FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2026 ATM WARRANT

The Pelham Finance Committee is increasingly concerned about the future financial viability of the Town of Pelham. Costs continue to grow well above what our tax revenue can provide. Each year, by law, towns in Massachusetts can only increase taxes 2.5% over the previous year's limit. This annual 2.5% increase only provides $135,000 this year, with some small additional revenue from new growth (new houses, additions, etc). The governor's budget provides an increase of $4,900 in unrestricted aid and $1,600 in PILOT funding.

Budget Increases

In an attempt to hold expenses steady this year in anticipation of further fiscal strain ahead, the Finance Committee requested that all departments fund their budgets at last year's level. Doing so required absorbing their COLAs (2.5%) and step increases by reducing other expenses, and we thank them for their hard work in crunching the numbers. Even with those constraints, the town's fixed costs rose. Group health grew by 8.5%, Hampshire County retirement increased by 8.1%, and workman's compensation by 20%. This totaled $55,383.

Overall spending for schools increased by about 5%. The elementary school's budget increased by a total of $231,280 (8%). This increase would largely be funded by $22,155 in additional tax support from the town (if Article 3B is approved), $65,614 in increased Chapter 70 funds from the state, and an additional $132,445 from the school's accrued school choice revolving account. While that account is currently at a long-term high with a balance of just over $1,000,000, covering similar increases year after year from the revolving account would likely not be sustainable, as the balance can fluctuate significantly. Additionally, the school's capital plan includes over $6.4 million in the next six years for a new roof, HVAC system, and windows. The town's capital stabilization account does not have the funds to pay for these projects, so creative solutions will be required. The town also uses free cash to support tuition for students attending charter schools so that expense doesn't further impact the school's budget. Charter school tuition for two students in the upcoming years is expected to rise to $73,000.

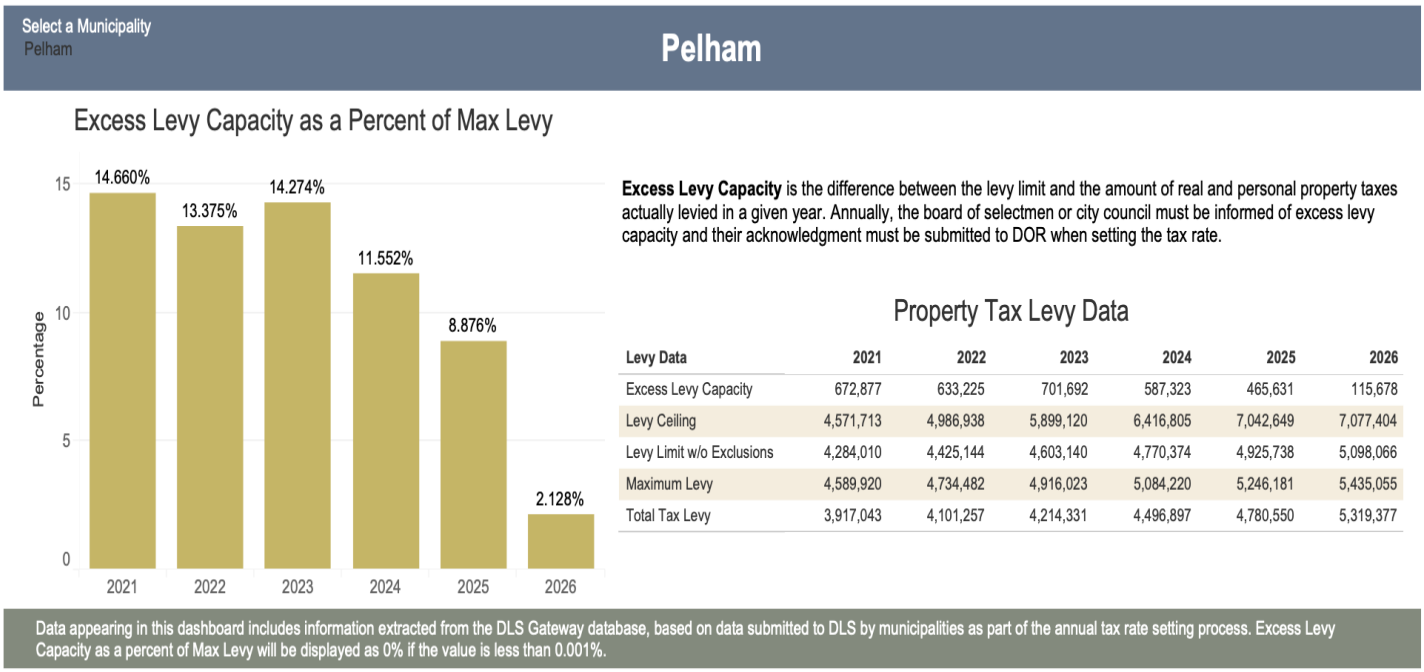
The initial budget presentation for the regional schools (grades 7-12) saw Pelham's assessment for 2027 increase by $213,497. With pushback from the region's four towns, the budget was reduced, and Pelham's assessment has now increased by $101,821 (7.75%). This follows increases in the preceding few years of 4% (FY24), 6% (FY25), and 23% (FY26), which were driven by the region's shift to the statutory method of assessment as well as increased enrollment of Pelham students. The region's capital budget will cost Pelham $407,823 through 2032, which we will likely handle with free cash as we have been doing to fund our annual share of projects. We anticipate that after 2032, the annual amount will jump to over $107,000 per year, well above what free cash can support. Note that the above assessments would have been higher if we had not voted to pay cash for the middle school roof.

Funding the Budget Increases

This year's plan to fund the budget utilizes the available tax increase of $135,000, state aid, and about $18,000 from our excess capacity, reducing that capacity to about $100,000. (If articles 3B and 3C are approved, it would decrease to about $60,000.)

Excess capacity is the available taxing ability left from past years when we did not raise taxes by the full 2.5%. The town needs to keep a decent amount of excess capacity to pay for emergencies, so that at the fall town meeting or a special town meeting money could be appropriated for unanticipated events.

The chart below depicts the town's available excess capacity over time. Because of large increases in the preceding few years, our available excess capacity has fallen steeply; when it is used up, the town will be unable to increase expenditure beyond the automatic 2.5% increase without an override.



Source: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/trends-in-excess-levy-capacity

Looking Ahead

Pelham is entering a fiscal crisis that we have been forecasting for the last couple of years. The Select Board has appointed a committee to identify and study all options for the kindergarten to sixth grade education of Pelham students, and another committee to look for new revenue streams that Pelham might be able to use. Both committees will have reports finished by December 2026.

The reality that is clearly emerging, in the view of the Finance Committee, is that Pelham does not have the tax base to fund the current and growing requirements for the Town. We would need new growth or increased assessments of $4,000,000 each year for every $100,000 in increased spending.

$4,000,000 x 2.5% = $100,000

In reality, the average of Pelham's new growth per year over the last four years was $2,461,164. Because of increased assessments and new growth during 2021-2025 that coincided with overall trends in housing values post-COVID, we had the excess capacity available to fully fund the town government, including both schools; however, with large tax increases in the last few years, our excess capacity has diminished quickly.

Pelham is rapidly approaching a major crossroads that will determine its future. Over the next year, we all need to come to terms with this fiscal reality that the town is facing. The two committees that the Select Board has appointed will be doing a great deal of research and it is important that they be given the freedom to do it well. The Finance Committee will begin the preparation of a necessary override proposal for next year's Town Meeting, and discussions will likely center around some short term and longer term recommendations. To communicate with the Finance Committee, you can email finance@pelhamma.gov. We welcome your input.

Respectfully submitted by John Trickey, Cara Castenson, Emily Marriott, and David Keiser

Results
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
May 9, 2026

The annual Town Meeting was called to order by Moderator, Dan Robb, at 9:02 a.m. at the grounds of the Pelham Elementary School.

Article 1.
Voted unanimously to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees, or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 2.
Voted unanimously to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the FY2027 beginning July 1, 2026, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 4, and to issue a note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17, or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 3.
Voted unanimously to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY27	FY27
	Article 3	**Appropriated**	**Appropriated**	**Requested**	**Recommended**
	GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
2	Selectperson Salary	$3,600	$3,600	$3,600	$3,600
	Expenses				

3	Town Clerk Salary	$32,490	$34,554	$45,574	$45,574
	Assistant Town Clerk		$6,000	$6,000	$6,000
	Expenses	8,000	$9,000	$7,125	$7,125
4	Finance Committee	$990	$990	$990	$990
5	Assessor's Salary	$2000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
	Assistant Assessors Salary	$12,300	$12,300	$12,300	$12,300
	Clerical/Consulting	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
	Contract Service	$13,900	$17,500	$17,500	$17,500
	Expenses	$2,850	$2,850	$2,850	$2,850
6	Collector Salary	$20,768	$25,247.00	$0	$0
	Expenses	$11,275.00	$11,275	$0	$0
	Collector Salary & Expenses			$36,522	$36,522
7	Treasurer Salary	$32,145	$33,449	$0	$0
	Expenses	$9,756	$10,000	$0	$0
	Clerical/Consulting	$7,019	$7,184	$0	$0
	Treasurer Salary & Expenses			$57,984	$57,984
8	Legal Services	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000
9	Town Meetings, Elections etc.	$15,000	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000
10	Town Reports	$875	$875	$400	$400
11	Town Office Wages	$31,214	$31,994	$39,936	$39,936
	Select Board/Town Office Expenses	$21,500	$21,500	$21,000	$21,000
12	Buildings and Grounds				
	Salaries	$18,630	$19,096	$19,573	$19,573
	Expenses	$65,720	$65,720	$65,720	$65,720
	Maintenance	$52,000	$52,000	$51,523	$51,523
13	Blanket Insurance	$48,000	$52,800	$50,280	$50,280
14	Town Accountant	$10,500	$10,500	$13,725	$13,725
	Town Accountant Expense	$250	$250	$250	$250
15	Reserve Fund	$102,000	$102,000	$102,000	$102,000
16	Surety Bonds	$1,000	$1,000	$600	$600
	Group Buying with FRCOG	$3,250	$3,415	$3,585	$3,585
17	Emergency Management	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000
18	Archivist	$0	$0		
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT		**$549,757**	**$565,639**	**$593,037**	**$593,037**
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS					
20	Board of Appeals	$200	$200	$200	$200
21	Conservation Commission	$850	$850	$850	$850
	Part Time Conservation Agent	$12,500	$12,500	$12,500	$12,500
22	Council on Aging	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
23	Historical Commission	$200	$200	$200	$200
24	Library Trustees				
	Director Salary	$41,236	$42,267	$43,712	$43,712

	Staff Salaries	$20,239	$22,739	$22,808	$22,808
	Expenses	$5,000	$5,000	$3,865	$3,865
25	Planning Board	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500
	Clerical/consulting	$10,000	$13,000	$13,000	$13,000
26	Recreation Commission	$0	$0	$0	$0
28	Cemetery Commission	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000
	Energy Committee	$500	$500	$500	$500
TOTAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS		**$105,225**	**$111,756**	**$112,135**	**$112,135**
SCHOOLS					
PUBLIC WORKS					
40	Highway Fund				
	Superintendent Salary	$82,958	$85,032	$83,830	$83,830
	Staff Salaries	$179,140	$187,229	$157,103	$157,103
	Expenses	$111,362	$111,362	$141,362	$141,362
41	School Signal Lights	$1,100	$1,100	$1,100	$1,100
42	Snow Removal				
	Salaries	$17,790	$18,235	$18,235	$18,235
	Materials	$81,875	$81,875	$81,875	$81,875
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS		**$474,225**	**$484,833**	**$483,505**	**$483,505**
PROTECTION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTY					
50	Police Department				
	Chief Salary	$32,752	$33,571	$34,410	$34,410
	Full Time Officer Salary	$156,603	$171,239	$183,636	$183,636
	Part Time Officer's Salaries	$21,000	$25,000	$11,607	$11,607
	Training and Education	$11,255	$16,255	$16,255	$16,255
	Expenses	$25,701	$35,701	$28,201	$28,201
	Expenses Fuel	$10,475	$10,475	$10,475	$10,475
	Reserve Officers	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Regional Lockup	$0	$0	$0	$0
50A	Town Road Detail	$3,729	$3,729	$3,729	$3,729
50C	Constable: Elections	$2,275	$2,275	$2,275	$2,275
51	Fire Department				
	Chief Salary	$33,960	$34,809	$40,407	$40,407
	Firefighter's Salaries	$43,358	$44,442	$45,583	$45,583
	Administration Assistant	$6,500	$6,663	$6,829	$6,829
	Expenses	$26,378	$26,378	$24,084	$24,084
53	Fire Hydrants	$280	$280	$280	$280
	Fire Equipment Testing	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
54	Tree Warden Salary	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500

	Expenses	$11,500	$11,500	$11,500	$11,500
57	Ambulance	$35,861	$37,654	$39,160	$39,160
58	Animal Control	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY		**$431,127**	**$469,471**	**$467,931**	**$467,931**
HEALTH AND SANITATION					
60	Board of Health Salaries	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Expenses	$400	$400	$400	$400
	Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control	$0	$0	$0	$0
61	Solid Waste				
	Hazardous Household Waste	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
	Recycling	$0	$0	$0	$0
63	Inspector of Animals	$75	$75	$75	$75
65	Quabbin Health District	$20,361	$21,180	$21,180	$21,180
TOTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION		**$22,836**	**$23,655**	**$23,655**	**$23,655**
BENEFITS AND INSURANCE					
70	County Retirement	$336,102	$334,741	$361,752	$361,752
71	Veteran's Agent Salary	$6,494	$6,652	$7,072	$7,072
	Expenses				
	Benefits	$49,248	$49,248	$49,248	$49,248
72	Workers' Compensation	$30,000	$30,000	$36,000	$36,000
73	Unemployment Insurance	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000
74	Group Health /Medicare	$224,000	$258,048	$280,000	$280,000
	Health Insurance Opt Out	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000
75	OPEB Deposit	$220,000	$240,000	$220,000	$220,000
TOTAL BENEFITS AND INSURANCE		**$880,844**	**$933,689**	**$969,072**	**$969,072**
GRAND TOTAL		**$2,464,014.00**	**$2,595,378.00**	**$2,649,335**	**$2,649,335**

Recommended by the Finance Committee & Select Board.

Article 3A.
Voted to amend FY 2027 requested Colum for line #31 to 1,420,360.00 passed with a majority vote with 5 no's to see if the Town will raise and appropriate the following monies to fund the Pelham Elementary School and Pelham's assessment from the Amherst Pelham Regional School for Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY 2025	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2027**
		Appropriated	**Appropriated**	**Requested**	**Recommended**
30	Pelham Elementary	$2,010,231	$2,096,679	$2,184,844	$2,162,293
31	Amherst Pelham Regional	$1,065,695	$1,310,503	$1,420,360	$1,412,324
	TOTAL SCHOOLS	$3,075,926	$3,407,182	$3,597,168	$3,574,617

Recommended by the Finance Committee & Select Board.

Article 3B.
Vote Passed by mjority to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $22,551 to be added to the Pelham Elementary School budget for Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action thereto.

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 3C.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sums to be added to the following expense accounts to bring those departments to a level services budget as compared to 2026, or take any other action relative thereto:

Police Department Part-time/overtime/admin	$10,393
Library Expenses	$1,135
Town Clerk Expenses	$1,894
Fire Department Expenses	$2,294
Building and Grounds Maintenance	$478
Tax Collector Expense	$691
Treasurer Expense	$2,028

Total: $18,913
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 3D.
To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of $274,958 from Free Cash to pay for the following expenses in Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto:

Sustainability Committee	$500
Cemetery Commission	$1,000
Historical Complex	$1,000
Zoning Board of Appeals	$500
Records Preservation	$500
Regional Capital Reserve	$50,000
Regional Capital Cost for 2027	$29,275
Fix or Replace a Door at the Elementary School	$12,000
Tree Removal Including the Tree at the School	$7,000
Medicare Reimbursement to the School	$7,183
Cost of a Charter School Student	$35,000
Legal Expense	$15,000
Boiler Repairs at the Community Center	$10,000
Sprinkler Maintenance at the Community Center	$7,500
Maintenance of the Community Center	$2,500
Police Signing Bonus	$2,500
Reimbursable Fire Department Grants	$13,500
Road Maintenance	$25,000
OPEB Review and Assessment	$5,000
Treasurer/Collector Transition Costs	$50,000

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 4.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will name the salaries and wages for all elected officers for the ensuing year, which payments shall not be made in advance of performance, and to determine when and how they shall be paid, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY2025 Appropriated	**FY2026 Appropriated**	**FY2027 Recommended**
Assessors	(Chair)	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
Assessors	(others)	$500	$500	$500

Auditor			$0	$0	$0
Board of Health	(Chair)		$200	$0	$0
Board of Health	(others)		$150	$0	$0
Cemetery Commissioner	(each 3)	$9.00hr	$0	$0	$0
Library Trustees			$0	$0	$0
Moderator			$0	$0	$0
Planning Board			$0	$0	$0
School Committee			$0	$0	$0
Select Board	(each 3)		$1,200	$1,200	$1,200
Tree Warden			$1,500	$1,500	$1,500

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 5.
Voted unanimously to see whether the Town will vote to amend the Agreement Establishing A Regional School District Comprising the Towns of Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury to revise paragraph (g) of Section VI, Apportionment and Payment of Costs Incurred by the District, as follows:
The Regional School Committee is authorized, if it so votes, to execute a lease, or leases, consistent with the powers and duties of the Regional School Committee as specified in M.G.L. c.71, section 16,
or otherwise act theron.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 6.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Capital Plan Stabilization Fund the sum of $100,000 to make needed repairs to the exterior of the Community Center, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Finance Committee and Select Board.

Article 7.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Capital Plan Equipment Stabilization Fund the sum of $150,000 to purchase new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and accessories to replace the Fire Department's expired units, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Finance Committee and Select Board.

Article 8.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to approve annual spending limits for FY2027 for revolving funds established in the Town Bylaws, in accordance with G.L c.44, Section 53E1/2, with such expenditure limits to be applicable for each fiscal year until such time as Town Meeting votes, prior to July 1 in any year, to increase the same for the ensuing fiscal year; provided, however, that at the request of the entity authorized to expend such funds, the Select Board, with the approval of the Finance Committee, may increase such limit, for that fiscal year only, all as set forth below, or take any other action relative thereto:

Revolving fund	FY spending limit
Archivist	$2,500
Building Inspector	$30,000
Community Garden Committee	$5,000
Community Hall	$7,000
Fire Department	$7,500
Gas Inspector	$1,500
Department of Public Works	$7,500
Planning Board	$15,000
Plumbing Inspector	$1,500

Police Department	$7,500
Wiring Inspector	$3,000
Zoning Board of Appeals	$1,000

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 9.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to establish a Board of Health Title 5 Inspection Revolving Fund pursuant to G.L c.44, §53E½ by (1) amending § 85-3, List of authorized funds, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Board of Health Title 5	Health Agent	Title 5 Inspection Fees and Fines	Inspections, supplies, and required professional courses

and (2) by amending § 85-4, Spending limits, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Board of Health Title 5	$5,000

or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 10.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to establish a Council on Aging Revolving Fund
pursuant to G.L c.44, §53E½ by (1) amending § 85-3, List of authorized funds, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Council on Aging Revolving Fund	Council on Aging	Council on Aging programming receipts	Programming operational and administrative costs

and (2) by amending § 85-4, Spending limits, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Council on Aging Revolving Fund	$4,000

or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 11.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of $20,000 from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund (established by vote of the Fall 2015 Town Meeting) pursuant to G.L. c.44, §53F3/4 to be used by the Select Board for the purpose of technology services and purchases for the Town, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 12.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $10,250 from the Community Preservation Fund Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues for administrative expenses in Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 13.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the following sums of money from the Community Preservation Fund Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues, and to reserve for later appropriation: (1) $20,500.00 for Open Space and Recreation, (2) $20,500.00 for Community Housing, and (3) $20,500.00 for Historic Resources; and to

reserve from the Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues, for later appropriation, $133,250.00 to the Fiscal Year 2027 Community Preservation Fund Budgeted Reserve, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 14.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $30,000, of which (1) $19,757.87 shall be from Pelham's Fiscal Year 2026 Community Preservation Fund Budgeted Reserve and (2) $10,242.13 shall be from the Open Space and Recreation Fund, for the Pelham Conservation Commission's application for funding to restore the weathered stairs and bridge leading to Buffam Falls from North Valley Road, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 15.
Vote passed by majority with 11 no's to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $10,000 from the Open Space and Recreation Fund, for the Pelham Conservation Commission's application for funding for creation of digital trail maps for the Town of Pelham, which shall be available via the Town's website and downloadable as digital files that can be used in phone-based mapping applications, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 16.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Library Trustees to expend such monies as they may receive from the sale of discarded books, gifts, and bequests, and from the State and Federal Governments, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 17.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Pelham Cultural Council to expend such monies as it may receive from the State and Federal Governments, and from gifts and bequests, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 18.
Voted unanimously 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 public highways for Fiscal Year 2027, and further to authorize the Select Board on behalf of the Town to accept and expend any money from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and/or maintenance, provided that no funds shall be expended to widen, or enter into a contract to widen, any Town road unless the Select Board has held a public hearing advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance, with any proposed contract and/or plans for such road improvements being posted for public viewing prior to the public hearing, and further provided that such policy is consistent with State requirements, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 19.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to accept and/or apply for any State or Federal funds or grants that may become available during Fiscal Year 2027, and to expend such funds in accordance with the terms and conditions thereof, provided that no funds shall be expended to widen, or to enter into a contract to widen, any Town road unless the Select Board has held a public hearing advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance, with any proposed contract and/or plans for such road improvements being posted for public viewing prior to the public hearing, and further provided that such policy is consistent with State requirements, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 20.

Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift for municipal purposes, on such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions as the Select Board shall deem appropriate, a parcel of land, known as Parcel B, Cadwell Street in the Town of Pelham, to be conveyed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc., and more particularly described as follows:

> The land shown as Parcel B on the ANR Plan titled, "Subdivision Approval Not Required Plan of Land in Pelham, Massachusetts, Prepared for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc.," prepared by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc., dated January 15, 2026, and recorded with the Hampshire Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 259, Page 67, having approximately 1,455 square feet according to said plan.

and authorize the Select Board to sign any and all documents in order to carry out the purposes of this article, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 21.
Voted unanimously for resolution Supporting the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity Act (S.546 H.1042)

To see if the Town will vote to support legislation currently pending before the Massachusetts Legislature, including S.546 and H.1042, "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity," which would establish a partnership program providing approximately $35 million annually to sup-port the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed; and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir was created by the Commonwealth pursuant to Chapter 375 of the Acts of 1926, which required the disincorporation of the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield and permanently altered the economic future of the surrounding watershed communities; and

Whereas the municipalities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir continue to steward and protect a critical drinking water supply serving approximately three million residents through the system operated by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest and most important public drinking water supplies in the United States, providing approximately 200 million gallons of clean drinking water each day, serving as a foundational component of the Commonwealth's public health, economic stability, and climate resilience.

Whereas the Town of Pelham supports a fair partnership between the communities that protect the Commonwealth's drinking water supply and the millions of residents who rely upon it; and

Whereas the Town of Pelham values its role as a regionally important water supply protection area not only for the Quabbin but also as watershed for wells and water supply in Pelham, Amherst, Shutesbury, Belchertown, and Springfield; and

Whereas the partnership funding proposed in S.546 and H.1042 would help align the Commonwealth's modern water system with the historic responsibilities established when the Quabbin Reservoir project was authorized in 1926;

Whereas watershed protection requirements and the Commonwealth's ownership of large areas of land have limited some economic development opportunities for Quabbin watershed municipalities, **while safeguarding land, air quality, soil, forest land, and habitat values for the citizens of the entire** Commonwealth,

Be it resolved that the Town of Pelham respectfully urges the Massachusetts Legislature to enact S.546 and H.1042 and establish a fair and equitable partnership with the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed.

Be it further resolved that the Town supports continued collaboration between the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and the Quabbin watershed communities to advance policies that strengthen this partnership, including but not limited to:

- representation of watershed communities in MWRA governance
- investment in watershed infrastructure and water quality protection
- technical and engineering assistance for watershed municipalities
- equitable drought management policies across the Quabbin water system

And further to authorize the Select Board to transmit this vote to the Governor, the Massachusetts Legislature, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and the municipalities served by the MWRA.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 22.
Citizen's Petition

Temporary Moratorium on New Single-Family Construction on Certain Vacant Lots in the Village Center Districts
Summary/Purpose:
To provide the Town time to review and clarify zoning provisions affecting neighborhood scale, site density, and dimensional standards for new single-family dwellings on vacant lots within the Village Center Districts.

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the authority granted under the Massachusetts Zoning Act (M.G.L. Chapter 40A), to impose a temporary moratorium on the issuance of building permits for new single-family dwellings on currently vacant lots greater than 10,000 square feet within the Village Center Zoning Districts while the Town studies and considers amendments to the Zoning Bylaw governing neighborhood scale, site density, building massing and dimensional standards within those districts, said moratorium to remain in effect for one (1) year from the effective date of this vote or until the adoption of such amendments, whichever occurs first;
During the period of the moratorium, the Pelham Planning Board shall review the relevant provisions of the Zoning Bylaw and may prepare and recommend amendments for consideration by a subsequent Town meeting in order to clarify dimensional standards and site density expectations and to ensure that new development within the Village Center Districts are consistent with the intent and purposes of the Town's zoning regulations; This moratorium shall not apply to:
1. Renovation, alteration, or expansion of existing structures;
2. Construction authorized by a building permit issued prior to the effective date of this vote; or
3. Projects that have received all required zoning approvals prior to the effective date of this vote or take any other action relative thereto.

Voted unanimously to amend article 22 to see if the town will vote to direct the Pelham Planning Board to study and consider amendments to the Zoning Bylaws governing neighborhood scale, site density, building massing, and dimensional standards within the Village Center Zoning Districts, in addition to any other relevant zoning issues the Planning Board deems important with respect to the Village Center Districts; and further, that the Pelham Planning Board shall review the relevant provisions of the Zoning Bylaws and may prepare and recommend amendments for consideration by a subsequent Town Meeting in order to clarify dimensional standards and site density expectations and to ensure that new development within the Village Center Districts is consistent with the intent and purposes of the Town's zoning regulations.

The business of the warrant having been completed, the meeting Voted to dissolve at 1:26 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2026.

129 voters were checked in.

Attest:
Melissa A. Hibbard
Town Clerk