

# Special Town Meeting Article Breakdown

## **Article 1 – Legal Expenses**

The Town has experienced a significant increase in legal costs due to multiple HR-related matters and the unforeseen expenses from the Police Chief investigation. This transfer replenishes the Legal Account so the Town can continue receiving necessary legal advisement.

## **Article 2 – Fire/EMS Per-Diem Staffing (200 hours/week)**

This article funds Fire/EMS coverage by maintaining 200 per-diem labor hours weekly. This level is essential to avoid gaps in emergency response following the resignation of most of the volunteer fire staff. It relies on per-diem coverage supplemented by volunteer response and the existing hours of the Public Safety Officer (PSO) and Fire Chief.

## **Article 3 – Increased Fire/EMS Coverage (240 hours/week)**

This would expand per-diem staffing to 240 hours/week. The additional hours would place one per-diem Fire/EMS employee on duty during the shifts worked by the PSO and Fire Chief, providing added support. This staffing also allows for occasional simultaneous emergency responses.

## **Article 4 – Increased Fire/EMS Coverage (336 hours/week)**

This expands coverage to 336 hours/week by adding a second per-diem employee on the 12am-8am shift, when the Town would rely more heavily on volunteer response; it further allows for simultaneous emergency responses.

## **Article 5 – Turnout Gear Replacement**

Most fire turnout gear is at least a decade past its expiration—well beyond its safe and compliant service life. Prior administrations did not budget for regular replacements, leaving unsafe conditions that now must be corrected all at once. This article funds 14 new sets of NFPA-compliant gear.

## **Article 6 – Acquisition of 207 Sandisfield Road (Fire Station)**

At the May ATM, voters amended the article to take ownership of the Fire Stations so the Town could only acquire the buildings by gift. Following that vote, the Select Board—both as a group and individually during lease discussions—asked SFDI (the nonprofit owning the fire stations) whether they would gift the buildings, since they were originally built for the Town’s use. SFDI has made clear they will not.

With the lease expiring in June 2026 and negotiations not progressing in good faith—including a proposed tripling of rent, shifting all maintenance and utilities to the Town, limiting access to parts of the buildings, and allowing SFDI unrestricted use of the facilities—the Town must take steps to ensure continuity of emergency services.

Constructing a new station would cost several million dollars. Purchasing the existing buildings is the most viable, cost-effective path to protect public safety operations.

## **Article 7 – Vocational Technical Student Transportation**

The Town is legally required to provide transportation for vocational technical students. Normally, families transport students for \$100/day. This year, families are unable to do so, requiring the Town to hire two bus companies at \$345 and \$300/day because the students attend different schools.

*Note: If any resident with a 7D license is interested in driving, the Town has a shuttle available or can work with you to approve your personal vehicle for 7D transport.*

## **Article 8 – Unpaid Bills from Prior Fiscal Years**

These charges accumulated because bills were not delivered to the Town. Many were sent to personal addresses of previous administrations and never forwarded. While the utilities did not reach out through other channels, the Town has reviewed, corrected, and cancelled any outdated or unnecessary accounts to prevent recurrence.