



Natick Finance Committee

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 3 of the Town of Natick By-Laws, I attest that the attached copy is the approved copy of the minutes for the following Meeting:

Town of Natick Finance Committee

Meeting Date: September 10, 2019

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:	TBD
Made by:	name
Seconded by:	name
Vote:	vote
Date:	date, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Evans

Clerk

Natick Finance Committee

NATICK FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES



TOWN OF NATICK

Meeting Notice

POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 30A, Sections 18-25

Natick Finance Committee

PLACE OF MEETING

School Committee Meeting Room, 3rd
Floor, Natick Town Hall 13 East Central
St.

DAY, DATE AND TIME

September 10, 2019 at 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Linda Wollschlager, Vice-Chairperson
Bruce Evans, Clerk
Michael Linehan, Member
David Coffey, Member
Jim A. Scurlock, Member
Daniel Sullivan, Member
Philip Rooney, Member
Jeff DeLuca, Member
Jerry Pierce, Member
Tony Lista, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kristine Van Amsterdam, Member
Patrick Hayes, Chair
Dirk Coburn, Member
Bill Grome, Member

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
 - b. Advisement of Pegasus Live Broadcast and Recording for On-Demand Viewing
 - c. Review of Meeting Agenda and Ordering of Items
 - d. Swearing in of New and Newly Appointed Member
2. Announcements
3. Public Comments
 - a. Committee policy & procedures available via this link and also at the meeting location
4. Meeting Minutes
 - a. Discuss and Approve Meeting Minutes for: March 19, March 21, April 4, Sept 3, 2019
5. 2019 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing
 - a. [Article 15: Street Acceptance-Eliot Hill Road, Merifield Lane, Woodcock Path](#)
 - b. [Article 16: Street Acceptance – Michael Terrace](#)
 - c. [Article 17: Street Acceptance – Clearview Terrace](#)
 - d. [Article 18: Amend Article 70 of the Town of Natick By-Laws: Public Works Regulations](#)
 - e. [Article 20: Transfer of land to Conservation Commission: Portions of 165 Mill Street Parcel](#)
 - f. [Article 22: Amend Article 20 of the Natick Town Bylaws](#)
 - g. [Article 23: Alteration of Layout of North Main Street \(Route 27\) and Adjacent Streets](#)
 - h. [Article 24: Transfer of Land and Grant of Easement to Natick Affordable Housing Trust: 299-301 Bacon Street](#)
6. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
7. Committee Discussion (including items not on the meeting agenda)
8. Adjourn

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice Chair, Linda Wollschlager. Ms. Wollschlager said that the Finance Committee would review the articles in this order: 20, 18, 17, 15, 16, 22, 23, and 24.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CITIZENS CONCERNS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Cathi Collins, Member School Committee read the following letter.



September 10, 2019

Dear Board of Selectmen,

We write to you to share our serious concern about the impact the current town government accounting process has on the school department. There have been several attempts to improve the process over the past two years, and more specifically over the past four months, but the efforts have fallen short. **This issue is particularly urgent because the school department is currently unable to close the books for FY19 due to lack of information.** We feel it is important to have a public discussion of the issue so that we can share the negative impact the current process has on the ability of the school department to function efficiently and transparently.

Timeliness of requisition and purchase order process

The first issue is the speed at which purchase orders are processed and invoices paid. The process is paper-intensive and centrally controlled. Use of paper increases time for processing and central control means very few individuals can process requests. The school department has had to develop “work-arounds” simply to make it possible for teachers and staff to be able to purchase the supplies they need to operate. The following work-arounds have been utilized to ensure schools can operate in service to students:

4. “Open” purchase orders - created at start of year
5. Invoices paid without purchase orders - “non-p.o warrants”
6. Reimbursements to employees for charges made

The School Committee believes the current system is unacceptable. The Town of Natick employs a powerful accounting system in MUNIS. We should not be operating outside of it, tracking requisitions, purchase orders, and invoices on Excel spreadsheets and paying for items without the appropriate tracking procedures. It is our responsibility as School Committee members to accurately track the budget and ensure funds are being spent as the citizens of Natick intended. We cannot do so within the current system.

We can tell you that the impacts of this outdated, slow and lengthy process are

very real for our students and staff as well. In May, just before the busy spring concert season, our music software system was shut down because payment had not been received. In July, the school department came within one day of having our entire network shut down because a requisition had not been converted to a purchase order. As we know you understand, this situation is untenable.

As alluded to earlier, the current process is controlled by the very few individuals who have access to the municipal finance system MUNIS. At a meeting in May, a commitment was made to expand access to MUNIS within the schools such that the purchase order process could be initiated by a larger number of users. Increased access to MUNIS is imperative so that we can more effectively manage the school budget and track expenses in a timely manner throughout the year.

While increased access has been granted, there has been no agreement on internal process to capitalize upon that increased access. This increased access is useless without meaningful reform to the internal process. There has been no attempt to discuss any revisions to the process that would allow the school department to operate in a fully transparent and efficient way. We are appreciative that Mr. Townsend accompanied Dr. Gray on a site visit to another school district on August 7th to learn more about the ability of MUNIS to increase transparency within the purchase order process. However, there has been no follow up to the visit and no indication of any change.

Day-to-Day Financial Management

Currently, the business office of the district is not able to input any of their own accounting records, such as “journal entries.” This is not a matter of control, but rather a necessary practice for the district to actively manage and monitor funds in various accounts. Relying upon individuals outside the district office, who understandably operate under different timelines and time constraints, is not an effective or transparent method of financial management.

We believe it is important to remember that the school department operates differently than other town departments. According to state law, “the city of town appropriating body is authorized to make non-binding monetary recommendations to increase or decrease certain items allocating such appropriations, but it may not limit the school committee's authority to determine expenditures within the total appropriation. (G.L. c. 71, [[section]] 34) The school committee remains the body responsible for approving and transmitting school department expenditures to the municipal accountant for the drawing of warrants.” In addition to state law, The Town of Natick Home Rule Charter states: “ He (Town Administrator) shall be

responsible for the purchase of all supplies, materials and equipment, and shall award all contracts for supplies, materials and equipment for all departments and activities of the town, **except for the school department.”**

Staffing and Scope of Responsibility

Because the current system requires all items go through town accounting department, it is inevitable that responses are delayed and items overlooked given the sheer volume of requests received. In addition, the school department continues to receive questions regarding purchases that are beyond the scope of responsibility of town staff. Unlike other town departments, the school department, per state statute, employs not only a chief financial officer, but also a fully staffed business office to manage and provide oversight for the day-to-day financial practices of the district. Recent questions regarding payment of Kennedy Building invoices, as well as a proposal to manage the \$110 million Kennedy project with separate purchase orders, has sparked deep concern about knowledge and capacity within town departments.

We know the financial management process in town government is complex and checks and balances are necessary to ensure precision, transparency, and accuracy. However, the current processes are impeding the ability of the school department to function effectively. It is within your purview to take action to reform this process, both to allow the school department to operate more transparently and to better serve the citizens of the town.

Sincerely,

The Natick School Committee

Julie McDonough, Chair

Matthew Brand, Vice-Chair

Donna McKenzie, Clerk

Cathi Collins

Shai Fuxman

Henry Haugland

Hayley Sonneborn

Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen acknowledged the receipt of this letter and would review the letter and try to address the concerns and develop workarounds.

MOTION

Mr. Evans moved to open the 2019 Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Coffey, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

[Article 15: Street Acceptance-Eliot Hill Road, Merifield Lane, Woodcock Path](#)

Presenters:

Mr. Jeremy Marsette, Director Dept. of Public Works (DPW)

Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

Mr. Hickey said that there are cases where the roadway was not accepted even though there was an approved subdivision plan. Some roads had portions that accepted roadways whereas other parts of the roadway were unaccepted.

Clearview Terrace and Michael Terrace are two such examples and were on the Roadway Improvement plan. Without Articles 15, 16, & 17, the town would only be able to re-pave portions of these two roads which is unacceptable.

Mr. Chenard noted that all roadways in Articles 15, 16, & 17 have a subdivision plan with street layouts that is on file at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, so there is no design cost to layout these roadways. The only costs are legal fees and the cost to implement this acceptance following Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Marsette noted that several years ago, Natick created a simplified procedure for street acceptance that was approved by the State Atty. General. These procedures apply to roadways that were approved by the Planning Board under the Modern Subdivision Control Regulations. Unfortunately, this procedure doesn't apply to all 26 miles of private ways, only somewhere on the order of 4-5 miles. However, it still requires that all abutters agree to this street acceptance which means they relinquish their property rights to the roadway via a "gift" to the town, resulting in a permanent transfer of ownership to the town. Most of the abutters on these roadways have signed a letter of intent with the town to accept the roadway. Approximately, 2600 feet of Eliot Hill Road, 660 feet of Merifield Lane, 450 feet of Woodcock Path, 380 feet of Michael Terrace, and 640 feet of Clearview Drive would be accepted under these motions. In the past, there have been three acceptances of sections of Eliot Hill Road in 1970, 1975 and 1978 and this will enable the entirety of Eliot Hill Road to be an accepted roadway and be re-paved next year. All told, it's a little less than one mile of previously private roadways that will become accepted roadways. Chapter 90 funding is not simply based on roadway miles, but this additional mile will provide an estimated \$7800 in additional annual roadway maintenance funding.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Rooney asked for clarification of the term "abutters". In this context, Mr. Marsette said it is both property owners adjacent to the roadway as well as roadway owners.

Mr. Rooney asked whether individual lots on unaccepted roadways owned by individual owners or a subdivision developer. Mr. Marsette said that these subdivisions were approved in the 1960s according to the plans of record and the roadways were built shortly after that and have had this layout – street layout, sidewalk, drainage since that time. These have all been sold off to private owners of the property.

Mr. Rooney asked whether the town had reached out to all residents of a street both the accepted and unaccepted portions. Mr. Marsette said they had only

reached out to those on the unaccepted portions since those on the accepted portion of these roadways aren't affected by this acceptance of the previously unaccepted portion of the roadway. Residents on the accepted portion have been informed that the road is on the 5-year re-paving plan.

Mr. Sullivan asked whether this situation is unique to Natick or common to other communities and noted that a study showed that Natick seemed to have a disproportionate number of unaccepted roadways. Mr. Marsette said this is an issue that confronts many communities. Mr. Chenard added that the reason for the unaccepted roads is developers who did not follow through to completion the roadway acceptance process; in some cases due to the developer bankruptcy. Mr. Scurlock asked for clarification of what the purpose of \$1000 request was.

Mr. Chenard confirmed that it was legal and filing fees.

Mr. Linehan asked what was meant by "accepted incrementally" since the definition of "accepted" may have shifted from concrete curbing to granite curbing to Cape Cod berms. Mr. Marsette said these roads were built publicly 50 years ago and they look very similar to publicly accepted roads of this vintage – with granite curbing on the radius and bituminous berms in the case of Eliot Hill Road and grass strips and sidewalks.

Mr. Evans provided a point of information on Cape Cod berms which is a bituminous berm that is rounded and high enough to keep water flowing in the street toward catch basins.

Ms. Wollschlager asked for confirmation of whether any of the subdivision plans would need to be re-examined. Mr. Chenard noted that they have examined the subdivision plans and compared them to the actual roadways. There is only one change that affects Article 15 – when the town accepted those roadways, the names on the original plans are different from the names of today's owners that should not affect the ability to accept the road, but has been noted for tracking purposes.

Mr. Pierce moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 15, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

[Article 16: Street Acceptance – Michael Terrace](#)

Mr. Jeremy Marsette, Director Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

Concurrent discussion of Articles 15, 16, & 17

Mr. Evans moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 15, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

[Article 17: Street Acceptance – Clearview Terrace](#)

Mr. Jeremy Marsette, Director Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

Concurrent discussion of Articles 15, 16, & 17

Comments from the Public

Mr. Jonathan Faigel, 16 Clearview Drive said he has lived there for 25 years and noted it will be a great benefit to the neighborhood to improve road safety since many children ride their bikes on this road.

Mr. Evans moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 15, seconded by Mr. Scurlock, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

[Article 18: Amend Article 70 of the Town of Natick By-Laws: Public Works Regulations](#)

Mr. Jeremy Marsette, Director Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

Mr. Hickey said this article and (Articles 16 & 17) deal with how the town deals with unaccepted roads (also known as private ways). Article 18 is part of a larger discussion of how the DPW services unaccepted roads. Article 18 is phase one of this plan and seeks to update the town bylaws pursuant to authority provided to towns to in MGL c. 40, §6N that allows towns to achieve a measure of liability protection that we don't have in our existing bylaws. At the same time, it will allow for better conformity with town DPW practices. The Board of Selectmen considers this a "best practice" in terms of mitigating the town's liability in how DPW works on unaccepted roads.

Mr. Marsette noted that this Article would update Article 70 of the town bylaws and is a cleanup item that is the starting point to formalize current DPW practice. Natick has about 26 miles of unaccepted roadways and 128 miles of accepted roadways. The town's annual practice has been to repair unaccepted roadways – potholes and curb repairs due to plowing. The town plows both unaccepted and accepted roads. The MGL that allowed this was not adopted by the town. In researching this article, we noted that the town did not accept MGL c. 40, §6N that allows temporary repairs to unaccepted roads or private ways. Each year, DPW scours the town to fill potholes on all roads. There is a fairly comprehensive presentation on the town web site under Public Works Engineering Division regarding private ways and includes details on this bylaw. Also, on the web site is a listing of accepted / unaccepted roadways that is updated annually by the Town Clerk in concert with the Engineering Division of DPW. It removes the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th paragraphs in Article 70 § 6 "Public Works Regulations". These paragraphs are in conflict with current DPW practice and would insert a new § 8 titled "Private Ways" that specifies that the DPW would provide snow removal, remove barriers removed on order of the Police or Fire Chief, at the expense of the owner the private way, and the scope of temporary repairs to private ways. Should this Article pass, the Board of Selectmen would create a policy that would have more detail as to how this bylaw would be put in force. DPW has provided a draft of such a policy and the Board of Selectmen will review it in a public

hearing. We made these changes based on what neighboring communities that have successfully changed their bylaws.

Article 18 Motion

Move that the Town vote to amend Article 70 of the Town of Natick Bylaws as follows:

1. Remove the second, third and fourth paragraph of Section 6; and,
2. Insert new Section 8 with the wording:

“Section 8 Private Ways

Snow and Ice Removal. The Town may remove snow and ice from such private ways for emergency vehicle access in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws and Board of Selectmen regulations and policies.

Barriers. Barricades, obstacles, or vehicles on private ways that are a barrier to prompt and appropriate emergency access shall be removed on order of the Police or Fire Chief, at the expense of the owner or owners of the private way. However, if the barrier is a vehicle, it shall be removed on order of the Police or Fire Chief and at the expense of the owner of the vehicle.

Temporary Repairs. The Town may perform temporary repairs to private ways that have been open to the public for a period of at least six (6) years. The Town may only perform temporary repairs in accordance with regulations and policies issued by the Board of Selectmen and that are determined by the Director of Public Works to be required for public necessity.

Said temporary repairs shall be considered necessary if they abate an immediate hazard. They shall not be considered as maintenance of the private way nor shall the way be considered a public way. Cash deposits or payments shall not be required and betterment charges shall not be assessed for said temporary repairs. The Town shall not be liable for any damage to private property caused by such repairs, except as otherwise provided by law. The Town shall not incur any liability whatsoever on account of action or inaction resulting pursuant to this Bylaw.”

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Pierce asked what the difference is between an unaccepted street and a private way. Mr. Marsette said that the terms are frequently used interchangeably. In general, a private way is considered to be designed to be a private way “forever” and an unaccepted road is a road that is planned to be an accepted roadway but the formal process of road acceptance has not taken place. By definition, private ways are not owned by the town.

Mr. Sullivan asked what the current policy for snow removal on private ways is. Mr. Marsette said all private ways are on the plow list. Best practices are to have a list of private ways that is reviewed by the roadway commissioners (in Natick, this is the Board of Selectmen).

Mr. Sullivan asked whether there are any private ways that are in such poor shape that temporary repairs are not completed. Mr. Marsette said there have been no instances of private ways not receiving temporary repairs during his tenure with the town.

Mr. Rooney asked whether the owners of a private way could request that the town re-pave their private way. Mr. Marsette said the owners could petition the

town for betterment to the roadway or sidewalks or draining and the owners would fund this, with the town helping finance it at reduced or low-cost interest. Generally, private ways looking for these betterments would also petition to become an accepted roadway.

Mr. DeLuca asked whether there are any public easements on private ways. Mr. Marsette said that there are not, but the town tries to ensure access to private ways for emergency vehicles (Police, Fire). The Commonwealth of Mass. has a classification of private ways open for public use (a through roadway) that has a higher classification than a private way that's not open for public use. Mr. Hickey added that he lives on a private way and the town plows, picks up his trash and recycling and removes trees that block public safety vehicles from getting through. Another benefit to this Article is moving away from the term unaccepted road to private way.

Mr. Linehan asked what the mechanism is for private way owner(s) to determine the cost of the betterment. Mr. Marsette said that the DPW Engineering Division could assist with estimating the cost.

Mr. Lista asked whether the town would net any additional Chapter 90 moneys by adopting this provision. Mr. Marsette said it would not. It would only increase if the private way goes through the road acceptance process and is approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. DeLuca asked whether police can issue tickets for blocking the street during a snow emergency. The traffic rules that the Board of Selectmen have adopted and update occasionally apply to accepted roadways only. These rules do apply to private roadways that are open to public use and are through streets. However, a dead end street, for example, would not be subject to these rules.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that the process for assessing betterments looks like it's being deleted and wanted to ensure that is still a process in place to assess betterments. Mr. Marsette said that they are removed the process for assessing betterments for temporary repairs only. MGL governs the process for betterments (MGL c. 40 §6) so the town doesn't need its own process.

Mr. Sullivan moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 15, seconded by Mr. Evans, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Debate:

Mr. Sullivan noted that in a previous town, he was on the Board of Selectmen and spent a disproportionate amount of time discussing private ways and services provided, and expressed appreciation for town administration taking steps to make this work better.

Mr. Evans said this clarifies a number of things and limits the town's liability.

Mr. DeLuca said he lives on an unaccepted narrow road and confirmed that the town does provide all the services that Mr. Marsette describes on that unaccepted road and appreciates what the DPW currently does and feels this will increase clarity.

Ms. Wollschlager said that she appreciated town administration taking on this thorny issue. I'm hopeful that this will move forward at a rapid pace.

[Article 20: Transfer of land to Conservation Commission: Portions of 165 Mill Street Parcel](#)

Ms. Melissa Malone, Town Administrator

Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations; Member Kennedy MS Building Committee

Mr. Matthew Gardner, Chair, Natick Conservation Commission

Ms. Malone stated that Article 20 deals with an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on the building site for the new Kennedy Middle School. This site does have wetlands and pursuant to law were required to consult with the ACOE. Included in your information packet is the agreement with the ACOE that was negotiated and drafted by Town Counsel and approved by ACOE. It is consistent with practices that the town has undertaken in the past. Engineers that are involved in this project have told us that it is not buildable property. I can speak to any specifics in the letter and Mr. Gardner and Mr. Chenard can speak to the meaning of executing this agreement.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Linehan asked for confirmation of whether even though the wetlands area was not buildable; one could have access to property through those wetlands. Mr. Gardner said that is permissible.

Mr. Linehan asked if there were any potential negative impacts from transferring this land into Conservation Commission control. Mr. Gardner stated that this is not buildable, but the question of putting the unbuildable land into permanent conservation restriction versus paying a \$132 K fee is a no-brainer. As part of the review process, public safety was consulted to ensure that all emergency access was included and they approved this plan.

Ms. Anna Nolin, Superintendent, Natick Public Schools added that the KMS Building Committee consulted extensively with the ACOE on this piece of property. Because this property has vernal pools on it, it was highly unlikely that we would ever be able to get ACOE permission to build on that area. Ms. Nolin continued that they asked ACOE if the vernal pools dried up, would that make any difference. ACOE said it was very unlikely that the vernal pool would dry up and it's a lengthy process (estimated 10-20 years) after confirmation that the vernal dried up before the land would be available.

Mr. Linehan asked whether the vernal pools are equally distributed in the 5.2 acres. Mr. Chenard said the vernal pools are mostly to the north of this section of the lot and there is a stream that runs straight to the middle portion of the lot and runs under the parking lot.

Mr. Linehan asked whether transfer to the Conservation Commission would preclude something such as underground conduits. Mr. Gardner confirmed that it would.

Mr. Pierce asked who the owners of the land are. Mr. Gardner said that it was transferred from the School Committee to the Board of Selectmen, and the article proposes transferring it to the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Pierce asked how much of that land plays into the design of the new KMS. Mr. Chenard said the specified land is adjacent to the road that leads to Brown

Elementary School. In addition to offsetting the elimination of 0.22 acres of vernal pools, it is adjacent to the power lines owned by EverSource. Dr. Nolin noted that the \$132K should be considered a fine for not putting compensatory land into conservation restriction.

Mr. Lista asked whether this requirement was just discovered. Mr. Chenard said that it was a long-standing negotiation with the ACOE that was settled after Spring Town Meeting had ended so this is the first time that we can bring it to Town Meeting. Mr. Evans, speaking as the Finance Committee representative to the Building Committee, this is the first opportunity to bring this matter to Town Meeting.

Mr. Lista asked if the Conservation Commission would place any restrictions or require buffer zones for this land. Mr. Gardner said the Conservation Commission would not put any further restrictions other than the Article 97 requirements. There is a brook that runs through the property that may be protected as a “river”. The vernal pool and the brook all have buffer zones associated with them and any work that may impact these buffer zones must be reviewed and allowed by the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Lista asked whether any maintenance would be required in these buffer zones and if yes, who would be responsible for that maintenance. Mr. Gardner said there is no required maintenance. However, the Conservation Commission is working with the town’s conservation agent to develop plans for regular maintenance for properties under the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission. There could be some activities such as removing invasive species, but not any regular maintenance.

Mr. Evans moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 20, seconded by Mr. Linehan, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Mr. Evans gave kudos to the KMS Building Committee and its contractors and Town Administration for flagging this as issue, working with ACOE to get resolution. This was a hurdle that had the potential to severely delay the project. Mr. Linehan thanked the speakers for answering the questions and he wanted assurance that everything was thoroughly vetted and there weren’t any bad unintended consequences.

Mr. Rooney requested that Article 20 be put on the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Pierce, Not Voted.

Debate:

Mr. Sullivan noted that this article required responses to a significant number of questions and is too complex to include on the consent agenda.

Mr. Evans agreed that it was too complicated for the consent agenda and even though tonight, the Finance Committee voted to unanimously support it, it is worthwhile for the information we considered to be included in the Recommendation Book so Town Meeting members understand our rationale.

Mr. DeLuca said that he went through Massachusetts conservation law and agreed that the complexity excludes it from being a consent agenda item.

[Article 22: Amend Article 20 of the Natick Town Bylaws](#)

Mr. Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Article 22 pertains to multi-member bodies appointed by the Town Administrator as set forth in the town bylaws and deals specifically with the Commission on Disability. The town has experienced problems attracting and retaining volunteers and during the process of soliciting volunteers for the Commission on Disability, it was noted that its members were appointed by the Town Administrator whereas state statute indicates that the Board of Selectmen can make these appointments. The town researched why this quirk existed and found no basis for it being exceptional, so the Board of Selectmen sponsored this article to eliminate this exception.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Linehan noted that the motion only specified deletion and requested confirmation that this is due to the state law providing this authority to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Hickey confirmed this.

Mr. Lista asked whether this would pose any problems with volunteers appointed by the Town Administrator. Mr. Hickey said he did not believe so because the Town Administrator would name candidates and the Board of Selectmen would affirm them, but would confirm whether his understanding is correct.

Mr. Linehan moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 15, seconded by Mr. Pierce, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Mr. Linehan moved to recommend adding Article 22 to the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

[Article 23: Alteration of Layout of North Main Street \(Route 27\) and Adjacent Streets](#)

Ms. Melissa Malone, Town Administrator

Mr. Bill Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

Mr. Michael Hickey, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Ms. Malone stated that this article refers to the acceptance of a roadway plan for alteration of the layout of North Main Street (Route 27). As you may recall from prior Town Meetings, the town has invested \$3 million for the acquisition and design of this roadway. The actual price of this roadway improvement including infrastructure, sidewalks and roads is \$18.6 million and that money is sourced from the Federal government and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Yesterday, the Commonwealth of Mass. DOT put this project out to bid, with a closing date of January 7, 2020. Earlier today, I testified at the State House with respect to a small portion which is Snake Brook, which is on the Wayland-Natick line concerning an improvement to property that is held by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The town currently has requested a temporary construction easement and the Governor and our state delegation were

very positive so we're hopeful that this will pass in the next few months. The last part of this project that was begun under the supervision of Mr. Errickson is the final acceptance of the roadway plan. We respectfully request the Finance Committee's approval to proceed with this plan.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Linehan asked for clarification on the Snake Brook issue. Ms. Malone noted that the reason Snake Brook was highlighted was the final issue from the state's perspective to moving ahead with this project. Snake Brook is located in Natick right before the town line of Wayland and is DCR property. This project will be improving the water run-off to Snake Brook which flows into Lake Cochituate, so we needed approval from the DCR to proceed. DCR is very supportive of the changes that we are making, has received all the plans and provided legal opinions to our Town Counsel supporting this plan.

Mr. Linehan asked whether there would be any impact to the Snake Brook Trail. Mr. Chenard said there would not.

Mr. Lista asked for confirmation that the plan would include a roundabout at the intersection of Pine Street and Route 27. Ms. Malone said it will be a roundabout, but it is a separate project also funded by the state.

Mr. Rooney wondered why the town planned to use a roundabout since the state seems to discourage roundabouts. Mr. Hickey noted that the state where he grew up started discouraging use of roundabout 15 years ago, but said that the current thought is that the roundabouts help to keep traffic moving as opposed to queuing. There are a series of traffic lights before and after this proposed roundabout. Mr. Chenard added that there are several state-funded TIP projects that are employing roundabouts, including some major roadways.

Ms. Wollschlager asked whether the temporary and permanent easement work was completed. Ms. Malone noted that this work was already completed and the Board of Selectmen had approved the acquisition and acceptance of these easements.

Mr. Rooney asked whether any of the adjoining streets included in this plan were unaccepted roads. Ms. Malone confirmed that there are streets along Route 27 that are unaccepted roadways but these aren't part of this plan.

Mr. Sullivan moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 23, seconded by Mr. Evans, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Debate

Mr. Sullivan noted that there were some vacancies in the Community and Economic Development Office and lauded those who stepped up to continue the forward momentum of this project.

Mr. Evans highlighted the excellent work of the previous Town Engineer, Mark Coviello, now semi-retired to get all the easement and property details worked out so this project could move forward. Mr. Evans also thanked Town Administration for shepherding the project through many convoluted steps.

[Article 24: Transfer of Land and Grant of Easement to Natick Affordable Housing Trust: 299-301 Bacon Street](#)

Ms. Malone, Town Administrator

Ms. Malone said in 2008, the Board of Selectmen received this property from the Bernardi Group and the Board of Selectmen agreed to transfer this property to the Affordable Housing Trust. It was recently learned that the transfer to the Affordable Housing Trust was not effectuated so Article 24 is provided to complete that process and update the land records so that the property is appropriately registered.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Lista asked what the town's status is on affordable housing. Ms. Malone said that the town is currently in safe harbor status, pending the result of the 2020 census. The census is completed every 10 years and at that point, a town knows whether it is over / under the 10% threshold for affordable housing. We will be in safe harbor status into 2021 when the results of the census are known.

Mr. Pierce asked for confirmation that this is the property where the Affordable Housing Trust built two affordable housing units. Ms. Malone confirmed that is correct.

Mr. Linehan asked what the relationship is between the town and the Affordable Housing Trust. Ms. Malone said that the Affordable Housing Trust is a separate entity that is established pursuant to MGL. All procurement and work is done through the Affordable Housing Trust, not the town.

Mr. Linehan asked whether the force main (sewer) and sewer connections work had been completed. Mr. Chenard said that the contract for this has been awarded and will be paid by the Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Linehan moved Favorable Action on subject matter of Article 24, seconded by Mr. Pierce, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Mr. Evans moved to recommend adding Article 24 to the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Mr. Linehan moved to close the public hearing on the 2019 Fall Annual Town Meeting warrant review, seconded by Mr. Evans, Voted 10 – 0 – 0.

Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2019:

Mr. Linehan moved to approve, as amended, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 9.0.1.

March 21, 2019:

Mr. Linehan moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 9.0.1.

April 4, 2019:

Mr. Linehan moved to approve, as amended, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 8.0.2.

ADJOURN

Mr. Pierce moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Linehan, voted by 10 – 0 – 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.