



TOWN OF COLRAIN
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Annual Town Meeting Warrant
Fiscal Year 2026

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 sixth day in May 2025, 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: This article allows the town to receive annual reports and updates from various departments and committees.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide the sum of \$5.29 for the payment of invoice incurred in a prior fiscal year to Aztec for copier expenses, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Five Dollars and Twenty-Nine Cents (\$5.29) from FY25 Town Office Support for the payment of invoice to Aztec for copier expenses incurred in a prior fiscal year.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

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

4/5 Vote Required.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to adopt and enact the amendments to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Charter, said amendment(s) having been proposed by a two-thirds majority of the weighted vote of the full membership of the FRCOG Council and a

majority vote of the FRCOG Executive Committee, with said amendment(s) taking full effect immediately upon adoption by two-thirds of the member towns unless a later effective date is otherwise specified; or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to adopt and enact the amendments to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Charter, said amendment(s) having been proposed by a two-thirds majority of the weighted vote of the full membership of the FRCOG Council and a majority vote of the FRCOG Executive Committee, with said amendment(s) taking full effect immediately upon adoption by two-thirds of the member towns unless a later effective date is otherwise specified.

Explanation: These amendments aim to improve the governance and operations of the FRCOG.

2/3 vote required.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to set the compensation of elected officials as provided by MGL Chapter 41, Section 108, to be made effective from July 1, 2025 as presented below, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to set the compensation of elected officials to be made effective from July 1, 2025 as presented in table below.

Explanation: Adjustments to officials' stipends and Town Clerk Salary reflect changes for FY2026.

	Voted	Proposed
	FY 2025	FY 2026
Select Board, Chair	\$3,708	\$3,600
Select Board, Clerk	\$3,708	\$3,600
Select Board, Member	\$3,708	\$3,600
Moderator	\$118	\$120
Town Clerk	\$25,869	\$26,516
Board of Assessors, Chair	\$3,692	\$3,600
Board of Assessors, Member	\$3,692	\$3,600
Board of Assessors, Member	\$3,692	\$3,600

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote to accept Mass General Laws Chapter 41, Section 108P, Additional Compensation for Town Treasurer, and vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 for the Town Treasurer's stipend, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to accept Mass General Laws Chapter 41, Section 108P, Additional Compensation for Town Treasurer, and vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000 for the Town Treasurer's stipend for FY26.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This stipend is allowable per MGL and allows the Town to annually recognize the professional certification of the Treasurer/Collector.

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds sums of money for the FY2026 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, Twenty-Six Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixty-Six Dollars (\$2,326,466) and transfer from the OPEB Trust Fund, the sum of Twelve Thousand, Five Hundred and Twenty-Two Dollars (\$12,522), for a total sum of Two Million, Three Hundred, Thirty-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred Eighty-Eight Dollars (\$2,338,988) deemed necessary to fund the Town's FY2026 Omnibus Budget and as set forth in the budget document presented to Town Meeting.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This article covers the Town's expected operating budget for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$349,894 and transfer from the Quintus Allen Fund the sum of \$2,459 for a total sum of \$352,353 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 Three Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred Ninety-Four Dollars (\$349,894) and transfer Two Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty-Nine Dollars (\$2,459) from the Quintus Allen Fund for a total sum of Three Hundred Fifty-Two Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty-Three Dollars (\$352,353) to fund the Franklin County Technical School District's operating assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding supports the technical school's annual operations.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,848 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 Forty-Eight Dollars (\$4,848) to fund the Franklin County Technical School District's capital assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This amount contributes to the school's capital projects.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,510,775 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 Five Hundred and Ten Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$2,510,775) to fund the Mohawk Trail Regional School District's operating assessment.

Recommended by Finance Committee (with reservation).

Explanation: Funding ensures the school district's operational needs are met.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$71,389 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 Seventy-One Thousand Three Hundred and Eighty-Nine Dollars (\$71,389) 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 11. To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,234 for the replacement of the hot water heater at Mohawk Trail Regional School, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Two Hundred and Thirty-Four Dollars (\$6,234) to fund replacement of a hot water heater at Mohawk Trail Regional School.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: To fund replacement of a hot water heater at MTRS.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000 toward the cost of restoration and preservation of town records, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) for the restoration and preservation of permanent town records.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Preserving permanent records is requirement of Massachusetts General Law and maintains access to important records for constituents.

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500 for the Griswold Memorial Library to pay for supplies and services related to crisis management, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) to fund crisis management supplies and services.

NOT Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Requested by the Library Trustees, this funding will allow the library to provide resources during town-wide emergencies or localized weather-related events (loss of power, extreme heat and cold).

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash to OPEB Trust Fund the sum of \$40,000 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 Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) from Free Cash to the OPEB Trust Fund to fund the Town's obligation of other post-employment benefits (OPEB).

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: This fully funds the Town's current liability for post-employment benefits for town employees. Colrain is one of only three towns in Massachusetts with a fully funded OPEB Trust.

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash to the General Stabilization account the sum of \$20,000, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to transfer the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) from Free Cash to the Town's General Stabilization account.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Adding funds to Stabilization funds help maintain the town's financial health and assists in generating interest revenue.

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws by adding a new section to establish and authorize revolving funds for use by certain town departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, § 53E½, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to amend the General Bylaws to establish the section titled 'Departmental Revolving Funds' revolving funds as written below.

Explanation: Adoption of this bylaw is required by MGL to establish annual revolving funds. Revolving funds provide financial flexibility for various town programs.

DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS

1. Purpose.

This bylaw establishes and authorizes revolving funds for use by town departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers in connection with the operation of programs or activities that generate fees, charges or other receipts to support all or some of the expenses of those programs or activities. These revolving funds are established under and governed by General Laws Chapter 44, § 53E½.

2. Expenditure Limitations.

A department or agency head, board, committee or officer may incur liabilities against and spend monies from a revolving fund established and authorized by this bylaw without appropriation subject to the following limitations:

- A. Fringe benefits of full-time employees whose salaries or wages are paid from the fund shall also be paid from the fund.
- B. No liability shall be incurred in excess of the available balance of the fund.
- C. The total amount spent during a fiscal year shall not exceed the amount authorized by town meeting on or before July 1 of that fiscal year, or any increased amount of that authorization that is later approved during that fiscal year by the selectboard and finance committee.

3. Interest.

Interest earned on monies credited to a revolving fund established by this bylaw shall be credited to the general fund.

4. Procedures and Reports.

Except as provided in General Laws Chapter 44, § 53E½ and this bylaw, the laws, rules, regulations, policies or procedures that govern the receipt and custody of town monies and the expenditure and payment of town funds shall apply to the use of a revolving fund established and authorized by this bylaw. The town accountant shall include a statement on the collections credited to each fund, the encumbrances and expenditures charged to the fund and the balance available for expenditure in the regular report the town accountant provides the department, board, committee, agency or officer on appropriations made for its use.

5. Authorized Revolving Funds.

The following table establishes:

- A. Each revolving fund authorized for use by a town department, board, committee, agency or officer, for Fiscal year 2026 and all the subsequent years;
- B. The department or agency head, board, committee or officer authorized to spend from each fund;
- C. The fees, charges and other monies charged and received by the department, board, committee, agency or officer in connection with the program or activity for which the fund is established that shall be credited to each fund by the town accountant;
- D. The expenses of the program or activity for which each fund may be used;
- E. Any restrictions or conditions on expenditures from each fund; and
- F. Any reporting or other requirements that apply to each fund.

<u>A.</u> <u>Revolving</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>B.</u> <u>Department,</u> <u>Board,</u> <u>Committee,</u> <u>Agency or</u> <u>Officer</u> <u>Authorized to</u> <u>Spend from Fund</u>	<u>C.</u> <u>Fees, Charges</u> <u>or Other</u> <u>Receipts</u> <u>Credited to</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>D.</u> <u>Program or</u> <u>Activity</u> <u>Expenses</u> <u>Payable</u> <u>from Fund</u>	<u>E.</u> <u>Restrictions</u> <u>or Conditions</u> <u>on Expenses</u> <u>Payable from</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>F.</u> <u>Other</u> <u>Requirements/</u> <u>Reports</u>	<u>G.</u> <u>Fiscal Years</u>
Plumbing Inspections	Plumbing Inspector	Plumbing permits and other inspection fees	Plumbing Inspection Services		Annual Report	2026 and Subsequent Years
Electrical Inspections	Electrical Inspector	Electrical permits and other inspection fees	Electrical Inspection Services		Annual Report	2026 and Subsequent Years
Fire Inspections	Fire Department Inspectors	Fire Department permits and other inspection fees	Fire Inspection Services		Annual Report	2026 and Subsequent Years
Building Department	Building Commissioner	Building permit and inspection fees, other fines and charges	Building Department Services		Annual Report	2026 and Subsequent Years
Dog Fund	Town Clerk, Animal Control Officer, and Select Board	Dog License Fees and Other Program Charges as Provided by Chapter 40, S 147A	Dog Licensing and Animal Control		Annual Report	2026 and Subsequent Years

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote Town to **approve annual spending limits for FY26 for Revolving Funds** established in the Town Bylaws, in accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §53E1/2, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to approve annual spending limits for FY26 for Revolving Funds established in the Town Bylaws for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 revolving funds.

Explanation: Setting spending limits ensures responsible use of revolving funds.

Authorized Revolving Funds	Fiscal Year Expenditure Limit
Plumbing Inspections	\$3,500
Electrical Inspections	\$3,500
Fire Inspections	\$3,500
Building Department	\$15,000
Dog Fund	\$15,000

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds to operate the Broadband Enterprise: Direct costs of \$734,076 to come from Broadband revenue and indirect costs of \$16,250 to come from Broadband revenue, or take any other action related thereto.

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

Salaries/Wages	\$7,000
Expenses	\$559,201
Debt Service	<u>\$167,875</u>
Total:	\$734,076

To be raised from the following:

Enterprise Receipts \$734,076

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Funding supports the operation and maintenance of the town's broadband services.

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide, a sum of money for the purchase of a fire apparatus and related items, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town appropriate the sum of Eight Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$850,000) for the purchase and equipping of a new fire truck apparatus for the Fire Department, including all incidental or related costs, to be expended under the direction of the Select Board, and to meet said appropriation as follows: Transfer the sum of Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000) from Certified Free Cash; Transfer the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) from the Fire Vehicle Stabilization special purpose stabilization fund; and authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow the sum of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) pursuant to G.L. c.44, §§7 and 8, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor.

Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Requested by the Fire Department. This is for the purchase of a fire truck to replace the 2001 International Fire Truck, which is necessary to support the fire prevention activities for the Town.

2/3 vote required.

ARTICLE 20. To see if the town will vote to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept, and expend any 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 construction and/or maintenance of highways and 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.

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 2026 as permitted by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 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 2026 as permitted by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F.

Explanation: This article allows the town to manage its funds efficiently through compensating balance agreements.

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease agreement for up to five years for the purpose of leasing a copy machine for the town office use, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease agreement for up to five years for the purpose of leasing a copy machine for the town office use.

Explanation: Leasing a copy machine ensures the town office has the necessary equipment for its operations.

ARTICLE 25. To see if the Town will vote to accept G.L. c. 64L, § 2(a) to impose a local meals excise, or take any action relative thereto.

MOTION: Move the Town vote to accept G.L. c. 64L, § 2(a) to impose a local meals excise.
Recommended by Finance Committee.

Explanation: Adoption of this section of MGL will allow the Town to impose an additional excise of .75% on the sales of restaurant (a.k.a. take-out) meals originating with the Town. This will create additional revenue with minimal impact on constituents.
