

TOWN OF ORANGE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M.

FRANKLIN SS:

To the Constables of the Town of Orange, in the County of Franklin:

GREETING:

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 Ruth B. Smith Auditorium, located at 6 Prospect Street, in said Orange on Monday, the Twelfth day of January 2026, at seven in the evening, then and there to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1: SENIOR PROPERTY EXEMPTION ELIGIBILITY

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 184 Section 51 of the Acts of 2002, amending MGL c59 §5 (41C) to reduce the eligibility age from 70 to 65 and to adjust the whole estate (asset) limit as follows: single persons asset limit increased from \$28,000 to \$30,000 and married persons asset limit to increase to \$40,000, to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025, or take any other action relative thereto.

Requires a majority vote

I move that the Town vote to accept the local option provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41C, as amended by Chapter 184 of the Acts of 2002, to reduce the eligibility age from 70 to 65 and to adjust the whole estate (asset) limit as follows: for single persons asset limit increased from \$28,000 to \$30,000 and married persons asset limit to increase to \$40,000 to be effective for applicable exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025.

Finance Committee recommended passage.

Motion passed, 154 in favor, 8 opposed, 0 abstentions.

ARTICLE 2: MGL C90 §17C LOCAL OPTION ALLOWING 25 MPH SPEED LIMITS

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, Section 17C, which allows the Board of Selectmen to establish a speed limit of twenty-five (25) miles per hour on any roadway inside a thickly settled or business district on any way that is not a state highway, or take any other action relative thereto.

Requires a majority vote

I move that the Town vote to accept the local option provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, Section 17C, which authorize the Board of Selectmen to establish a speed limit of twenty-five (25) miles per hour on any roadway inside a thickly settled or business district on any way that is not a state highway.

Finance Committee recommended passage.

Motion passed, 133 in favor, 28 opposed, 2 abstentions.

ARTICLE 3: TRANSFER TO SUPPORT BUILDING OFFICIAL APPROPRIATION

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of Forty-One Thousand One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$41,150) from the Building Demolition Special Purpose Fund established under Article 19 of the Annual Town Meeting held June 21, 2021, to establish a Building Inspector Special Purpose Fund, enabling the Town to hire qualified and certified applicants at market rate compensation, or take any other action relative thereto.

Requires a majority vote

I move that the Town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of Forty-One Thousand One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$41,150) from the "Building Demolition" Article Account, established under Article 19 of the Annual Town Meeting held June 21, 2021, to the "Temporary Inspector of Buildings" Article Account, originally established under Article 13 of the Special Town Meeting held January 18, 2024, for the purpose of providing gap funding to enable the Town to hire a qualified building official at market rate compensation, said appropriation to remain available until the purpose of this article is fulfilled.

Finance Committee recommended passage.

Motion passed, 149 in favor, 21 opposed, 4 abstentions.

ARTICLE 4: BORROWING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP AT PLANNED AIRPORT T-HANGAR SITE

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$137,500), which amount includes an estimated ten percent for procurement and engineering costs (10%) and twenty percent (20%) contingency, for environmental abatement work related to asbestos cleanup at the airport t-hangar construction site, and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum under M.G.L. c.44, §8 or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes therefor, and further to authorize the Select Board and Airport Commission to take any actions necessary to carry out this work, including applying for and accepting grants, or take any other action relative thereto.

Requires a 2/3rd vote

I move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$137,500) for environmental abatement work related to asbestos cleanup at the airport t-hangar construction site, including procurement, engineering, and contingency costs, and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes therefor; and further, to authorize the Select Board and Airport Commission to take all actions necessary to carry out this work, including applying for and accepting grants or earmarked funds, and to use such funds to reduce the amount borrowed.

Finance Committee recommended passage.

Motion to amend to a reduced amount of \$42,000 failed, 33 in favor, 135 opposed, 1 abstention.

Motion of original article passed, 132 in favor, 36 opposed, 2 abstentions.

ARTICLE 5: SPECIAL LEGISLATION- TOWN CHARTER

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation under Article 2, Section 8 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution to establish a Town Charter for the Town of Orange, substantially in the form as set forth in Appendix A attached, said Charter to provide for a Town Manager form of government and to set forth the organization, powers, and duties of the Town's executive and legislative branches; and, further authorize the Board of Selectmen to approve any changes to the Special Legislation as requested by our legislators, senate or house counsel or any person authorized by them; or take any other action relative thereto.

Requires a majority vote

I move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation under Article 2, Section 8 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution to establish a Town Charter for the Town of Orange, substantially in the form set forth in Appendix A, said Charter to provide for a Town Manager form of government and to define the organization, powers, and duties of the Town's executive and legislative branches; and further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to approve any changes to the special legislation as may be requested by our legislators, senate or house counsel or any person authorized by them.

Finance Committee recommended passage.

Motion to amend Chapter 8 Section 8-10-1 to include "budgetary" passed, 155 in favor, 12 opposed, 12 abstentions.

Motion to amend Chapter 4 Section 4-3-3 to replace February to April failed, 31 in favor, 140 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Motion to amend Chapter 4 Section 4-3-3 to remove "The Mahar Regional School Committee and the" failed, 36 in favor, 134 opposed, 4 abstentions.

Motion to amend Chapter 3 Section 3-1-1 from five members to three members failed, 18 in favor, 150 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Motion to vote on the article as amended passed, 155 in favor, 12 opposed, 2 abstentions.

A true copy. ATTEST:

Rachael Fortier, CMC
Town Clerk