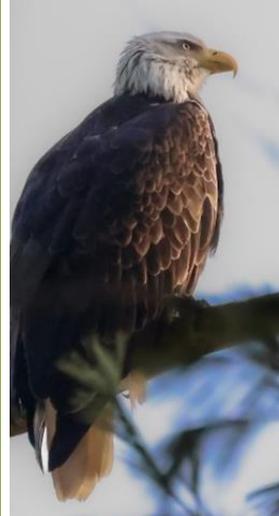




Welcome to Townsend's Special Town Meeting

March 19, 2026



Snapshot of Articles to be discussed

- Article 1 - ClearGov
- Article 2 - OPEB Actuarial Study
- Article 3 - Town Counsel Trust
- Article 4 - FY26 Police Wage Adjustments - ARPA
- Article 5 - FY 27 Police Wage Adjustment via Prop 2 ½ Override
- Article 6 - Lease Authorization for Squannacook Meadows
- Article 7 - Board of Health (take no action)
- Article 8 - Town Clerk Codification of Role
- Article 9 - Election Account Replenishment
- Article 10 - Technical Code Corrections – Town Clerk
- Article 11 – Technical Code Corrections – Town Clerk



Article 1 – ClearGov for Townsend

Request: Transfer \$41,599.79 from Free Cash or Sale of Town owned properties fund(s)

Purpose:

- Purchase ClearGov budgeting and financial planning software
- Improve budget transparency and long-term financial planning
- Cover initial setup, onboarding, and the first-year subscription

Outcome:

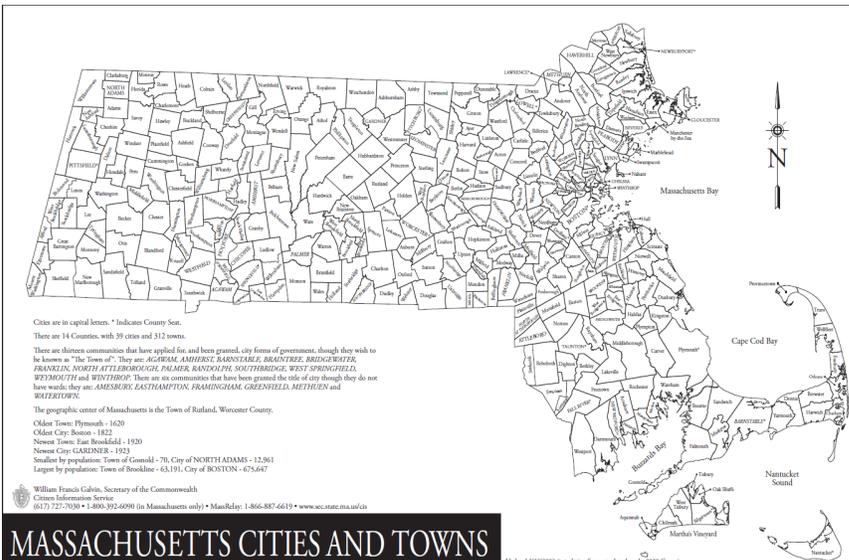
- Provides the Town with a modern tool to plan budgets, track finances, and clearly present financial information to residents and boards

Towns and Cities near Townsend with ClearGov

1. Pepperell, MA
2. Lunenburg, MA
3. Ayer, MA
4. Littleton, MA
5. Winchendon, MA
6. Lancaster, MA
7. Boxborough, MA
8. Stow, MA
9. Concord, MA
10. Bedford, MA
11. Maynard, MA
12. Lowell, MA
13. Shrewsbury, MA
14. Boylston, MA
15. Holden, MA
16. Grafton, MA



Article 2 - Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Actuarial Study



Purpose:

- Hire an actuarial consultant to calculate the Town's future retiree health insurance liability (OPEB obligation).

Why it matters:

- Help the Town understand long-term financial obligations related to providing retirement benefits (health insurance and potentially pension benefits) to employees.

Request: Transfer \$4,750.00 from Free Cash or Sale of Town owned properties fund(s)

Study to be completed within approximately 120 days.



Approximately 93% of municipalities in Massachusetts provide OPEB benefits, supporting employee retention and long-term workforce stability.

Article 3 – Town Counsel Trust



Transfer: \$50,000 from Free Cash

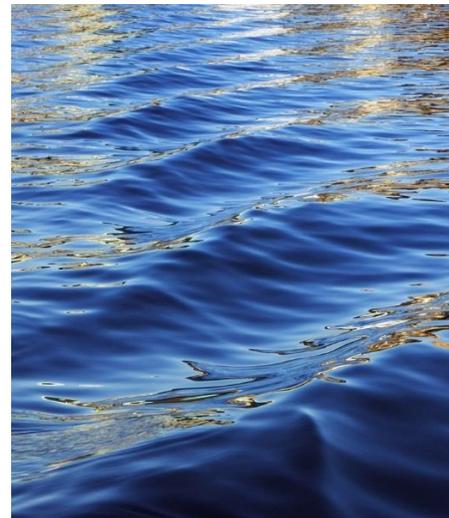
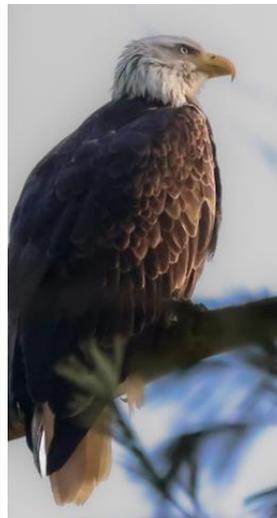
Purpose: Establish a stabilization fund for Town Counsel legal services

Townsend has utilized a legal trust for the following:

1. Union Contract Negotiations
2. Non-Union Personnel matters
3. Land Use management issues
4. RFP drafting and review for various town projects.
5. Other unanticipated legal matters



Article 4 and 5
Townsend Police Department

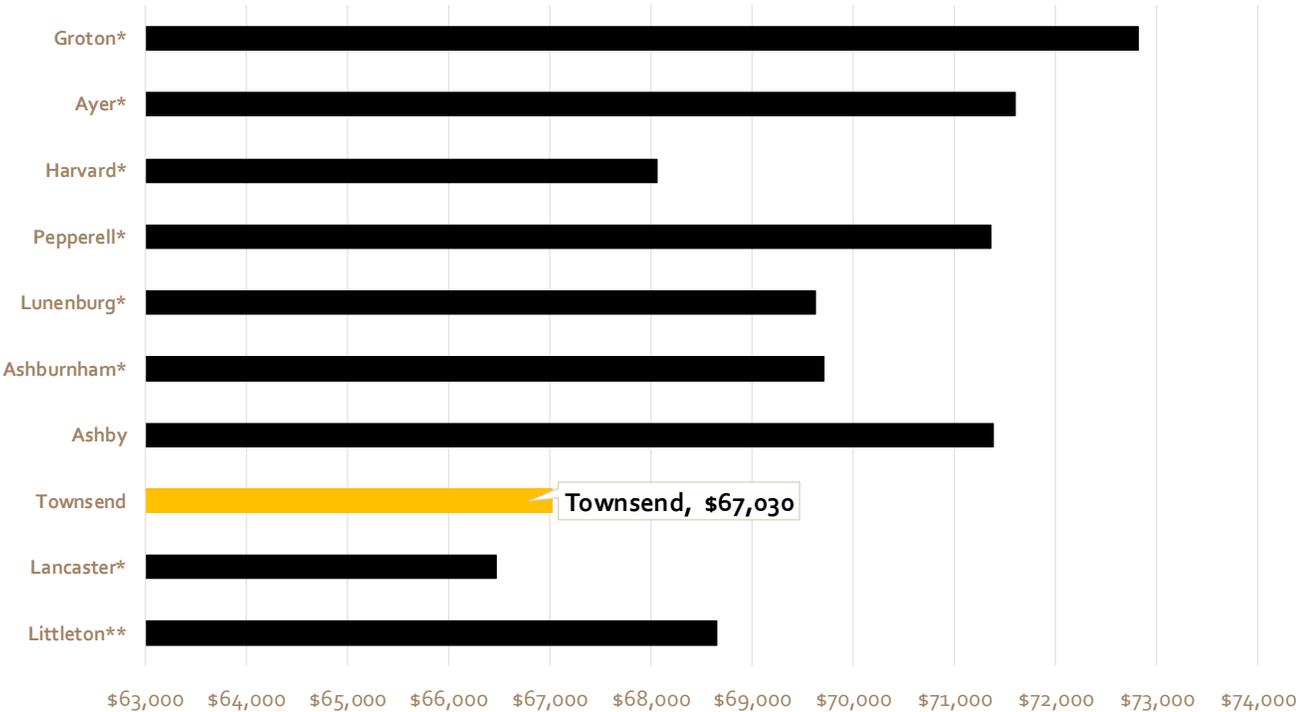


Current Landscape

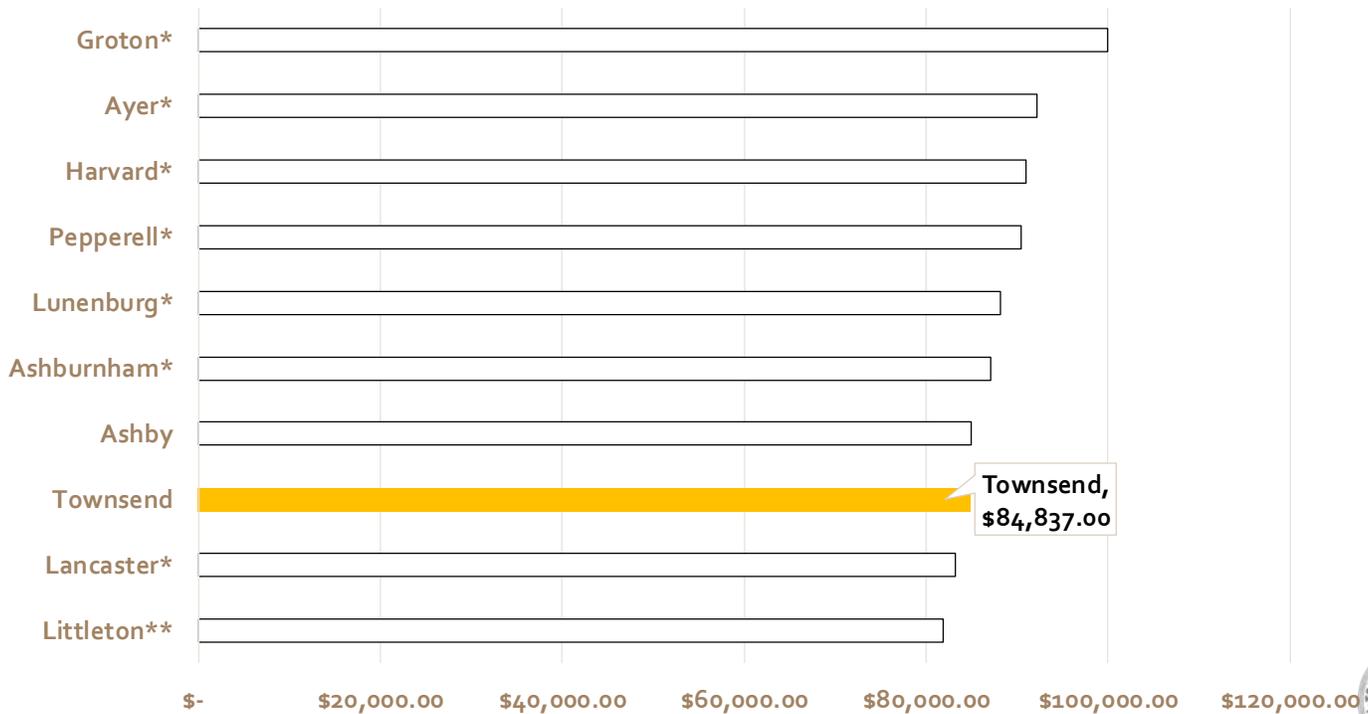
- Townsend and the Townsend’s Police Bargaining unit (AFSCME Council 93, Local 3470) have been in negotiations for over 18 months.
 - Townsend has been out of contract with its police officers since FY25.
- The following will be shared to provide context for two warrant articles
 - Collins Center Salary Analysis
 - Article 4 expense and utilization of ARPA funding
 - Article 5 – totality of budget ask and breakdown of expense buckets impacted by a passing Town Meeting vote.
- Next steps from STM to Annual Town Election



Average Patrol Officer Salary by Department



Average Sergeant Salary by Department



Warrant Article 4 – FY26 with ARPA Funds

- Article 4 asks Townsend to fund a singular year agreement with the Police Bargaining Unit (AFSCME Council 93, Local 3470).
- This covers July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.
 - Officers are currently working without an agreement but continue service to the town while negotiations have been ongoing.
- Vote would authorize the town to pay back wages (\$53,500) and then update wage rates for the remainder of the year.
- *Certifications and Stipends are subsidized**
- *Differences in #s are due to lag time and shifting in schedules for STM and officers.*

Segment	FY25	Increase
Patrolman & Sergeant Salary Increases	\$912,000	\$36,480
SRO	\$80,000	\$2,560
Overtime	\$150,000	\$4,950
Holiday Pay	\$42,100	\$1,558
Certifications Stipends	\$80,000	\$2,400
Uniform Allowance	\$19,000	\$9,063
TOTAL		\$57,011



Warrant Article 5 – FY27 – New Wage Rates and impact to Police Budget

- This article will ask residents to consider voting on a wage contract to provide total wage increase of 14%.
- FY28 agreement is asking for a 2% COLA for officers within the bargaining unit.
- Town receives \$80,000 from NMRSD for SRO, but town retains SRO during summer months.
- *The math on this is not perfect as it shifts based on officer enrollment and subject to the passing of Article 4.*

Segment	FY26	FY27	Increase
Patrolman & Sergeant	\$948,480	\$1,083,164	\$132,787
SRO	\$82,560	\$94,118	\$11,558
Overtime	\$154,950	\$176,953	\$22,003
Holiday Pay	\$43,658	\$50,294	\$6,636
Certifications Stipends + Longevity*	\$111,800	\$120,950	\$9,150
Uniform Allowance	\$28,063	\$38,063	\$10,000
Police Training	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
Total			\$196,954



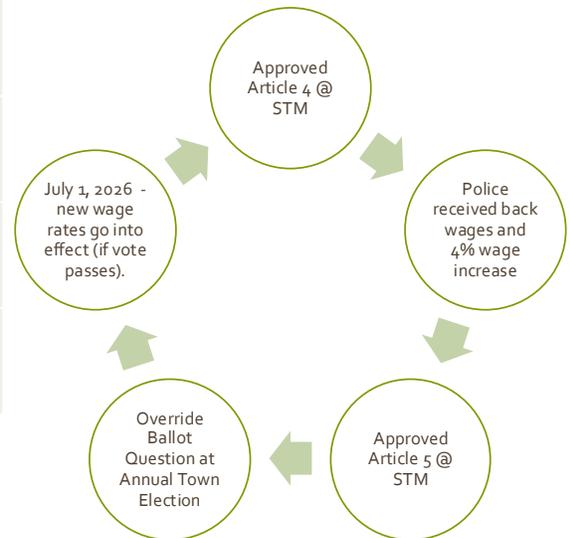
Impact of a \$197,000 Override

Assessed Value	Current Estimated Tax Bill	Proposed Estimated Tax Bill	Estimated Tax Bill Increase
450,000	6,187.50	6,241.50	54.00
650,000	8,937.50	9,015.50	78.00
850,000	11,687.50	11,789.50	102.00

**** This does not include CPA surcharge****

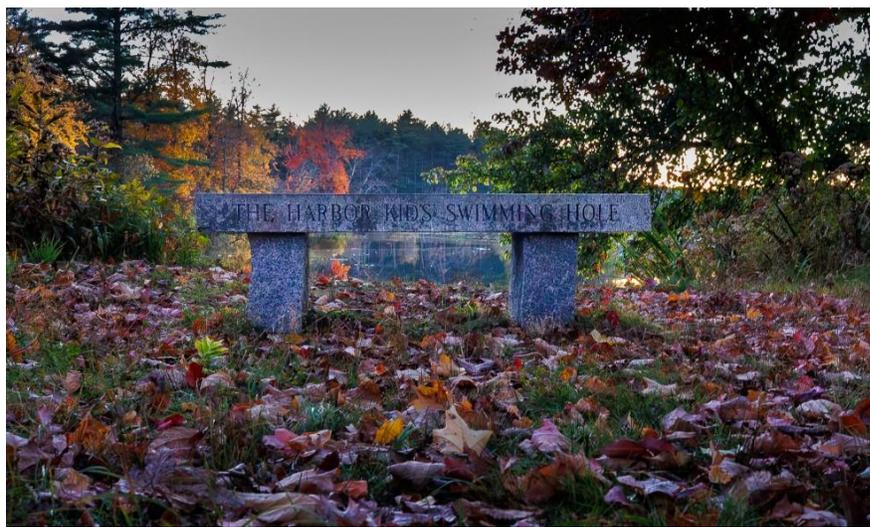
-- Townsend invests roughly \$125,000 to recruit and train each officer. After gaining experience, many leave for higher wages or more favorable schedules elsewhere.

-- Tax bill increase is based upon DLS current annual rate estimates. **



Failure to pass...

- If Town residents do not authorize placing Article 5 on the Annual Election ballot, the Town and the Police Bargaining Unit would return to negotiations to discuss a revised agreement.
- Police officers would continue providing services under the wage adjustments approved in Article 4, if Article 4 is adopted by Town Meeting.



Article 6 – Lease Authorization for Squannacook Meadows



Purpose: Authorize the Select Board to enter into a new fifty (50) year lease agreement with the Townsend Ashby Youth Soccer Association for the use of Town-owned land known as the Open Space parcels at Squannacook Meadows.

Benefits:

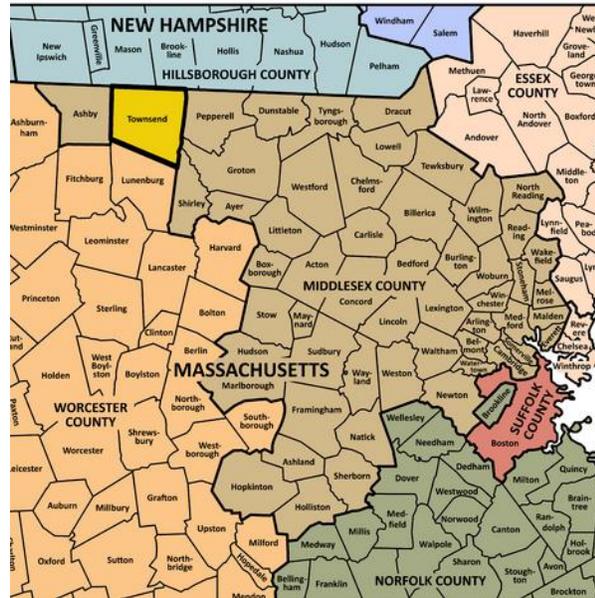
- Maintain Open Space
- Endangered species habitat preservation.
- Continued use of space for recreation.



Article 7 – Board of Health

The Board of Health originally requested that this article be presented but has subsequently asked the Select Board not to take action at this time.

TOWNSEND, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS



Article 8 – Town Clerk Codifications



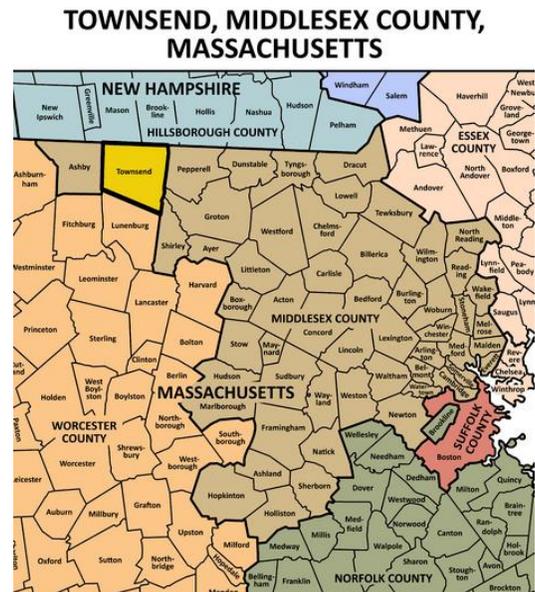
The Town Clerk has asked for a motion to table.



Article 9 – Election Account Replenishment

Purpose: The town transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$35,000 to replenish the balance of the appropriation established under Article 4 of the May 7, 2024, Annual Town Meeting for expenses associated with Special Town Meetings and Required Elections.

- Account - ST MART₄ 5-7-2024 ELECTIONS
 - Account is showing \$8,199.62 remaining as of 3.11.26 Town Accountant report



Article 10 and Article 11 Technical Code Corrections

- Code of the Town of Townsend by replacing all references to "Board of Selectmen" with "Select Board," and all references to "Selectmen" with "Select Board members," wherever such terms appear in the Town Code.
- Code of the Town of Townsend by making the following corrections: replacing the word "nonsubstantive" with "non-substantive," and replacing the word "insure" with "ensure."



**Annual Town Election –
April 27th, 2026, 7:00 AM to
8:00 PM at Town Hall.**

**Annual Town Meeting –
May 5th, 2026, North
Middlesex Regional High
School, 7pm**

Thank you!

