



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: February 16, 2021

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion: XXXX
Made by: xxxx
Seconded by: xxxx
Vote: x - x - x
Date: <date>, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Evans
Clerk
Natick Finance Committee

DRAFT



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

Virtual Meeting accessed via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85844305049>

Meeting ID: 858 4430 5049

Passcode: 409248

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,85844305049# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

DAY, DATE AND TIME

February 16, 2021 at
7:00 PM

Notice to the Public: 1) Finance Committee meetings may be broadcast/recorded by Natick Pegasus. 2) The meeting is an open public meeting and interested parties can attend the meeting. 3) Those seeking to make public comments (for topics not on the agenda or for specific agenda items) are requested to submit their comments in advance, by 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting, to the Chair: phayes.fincom@natickma.org. Comments will be posted on NovusAgenda and read aloud for the proper agenda item. Please keep comments to 350-400 words. 4) The Chat function on Zoom Conferencing will be disabled.

Posted: February 11, 2021 11:45 AM

MEETING 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
2. Announcements
3. Public Comments
 - a. [Committee policy & procedures available via this link and also at the meeting location](#)
4. Meeting Minutes
 - a. Review & Approve Meeting Minutes for January 7, 2021 and January 14, 2021
5. Town Administrator's FY2022 Budget - Public Hearing
 - a. [January 4 Preliminary Budget update](#)

- b. [Personnel Board](#)
 - c. [Town Report](#)
 - d. [Weights and Measures](#)
 - e. [Finance Committee](#)
 - f. [Commission on Disability](#)
 - g. [Cultural Council](#)
 - h. [Historic Commission](#)
 - i. [Historic District Commission](#)
6. Committee and Subcommittee Scheduling and Process
7. Adjourn

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson
Bruce Evans, Clerk
Todd Gillenwater, Vice-Chairman
Dirk Coburn, Member
Cathy Coughlin, Member
Jeff DeLuca, Member
Bill Grome, Member
Julien LaFleur, Member
Mike Linehan, Member
Jerry Pierce, Member
Richard Pope, Member
Phil Rooney, Member
Jim Scurlock, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Coffey, Member
Julien LaFleur, Member
Chris Resmini, Member

Town Administration

Mr. Robert Rooney, Interim Town Administrator
Mr. John Townsend, Deputy Town Administrator – Finance
Ms. Juling de los Reyes, Assistant Director - Finance
Mr. Abdul Rauf, Finance Department

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson.

Announcements - None

Mr. Linehan moved to open the public hearing on the Town Administrator's January 4, 2021 Preliminary budget, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

January 4 Preliminary Budget update

Mr. Townsend told the Committee that he will be issuing the updated preliminary budget on March 5, 2021 that will include a revised FY 22 budget that includes all the additions from Fall 2020 Town Meeting and other adjustments since that time and correcting errors. We have received the Cherry Sheet estimates for estimated FY 22 state aid that projects a 3.5% increase in our state aid, approximately an additional \$1.7 million. Mr. Townsend cautioned that the Governor's initial budget is usually the most optimistic estimates so I don't think that number will stick. However, it's always good to know that we are above what we had last year. We look forward to getting additional information We're also be re-issuing our previous forecast that will be presenting on February 24 to the Select Board and will be updating our forecast numbers. With respect to our projections for FY 22, FY 23 and FY 24, we have uploaded the forecasted revenues to ClearGov Regarding future CARES Act and FEMA reimbursements. we're working with the state and with FEMA to both provide documentation on our spending (what we have spent so far), as well as with FEMA who are still trying to figure out how much they're going to reimburse us. We're working with them to provide them the proper documentation and were hopeful that we may get additional CARES Act money as we've spent our \$3.1 million allocation. We also expect to get our health insurance rates next Monday and can update our health insurance costs (our estimated is around 6.3%). Mr. Townsend said they'll put together a presentation shows the breakdowns on policies, for the school and the town to give you an overall view of how much we're going to be spend on health insurance in FY 22. One of the reasons it's so important, of course, this year is that the PEC, the agreement that we have with the unions on the employee / employer split is expiring in June, so we will sit down shortly with all the unions as a group to negotiate those splits. We are also waiting for our Keefe Tech number and we will be close to finishing the education budget as well. Finally, we're working with our colleagues at NPS (Dr. Gray) to bridge the budget gap and will meet to crunch the numbers to move it along. We're working hard to provide a budget that balances the town's needs

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Linehan asked the term length of the PEC agreement. Mr. Townsend said it is negotiable, but the last agreement was three years.

Mr. Linehan asked if the administration anticipates there will be a substantive difference in the terms. Mr. Townsend said it's hard to say given that it's a negotiation and noted that there are a couple of language changes we will discuss. We have a buyback program and we would like to start working on the length of that. However, regarding the employer / employee split, if the number comes in pretty close to where we forecast, I do not expect that to change.

Personnel Board budget (\$1000)

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Coburn asked whether this budget covers communication to employees. Mr. Townsend said he was pretty sure that he hasn't seen this money spent on communications. Paperwork for this board is usually handled by HR and town staff, so we absorb most of those costs, so I'm not sure what this is used for.

Mr. Coburn said his thinking that with the many changes in the coming months, there is an increased need for a variety of communications and was concerned that this amount could be insufficient but if that were the case, the proposed budget will be higher.

Mr. Evans moved to approve the Personnel Board budget in the amount of \$1,000, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 11 – 1 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = no	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Town Report budget (\$4,100)

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Evans noted that given Town Meeting was virtual last year and will likely be this year, how many copies of the Town Report will be printed, although this year, we may have an in-person town meeting in the fall where all Town Meeting members would receive a printed copy. This past year, my understanding was that only 50 copies were made. Mr. Townsend said that this budget covers all Town Meeting members and additional 50 copies.

Mr. Pope asked whether this budget includes the cost of distributing them to Town Meeting members since we are having virtual Town Meeting or are they at Town Hall and available on request. Mr. Townsend said they are available at town hall on request.

Mr. DeLuca asked whether it is required that these be printed considering we're going virtual. Mr. Townsend said physical copies are required in a number of different places in town - the Town Clerk's office, the Libraries and the 50 copies meet that need.

Mr. Gillenwater asked whether the problem with a previous year town report had been resolved. Mr. Townsend said it was and that he has a complete set in his office. Mr. Errickson confirmed that last year, they were a little bit behind due to COVID and this budget should be viable for this year.

Mr. Evans asked if someone wants to pick up a copy of the 2020 Town Report from last year how can they do so, noting that he finds it useful to look back at articles that have been passed in previous years. Mr. Townsend said they can contact the Select Board Office and request a copy.

Mr. Evans moved to approve the Town Report budget in the amount of \$4,100, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 11 – 1 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = no	Mr. Pope = yes

Mr. Evans = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes
Mr. Grome = yes

Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Scurlock = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Comments from the Committee

Mr. Evans said he recognized that last year was an anomaly and noted that this has been the budget for every year in recent memory. Perhaps, Town Meeting members could be asked whether they want a physical copy or not to reduce the cost.

Mr. Rooney said that the budget covers 230 books and is less than \$20 a book and, given the size of the book and the information in it, this is not an unreasonable cost. I'd rather have the budget as it is vs. approving less and having to reauthorize a higher figure. This budget is based on the historical spend in this area.

Mr. DeLuca said he views this as an antiquated expense and thinks that most people do not need physical copy and said that 50 physical copies is sufficient.

Mr. Coburn agreed and noted that he wanted to encourage increased digital participation in this reading, but noted that there is no reliable long term digital archival medium. For that reason, we need physical copies. We serve a population of diverse interests, ages, skills and preferences so perhaps printing a smaller number of physical book will address the archival need and serve the diverse population, but also advocated for greater digital use.

Mr. Gillenwater agreed on the lower number of physical copies and suggested that the Finance Committee Budget Recommendation Book move to a subscription model but that would require town charter and bylaw changes.

Mr. Robert Rooney, Interim Town Administrator said he wholeheartedly supports some of the comments on online availability, noting that he had a conversation with the Executive Assistant who puts together the Town Report and said that given that the Town Meeting is virtual, there is much less demand for these books. However, she also said that MGL dictates the information that must go into the books. I definitely want to see if we can produce the minimum with an overage factor. MGL says this information must be provided and available, but it is not clear whether that must be in print form and I need to check whether virtual availability meets the legal requirement. But I also understand the legacy comment that it needs to be available for posterity in hardcopy.

Mr. Evans noted that he agreed with providing the option to have the Town Report available electronically. However, there are residents who prefer paper copies and town committees who need them such as the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission and others.

Ms. Wollschlager agreed on the need to balance physical copies with virtual copies, noting that many Finance Committee members prefer to have their budget books in hardcopy, myself included, even though I'm a very much of an online person. So I do agree that we not continue to print the report for all Town Meeting, but survey Town Meeting members to find out how many physical copies we really need and not spend money on physical books that will either gather dust or be put in the right recycling bin.

Sealer of Weights and Measures (\$32,001)

Mr. Townsend said this budget is primarily the salary of the person in this position. He is eligible to receive merit increases and he purchased a couple of pieces of new equipment in FY 19, I believe. He inspects fuel pumps and the weight of the scales on a regular basis at stores even during COVID. Most of the retailers that he inspects on a regular basis like Wegmans, Roche Brothers, Stop and Shop and gasoline stations have stayed fairly consistent. Mr. Errickson added that this budget increased from a

couple of years ago due to the opening of Wegmans. Wegmans alone added 300 – 400 inspections due to the number of weights and other things that they actually have so we had to increase the budget to address those needs.

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Town Report budget in the amount of \$32,001, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Finance Committee (\$32,800)

Ms. Wollschlager noted that ClearGov actuals for FY 20 were \$9,527.

Mr. Evans noted that the \$9,527 is largely due to the fact that we aren't using transcription services, but that could very quickly change. Better than half of this budget was required for transcription services for doing minutes and the other big piece is our Town Meeting recommendation books.

Mr. Coburn asked whether the cost of taking minutes has been changed as the result of the technology that is being used that has reduced the use of transcription service. Mr. Evans said once we hit COVID and went virtual, we were unable to get transcribers for our meetings (the vendor we worked with stopped operations during lock-down). So, we explored options for how to use emerging transcription software to transcribe the minutes. As you know, Zoom recordings are recorded and I run them through otter.ai, a transcription software program that I purchased that costs \$100 a year. This generates a raw transcript file of everything that was said in the meeting, but it is the equivalent of a written form of the audio file which I then have to make sense of and condense into creating minutes that are that are readable. Now while that cost is fairly minimal, because I'm putting the work in now and have the time because I'm retired, at some point, we have to move off this approach. And the alternatives are to hire a transcriptionist again where the cost per hour is \$30 to \$35 an hour & it is very difficult to get a person who can do this transcription in a timely manner. For the past few years, I have needed to spend many hours nurturing the knowledge of Fincom to the transcribers. Alternatively, when we aren't using Zoom meetings, we can take the recordings from Natick Pegasus and run them through on-line software that costs 25 cents per minute of recording. You would still have to do major editing to re-write these into usable minutes. If we assume the average Fincom meeting goes three hours and in 2020, we had 23 Fincom meetings. So, that is 180 minutes x 23 meeting = 4,140 minutes, or \$1,035, so this could be a way to cut this budget, but I suggest we leave the budget as is and try this approach later in FY22 to see how well it works. In my brief experiment, it looked promising but I suggest we do a comparison between on-line approaches. However, going back to the in-person transcriber doesn't make sense for the reasons cited earlier. Further, there are a lot of charts and financial data that don't really translate to text very well and the clerk has to add that information. So, from a cost perspective, this budget may be a little high, but I would caution against cutting it at this point.

Mr. Coburn noted that he was looking to ensure that we are reflecting the cost of what it takes to produce these minutes and records.

Mr. Coburn asked whether the Finance Committee is using an enterprise Zoom license. Ms. Wollschlager said the Finance Committee has two Zoom license seats provided through the town so that meets our committee and subcommittee needs.

Mr. Coburn asked whether the seats are paid out of the Finance Committee budget. Mr. Townsend said he was not sure, but he would check and suggested that we may charge an indirect cost to the Finance Committee budget. He also said he believes it's funded out of the Select Board budget.

Mr. DeLuca asked what the memberships line item in the Finance Committee budget covers. Ms. Wollschlager said that is our membership with the Association of Town Finance Committees annual dues.

Mr. DeLuca said the 2020 actuals for postage was listed as zero and the FY 22 budget is \$1,561. Ms. Wollschlager speculated that the town must have picked up the mailing costs, unless it's included in the mail center fees. In 2019, it was zero so it also could be just be part of the copy center costs that we pay for the Town Meeting books and our letters, so it might not be broken out as separate postage. Mr. Townsend said he would look into why this number was zero.

Mr. Pierce asked what the reason was for the big decline in actuals from FY 20 to FY 21. Ms. Wollschlager said the big decline is that Mr. Evans has taken the place of the expensive consulting services and has saved the committee a lot of money because he's been transcribing all the meeting minutes.

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Finance Committee budget in the amount of \$32,800, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Comments

Mr. Coburn said it's great that people have stepped up to do what it takes to make things work and it sounds like we've gotten some support from money budgeted elsewhere in the budget (Select Board, town administration and so forth), but would like to have a budget that reflects the real costs to support operations. And, if it means an indirect allocation to this appropriated amount, then we should do that.

Mr. DeLuca noted that he understands that there are mandatory requirements to sending out paper copies of the Recommendation Books, but hope we explore alternatives in the future. Also, whenever I see consulting services, I would like to have more detail on what it's used for and whether someone on town staff could do this work via a salary increase and/or stipend.

Ms. Wollschlager stated that she appreciated the continued efforts of the work Mr. Evans does for our committee. All you have to do is read through the minutes to understand what he puts into every single meeting that we have many of them not only for our committee, but also for the subcommittees on which he participates and this would be costing us a lot of money, particularly now that we are virtual. Those of you who are subcommittee chairs know what is involved with taking minutes - it is not a quick endeavor. Ms. Wollschlager also noted that the Recommendation Book is available electronically and would love it if we didn't have to print it and noted that we try to put the Recommendation Book in as many different places for the public to be able to access and view it. However, it's my understanding

that we still have to prepare the written report. That may be something that Town Counsel, at some point, could deem otherwise. But for now, the report still must be printed.

Commission on Disability (\$750)

Questions from the Committee

Mr. DeLuca noted that on ClearGov, it states purchased services and “Miscellaneous” is the bulk of the expense at \$625 and asked what that comprised. Mr. Townsend said he didn’t know and would check, but speculated that it might be tax vouchers. Mr. Rauf said it looks like this is a reimbursement for purchased supplies.

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Commission on Disability budget in the amount of \$750, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Natick Cultural Council (\$750)

Mr. DeLuca noted that this has the same miscellaneous category question and asked what that comprised and FY 20 actuals were \$235. Mr. Rauf said it was supplies reimbursement also.

Mr. Linehan asked what the approval process is for the smaller budgets – does it go directly to the comptroller or is it the Select Board. Mr. Townsend said it goes to the Comptroller and they are authorized to sign up to but not to exceed the budgeted amount.

Question from the Public

Ms. Catherine Brunell asked whether the view of ClearGov that the Finance Committee sees is the same one as the public view of ClearGov. Mr. Townsend said that, although the budget figures are the same, the Finance Committee has a detailed view of the underlying information behind the budget, but the budget figures are the same numbers as those that the public sees – there is no difference.

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Natick Cultural Council budget in the amount of \$700, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 11 – 1 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = no	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Natick Historic Commission (\$750)

Mr. Coburn asked what the FY 21 spending was. Mr. Townsend said there was not actual spending in either FY 20 or FY 21 and the last time, it was under purchased services as a reimbursement for supplies.

Mr. Linehan asked whether these smaller budgets are rolled forward or does someone asked the chairman of a committee or commission what budget they need. Mr. Townsend said they contact the chairman just make certain that they still feel they need their \$700 or \$500, or whatever it actually is – that's our routine practice. If we cannot reach them, then we will we will continue on with their previous year's budget.

Mr. Pope moved to approve the Natick Historic Commission budget in the amount of \$750, seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate

Mr. Pope noted that these amounts to keep the committees active, and seem like reasonable amounts that we should give them, but encouraged the town to get a report every so often. If the spending is zero, I would exhort them to make sure the committee is still active.

Mr. Coburn agreed and said that that preservation of history should be supported and this is a minimal way to support it. I know there are good people involved in this activity, but I wonder after some time not spending any of the budget that we might see some more communication with them and encourage some more efforts that might incur costs.

Natick Historic District Commission (\$550)

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Natick Historic District Commission budget in the amount of \$550, seconded by Mr. Grome, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Linehan said it would be nice for Town Meeting to receive annual reports from the advisory boards and commission. Ms. Wollschlager said, according to our bylaws, all boards committees, town officers are supposed to file an annual report that goes into the annual Town Report and any committee failing to report as required to the town meeting shall be discharged.

Mr. Linehan moved to approve the Natick Historic District Commission budget in the amount of \$550, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
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Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Linehan moved to close the public hearing on the Town Administrator's FY 22 budget, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Committee and Subcommittee Scheduling

Ms. Wollschlager said she sent out the approved Spring Annual Town Meeting warrant. Our review schedule is on the Finance Committee shared drive and the link I provided to the Committee has links to all the subcommittee meeting agendas, documents shared with the subcommittee and subcommittee minutes. Please read these documents in advance of our meeting so we do not repeat the same questions that have been answered at the subcommittee level. Mr. Rooney has done a great job summarizing the meetings the general government subcommittee had and these are among the budgets that we are reviewing shortly.

Mr. Linehan asked whether the public had access to the subcommittee reports. Ms. Wollschlager confirmed that they will be available to the public. They are now on the Finance Committee website, so all the meeting minutes and subcommittee minutes will be made public. Mr. Evans also posts the relevant information on the budget items we hear that evening to NovusAgenda. Mr. Rooney added that he submitted his minutes to Ms. Packer, the Town Clerk and she will post them on the Natick town web site.

Ms. Wollschlager reviewed how the Finance Committee has reviewed budgets. Previously, we had the department heads come in and give their full presentation and the Finance Committee would ask questions. Other years, we've gone to the subcommittee chairs first and have them walk us through their subcommittee review. Sometimes that's followed by another short presentation by the department heads; sometimes it's not. Ms. Wollschlager solicited inputs on what the committee wanted to see as a process.

Mr. Rooney said that it was obvious that a lot of things that were reviewed in subcommittee minutes weren't being read because of the questions that were answered would come up in the meetings. That could have been a function of us not getting information posted out there to be read. The method that I found worked for me this year was to send out a questionnaire to the general government and when we were in the actual meeting, the departments answered it and questions about spending. I asked them to spend five minutes or so and not re-read their answers to our questionnaire. This afforded them an opportunity to tell us as a Committee the points that I want to make sure to emphasize to the full committee.

Mr. Scurlock said two of the three areas that we cover in the Education & Learning subcommittee can be covered in the way that Mr. Rooney suggested – the Libraries and Keefe Tech. The Natick Public Schools budget is very different. We extensively reviewed it at subcommittee given that it's an enormous part of

our town budget so there will be much information provided in our minutes, but we also need to have NPS present to us at our meeting and answer the committee's questions.

Mr. Evans agreed with both Mr. Scurlock and Mr. Rooney that there are certain questions that we can preempt. On the DPW subcommittee, we've had two meetings: 1) the first meeting was a detailed drill-down on what's new in their budget and identified their challenges. DPW management provided a strategic overview and identified how they're responding to their challenges; 2) the second meeting focused on reviewing their budget requests in detail and voting on whether to recommend those to the full Finance Committee. Since they have seven divisions, plus the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund. Once the minutes are written, members will have a good overview of what's going on in DPW and be able to analyze the budget pretty easily.

Mr. Gillenwater said if members review the subcommittee meeting minutes, we can focus on other questions that come up afterwards and this may better focus the conversation.

Mr. Coburn said we also must be cognizant of presenting the right level of information to the public in our full Committee meetings. There must be some level of presentation from the various departments. For example, until I got on the DPW subcommittee and started really digging into, I didn't have a sufficient appreciation for the role, importance, and service level provided by DPW.

Mr. Linehan said he would like to hear a brief presentation for some departments and go into greater depth for larger departments.

Mr. Rooney said he asked department heads to review any variances greater than 3% in their budget to provide context to the subcommittee and identify the areas of emphasis in their budget. We should have the department head at our meeting because no matter how much work the subcommittees do, questions come up either from the public or the full committee that only the department head can answer. Perhaps we can tell department heads to limit their presentation to a length of time with larger departments such as the schools having more time to present.

Ms. Wollschlager said when go through a particular budget, we start out with the subcommittee chair making their report. then go to the department head where they would have a chance to make a presentation or have commentary in response to what the subcommittee chair said, followed by questions from the committee. At the conclusion, the subcommittee chair would then give their recommendations if they had a vote on a given budget.

Mr. Rooney said the General Government subcommittee has not been voting recommendations because we voted last year and then received a revised budget, so our votes meant nothing. So knowing the revised budget was coming, we did not vote. Our Town Moderator was at one of our meetings and the question came up of what the purpose of subcommittees was. Mr. Rooney said he described the objective of the subcommittee was to help the Finance Committee concentrate on departments within town government, do preliminary work, get answers to question and prepare, report, and circulate that information prior to reviewing it at the full Finance Committee and avoid the lengthy meetings that were common prior to subcommittees. So, the subcommittee attempts to crystallize information so that when we get in the actual Finance Committee, we could rely on the subcommittee's work and the published minutes. Mr. Foss agreed that this was the right approach.

Mr. Pope noted that this is his first experience with the subcommittee process, but agreed that he would like to see an introduction by the subcommittee chairs. For example, the education and learning subcommittee met the library, the library gave their budget, and they were able to demonstrate that it was a prudent budget where they kept their expenses in line and their budget was supported by 4-0 vote.

Mr. Coburn noted that, historically, capital has been more active at Fall Town Meeting and it seems product that we should use the subcommittee process in the fall as well, probably Capital as well as general Government, to provide the same benefits that accrues in the spring.

Subcommittee Meeting Updates

Education & Learning

Mr. Scurlock said the subcommittee had a good meeting with the library. As you know, they are searching for a new Morse Institute Library Director and the Assistant Director reviewed the agenda. She is also the Director of the Bacon Free Library and reviewed their budget. The trustees from each library were also present and provided great information and I suggest that they be invited to the full Finance Committee when we review their budget. Regarding Keefe Tech, we just finished our review with them earlier this afternoon. They presented their preliminary budget estimates and will not have final figures until after March 8 when they have their final budget in place. They will be ready to meet with the full committee following that date. Both libraries and Keefe Tech could provide a 10 minute overview and then answer questions on their budget. NPS is much more complex and would need more time to present and were still meeting with them and they are meeting with town administration to bridge the gap between their budget requests in the town administration's appropriation. Mr. Evans added that there is more constructive conversation between NPS and town administration – they're having regular meetings with them to reconcile their budgets and are making considerable progress. Mr. Scurlock said the next meeting with NPS is Tuesday February 23 and we will discuss what other meetings we need to hold, what topics haven't been covered, what additional questions that we need answered.

General Government will have a meeting to review Community and Economic Development, Finance Department, & Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund on Monday February 22.

DPW – meetings are completed and we have voted to approve their budgets. As usual, DPW management was well prepared, analyzed everything in detail, and explained it very clearly. We asked them a number of in-depth questions and they provided responses and where they don't have responses there was a good reason why they didn't because they were assessing requirements in that area.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Coughlin, Mr. Grome & Mr. Rooney left the meeting prior to these votes.

January 7, 2021 minutes

Mr. Linehan moved to approve, as amended the January 7, 2021 minutes, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

January 14, 2021 minutes

Mr. Linehan moved to approve, as amended the January 14, 2021 minutes, seconded by Mr. Pierce, voted 9 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Pierce moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Linehan, voted 9 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pierce = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Gillenwater= yes	Mr. Scurlock = yes
	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:28 PM