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Annual Town Meeting – May 5, 2026
Fiscal Year 2027

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TOWN OF COLRAIN
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Annual Town Meeting Warrant
Fiscal Year 2027

FRANKLIN SS:

To either of the Constables of the Town of Colrain in the County of Franklin.

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said town, qualified to vote on town affairs, to meet at the Colrain Central School, located at 22 Jacksonville Road at 6:00 PM in said town on Tuesday the fifth day in May 2026, there and then to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to hear and act upon the report of the Select Board and other offices, departments, committees, or other agencies of said Town, or take any other action related thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to hear and act upon the report of the Select Board and other offices.

Explanation: See article description above.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide the sum of \$15.35 for the payment of invoice incurred in a prior fiscal year to Aztec for copier expenses, or take any action relative thereto.

4/5 Vote Required.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Fifteen Dollars and Thirty-Five Cents (\$15.35) from FY26 Town Office Support for payment of a prior year invoice to Aztec for copier expenses.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This amount covers an outstanding FY25 invoice from Aztec.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to set the compensation of elected officials as provided by G.L. c.41, §108, to be made effective from July 1, 2026, as presented below, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTIONS

MOTION: Move the Town vote to set the compensation of elected officials to be made effective July 1, 2026 as presented in table below.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This article sets Town officials' stipends and the Town Clerk's salary for FY2027.

	Voted	Proposed
	FY 2026	FY 2027
Select Board, Chair	\$3,600	\$3,600
Select Board, Clerk	\$3,600	\$3,600
Select Board, Member	\$3,600	\$3,600
Moderator	\$120	\$120
Town Clerk	\$26,516	\$27,258
Board of Assessors, Chair	\$3,600	\$3,600
Board of Assessors, Member	\$3,600	\$3,600
Board of Assessors, Member	\$3,600	\$3,600

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds sums of money for the FY2027 Omnibus Budget items, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million, Three Hundred and Twenty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred and Fifty-Six Dollars (\$2,324,356), and transfer from the Broadband Enterprise Fund, the sum of Sixteen Thousand and Nine Hundred Dollars (\$16,900), for a total sum of Two Million, Three Hundred Forty-One Thousand, Two Hundred and Fifty-Six Dollars (\$2,341,256) deemed necessary to fund the Town's FY2027 Omnibus Budget and as set forth in the budget document "Omnibus Budget – Article 4", as attached to this Warrant.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding supports the Town's operations in FY2027.

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$364,161 and transfer from the Quintus Allen Fund the sum of \$1,850 for a total sum of \$366,011 to be used for the Franklin County Technical School District's annual operating assessment, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred and Sixty-Four Thousand, One Hundred and Sixty-One Dollars (\$364,161), and transfer One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$1,850) from the Quintus Allen Fund, for a total sum of Three Hundred and Sixty-Six Thousand and Eleven Dollars (\$366,011) to fund the Franklin County Technical School District's operating assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding supports the Franklin County Technical School District's annual operations.

MOTIONS

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,808 to be used for the Franklin County Technical School District's annual capital assessment, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Eight Hundred and Eight Dollars (\$4,808) to fund the Franklin County Technical School District's capital assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This amount contributes to the Franklin County Technical School District's capital projects.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,782,901 to be used for the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's annual operating assessment, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty-Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and One Dollars (\$2,782,901) to fund the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's operating assessment.

NOT Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding ensures the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's operational needs are met.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$68,379 to be used for the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's annual capital assessment, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-Eight Thousand, Three Hundred and Seventy-Nine Dollars (\$68,379) to fund the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's capital assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This amount is paying debt service on capital projects at Colrain Central School and MTRS.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$7,500 from the Assessors' Stabilization Fund to fund the purchase of upgraded assessment software to make it compatible for work with outside assessors and to meet current industry standards, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500) from the Assessors' Stabilization Fund to fund the purchase of upgraded assessment software to make it compatible for work with outside assessors and to meet current industry standards.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

MOTIONS

Explanation: Will allow the Town's Assessing Department software to work seamlessly with outside vendor.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$5,000 from the Technology Stabilization Fund to fund the Town server to cloud conversion project, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) from the Technology Stabilization Fund to fund the Town server to cloud conversion project.

Explanation: Town-wide computer server is at end of life and is no longer supported for MS Office Suite, which is the Town's main computing software.

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$75,000 from Free Cash to pay down the Bond Anticipation Note for the Fire Vehicle, or take any action relative thereto.

**MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) from Free Cash to pay down the Bond Anticipation Note for the Fire Vehicle.
Recommended by Finance Committee.**

Explanation: This will pay down debt service on Town Fire Vehicle purchased in FY26.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash to the OPEB Trust Fund the sum of \$30,000 to meet the Town's cost of other post-employment benefits (OPEB), or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) from Free Cash to the OPEB Trust Fund to fund the Town's other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligation.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This continues to fund the Town's liability for post-employment benefits for Town employees.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash to the General Stabilization Fund the sum of \$185,000, or take any action relative thereto.

**MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of One Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$185,000) from Free Cash to the Town's General Stabilization Fund.
Recommended by Finance Committee.**

Explanation: Adding funds to the General Stabilization Fund helps maintain the Town's financial health and assists in generating interest revenue.

MOTIONS

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from the Highway Vehicle Stabilization Fund, or borrow a sum of money for the purchase of a new Highway Department grader, said funds to be used in addition to any funds granted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) through its Grant Central program, and to authorize the Select Board to enter into all agreements and take all necessary actions to accept and expend such grant funds, provided that a local match is authorized by this vote, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to approve the purchase of a new Highway Department grader for the sum of Four Hundred and Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$460,000), and to fund said purchase by transferring the sum of Two Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$210,000) from the Highway Vehicle Stabilization Fund and expending Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) from a Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) grant through its Grant Central program, and to authorize the Select Board to enter into all agreements and take all necessary actions to accept and expend such funds and to purchase such grader.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This will allow the Town to purchase a new Highway Department grader *if* the Town receives the grant award and allows for the required match.

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from the Highway Vehicle Stabilization Fund the sum of \$85,000 for the rehabilitation and restoration of 2001 International Chassis for use as a highway vehicle, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$85,000) from the Highway Vehicle Stabilization Fund for the rehabilitation and restoration of the 2001 International Chassis for use as a highway vehicle.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This will allow the Highway Department to build a large truck to use for snow removal operations using the Fire Department surplus vehicle chassis.

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$10,000 for the purchase of an Everest CK 640 Snowplow to be used by the Highway Department, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) from Free Cash for the purchase of an Everest CK 640 Snowplow to be used by the Highway Department.

Explanation: This will fund the purchase of a new snowplow requested by the Highway Department.

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to **create a special purpose stabilization fund** pursuant to G.L. c.40, §5B for the design, construction, reconstruction, and major repair of Town-owned buildings and facilities; or take any action relative thereto.

2/3 Vote Required.

MOTIONS

MOTION: Move the Town vote to create a Facilities Stabilization Fund, which shall be a special purpose stabilization fund pursuant to G.L. c.40, §5B for the purpose of funding design, construction, reconstruction, and capital repairs of Town-owned buildings and facilities.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This will allow the Town to create a Facilities Stabilization Fund for the designated purpose identified.

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to operate the Broadband Enterprise Fund by raising and appropriating or transferring from available funds, the total sum of \$744,618, or take any other action related thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to appropriate the following sums to operate the Broadband Enterprise Fund:

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Salaries/Wages	\$ 8,000
Expenses	\$557,093
Debt Service	\$162,625
<u>Indirect Costs</u>	<u>\$ 16,900</u>
Total:	\$744,618

and to raise said sums from the following:

<i>Source</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<u>Enterprise Receipts</u>	<u>\$744,618</u>
Total:	\$744,618

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding supports the operation and maintenance of the Town’s broadband services and allows for the Town to cover the overhead of services provided.

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote Town to **approve annual spending limits for Revolving Funds** established in the Town Bylaws, pursuant to .G.L. c.44, §53E½, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, or take any action relative thereto.

Authorized Revolving Funds	Department, Board/Committee Agency or Officer	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
Plumbing Inspections	Plumbing Inspector	\$3,500
Electrical Inspections	Electrical Inspector	\$3,500
Fire Inspections	Fire Chief	\$3,500
Building Department	Building Commissioner	\$15,000
Dog Fund	Town Clerk	\$15,000

MOTIONS

MOTION: Move the Town vote to approve annual spending limits as listed below for Revolving Funds established in the Town Bylaws, pursuant to G.L. c.44, §53E½, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Authorized Revolving Funds	Department, Board/Committee Agency or Officer	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
Plumbing Inspections	Plumbing Inspector	\$3,500
Electrical Inspections	Electrical Inspector	\$3,500
Fire Inspections	Fire Chief	\$3,500
Building Department	Building Commissioner	\$15,000
Dog Fund	Town Clerk	\$15,000

Explanation: This article sets spending limits to ensure the responsible use of already-authorized revolving funds.

ARTICLE 20. To see if the town will vote to **authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept, and expend state or federal grants that may become available**, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept, and expend any state or federal grants that may become available.

Explanation: This article allows the Town to seek and utilize grant funding sources for various projects and initiatives.

ARTICLE 21. To see if the Town will vote to **authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for construction and/or maintenance of highways** or other permissible expenditures from the Transportation Bond monies (Chapter 90) and authorize the Select Board to accept any monies from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and/or maintenance related work, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for the construction and/or maintenance of highways, whether pursuant to G.L. c.90 or any other enabling authority, and to accept any monies from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and/or maintenance related work.

Explanation: This article facilitates the Town’s ability to manage and fund highway construction and maintenance projects.

ARTICLE 22. To see if the Town will vote to **authorize the Treasurer to borrow in anticipation of Chapter 90 State reimbursement funds** for road repair projects, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTIONS

MOTION: Move the Town vote to authorize the Treasurer to borrow in anticipation of Chapter 90 state reimbursement funds for road repair projects.

Explanation: This article ensures the Town can finance road repair projects while awaiting state reimbursement.

ARTICLE 23. To see if the Town will vote to **authorize the Treasurer to enter into compensating balance agreements** during Fiscal Year 2027 as permitted by Massachusetts G.L. c.44, §53F, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to authorize the Treasurer to enter into compensating balance agreements during Fiscal Year 2027 pursuant to G.L. c.44, §53F.

Explanation: This article allows the Town to manage its funds efficiently through compensating balance agreements. A compensating balance is a minimum balance that an organization agrees to maintain in its bank account as part of receiving favorable loans or other services from a bank.

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town will vote to **amend the Town of Colrain Zoning Bylaws to substitute the term “Select Board” for the term “Board of Selectmen”**; to substitute the word “Selectpersons” for the word “Selectmen”; and to substitute the word “Selectperson” for the word “Selectman”; and further affirm that upon the effective date of such amendment, the term “Board of Selectmen” shall be taken to mean “Select Board” and the term “Selectmen” shall be taken to mean “Selectpersons” and the term “Selectman” shall be taken to mean “Selectperson” for the purposes of all laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, or other documents that refer to or are applicable to the Town of Colrain Zoning Bylaws, or take any action relative thereto.

2/3 Vote Required.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to amend the Town of Colrain Zoning Bylaws to substitute the term “Select Board” for the term “Board of Selectmen”; to substitute the word “Selectpersons” for the word “Selectmen”; and to substitute the word “Selectperson” for the word “Selectman”; and further affirm that upon the effective date of such amendment, the term “Board of Selectmen” shall be taken to mean “Select Board” and the term “Selectmen” shall be taken to mean “Selectpersons” and the term “Selectman” shall be taken to mean “Selectperson” for the purposes of all laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, or other documents that refer to or are applicable to the Town of Colrain Zoning Bylaws.

ARTICLE 25. To see if the Town will vote to approve the warrant article, “Resolution in Support of an ‘Act Establishing Medicare for All’”, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to approve the “Resolution in Support of an ‘Act Establishing Medicare for All’”, as attached to this Warrant.

Omnibus Budget - Article 4

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
STIPEND	120	120	0	0.00%
OTHER EXPENSES	60	100	40	66.67%
<u>114 - TOWN MODERATOR</u>	180	220	40	22.22%
<u>115 - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE EXPENSES</u>	100	0	(100)	-100.00%
SALARIES ELECTED OFFICIALS	10,800	10,800	0	0.00%
ADVERTISING	1,500	1,500	0	0.00%
OTHER EXPENSES	1,250	1,250	0	0.00%
<u>122 - SELECT BOARD</u>	13,550	13,550	0	0.00%
SALARIES & WAGES PERMANENT	97,375	102,244	4,869	5.00%
OTHER EXPENSES	2,000	1,000	(1,000)	-50.00%
<u>123 - ADMINISTRATOR</u>	99,375	103,244	3,869	3.89%
<u>131 - FINANCE COMMITTEE EXPENSES</u>	330	150	(180)	-54.55%
<u>132 - RESERVE FUND</u>	2,000	1,000	(1,000)	-50.00%
ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE	4,970	5,490	520	10.46%
ACCOUNTING SERVICES	30,000	30,900	900	3.00%
ANNUAL TOWN AUDIT	17,000	17,500	500	2.94%
<u>135 - ACCOUNTANT</u>	51,970	53,890	1,920	3.69%
DIR OF ASSESSING SALARY	50,960	52,489	1,529	3.00%
ASSESSORS STIPENDS	10,800	10,800	0	0.00%
ASSESSORS MAPPING	0	0	0	
ASSESSORS EXPENSES	17,000	23,375	6,375	37.50%
<u>141 - ASSESSORS</u>	78,760	86,664	7,904	10.04%
TREASURER/COLLECTOR SALARY	70,000	72,500	2,500	3.57%
ASST TREASURER/COLLECTOR WAGES		19,435	19,435	
TAX TITLE CUSTODIAN	5,000	5,000	0	0.00%
TREASURER STIPEND	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%
PROF SERVICES/PAYROLL	10,300	8,280	(2,020)	-19.61%
SOFTWARE	11,400	10,325	(1,075)	-9.43%
POSTAGE	2,400	2,500	100	4.17%
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1,250	2,775	1,525	122.00%
SUPPLIES	2,150	2,500	350	16.28%

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
BUSINESS TRAVEL	850	900	50	5.88%
LICENSES/DUES	90	180	90	100.00%
<u>145 - TREASURER/COLLECTOR</u>	104,440	125,395	20,955	20.06%
ADMINISTRATIVE ASST WAGES (Support)	33,690	19,435	(14,255)	-42.31%
BOARDS & COMMITTEE CLERICAL	2,621	2,912	291	11.11%
CONSTABLE	300	300	0	0.00%
TOWN OFFICE ELECTRICITY	4,500	4,500	0	0.00%
HEATING	4,000	4,000	0	0.00%
TOWN OFFICE REPAIRS & MAINT	5,000	5,000	0	0.00%
TOWN HALL GROUNDS	5,500	5,500	0	0.00%
TOWN HALL SECURITY	500	400	(100)	-20.00%
TOWN HALL MISC	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%
TOWN HALL FORMS/SUPPLIES/MACHINERY	3,190	3,190	0	0.00%
WEBSITE SUPPORT	1,340	1,340	0	0.00%
IT SUPPORT/LICENSING	37,040	38,522	1,482	4.00%
COPIER LEASES	3,700	3,700	0	0.00%
OFFICE POSTAGE	800	800	0	0.00%
OFFICE TELEPHONE	3,660	3,660	0	0.00%
OFFICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1,000	500	(500)	-50.00%
<u>150 - TOWN OFFICE SUPPORT</u>	107,841	94,759	(13,082)	-12.13%
<u>151 - TOWN COUNSEL</u>	20,000	15,000	(5,000)	-25.00%
<u>158 - TAX TITLE</u>	10,000	10,000	0	0.00%
SALARY	26,516	27,258	742	2.80%
CLERK ELECTION/REGISTRAR WORKERS	4,842	4,842	0	0.00%
OTHER EXPENSES	3,439	3,740	301	8.75%
<u>160 - TOWN CLERK/ELECTIONS</u>	34,797	35,840	1,043	3.00%
<u>171 - CONSERVATION COMMISSION EXP</u>	500	150	(350)	-70.00%
<u>175 - PLANNING BOARD EXP</u>	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%
<u>192 - TOWN OFFICE CUSTODIAN</u>	7,103	7,600	497	7.00%
<u>195 - TOWN REPORTS</u>		1,500	1,500	
<u>100 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT</u>	531,946	549,962	18,016	3.39%

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
CHIEF SALARY	37,597	82,554	44,957	119.58%
SALARIES	80,000	32,000	(48,000)	-60.00%
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	4,000	3,000	(1,000)	-25.00%
TRAINING	6,000	3,000	(3,000)	-50.00%
OFFICE EXPENSE	2,000	2,500	500	25.00%
FUEL	8,500	6,500	(2,000)	-23.53%
EQUIPMENT	20,000	15,000	(5,000)	-25.00%
<u>210 - POLICE</u>	158,097	144,554	(13,543)	-8.57%
CHIEF SALARY	7,056	10,000	2,944	41.72%
ADMINISTRATIVE ASST	2,622	2,622	0	0.00%
FIREFIGHTER SALARIES	50,000	50,000	0	0.00%
OFFICER STIPENDS	3,036	3,036	0	0.00%
TRAINING	15,000	15,000	0	0.00%
ELECTRICITY	8,000	8,000	0	0.00%
BUILDING HEAT	7,000	4,000	(3,000)	-42.86%
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	6,000	3,000	(3,000)	-50.00%
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	15,000	15,000	0	0.00%
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	30,000	30,000	0	0.00%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	5,000	2,500	(2,500)	-50.00%
SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGY	4,600	4,600	0	0.00%
TELEPHONE/INTERNET	3,300	3,300	0	0.00%
RADIO MAINTENANCE	3,000	3,000	0	0.00%
SUPPLIES	2,100	2,100	0	0.00%
FUEL	2,500	2,500	0	0.00%
LICENSES/DUES	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%
<u>220 - FIRE</u>	165,214	159,658	(5,556)	-3.36%
SALARY	10,289	10,577	288	2.80%
SOFTWARE	3,445	3,445	0	0.00%
SUPPLIES	200	200	0	0.00%
DUES/CERTIFICATION	870	870	0	0.00%
<u>241 - BUILDING INSPECTOR</u>	14,804	15,092	288	1.95%
EMERGENCY MGMT DIR STIPEND	2,100	2,300	200	9.52%
EXPENSES	2,575	2,700	125	4.85%
FRCOG REPC ASSESSMENT	150	150	0	0.00%
<u>291 - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT</u>	4,825	5,150	325	6.74%

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	5,079	5,178	99	1.95%
FCSO REGIONAL SHELTER ASSESSMENT	385	462	77	20.00%
<u>292 - ANIMAL CONTROL</u>	5,464	5,640	176	3.22%
			0	
<u>200 - PUBLIC SAFETY</u>	348,404	330,094	(18,310)	-5.26%
SCHOOL COMMITTEE STIPEND	900	900	0	0.00%
<u>300 - SCHOOL DEPARTMENT</u>	900	900	0	0.00%
<u>300 - EDUCATION</u>	900	900	0	0.00%
SUPERINTENDENT SALARY	90,995	105,884	14,889	16.36%
WAGES	254,435	239,340	(15,095)	-5.93%
OVERTIME	34,275	34,275	0	0.00%
ELECTRICITY	0	0	0	
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	20,900	20,900	0	0.00%
MACHINERY MAINT	43,670	43,670	0	0.00%
BRIDGE EXPENSE	2,000	1,000	(1,000)	-50.00%
DOT COMPLIANCE	2,000	1,000	(1,000)	-50.00%
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	
FUEL	67,116	50,000	(17,116)	-25.50%
ROAD MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	
ROADWAY & SUPPLIES	100,000	110,000	10,000	10.00%
LICENSES/DUES	6,300	6,300	0	0.00%
UNIFORMS	15,000	15,000	0	0.00%
<u>422 - HIGHWAY</u>	636,691	627,369	(9,322)	-1.46%
SEASONAL WAGES	4,319	5,300	981	22.71%
EQUIP MAINTENANCE	10,000	10,000	0	0.00%
CONTRACTED SERVICES	0	0	0	
SALT	57,150	57,150	0	0.00%
SAND	47,150	47,150	0	0.00%
<u>423 - SNOW REMOVAL</u>	118,619	119,600	981	0.83%
<u>424 - STREET LIGHTING</u>	7,000	7,700	700	10.00%
SALARIES	23,740	24,690	950	4.00%
EXPENSES	71,974	73,731	1,757	2.44%
SOLID WASTE DISTRICT ASSESSMENT	7,149	7,838	689	9.64%
<u>433 - TRANSFER STATION</u>	102,863	106,259	3,396	3.30%

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
491 - CEMETERY	1,330	1,330	0	0.00%
			0	
400 - PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES	866,503	862,258	(4,245)	-0.49%
			0	
STIPEND	1,500	1,500	0	0.00%
INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS EXPENSE	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	0	0.00%
511 - ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,500	1,700	200	13.33%
			0	
CLERICAL WAGES	1,538	1,585	48	3.09%
EXPENSE	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>	0	0.00%
512 - BOARD OF HEALTH	2,538	2,585	48	1.87%
513 - REGIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT	12,730	13,990	1,260	9.90%
SPACE RENTALS			0	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	9,926	6,000	(3,926)	-39.55%
FOOD & FOOD SERVICES	9,052	6,000	(3,052)	-33.71%
EXPENSES	<u>1,022</u>	<u>1,000</u>	(22)	-2.15%
541 - COUNCIL ON AGING	20,000	13,000	(7,000)	-35.00%
DISTRICT ASSESSMENT	4,390	4,691	301	6.87%
VETERAN'S BENEFITS	<u>5,040</u>	<u>7,560</u>	2,520	50.00%
543 - VETERANS	9,430	12,251	2,821	29.92%
500 - HUMAN SERVICES	46,197	43,526	(2,671)	-5.78%
DIRECTOR WAGES	43,846	45,074	1,228	2.80%
SUBSTITUTE	0		0	
WAGES	20,353	21,167	814	4.00%
ELECTRICITY	2,600	2,680	80	3.08%
BUILDING HEAT	4,300	3,000	(1,300)	-30.23%
OTHER UTILITIES	60	62	2	3.33%
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	5,750	5,980	230	4.00%
PROGRAMMING	3,000	2,500	(500)	-16.67%
TECHNOLOGY/ONLINE SERVICES	5,245	5,294	49	0.93%
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	2,000	1,500	(500)	-25.00%
SUPPLIES	1,500	1,500	0	0.00%
CLEANING	3,000	1,780	(1,220)	-40.67%
BOOKS	22,216	22,285	69	0.31%

	Budget 2026 Voted	FY27 Select Board Proposed	\$ Diff	% Diff
BUSINESS TRAVEL	500	500	0	0
610 - LIBRARY	114,370	113,322	(1,048)	-0.92%
PITT HOUSE ELECTRICITY/OIL EXPENSES	100	100	0	0.00%
691 - HISTORICAL COMMISSION	100	100	0	0.00%
692 - MEMORIAL DAY	1,000	1,200	200	20.00%
600 - CULTURE & RECREATION	115,470	114,622	(848)	-0.73%
PRINCIPLE	0	0	0	
INTEREST	0	13,822	13,822	
SHORT TERM INTEREST	2,050	2,050	0	0.00%
700 - DEBT SERVICE	2,050	15,872	13,822	674.24%
FRCOG PROCUREMENT ASSESSMENT	2,990	3,144	154	5.15%
FRCOG CORE ASSESSMENT	9,986	9,823	(163)	-1.63%
800 - INTERGOVERNMENTAL	12,976	12,967	(9)	-0.07%
911 - FRANKLIN REG RETIREMENT ASSESS	138,534	134,815	(3,719)	-2.68%
915 - GROUP INSURANCE PREMIUMS	209,858	220,000	10,142	4.83%
PROPERTY & CASUALTY	53,498	46,405	(7,093)	-13.26%
VFIS - POLICE FIRE	7,906	8,035	129	1.63%
945 - LIABILITY INSURANCE	61,404	54,440	(6,964)	-11.34%
946 - PUBLIC OFFICIAL INSURANCE	1,800	1,800	0	0.00%
900 - UNCLASSIFIED	411,596	411,055	(541)	-0.13%
TOTAL OMNIBUS BUDGET (without Education)	2,336,042	2,341,256	5,214	0.22%

FY27 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Understanding This Year's Budget in Plain Terms

A Budget with Real Constraints

- This budget keeps operations steady, building general stabilization funds and paying off debt early
- Municipal budget remains level-service
- Departments reduced or held requests flat
- Some budgets are below last year

Why Are Costs Still Rising?

- Limited new development/growth
- Expansion of land in conservation/protection programs
- School assessments and regional obligations
- Employee benefits and insurance
- Inflation impacting fuel, materials, and services

How Are We Managing the Pressure?

- Absorbing rising costs within existing budgets; may generate less 'Free Cash'
- Delaying hiring in key positions until later in the fiscal year
- Ensuring our costs are covered by fees/charges as allowed
- Using gifts/grants where available

What This Means for Residents

- Tax bills may increase without new services
- Service levels maintained, not expanded
- Some needs postponed this year

Looking Ahead

- Limited growth and increasing reliance on residential taxes
- Rising education costs
- Aging population with growing service needs
- Limited community gathering space; town facilities need investment

Select Board Commitment

- Maintain core services; expand services by building efficiency in programs
- Engage with and build support services for Colrain's aging population
- Continue to plan responsibly for the future
- Remain transparent about challenges



TOWN OF COLRAIN

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Finance Committee
Douglas MacLeay, Chair
Betty Ringwood, Vice-Chair
David Swiderski, Clerk
Deborah Menard

Statement for Annual Town Meeting Budget Pressures and Use of Levy Capacity

Dear Residents:

We would like to take a moment to address the budget before you, along with the broader financial challenges facing the Town, and to clarify how we are balancing this year's budget.

For FY27, the Town's operating budget is approximately \$2,341,256 (or 0.22%) more than last year's budget of \$2,336,042. In other words, the municipal side of the budget remains essentially level, reflecting a continued effort to control local spending.

The most significant cost driver continues to be the Mohawk Regional School District assessment, which is increasing by over \$262,000, or more than 10%, along with additional increases in capital assessments. These are required costs that must be legally funded.

At the same time, under Proposition 2½, the Town's levy limit is only increasing by about \$199,000, including new growth. We're fortunate this year to have an estimated \$85,000 in new growth due to new utility poles in Town. Normally, our annual new growth averages \$30K. Even with this year's unusual new growth, the increase in school costs alone exceeds the total new recurring revenue available to the Town.

To address this gap, we carefully reviewed department requests and reduced those requests by nearly \$80,000. In addition, although we are *not* using available Free Cash to reduce the tax rate, we are:

- Maintaining and drawing down prior years' excess levy capacity, reducing it from approximately \$348,000 to \$259,000; and
- Using stabilization transfers to support capital needs and available Free Cash to add to our General Stabilization Fund to insulate our financial future and to support the Town's bond rating.

This distinction is important. By preserving one-time revenues for known expenses and investments, rather than using them to artificially lower the tax rate, the Town is avoiding the creation of additional structural imbalance in future years. However, the impact is that most taxpayers will see an increase. The estimated average tax bill increase will be approximately \$300.

This approach reflects the underlying challenge we face; required costs, particularly education, are rising faster than our allowable revenue growth and our financial viability is shrinking as excess levy capacity is reduced.

Importantly, the Mohawk Trail Regional School District has informed the Town that, **if nothing changes – no additional consolidation or meaningful structural changes occur within the District – they anticipate future assessment increases similar to what we are experiencing this year.** In its current form, that level of increase is **not affordable for the Town of Colrain.**

While we're able to balance the FY27 budget using excess levy capacity this year, it is not a long-term solution. The structural imbalance between revenues and required expenditures will continue to put pressure on future budgets.

A Proposition 2½ override remains one option to address this, but it comes with clear impacts to taxpayers and requires community support. Further, the Town is being asked to support future capital expenses at both regional schools, Mohawk and Franklin County Technical School. These certainly cannot be raised within the tax levy and will require debt exclusions.

In closing, this budget represents a responsible path forward for this year, but it also highlights the ongoing financial challenges that will require continued efforts and difficult decisions.

Thank you for your attention and your continued engagement in the Town's financial future.

Yours Truly,

Finance Committee Members
Douglas MacLeay, Chair
Betty Ringwood, Vice-Chair
Deborah Menard
David Swiderski, Clerk

Voted: April 9, 2026

Definitions:

Excess Levy Capacity: The gap between the maximum permissible levy and the actual levy.

Free Cash: A certified amount of unrestricted, available funds remaining from the previous fiscal year's operations.

Levy Limit: The maximum amount of property tax revenue a municipality can raise in a given fiscal year.

New Growth: The additional property tax revenue authorized under Proposition 2½, generated by increased valuation from new construction, renovations, or property improvements during calendar year.

Proposition 2 ½: Limits municipal property tax levy to 2.5% of total assessed property value.

Resolution in Support of “Act Establishing Medicare for All”

Annual Town Meeting – May 5, 2026

Whereas: access to health care has become one of the biggest political issues of the day and is of great concern to ourselves and our neighbors; and

Whereas: The U.S. remains one of the few countries that does not provide universal publicly funded health care; and

Whereas: the cost of health care keeps increasing thereby creating a burden and a concern to us all; and

Whereas: the number of people who do not have affordable access to quality health care increases, the health of our communities decreases, and

Whereas: the cost of health insurance increases and the policies include up front costs of co-pays and deductibles that are a burden for employers and employees; and

Whereas: in particular, the money spent by Cities and Towns to cover their employees is a large cost to both the employer and the employees; and

Whereas: the Town of Colrain would save approximately \$62,175 per year in insurance costs under the “Act Establishing Medicare for All”, and

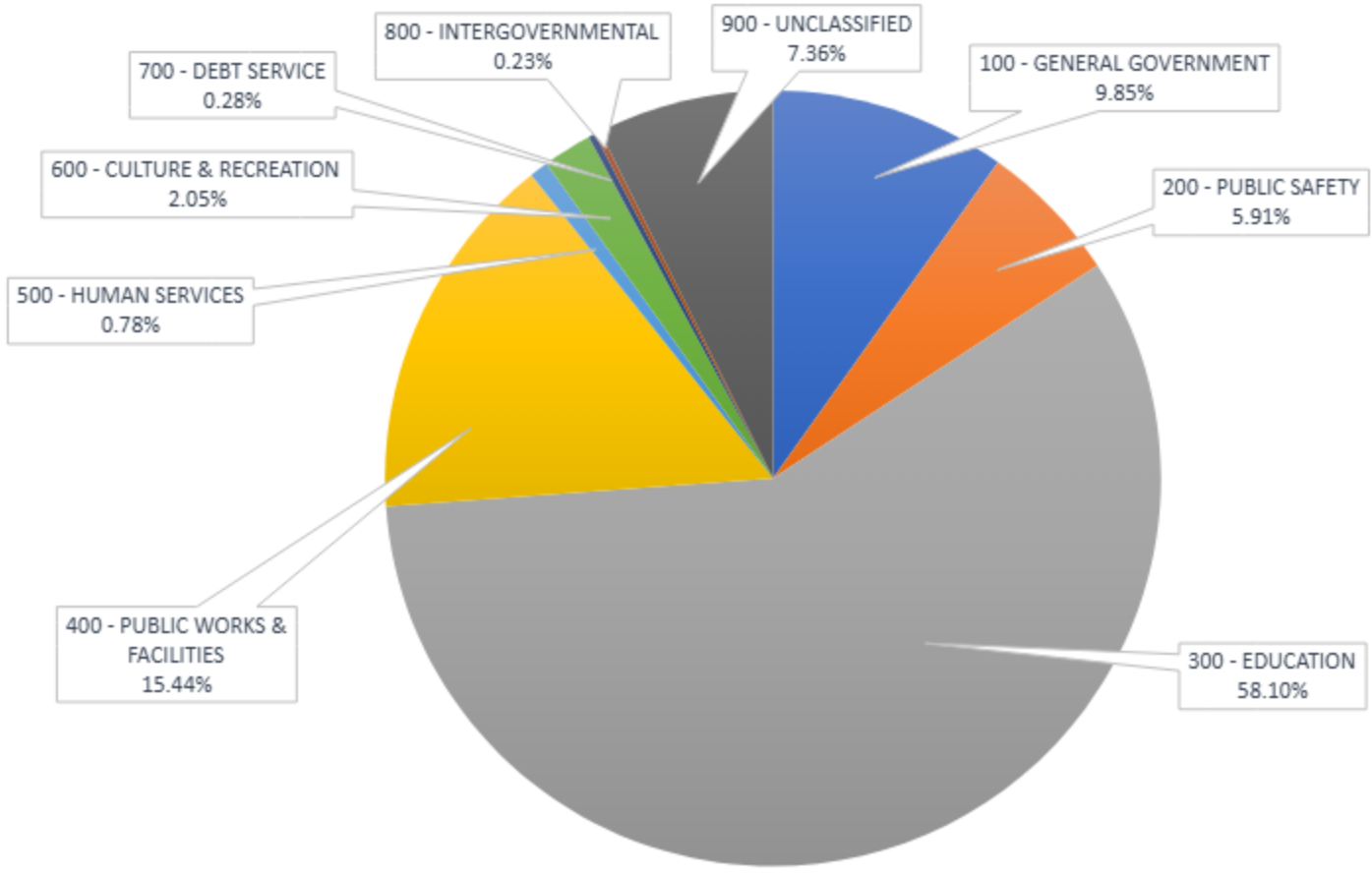
Whereas: these funds could be better spent by Towns to improve the overall quality of life, and by employees to increase wages and salaries and other benefits; and

Whereas: Massachusetts has been a leader in providing coverage for quality health care for its people; and

Whereas: there is an alternative means of providing health care for all that also provides better coverage, without co-pays and deductibles, and includes medical, dental and preventative care.

Therefore be it Resolved: That the Town of Colrain endorses the House and Senate Bill, “Act Establishing Medicare for All” (S.860 & H.1405) and will communicate its support to our State Representative and State Senator.

FY2027 Budget



- 100 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT
- 200 - PUBLIC SAFETY
- 300 - EDUCATION
- 400 - PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES
- 500 - HUMAN SERVICES
- 600 - CULTURE & RECREATION
- 700 - DEBT SERVICE
- 800 - INTERGOVERNMENTAL
- 900 - UNCLASSIFIED