

[Hawley residents vote down resolution on state flag, seal for second year](#)

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HAWLEY — For the second year in a row, residents voted against a resolution to change the state flag and seal during their Annual Town Meeting on Monday evening.

The state seal depicts an Indigenous man holding a bow and arrow, with an arm brandishing a sword above him. Below the man is a Latin inscription on a piece of ribbon that loosely translates to “By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty.” According to the resolution, a flag and seal redesign would be a way to “better reflect our aspirations for harmonious and respectful relations between all people who now call Massachusetts home.”

Last year, residents voted in opposition to a similar resolution after opponents argued that the symbol does not represent violence against Native Americans, but rather, stands as a depiction of both the settlers and the state’s Indigenous peoples. These ideas were shared again by the 38 attendees at this year’s meeting, held at the Town Office.

“It’s a tribute to the Native Americans who helped the Pilgrims in 1620,” resident Tedd White said on Monday. “They helped them survive the winter. It’s also a tribute to the Minutemen who fought in the Revolutionary War in 1775. ... This is a hit list that they’ve got about the way the seal was formed and I don’t buy it. This is a regurgitation article from a year ago ... we voted and we voted it down. We voted to keep the seal as it is. This article is not in good faith.”

“Native American tribes in Massachusetts, have been trying to get this change for 50 years. They are not proud of this. They find it offensive,” Historical Commission Chair John Sears responded. “They find it threatening and denigrating and an offensive symbol of white supremacy.”

Other residents contributed to the discussion, with some finding the seal to be disrespectful to Native Americans, while others said they view the seal as a proper representation of the town of Hawley and the state.

Twelve residents voted in favor of changing the flag and seal, while 19 opposed it. Selectboard Chair Hussain Hamdan previously noted that were the resolution to pass, it would be purely symbolic, conveying the town’s stance to Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight co-chairs Sen. Nick Collins and Rep. Antonio Cabral, along with Sen. Paul Mark, D-Becket, and Rep. Natalie Blais, D-Deerfield.

All other articles on the warrant were approved in about an hour and 15 minutes.

This includes a \$614,292 fiscal year 2025 operating budget, which is an increase of roughly 3.6% from the \$592,833 budget of FY24, and a \$606,958 school budget, which represents a roughly 2% increase from the FY24 school budget.

Residents also approved various spending requests, including the transfer of \$10,000 to purchase a new rotary mower for the Department of Public Works, the creation of a revolving account to hold the fees and fines associated with dogs and dog licenses, and the appropriation of \$773 to upgrade telephone infrastructure and enhance 911 communication systems at Mohawk Trail Regional School.

*Source: <https://www.recorder.com/Hawley-residents-vote-down-resolution-on-state-flag-seal-for-second-year-55123191>*