

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Tuesday, January 30, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Middle-High School Gymnasium



Selected Sources of Funding Proposed to Be Appropriated Tonight

- Free Cash: balance is \$4,351,109
 - Free Cash is *not* free money. Free Cash is the state finance term for the portion of Undesignated Fund Balance at the end of the previous fiscal year certified as available for appropriation by the state Department of Revenue Division of Local Services. **More simply put, it generally reflects money that is left over from the previous year's Town budget.**
- Water Enterprise Retained Earnings: balance is \$336,720
 - Retained earnings are essentially "Free Cash" for the Town's Water Enterprise.
- Water Infrastructure Stab. Fund: balance is \$2,893,736
 - The rainy day fund for the Town's Water Enterprise.

**NOTE: WASTEWATER/SEWER IS NOT
ON THE WARRANT FOR TONIGHT'S MEETING**

Article 1

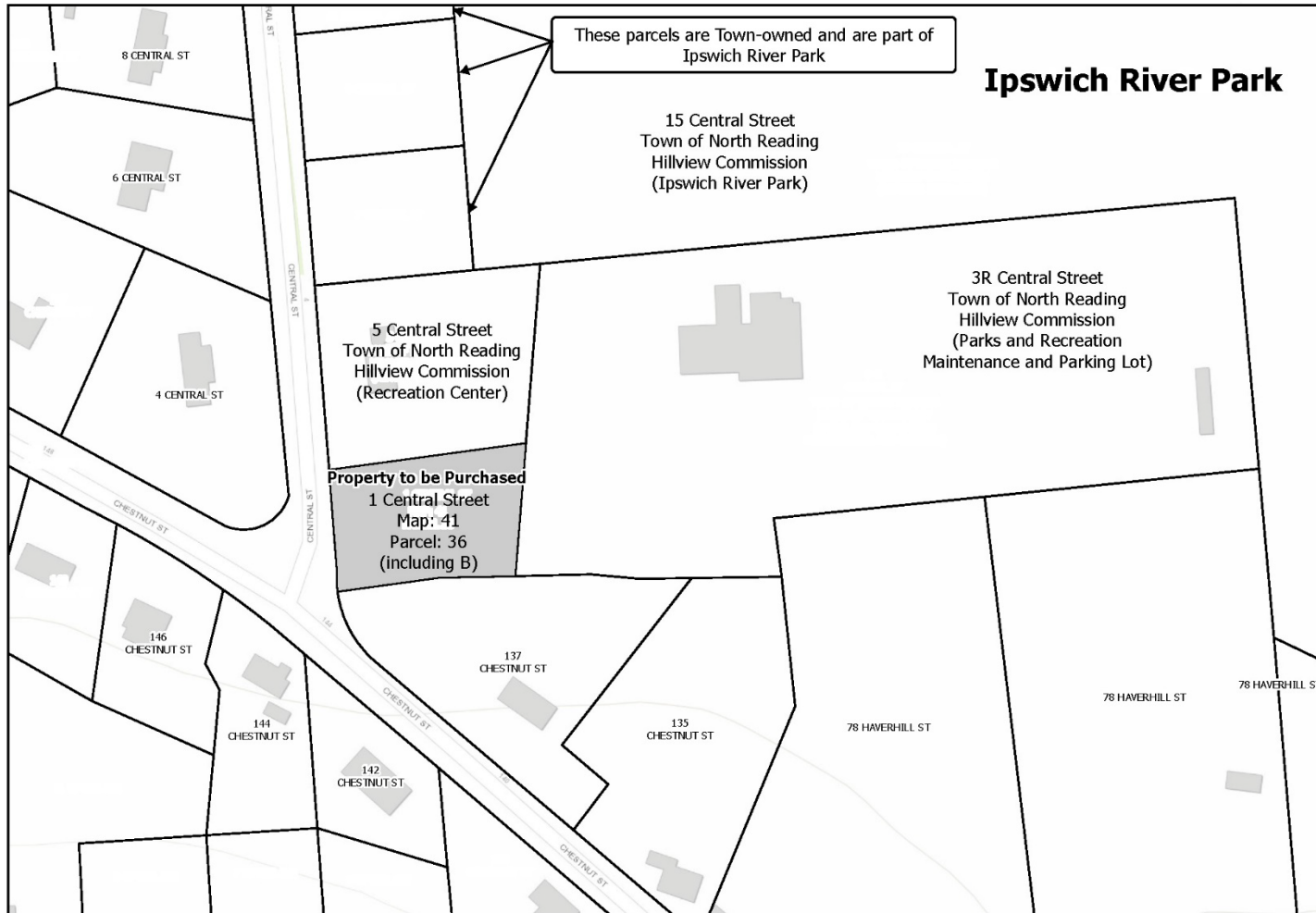
- Authorize Acquisition and Appropriation for 1 Central Street
 - Parcel is a single family house lot that abuts Town-owned land connected to Ipswich River Park and front Central Street.
 - Appropriation being requested is \$650,000 in Free Cash.
 - Additional slides to follow.
 - Select Board: Recommends
 - FinCom: Recommends
 - School Committee: Recommends
 - Parks and Recreation Committee: Recommends
 - Land Utilization Committee: Recommends

Article 1

- About the 1 Central Street parcel:
 - Owned by Nancy E. Wheeler / Wheeler Realty Trust
 - 0.54 acres of land
 - 1,804 square foot single family home and a 280 square foot detached garage
 - Valued at \$641,700 by Assessors

Article 1

TOWN OF NORTH READING
1 CENTRAL STREET



Article 1

- This property abuts Town-owned land that includes the current Recreation Center, Parks and Recreation maintenance building, and overflow parking for Ipswich River Park.
- Considerations for potential future use have included an indoor recreation facility/ice rink, an updated Parks maintenance building, fields, and an intergenerational community center, although other potential municipal uses may be identified in the future.
- **Tonight's vote and discussion are not to determine what the future use will be. The vote is only on whether or not to purchase the property, adding area to existing Town-owned land to make any future use of the land more feasible.**

Article 1

- Depending on the eventual use, state legislative approval may be required.
- Regardless of the eventual use of the site, the acquisition of the single family lot at 1 Central Street would provide additional contiguous and relatively dry land with frontage on Central Street.
- The purchase price is \$650,000 and is anticipated to be funded using available funds without the need for a debt exclusion or override.

Article 1



Article 1

- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**
 - **Will my taxes go up?**
 - No. The funding source is Free Cash, which is the state term for funding left over from the previous fiscal year.
 - **Why not use this Free Cash to lower my taxes?**
 - Free Cash is one time revenue and cannot be used to fund recurring costs. Each year, departments ask for operating funds that exceed the amount of recurring revenue. While Free Cash cannot be used for this purpose, it has been an important tool for purchasing equipment, repairing buildings, and covering certain non-recurring costs in the municipal and school budgets when projected revenue is insufficient.

Article 1

- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
 - **How will we decide what we will do with the land?**
 - Multiple committees are working to review options for the use of the property in this area, including:
 - Facilities Master Plan Committee
 - Parks and Recreation Committee
 - Hillview Commission
 - Land Utilization Committee
 - Ultimately, the decision about what to do with the property will come back to a future Town Meeting for approval by the voters.

Article 1

- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
 - **The Town has other parcels such as the Smith Property, 9 Mill Street, and parcels in and around Eisenhaure Pond that it has acquired in recent years. What is the status of those parcels?**
 - The Smith Property was acquired as a means to limit development along the Ipswich River.
 - Eisenhaure Pond contains a trail network that may be accessed from Oscar's Way, Burnham Drive, Magnolia Street, and Lloyd Road.
 - The Town acquired a single family home at 9 Mill Street in 2017. This parcel has a water main on it and was intended to also house a water pump station connected to Reading, however in 2018 the Town opted to proceed with a 99 year agreement with Andover instead. The property was purchased with a different funding source – water enterprise revenues – and is anticipated to be sold using the state-required Request for Proposals process early this spring. The Town will retain the right to use a portion of the land for a future municipal purpose of necessary

Article 2

- Amend FY 2024 Town Operating Budget
 - No amendment is being requested.
 - Article recommended to be passed over.
 - Select Board: Recommends Passing Over
 - FinCom: Recommends Passing Over

Article 3

- Amend FY 2024 Town Capital Budget
 - Three amendments being requested:
 - \$515,000 for water tower painting
 - \$200,000 from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings
 - \$315,000 from Water Infrastructure Stabilization Fund
 - \$250,000 from Free Cash for Fire Department renovation design development phase expenses
 - \$200,000 for state-required owners project manager services
 - \$50,000 for additional designer services
 - \$68,750 from Free Cash for design and construction at the North and Central Street intersection
 - \$50,000 is additional funding beyond what was authorized in June, 2023
 - \$18,750 will be in place of proceeds from prior bonds that were re-appropriated for this project but were ultimately determined to not qualify for this use.
 - Select Board: Recommends
 - FinCom: Recommends
 - CIPC Recommends