
Article 31

Home Rule Legislation / Chapter 61B Exemption

Carmine Granucci

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 21

The Problem

75%

tax discount for
private country clubs

Chapter 61B provides a 75% reduction in assessed value for recreational land. It was designed for farms and open spaces.

Private country clubs have taken advantage of this to dramatically reduce their tax obligations.

Two clubs hold 59 acres of private land in Arlington (1.8% of total town land):

- Belmont CC: 11.33 acres, currently under 61B
- Winchester CC: 47.95 acres, dropped 61B for FY2026

Removing Belmont CC's exemption: ~\$18,254/year in additional revenue

(per Town Manager, Board of Assessors methodology)

61B requires 5+ contiguous acres. Only these two clubs qualify in Arlington.

The Tax Disparity

Land-only tax per acre, FY2026

\$545

per acre

**Belmont CC
(61B Exemption)**

1.5% of residential rate

\$4,495

per acre

**Winchester CC
(Golf, No 61B)**

13% of residential rate

\$35,258

per acre

**Arlington Residential
(Typical Lot, Land Only)**

65x Belmont CC rate

Even on large ~1 acre lots, residential land is taxed at ~\$22,969/acre (42x the 61B rate).

Why We Must Act Now

Winchester CC has toggled in and out of 61B for decades:

1992–2003	Full 61B
2004–2008	Dropped 61B
2009–2025	Split: 5 ac Golf + 40 ac back on 61B
2026	Dropped 61B again

If Winchester re-enrolls in 61B: **estimated loss of ~\$24,964 per year in tax revenue.**

Combined with Belmont CC (\$18,254): ~\$43,218/year at risk. Without Article 31, nothing prevents either club from applying next year.

Vote Yes on Article 31

Supported by:

Select Board

**3-1 favorable
(1 recusal)**

Board of Assessors

Unanimous

A private country club should not receive a 75% tax discount while Arlington homeowners are asked to pay more through overrides. Everyone should pay their fair share.

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