



Compiled by the Bedford Public Library's Reference Department in conjunction with Town Clerk Sally Kellar, the Planning & Zoning Department, and Assistant Town Manager/Director of Strategic Initiatives Jeanne Walker.

Article 2. CHARTER REVISION PROPOSED BY THE CHARTER COMMISSION

Text of the article as it will appear on the ballot:

“Shall the municipality approve the Charter revision recommended by the Charter Commission?”

(Requires a 3/5 ballot vote approval to pass)

Summary in accordance with RSA 49-B:6,I: Bedford currently operates as a Town Council with a Budgetary Town Meeting form of government where the Council serves as the legislative body for all matters except the budget. The budget is currently acted on by the voters at an in-person session known as Budgetary Town Meeting that is typically held in the evening the day after elections in March. The Charter revision proposes to eliminate the Budgetary Town Meeting and have the budget acted on by the voters on Election Day on the Official Ballot. The Town Council would conduct at least one public hearing on the budget and a Deliberative Session would be held prior to the budget being placed on the Official Ballot.

The proposed budget process would be similar to that currently completed for action on the School District budget.

THE TOWN COUNCIL DOES NOT RECOMMEND PASSAGE OF THIS ARTICLE.

For more information, view the Charter Commission’s webpage and their report, which is available at the Town website. A paper copy is also available for viewing at the Library’s Reference Desk:

<https://www.bedfordnh.org/1008/Charter-Commission>

<https://www.bedfordnh.org/DocumentCenter/View/6997/Bedford-Charter-Commission-Final-Report---2023-12-08>

Article 3. ZONING ARTICLES

Zoning Amendments Proposed by the Planning Board

Text of the amendments as they will appear on the ballot:

Amendment No. 1

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Bedford Zoning Ordinance to amend Article VIII, Section 275-21 Subsection J(2)(e), by deleting the words shown in strikethrough and adding the words in bold, as follows:

Amend Article VIII, Section 275-21 Subsection J(2)(e), as follows:

- e) The **property shall be at least 1.5 acres in size.** ~~combination of the principal single dwelling and the detached accessory apartment shall comply with the minimum lot sizing for the Residential and Agricultural District, in accordance with Article III, Section 275, Table 1, Table of Dimensional Requirements.~~

[This amendment is intended to set the minimum lot size requirement for detached accessory apartments in the Residential & Agricultural District to be 1.5 acres, by removing the reference to the Table of Dimensional Requirements, which requires a soils based lot sizing calculation be provided. The calculation is done when land is subdivided and is not needed for the permitting associated with the accessory apartment.]

Article 3. ZONING ARTICLES (continued)

Amendment No.2

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Bedford Zoning Ordinance to amend Article X, Section 275-76, Floodplain Development, as summarized as follows:

This amendment makes administrative changes to the Floodplain Development Ordinance to bring the Town's floodplain regulations into compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program and to incorporate amendments to align with the best practices for floodplain regulation.

[This amendment incorporates administrative changes to bring the Town's ordinance into compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program and also incorporates recommended best practices for floodplain regulation. The changes include updates to the purpose statements, definitions and terminology throughout the ordinance. The amendment also includes new requirements for the construction of driveways in floodplains and allows for the construction of an accessory structure of 500 sq. ft. or less (such as garages, sheds and playhouses), provided certain criteria are met. The complete text of the amendment is on file for public viewing at the Planning Department and on the Town's Website.]

Article 3. ZONING ARTICLES (continued)

ZONING AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CITIZEN PETITION:

Amendment No. 3

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by petition of Matthew McLaughlin and others, as follows:

To amend the Town of Bedford Code, Chapter 275, Zoning, Article II, Section 275-8, Location of Districts and the Zoning map for the western boundary of the Historic District from the “The easterly edge of the power line right of way” to “The centerline of Wallace Road.”

This would remove eighteen properties from the Historic District, from 266 Wallace Road to 324 Wallace Road. Only four of these properties were built prior to 1955.

[THE PLANNING BOARD **DOES NOT** SUPPORT PASSAGE OF THIS AMENDMENT.]

ARTICLE 4. ISSUANCE OF LONG TERM DEBT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH RIVER ROAD POLICE AND FIRE COMPLEX AND RENOVATIONS AT THE SAFETY COMPLEX AND TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

Text of the article as it will appear on the ballot:

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty six million five hundred thousand dollars (\$36,500,000) for the purpose of financing the costs of engineering, designing and constructing a police station and fire substation with associated building and site improvements and related furniture, fixtures, fit up and equipment at 300 South River Road and to complete renovations at the Safety Complex at 55 Constitution Drive and Town Office Building at 24 North Amherst Road; to authorize the issuance of not more than thirty five million five hundred thousand dollars (\$35,500,000) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); with one million dollars(\$1,000,000) to come from the Facilities Design/ Build Capital Reserve Fund; to authorize the Town Council to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; to authorize the Town Council to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for this project; and to authorize the Town Council to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto? Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. (3/5 ballot vote required for approval.)

Explanation: If approved, this funding will be used to construct an approximately 44,000 square foot police station and fire substation at 300 South River Road and to renovate the existing Safety Complex and Town Office Building, including but not limited to, engineering, design, construction, and fit up. The Town is requesting the authority to bond up to \$35,500,000. In the event that completion of this project is less than the requested amount, it is the Town's intent to issue only what is

ARTICLE 4 (continued)

necessary. Any remaining funds from this authorization will be brought back to the voters to rescind ensuring that they cannot be used for any other purpose.

The existing Safety Complex was built in 1994 when the Town's population was 12,500 which has now grown by 90% to 23,704. Police and Fire staffing has grown from 49 to 95 in the same time frame to address the nearly 400% increase in calls for service. Continued operation from Safety Complex compromises the mission of the Fire and Police Departments as well as the safety and security of the public, our employees, and critical infrastructure and public safety assets. Moving the Police Department from the current Safety Complex allows for expansion of the Fire Department, allows for co-location of the Planning Department, Building Division and Public Works. It also creates more usable space in the Town Office Building. The project has no tax impact in 2024, an estimated tax rate impact of \$0.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2025, and an estimated tax rate impact \$0.49 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2026 which reduces by an estimated \$0.01 per \$1,000 of assessed value each year until the bond is paid off in 2044.

THE TOWN COUNCIL RECOMMENDS PASSAGE OF THIS ARTICLE.

Additional information provided by Jeanne Walker, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Strategic Initiatives:

The need for a Fire Substation in the South River Road corridor was identified in the Master Plan in 1990. Since that time numerous facilities studies have been performed echoing that need. At the same time, due to Bedford's population growth and increased needs for service, the Police and Fire Departments have outgrown their current space at the Safety Complex. Expanding the current building was examined but there isn't enough land on the existing site. After researching available properties

ARTICLE 4 (continued)

within Bedford, it was determined that the solution was to co-locate a Fire substation and a new Police station in the South River Road corridor. It reduces response time in the highest emergency call volume area, provides an economy of scale, requires the purchase and development of only one piece of property, and meets the additional space needs for both departments.

When the property at 300 South River Road became available, the Town purchased the property using Capital Reserve Funds approved for this purpose at the 2021 and 2023 Town Meetings. A conceptual layout of the single-story new police station (24,500 sf) and fire substation (10,200 sf) has been prepared and is estimated to cost \$34 million. Also included in this warrant article is \$1.5 million for improvements to the current Safety Complex (55 Constitution Drive) to reconfigure the Fire Department and relocate the Planning Department into the building. An additional \$1 million is included for improvements to the Town Offices, to improve the building's systems and workflow.

The new station is programmed to meet Bedford's needs for the next thirty to fifty years.

For further information, please visit the Bedford Building Project Official website at <https://srrcomplex.bedfordnh.org>.

If you would like to learn more, you may watch interviews with the candidates on BCTV on their program "Candidates Corner", as well as the Bedford Men's Club sponsored forums with the Town Council and School Board Candidates. Visit BCTV's website, www.bedfordtv.com to find the program schedule of candidate interviews and the debate or to view them on demand. You may also watch Charter Commission meetings and informational videos about the South River Road Police & Fire Complex on BCTV. Sample ballots and more information are available at bedfordnh.org.



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Election Day

Tuesday, March 12
7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Bedford High School
47 Nashua Road

Budgetary Town Meeting

Wednesday, March 13 at 7:00 PM
Bedford High School Theater
47 Nashua Road