



Town of Otis, Massachusetts
Annual Town Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2026

Farmington River Regional School District, 555 North Main Rd.

Present:

Selectboard: Therese Gould, Larry Southard

Finance Board: Lisamarie D'Orazio Chair, Therese Gould, Susan Bauer-Brofman

Moderator: David Sarnacki

Town Administrator: Brandi Page

Town Clerk: Lyn O'Brien

Town Counsel: Jeremia Pollard

Board of Registrars: Emily Piacquadio, Jill Moretz, Marjorie Middleton

Clickers: Chase Chapdelaine, Anthony Middleton

Total Registered Voters: 1377

Total Registered Voters in Attendance: 350

Meeting called to order by the Moderator at 7:03 pm in the Otis Town Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

A moment of silence was held for those who have passed away.

Introductions were made. Cell phones were requested to be silenced.

The Moderator explained the town meeting clickers and said we would be using them on all articles. Voting will be open for 30 seconds for each article. A test question was voted.

The Moderator asked voters to speak into the microphone and identify yourself. Voters will have a time limit of two minutes to speak.

The Moderator confirmed with the Town Clerk a quorum was present.

A motion was made to dispense with the reading of the warrant and proceed to act on the Articles.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed.

ARTICLE 1: Town Reports

To receive the reports of the various Town Officers and act thereon.

A motion was made to accept Article 1.

The motion was seconded.

Article 1 passed

Clicker count: Yes 247 No 8

ARTICLE 2: General Fund Operating Budget

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate such money as may be necessary to defray the Town's operating expenses for this fiscal year (FY27). See appropriations list attached at end of Warrant with a total amount of **\$7,111,341.74**.

A motion was made to accept Article 2.

The motion was seconded.

Article 2 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 246 No 53

ARTICLE 3: Revolving Funds

There are hereby established in the Town of Otis pursuant to the provisions of G.L. Ch. 44, 53E 1/2, the following Revolving Funds:

Plumbing/Gas	Fees & Charges for Plumbing/Gas Inspections
Wire Inspector	Fees & Charges for Wire Inspections
Fire Department Inspections	Fees & Charges for Fire Inspections
Sanitation Inspector	Fees & Charges for Sanitation Inspections
Recreation Commission	Fees & Charges for Recreation Programs
Demolition Debris Removal	Fees & Charges for Transfer Station Demolition Debris
Cemetery	Fees & Charges for Cemetery Commission Expenses
Tax Title	Fees & Charges for Tax Title Expenses

Section II: Expenditures from each revolving fund set forth herein shall be subject to the limitation established by Town Meeting or any increase therein as may be authorized in accordance with G.L. Ch. 44, 53E 1/2.

Plumbing & Gas Inspector	\$15,000.00
Wire Inspector	\$15,000.00
Fire Department Inspections	\$6,000.00
Sanitation Inspector	\$9,000.00
Recreation Commission	\$5,000.00
Demolition Debris Removal	\$50,000.00
Cemetery	\$2,000.00
Tax Title	\$30,000.00

A motion was made to accept Article 3.

The motion was seconded.

Article 3 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 259 No 36

ARTICLE 4: Wastewater Enterprise Fund

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate **\$102,750.00** for the operation and maintenance of the municipal sewer system, and further to provide for said appropriation transfer funds from the sewer user fees.

A motion was made to accept Article 4.

The motion was seconded.

Article 4 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 253 No 37

ARTICLE 5: Otis Fire & Rescue Enterprise Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$494,700.00** for the operation and salaries of Otis Fire & Rescue.

A motion was made to accept Article 5.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: How have things changed with our EMS service and how are we served by EMS that's different from before? Brandi Page, Town Administrator, answered the EMS came under the town this year. Last year we voted \$350,000 and we offset the expenditures of about \$85,000 with ARPA money. This is the first year we are fully funding it and not offsetting it with anything. Next year we will start to see retained earnings. After a year goes by those will be certified like our free cash. We will start to see what is coming in and what will be staying in the enterprise fund as revenue. We are staffing 4 full time EMT's and Per Diems. We are not at 24 hour coverage yet but hope to build that up in the next few years as we can afford to do it.

Article 5 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 302 No 16

ARTICLE 6: Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$144,337.56** for the purpose of paying the principal and interest due in fiscal 2027 for the fifth payment on the KME Fire Truck and the first payment on the Heavy Duty Highway truck; and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 6.

The motion was seconded.

Article 6 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 237 No 19

ARTICLE 7: Wind Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$430,801.26** in fiscal 2027 for paying the principal and interest for the Wind Project Bond; funds to be transferred from the Wind Municipal Light Plant.

A motion was made to accept Article 7.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: When was there an audit or an accounts review? It is audited every year and we are currently on our 2nd audit. It was presented at an open selectboard meeting.

Article 7 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 249 No 71

ARTICLE 8: Broadband Debt Service

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$211,750.00** for paying the principal and interest due in fiscal 2027 on funds borrowed for the Otis Fiber Bond; funds to be transferred from the Wind Municipal Light Plant.

A motion was made to accept Article 8.

The motion was seconded.

Article 8 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 237 No 75

ARTICLE 9: Grant Funds

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to apply and accept Federal and State grants, including Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) grant funds, and to expend any monies received and in anticipation of being received, as set forth by the appropriate grant application, and to follow the appropriate procedures.

A motion was made to accept Article 9.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: The Moderator explained this is for any and all grants for the Town.

Article 9 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 279 No 54

ARTICLE 10: Town Ways and Bridges-CH90

To see if the Town will vote to accept any and all funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Transportation (Mass DOT), under provisions of Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair and construction of Town ways and bridges.

A motion was made to accept Article 10.

The motion was seconded.

Article 10 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 320 No 8

ARTICLE 11: Rescind Prior Borrowing Authorizations

To see if the Town will vote to rescind the unused borrowing authority voted under previous Town Meeting articles, or act in any other manner in relation thereto. This vote is to rescind authorized and unissued debt that is no longer required for its intended purpose, specifically **\$1,361,111.00** not used for Broadband, **\$23,750.00** not used for the Grader, **\$189.00** not used for the Loader, and **\$7,057.24** not used for the Pumper Fire Truck.

A motion was made to accept Article 11.

The motion was seconded.

Article 11 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 289 No 18

ARTICLE 12: Town Hall Roof

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$150,000.00** to pay all related costs for designing, constructing and or repairing the roof at the Otis Town Hall, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 12.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: Last year we approved \$500,000 for the roof, what happened to that money? Brandi Page answered that money is still set aside for the project but we need an additional \$150,000 to complete the project. Bids have been opened and 2 out of 6 bids are within our budget. We plan to have it done by winter.

Article 12 passed

Clicker count: Yes 262 No 53

ARTICLE 13: Police Cruiser

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$115,000.00** for the purpose of purchasing a new cruiser with the necessary equipment for the Police Department, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 13.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: Do we need an additional cruiser? Kris McDonough Police Chief responded, we have three police cruisers. The cruiser that is being replaced is a 2017 with 141,000 miles on it. On a small police department we like to have a new cruiser, middle of the road cruiser, and an old cruiser. We like to rotate these out so we aren't asking for three cruisers at the same time. Article 13 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 245 No 77

ARTICLE 14: Highway Truck F600

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$210,000.00** for the purpose of purchasing a new F600 truck outfitted with dump/ sander/plow equipment for the Highway Department, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 14.

The motion was seconded.

Article 14 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 283 No 42

ARTICLE 15: Road Paving

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of **\$300,000.00** for the purpose of repairing and paving town roads including costs incidental and related thereto, and further to provide for said appropriation, take said sum from Free Cash.

A motion was made to accept Article 15.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: Any plans to maintain Old State Road? No.

Article 15 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 298 No 24

ARTICLE 16: OPEB Trust Fund

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 20, as amended by Section 238 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016, which authorizes the establishment of an Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all actions necessary to establish and administer said Trust Fund and further to designate the Treasurer as the custodian of the OPEB Fund; and to authorize the Select Board to appoint a Trustee or Board of Trustees to oversee the investment and management of said fund.

A motion was made to accept Article 16.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: What is this? Brandi Page Town Administrator responded this is the Town's future benefit obligation for its employees. We have to get audited on this every other year. Our last audit was in calendar 2025. Currently our liability is \$933,199.00. This article sets up the trust fund and the next article starts putting money into it.

Article 16 passed.

Clicker Count: Yes 258 No 63

ARTICLE 17: Funding OPEB Liability

To see if the Town will vote to transfer any monies remaining in the Health Insurance (914) budget at the close of FY26 to the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund.

A motion was made to accept Article 17.

The motion was seconded.

Article 17 passed.

Clicker count: Yes 257 No 46

ARTICLE 18: Reservoir Road Culvert Replacement Easements

To authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire the following land parcels and or rights in land parcels for the purpose of obtaining a secure and public right of way. This will allow for the construction and roadway safety improvements for the Reservoir Road Culvert Replacement.

Total # Parcel Area (Square Feet)

Permanent Easements, 4 totaling 15,370.40

Temporary Easements 3 totaling 7,772.11

Further that the Selectmen may acquire these parcels, or modification of these parcels or other required parcels through all legal means. This includes donations, purchase or eminent domain. Funding for acquisition is in place with grant funding. The subject parcels are currently identified on plans dated March 26, 2025 “Easement Plan Surveyed for The Town of Otis, Reservoir Road, Otis, Massachusetts”, which plans are available for review at the Town Clerk’s Office.

A motion was made to accept Article 18.

The motion was seconded.

Article 18 passed.

2/3rds vote required. Clicker count: Yes 268 No 57

ARTICLE 19: New Library Construction Project

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate **\$9,300,000** (NINE MILLION THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS) for the purpose of constructing and equipping a new Library, including but not limited to the preparation of plans and specifications, the preparation of bid documents, project management and supervision, construction of the building, water and sewer systems, mechanical systems, exterior improvements and landscaping, the purchase and installation of furniture and equipment, the purchase and installation of technology and any other costs incidental and related thereto, for which the Town is eligible for a grant in the amount of **\$6,402,354** from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC); and to meet this appropriation, to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum pursuant to the provisions of MGL c. 44 sec. 7 or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; provided that any borrowing or expenditure hereunder shall be contingent upon passage of a Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion ballot question vote pursuant to

the provisions of MGL c. 59 sec. 21C; said funds to be expended by the Select Board in consultation with the Library Building Committee; and to authorize the Select Board to execute all documents and take all actions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote.

A motion was made to accept Article 19.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion: Multiple voters expressed their views on why we need a library and why we do not. These included the library has outgrown its original purpose and an accessible space is needed for all. If we don't accept it the money will be gone. A new library is a want and not a need. The tax increase was also discussed.

A motion was made to call the question.

The motion was seconded.

This is non debatable and requires a 2/3rds vote. Yes 268 No 63

The motion to call the question passed.

Article 19 went to a vote and the clicker system froze during two attempts at voting. The system was rebooted and all was ok.

2/3rds vote required: Clicker Count: Yes 144 No 190

Article 19 failed.

A motion was made to dissolve the meeting.

The motion was seconded.

The motion to dissolve the meeting passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn O'Brien

Town Clerk

Town of Otis FY27 Operating Budget

Account number	Description	Done	Pavroll	Approved Amount
122	Board of Selectmen	X	\$17,500.00	\$21,365.00
123	Town Administrator	X	\$158,158.89	\$162,138.89
131	Finance	X	\$1,700.00	\$2,042.00
132	Reserve Fund	X		\$10,000.00
135	Accountant	X	\$25,561.45	\$27,161.45
136	Audit	X		\$19,000.00
141	Assessors	X	\$49,627.36	\$83,177.36
145	Treasurer	X	\$58,700.00	\$75,200.00
146	Town Collector	X	\$58,716.34	\$85,591.34
150	Office Supplies	X		\$9,500.00
151	Legal	X		\$30,500.00
155	Technology	X		\$66,900.00
161	Town Clerk	X	\$58,748.79	\$62,468.79
162	Elections	X	\$12,900.00	\$21,225.00
171	Conservation	X	\$15,500.00	\$17,900.00
175	Planning Board	X	\$5,000.00	\$7,200.00

176	Zoning Board	X	\$4,500.00	\$7,100.00	
190	Safety	X	\$6,000.00	\$9,500.00	
192	Town Hall	X		\$24,432.75	
195	Town Report	X		\$2,000.00	
210	Police	X	\$399,483.40	\$439,583.40	
215	Otis Fire & Rescue	X	\$400,000.00		\$ 494,700.00
220	Fire	X	\$46,000.00	\$117,816.50	
241	Building Inspector	X	\$83,311.69	\$88,951.69	
291	Emergency	X	\$3,500.00	\$21,250.00	
292	Animal Control	X	\$18,500.00	\$17,700.00	
294	Tree Warden	X	\$500.00	\$500.00	
300	Schools	X	\$2,600.00	\$2,809,430.68	
422	Highway	X	\$235,475.67	\$595,882.17	
423	Snow & Ice	X	\$88,000.00	\$205,000.00	
425	Gas & Diesel	X		\$50,000.00	
429	Maintenance	X	\$321,001.50	\$509,576.11	
433	Health & Sanitation	X	\$124,398.02	\$322,198.02	
440	WWTP	X	\$30,000.00		\$ 102,750.00
491	Cemetery	X	\$1,500.00	\$12,200.00	
520	Community Health	X		\$1,000.00	
522	Visiting Nurse	X		\$6,300.00	
523	Construct	X		\$800.00	
541	Council on Aging	X	\$42,547.55	\$67,267.55	
543	Veterans	X		\$60,000.00	
610	Library	X		\$79,440.00	
630	Recreation	X		\$7,350.00	
691	Historical	X		\$11,175.00	
692	Celebrations	X		\$10,000.00	
699	Cultural Council	X		\$6,000.00	
820	Berkshire Regional Plan	X		\$1,498.04	
911	Berkshire County Retirement	X		\$223,020.00	
912	Unemployment	X		\$13,000.00	
914	Health Insurance	X		\$512,500.00	
916	Medicare	X		\$30,000.00	
945	Insurance	X		\$147,500.00	
			\$ 2,269,430.66	\$ 7,111,341.74	\$ 7,708,791.74