



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: April 5, 2022

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote: 0 – 0 – 0

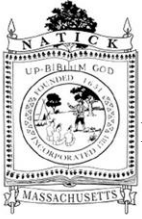
Date: xx, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wollschlager

Chair

Natick Finance Committee



TOWN OF NATICK

Meeting Notice

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

Natick Finance Committee

<u>DAY, DATE AND TIME</u>
April 5, 2022 at 7:00 PM
<u>PLACE OF MEETING</u>
Virtual Meeting accessed via Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7949362580 Meeting ID: 794 936 2580 Passcode: 220129 One tap mobile +19292056099,,7949362580# US (New York) Dial by your location +1 929 205 6099 US (New York) School Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Flr, Town Hall, 13 East Central St. Natick, MA 01760

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 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.

MEETING AGENDA

Posted: Thursday, March 31, 2022 3:00 PM

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
5. Town Administrator's FY2023 Budget - Public Hearing
 - a. Keefe Tech budget
 - b. Morse Institute Library budget
 - c. Bacon Free Library budget
6. 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing
 - a. [Possible Reconsideration of Article 13 Revolving Funds](#)
 - b. [Article 24: Regional Center \(RC\) Overlay District](#)
 - c. [Article 25: Cluster Development Allowed in Certain District](#)
 - d. [Article 26: Open Space Public Benefit Amenity](#)
 - e. [Article 27: Pickerel Pond Trail Connector](#)
 - f. [Article 2: Committee Report](#)
 - g. [Article 3: Elected Officials Salary](#)
 - h. [Article 5: Collective Bargaining](#)
 - i. [Article 8: Fiscal 2022 Morse Institute Library Budget](#)
 - j. [Article 9: Fiscal 2023 Morse Institute Library Budget](#)
 - k. [Article 10: Fiscal 2022 Bacon Free Library](#)
 - l. [Article 11: Fiscal 2023 Bacon Free Library](#)
 - m. [Article 12: School Bus Transportation Subsidy](#)
7. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
 - a. Update on upcoming Committee and Subcommittee meetings
 - b. Subcommittee Updates
8. Committee Discussion (for items not on agenda)
9. Adjourn

Meeting may be televised live and recorded by Natick Pegasus. Any times listed for specific agenda items are approximate and not binding. Please note the committee may take the items on this agenda out of order.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hossam Behery, Member at 7:10pm, virtually

Dirk Coburn, Member

Brett Conaway, Member

Jeff DeLuca, Member at 7:10pm, virtually

Todd Gillenwater, Vice-Chair
David Krentzman, Member
Kat Monahan, Member
Richard Pope, Member
Phil Rooney, Member
Patti Sciarra, Member
Linda Wollschlager, Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Coffey, Secretary
Cathy Coughlin, Member
Chris Resmini, Member
Betty Yobaccio, Member

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. on 4/5/2022 by Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes, in person	Mr. Conaway = yes, in person
Ms. Gillenwater = yes, in person	Mr. Krentzman = yes, virtually
Ms. Monahan = yes, virtually	Mr. Pope = yes, in person
Mr. Rooney = yes, remote	Ms. Sciarra = yes, in person
Ms. Wollschlager = yes, in person	

Announcements: None.

Public Comments: None

Mr. Coburn moved to open the public hearing on the FY23 Budget and Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater voted 9 - 0 - 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Coburn = yes	Mr. Conaway = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Keefe Tech Budget:

Jon Evans, superintendent and Dolly Sharek, director of finance and business operations appeared for Keefe Tech. Natick is represented by two members out of 16 members on the school committee. Mr. Evans gave a presentation on the Keefe Regional Technical School Budget.

Mr. Gillenwater reported the subcommittee saw the presentation previously and their questions involved the major increase, health insurance, which is a combination of the ever-increasing amounts and some experience rating from prior year claims. We reviewed the addition of five full-time employees in the academic areas of English, math, chemistry and the new HVAC program and there's one additional paraprofessional. The HVAC program staffing is less than the graphics design program that it's taking the place of. They are deferring filling an open shipper and receiver position. One of our members was interested in a discussion around the mental and social health issues that had been noted at some of the Natick facilities and what was the sort of experience that Keefe was getting back from student surveys. They acknowledged that there is some need for increasing counseling. It's going to be efforted through ESSER funding and a new association with a McLean Hospital.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Coburn asked a question with regard to state aid and how sustainable we might expect that to be. What is the source of the increase? Mr. Evans answered it largely is from the organic growth we've seen in the state budget, also a very complicated foundation budget formula is something that ultimately results in what we see for state aid, and it's also the reason that we can't tell you in January what it looks like, because we don't know. When we had a 4.4 percent increase in our students, we were confident that that would result in an increase in Chapter 70 aid. When it comes down to the details within, we must wait. But we know that when you look at the demographics for our students, and you look at our percentage of students on an ed plan, percentage of students who are receiving free or reduced lunch, and those who are English language learners, you find that Keefe Tech has a higher representation in those areas and with that comes some additional services and funding. We were hopeful that in spite of a 6.22 percent budget increase, that we would realize enough state aid to make it possible and palatable for our communities, and it resulted in a pretty small increase in assessment. We hope that if we have another increase in students, it won't be too dramatic because there isn't room for it to be. But if we have another dozen or a couple dozen kids in our budget for next year, we're hopeful that the state aid would increase commensurately and that we would have a better year in terms of some of the drivers of the budget.

Ms. Monahan asked about staff retention, is that something that's affecting Keefe Tech?

Mr. Evans answered we've done well in terms of our faculty ranks. We have struggled in some of our positions to fill paraprofessional positions, substitute teaching, cafeteria workers have been difficult to fill. I've said in recent meetings during the pandemic we have never had a greater need for substitute instructors and never had a harder time finding them. We definitely have struggled with some staffing in that area, but I think our teaching ranks remain pretty solid in terms of retention.

Mr. Conaway asked how do the 21 applicants this year from Natick rate to the other years?

Mr. Evans answered it is actually a slightly larger than typical year. It's not unheard of, maybe we have between 15 to high teens is a typical year, so it might be a few more, not like triple or anything.

Ms. Sciarra asked does everybody automatically get in or is there a lottery? Mr. Evans answered it's not a lottery. We have criteria for admissions where we evaluate students on the basis of

attendance, grades, discipline, counselor recommendation and an interview. The acceptance rate is pretty high, but there is a process by which we are able to accept about 250 students who apply through the initial wave. And then if we do have a capacity-based waiting list at that point, any student who declines creates a space we backfill from that list to try to serve as many students as possible.

Ms. Sciarra followed up with of the 51 students that we have, do you know what grades they are, are we graduating out some of those or is our number of students going to be higher next year? We're accepting 20-ish. Mr. Evans answered at this time, we have 13 seniors from the town of Natick; we have 10 juniors; 12 sophomores; and 14 freshmen. There is no way to predict, but it is possible that with 13 seniors that we would see an increase for Natick next year.

Mr. Pope asked if there were a school building project, do you have the ability to issue debt? How would you fund a school and how would we fund it? Mr. Evans answered we would have our committee go forward with an intent to proceed with an MSBA project, we would have a sense of what the total project would be, what the amount that would not be covered from reimbursement would be, and then we would communicate with all of our five member communities. And they would then have the opportunity to most likely have a town meeting where this is voted upon. We would need the support of all of our five member communities to be able to go forward with our typical structure for such an improvement. If we get that in place, it would be approved debt for our school district in the apportionment for our five member communities, that would be based on enrollment over a several-year span and there would be a percentage kind of calculated. When we did our roof project, we needed our five towns to approve it. Some of our communities chose to pay it as opposed to go to bond for it. If approved by a community, it would be up to them how they proceed. For a big project, like MSBA, I'm assuming it would be debt, and that would be for the town to approve and then see the best means forward for it.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on the Keefe Tech budget for FY23 in the amount of \$1,141,089, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 11-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Morse Institute Library Budget:

Miki Wolfe, director of the Morse Institute Library, made a presentation.

Mr. Gillenwater reported the subcommittee saw the presentation previously and the main question under the Morse was a discussion of the material spending requirement and the need for contributions from outside groups. It's great that outside groups are contributing, but we were wondering whether or not we should be making a stronger effort to get from the 75 percent,

which is funded by the town funding now, up to the one hundred percent. And the general feeling was taking that all in one jump might be kind of a large ask, but it's definitely something that the director is working towards.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Coburn asked if the outside funding is principally a result of the Friends of Morse Institute. Ms. Wolfe replied a significant portion, yes.

Mr. Coburn asked in total, between what the town does and what the third parties do, does it barely make the requirement, or does it comfortably make the requirement? Ms. Wolfe replied I would say it makes the requirement by not a comfortable amount, but we clear it every year. I can't speak to previous years, I can just speak to this year, and we're looking at it and we're adjusting our spending and trying to figure out what we need to contribute to make it easier.

Mr. Conaway asked have we ever met this requirement in the certification in Natick historically? Ms. Wolfe replied she went back five years and didn't see it historically by the budget itself, but with outside contributions it has always been reached.

Mr. Pope asked if we wanted to do it now, what is the deficit that you hope to close over some years? Ms. Wolfe replied \$60,000 and the Bacon contributes about \$16,000. Mr. Pope asked if the materials expenditure would grow by \$60,000 over everything else over the next few years. Ms. Wolfe replied yes.

Ms. Monahan asked is the materials expenditure requirement the metric of a good library? Ms. Wolfe replied the library wants more acquisitions, more collections and more materials available to our patrons. It's kind of balanced with services, which folks have come to expect from the library as well. So if we can do if we can do more than that, I would love it. I would like to get us up to that minimum and then keep pushing beyond that.

Ms. Monahan asked if it's a percentage or an amount based on our population? Ms. Wolfe replied it's a percentage: 13 percent.

Ms. Monahan asked possibly another idea would be just cutting expenditures and then the same amount the town is giving would represent a larger piece of the pie? Ms. Wolfe replied you wouldn't make the municipal appropriations requirement, which is kind of the other part. That's the formula, which is over three years, so you add it over three years, divided it and it's got to increase by 2.5 percent. The budget has to increase by 2.5 percent over three years. And then 13 percent of that has to be spent on materials.

Mr. Gillenwater added a clarification, it's slightly more critical than a financial recommendation. It's actually one of the certification requirements. It is a recommendation, but it's really what we need to belong to the networks and get municipal funding.

Mr. DeLuca asked do subscription services and network fees count towards those expenditures? Ms. Worke answered network fees do not count in their entirety, a portion of our total network fees is assessed for our shared contributions to the Overdrive database. Because that is content,

we can count that towards the expenditure requirement. The network informs us at the end of the year what our percentage is and then we get to add that into the base to our reports.

Mr. DeLuca asked if in the future if network fees could be broken out from computer maintenance. Ms. Wolfe replied it may go up slightly next year because of increased use by Natick residents.

Mr. Coburn asked Ms. Wollschlager if there is anybody who might give a Friends of Morse Institute library perspective on this matter of materials acquisition. Ms. Gloff answered she has been involved in The Friends of the Morse Institute Library off and on to a greater extent. However, I am no longer on the steering committee of The Friends because I am now a library trustee. I was elected to the board last year in at the March elections. I'm still a member of The Friends, just not on the steering committee. One of the key things that The Friends donates are all of the speed reads which you can get in the front of the library off there to the left. They're books that you can take out for a week at a time. Another thing is The Friends also provide money to pay for some supplies for the bookmobile, which goes out and gives books to preschools and seniors and other people who can't make it to the library. The Friends money is also used toward large print.

Mr. Behery asked how many computers do the library have? Ms. Wolfe replied there are six available upstairs currently, but that will be increased by eight. They are being connected with a new print system that does printing, scanning, faxing and translation of books. Also three more will be added to the teen section and two more to the children's section. After COVID many of the computers were not able to be updated, so they have slowly been being replaced.

Ms. Wollschlager asked what are the three positions that have been added over the last few years? Ms. Wolfe answered that was done before she started in July. They are library assistants, the people you meet out front who check out and recommend books. They were added December of 2020.

Ms. Wollschlager asked how many librarians are at the library? Ms. Wolfe asked people with a degree or people in info services? Info services people are librarians without a degree. There are 12 approximately who are librarians with degrees.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on the Morse Institute Library budget for FY23 in the amount of \$2,434,034, seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater is pleased to recommend approval and would like to see the gap closed over the years by increasing funding. The library is a wonderful resource. Mr. Coburn added a town without a library is like a day without sunshine. The library adds so much to our community and civic life and civilization. Mr. Coburn has resisted efforts at Town Meeting to balance a budget by cutting library hours and budgets to the bare minimum. He thinks he supports the idea of increasing the materials acquisition but is concerned that as we approach the idea of increasing

municipal commitment to materials acquisition that we retain a beautiful thing that we have in town.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Bacon Free Library Budget:

Amy Sadkin, director of the Bacon Free Library, made a presentation that was previously given to the subcommittee.

Mr. Gillenwater reported subcommittee notes. One member asked if two physical libraries are going to be enough in Natick. Much of that perceived need is being met with services delivered outside the physical buildings, from bookmobile to programming on the lawn to many other things that are going on. Another question is the heating, oil and gas line sufficient for increased costs and in consultation with the town that's the number that everyone feels it's going to be.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on the Bacon Free Library budget for FY23 in the amount of \$227,271 seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater is pleased with the presentations and thank you for your time and all the work you're doing on behalf of Natick. Mr. Coburn agreed with Mr. Gillenwater and commented it's another gem in our community.

Mr. Pope mentioned it's beneficial that the two budgets are presented together because they can be looked at together. The Bacon budget is a 23-percent increase, if it's added together with Morse, it averages out to about 3 and 1/2 percent, which is a very reasonable increase.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Ms. Wollschlager reported Articles 24, 25 and 26 were heard on March 24 but at that time there were no final motions for those articles. The articles have been reviewed by town counsel and there are now motions.

Article 24: Regional Center (RC) Overlay District

Ms. Loomis reported that nothing has changed on Article 24 since March 24.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 24, seconded by Mr. Pope, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater said it's great we have the actual additional language that's necessary to make it a valid motion. Mr. Pope said this is a great amendment that allows that zone to respond to changes in a world post-COVID and in response to the demand that was there even before.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 25: Cluster Development Allowed in Certain District

Ms. Loomis reported there was a minor change made based on the discussion on March 24. There was a lot of discussion regarding the one year versus 15 months, which was the same conversation that the planning board had during their public hearings. On March 30th the planning board reconsidered their recommendation and actually changed their recommendation from one year to 15 months. The moratorium would be from March 2 and 15 months thereafter, rather than one year.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Pope mentioned there is a scrivener's error, 15 months from March 2 would be June, not May. Can we modify it to June 1, 2023? Ms. Loomis replied yes.

Mr. Coburn was not at the March 24 meeting and asked was any due diligence done in ascertaining the enforceability and so forth of inserting a moratorium in code this way? Ms. Wollschlager replied town counsel reviewed the article today and was involved with crafting the language.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 25, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 10-1-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater is glad to have the language approved by town counsel and the overall goal of moratorium is a good one. Mr. DeLuca followed up by stating that this as an absolute necessity. I think it's one of those things with essentially growing pains with anything new, we have to make sure that everything is all set and in place. The moratorium is strategically the right choice.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Ms. Monahan = no
Mr. Rooney = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 26, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater remarked it's good to have the language approved by town counsel.
Mr. DeLuca said this is a commonsense motion.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes

Article 27: Pickerel Pond Trail Connector

Ms. Claire Rundelli and Mr. Matt Gardner, chair of the Conservation Commission, make a presentation. Mr. Gardner stated that over 10 years ago, the Apple Hill campus of MathWorks underwent a significant expansion. As part of that the company provided over \$1 million in funding to support traffic, open space and connectivity projects in the in the area of that Apple Hill campus. One of the things that was implemented as part of that expansion was the now famous U-turn in front of the Starbucks drive thru, just to help mitigate some of the traffic issues that were present there. Over the past 10 years or so the laundry list of projects that were proposed, were pretty diligently addressed using both this funding that MathWorks provided, plus other funding sources that were available and leveraged by the community there. Recently it was discovered that just over \$600,000 remained from the original funding. Town staff has come up with a list of projects to utilize the remaining funds to fulfill the original intent of the funding and in alignment with that intent. Some of the things that have been proposed as part of the usage of these funds include improvements to the Walnut Street/Bacon Street intersection.

Tonight we're asking for your support that would allocate \$150,000 of the over \$600,000 that remains to use that as matching funds for a grant application to fund a bridge project in the Pickerel Pond part of Natick. Pickerel Pond is a really remarkable over 100 acres of open space that sits north of Route 9, kind of in the intersection or near the intersection of Oak Street and Route 9, and it's a beautiful swath of open space that is open to the public. There's an opportunity to introduce a significant connectivity in that area that would connect what's called the Oakdale neighborhood over to the other side of the uplands in the Pickerel Pond parcel and allow people to have walking access from the Oakdale neighborhood into the Wethersfield neighborhood. People could walk from the Oak Street/Route 9 intersection into Wethersfield up

to Ben-Hem, and it also connects to the Cochituate Aqueduct Trail, that is a well-used and well-loved trail in Natick. This would require to build about a 250-foot walking bridge over a stretch of open water that connects these two parcels of upland.

We have applied for a grant that would make this connection here. A 50-percent match is required as part of this. To be clear, if the grant is not successful, we don't need the funds, we're not going to use them as part of this warrant article or this allocation.

The original intent of these funds from MathWorks is really to improve connectivity. MathWorks has been very consistent in their support for open space and trails projects. We think this is exactly aligned with what the intention of that funding is.

We ask for your support here this evening and be happy to answer any questions.

Ms. Rundelli provided more clarity about the grant structure. The grant is the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. It is technically federal dollars being distributed through the state's office of the Department of Conservation Services, which is a part of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The total project cost is estimated to be around \$300,000. That's based off of three different quotes that the town received from various contractors for both the design and the construction of the bridge boardwalk system, along with a contingency cost for the continuing rise in supply costs that we are seeing.

The grant program is a 50-percent match programs. The town does need to appropriate the full \$300,000, \$150,000 of that would be reimbursed through the grant program should we receive the grant award. The grant program itself does require that a Town Meeting vote occur to appropriate the full project cost. We will not be awarded the grant if we don't go through this step. We believe that our application is quite competitive. The map that was up earlier highlights a pretty substantial regional connection that would be sort of made. The Cochituate Aqueduct goes from this point at Pickerel Pond all the way to Quinobequin Road, formerly in Newton. This boardwalk would open up all of the neighborhoods around Pickerel Pond to that sort of larger regional connection. The neighborhood adjoining Wethersfield is actually an Environmental Justice Community in the new 2020 census tract mapping, so it would also benefit that community. We are due to hear I believe later this month from the state if the review team is going to be recommending us for funding to the larger board that makes that decision. We hope that you all are willing to support us in this endeavor. I have some additional materials discussing the original MathWorks mitigation allocation and how the town hopes to maybe use more of that money if you have any questions about that.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Pope found a scrivener's error, 60R Harwood Land should be 60R Harwood Road.

Mr. Gillenwater asked does appropriating \$300,000 when \$150,000 is going to be spent become an exercise in redeploying appropriated but unspent funds? Is there a different clean-up method of taking care of appropriations which are really ghost appropriation for the purpose of meeting grants or will this be swept up as surplus appropriation available for other projects?

Mr. Errickson answered for grants that are reimbursement grants, typically they don't come with

a requirement to Town Meeting to seek an appropriation. In those cases we set up an account that has tied to it the authorization of the grant award. Cash available is used to pay for invoices that come in and then depending on the grant we either get a lump sum or we have to do quarterly reporting or monthly reporting. It depends on the grant. In this case my expectation is that we would do the full appropriation as noted, we would spend the \$150,000 and then potentially come back to town meeting after the program is done to then release the other \$150,000 of the appropriation. We would come back at a future time to rescind that balance of an appropriation.

Mr. Gillenwater commented, it would be rescinded and not redeployed to a like project. Mr. Errickson answered no, it would be rescinded. It would just be the balance of the \$150,000.

Mr. Coburn asked where does the \$150,000 end up? Where does it end up, free cash, back in the fund from which it was appropriated, the MathWorks fund? Mr. Errickson answered \$150,000 comes from a past appropriation by Town Meeting that came from MathWorks mitigation funds. That's currently in an account of that past appropriation, and \$150,000 will be taken out of that account and putting it into a new account based on this new appropriation, if it passes Town Meeting. The other \$150,000 will be put up as part of a reimbursement grant. So once we get the grant award, we would then use available cash that we have in other accounts, but put in that account to make the \$300,000 total. And then as money comes spent, we would get reimbursements and back pay that and that money would just go back to available. There's no mechanism or need for a Town Meeting action in that case. It just goes back to one of our cash accounts.

Mr. Coburn was making an unwarranted assumption that the \$300,000 would come out of that MathWorks fund. Mr. Errickson answered not the full amount. Mr. Coburn questioned just \$150,000 comes out of that, another \$150,000 is found from available funds, which are then replenished when the grant comes through? Mr. Errickson replied correct, per a typical reimbursement grant.

Ms. Monahan asked will there be room for cycling or people with mobility issues in wheelchairs? Mr. Gardner answered it's a walking path. The area is currently used by mountain bikers. The topography of the site would make it difficult for it to be an ADA-accessible site. There is a steep approach from one end from the east end. There would probably be a terrace or stairs that would go down to it, not super steep, but it would not be ADA accessible, that's for sure.

Ms. Rundelli added the structure itself will be ADA compliant, but the approaches to it, unfortunately due to the geographic constraints are not currently ADA accessible. And we have explored decking options to ensure that the boardwalk is appropriate for cycling use as well. There is a lot of debate between horizontal, diagonal and vertical board alignments. That will be something that will be addressed during the design period.

Ms. Monahan replied it's unfortunate that it's not going to be fully ADA compliant in its current projected build. Ms. Monahan next asked about the 2013 spring annual Town Meeting MathWorks appropriation, is the remaining balance \$150,000 or is there more besides what is

being appropriated? Ms. Rundelli replied the remaining balance of the original, just over \$1 million mitigation payment from MathWorks, the remaining value is \$630,000. This would be a small portion of that. There are discussions within the Community and Economic Development Department about potential other funding opportunities that the rest of that money can go to, but those will likely be addressed to a Fall Town meeting warrant article.

Mr. DeLuca asked why are these funds available now and not discussed earlier? Mr. Errickson answered in 2013 the funds were appropriated for supporting sidewalks all the way connected up to the Oak Street project as part of the MathWorks mitigation funds. The Oak Street project is a very large town initiated MassDOT-funded project to basically rebuild that entire intersection. The original anticipated cost of that work that MathWorks put money towards was in the tune of \$900,000-and-plus. When that project got underway, MassDOT actually covered more of the cost than anticipated leaving a remaining balance of the \$670,000-plus that was noted. We were not able to use those funds until that Oak Street project was fully complete from a contractual perspective. That didn't happen until about two years ago. So only two years ago, could these funds be utilized. Mr. Errickson added he was trying to work on this four years ago in his prior role but did not have the authorization from MassDOT to expend those funds until they could close out the grant. There is a long behind-the-scenes story as to why that took so long, involving a company that went bankrupt. We have been looking at utilizing these funds in some other way for many years. It's only been in the last year plus and COVID put a little bit of a delay on our ability to bring forward this this project, as well as coordination with MathWorks, the planning board and others, who have given their blessing for this use of funds. So this project was tied up with MassDOT and only recently were these funds released from their obligation of the original appropriation from 2013.

Mr. DeLuca followed up with has an environmental study been conducted or is that part of the \$300,000 to be spent to construct the bridge. Mr. Gardner answered the project would certainly be subject to all relevant permitting processes, certainly Conservation Commission, Planning Board would have a say in it as it's part of trail connectivity. Above and beyond that the Pickerel Pond area is an area that we have looked at quite extensively, particularly in terms of acquiring a parcel of land that would form one end of this bridge. There was some initial some site assessments done to ensure that there's no hidden risks to the community to acquire that land. This project would be subject to all other appropriate permitting processes, as required under town bylaws and state laws. Ms. Rundelli added the materials that are being proposed for the construction of the bridge is a system of helical support screws that are used frequently in marine docking systems. The disturbance associated with the construction of the bridge, at least in terms of under the water disturbance, is fairly minimal compared to some more traditional footings for wetlands.

Ms. Monahan asked for a clarification this is the same project that's happening because 60 Harwood Road was just acquired in the last year, right? Ms. Rundelli answered yes. The reason that that discussion preceded this discussion is that in order to have the strongest grant application possible, being the landowner for both properties that the bridge would connect to, obviously strengthens our grant application. Mr. Gardner adds that land acquisition just made common sense. This is a privately held parcel of land that was surrounded by conservation

commission or town-owned land in this stretch of open space. The acquisition of that, especially in a cost-free way was just common sense.

Mr. Behery asked who would be responsible for maintaining this structure? Ms. Rundelli replied the Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee and the Conservation Commission will be the primary caretakers of this structure. For minor issues, the Stewardship Committee will probably be brought in. For anything that requires a more substantial budget, it would come to the Conservation Commission for review and approval.

Mr. Conaway asked would the mitigation funds be available for maintenance on the bridge in this instance, whereas CPA funds are not available for routine maintenance? Ms. Rundelli answered that could definitely be a potential source. There has been no estimate of future maintenance costs. The materials in the quotes we received are fairly resistant materials. Obviously installing a bridge in water, you want to pick things that are going to withstand freezes and thaws and inclement weather. We're not anticipating any sort of large maintenance costs within the first 5 to 10 years of the bridge's lifespan, but the Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee and the conservation office does have a small budget as well that could be used for those maintenance dollars.

Ms. Wollschlager asked for a clarification about whether or not the mitigation fund can be used for maintenance? Mr. Errickson answered typically mitigation funds that come through a planning board or some type of special permit granting authority decision, have a tie back to the intended use of why those funds were extracted from a developer. In the case of these funds, the intended use, as noted by Mr. Gardner, at the beginning of this presentation noted MathWorks was really investing in connectivity. In this case, it was really for a sidewalk along Oak Street but that became an unnecessary because those funds were covered by another project. But putting that back into connectivity or other things that lead or have some correlation to that is a desire of the process. Technically speaking, Town Meeting could appropriate mitigation funds from planning board or special permit granting authority decisions as they see fit, but there is a potential liability there that we need to be mindful of because those were extracted for a specific purpose.

Mr. Conaway asked could the mitigation funds be used to include an investment in the conservation, maintenance funding effort or capability that would ensure maintenance for this type of open space improvement over time differently than the prohibition in the CPA, as I understand it for maintenance utilization of those dollars? Mr. Errickson answered he would have to confer that with legal counsel but his recommendation is try to keep as close to the original intended use from whatever the decision is.

Questions from the Public:

Josh Ostroff, a town meeting member from Precinct 6, commented he's appreciative of the volunteers and staff that have driven this forward over the past dozen or so years. Hopefully we'll get the grant because I think it's such a compelling project for connectivity, and I'm hoping to enthusiastically vote with a minimum of debate at town meeting.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 27 in the amount of \$300,000, with the scrivener's adjustment changed "60 Harwood Land" to "60 Harwood Road," seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater stated it sounds like an excellent use of \$150,000 and another \$150,000 in grant for an excellent expansion of the trail system. Mr. DeLuca stated he'll be very excited see this entire network once the connection is complete.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 2: Committee Report

Motion A: Ms. Wollschlager reported whether or not we wanted to have our committees make the presentations in person to us at the Finance Committee meeting was discussed previously and the decision was not unless it was something specifically asked for by that committee. Materials from two of our committees looking to present to town meeting are available on Novus. The third committee we were hoping to get a report from tonight, but the chair of that committee, Town Meeting Member Recall Committee, is out of town and her designee at the last moment this afternoon was unable to attend this evening. First up is the net zero report from the Sustainability Committee. That is available in Novus. Ms. Wilson-Martin is here if there was anything that you wanted to add about that.

Jillian Wilson-Martin replied the net zero report is a brief report that we intend to give to town meeting every year. It provides an update on how we're doing in the implementation of the net zero action plan that we shared at the last town meeting. It just reminds the community about the strategy we're taking, our priorities as a community and provide some highlights of the work that was accomplished over the past fiscal year.

Ms. Wollschlager presents possible motions to be used for the three committees under Article 2. Motion A, which is to move to hear and discuss the net zero report of the Natick Sustainability Committee. This is the same motion that we've had under the committee article previously when we've heard the net zero report.

Mr. Gillenwater moved Article 2, Motion A, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater stated Town Meeting should be able to hear and discuss this important report. Ms. Sciarra agreed with Mr. Gillenwater.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes

Article 2, Motion B:

Ms. Wollschlager continued with a report from the Transportation Advisory Committee. Novus does not have the final report; it is the preliminary report. The final report will be available hopefully sometime soon before town meeting.

Josh Ostroff, chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee, commented this is substantially a report that was provided to the Select Board or appointing authority last month. Members of the committee were interested in sharing this with Town Meeting, because there's just a lot of visibility about many of the transportation issues in town that Town Meeting members would be interested in hearing about. The report would be amended: first, if there's input or comments from the FinCom, those are certainly welcome; second, if we want to provide more illustrations of some of the project requests that we've received and how we see them fitting into the future. Those are the primary changes that we would make. We might add some flavor from what other communities have done. Some of the structural changes that we would recommend the town consider and how transportation projects are managed, there's a couple comparable communities that have those structures, but those would just be cited.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Behery asked what would be the cost of changing the speed limit signage across all the roads? Mr. Ostroff answered there are relatively few speed limit signs saying what the default speed limit is in Natick now. We typically have just speed limit signs on roads that are other than the default. We don't anticipate needing hundreds of signs. The recommendation from our committee, is to have a more comprehensive approach to this, not just change the speed limit or the law, but also look at engineering and education and enforcement. This is actually something that Town Meeting has already voted. Now it's a question of the Select Board accepting that law and how it gets implemented. It's not so much a matter for Town Meeting to vote on whether to do this but for the Select Board to take action a year after town meeting accepted it. And that I want to underscore, as I said to the Select Board, is not intended as a criticism. The staff capacity is very limited.

Mr. Behery continued are you saying that if we're going to have this townwide, then we're not going to need as much signage as we might expect? You're going to have to have some sort of an effort, whether it's going to be some sort of public reach out in order to let everybody know, especially people outside Natick. I think we're still going to have to need some considerable amount of signage. Mr. Ostroff answered a much more comprehensive approach to education is needed. Changing a law, changing a sign doesn't do it. I don't want to get too into that because I know that's not really germane. I would just say more than 50 communities have done this. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, but we have to do what's right for Natick. Mr. Behery said he agreed and is not against this. We need to look out on the cost of implementing this as well as

making the recommendation as part of the report so the report is somehow complete. Mr. Ostroff appreciated Mr. Behery's comments.

Mr. DeLuca asked this is preliminary but is predominantly what is going to be shown in final version or close to final version during town meeting. Mr. Ostroff replied yes. There won't be any significant changes to the content more just the style and something to make it more visually interesting and a quicker delivery.

Mr. Gillenwater moved Article 2, Motion B, to hear and discuss the report of the Transportation Advisory Committee, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 11-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater believes Town Meeting should hear and discuss the report. Mr. DeLuca agreed with Mr. Gillenwater

Ms. Monahan wanted to thank the presentation makers for the presentations on the Net Zero and Transportation Advisory Committee. Ms. Monahan thanked Mr. Errickson for supporting common sense e-bike regulation.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes

Mr. Coburn = yes

Mr. Conaway = yes

Mr. DeLuca = yes

Mr. Gillenwater = yes

Mr. Krentzman = yes

Ms. Monahan = yes

Mr. Pope = yes

Mr. Rooney = yes

Ms. Sciarra = yes

Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 2, Motion C:

To move to hear and discuss report of a Town Meeting Member Removal Recall Study Committee. That is the committee that we put in place a year or so ago. And here is what Ms. Coughlin, our Finance Committee member, who is also the chair of that committee, had to say at our meeting on 3/29. She was hoping to have this report by April 5, and she said through no fault of our committee, we're unable to get a final report from a very important party before we could write our report. It will be very well put together. We will cover all of the points, pros and cons. We do not have anything yet. When we do get something from that committee, it will be passed along to the Finance Committee. It's the pleasure of the Committee, if you feel like we can vote on this Motion C without having seen anything.

Mr. DeLuca moved to push the vote until we actually have material. With the other motions that we've seen, we discussed not having the presentation, but we had the ability to review and ask questions of the material. At this point in time, we don't have that luxury.

Ms. Wollschlager pointed out that I don't know that we'll get it before our meetings conclude. Thursday is our last meeting on the warrant articles. So you certainly can make that motion? I don't think that the committee would want to have a special meeting just to discuss this. What would you propose?

Mr. DeLuca is not sure what motion would be appropriate. Ms. Wollschlager recommended not making a Motion C at all. The net effect would be very similar. It would just be a motion that would have to be made at Town Meeting.

Mr. Gillenwater asked if there's any pressing action item, either from Town Meeting or from any other party, that if we don't hear the recommendations this cycle and we hear the recommendations in the report at the next town meeting, is there anything that's not going to happen actionable between now and then? Ms. Wollschlager replied this committee has to make a report to Town Meeting. They're going to ask to make a report.

The question before us is whether or not we feel comfortable adding a Motion C at this point, given that we haven't seen any materials, or whether we just will let it go and have the motion be made at Town Meeting floor.

Mr. Coburn asked can we not make a motion on a matter? We've made motions on other matters under the article. Ms. Wollschlager answered we have not received anything from this committee. If we had received a presentation from a committee, I think we probably should make a decision one way or the other. We did receive a verbal report. We were expected to have something by today, we did not.

Mr. Coburn said making a motion to recommend favorable action carries with it a connotation that we've known enough to have some grounds for approving not necessarily endorsing everything but approving of what's going to be presented as setting a table for Town Meeting, and we don't know that.

Ms. Wollschlager will send something out to Catherine Coughlin and Kathryn Coughlin and if they are able to provide a presentation, we'll have our final meeting on Tuesday, where we're going to be discussing the override, but I'll leave that space.

Ms. Monahan asked who is this party that has not provided their input? Do they have most of the report? Ms. Wollschlager answered she has no knowledge of what the status of the report is.

Mr. Rooney said this is not anything new. We've had meetings in past years where we were supposed to hear articles, and this is a piece of an article. And it wasn't ready; we didn't hear it. So therefore, not hearing it. We didn't do anything. It went on ahead to town meeting where it was discussed there. Mr. Rooney agreed with Mr. DeLuca and Mr. Coburn and felt too much time was being spent on this.

Article 3: Elected Officials Salary

Mr. Errickson commented this motion was put together in collaboration with the elected official who's here tonight as well, as well as the chair of our personnel board. This is unique in that the elected official is a full-time employee of the town, but is not necessarily considered a personnel board employee because they don't have a reporting structure that reports up like a personnel board employee to the town administration or some type of department head. This is an elected official. They report to the electorate. This salary was put forth for a recommendation based on

extensive analysis of the marketplace and based on also experience in the role, and the number that is proposed is \$115,000 for this position.

Ms. Wollschlager said an email was sent to Finance Committee Members from the chair of the personnel board who provided some data and also agrees with the recommended salary amount.

Mr. DeLuca, were those materials also provided on Novus? Ms. Wollschlager replied, no, because it was an email. It will be converted and put up on Novus.

Mr. Rooney, what is the current salary now? Mr. Errickson replied \$105,000, which was voted on last year by town meeting. Mr. Rooney added this position has continually received some significant increases year to year when compared to the rest of the town. This would be a \$10,000 increase, which is about 9 percent, and I can recall some years where it was more than that, another year, I think it was about 8 percent. I'm concerned about fairness. How do you justify this? Because there are other members in town, who don't have the opportunity each year to be able to experience this. How do you justify this?

Mr. Errickson replied this is a unique position in the sense that there is no direct reporting to the town administrator or town administration. My understanding from years past is that the recommendation really comes from what is put forward by various folks that might be involved. In this case it was coordinated with some support from the chair of the personnel board to come up with a salary. It's a unique position. Ultimately the final say for the salary is town meeting. I do recall in years past that there was some debate at town meeting whether or not the town administrator should even be involved in the compensation for this. This is my first time doing it. And so I relied on some work that was done by the chair of the personnel board and in coordination with some of the work done by the person actually sitting in the position. But this is not a typical position that town administration has much oversight over the compensation. I can't speak for how years past there was discussion on this either.

Mr. Rooney said as I recall from the past, it's always been initiated by the person sitting in the position. And I'm just asking you, if someone who has to administrate the town payroll is part of the overall running of the town, not necessarily this job, but with other members that provide services to this town, are you comfortable with the size of these increases and the fact that it's initiated by the person sitting in the position, do you think this is fair to our other members of the town? Mr. Errickson answered his challenge with that is that the salary and the position is not under the purview of the personnel board. For me to say that it's fair or not fair is not really in the purview of this position, nor is it in my role of overseeing this position.

Mr. Rooney replied he didn't ask you if it was fair for this position. Are you being fair with the other members of this town administration who do not have the opportunity to individually put forward what they want for pay increases? Are you comfortable with this concept?

Mr. Errickson asked can you further explain what you mean by "fairness of this concept"?

Mr. Rooney replied there are people who work in town hall, who you do have sway over. Do they come to you each year and sit down and say, "Here's what I think I'm worth, and by the way, here's the amount of money I want. Go get it approved"? Mr. Errickson answered for

non-union personnel, we do have a merit system that we do review on an annual basis whereby we do merit reviews and we do budget for merit adjustments. Through the years those have ranged in percentages. If I feel this particular process is fair, as compared to how we do it for non-union personnel, my preference would be to have this position be following more of the merit review process. Our bylaws and our charter are not written that way.

Mr. Rooney replied Mr. Errickson answered the question, and Mr. Rooney interpreted it to mean this isn't so much a merit review process. Mr. Errickson replied correct.

Mr. Behery asked why is there an increase every year? At the same time, if we look at what we've seen in the budget, the maximum we've seen is 3 percent. So why this 10 percent, while this position is relatively high on the on the scale that was provided for us in the material. Mr. Errickson defers back to the analysis that was completed by the chair of the personnel board and in discussions with the person sitting in this position. Again, this is this is unique in the sense that it's not as if this position reports directly to a town administration or town administrator. Past votes by town meeting and even the current vote by town meeting is really up to the town meeting to decide if this is considered a fair compensation for this position. It's an elected official's salary. It's a very unique situation and the only position that town meeting considers the individual salary for.

Mr. DeLuca was trying to trace back and figure out what the last raised was. I know it's currently at \$105K. Do you have that information readily available? Mr. Pope answered he remembered last year this coming up. He commented in the fairness game, the town clerk was the only position in the town that gave up their 2020 pay raise and did not receive it back when the budget was reconsidered, and that the town should fix that. This seems like an effort to fix that.

Mr. DeLuca is trying to find out how we got to the \$105K. Were we in the 90s and then it got up to the 105. Mr. Pope replied he thought it was at either \$102K or \$103K and then went to 105. It was just a cost of living adjustment last year. That's all that happened last year. It was the same in FY20 as in FY19, without eligibility for the bonus system.

Mr. Coburn responded he was in a bit of a quandary because the chair of the personnel board I thought maybe would be online. He asked me to inquire about the materials that he's forwarded along, but I don't know who to inquire with. It seems to me we've got a lot of data but not the benefit of understanding how that data turned into the recommendation or the request that we're considering. Is there anybody online who participated in that process? Ms. Wollschlager replied not that she was aware of.

Diane Packer, town clerk said that she understands her salary puts everybody in a difficult position because we're talking about one person. However, I am not on the pay plan and sometimes get the same COLA that others do. I am not eligible for merit raises, and I'm not eligible for any bonus programs. In terms of comparison to my peers, yes, I am at this same level. The salaries that you're looking at are the salaries that they are making now, not what they're going to be making next year, as well as the fact that compared to other department heads, I'm significantly behind that. And I have 12 years of experience, an undergraduate

degree, a graduate degree, and I'm a certified clerk. That is part of how, when speaking with the chair of the personnel board and the town administrator, that was how the agreement came to the number that we came to. I hope that's helpful.

Mr. Rooney moved to refer back to the town administration for more history on pay changes, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 2-9-0. Motion fails.

Mr. Pope moved for Favorable Action on Article 3, that the Town vote to fix the salary and compensation of all elected officers of the Town for FY23 as to the Town Clerk in the amount \$115,000, seconded by Mr. Conaway 9-2-0.

Debate:

Mr. Rooney wanted to refer this back because this office is important. If I understood the materials correctly, which were provided by the personnel board, I don't think the current compensation is totally out of line. I recall some significant changes pre-COVID. There's fundamentally something wrong with this position and its pay structure. If we have years, where we're making significantly different increases more than we're doing with the rest of the town, including people who are on a merit system, I'm just not comfortable with that. It sets a bad precedent for our other members of the town community and the raises and the increases that they see. And I also think we're fortunate this year, we now have an assistant town clerk, that should help with the running of the operations in the office. I'm just not comfortable with the data that we get and we have for this right now to go forward with it and to make a recommendation to approve it.

Mr. DeLuca concurred with Mr. Rooney's statements and adds that I have to look at this from a lens of fairness and equity across the town. I just don't have the data before me to say whether an almost 9 percent raise is appropriate or not, when we're not making that same recommendation for our teachers or anywhere else in the town employment. I think if I had a track record in front of me that showed that this is a true up, rather than an annual raise situation, where it's gone a prolonged period of time, I'd feel a lot more comfortable making the vote on this. At this point in time, without additional information, I don't feel comfortable with this.

Mr. Pope hoped everyone would support this. Looking at the materials that Linda sent, the assistant town clerk is a Grade 3, which has a pay range where Point 2 is \$85,000 but the maximum is \$115,500. With Ms. Packer's role is overseeing her and overseeing the entire department a Grade 4 is reasonable. A Grade 4, the range between Point 2 and the maximum is \$105,00 to \$137,000, which this is well within the range of. It may be for consideration to put her on the play pay plan and whether or not that fits into elected officials, but it would fit somewhere around Grade 4. Potentially it could be Grade 5, but I think Grade 4 is probably most suitable for this role. Another part of it is that years ago there were unions and there were other members of the town who gave up their COLA and then had them restored by this Finance Committee. She did not. She was the only person in this town who did not and part of this is to make up for this. This is a true up for that loss of two years of having lived with that pay increase that the rest of the town received. I would hope that everyone would support this.

Mr. Conaway agreed with Mr. Pope. The true-up argument is very compelling in this situation, and I also think that it is a no-brainer that the duties of a town clerk in the scope of the pandemic have been exponentially more complicated, and I think we should be compensating her effectively for achieving what she's achieved in that timeframe.

Mr. Coburn wished there was a stronger process around this. I don't think we need to vote referral to motivate that. Without a formal process, just eyeballing the data we've been given, taking a look as other members have already articulated at rough comparison to the pay plan on which this position does not sit but in relation to some of the positions on which it makes sense. I'm going to support this. It feels comparable to the value that the town is getting. And I really hope that we don't have to go through another budget cycle. I look at people who are responsible for creating process in this town who are present, the elected official in question, the town administrator. If the chair of the personnel board were here, I would be looking at him as well. and some kind of executive or legislative body to review and vet and come up with a process that is less dependent on individual members of Finance Committee, eyeballing it and saying, yeah, this makes sense, but actually has some method to it. I really hope that next time we go through a budget cycle, we have something like that, or we're on the road to it, but I will support recommendation for positive action.

Mr. Gillenwater said in debate, I'm going to support the positive motion, but I do have a recommendation along the previous speaker's thoughts, and I believe it's been brought up before, I think the administration should investigate how within our charters and bylaws, town meeting can set the rate for this position before the every-three-year election, set it for the term posted for the elections. If people want to run for it at that price, that's what the position pays. We do it with state legislators and other things like that. Town Meeting would still be setting the rate, so I don't know if that satisfies everything within the bylaws. And just every three years the meeting before this comes up for a three-year-term election, set the rate and then we don't have to do this every year. I don't think anybody's exceptionally comfortable with having to do this every year. So let's just take two cycles out of our three cycles.

Ms. Monahan agrees with Mr. Pope and Mr. Coburn. I support favorable action on this, and I think it's an appropriate amount or as appropriate as the Finance Committee can agree to.

Mr. Behery said he's going to support this. I think having a town clerk at Grade 4 would make sense. Mr. Behery would echo what Mr. Gillenwater said about the process. I think the process is needed, not just for how the Finance Committee makes a decision, but also for the town clerk itself, the person doing the job, to feel comfortable that, you know, the compensation is accurate, and he doesn't or she doesn't have to come and stand in front of the committee every year for that process. I think having a clear process from the beginning, would make this situation much better.

Ms. Sciarra said we need to look at this from two points of view, one, we're giving her a COLA and a merit, because she doesn't get a merit, where I think a lot of other town employees have gotten merits over the COVID period. The second thing this position is responsible for elections, which is really, really, really important, and it's responsible for a lot of other things. If you look at the position, it's running a department, I think Grade 4 is probably where it should be, and the

salary ranges is in the Grade 4. I have been in a ton of town clerk's offices, and I have to say our town clerk is really, really good at elections. We have a great staff there. They try to do it, right. I think they do it right. I think we need to set it at a rate that we want to hire someone who's really good. I would actually support this. This position for what it does is worth it.

Mr. Wollschlager stated the salary for the town clerk in FY20 was \$95,800, FY21 was \$100,786, FY22 is 105,000. Before you is FY23 for 115,000.

Roll-call vote (referral to Town Administration):

Mr. Behery = no	Mr. Coburn = no
Mr. Conaway = no	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = no	Mr. Krentzman = no
Ms. Monahan = no	Mr. Pope = no
Mr. Rooney = yes	Ms. Sciarra = no
Ms. Wollschlager = no	

Roll-call vote (Favorable Action):

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = no
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Rooney = no	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 5: Collective Bargaining

Mr. John Townsend explained there is one motion, Motion A. An agreement has been reached with two units of Public Employees Local Union 1116. These are DPW laborers, the bulk of the employees at the DPW that mow the lawns and do all the basic work down there. And also we reached an agreement with the Supervisors' and Administrators' Association, which is the DPW supervisors and administration who provide the supervision down there. We are fairly well advanced with two other units, one will be Local 1116 the Clerks' Unit and the other will be the library's Librarians' Unit. We're significantly advanced along and hopefully will reach an agreement with them probably sometime next week.

Looking at Motion A we are making a motion for both these units, the supervisors and the laborers. Both cover the DPW town side of things that was funded out of our general fund, as well as the water and sewer employees, who are funded under the enterprise fund. This motion would cover both.

We would move that the town vote to appropriate the sum of \$156,851 from the Selectmen's FY22 budget expenses as appropriated at the 2021 spring annual town meeting, Article 7, Motion E, that would be for the laborers and the supervisors under DPW. And also we'd move that the Finance Committee recommend a favorable recommendation of \$82,054 appropriated from the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings from the terms of the agreement between the town and the Collective Bargaining Unit. This would be divided up as follows:

Department of Public Works salaries \$156,851, and from the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings, water and sewer salaries \$82,054.

Ms. Wollschlager clarified this is just a transfer for the current fiscal year. And whatever these contracts require is already part of the budget for FY23. That has been previously presented to us.

Mr. Townsend agreed. This is for FY22, we do have approximately \$450,000 in the Select Board's CBA settlement line as part of their expenses.

Mr. Pope asked is this for a pay raise that was negotiated? Mr. Townsend replied, yes. This would be their cost of living increase as well as adjustments to their steps in their contracts. Mr. Pope followed up with do you know what percentage these numbers translate to or is that something private? Mr. Townsend answered it's not private. The COLA for the supervisors is 2 percent. The COLA for the laborers is 1 percent. The reason why they differ somewhat is that part of the process, we agreed to additional steps, each of the units have various steps, which they proceed on a yearly basis, or adding a step for the supervisors and then I believe two steps for the laborers. We also agreed to a longevity step for both these units, actually two for the laborers and one for the supervisors. What this is is the step after, in one case laborers is 10 and 15 years, and then in the supervisors, that's 10 years. Basically, instead of giving them a stipend, which is very common amongst these units, we're turning that into a step, so to encourage people to stay longer, especially in the labor side, we have difficulty keeping people for long periods of time, just to encourage them for staying with town.

Mr. Coburn asked are there any costs of these contract settlements included in these amounts that are not related to compensation, the steps and COLAs you mentioned, stipend for something or programs for benefits or uniform or the many things that can be negotiated in the contract?

Mr. Townsend answered there are in addition to the monetary aspects of these contracts, several different types of language changes we agreed to, but one has some very small amount, \$450 increase for the tool allowance for the laborers, the mechanics. They're required to provide their own tools. I believe it's a \$50 or \$150 increase. Mr. Errickson said the amount is \$450 tool allowance.

Mr. Coburn asked we're talking about very small things on the fringes, and most of it is compensated. Mr. Errickson said that's right. Mr. Townsend answered, the vast majority of it is the compensation.

Mr. DeLuca asked given current inflation measures, Consumer Price Index, personal consumption, expenditures, is that going to factor into next negotiations or are you starting to see that trickle into some of the negotiations now? Mr. Errickson answered it definitely is part of the negotiations and as Mr. Townsend mentioned, the COLAs were just one factor of the compensation adjustments here. So many of the members, if not, in almost all cases, all the members are getting more than just what the COLA notes. We were able to put together the entire package with both COLAs and in some cases steps that led to additional compensation. The whole story is to look at the whole package, not just one component of the package.

Inflation has definitely been a topic of conversation in all of our negotiations with all of our collective bargaining units.

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 5, Motion A, in the amount of \$156,851 for Department of Public Works Salaries, \$82,054 for Water and Sewer Salaries, from the Select Board's FY22 Budget Expenses and Water and Sewer Retained Earnings, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, voted 10-0-0.

Debate:

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 8: Fiscal 2022 Morse Institute Library Budget

Ms. Wollschlager stated the administration is requesting no action on Article 8.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend No Action on Article 8 and to request that the Moderator put it on the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 10-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 9: Fiscal 2023 Morse Institute Library Budget

Mr. Gillenwater moved Favorable Action on Article 9 in the amount of \$2,434,034 from FY23 tax levy, seconded by Mr. Behery, voted 10-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater stated everything we discussed previous is still in effect, so this is just the housekeeping for it.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 10: Fiscal 2022 Bacon Free Library

Ms. Wollschlager stated the administration is requesting No Action on Article 10.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend No Action on Article 10 and to request that the Moderator put it on the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 10-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 11: Fiscal 2023 Bacon Free Library

Mr. Gillenwater moved Favorable Action on Article 11 in the amount of \$227,271 from FY23 tax levy, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 10-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Coburn moved to close the public hearings on the warrant and the budget, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, voted 10-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling:

The committee discussed the schedules and topics for upcoming meetings.

Ms. Sciarra moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pope, voted 10-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Mr. Krentzman = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

MEETING ADJOURNED 10:26 P.M.