DRAFT — FOR INTERNAL REVIEW

Memorandum

To: Members of the Medfield Warrant Committee

From: Stephen Callahan, Chair Warrant Committee

Subject: A Strategic View of the Role of the Warrant Committee

Date: January 9, 2026

Purpose of This Memo

This document presents a comprehensive, strategic view of the role the Warrant Committee should play in Medfield's financial governance. It is intended to guide internal discussion, establish shared expectations, and—once finalized—serve as a public-facing explanation of the Committee's purpose and value to the community.

1. Overview

The Medfield Warrant Committee serves as the Town's statutory finance committee, responsible for reviewing the annual budget and making recommendations on all warrant articles. While these duties form the foundation of our work, the Committee's role in a modern, growing community extends beyond basic budget review.

To best serve residents and Town Meeting, the Committee should function as an independent, analytical, transparent, and forward-looking fiscal oversight body that helps Medfield maintain long-term financial stability.

2. Core Strategic Roles

A. Independent Fiscal Watchdog

- Provide objective, non-political analysis of all financial proposals
- Identify structural deficits and unsustainable practices
- Challenge assumptions when necessary
- Ensure decisions support long-term financial stability rather than short-term fixes

B. Long-Range Financial Planning Partner

- Track multi-year trends in revenues, costs, enrollment, and staffing
- Assess capital needs, debt capacity, and reserve strength
- Use scenario planning to anticipate future challenges
- Advocate for policies and practices that protect Medfield's future

C. Translator and Truth-Teller for the Public

- Turn complex financial issues into plain language
- Provide context and benchmarking, not just numbers
- Publish clear, accessible reports for residents
- Help Town Meeting understand the tradeoffs behind each decision

D. Integrator Across Town Government

- Meet with all departments, boards, and article sponsors
- Spot overlaps, gaps, and conflicts across departments
- Encourage collaborative solutions
- Elevate issues that require a town-wide perspective

E. Guardian of Best Fiscal Practices

- Promote disciplined use of Free Cash and one-time revenues
- Support healthy reserves and prudent debt levels
- Push for transparent, prioritized capital planning
- Encourage conservative revenue assumptions and clear financial policies

F. Committee of Record for Town Meeting

- Provide well-reasoned, well-documented recommendations on each article
- Present majority and, when appropriate, minority views
- Model civility, clarity, and fairness during public deliberations
- Serve as the trusted fiscal voice voters look to at Town Meeting

3. The Warrant Committee We Aim to Be

- Independent and analytical
- Forward-looking and strategic
- Transparent and accessible to residents
- Disciplined stewards of Medfield's financial health

Goal: Protect Medfield's long-term financial stability and empower residents to make informed decisions.

4. Next Steps

Committee members are invited to review this draft and provide feedback

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