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Chester qualified to vote in Elections and town affairs to meet in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium, 15 Middlefield Road, in said Town on Monday, March 16th, 2026, at 6:30 in the evening, then and there to act on the following articles:

**Article 1: PURCHASE OF A USED PICK-UP TRUCK FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

*To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash, the sum of \$14,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a vehicle for use by the Fire Chief, including any incidental and related costs, or take any other action relative thereto.*

**Submitted by Fire Chief**

**2/3 vote required**

**Explanation:**

This article authorizes the purchase of a command vehicle for use by the Fire Chief. The vehicle will be used for emergency response, incident command, inspections, mutual aid coordination, and other official Fire Department duties.

If approved, the funding will come from Free Cash. The vehicle may be equipped with appropriate public safety equipment including emergency lighting, radios, and related outfitting necessary for emergency response operations.

**Nate Bolduc, 20 Sylvester Hamilton Road, made a motion to amend sum to \$20,000 as there are enhancements needed to allow firefighter use. John Baldasaro seconded the amendment. There was no discussion.**

**0 – No Votes All in favor 18 registered voters present**

**Amendment Approved**



*related administrative fees, as set forth in the proposed by-law on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.*

**Submitted by Town Clerk & Town Administrator**

**Majority vote required**

**Explanation:**

Massachusetts law requires all dogs to be licensed annually through the Town Clerk. While the authority to license dogs is established under state law, Town Meeting must adopt or amend a local by-law to establish or change the licensing fees charged and the distribution thereof. The full text of the proposed by-law is on file with the Town Clerk and available for public review prior to Town Meeting.

**John Baldasaro accepted the article as read.**

**Barbara Huntoon, 35 Bromley Rd, asked what the dog licensing fee would be increasing to. Terry Donovan said there would be no increase to the fee. This would reallocate a portion of the dog licensing fee to the town clerk or town clerk assistant in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.**

**Jessica Slatcher, 84 route 20, seconded the motion.**

**0 – No votes**

**All in favor 18 registered voters present**

**Article Approved**

**Article 5: Gateway Graduation Class Bleachers**

*To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to loan a sum not to exceed \$2,000 to the Senior Class of Gateway Regional School District for the purpose of securing, renting, or constructing bleachers for graduation ceremonies, said loan to be repaid to the Town within 8 years under such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine;*

*And further, to authorize the Select Board to execute any and all agreements necessary to effectuate said loan;*

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**Submitted By Jason Forgue**

**Majority vote required**



**Explanation:**

**Town Clerk**

This article authorizes the Town to provide a temporary loan to the senior class of Gateway Regional School to assist with the cost of securing bleachers for graduation ceremonies. The intent is to provide short-term financial support so that adequate seating can be available for families and guests.

The loan would be subject to a written repayment agreement approved by the Select Board. The Town would expect full repayment within the timeframe specified in the vote. No funds would be expended permanently unless Town Meeting separately authorized such an appropriation. Because this article authorizes a municipal loan but does not involve borrowing by the Town, debt exclusion, or taxation, it requires a **majority vote** at Town Meeting.

**John Baldasaro accepted the article as read.**

Rosemary Dalesandro, 117 Prospect Street, asked if all towns in the district have been requested to pay.

Brian Forgue said yes, all Hilltown are being requested this amount to go toward purchasing equipment for graduation

Mary Ann Pease, 16 Hampden Street, suggested donating the funds instead of having an eight-year repayment plan.

Brian explained that the town does pay a lot for the school each year and this keeps the responsibility of this subject to the school.


Mary Ann made a motion to amend the article to donate \$2,000 from free cash to Gateway without a repayment plan. John Baldasaro seconded.

0 – No votes All in favor 20 registered voters present Amendment Approved

John Baldasaro accepted the amended article. Barbara Huntoon seconded.

0 – No votes All in favor 20 registered voters present Amended Article Approved

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**Article 6: Prior Fiscal Year Bills**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum of money to pay bills of a prior fiscal year in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 64, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator 4/5 vote required

Department	Vendor	Fiscal Year	Amount	Invoice Number
Treasurer	UFASI	FY25	\$650.00	9819
Treasurer	UFASI	FY25	\$650.00	9345

**Explanation:**

From time to time, invoices are submitted after the close of a fiscal year or are discovered after the books have been closed. Massachusetts law prohibits paying prior fiscal year bills without a specific appropriation by Town Meeting. This article allows the Town to appropriate funds to legally pay outstanding obligations incurred in a previous fiscal year. The bills must be certified as valid by the department head and approved by the Select Board before payment. This action does not re-open the prior year's budget but authorizes payment of legitimate unpaid obligations.

Barbara Huntoon asked what these invoices are for. Andrew Alward said these are invoices paid by the Treasurer for fiscal advisory services provided to the town through Unibank. Funds would need to come from free cash. John Baldasaro accepted the article as read. Barbara Huntoon seconded.

0 – No votes All in favor 20 registered voters present

Article Approved

**Article 7: Establish Insurance Stabilization Fund**

*To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40 Section 5B and any other enabling authority, to establish a special stabilization fund to be known as the "Insurance Stabilization Fund," for the purpose of reserving funds to mitigate the impact of extraordinary, unanticipated, or volatile increases in the Town's property, liability, workers' compensation, health, cyber, and other municipal insurance costs;*

*And further, to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to deposit into said fund any sums appropriated by Town Meeting, including free cash, transfers from available funds, certified retained earnings, insurance reimbursements, or any other funds authorized by law;*

*And further, to provide that appropriations from the Insurance Stabilization Fund may be made by a majority vote of Town Meeting for the purposes stated herein;*

**Submitted by Town Administrator**

**Majority vote required**

**Explanation:**

This article establishes a dedicated stabilization fund to help the Town manage fluctuations in municipal insurance costs. Insurance premiums — including property, liability, workers' compensation, health, and cyber coverage — can vary significantly from year to year due to market conditions, claims experience, or catastrophic events.

By creating an Insurance Stabilization Fund under Massachusetts law, the Town may set aside money in stronger financial years and use those funds in years when insurance costs spike unexpectedly. This helps:

- Reduce sudden impacts on the tax rate
- Avoid emergency budget cuts in operating departments
- Support long-term financial planning
- Maintain more predictable budgeting practices

Funds may only be spent for the purposes defined in the article and require a Town Meeting vote for appropriation.

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**John Baldasaro accepted the article as read. Nate Bolduc seconded.**

**There was no discussion**

0 – No votes All in favor 20 registered voters present

Article Approved

**John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Barbara Huntoon seconded.  
Special Town Meeting concluded at 6:42pm**