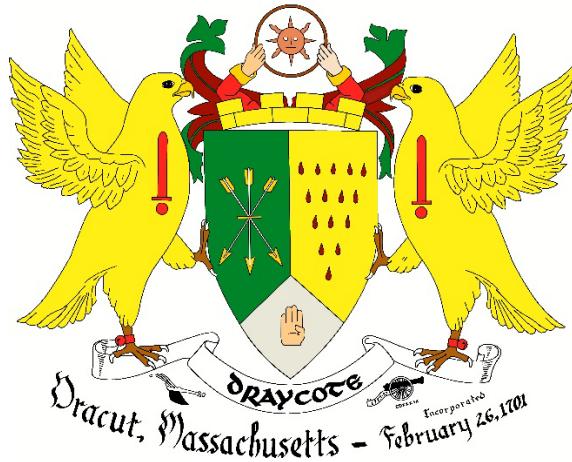


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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO FALL TOWN MEETING

Fiscal Year 2026



NOVEMBER 10, 2025
Town Meeting

November 06, 2025

To the Citizens of Dracut:

The Finance Committee respectfully submits the following recommendations for the articles presented in this Town Meeting Warrant. Our goal is to help voters make well-informed decisions in the interest of the Town's long-term fiscal stability at our November 10, 2025 Town Meeting.

The role of the Finance Committee, as defined by the Town Charter and Bylaws, is to review all financial matters that come before Town Meeting, including the Town Manager's annual budget and any warrant articles that involve the expenditure of funds. The Committee acts independently of the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen to assess and prioritize responsible stewardship of public funds.

The Committee meets regularly with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager/ Finance Director to review financial statements, fiscal matters, and short- and long-term financial projections. We have evaluated each warrant article with financial implications considering available resources, ongoing obligations, and the Town's strategic priorities.

Our recommendations are presented alongside each article and include vote counts and brief rationales.

We thank the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager/ Finance Director, Board of Selectmen, department heads, and citizens of Dracut for their collaboration and. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and for your thoughtful consideration of the matters before you.

Respectfully submitted,

Cori Stott, Chair

On behalf of the Finance Committee:

Rich Cowan, Emily Mattox, Nancy McDonald, & Alyssa Nazzarro

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ARTICLE 2 – New Joseph A. Campbell Elementary School

The School Building Committee voted to postpone this article to a future Special Town Meeting to take advantage of anticipated increases in per pupil reimbursement rates expected to begin January 1, 2026, per communications from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

The Finance Committee unanimously agreed to take no action on Article 2.

ARTICLE 4 – Repeal of Past Articles

This article seeks to repeal two Town Meeting votes from 2015 regarding the use of revenues from the Parker School. Approval would direct all funds exceeding facility maintenance costs to the Town's General Fund.

The Finance Committee discussed that these funds, generated by a Dracut Public Schools resource, should remain exclusively dedicated to school use.

The Finance Committee voted 4-1 to not recommend approval of Article 4.

ARTICLE 5 – Unpaid Bills

This is a routine article that seeks Town Meeting approval to pay any unpaid bills. Under Massachusetts General Law, unpaid bills from a prior fiscal year can only be paid from the current year's appropriations with the specific approval of Town Meeting. There are three (3) unpaid bills from W.B. Mason on the 2025 Fall Town Meeting Warrant totaling \$107.74.

The Finance Committee unanimously voted to recommended approval of Article 5.

ARTICLE 6 – Personnel Bylaw Amendments –Chapters 11 & 13

This article seeks Town Meeting approval to amend the Personnel Bylaw. The Finance Committee reviewed one fiscal component concerning sick leave accrual. The amendment would cap retiree sick time payouts for employees hired after July 1, 2021. The change is intended to limit the Town's future sick leave liability; in the past two years, approximately \$200,000 has been paid out in retiree sick time.

The Finance Committee voted 4-0 to recommend approval of Article 6 with one member not present for the vote.

ARTICLE 8 –Amend Town Bylaw Chapter 14 Article VIII, Section 1

This article requests Town Meeting approval to require a surety bond from any contractor completing sewer work in the Town. The bond serves to protect the public and clients from potential financial harm due to the contractor's failure to fulfill contractual or legal obligations.

The Finance Committee voted 4-0 to recommend approval of Article 8 with one member not present for the vote.

ARTICLE 11 –Audit of Dracut Public Schools

This article requests Town Meeting approval to fund an additional external audit of the Dracut Public Schools, separate from the annual independent audit already conducted. The Finance Committee noted that the proposed appropriation does not specify a maximum expenditure or clearly define the purpose of the audit.

The Finance Committee unanimously voted to not recommend approval of Article 11.

ARTICLE 16 –Citizen Petition

In 2021, the petitioner was granted a tax-free disability retirement benefit equal to 74% of salary following an on-duty injury as a Dracut police officer. This article requests increasing that benefit to 80% once the petitioner reaches mandatory retirement age or would have completed 32 years of service, applied retroactively to the original retirement date.

The Finance Committee discussed the negative financial impact to the Town, including retroactive costs and future precedent, noting that payments would be made through the Middlesex County Retirement System but ultimately assessed to the Town.

The Finance Committee unanimously voted to not recommend approval of Article 16.