

# TOWN OF BUCKFIELD

## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

### FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

TO: Cameron Hinkley, a Resident of the Town of Buckfield in the County of Oxford, and State of Maine.

GREETINGS: In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Buckfield in said County and State qualified by law to vote in Town affairs, to appear at the Municipal Center in said Town on Tuesday, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025 at 8:00 AM, then and there to act upon Articles 1 through 30 by secret ballot as set out below, the polling hours therefore to be from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM.

**ARTICLE 1:** To elect one (1) **Selectman** for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

**ARTICLE 2:** To elect one (1) **Selectman** for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

**ARTICLE 3:** To elect one (1) **R.S.U. # 10 School Board Director** for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$548,415** for **GENERAL GOVERNMENT** operating expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

#### **RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

The General Government budget includes Administration, Insurance, Assessing, and the Municipal Center.

**Administration - \$370,005**

**Insurance - \$76,460**

**Assessing - \$45,000**

**Municipal Center - \$56,950**

**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$794,294** for **PUBLIC SAFETY** operating expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

#### **RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

The Public Safety budget includes Fire, Rescue, Emergency Management, Animal Control, Streetlights, and Hydrants. The Fire and Rescue Department budgets are offset by revenue generated through contracts with Hartford and Sumner as well as billing revenue. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 proposed Public Safety Revenue (incoming funds) is **\$255,000** (to be accepted under Article 11).

**Fire Department - \$178,820**

**Rescue Department - \$495,562**

**Animal Welfare - \$14,967**

**Streetlights - \$5,500**

**Hydrants - \$62,720**

**Emergency Management - \$1,615**

*Proposed Budget (Costs) - Proposed Local Revenue (Income) = Total to be raised through taxation*  
**\$794,294 - \$255,000 = \$539,294**

**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$35,455** for the **PARKS AND RECREATION** operating expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

*The Parks and Recreation budget includes costs associated with maintaining facilities as well as costs associated with operating youth sports programs. This also includes maintenance to the Railroad Bed Recreation Trail. Some of these operating expenses are offset by revenue generated through various sponsorships and registration fees.*

**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$74,536** for the **COMMUNITY** operating expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

*The Community budget includes Community Events, Social Services, General Assistance, the Old Church, and the Zadoc Long Free Library. Some of these operating expenses are offset by revenue generated from donations, trust funds, surplus book sales, photocopy fees, and State reimbursements.*

**Organizations and Events - \$1,500**

**Social Services - \$3,250**

**General Assistance - \$2,000**

**Old Church - \$5,650**

**Zadoc Long Free Library - \$62,136**

**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$136,340** for **DEBT SERVICE** for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

*Fire Rescue Building: \$71,280*

*2021 Cat Excavator: \$21,700 – One (1) Remaining Payment*

*2005 E-One Quint: \$27,475 – Seven (7) Remaining Payments*

*2023 Ford F-450: \$15,885 – Three (3) Remaining Payments*

*This is a decrease of \$31,395 due to the payoff of the 2009 International and 2012 Peterbilt plow trucks.*

**ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$1,193,407** for **PUBLIC WORKS** expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

*The Public Works budget includes the Public Works Complex, Public Works Operations, Summer Roads, Winter Roads, and Cemeteries.*

**Public Works Complex - \$18,280**

**Public Works Operations - \$498,327**

**Summer Roads - \$551,200**

**Winter Roads - \$114,100**

**Cemeteries - \$11,500**

*Local and State revenues (income) such as culvert installation reimbursement, motor vehicle excise tax and LRAP (Local Road Assistance Program) help to offset the overall cost of Public Works (to be accepted under Article **11** and **12**).*

**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a total of **\$308,635** for the **SOLID WASTE** operating expenses for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

*The Solid Waste budget includes the full cost to operate the Buckfield-Sumner Solid Waste Facility. The amount to be taxed to the taxpayers of Buckfield is reduced by the Town of Sumner's 35% share of the budget through the acceptance of local revenues in Article 11.*

$$\text{Proposed Budget (Costs) - Proposed Local Revenue (Income) = Total to be raised through taxation}$$
$$\text{\$308,635 - \$107,940 = \$200,695}$$

**ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will vote to accept and appropriate the projected **Local Revenues** of **\$857,070** to reduce the 2025-2026 Appropriations Budget.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

***Approval of Local Revenues reduces the amount to be taxed.***

General Government Revenues - \$446,450  
Public Safety Revenues - \$255,000  
Parks and Recreation Revenues - \$13,750  
Community Revenues - \$17,750  
Public Works Revenue – \$16,180  
Solid Waste Revenue - \$107,940

**ARTICLE 12:** To see if the Town will vote to accept and appropriate the projected State Revenues of **\$536,300** to reduce the 2025-2026 Appropriations Budget.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

***Approval of State Revenues reduces the amount to be taxed.***

Municipal Revenue Sharing - \$475,000  
Local Road Assistance Program - \$50,000  
General Assistance Reimbursement - \$1,400  
Tree Growth Reimbursement - \$6,500  
Veteran Exemption Reimbursement - \$1,500  
Snowmobile Registration Reimbursement - \$900  
Pit/Tax Loss Reimbursement - \$1,000

**ARTICLE 13:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to appropriate up to **\$300,000** from the undesignated fund balance and apply the total amount to reduce the fiscal year 2025-2026 appropriations budget.

**RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD**

**ARTICLE 14:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Treasurer, upon approval of the Select Board, to apply the revenue received in excess of the 2024-2025 proposed Rescue Department Revenue of \$240,000, to the Rescue

Department Capital Asset Reserve account and be used for the future purpose of replacing and/or remounting ambulances.

*The ambulance replacement plan relies on this allocation of excess revenue to cover the costs associated with remounting or replacing aging units. Without allocating this revenue the Town will have to finance the refurbishment or replacement of ambulances as needed. If there are no excess funds, no funds will be applied.*

**ARTICLE 15:** To see if the Town will vote to set November 15, 2025 as the due date for the first half of the 2025-2026 property taxes and May 15, 2026 as the due date for the second half of the 2025-2026 property taxes; after which interest will be charged at the rate of **4%** per year, or part thereof, on taxes unpaid after the date in accordance with 36 M.R.S. § 505(4).

*Per 36 M.R.S. § 505(4), the maximum rate of interest that can be charged is 7.5%; the Treasurer of State sets this rate each year.*

**ARTICLE 16:** To see if the Town will vote in accordance with 36 M.R.S. § 506(A), to pay no interest on refunds of overpaid or abated taxes.

*36 M.R.S. § 506(A) provides the rate of interest may not exceed the rate set for delinquent taxes, nor be less than that rate reduced by 4%.*

**ARTICLE 17:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the payment of tax abatements approved by the Select Board from the property tax overlay or, if necessary, from undesignated fund balance.

**ARTICLE 18:** To see if the Town will vote to accept prepayment of taxes to the Tax Collector for fiscal year 2025-2026 prior to the date of commitment and to pay no interest thereon.

**ARTICLE 19:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to sell by bid or auction, such equipment, vehicles, or furniture valued at or over \$5,000 as are no longer necessary for Town operations.

**ARTICLE 20:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Manager to sell by bid or auction, or on such terms and conditions he/she deems to be in the best interest of the Town, such equipment, vehicles, or furniture valued under \$5,000 as are no longer necessary for Town operations.

**ARTICLE 21:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board and Town Manager to apply for State, Federal, and other grants on the Town's behalf for purposes they deem to be in the best interests of the Town; to accept such grants, including, when necessary, the authority to sign contracts and related documents and accept conditions of approval; and to appropriate and expend such grant funds for the authorized purposes for fiscal year 2025-2026.

**ARTICLE 22:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to negotiate and execute multi-year contracts not to exceed three years, including but not limited to, contracts or agreements in the following areas: auditing, tax assessing, solid waste disposal, fire, rescue, equipment purchasing, leasing and maintenance agreements.

**ARTICLE 23:** To see if the Town will authorize the municipal officers to dispose of tax-acquired property via quitclaim deed by either (A) offering the property to the former owner(s) or if deceased, to his/her/their heirs/devisees/personal representative for a price equal to all outstanding taxes, interest, fees and costs; or (B) using the process required by 36

M.R.S. § 943-C, provided that if the board is unable to list or sell the property as required by § 943-C(3), the board may sell the property through a competitive sealed bid process in which a notice advertising sale of the property shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. For sales other than to the former owner, excess sale proceeds, as defined in 36 M.R.S. § 943-C, shall be returned to the former owner.

**ARTICLE 24:** Shall an ordinance entitled 'Town of Buckfield, Fire Department Billing and Restitution Ordinance' be enacted?

*The purpose of the proposed ordinance is to allow the Town of Buckfield to recover expenses incurred by the fire department when responding to certain types of incidents. This ordinance is specific to non-residents of Buckfield, companies, and specific mutual aid calls for service in which Buckfield Fire Department is the only agency providing the billable service. Cost recovery is becoming a more common practice as departments face rising costs and pressure to keep costs to the taxpayers as low as possible. A copy of the proposed ordinance is attached.*

**ARTICLE 25:** To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to accept gifts, real estate, and certain funds, including trust funds (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the Gifts") on behalf of the Town under such terms as they deem advisable, spend the Gifts for the purposes intended as allowed by law and establish reserve funds as necessary in order to give effect to the Gifts.

**ARTICLE 26:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate **75% of the refund** of Snowmobile Registrations, received annually from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to the Streaked Mountaineers Snowmobile Club for maintaining trails and bridges, on the condition that those trails be open to the public for snowmobile purposes at no charge in the snow season.

**ARTICLE 27:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to waive foreclosure on any tax lien during the course of the fiscal year, leaving the Tax Lien Mortgage in full force and effect as provided for in 36 M.R.S.A. § 944(1).

**ARTICLE 28:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to expend an amount not to exceed the 2024-2025 approved budget for any department in which the proposed 2025-2026 budget is rejected, or until such time a new budget is approved by the Town at a Special Town Meeting.

**ARTICLE 29:** To see if the Town will accept the bequests outlined in the Last Will and Testament of the late James E. Jordan, which include his residence and two-acre parcel of land, all remaining real estate, and a sum of money from the residuary estate, to be invested in accordance with the terms of his will. The income generated from said investments shall be used exclusively for the maintenance of the bequeathed properties. Pursuant to the conditions of the bequest, the residence shall be "used for the specific purpose of providing a location for training and support of the rescue unit of the Town". The remaining property shall be "used for the specific purpose of providing recreational opportunities to the public". Neither the residence nor the remaining property shall be sold. In accepting the bequests, the Town agrees to follow the terms outlined in Mr. Jordan's will into perpetuity. Should the Town decline to accept these bequests under the stated terms, all assets will instead be transferred to the closest local charter of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club, as specified in Mr. Jordan's will.

**Article 30:** To see if the town will vote to authorize the Select Board to lease or sell, the Old Church on the Hill, to an individual, non-profit organization, or other group under the conditions that the building will be

substantially stabilized and repaired. If interior renovations alter the current layout of the building the lessee or purchaser shall agree that the exterior of the building will remain unaltered from its original design.

*The Old Church on the Hill needs substantial structural and cosmetic renovations. An engineering study of the steeple and roof was conducted in 2020 that identified needed repairs. The estimate at the time of the study placed those repairs at \$635,000. A second opinion was provided without a formal report in 2022 that with enough volunteers needed repairs could potentially be made for \$25,000. The Town has been unable to find volunteers to fundraise, coordinate additional opinions, or make repairs. The building continues to deteriorate and requires significant attention.*

Given under our hands at Buckfield, Maine this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. 2025.

**Town of Buckfield Select Board**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Hand, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra Fickett, Vice Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Azalea Cormier, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Heather Henley, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Fickett, Selectman

The Registrar of Voters is available at the Town Office in the Municipal Center Tuesday-Friday during regular business hours for the purpose of accepting new registrations and to make address, name and/or enrollment changes. In addition, the Registrar of Voters will be available at the Annual Town Meeting from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

A True Copy. Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Alyssa Phillips, Town Clerk

## RETURN

Pursuant to the within warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of said Town, qualified to vote in Town affairs by posting an attested copy of the within Warrant at; the Buckfield Municipal Center, the Buckfield Post Office, Tilton's Market, Zadoc Long Free Library, and R.E. Lowell Lumber, being conspicuous public places within Buckfield on \_\_\_\_\_, 2025 which is at least (7) days next prior to the date of the meeting.

Dated at Buckfield, Maine this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cameron Hinkley, Resident of Buckfield

## **Town of Buckfield**

### **Fire Department Billing and Restitution Ordinance**

#### **1. Authority**

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to municipal home rule ordinance authority and Title 30-A M.R.S.A. § 3001.

#### **2. Purpose**

The Town of Buckfield Fire Department is engaged in providing fire suppression, fire rescue, and fire safety services. The Town of Buckfield is organized as a municipality under the laws of the State of Maine; and in consideration of services rendered hereby desires to set the following billing and restitution ordinance for specific Fire Department services.

#### **3. Definition of Services**

The Town of Buckfield will seek payment for the cost of services provided by the Town of Buckfield Fire Department when responding to incidents involving non-residents in the Town of Buckfield, or upon request of mutual aid from other municipalities. Services for which the Town of Buckfield shall seek payment include:

- a. Scene and Safety Control at Traffic Accidents: Positioning of fire apparatus and personnel so as to protect the scene from other traffic and deny entry into the scene of unauthorized personnel. Law Enforcement can move traffic around the area the Fire Departments has deemed as the safe zone for the occupants of the vehicles and the rescuers on the scene. Scene control may also include initial assessment of victims, basic life support, safely staging other incoming agencies responding to this incident. Prioritizing victim for treatment and transport and may also include a pulled hose line for protection of people on scene from possible fires and fumes or residue from such things as gasoline and air bag propellants. The most important function is establishing incident command of the scene, which is the Fire Department's responsibility at emergency incidents of this nature, and to coordinate with other responding agencies for their needs at the scene.
- b. Disentanglement and Extrication Operations from Vehicles: Anytime a person has to be lifted or taken out of an emergency situation or forcible entry is necessary to gain proper access to victims, the Fire Department will assist ambulance or EMS (Emergency Medical Services) personnel in a coordinated effort or on their own. This could include, but is not limited to car accidents, industrial accidents, below grade rescues, or even high angle rescues to name just a few. Ropes, ladder devices, air monitoring equipment, self-contained breathing apparatus, hydraulic equipment, shoring, saws, cribbing, air bags are just a few types of equipment used in extrication operations.
- c. Fluid and Hazardous Substance Mitigation at Traffic Accidents: Anytime the Fire Department has to manage any fluids or hazardous substances through containment or absorption with pads, sand, or other means determined by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Mitigation of all hazardous substances is performed in accordance with DEP regulations.
- d. Vehicle Fires\*: Anytime the Fire Department have to contain or extinguish a fire in a motor vehicle. This includes but not limited to passenger cars, trucks, semi-trucks, tractor trailers,



construction equipment, farm equipment, all-terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles. This includes the laying of hose lines and positioning a handline for the protection of individuals at the scene because of fire, smoke, or leaking fluids such as gasoline. Vehicle fires may also require the use of a suppression agent such as foam to help extinguish the fire.

- e. Hazard Mitigation Operations: Anytime the Fire Department personnel have to deal with a hazardous substance via containment or absorption with pads for carbon-based substances like gas or oil, or removal via pads and sand or other means permitted by the DEP. This could be a car accident, trucking accident or a fixed facility. The mitigation of all hazardous materials and substances is done in conjunction with the DEP.

*\* This may also include any lost or damaged equipment as a result of the incident.*

#### **4. Fees for Services Rendered**

Upon adoption of this Ordinance, the Buckfield Select Board in their expressed authority is authorized to review and set the fees for Fire Department services as they deem in the best interest of the Town of Buckfield. Fees for services shall be limited to cost recovery.

#### **5. Restitution and Billing Procedure**

The Town may seek restitution for costs for Fire Department services by filing claims with the insurance companies that insure the individuals or companies involved in an incident where Fire Department services are provided. The Buckfield Select Board is authorized to enter into a Cost Recovery Agreement with a third-party billing company for the billing and collection of fees for Fire Department services through the filing of insurance claims. All such claims shall be submitted in the name of the Town of Buckfield. The Town shall only seek restitution for Fire Department services from insured individuals or companies.

The Buckfield Select Board is authorized to institute legal action to collect insurance claims that remain outstanding for more than 60 days. The Buckfield Select Board shall be authorized to write off claims, when a claim is not paid with a valid reason including insured not at fault, or if all attempts to contact the insurance company fail by any common method available.

#### **6. Compensation for Third-Party Collection Services**

Terms of compensation to the third-party billing company shall be agreed upon and approved by the Buckfield Select Board and set forth in terms of the Cost Recovery Agreement

#### **7. Reserve Account**

All monies collected from the above billing, less costs of collection, shall be deposited into the Fire Department Capital Asset Reserve account.

#### **8. Administration and Enforcement**

It shall be the duty of the third-party billing company to effectively pursue the requirements of this Ordinance for payment of services rendered by the Fire Department as specifically outlined above.

### **9. Validity and Severability**

If any Section of this Ordinance is declared by the courts to be invalid, such decision shall not invalidate any other section or provision of this Ordinance.

### **10. Conflicts with Other Ordinances**

This ordinance shall not in any way impair or remove the necessity of compliance with any other applicable rule, ordinance, regulation, by law, permit, or provision of law. Where this Ordinance imposes greater restriction upon the use of Fire Department services, the provisions of this Ordinance shall control.

### **11. Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the Town of Buckfield at its annual Town Meeting on June 10, 2025.

DRAFT