



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 2, 2025-PROCEEDINGS

The Moderator, Tom Merolli, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. The meeting was immediately placed in recess to check in voters that were still in line. The meeting came out of recess at 7:08 pm. He dispensed with the reading of the warrant. The Moderator went over the rules and procedures for the meeting. A brief overview of the use of electronic voting was presented. The Moderator led the Town Meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The voters allowed the following non-voting persons into the meeting:

Dr. Maureen Cohen-MURSD Superintendent
Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick – BVT Superintendent
Anthony Steele – Asst. Superintendent BVT
Jeremy Stull - Town Administrator
Karis North-Town Counsel
Dylan Lindholm – Asst. Town Planner
Isabella Genova – Conservation Agent
Tyler James – ABMI
Andrew Jenrich – Taft Library Director
Katie Moxam – Executive Assistant to the Select Board and Town Administrator
Sherrie Bates – Principal Assessor
Jennifer O'Neill – Human Resources
Several minors

ARTICLE 1

Voted that any motion or amendment to increase any monetary articles or line items as proposed by the Finance Committee, presented at this Town Meeting Shall be OUT OF ORDER unless such motion, or amendment, states the source of funding as being from available free cash, or the line item or article that will be reduced by the same amount.

Yes 174
No 9
Passed majority

CONSENT AGENDA

Voted to take out of order and place Articles 2, 4-14, 19-20 in consent agenda.
Yes 149
No 13
Passed 2/3rds majority

ARTICLE 2

Voted to affix salaries and compensation of elected officials of the Town for fiscal 2026, as follows:

Elected Officials	Stipend	Salary	Fiscal 2026 Total
Board of Health - Chair	\$ 225		\$ 225
Board of Health - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175
Board of Health - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175

Planning Board - Chair	\$ 225		\$ 225
Planning Board - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175
Planning Board - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175
Planning Board - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175
Planning Board - Member	\$ 175		\$ 175
Select Board- Chair	\$ 2,200		\$ 2,200
Select Board - Member	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Select Board - Member	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Select Board - Member	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Select Board - Member	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Board of Assessors - Chair	\$ 300		\$ 300
Board of Assessors - Member	\$ 250		\$ 250
Board of Assessors - Member	\$ 250		\$ 250
Moderator	\$ 100		\$ 100
Town Clerk	\$ 3,800	\$ 74,577	\$ 78,377
Tree Warden	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000

ARTICLE 4

Voted to appropriate funds provided to the Town by the Commonwealth pursuant to so-called Chapter 90 type money and such other funds as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation (including its Highway Division) may provide, and to authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (including its Highway Division) for so-called Chapter 90 type money and such other funds allocated to the Town for fiscal 2026.

ARTICLE 5

Voted to authorize the Select Board, during Fiscal Year 2026, to acquire on behalf of the Town any and all easements for any of the following purposes: roads, sidewalks, vehicular and/or pedestrian access or passage, drainage and utilities, provided however that such authorization pertains only to easements acquired at no cost to the Town; and, further, to authorize the Select Board, subsequent to a public hearing, during Fiscal Year 2026 to abandon or relocate easements acquired for any of the foregoing purposes.

ARTICLE 6

Voted to approve the Mendon Five Year Land Use Program.

ARTICLE 7

Voted to transfer \$131,400 from the Community Preservation Budgeted Account to fund the fiscal 2026 Police Station Debt Exclusion.

ARTICLE 8

Voted to set aside for later spending from the Fiscal 2026 Community Preservation Revenues of \$655,000: (10%) \$65,500 for open space; (10%) \$65,500 for historic preservation; (10%) \$65,500 for Affordable Housing, (65%) \$425,750 Budgeted Reserve and (5%) \$32,750 for administration.

ARTICLE 9

Voted to transfer \$15,000 from the Community Preservation Accounts to fund the Fiscal Year 2026 Affordable Housing Coordinator position as a constituent piece of the Town Planner position.

ARTICLE 10

Voted to transfer \$18,823.56 from Free Cash to fund insurance overpayment re-payment to a retiree.

ARTICLE 11

Voted to transfer \$65,350 from Free Cash to fund a previously misclassified water study expense.

ARTICLE 12

Voted to transfer \$93,334.74 from Free Cash to fund the fiscal 2025 snow and ice removal deficit.

ARTICLE 13

Voted to transfer \$60,000 from Free Cash to purchase new garage doors at the Mendon Fire Station.

ARTICLE 14

Voted to transfer from Free Cash \$3,500 for Police Department Matching Grant Funds in fiscal 2026.

ARTICLE 19

Voted to raise and appropriate \$19,800 to fund the fiscal 2026 portion of the Update Valuation Account.

ARTICLE 20

Voted to raise and appropriate \$10,100 to fund the fiscal 2026 portion of the Assessor's Cyclical Inspection Program.

CONSENT AGENDA

Yes 151

No 12

Passed majority

ARTICLE 3

Voted to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$557.90 to pay a bill of a prior year in the same amount from Community Solar

Yes 172

No 11

Passed 4/5ths majority

ARTICLE 15

Voted to raise and appropriate the sums of money as read under Article 15 to defray fiscal 2026 changes and expenses of the Town including debt & interest and to provide for a reserve fund for the ensuing year.

Department Code	Department Name	Department Budget
114	Moderator	\$100.00
122	Select Board	\$288,250.00
131	Finance Committee	\$3,000.00
122	Reserve Fund	\$76,114.13
135	Accountant	\$85,450.00
141	Assessors	\$87,350.00
145	Finance	\$168,600.00
151	Legal	\$80,000.00
152	Human Resources	\$42,800.00
155	Information Technology	\$219,500.00
161	Town Clerk	\$101,825.00
162	Elections	\$15,550.00
171	Conservation	\$85,950.00
175	Planning	\$81,050.00
176	Zoning Board of Appeals	\$5,400.00
179	Land Use	\$3,050.00
192	Public Buildings	\$210,700.00
210	Police	\$2,042,700.00
220	Fire	\$1,471,700.00
241	Inspector	\$156,650.00
291	Emergency Management	\$29,250.00
292	Animal Control	\$29,750.00
294	Forestry	\$55,000.00
299	Dispatch	\$159,100.00
301	Mendon/Upton Reg. Sch. Dist.	\$11,096,827.00
310	Blackstone Valley Reg. Voc. Sch.	\$1,507,571.00
320	Norfolk Agricultural School	\$373,649.00
420	Highway, Grounds, & Facilities	\$870,150.00
423	Snow & Ice Removal	\$194,000.00
424	Street Lighting	\$43,000.00
430	Waste Collection	\$29,550.00
450	Water Distribution	\$36,600.00
491	Cemetery	\$100.00
512	Board of Health	\$116,950.00
541	Council on Aging	\$195,750.00
543	Veterans' Services	\$42,150.00
610	Library	\$345,900.00
630	Recreation	\$22,500.00
650	Parks	\$91,020.00
691	Historical Commissions	\$4,000.00
710	Retirement of Debt	\$700,000.00
751	Interest on Long Term Debt	\$174,145.00
820	State Assessments & Charges	\$8,228.00
911	Retirement & Pension Contribution	\$1,159,488.00
912	Workers' Compensation	\$27,000.00
913	Unemployment Compensation	\$33,000.00

914	Health Insurance	\$1,475,000.00
915	Life Insurance	\$27,500.00
916	Medicare	\$65,000.00
919	Other Insurance	\$135,000.00
945	Liability Insurance	\$138,500.00
	Total	\$24,411,417.13

Yes 179
 No 12
 Passed majority

ARTICLE 16

Voted to raise and appropriate the following sums of money to operate the Water Enterprise Fund for fiscal 2026:

Salaries - \$5,200.00
 Contracted Services - \$15,000
 Expenses - \$14,200
 Water Infrastructure Repair & Replacement Fund - \$21,336
 Purchase of Water - \$165,000
 Total: \$220,736

and for that \$220,736 be raised as follows:
 Department Receipts - \$207,351
 Retained Earnings - \$13,385.00

Yes 152
 No 15
 Passed majority

ARTICLE 17

Voted to set the fiscal 2026 Revolving Fund limits in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 53 E ½ as follows:

Revolving Fund	Limit on Spending
Library	\$6,000
Planning Board	\$30,000
Highway	\$25,000
Conservation	\$25,000
Parks	\$250,000
Fire Department	\$10,000
Title V (Board of Health)	\$25,000
Police Department	\$15,000

Yes 183
 No 4
 Passed majority

ARTICLE 18

Voted to raise and appropriate the following sums of money to operate the Curbside Trash and Recycling Program Enterprise Fund for fiscal 2026:

Disposal - \$147,000
Collection - \$526,900
Administration - \$4,500
Total - \$678,400

And for that sum to be raised as Departmental Charges for Services.

Yes 182
No 12
Passed majority

ARTICLE 21

Voted to approve a \$10,675,452 borrowing authorized by the Mendon-Upton Regional School District for the purpose of paying costs of roof replacement at the Nipmuc Regional High School located at 90 Pleasant St., Upton, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District has applied for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the direction of the School Committee. The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and if the MSBA's Board of Directors votes to invite the District to collaborate with the MSBA on this proposed repair project, any project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant that may be approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; and that, if invited to collaborate with the MSBA on the proposed repair project, the amount of borrowing authorized by the District shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA. This approval is expressly conditioned upon a vote of the Town to exclude the amounts required to repay the Town's allocable share of this debt from the limitation on local property taxes set forth in G.L. c. 59, §21C (also known as Proposition 2½).

Yes 195
No 6
Passed majority

ARTICLE 22

Voted to approve a \$11,559,397 borrowing authorized by the Mendon-Upton Regional School District for the purpose of paying costs of purchasing equipment and various upgrades and remodeling projects in and for the District's four schools, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto. This approval is expressly conditioned upon a vote of the Town to exclude the amounts required to repay the Town's allocable share of this debt from the limitation on local property taxes set forth in G.L. c. 59, §21C (also known as Proposition 2½).

Yes 183
No 23
Passed majority

ARTICLE 23

Voted to approve a \$12,002,785 borrowing authorized by the Mendon-Upton Regional School District for the purpose of paying costs of renovating and constructing outdoor recreational facilities, press box, concession stand, bathrooms and buildings at the District's Nipmuc School and renovating and construction outdoor recreational facilities at the District's Miscoe School, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto. This approval is expressly conditioned upon a vote of the Town to exclude the amounts required to repay the Town's allocable share of this debt from the limitation on local property taxes set forth in G.L. c. 59, §21C (also known as Proposition 2½).

Yes 168
No 33
Passed majority

ARTICLE 24

Voted to transfer up to \$100,000 from the Community Preservation Budgeted Account to fund a portion of the fiscal 2026 Mendon-Upton Regional School District debt associated with outdoor recreation fields.

Yes 179
No 7
Passed majority

ARTICLE 25

Defeated a motion to amend Mendon Zoning By-laws Article V Section 5.05 (Age Restricted Mixed Use Overlay District) and corresponding map to include 3 North Ave (8-189-3-0) and 6 Milford St (8-177-6-0).

Yes 90
No 82
Failed

ARTICLE 26

Voted to amend Mendon Zoning By-laws Article V Section 5.03 (Flood Hazard Overlay District) to comply with FEMA regulations and NFIP eligibility by removing the old Section 5.03 and replacing it with the new Section 5.03 as follows:

Section 5.03 Flood Hazard Overlay District

(a) Purpose and Administration

The Flood Hazard Overlay District is herein established as an overlay district to:

- (i) Ensure public safety through reducing threats to life and personal injury
- (ii) Eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials
- (iii) Prevent the occurrence of public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding
- (iv) Avoid the loss of utility services which if damaged by flooding would disrupt or shut down the utility network and impact regions of the community beyond the site of flooding

- (v) Eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of flooding conditions
- (vi) Reduce damage to public and private property resulting from flooding waters
- (vii) Establish uses that are compatible with areas prone to flooding.

The Town of Mendon hereby designates the position of Conservation Agent to be the official floodplain administrator for the Town.

(b) Flood Hazard Overlay District Delineation

The Flood Hazard Overlay District includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Mendon designated as Zones A and AE, on the Worcester County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program. The map panels of the Worcester County FIRM that are wholly or partially within the Town of Mendon are panel numbers 25027C0864E, 25027C1030E, 25027C1031E, 25027C1033E, and 25027C1034E, dated July 4, 2011 and 25027C0868F, 25027C1032F, and 25027C1055F dated July 8, 2025. . The exact boundaries of the Flood Plain District may be defined by the 100-year base flood elevations shown on the FIRM and further defined by the Worcester County Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report dated July 8, 2025. The FIRM and FIS report are incorporated herein by reference and are on file with the Town Clerk and Building Inspector.

(c) Special Permits

A Special Permit is required for all proposed construction or other development in the Flood Hazard Overlay District, including new construction or changes to existing buildings, placement of manufactured homes, placement of agricultural facilities, fences, sheds, storage facilities or drilling, mining, paving and any other development that might increase flooding or adversely impact flood risks to other properties. All development, as well as the permitted uses and requirements of the underlying district, must comply with all requirements and laws relevant to uses allowed in the Flood Hazard Overlay District.

(i) Requirements

- 1) The Town of Mendon requires a Special Permit to be issued by the Planning Board for all proposed use, construction, or other development as defined by FEMA in the Flood Hazard Overlay District including, but not limited to,
- 2) Special Considerations
 - a) In A and AE zones, storage of all recreational vehicles to be placed on a site must be elevated and anchored in accordance with the zone's regulations for foundation and elevation requirements or be on the site for less than 180 consecutive days or be fully licensed and highway-ready.
 - b) In the case of a use not included above, the floodplain administrator will determine whether a special permit is required.
- 3) No special permit may be issued unless the proposed use or structure is in compliance with MGL c. 131, § 40, and with demonstrated evidence of acquisition of and compliance with all other necessary permits as outlined below. Any variances from the provisions and requirements of the above referenced state regulations may only be granted in accordance with the required variance procedures of these state regulations.

- a) The section of the Massachusetts State Building Code which addresses floodplain and coastal high-hazard areas (currently 780 CMR 115G, Flood Resistant Construction and Construction in Coastal Dunes), as may be amended. [Amended 5-8-2023 ATM by Art. 20]
- b) Wetlands Protection Regulations, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), currently 310 CMR 10.00, as may be amended.
- c) Minimum Requirements for the Subsurface Disposal of Sanitary Sewage, DEP, currently 310 CMR 15, Title 5, as may be amended.
- d) The Mendon Wetlands Protection By-law and accompanying regulations, as may be amended. [1] Editor's Note: See Ch. 95, Wetlands.
- e) Any regulations or by-laws adopted by the Mendon Board of Health.
- f) All other state and federal permits as required by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and/or other departments and agencies as may be amended

(ii) Special Permit Determination

In addition to the foregoing requirements, the Planning Board shall consider the following in determining whether to issue a special permit:

- 1) In Zone AE along watercourses that have a regulatory floodway designated within the Town of Mendon on the Worcester County Flood Insurance Rate Maps, encroachments are prohibited, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, and other development within the adopted regulatory floodway unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.
- 2) All development proposals, including subdivision proposals, in the floodplain overlay district shall be reviewed to assure that:
 - a) Such proposals minimize flood damage;
 - b) All public utilities and facilities are located and constructed to minimize or eliminate flood damage; and
 - c) Adequate drainage is provided.
- 3) When proposing subdivisions or other developments greater than 50 lots or 5 acres (whichever is less), the proponent must provide technical data to determine base flood elevations for each developable parcel shown on the design plans.

- 4) All applications for special permits shall include a site and development plan. Said plans shall, at a minimum, show existing contour intervals of site and elevations of existing structures.
- 5) There shall be established a “routing procedure” which will circulate or transmit one copy of the site and development plan to the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Health, Building Inspector, Town Engineer, Highway Surveyor, Select Board, and Board of Assessors for comments which will be considered by the Planning Board prior to issuing applicable permits.

(d) Variances

- (i) Granting Authority. Any variances from the provisions and requirements of the above-referenced state regulations may only be granted in accordance with the required variance procedures of the State Building Code Appeals Board.
 - 1) The applicant will provide the Town of Mendon, from the State Building Code Appeals Board, a written and/or audible copy of the portion of the hearing related to the variance, and will maintain this record in the community’s files.
 - 2) The Town shall also issue a letter to the property owner regarding potential impacts to the annual premiums for the flood insurance policy covering that property, in writing over the signature of a community official that (i) the issuance of the variance to construct a structure below the base flood level will result in an increased premium rates for flood insurance up to amounts as high as \$25 for \$100 of insurance coverage and (ii) such construction below the base flood level increases risks to life and property.
 - 3) Such notification shall be maintained with the record of all variance actions for the referenced development in the Flood Hazard Overlay District.
- (ii) Requirements. A variance from these Flood Hazard by-laws must meet the requirements set out by State law, and may only be granted if:
 - 1) Good and sufficient cause and exceptional non-financial hardship exist;
 - 2) The variance will not result in additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, or fraud or victimization of the public; and
 - 3) The variance is the minimum action necessary to afford relief.

(e) Floodway Data and Base Flood Elevation

- (i) Floodway Data & Floodway Encroachment
 - 1) In Zones A and AE, along watercourses that have not had a regulatory floodway designated, the best available Federal, State, local, or other floodway data shall be used to

prohibit encroachments in floodways which would result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

- 2) In Zone AE, along watercourses that have had a regulatory floodway designated on the Town's FIRM or Flood Boundary & Floodway Map, encroachments are prohibited, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, and other development within the adopted regulatory floodway unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

(ii) Base Flood Elevation Data

- 1) In A Zones, in the absence of FEMA BFE data and floodway data, the building department will obtain, review, and reasonably utilize base flood elevation and floodway data available from a Federal, State, or other source as criteria for requiring new construction, substantial improvements, or other development in Zone A and as the basis for elevating residential structures to or above base flood level, for floodproofing or elevating nonresidential structures to or above base flood level, and for prohibiting encroachments in floodways.

(f) Notification of Watercourse Alteration & Submittal of New Technical Data

(i) In a riverine situation, the Conservation Commission shall notify the following of any alteration or relocation of a watercourse:

- 1) Adjacent Communities
- 2) Bordering states, if affected
- 3) NFIP State Coordinator

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

- 4) NFIP Program Specialist

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

(ii) If the Town acquires data that changes the base flood elevation in the FEMA mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas, the Town will, within 6 months, notify FEMA of these changes by submitting the technical or scientific data that supports the change(s). Notification shall be submitted to:

- 1) NFIP State Coordinator

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

- 2) NFIP Program Specialist

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

(g) Abrogation and Greater Restriction

The floodplain management regulations found in this Flood Hazard Overlay District section shall take precedence over any less restrictive conflicting local laws, ordinances, or codes.

(h) Disclaimer of Liability

The degree of flood protection required by this by-law is considered reasonable but does not imply total flood protection.

(i) Severability

If any provision of these Flood Hazard District Regulations is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the Flood Hazard District Regulations shall not be affected thereby.

Yes 139

No 16

Passed 2/3rds majority

ARTICLE 27

Defeated the motion to allow the establishment of a stabilization account for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §16G ½.

Yes 49

No 95

Failed

ARTICLE 28

Voted to transfer \$50,000 from Free Cash to fund Fire Department Self Contained Breathing Apparatus equipment.

Yes 131

No 5

Passed majority

ARTICLE 29

Voted to amend Chapter XXVIII Wetlands Protection By-law of the Mendon General By-laws as follows:

Chapter XXVIII Wetlands Protection By-Law

Section 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to protect the wetlands, water resources, flood prone areas, and adjoining upland areas in the Town of Mendon by controlling activities deemed by the Conservation Commission likely to have an adverse effect, immediate or cumulative, upon wetland values, including but not limited to the following: protection of public or private water supply; protection of groundwater; flood control; erosion and sediment control; storm damage prevention; prevention of water pollution;

fisheries; wildlife habitat; rare species habitat including rare plant and animal species; recreational value; protection of surrounding land and other homes or buildings; protection of surrounding land from predicted increases in flood frequency & intensity; protection of surrounding land to provide improved water filtration capacity, under predicted future increases in precipitation intensity, water temperatures and eutrophication impacts, (collectively the “Resource Area values protected by this By-Law”) deemed important to the community. Presumptions of significance contained in 310.CMR 10.00 shall extend to said values.

Section 2.0 Jurisdiction

Except as permitted by the Conservation Commission or as provided in this Bylaw or its Regulations, no person shall commence to remove, fill, dredge, build upon, degrade, discharge into, impact, or otherwise alter the following Resource Areas:

- a. Any freshwater wetlands: including marshes; wet meadows; bogs; swamps; isolated wetlands; springs; banks; reservoirs; lakes; ponds; rivers; brooks and creeks, or perennial or intermittent streams;
- b. Any land under the aforementioned waterways and waterbodies;
- c. Any wetlands bordering on the aforementioned resource areas;
- d. Any adjoining lands out to a distance of 100 feet of all aforementioned resource areas known as the Buffer Zone;
- e. Any Vernal Pool, including Vernal Pools not certified by the Mass Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and adjoining land out to a distance of 100 feet known as the Vernal Pool Habitat;
- f. Any land within 200 feet of perennial streams or rivers known as the Riverfront Area;
- g. Any land subject to flooding or inundation by ground water, surface water, or storm flowage (bordering or isolated).

Collectively all such wetland Resource Areas and lands abutting any of the aforesaid Resource Areas shall be deemed to be Resource Areas protected by this Bylaw.

Section 3.0 Definitions

Except as may be otherwise provided in this bylaw or in regulations of the Commission, the definitions of terms in this bylaw shall be as set forth in the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40 and regulations (310 CMR 10.00). The term “Alter” means, without limitation, the following actions when undertaken upon or affecting any of the areas subject to protection under the By-Law:

- a. Removal, excavation, or dredging of soil, sand, gravel, or aggregate materials of any kind;
- b. Changing the preexisting drainage characteristics, flushing characteristics, sedimentation patterns, flow patterns, or flood retention characteristics;
- c. Drainage, or other disturbance of water level or water table;
- d. Dumping, discharging, or filling with any material which may degrade water quality;
- e. Placing of fill, or removal of material that would alter elevation;
- f. Driving of piles, erection, expansion or repair of buildings, or structures of any kind;
- g. Placement of obstructions or objects in water;
- h. Destruction of plant life including cutting or trimming of trees and shrubs;
- i. Changing temperature, biochemical oxygen demand, or other physical or chemical characteristics of any waters;
- j. Any activities, changes, or work which would cause or tend to contribute to pollution of any body of water or groundwater; and
- k. Incremental activities which have, or may have, a cumulative adverse impact on the Resource Areas protected by the By-Law.

The term "*Bank*" shall include the land area which normally abuts and confines a water body; the lower boundary being the mean annual low flow level, and the upper boundary being the first observable break in the slope or the mean annual flood level, whichever is higher.

The term "*No Build Zone*" means that portion of the Buffer Zone up gradient of the No Disturb Zone which extends 50 feet from the edge of the Resource Area. Except as otherwise provided in these regulations, no buildings or structures shall be permitted in the No Build Zone. Prohibited activities include but are not limited to, construction of any structure, installation of any impervious surface, and any work requiring a building permit.

The term "*No Disturb Zone*" means that portion of the Buffer Zone which extends 25 feet from the edge of the Resource Area. Except as otherwise provided in this By-Law or associated Regulations, no activity is permitted within 25 feet of the delineated edge of Wetland Resource Areas. This standard has been adopted because the alteration of land immediately adjacent to a wetland is likely to result in the alteration of the wetland itself. Examples of alterations include from extension of lawn, depositing yard waste and clearing of vegetation.

The term "*Person*" shall include any individual, group of individuals, association, partnership, corporation, company, business organization, trust, estate, the Commonwealth or political subdivision thereof to the extent subject to town bylaws, administrative agency, public or quasi-public corporation or body, this municipality, and any other legal entity, its legal representatives, agents, or assigns.

The term "*Pond*" shall follow the definition of 310 CMR 10.04 except that the size threshold of 10,000 square feet shall not apply. Man-made retention or detention basins, swimming pools, lined fishponds, and wastewater treatment lagoons shall not be considered ponds.

The term "*Rare Species*" shall include, without limitation, all vertebrate and invertebrate animals and all plant species listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, regardless of whether the site in which they occur has been previously identified by the Division.

The term "*Rare Species Habitat*" means those areas providing habitat for species of wildlife and /or plants listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

The term "*Vernal Pool*" means, in addition to scientific definitions found in 310 CMR 10.00, any confined basin or depression not occurring in existing lawns, gardens, or landscaped areas, which in most years holds water for a minimum of two continuous months during the spring and/or summer, contains at least 200 cubic feet of water at some time during most years, is free of adult predatory fish populations, and provides essential breeding and rearing habitat functions for amphibians, reptiles, or other vernal pool community species, regardless of whether the site has been certified by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The Mendon Conservation Commission has the discretionary authority to protect a vernal pool when it is shown to provide vernal pool wildlife habitat function despite the lack of official certification by the state. The boundary of the Resource Area for Vernal Pools shall be 100 feet outward from the mean annual high-water line defining the depression. Unless compelling evidence is provided to the contrary, no project or activity shall have an adverse effect on a Vernal Pool by altering its topography, soil structure, plant community, composition, hydrologic regime and/or water quality.

Section 4.0 Exemptions and Exceptions

The application and permit required by the By-Law shall not be required for maintaining, repairing, or replacing, but not substantially changing or enlarging, an existing and lawfully located structure or facility used in the service of the public to provide electric, gas, water, sewer, telecommunications services,—provided that written notice has been given to the commission at least 14 days prior to the commencement of work, and provided that the work conforms to performance standards and design specifications in regulations adopted by the Commission.

The application and permit required by the By-Law shall not be required for work performed for normal maintenance or improvement of land in agricultural use as defined by the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations at 310 CMR 10.04.

The application and permit required by the By-Law shall not be required for emergency projects necessary for the protection of the health and safety of the citizens of Mendon, provided that the work is to be performed by or has been ordered to be performed by an agency of the Commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof or by the Town; provided that advance notice, oral or written, has been given to the Commission prior to commencement of work or within 24 hours after commencement; provided that the Commission or its agent, in writing, certifies the work as an emergency project; provided that the work is performed only for the time and place certified by the Commission for the limited purposes necessary to abate the emergency; and provided that within 21 days of commencement of an emergency project a permit application shall be filed with the Commission for review as provided by this bylaw. Upon failure to meet these and other requirements of the Commission, the Commission may, after notice and a public hearing, revoke or modify an emergency project approval and order restoration and mitigation measures.

Except where otherwise stated in this section, the minor activity exemptions provided under the Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. c. 131, § 40) and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto (310 CMR 10.00) shall apply to the wetland resource areas protected under this bylaw.

Section 5.0 Applications and Fees

Written application of a Notice of Intent (NOI, the permit application) shall be filed with the Commission to perform activities regulated by this bylaw affecting resource areas protected by this bylaw. This application shall include such information and plans as are deemed necessary by the Commission to describe proposed activities and their effects on the resource areas protected by this bylaw. No activities shall commence without receiving and complying with a permit pursuant to this bylaw.

The Commission in an appropriate case may accept as the application and plans under this bylaw any application and plans filed under the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131 §40) and regulations (310 CMR 10.00), together with such other information and plans as is required by this bylaw and regulations issued hereunder.

Any person desiring to know whether a proposed activity or an area is subject to this bylaw may in writing request a determination from the Commission. Such Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) or Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) filed under the Wetlands Protection Act shall include information and plans as deemed necessary by the Commission.

At the time of an application, the applicant shall pay a filing fee, as specified in the Regulations of the Commission, to the Town of Mendon to be put into an account established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, Sec. 53 E 1/2, which account may be drawn upon by the Commission as necessary to carry out the provisions of this by-law. Accordingly, the combined filing fees of all applicants are pooled for uses directly related to the By- Law, including salaries, administration, office supplies, enforcement, postage, and miscellaneous costs. These fees are in addition to those required by the Massachusetts

Wetlands Protection Act. The Commission shall waive the filing fee for an application or request filed by a government agency.

Upon receipt of a permit or other applications, RDA, ANRAD, COC or other request, the Commission may, at the expense of the applicant, retain an independent consultant, including engineers, wetlands scientists, wildlife biologists or other experts, for the purpose of providing the Commission with the data, analysis, or other information deemed by the Commission to be reasonably necessary or appropriate to assist the

Commission in reviewing the application or rendering its decision, in conformity with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 44, § 53G, and with the rules promulgated by the Commission for hiring outside consultants under M.G.L. Ch. 44, § 53G, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such funds shall be deposited with the town treasurer, who shall create an account specifically for this purpose. Additional consultant fees may be requested where the requisite review is more expensive than originally calculated or where new information requires additional consultant services.

Section 6.0 Notice of Hearings

Any person filing an application, NOI or ANRAD or other request, with the Conservation Commission at the same time shall give written notice thereof, by certified mail (return receipt requested) or hand delivered, to all abutters at their mailing addresses shown on the most recent applicable tax list of the assessors, including owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, and abutters within 300 feet of the property line of the applicant, including any in another municipality or across a body of water. The notice shall state a brief description of the project or other proposal and the date of any Commission hearing or meeting date if known. The notice to abutters also shall include a copy of the application or request, with plans, or shall state where copies may be examined and obtained by abutters. An affidavit of the person providing such notice, with a copy of the notice mailed or delivered, shall be filed with the Commission. When a person requesting a determination is other than the owner, the request, the notice of the hearing and the determination itself shall be sent by the Commission to the owner as well as to the person making the request.

The Commission shall conduct a public hearing on any permit application, RDA, or ANRAD with written notice given at the expense of the applicant, at least five business days prior to the hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality. The Commission shall commence the public hearing within 21 days from receipt of a completed permit application, RDA, or ANRAD unless an extension is authorized in writing by the applicant. The Commission shall have authority to continue the hearing to a specific date announced at the hearing, for reasons stated at the hearing, which may include the need for additional information from the applicant or others as deemed necessary by the Commission in its discretion, based on comments and recommendations of the boards and officials.

The Commission shall issue its permit Order of Conditions (OOC), other order or determination in writing within 21 days of the close of the public hearing thereon unless an extension is authorized in writing by the applicant. The Commission in an appropriate case may combine its hearing under this bylaw with the hearing conducted under the Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Ch.131 §40) and regulations (310 CMR 10.00).

Section 7.0 Permits and Conditions

If the Commission after a public hearing determines that the activities which are the subject of the application are likely to have a significant or cumulative effect upon the wetland values protected by this bylaw, the Commission shall issue or deny a permit for the activities requested. If it issues a permit, the Commission shall impose conditions which the Commission deems necessary or desirable to protect those values, and all activities shall be done in accordance with those conditions.

The Commission is empowered to deny a permit for failure to meet the requirements of this bylaw; for failure to submit necessary information and plans requested by the Commission; for failure to meet the performance standards and other requirements in this bylaw and the regulations issued hereunder, for failure to avoid or prevent unacceptable significant or cumulative effects upon the wetland values protected by this bylaw, and where no conditions are adequate to protect those values.

A permit shall expire three years from the date of issuance. The Commission may extend a permit for one or more periods of up to three years each, upon written request made at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the permit.

For good cause, the Commission may revoke or modify any permit, DOA, or ORAD, or any other order issued under this bylaw upon reasonable notice to the permit holder, and upon a vote a majority of the Commission at a duly noticed public hearing. Requests for amendments to permits shall follow the procedures set forth in MassDEP Wetlands Policy

85-4.

The Commission in an appropriate case may combine the decision issued under this bylaw with the permit DOA, ORAD, or Certificate of Compliance (COC) issued under the Wetlands Protection Act.

No work proposed in any application shall be undertaken until the permit, or ORAD, issued by the Commission with respect to such work has been recorded in the Worcester Registry of Deeds or, if the land affected thereby be registered land, in the Registry Section of the Land Court for the Worcester District, and until the holder of the permit certifies in writing to the Commission that the permit has been so recorded.

Section 8.0 Rules and Regulations

The Commission shall be authorized to promulgate Rules and Regulations ("Regulations") to effectuate the purposes of this Bylaw at a public hearing for which one week's notice has been provided in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town. Such Regulations shall take effect when voted and filed with the Town Clerk. Failure by the Commission to promulgate such Regulations or a legal declaration of their invalidity by a court of law shall not act to suspend or invalidate the effect of this Bylaw. At a minimum these regulations shall reiterate the terms defined in this bylaw, define additional terms not inconsistent with the bylaw, and impose filing and consultant fees.

Section 9.0 Security

As a part of a permit issued under this bylaw, in addition to any security required by any other municipal or state board, agency or official, the Commission may require that the performance and observance of the conditions imposed thereunder (including conditions requiring replication or mitigation) be secured wholly or in part by one or more of the methods described below:

- a. By a proper bond or deposit of money or negotiable securities or other undertaking of financial responsibility sufficient in the opinion of the Commission, to be released in whole or in part upon issuance of a Certificate of Compliance for work performed pursuant to the permit;
- b. By accepting a conservation restriction, easement, or other covenant enforceable in a court of law, executed and duly recorded by the owner of record, running with the land to the benefit of this municipality whereby the permit conditions shall be performed and observed before any lot may be conveyed other than by mortgage deed. This method shall be used only with the consent of the applicant, and upon approval as to form by Town Counsel.

Section 10.0 Enforcement

No person shall remove, fill, dredge, build upon, degrade, or otherwise alter resource areas protected by this bylaw, or cause, suffer, or allow such activity, or leave in place unauthorized fill, or otherwise fail to restore illegally altered land to its original condition, or fail to comply with a permit or an enforcement order issued pursuant to this bylaw.

The Commission or its agent may enter upon privately owned property for the purpose of carrying out its duties under this By-Law and may make or cause to be made such examination or survey as deemed necessary, subject to the constitutions and laws of the United States and the Commonwealth.

The Commission shall have the authority to enforce this By-Law, its regulations and permits by violation notices, enforcement orders, civil and criminal court actions, and non-criminal citations under M.G.L Ch. 40 §21 D. Any person who violates provisions of this By-Law may be ordered to restore the property to its original condition or take other action deemed necessary to remedy such violations or may be fined or both.

Upon request of the Commission, the Select Board and Town Counsel shall take legal action for enforcement under civil law. Upon request of the Commission, the Chief of Police and/or Town Counsel shall take legal action for enforcement under criminal law. Municipal boards and officers, including any police officer or other officer having police powers, shall have authority to assist the Commission in enforcement.

Any person who violates any provision of this bylaw, regulations hereunder, or permits issued hereunder, may be punished by a fine of \$300 per day per offense. Each day or portion thereof during which a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense, and each provision of the bylaw, regulations, or permit violated shall constitute a separate offense. As an alternative to criminal prosecution in a specific case, the Commission may issue citations with specific penalties pursuant to the non-criminal disposition procedure set forth in M.G.L. Ch. 40 §21D, which has been adopted by the Town in Chapter 1, Section 3 of the General By-Laws.

Section 11.0 Burden of Proof

The applicant for a permit shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the credible evidence that the work proposed in the application will not have unacceptable significant or cumulative effect upon the Resource Area protected by this By-Law. Failure to provide adequate evidence to the Conservation Commission supporting this burden shall be sufficient cause for the Commission to deny a permit or grant permit with conditions.

Section 12.0 Appeals

A decision of the Commission shall be reviewable in the Superior Court in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 249 §4.

Section 13.0 Relation to the Wetlands Protection Act

This bylaw is adopted under the Home Rule Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution and the Home Rule statutes, independent of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131 §40) and regulations (310 CMR 10.00) thereunder. It is the intention of this bylaw that the purposes, jurisdiction, authority, exemptions, regulations, specifications, standards, and other requirements shall be interpreted and administered as stricter than those under the Wetlands Protection Act and regulations.

Section 14.0 Severability

If any provision, paragraph, sentence, or clause of this by-law shall be held invalid for any reason, all other provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

Yes 124
No 13
Passed majority

ARTICLE 30

Voted to amend the Mendon General By-laws Chapter II Sec. 14 to allow electronic voting at Town Meeting as set forth below:

When a question is put, the consensus of the Meeting shall be determined by electronic tabulations and electronic devices to tabulate Town Meeting votes. If electronic tabulation is not available or a vote of the Town Meeting chooses not to use it, the determination of the vote shall be the following process: the voices of the voters and the Moderator shall declare the vote as it appears to him. If the Moderator is unable to decide the vote by sound of the voices, or if his decision is immediately questioned by seven (7) or more voters rising in their places for that purpose, he shall determine the vote by ordering a show of hands and he may appoint tellers to make and return the count.

Yes 115
No 10
Passed majority

ARTICLE 31

Voted to amend the Mendon General By-laws Chapter II Sec. 2 to amend the Town Election date, by removing the stricken language, and adding the underlined language, as set forth below:

The annual Town Meeting for the election of Town officers and the determination of such matters as are required by law to be elected or determined by ballot shall be held on the ~~Tuesday occurring eleven days after the first Friday~~ third Tuesday in May.

Yes 115
No 5
Passed majority

ARTICLE 32

Voted to Passover this article.

Yes 120
No 18
Passed majority

ARTICLE 33

Voted to amend the Mendon General By-laws to use gender neutral language throughout.

Yes 97
No 44
Passed majority

A motion to dissolve the warrant was made at 9:36 pm. The tellers for the meeting were Kathy Rich Nancy Fleury and James Barraford. Sgt. Guy Kloczkowski was the officer on duty. There were 221 voters in attendance.

A true copy. Attest:

Ellen Agro
Town Clerk