



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 18, 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 18, 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 16, 2021 1:40 PM

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. [Town Clerk Budget](#)

- c. [Board of Registrar's Budget](#)
 - d. [Information Technology Budget](#)
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 (arrived 7:20 PM)
Jeff DeLuca, Member
Bill Grome, Member
Julien LaFleur, Member
Mike Linehan, Member
Richard Pope, Member
Phil Rooney, Member
Jim Scurlock, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Coffey, Member
Jerry Pierce, 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
Ms. Diane Packer, Town Clerk
Mr. Robert LeFrancois, Director, IT Department

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson.

Announcements -

Ms. Packer announced that the Town election is on March 30 2021 and there will be regular polling hours on that day (7 AM to 8 PM). There is also a vote-by-mail option and there is a link to a vote-by-mail application on our website and I will put it at the top of the website tomorrow. You must fill out an application even if you voted by mail in the November 2020 election because those applications are only valid for that calendar year. The deadline to receive applications is 5PM on March 24, 2021. The ballots will be sent to the printer tomorrow and should be available to start to be mailed out at the end of February / early March. Although ballots aren't available, we're getting everything ready to go; we

cannot mail them all at once. As soon as the ballots come in, we will also re-open up the ballot box that is outside at Town Hall and residents can drop their ballots in that box as well.

Mr. Evans moved to open the public hearing on the Town Administrator's January 4, 2021 Preliminary budget, seconded by Mr. Scurlock, voted 11 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Linehan = 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. LaFleur = yes	

Town Clerk

Mr. Rooney said the General Government subcommittee met with the Town Clerk to discuss the Town Clerk and Registrar budgets. Prior to our meeting, we circulated a questionnaire and there were about a half dozen questions that were asked and Ms. Packer responded to those questions:

- Impact of COVID on the department during the year. Another
- Participation in preparation of the FY 22 preliminary budget.
- Staffing challenges and related questions (staffing, reductions, additions, changes that they anticipate or have made)
- Spending and requested explanation of any changes greater than 3% up or down from their FY 21 budget

We reviewed the questionnaires and summarized the results of our meeting as draft subcommittee meeting minutes and sent it to members of our subcommittee and town administration and made any revisions required. Those minutes were made available to the committee.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that these draft minutes are available to the committee and the public On NovusAgenda.

Ms. Packer discussed the Town Clerk budget. The major change in the Town Clerk budget is the request for an Assistant Town Clerk, not only to help with elections but the increased workload of pretty much everything within the Town Clerk's Office, especially as we go forward. Ms. Packer said she is in the process of writing a job description to present to the Personnel Board. A key piece will be helping with getting minutes up on the website, getting other things posted on the website, including updating the Town Clerk's website. The Town Clerk's office has had the same staff since way before I was elected Town Clerk twelve years ago and the demands on the office have increased every year since then:

- The number of town meeting nights has increased a lot and this takes up a huge amount of the Clerk's time.
- The number of times the time has gone out to borrow funds has increased. Only the Town Clerk can participate in this process, but an Assistant Town Clerk would be able to do this.
- Help with continuity as Ms. Packer is nearing retirement and the Town Clerk job is complex and a succession plan needs to be developed.

Ms. Wollschlager said the Town Clerk's budget is found on pages 198-199 in the budget book.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Linehan asked if the Assistant Clerk position anticipated starting at the beginning of the fiscal year and be funded for the entire year. Ms. Packer said she expects to hire the Assistant Town Clerk for the full year and to start at the beginning of the fiscal year, so would be funded for the full year.

Mr. Linehan asked whether the Assistant Clerk would be required to be a Natick resident. Ms. Packer said while this hire might be able to fill the position in the future, residency is not an absolute requirement. Residency is not a requirement at this point for the job, although I have spoken with Ms. Blondiet of the HR department and have not finalized the requirements. Familiarity with Natick would be preferred, but would not be a requirement because that would reduce the pool of candidates and eliminate some very qualified people.

Mr. DeLuca asked what the salary for the Assistant Town Clerk would be and asked whether that salary was comparable to similar towns with Assistant Town Clerk positions.

Ms. Packer said the salary is \$75,000. Mr. DeLuca said this salary seemed high based on his initial research. Ms. Packer said the salary is dependent on the size of the town, and in some places, those positions are union positions. This would not be a union position. In addition, Assistant Town Clerks are often part-time jobs in other communities that have a lesser workload.

Mr. DeLuca asked what has changed recently and looking forward to the next year or two that warrants this position. Ms. Packer said the demands of the Town Clerk's job have increased enormously with the biggest component the addition of vote-by-mail. That's never going away and takes an enormous amount of time. In our office last year, there were four of us and a volunteer who worked seven days a week (full days) trying to keep up with what was going on with elections. And it's only going to increase because it will be available for state and local elections. We had 11 nights of Town Meeting this fall. It's impossible to keep up with your other daily duties in the clerk's office, addressing the number of requests, the calls, and the various research requests we are asked to do. We also don't have anyone to keep the Town Clerk's website updated. Trying to do this work without further assistance is unsustainable.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if, when this position gets a job description, it will also have to be reviewed by the Personnel Board and the salary would be set at that point. Ms. Packer confirmed this and said the salary grade would be set. The salary figure of \$75,000 was put into the budget to make sure that there was enough money in there to attract a strong candidate, but ultimately it would be the decision of the HR director and the Personnel Board based on the job description what the final salary would be.

Mr. Evans noted that any time there is a pay grade, there is a salary range and asked whether this is at the mid-point of the grade 2 range. Ms. Packer said they haven't looked closely at the pay grades yet. I'm more concerned with writing an accurate job description that includes all of the tasks and skills that we're we need in order to move forward in the best way that we can and in the experience that we're looking for.

Mr. Pope asked whether this position would be filled by someone who is not on the current Town Clerk staff or whether any of the staff could be considered for this role since one of the objective is continuity

and succession planning. Ms. Packer said the job would be posted in the requirements listed. Anyone already working within town was interested in applying should do so. Ms. Packer said you are correct – there are the skill and knowledge level as well as the continuity aspects. However, two people in the Town Clerk’s office and planning to retire, so it may not be someone within the Clerk’s office, but there may be other people who might be interested and qualified.

Comments from the Public

Mr. Foss said, from his vantage point as Town Moderator, I rely heavily on the Town Clerk’s office because they are the professionals and Ms. Packer does a fabulous job of backing me up for Town Meeting and keep the legislative body of the town in sync. The Town Clerk’s office had four people in the office in the late 80s and early 90s and it was a pretty active office at the time. The demands have increased dramatically, yet it is still four people in the office. Mr. Foss asked that some backup data be put in the Recommendation Book so Town Meeting members will clearly see how the department requirements have changed and how the staffing has lagged woefully behind.

Mr. Townsend noted that the \$75,000 salary is comparable to other Assistant Directors in the town. While Ms. Packer is an elected official, she is, in essence a Department head so this position is considered an Assistant Director position and \$75,000 is in the range of some someone we would expect to have those sort of duties – such as filling in for the Director should she be out of the office. Also, the Town Clerk is very involved in the issuance of debt and many other legal papers for the Finance Department. In fact, it’s to the point now where if we are going out to issue debt, I make sure to confirm that Ms. Packer will be available because she is essential to the whole process. To have an Assistant Director to provide assistance and support in those particular instances is very crucial to the Finance Department and many other departments in the town.

Mr. Evans moved to approve the Town Clerk's budget in the amount of \$396,051, seconded by Mr. Grome, voted 11 – 0 – 1.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. LaFleur = yes
Ms. Coughlin = abstain (arrived late)	Mr. Linehan = 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. Evans thanked Mr. Townsend for making me aware of the Finance Department connection which I didn't know. Second is a thank you to Ms. Packer for putting the minutes up on the website. Mr. Evans said he wanted to point out how difficult to vote-by-mail process is. I was helping out as a volunteer and there is a lot of sorting work, verification work, mailing, and validation of the returned votes. It's tedious, time consuming and laborious and the more people who know how this process should work, the better. The last point is that the documentation requirements for Town Meeting have gone exponentially up in terms of complexity over the years, so the Assistant Clerk position is both overdue and needed. It's overdue. This department has not asked for anything in at least 10 years, other than capital sorts of things, so it's time that they get some help.

Mr. Grome said he couldn't think of any other budget that we're going to review that has had respond to state mandates such as the expansion of vote-by-mail and early voting. This department deserves this position and I support it.

Mr. DeLuca noted that he has concerns about the salary request, but is sure that it will be completely vetted out during this process, so I will support this. This office has done a tremendous amount of work done this past year and has another potential issue – ranked voting on the horizon.

Mr. Scurlock noted the Moderator's comments and that functionally and numerically requirements have increased. I agree with the Moderator's suggestion of providing more hard data to bolster the case of justification of this position before going to Town Meeting.

Ms. Wollschlager said, in general, it isn't the practice of the Finance Committee to vote on a position without a job description. Having said that, I feel very comfortable that I understand some of the duties that are required of the Assistant Town Clerk and I think many people have already who've already spoken today have acknowledged the need that this position. I have seen the work that our Town Clerk has done and the number of hours and weekends. I don't think that's fair to ask and because, she is an elected official, she doesn't get the same amount of vacation weeks. With succession planning in mind, it's absolutely the right thing to identify an Assistant Town Clerk who, who hopefully might take the Town Clerk position when Ms. Packer decides to retire. The Town Clerk is very important for the town, and we can't afford to have someone there who cannot provide the quality of work that has been provided by the current Town Clerk.

Board of Registrars

Ms. Packer said the Board of Registrars budget is directly related to elections. The budget is considerably less for FY 22 because there is only one local election. Last calendar year was an outrageously difficult year that would have been busy without COVID, which made it even more difficult. Vote-by-mail is not going away – the voters and legislators both love it and are looking at a variety of laws, some of which include same day voter registration. It's not clear what's going to pass or not pass. Another issue is that the town will be required to redistrict based on the 2020 census, assuming federal numbers for the 2020 are released in a timely manner. The Select Board, the Town Clerk and the Board of Registrars the developed that redistricting plan. There is no full-time staff in this budget - the staff is actually in the Town Clerk's budget. One member in the Town Clerk's office has the primary responsibility for elections and does a lot of the behind-the-scenes work involved in elections. During this, these kinds of elections, that I'm going to be honest with you last year for the town election, we usually do 75 mail-in-ballots and 2000 in the November election. We already have about 150 applications for this upcoming local election. When I say vote-by-mail, this is both vote-by-mail and absentee voting. I lump them together, because they're all done through the post office and it doesn't make a difference to us as to which application we get.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Pope asked how many elections were in FY 20. Ms. Packer noted that FY 20 begins July 1, 2019 and runs through June 30 2020. So the actual the September state primary and November national election, were in the FY 21 budget. In calendar 2020, there were four elections and one of them ended up almost being in FY 21 because it was held on the last day of June (local election that was postponed due to COVID).

Mr. Pope said he was trying to get out comparison with an off-cycle year (local election only). Ms. Packer said when she did this budget; we did not know that they were going to extend the mail-in budget for last year. There have been other changes to the election law as a result of COVID that will allow us to save some money at the polls. For example, we used to have a check-out table at the polls and this year, there was no checkout table which allows us to reduce the number of people needed to be poll workers (previously there were two people that checked you out). I would have to go back to look at the other numbers to compare it with an “off-cycle” year. Although we will only have one election in FY 22, we will also be ramping up for the mid-term elections (primary and mid-term election) in FY 22. Changes to state minimum wage also increased the cost of poll workers. Also, we received a \$15,000 grant to help offset some of the costs this year that we use towards the labor and postage costs. We mailed out 18,000 ballots and had 18,000 ballots that were voted. Eighty percent of the Natick voters who voted in the presidential election voted by mail and our turnout was just under 90% of registered voters.

Mr. Evans moved to approve the Board of Registrars budget in the amount of \$76,324, seconded by Mr. Grome, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. LaFleur = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Linehan = 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

Ms. Wollschlager noted that if the Town Clerk has metrics that she provides us, we can include those metrics in the Finance Committee Recommendation Book. Ms. Packer agreed to do so.

Information Technology budget

Presenter: Mr. LeFrancois

ClearGov IT budget extract

- Other Expenses		\$243,780.81	\$94,992.70	\$185,000.00	
SOFTWARE SYSTEM UPGRAND/REPLAC	0001-155-1-0000-00...	\$98,063.71	\$23,410.52	\$75,000.00	
COMPUTER EQU REPLACMENT	0001-155-1-0000-00...	\$145,717.10	\$71,582.18	\$110,000.00	
- Salaries		\$352,775.25	\$362,225.21	\$434,889.00	\$
SALARIES MANAGEMENT	0001-155-1-0000-00...	\$114,283.13	\$117,345.87	\$119,240.00	\$
SALARIES TECHNICAL/PROFESSNL	0001-155-1-0000-00...	\$238,492.12	\$244,879.34	\$315,649.00	\$

- Expenses		\$747,841.81	\$834,325.33	\$1,055,500.00	\$1,057,500.00
EQUIPMENT REPAIRS/SERVICING	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$28,236.91	\$23,515.58	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
SOFTWARE SERVICING	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$355,610.53	\$377,264.68	\$427,000.00	\$483,000.00
HOSTED APPLICATIONS	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$168,742.47	\$230,296.58	\$262,500.00	\$343,000.00
TELEPHONE	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$22,530.74	\$24,877.77	\$19,000.00	\$19,000.00
TRAINING & EDUCATION	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$7,138.18	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
COPY/MAIL CENTER FEES	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
COMPUTER SUPPLIES	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$4,614.73	\$6,154.89	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
PAPER SUPPLIES	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$9,105.21	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
TELEPHONE SYS MAINTENANCE	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$68,202.26	\$69,387.89	\$90,000.00	\$0.00
IAN/WAN MAINTENANCE	0001-155-1-0000-000-...	\$83,660.78	\$93,827.94	\$160,000.00	\$160,000.00
Communication System	123456789			\$50,000.00	\$5,500.00

Mr. Rooney said he mailed out the General Government questionnaire and noted that there was a new position budgeted. In some ways, COVID accelerated the need to take action on some projects within this department to meet the remote work needs of town administration.

Mr. LeFrancois said he has been pushing to move town IT out to hosted solutions for a long time because there are real benefits - improved customer service, improved disaster recovery, business continuity, but it cost more because everything we were running in-house ran fine and we had greater control. However, when the pandemic hit we had to quickly prepare to support employees working remotely. Eighty percent of people working remotely needed access to the MUNIS financial system and others needed to work with the permitting system which was also on premise ran into issues when they tried to make appointments and it wasn't a streamlined process and was difficult to execute. So, the pandemic accelerated the need to move services out to the cloud to create a more mobile workforce and that is what we pushed forward in the FY 22 budget. Right now, by moving the permitting system out because that was funded in FY 21 budget and in the FY 22 budget, we included the support for that cloud-based system and to move MUNIS out to the cloud. It's just going to make a much better experience for not only the work staff to be able to access the information when they're in the office but also when they're working remotely. It will also provide much better customer service, especially on the permitting side. Some of the increase is due to the movement of the financial system to the cloud and there is an increase in support cost for the cloud-based permitting system. However, we're not seeing a real increase in equipment, because if folks have a position that allows them to be mobile and

is beneficial, they can work remotely. If they can work remotely and their supervisor approves, when their desktop PC comes up for replacement, we will replace it with a laptop. We also had an increase in our disaster recovery investment so that we can protect our critical servers that remain on-site by backing them up to the cloud. So we can have our servers or critical servers here, standing up in the cloud somewhere to enable disaster recovery and business continuity. We also had a staff person retire in July, so the requested position isn't exactly a new position, but an upgrade to the existing position. The previous position was a network administrator position and we increased it to a Senior Network Administrator position and IT Deputy position is the position description. It's a highly technical position. That does some of the work that I've been doing really for the past 23 years. And it's a position I've requested for the last ten years. Right now, I'm the security guy, the firewall guy, senior network administrator, and networking guy. Like the Town Clerk's office, I have the same size staff I had back in 1998, so I'm definitely looking forward to having some help. My systems analyst is helping out doing a lot of the CIO work so we're doing the best we can. This budget allows us to move forward.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Pope asked why telephone maintenance went from \$90,000 in FY 21 to \$0 in FY 22. Mr. Le Francois said he believed it has moved into the Shared Expense budget. There was an increase in the budget because the person in our group who retired was our telephone administrator so we picked up some enhanced management services through our phone support vendor and that led to the increase. Then, with the opening of the new Kennedy Middle School, that also added an increase in support services and there will be a small increase with a new West Natick Fire Station but that is only 14 phones.

Mr. DeLuca asked for an overview of the permitting sys is moving to the cloud. Mr. Le Francois said he hoped to get the permitting system in place by next late spring / early summer. I budgeted \$300,000 for the permitting system and if this is the permitting system we go with, the support costs are usually 20% or \$60,000 and I've included that in this FY 22 budget. Once we get the actual numbers, then we'll know the exact support cost. This budget would cover the top end of the range of permitting systems, so this budget is to ensure that sure we can cover support for the permitting system when we put it in place.

Mr. DeLuca asked for clarification on the disaster recovery solution for the present financial systems.

Mr. Le Francois said he has the funding for the disaster-recovery-as-a-service and has been trying to get the contract signed. And once that's in place, all of our critical systems (financial systems and permitting system) that are on site will now be hot-spaced up in the cloud, so we can spin them up via VPN and they will be accessible both internally and remotely. Once they move to the cloud, then obviously, we won't need to have standby servers for them and that may lower the cost of the disaster-recovery-as-a-service because once they're running on a hosted solution, we can ensure that the data is replicated and backed up and our provider doing the hosting service has all sorts of business continuity and disaster recovery options available. Ironically enough though, if you run stuff on Amazon Web Services, a lot of backup solutions suggest you make a copy locally so it's completely opposite of the way it's historically been.

M Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. LaFleur = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Linehan = 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. Evans said that he has only kudos to pass on. This department does a tremendous job under difficult circumstances, responding to the urgent needs accelerated by COVID, despite being understaffed I'm very happy to see this "adjusted" position - I think it's definitely overdue. Much as the complexity increased in the Town Clerk's office, the computing environment has changed just a tad in the intervening time. So I think this budget is well within reason. I also applaud all the efforts that Mr. Le Francois did to accelerate moving stuff to the cloud which provided greater efficiency to users and greater service to residents.

Mr. DeLuca noted that many people look at IT budgets as a cost and expense to the town. However, you have to look beyond that and recognize that this provides the core functions of town operations and the Highest point of vulnerability for any municipality is its IT department, so it is not an area to lag in investment. This department has done a lot with the over-extended resources. In my opinion, any reasonable investment we make in our IT infrastructure is money well spent. If we treated this town like a company and looked at the revenue and everything that's in it, we're underspending so this budget is moving in the right direction. Cloud computing is a good way to go in terms of reducing security vulnerability while increasing efficiency.

January 4 Town Administrator's Budget Update

Mr. Townsend said they are continuing their productive dialogue with the schools and had a very productive meeting with Dr. Gray yesterday, getting more into the details, and we are making progress. Hopefully, in the near future, we'll have an update for you. We received the insurance rates from West Suburban Health Group (WSHG), the collaborative that we belong to for our health insurance. The WSHG Board of Directors is meeting next Monday and they have six options to choose from for their FY 22 rates. We are pleased to see that the expensive rate setting option had a net increase of all the plans of 6.4%, which is right on the target that we projected and that is the highest of the options; the lowest option is 3.2%. Either way, things are looking up with regards to health insurance and hopefully, we'll be getting one of those lower numbers.

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

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. LaFleur = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Linehan = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes

Mr. Gillenwater= yes
Mr. Grome = yes

Mr. Scurlock = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Committee and Subcommittee scheduling

Ms. Wollschlager said the Spring Town Meeting warrant has 33 articles and most of them are the standard articles that we typically see at Spring Town Meeting:

- The first thirteen articles are the easements, committee articles, Town Clerk salary, Personnel Pay Plan, collective bargaining, the budgets, and school bus revolving funds, capital equipment and capital improvement.
- CRT rail trail maintenance revolving fund
- Contingency funds for the West Natick Fire Station
- Articles 19 (increase personal exemptions) and 20 (PEG access fund) are standard articles.
- Article 21 solar project
- Article 22 is wine and malt beverage licenses, and we've had those before.
- Article 23 is to accept state legislation to lower town speed limits
- Articles 24 to 28 are the Planning Board and zoning bylaw change articles. We've got a couple on signage, we have some citizen's petition articles on adult use marijuana rezoning and historic preservation. Note that this is NOT the same Historic Preservation bylaw that we dealt with at a prior Town Meeting – this is involving a church.
- Article 29 is a citizen petition, on adult use marijuana
- Article 30 is an article to extend the Land Use and Makeup study committee term.
- Articles 31 and 21 are articles from the Town Meeting Practices and Rules committee.
- Article is a citizen petition article for the creation of a Town Meeting Member Recall and Removal Study Committee.

Ms. Wollschlager said she contacted the Planning Board and will schedule our hearings after the Planning Board hearings because that seems to make sense. There aren't as many Planning Board articles as there have been in previous years.

Ms. Wollschlager said she is working with Town Administration and asked them when they will be ready with their motions on their articles. Since some of them are standard articles that might not have any action, some of these may be easier than others. We will work with the Moderator to plan Town Meeting and to identify articles that might be considered for the consent agenda. Ms. Wollschlager welcomed the input of Committee members on which articles they felt should be considered for the consent agenda.

Mr. Foss said that he listens very closely to the questions that the Finance Committee focuses on because if the Committee is asking questions, there's a strong likelihood that Town Meeting members the last those questions also in that would preclude are those articles from being on the consent agenda.

Subcommittee Scheduling

Mr. Evans said the Education and Learning subcommittee is moving its meeting from Tuesday at 5 PM to Thursday at 5 PM. Mr. Evans also said the other good news is that DPW received the MWRA Sewer rates and it's lower than they forecasted so they will be able to level-fund the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund budget at what the FY 21 level and that will save a little more than \$250,000.

Mr. Rooney said he is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the administrative part of the general government.

Mr. Gillenwater said he attended a couple of meetings of the Audit Advisory Committee. One of the questions brought up by another Finance Committee member was about a recurring management note regarding counter-party and bank risk. Some of that has been mitigated, some of that cannot really be mitigated and it came up for a discussion again in today's meeting. In some ways, it's just something that can never be accomplished because we're not going to be able to get insurance against some of the large co-mingled funds and some of the large exposures. We're pretty much in the same boat as everybody else. The audit is progressing as expected and the vast majority of the work is being done remotely and off-site. The only work that is currently scheduled to be done on site on site is AP invoice testing, which simply by the nature of it gets done on site. So unless Mr. Townsend has something else to add, it looks like it's going on as expected and routinely.

Mr. Evans said there was good news from the Kennedy Middle School Committee. They have been in the process of razing the old Kennedy school and didn't find any contaminants like asbestos and so forth that would require remedial cleanup. Normally, there's a there's a sizable amount put in for contingencies like that. And as some of you will recall, we did find some nasty stuff at West Natick fire stations. So this is a real plus.

Mr. Patrick Hayes provided an update on the West Natick Fire Station. The project is about 85-90% complete with electrical and exterior work continuing. Most of the plumbing, HVAC and interior work is done. There are a few specific things that are not done yet because they're tied to critical path, which I'll get to in a second. Those things are like some final electrical lighting, testing, the commissioning of the building, ceiling work, final floor, and in some areas, those who are yet to be done, the garage doors are up. The epoxy resin floor will go down in the next couple of weeks. Substantial completion is expected by the middle of April, one month later than expected and I'll touch on that in a minute and the impacts to that from a budgeting perspective. This project started way back when with a budget of \$16,785,000 and change. When we went out to bid, the bids came out very favorably for us and it allowed us to start the project with a \$2.2 million contingency. And that contingency was spread out across a number of different line items for hard costs, construction and soft costs and things. As Mr. Evans mentioned, somewhat fortuitously, that Kennedy Middle School didn't find any asbestos when they started their demolition. Unfortunately, when we started our project, the project did find asbestos and we were required to remove the asbestos and remediate the property. The net effect of that was we spent about \$1.65 million in contingency for asbestos mitigation and delay claims from our general contractor and our subcontractors. We the spent an additional \$500,000 from contingency for the longer duration of the project staff, our professional staff, the Owner's Project Manager (OPM), the architect, and some of our engineering people. At this juncture, about 85 to 90%, complete for Phase one, and still with a small Phase two to do our financials look okay, but not great. We expect at this point, \$16,450,000 that is already

spent or earmarked to be spent, we have about another \$93,000 in change orders that we expect to hear and approve - they've already been vetted pretty strenuously. That leaves us with a running contingency number of only about \$200,000 at this point to, to finish up Phase one and get into Phase two. We are also another month behind schedule and where we thought we were two months ago. The specific and single driver to this delay is EverSource who committed to delivering us a transformer by the middle of December and having permanent power turned on. By the middle of January, we got our transformer but they finally showed in February and we finally got permanent power turned on basically this week. So we have a 35 day delay that took our final or substantial completion date of the station from March 12 to the middle of April which is going to cost us somewhere between \$80,000 to \$120,000 of additional expenses for delay claims and things (that's a forecast, not a hard number). I'm sharing this information because you'll see a warrant article from the Select Board to appropriate contingency funds for the completion of the Fire Station. Hopefully, with no other problems occurring, we expect to have the station open, fully commissioned and ready to go sometime in mid-April and the station will be open for business in early May. Chief Lentini noted in our last meeting that for the Fire Department to become operational, it's pretty complex. They need to pull the Engine 4 out of the old station and three firefighters are on that pull-out and they go into a new driveway next door, back the engine in and drive it into the bay. May through August is Phase 2 which includes demolition of the old building. We believe that is free and clear of asbestos, but we're not 100% certain and we have to dig a big hole in the ground to remove the basement, dig a big hole in the ground to put in a stormwater retention tank and cover that over and finish the blacktop access to Speen Street where the curb cuts are now. We then put in the neighborhood pocket park on the old building site and we hope to complete Phase 2 by September.

Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Hayes for all the many hours he has spent on this project addressing the complicated issues that arouse and really tested people on that building committee.

Ms. Wollschlager provided an update on the town administrator screening committee. We decided not to move forward with the sole RFP that we put forward on the project for a consultant to help us. On Tuesday, we spoke with a representative from the Collins Center at UMass. They are an assessment tool that we have used previously in the town and they have assisted many municipalities within the state and conducted Town Administrator searches and other searches for other positions within the Commonwealth and they've also branched out outside state lines. We had a long discussion with the representative – they put together a proposal that cost \$12,000 and the Committee looked favorably on that and voted to recommend that the Select Board accept that proposal. The Select Board is meeting next week and hopefully that will be on their agenda and we can move forward with the project with the Collins Center. In the meantime, our committee members have been interviewing town department heads and other stakeholders within town. We are in the process of compiling all of those inputs. And we'll use that into coming up with a profile of what we want in a candidate.

Mr. Linehan moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 11 – 0 – 0

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes

Mr. DeLuca = yes

Mr. Evans = yes

Mr. Gillenwater= yes

Mr. Grome = yes

Mr. LaFleur = yes

Mr. Linehan = yes

Mr. Pope = yes

Mr. Rooney = yes

Mr. Scurlock = yes

Ms. Wollschlager = yes

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:45 PM