

Summary of Warrant Article 11 Omnibus Capital Items

The nine capital expenditures listed on 17 are part of the Town’s Five-Year Capital Program and have been approved by the Select Board, Finance Committee, and where appropriate, the Permanent Building Committee and Sustainability Committee. The complete Capital Improvement Program document is available on the Town Administrator website. All are proposed to be funded from the Town’s Free Cash reserves and are not part of the real estate tax assessment. No additional taxes need to be raised to fund these projects.

Capital Item	Free Cash Request	PBC Recommendations	Sustainability Committee Recommendation
1 IT Hardware	\$27,000		
2 New Automated Trash Collection - Trash and Recycling Bins	\$310,000		
3 Replace Police Department Tasers and Cartridges	\$17,000		
4 Handheld Radar Police Department	\$5,000		
5 CPR Machines Fire Department	\$44,200		
6 Electronic Handheld Voting Devices Town Meeting	\$12,000		
7 Spofford School Flooring Year 2	\$90,000	Yes	
8 Spofford School - Feasibility and Design HVAC Electrification	\$75,000	Yes	Yes
9 Engineering Design Services for New DPW Facility Phase II - Schematic	\$248,000	Yes	
Total ARTICLE 11	\$828,200		

1. **IT Hardware:** The Town Administrator works with the Town’s IT Consultant to develop a 5-year technology plan for the Town. This plan is funded through the annual IT appropriation in the Town’s operating budget, as well as Free Cash for one-time expenditures. In addition, state or federal grants will be pursued whenever possible. For Fiscal Year 2024, the request in Article 11 to appropriate \$27,000 for IT Hardware would fund the replacement of servers for Town Hall and the Police Station, including software updates. These are one-time expenditures not covered in the FY23 operating budget for technology. The servers are beyond useful life and need to be replaced. The servers are part of a data storage program that relies on a combination of on-site server storage and cloud storage to provide redundancy as a protective measure against cybersecurity threats, as well as for data recovery.

2. **New Automated Trash Collection – Trash and Recycling Bins:** The Town extend the curbside collection contract with Waste Management, but is shifting from the current manual collection method to an automated collection method. Moving from a manual to an automated collection method means that the Town must make an up-front capital investment to purchase the standardized containers required for Waste Management’s trucks. Each participating household will receive one standard 64-gallon trash container and one standard 64-gallon recycling container free of charge. Households will have the option to purchase multiple containers, but must pay an up-front cost for the container, as well as an annual service fee. Delivery of the barrels to residents will begin on June 12th; the containers will be staged at Town Hall in each morning during a period of 6 days and will be delivered to households the same day that they are initially dropped off at Town Hall. Waste Management has offered to work with the Town to arrange for a third party to collect existing plastic and metal trash and recycling barrels that residents no longer need. Article 11 funds the cost of the Town ordering trash and recycling bins for participating residents. There is grant funding available to offset the capital cost of purchasing the containers. The Town is planning on submitting a grant application once a contract is signed and the cart order is finalized.
3. **Replace Police Department Tasers and Cartridges:** The Police Department currently supplies each officer in the department with a taser and replacement cartridges. These tasers and cartridges are expired and beyond warranty. This warrant article would fund officer cartridges, holsters docking stations and software for the 4 new units. Officers will share tasers by shift instead of having them assigned due to the drastic cost increase since the Tasers were first purchased. The price of training cartridges will be maintained in the Police operation budget.
4. **Handheld Radar Police Department:** The request is to use Free Cash to purchase a handheld radar to replace the existing one that is beyond warranty and cannot be repaired.
5. **CPR Machines Fire Department:** The Fire Department would like to purchase two mechanical Chest Compressor (CPR) devices that provide continuous chest compressions to a patient who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The devices would take the place of a first responder when CPR is required. The cost does include a 5-year maintenance agreement that covers all repairs, battery replacement and annual preventative maintenance.
6. **Electronic Handheld Voting Devices Town Meeting:** This request is for 500 units of handheld electronic voting devices to be used at Town Meeting. This project is supported by our Town Moderator. It would allow for privacy in voting and immediate, accurate vote counts.
7. **Spofford School Flooring Year 2:** This Article would fund year 2 of a 3-year floor replacement project at Spofford Pond. \$60,000 was funded at last year’s Town Meeting.
8. **Spofford School – Feasibility and Design HVAC Electrification:** In the Town’s 5-Year

Capital Improvement Program, from fiscal years 2024 through 2008, are the replacement of the HVAC systems at Cole and Spofford Schools, including boilers and controls. In advance of those projects, the School Committee is working collaboratively with the Sustainability Committee and Permanent Building Committee on the feasibility of replacing these systems through electrification. The Town completed an Electrification Scoping Audit through National Grid, which demonstrated that the electrification of these systems would reduce the carbon footprint for the elementary school buildings significantly. Current grants and incentives through National Grid and the state's Green Communities program could cover a significant portion of the installation costs, potentially making electrification more cost effective than replacing with traditional fossil-fuel-burning systems. The next step in the process is to appropriate money to fund a more detailed study with firmer cost estimates, starting with Spofford Pond Elementary, since it has the oldest heating system.

This Warrant Article would fund Feasibility Study & Schematic Design for Spofford School. The Town would work with a consultant team and further explore options and generate schematic information and cost estimate specific for Spofford. The Sustainability Committee received a \$75,000 order of magnitude estimate for the Feasibility Study & Schematic Design from an architectural firm that specializes in school construction and building systems. The Feasibility & Schematic Design would provide a plan for next steps, including funding full design and construction plans for bidding.

9. **Engineering Design Services for New DPW Facility Phase II – Schematic:** At last year's Town Meeting voters appropriated \$50,000 for Phase I of the design and permitting of a new DPW Facility: design and permitting of the access drive. The access drive is currently in the permitting phase with the Conservation Commission.

For the next step in building the new DPW facility, MA procurement laws require that the town solicit Request for Proposals (RFP) for Engineering and Designer services. In preparation for a 2023 ATM appropriation for these engineering services, the town began to research an appropriate cost. After receiving two independent preliminary cost estimates of approximately \$1.4 million for full services, the town elected not to seek funding for the entirety of the design. Instead, the town is seeking a more modest appropriation of \$248,000 for a Schematic (20% Design). The benefits of this approach are two-fold. First, it was clear that the \$1.4M proposals were conservative to buffer many unknowns at this stage of the process. By appropriating funding as an iterative process, the selected engineer design team can proceed with more confidence on the remaining designing fund, thereby appropriating funds without as much contingency and to avoid over-burdening the tax payer unnecessarily. Second, this allows this important town project to proceed over the next year and make steady, yet important progress. As stated previously, it's been nearly 20 years since the town first contemplated the need to replace the facility and this design time is all the more critical in 2023. This 20% schematic design will provide critical preliminary information such as but not limited to: space needs assessment, Zoning analysis, Existing Conditions Plan, Concept Site Plan, Wetland and Geotechnical investigations, and a conceptual level estimate.

Should the voters approve funding for schematic design, the Town would solicit an RFP for designer selection services. An engineering/architectural firm would submit proposals to a town selection committee and the most qualified designer would be selected based on the committee's aggregated scoring. A designer fee "not to exceed" the appropriation would then be negotiated. By budget season next year, the goal would be to have a more accurate cost to fund the rest of the design with a similar process and fully design and permit the project through the various town boards and commissions. In this timeline, design and permitting would be completed so that construction funding can be requested at the 2025 ATM. That would have the opening the new facility sometime in late 2026 or early 2027.