WARRANT FOR FY 2026-2027 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Cooper, Maine

To: Kevin Mahar, a resident of the Town of Cooper, County of Washington, 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 Cooper, in said County, qualified by law to vote in town affairs, to meet at the Cooper Community Center in said town on **Saturday, June 27, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.**

ARTICLE 1: To choose a moderator to preside at said meeting.

Clerk to swear in Moderator

ARTICLE 2: To elect a ***Selectman*** for a term of three years.
(general job description at end of warrant)

Open Seat - 2026 ***(Open Seat to expire July 1, 2028)***
David Wilson – 2027
Lance Keen - 2028

ARTICLE 3: To elect a ***Tax Assessor*** for a term of three years.
(general job description at end of warrant)

Open Seat - 2026 *(Open Tax Assessor seat expires July 1, 2028)*
Lance Keen – 2027
Norman Howe - 2028

ARTICLE 4: To elect a ***School Board*** member for a term of three years.
(general job description at end of warrant)

Open Seat – 2026 *(Open Seat to expire July 1, 2028)*
Angela Donaghy – 2027
Natalie McGuire - 2028

Break for School Budget Articles 1 through 7

ARTICLES PURSUANT TO 20-A M.R.S.A. SECTION 1485

COOPER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT WARRANT ARTICLES
FOR TOWN MEETING

To: Kevin Mahar, a resident of the Town of Cooper, County of Washington, State of Maine.

GREETINGS:
In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of Cooper, in said County and State, qualified by law to vote in Cooper affairs, to meet at the Cooper Community Center/Town Office in Cooper, Maine on the 27th day of June A.D., 2026 at 1:00PM located at 425 Cooper HWY, and then and there to act upon the following articles, to wit:

ARTICLE 1: To see what sum the school administrative unit will be authorized to expend for Regular Instruction.

Recommend $ 310,300.00

ARTICLE 2: To see what sum the school administrative unit will be authorized to expend for Special Education.

Recommend $ 35,358.00

ARTICLE 3: To see what sum the school administrative unit will be authorized to expend for System Administration.

Recommend $ 32,685.00

ARTICLE 4: To see what sum the school administrative unit will be authorized to expend for Transportation and Buses.

Recommend $ 26,110.00

ARTICLE 5: To see what sum the municipality will appropriate for the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act **(Recommend $225,400.00)** and to see what sum the municipality will raise as the municipality's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, Section 15688.

Recommend $ 179,605.00

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town of Cooper raise and appropriate $157,053.00 in additional local funds, which exceeds the State's Essential Programs and Services allocation model by $157,053.00 as required to fund the budget recommended by the Cooper School Board. *(Written Ballot Required)*

The Cooper School Board recommends $157,053.00 for additional local funds and gives the following reasons for exceeding the State's Essential Programs and Services funding model

by $157,053.00: The Essential Programs and Services funding model does not recognize all costs schools incur.

ARTICLE 7: To see what sum the municipality/district/unit will authorize the school committee to expend for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027 from the school administrative unit's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act, non-state-funded school construction projects, additional local funds for school purposes under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15690, unexpended balances, tuition receipts, state subsidy and other receipts for the support of schools.

Recommend $ 404,453.00

COOPER REVENUE			
FY 2027			
	2025-2026	**2026-2027**	**DIFFERENCE**
1000-0000-0000-41211-000 Required Local Share	175,985.00	179,605.00	3,620.00
1000-0000-0000-43111-000 State Allocation	38,318.00	45,795.00	7,477.00
1000-0000-0000-41420-000 Transportation Meddybemps	20,000.00	22,000.00	2,000.00
1000-0000-0000-55000-000 Fund Balance	-	-	-
1000-0000-0000-41213-000 Additional Local Needed	80,981.00	157,053.00	76,072.00
TOTAL REVENUE	**315,284.00**	**404,453.00**	89,169.00
TOTAL LOCAL	**256,966.00**	**336,658.00**	79,692.00
TOTAL BUDGET	**315,284.00**	**404,453.00**	89,169.00

5/19/2026

COOPER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT			
FY 2027 BUDGET			
SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**DIFFERENCE**
1000-0000-2310-53410-900 SCHOOL BOARD	395.00	472.00	77.00
1000-0000-2310-53460-900 AUDIT	4,500.00	6,500.00	2,000.00
1000-0000-2310-55201-900 INSURANCE-LIABILITY	500.00	600.00	100.00
1000-0000-2310-58100-900 DUES/STIPENDS	700.00	800.00	100.00
1000-0000-2320-53410-900 SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE	11,560.00	14,856.00	3,296.00
1000-0000-2500-53410-900 BUSINESS OFFICE	7,116.00	9,457.00	2,341.00
SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION	**24,771.00**	**32,685.00**	7,914.00

TRANSPORTATION & BUSES	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**DIFFERENCE**
1000-0000-2700-51180-900 BUS SALARIES	13,600.00	14,010.00	410.00
1000-0000-2700-52280-900 BUS SOCIAL SECURITY	1,100.00	1,150.00	50.00
1000-0000-2700-52680-900 BUS UNEMPLOYMENT COMP.	120.00	150.00	30.00
1000-0000-2700-52780-900 BUS WORKERS COMP.	800.00	800.00	-
1000-0000-2700-55100-900 BUS SERVICE	2,000.00	2,000.00	-
1000-0000-2700-55200-900 INSURANCE	420.00	500.00	80.00
1000-0000-2700-56260-900 FUEL	3,500.00	3,500.00	-
1000-0000-2700-56700-900 BUS PARTS AND SUPPLIES	4,000.00	4,000.00	-
1000-0000-2700-58310-900 PRINCIPLE COST OF BUS LEASE/	-	-	-
1000-0000-2700-58320-900 INTEREST	-	-	-
TRANSPORTATION & BUSES	**25,540.00**	**26,110.00**	570.00

REGULAR INSTRUCTION	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**DIFFERENCE**
1000-1100-1000-55610-950 ELEMENTARY TUTION	136,000.00	178,100.00	42,100.00
1000-1200-1000-55310-990 SECONDARY TUITION	61,900.00	66,200.00	4,300.00
1000-1200-1000-55630-990 TUITION TO PRIVATE SCHOOL	28,200.00	60,400.00	32,200.00
1000-1200-1000-55680-990 TUITION TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS-IV	1,596.00	5,600.00	4,004.00
REGULAR INSTRUCTION	**227,696.00**	**310,300.00**	82,604.00

SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**DIFFERENCE**
1000-2200-1000-55610-950 ELEMENTARY SP ED COSTS	12,000.00	15,000.00	3,000.00
1000-2200-1000-55610-950 SECONDARY SP ED COSTS	14,000.00	7,000.00	(7,000.00)
1000-2200-1000-53440-950 CONTRACTED SERVICES	7,000.00	8,000.00	1,000.00
1000-2500-2330-53440-900 SPECIAL ED DIRECTORS OFFICE	4,277.00	5,358.00	1,081.00
SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION	**37,277.00**	**35,358.00**	(1,919.00)

GRAND TOTAL	**315,284.00**	**404,453.00**	89,169.00

NOTES: This budget includes 15 Students attending Elementary School, 4 Students plus 1 'ghost' student attending Jr/Sr High School, 3 Students plus 1 ghost student attending Private Schools. The increase to the Bus Salary is a 3.0% pay increase for the year,

Return to Town Warrant Articles:

ARTICLE 5: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for the Marion Transfer Station to accept the ***Solid Waste*** of the Residents of Cooper.

(Board recommends $ 12,000.00)

Note: The Marion Transfer Station is open Tuesday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Residents are required to have a sticker *(available at the Town Office) and all visitors to the station must go over the scales*. ALL PEOPLE dropping off less than 100 pounds have to stop at the station office on the way out and pay a fee of $7.00 (the so-called flat fee). The Town of Cooper will no longer pay these flat fees for residents. For questions, please call the station at 207-726-4561.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town of Cooper will reduce taxes by dedicating ***State Road Assistance funds*** to general capital upgrades of town roads.

Explanation: State Road Assistance funds must be used for maintenance and capital upgrades to town roads. This article empowers the selectmen to apply those funds as necessary. Road Assistance funds received in FY 2026 totaled $21,288.00. We estimate we will receive approximately $21,000.00 in FY27.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 7: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for ***Summer Roads Maintenance*** *(repair and upkeep of town roads)*.

Explanation: The funds we accept *(ARTICLE 6 above)* from the State of Maine for Road Assistance are not adequate for general road maintenance.

(Board recommends $4,000.00 in addition to the estimated state road assistance funds we will receive)

ARTICLE 8: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will raise and appropriate for ***Winter Road Maintenance***, salt and sand for the ensuing year.

(Board recommends $150,600.00)

ARTICLE 9: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for improvements to the ***Cooper Community Center/Grange Building***.

(Board recommends $25,000.00)

Explanation & Discussion: The Community Center Fund will have an estimated balance of $104,501.00 when the books close for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

ARTICLE 10: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will raise and appropriate for general maintenance of town ***Cemeteries*** as needed.

(Board recommends $10,000.00)

ARTICLE 11: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for ***Animal Control***.

(Board recommends $500.00)

ARTICLE 12: To see what sums the Town of Cooper will approve for the ***Annual Salaries*** of the following Municipal positions for the ensuing year.

(Board recommends $ 54,350.00)

Selectman 1	$	3,000.00	
Selectman 2	$	3,000.00	
Selectman 3	$	3,000.00	
Assessor 1	$	1,000.00	
Assessor 2	$	1,000.00	
Assessor 3	$	1,000.00	
Town Clerk	$	4,000.00	
Tax Collector	$	7,000.00	
Health Officer	$	100.00	
Treasurer	$	8,000.00	
Planning Board 1	$	500.00	
Planning Board 2	$	500.00	
Planning Board 3	$	500.00	
Cemetery Sexton	$	2,000.00	
Code Enforcement	$	5,000.00	Plus mileage and fees
Fire Chief	$	1,000.00	
Appointed Road Commissioner	$	750.00	
Emergency Management Director/911	$	1,000.00	
Certified Assessor Agent	$	12,000.00	

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to spend up to $78,000.00 on ***Administrative Expenses*** and other contingent costs for the ensuing year.

(Board recommends to raise and appropriate $ 40,000.00 *for this purpose and in addition to the excise tax collected, and to make up any remainder from the general fund, up to a total of $78,000.00)*

ARTICLE 14: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for the Maintenance and Sanitary Services of the ***Cooper Town Beach*** Area.

(Board recommends $ 1,000.00)

ARTICLE 15: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for required liability, property and casualty, and workman's compensation ***Insurance***.

(Board recommends $ 6,500.00)

ARTICLE 16: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate for a Fire Protection contract with the Alexander Fire Department and upkeep of the ***Fire Department***'s building located at the auxiliary site in Cooper.

(Board recommends $6,500.00: *$3,000.00 for the contract with Alexander*
$3,500.00 for upkeep and repairs to the Cooper Fire House Building)

ARTICLE 17: To see what sum the Town of Cooper will raise and appropriate for ***General Assistance*** for the ensuing year.

(Board recommends raise and appropriate $100.00 and if needed, take emergency payments from the surplus)

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to pay **$24.00 per hour** for ***General Town Labor*** for the ensuing year.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

Explanation: We use the 2026/2027 table of Maine's Department of Labor Wage Rates for construction in Washington County.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to make December 1, 2026 the due date for the 2026 property taxes.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to charge 7% interest on unpaid 2026 property taxes *(the State's maximum for 2026)* starting December 2, 2026, and to pay 3% annual interest on property tax overpayments caused by an abatement for overvalued property.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to allow the tax collector or treasurer to apply property tax payments to the oldest unpaid tax bill first, as required by Maine law, unless the taxpayer gives written approval to apply a payment to a tax bill that is under abatement or appeal; and to authorize the tax collector or treasurer to accept pre-payments of any taxes not yet committed, setting the rate of interest paid at 0% for those prepayments pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A Sec 506.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to authorize the Select Board to offer for sale any property automatically acquired by tax liens to the previous owner(s) for payment of all back taxes, costs, fees, and interest. Should the previous owner decline to redeem the property after 30-days' notice, to authorize the Select Board to follow the special sale process required by 36 M.R.S.A. Sec 943-C; and further to allow the Select Board to authorize the Treasurer to waive automatic lien foreclosures when it is in the best interest of the Town. *(updated article to comply with the updated Statute)*

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 23: To see whether the Town of Cooper will vote to pass the following resolution or to take any action with respect thereto:

RESOLVE: The Treasurer for the Town of Cooper, with the approval of Cooper's Select Board, or a majority thereof, is hereby authorized to borrow as needed in anticipation of taxes for the upcoming taxable year commencing July 1, 2026; a total sum not to exceed $30,000.00 and for such purpose as to issue and sell the promissory note(s) of the town; said note(s) to accrue interest; said note(s) to be payable at such date within the taxable year in which said note(s) are issued; as the Select Board, or a majority thereof, may approve to be paid out of money raised by taxation during the year. The money from the note(s) is to be used for purposes by which the Town may legally incur debt. *(Standard article)*

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to authorize the Select Board to spend an amount not to exceed an amount equal to two (2) months of Cooper's twelve (12) month budgeted amounts in each budget category during the period from July 1, 2026, to the date of the Cooper Annual Town Meeting. *(Standard Article)*

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to appropriate the following revenues for inclusion in the non-tax revenues portion of the budget to be used to further offset local property taxes.

Excise Tax	38,550.00
Maine Revenue Sharing	54,356.00
Homestead Exemption	20,596.00
Veteran Exemption	485.00
Tree Growth Reimbursement	18,000.00
Local Road Assistance	21,000.00
GA Reimbursement	70.00
Misc Income	350.00
Interest Earned	11,000.00
Interest on Property Taxes	1,000.00
Permits & Licenses	1,050.00
Education Subsidies	45,795.00
Busing Service	22,000.00
Total Non-tax Revenues	234,252.00

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate $5,644.00 as the yearly stipend for emergency ***Ambulance*** and rescue services.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to authorize the Select Board to transfer the funds reimbursed to the Town by the State of Maine for snowmobile registration to Breakneck Mountain Snow Riders Snowmobile Club for the purpose of maintaining local trails.

(Board estimates the amount to be $100.00 and recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate **an amount not to exceed a total of $3,100.00**, subject to Board approval, for funding of third-party requests. Typical requests could come from:

American Red Cross, Pine Tree Chapter
Cathance Lake Association
Catholic Charities
Community Health and Counseling Services
Eastern Area Agency on Aging
The LifeFlight Foundation
Washington Hancock County Agency (WHCA)
Washington County Children's Program
Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District
WIC Program
Wreaths Across America

Note: Anyone having strong feelings for or against a certain request should bring it to the attention of the Select Board on or before the next Select Board meeting.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to raise and appropriate ***$118,914.00*** for ***Washington County Tax***.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 30: To see if the voters of the Town of Cooper will authorize abatements to always be taken from commitment overlay. *(Article is recommended by Auditor)*

Explanation: Commitment overlay is supposed to be used for abatements of property taxes due to errors or mistakes with any leftover amount from overlay going into the general fund.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town of Cooper will vote to authorize the Treasurer and the Select Board to make, or continue making, ***Carryover Accounts*** for the roads, town beach, cemeteries, community center, animal control officer and an account for unforeseen issues.

(Board recommends a Yes vote)

ANNOUNCEMENT(S): The Select Board for the Town of Cooper would like to apprise the town of some upcoming challenges that may affect this and future budgets. The following list is not in any particular order and may not be all inclusive. (Discussion only)

- State policy on education; Cooper Residency
- Condition and sustainability of the Cooper Community Center
- Significant increase to the County's Budget
- Potential changes to the terms of our current agreement with Downeast EMS

Newly elected town officers will be sworn in at the end of the open town meeting.

Motion to adjourn:

Respectfully submitted,

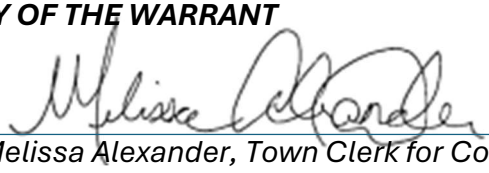
Given under our hands, the current Board of Municipal Officers for the Town of Cooper, this 18th day of June 2026.

/s/ David Wilson
David Wilson - Chair

/s/ Kevin Mahar
Kevin Mahar

/s/ Lance Keen
Lance Keen

A TRUE COPY OF THE WARRANT

ATTEST: 
Melissa Alexander, Town Clerk for Cooper