

Arlington Town Meeting — Main Motion

ARTICLE NO. 92

Dated: May 4, 2026

I, Patrick Hanlon, do hereby submit the following Main Motion under Article 92:

Voted:

A Resolution In Support of Transitioning to Clean Heat in Massachusetts

WHEREAS:

1. Massachusetts has a mandate to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
2. Buildings are responsible for over one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the state and to achieve net zero we need to drastically reduce the burning of fossil fuels, including oil, propane, and natural gas.
3. The Town of Arlington is committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, has adopted a Net Zero Action Plan, and is committed to moving off fossil fuels and doing so in a fair and equitable manner.
4. The energy transition requires a strategic plan to retire the natural gas distribution system and replace it with low- to no-emissions energy sources.
5. Most of the gas pipes in Arlington are aged and leak-prone, and methane (the primary component of natural gas) is a potent greenhouse gas.
6. Under the current Massachusetts Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP), gas utilities will spend billions of ratepayer dollars to install new replacement gas pipes.
7. Under the GSEP, ratepayers would be required to pay off the cost of replacement pipes for decades, long after they have been retired (also known as “stranded costs”), increasing gas bills and wasting resources that are needed for the transition to cleaner energy sources.
8. Leak repair of gas pipes is effective at controlling leaks and less expensive than installing new pipes.
9. Neighborhood electrification is a coordinated, street-by-street transition of homes and businesses from gas to electric, enabling the systematic retirement and removal of gas pipeline segments as each area converts — rather than maintaining an expensive network indefinitely for a dwindling number of customers.
10. Without a neighborhood electrification plan, higher-income households will be more likely to electrify, leaving a smaller number of predominantly lower-income households to shoulder the financial burden of paying for the entire gas pipeline system, thus resulting in higher bills and a less equitable system.

11. The Town’s Electrify Arlington program is available to provide information and assistance to Arlington residents, rental property owners, and businesses.

12. Arlington has numerous segments of gas pipes that could be, as part of a long-term integrated energy plan, safely retired via neighborhood electrification and removed from the gas pipeline system, including but not limited to segments identified by National Grid, as required by the Department of Public Utilities, as possible locations for “Non-Pipeline Alternatives”.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

A. That the Arlington Town Meeting supports the creation of a strategic plan for the neighborhood-by-neighborhood transition from fossil fuels to clean heat and other electric appliances, including by either individual heat pumps or shared thermal energy infrastructure such as networked geothermal systems;

B. That the Arlington Town Meeting requests that National Grid, Eversource, and the Department of Public Utilities actively participate in a planning process with the Town for a phased transition off natural gas to clean electrical and thermal energy, with minimized cost and disruption and with equity and affordability for all;

C. That the Arlington Town Meeting supports a transition that includes:

- Using leak repairs where appropriate, prioritizing the largest volume leaks, to reduce or eliminate leaks until a pipe can be retired,
- Retiring gas pipes by street segment or neighborhood, prioritizing leak-prone pipes, after moving customers to electric appliances and air-source heat pumps, ground-source heat pumps, or networked geothermal systems;

D. That the Clerk of the Town of Arlington send a copy of this resolution to the Governor Maura Healey, Senate President Karen E. Spilka, House Speaker Ronald Mariano, each member of the legislative delegation for the Town of Arlington (Sen. Cindy Friedman, Rep. Sean Garballey, and Rep. David Rogers), the National Grid and Eversource customer representatives to Arlington, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, and DPU Chair Jeremy McDiarmid.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Patrick M. Hanlon, Precinct 5

Date Voted: _____

Action Taken: _____