



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 7, 2022

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote: 0 – 0 – 0

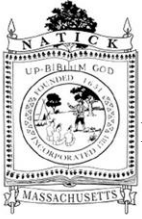
Date: xx, 2022

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 7, 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: Monday, April 4, 2022 3:34 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
 - b. Approve Education and Learning Subcommittee Minutes
5. Town Administrator's FY2023 Budget - Public Hearing
 - a. Natick Public Schools budget
6. 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing
 - a. [Possible Reconsideration of Article 13 Revolving Funds](#)
 - b. [Article 12: School Bus Transportation Subsidy](#)
 - c. [Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget](#)
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:

Brett Conaway, Member
Todd Gillenwater, Vice-Chair
David Krentzman, Member
Kat Monahan, Member at 7:08pm virtually
Richard Pope, Member
Chris Resmini, Member
Patti Sciarra, Member
Linda Wollschlager, Chair
Betty Yobaccio, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hossam Behery, Member

Dirk Coburn, Member
David Coffey, Secretary
Cathy Coughlin, Member
Jeff DeLuca, Member
Phil Rooney, Member

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. on 4/7/2022 by Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes, in person	Mr. Gillenwater = yes, in person
Mr. Krentzman = yes, virtually	Mr. Pope = yes, virtually
Mr. Resmini = yes, virtually	Ms. Sciarra = yes, in person
Ms. Yobaccio = yes, virtually	Ms. Wollschlager = yes, in person

Announcements: None.

Public Comments: None

Bruce Evans gives a project update on Kennedy Middle School. The three phases, the building, demolition of the old building, creation of the new gym and the turf field, were completed by the end of last year. Commitments to date are \$99 million or 94 percent and project expenditures are \$98 million or 93 percent. This is on track. It seems like a relatively high number, but we're at the point of minor tweaks that need to get done. The project should wrap up towards the end of the calendar year. In terms of MSBA reimbursement, the estimated maximum grant we would get back from the state is \$37 million. Some things that we need in the schools are not MSBA reimbursed but add considerable value and are included, such as hydroponics lab or the planetarium is another example. The reimbursable project costs are \$74 million. The reimbursement rate is just under half. And we've received almost \$35 million of that. We're at 94% of the total reimbursement and it's held at that level until the final MSB audit, which will occur in October or December of 2022. We're awaiting response from USGBC and expect to get LEED status. This will be the most environmentally sustainable municipal building that Natick has ever built. Photovoltaic panels are going up very shortly, if they haven't started already. They will go on the canopies over the parking lot, as well as the roof panels.

The next milestone is the making sure the HVAC systems are all operational and working well. We are making sure all the HVAC done before we sign off on the project. The last thing is that MSBA board meeting for the final audit. There is a meeting between the project manager and MSBA board that certifies Natick did everything they said they would do and then we can sign off and release the final payments. And that will be the end of the Kennedy Middle School Building Committee.

I want to commend Dr. Nolin, for all the research that she and her team did to look ahead 50 years. The good news is we're coming in under budget, and we have a terrific facility for education.

Questions from the Committee:

Ms. Sciarra asked the town's net cost is \$68 million. Mr. Evans answered yes. What was done for debt override or debt exclusion? Mr. Evans answered it was around \$80 to \$85 million. Ms. Sciarra asked what happens to that difference? Mr. Townsend answered the exclusion is calculated into the tax rates. If there's some left over, Town Meeting can go back and reappropriate for other projects that they wish to do. Once the money is borrowed, it's in the tax bill. Ms. Sciarra asked if that money could be reallocated to another project? Mr. Townsend answered yes and explained it's similar to the high school. Natick got an excellent deal on the high school, and they had a lot of leftover money, so a lot of it was reappropriated by Town Meeting to other school projects to other building projects.

Mr. Evans followed up by saying it has to be allocated to like-for-like type things. Ms. Sciarra mentioned for the high school we bought computers. So it doesn't go back to the taxpayers; it's just reallocated. Mr. Townsend answered reallocated.

Mr. Conaway asked a clarifying question, like-for-like, is that building for building or is it construction for disability access on various facilities in the town? Mr. Townsend answered a capital project that has a useful life of equal or less than what the original structure was designated as, equal or less than. So 20 years for the middle school, and if you have any capital project that meets that criteria of 20 years.

Mr. Conaway asked was the projection for making Johnson School accessible would be somewhere around 5 million. Is that the type of thing that could be reallocated from a surplus of \$16, \$17 million on the Kennedy? Mr. Townsend answered, yes, it would be a possibility. It is something that would have to be run by bond counsel and they make the determination on that. That would be something that possibly could be used with the extra money.

Mr. Errickson followed up with when you impact a building, the whole building needs to come up to code as well and the useful life of not only the improvement, but also the building comes into potentially play there, which I know Johnson from a full compliance perspective is in the \$17 to \$20 million range.

Mr. Conaway replied he was just thinking other uses of Johnson School, obviously it's going to close the school, but there could be other municipal uses of that facility with appropriate accessibility. Mr. Townsend answered yes, but any building, once you start hitting certain thresholds, you have to bring the entire building up to code when it comes to like fire safety compliance, not just ADA compliance.

Ms. Sciarra asked once it's determined what the excess is, is there a time limit as far as when we need to reallocate it or is there a point in time when we say we're not going to spend or we're not going to need it and we adjust real estate tax bills or do we pay it back sooner? Do we take that excess and pay down the bond sooner? Mr. Townsend answered bonds are only callable after 10 years. Once you get 10 years, you can refund your bond, which that's basically sort of paying it back. Once the project is completed and paid off, then obviously the debt exclusion goes away. If you want to refund it for a shorter period of time, then you could do that and shorten the length of time for that debt exclusion, correct.

Mr. Evans followed up with the net effect of that is to get money back to the taxpayers because the debt exclusion ends sooner. Mr. Errickson added it might not relate to a lower tax bill right away, but it may relate to down the road.

Mr. Pope moved to approve three Education and Learning Subcommittee minutes as drafted, seconded by Mr. Krentzman, voted 3-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Krentzman = yes

Mr. Pope = yes

Mr. Gillenwater = yes

Mr. Gillenwater moved to open the public hearings on Town Administrator's FY23 Budget and on 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes

Mr. Gillenwater = yes

Mr. Krentzman = yes

Ms. Monahan = yes

Mr. Pope = yes

Mr. Resmini = yes

Ms. Sciarra = yes

Ms. Yobaccio = yes

Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Natick Public Schools Budget:

Ms. Wollschlager said the individual departments within the Natick Public Schools have been heard and tonight we're hearing the final budget and vote on that. Mr. Gillenwater explained the subcommittee hasn't had a meeting on these materials. The subcommittee met on the four major divisions, transportation, technology, special ed and teaching, learning and innovation. There's another whole group of expenses for things like building operations and the individual schools' request. We're also going to see a breakdown tonight of what they can show us on compensation. It's kind of a moving target or it has been up until now, because all of the collective bargaining units are under negotiation. There's limits to what we can get disclosed.

Dr. Nolin and Dr. Gray make a presentation on the Natick Public Schools Budget. Dr. Gray starts with the FY23 Administration Budget. The items that have changed the most: Superintendent - Photocopy went up \$19,500, which is a reflection of the cost for doing the annual report and budget book; Business & Finance - Purchase of Services, an additional \$50,000 is allocated to continue to address MUNIS Chart of Accounts and assistance in helping gain more access to MUNIS and do more on behalf of the school system; Legal Services - General has been reduced because historically there have been hefty legal services bills and that seems to have subsided in the last couple years; Legal Services - Arbitration have increased because this is a negotiation year; and Legal Services - SPED Matters have been reduced. The overall for an administration budget there is a \$25,250 increase.

Dr. Gray continued with the FY23 Building Ops and Maintenance Budget, the major reductions are Electricity, reduced by \$200,000. If there is a spike through the summer into the fall, perhaps additional support will be needed and we'll come to Fall Town Meeting. General Maintenance has been reduced by \$102,503. The total FY23 Building Ops and Maintenance Budget has decreased \$302,503, which Mr. Bill Spratt feels will meet Natick Public Schools' need.

Dr. Nolin presented on FY23 NPS Schools Budget Request for individual schools. The overall expense budget went down for the year. The per pupil costs are \$6.50 for art class; \$4 for Phys Ed; \$4 for library; \$4 for music; \$10 in teaching and learning and innovation budget. Student-by-student costs are a good baseline. Student achievement needs are reviewed, resources or intervention materials that may be necessary. These materials can be swapped among schools based on need.

There was an increase in coaching requests. This was put it off until negotiation year because we don't add additional stipends until we've negotiated. Specific grant funding was received to fund coaching positions this year and extracurricular activities. They were added into the FY 23 budget so that they could be memorialized and brought forward. That was a recommendation of the school committee. It's also a recommendation for addressing a lot of the mental health and isolation issues students are having.

Dr. Nolin reported retirement and resignations have been extremely difficult to forecast. Typically there are about 70 changes and as of December 31 there were 303 changes.

Dr. Gray reported on FY23 Compensation Request - Salaries by Location. Other than a 6 percent cost for District-wide Administration, most everything else is directly included to educate students. The total budget is \$64,678,499. Not included in the budget are Food Services of \$642,124 and After School Activities Programs of \$2,010,136. These are self-sustaining accounts and are not part of the operating budget.

Total compensation increased by 5.55 percent and total expenses decreased by .05 percent for an overall budget increase of 4.4 percent.

FY23 New Positions, Dr. Nolin reports that three pupil services positions are funded from grant funding. The end of this year we will determine if we continue to need that funding. With a year of closure and a year of hybrid learning, a backlog was created in addressing student learning needs on IEPs and 504s. The gaps have not been closed as quickly as they would in real live daily service. Some of the pupil services positions may not be needed in other years as students accelerate through their recovery period.

Grants continue to be written and grant money is spent first. The transparency website details what has been spent on what grant over the last two years. Those are ever moving pieces and looking at the document history shows how monies get moved around. There are very specific things that the grants are allowed for, which is reported Department of Ed or whatever the funding agency is.

We are trying to do our part to reduce the schools' impact on town finances. We are seeking that next Memorial building project to get in the queue for reimbursement. We do have one facility, the Memorial School, which does need to either be repaired or renovated. We're seeking an assessment to do that. Wrapped into that assessment is an enrollment study. They look at our districts, of how our school is districted; sites, do we have a place for a downtown school or do we not, do we have a place to build at Memorial, what is the best site, all of that gets wrapped

into a cost that can be reimbursed by the MSBA, instead of us doing it now and taking it out of operating funds in order to do that work.

We did recommend the gradual closure of our Johnson School which, while difficult, will allow us over three years to transfer 37.5 FTEs within the organization to support our students in other schools. We have been making such internal transfers and shifts as we have opened the Kennedy School, and we have reduced some staffing at the Wilson School. That's been happening for four years, and that will be a similar process using the Johnson School redistricting and transfer of staff.

We are keeping class sizes reasonable so that we don't have to hire as many support staff. The smaller class size allows the average teacher to be able to address learning deficits, and also keeps the teaching staff who are overwhelmed by the amount of post pandemic issues. We'd like to retain them so that we don't have to keep retraining. And that's certainly a drain on the organization, both energy wise and money wise. And of course, we are continuing to try to be the most attractive place for a diverse teaching force to join us and to increase student belonging and to make Natick more attractive to families and employers.

Dr. Gray stated I know that the Finance Committee in particular was concerned about the one-month additional time to work with our town partners. It has been a relief to be able to have that extra time to get more information and be able to do that. As you know, our budget request is \$80,492,330. The town proposed offering us \$79 million as recommending to appropriate by town meeting, which means that we have a variance of \$1,492,330. How are we going to make up that difference? We're proposing to utilize a year-end surplus. We have a \$77 million appropriation we currently work within, a 1 percent savings of \$770,000. We're looking maybe saving about 2 percent this year. It's the schools' version of free cash.

In meeting with the town, we asked them would you prefer free cash or would you prefer us to try to prepay our special education out of district costs, which is always an option available to schools. And there was a decision made that if we have available funds, that we should prepay our out-of-district tuition, as we have done in the last couple of years. That comes both with a benefit but a cost because at some point when we can't do that, that's the cliff we'll be running into. So I'm sure that as we speak further into '24 and '25 and we talk about the potential of any kind of an override, this is one of the many factors that will come into play as we look to project into the future and try to figure out where our funding is going to be met. Currently we do have funds that we are going to be utilizing to close that gap, and we have approximately \$400,000 in revolving accounts. Revolving accounts are those funds that we collect through any fees, and when they reach a certain limit, we feel it's our diligence and duty to return that back to the general fund. Between the two, we expect we will be able to assist in reducing the request between the \$79 million and our budget request of \$80,492,330.

Dr. Nolin added, just a reminder, this grant piece that we said here, so \$3.4 million last year and \$1.6 million this year allows us to take things out of the operating budget, and that's why we have a surplus. We don't usually create a budget where there's a lot of give. We just want you to understand why there is any surplus to begin with. I also just want you to know that so far this year, we've had 29 people retire. With that comes the opportunity to hire less experienced

people. It's not fortunate that we're losing the experience, but it's been a very challenging couple of years. And so those people who have been really close to retirement have accelerated their decisions, which has contributed to our surplus as well.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Conaway asked it says the enrollment this year is 5,322. How does that compare to what's expected next year? Dr. Nolin replied so far we're not seeing a big dip. We have had a dip in kindergarten enrollment. That's down a significant amount. I can't really give you the final numbers, because they will fluctuate right through the summer, but we're down about 45 students in K. We expected to lose one section but not two of kindergarten students. We've done all our child find pieces. We've gone to the preschools. We don't think there's a red-shirting effect. I expected to see that this year, quite honestly, of kids who were held out last year and then accelerated this year. Didn't see it. Not an increase in private schools or charter attendance and not an increase in homeschooling. We don't have any new information except that the Ben-Hem neighborhood and Lilja, we've seen a five-year trend at Lilja. Those areas that were very hot real estate markets about a decade ago, which brought us our enrollment charge 10 years ago, are now aging into the middle school and the high school, right, so they're still living there. That's not new real estate. I check the real estate every week here, there's about 50 properties open, and a lot of them are townhouse kinds of places. Now, of course, kids can move into that, but I think sort of the price points, the type of housing that's available and families just aging in the system has made some space in the elementary school.

Mr. Conaway asked is there generally a lot of fluctuation year to year or is it pretty modest? Dr. Nolin answered there were 10 years of meteoric rises. The town census came back telling us we had 200 7th graders. We know we have 400 that sit before us right now. It wasn't filled out accurately. There's a lot of bad data there. But counting who's in, we just gave a report on all the people who have preregistered to enroll in the Natick Public Schools and those who have left. We've accounted for the Johnson transition for K, and we're pretty stable with the 5300.

Mr. Conaway asked as far as like a long-range impact, what are some of the opening ideas about what can be addressed with extra funding? Dr. Nolin answered if there's any revenue source that can help us with capital projects that we have that are existing, I think that that's important. We've been deferring the types of management and capital projects that we really needed to do. If you're asking me to dream about the school system out loud, I am concerned about the level of need for family and support and engagement. I think it's a hard time for families and lots of towns have Community and Family Engagement centers, where they provide social work services, medical food assistance. They provide language translation services and parenting classes. And it would be grand to have a location for that. We certainly don't have one right now. So that's something that I'm interested in. I do feel like the vision for education in the nation is talking about universal preschool. I don't know what kind of space we would need for that. As we do our analysis of sites, should we be lucky enough to go into the MSBA project, I'd like to know what spaces are available for other sites, because we don't need a Kennedy-sized school on a different site, and Memorial could be renovated, not rebuilt. We might be able to deploy those funds for different reasons to address those types of needs.

Mr. Pope asked my questions are about the grant staffs, are you going to be reducing the size of the grant staffs? Is that because the grants are expiring or can you give me a little bit of color on that? Dr. Nolin answered those are funded by grants for next year. What you're going to hear me saying to the school committee and to the public each year is we can't retain anything that is added as a grant position unless we add it to the operating budget. It would be reduced out of grants and it may be added to the operating budget, but it may be reduced in full. It depends on what the needs of the system are at the time of the reduction or addition to the operating. I just want everyone to understand that just because we put something on a grant, doesn't mean we expect that to roll into the operating budget thereafter.

Mr. Pope followed up with you're speaking about the role of the grants as they come to an end. Dr. Nolin answered, yes, they fund certain positions. For example, we spoke about the IEP services that have a backlog, we would like to move through that backlog. Once that backlog is moved through, we may not need as many related service providers or special education staff. That's a very real issue right now, I have a superintendent's advisory group of my union representation, every single month, they're bringing forward the issues of that workload. Right now is not the time, but I just want to reassure everyone that it's not something that we would need forever, some of those positions.

Ms. Sciarra asked going back to the excess Kennedy building debt, who determines how that's spent? Mr. Erickson answered ultimately, given it's an appropriation, it's our take right now, but we'll confirm this with legal counsel, is that that's a Town Meeting call. Ultimately we'd have to bring it back to Town Meeting. We'd want to obviously work internally with the building committee on a recommendation of some type to figure out what would make the most sense, but that would be a call for Town Meeting to make. Mr. Errickson will confirm with counsel.

Ms. Sciarra asked we spent money on computers, and I'm not sure how that all happened, but you're buying five-year assets with 30-year bonds. Who gets to decide how to spend the money so that we don't end up going down that road again? Mr. Errickson answered if it's related the building project or the building itself, that would still be the building committee. But once the building committee is dissolved, then reappropriating bond funds would have to go back to town meeting. We've done that with other capital projects or other capital bond-funded appropriations from town meeting in the past and with the capital program this year.

Dr. Nolin said computers are bonded differently not over 30 years and asked Mr. Townsend for affirmation. Mr. Townsend answered when you have projects this size, you have a number of different sources. The Town borrowed money for the design and they had a BAN outstanding with \$3 or \$4 million on various different aspects of it. Whereas the bond for the major construction was \$60 million, there's additional funds that are sort of part of that whole project that can be tapped into. Mr. Townsend didn't recall the computers being funded from the school funding, but there could have been some money left in the design phase of that which could have been used for that particular purpose. That's something that bond counsel would decide and then ultimately Town Meeting would make the appropriation.

Ms. Monahan asked do you think that the purchased services for MUNIS is going to be an ongoing expense? It seems like a lot of money to spend each year to use a program that isn't

going away, or I would think you need continual work in MUNIS. Dr. Nolin answered she sincerely hope not. Through collaboration between Mr. Townsend's office and Dr. Gray's office, we're untangling that. This consultation fee is to do that and to help create the workflows that we need it to be now and I don't anticipate it being a yearly cost.

Ms. Monahan asked if the churn in staff will slow down a bit or is it too hard to predict?

Dr. Nolin answered this is an unusual market. In previous years, more experienced teachers would never consider leaving because they would be too expensive to sort of compete for jobs. Now there's a real desire to have that level of experience. A lot of our experienced teachers are moving. We are trying to negotiate a contract that is attractive enough so that our teachers do not want to leave. It is my sincere hope that we retain the staff that we have grown throughout their careers and that they stay with us.

Dr. Gray added part of his investigation into the MSBA statement of interest, I went down and read the 1978 annual report, and I thought it was interesting that in 1970 the school district and the Finance Committee were grappling with enrollment. They had a downward trend, and they were recommending that we had 12 elementary schools, we need to add a 13th, and they were going to apply for funding. In addition to that, we had three junior high schools and were going to recommend that they build a fourth junior high school. And that, as I read through the annual report, it kind of made me think that sometimes things just don't change. It may change number wise, but it was very interesting to read what they were grappling with back in 1970. I thought I'd share that with the committee.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action in the amount of \$79 million for the FY23 Natick Public School Budget, seconded by Mr. Pope, voted 9-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater felt that both the \$80 million details make sense for an ongoing operation and the \$79 million appropriation request is what has been worked out as reasonable and acceptable to all parties. Mr. Pope agreed.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 13: Reconsideration

Ms. Wollschlager clarified Article 13 as originally voted was not correct. Mr. Townsend simplified the language and recrafted the motion.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Pope asked if this was a giant scrivener's error? Ms. Wollschlager replied, no, because it's a rewrite of how the motion is formulated.

Mr. Gillenwater moved that the Finance Committee reconsider Article 13, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action for Article 13: Revolving Funds and to request that the Moderator put it on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 12: School Bus Transportation Subsidy

Dr. Gray made a presentation. Each year since 2006 when it was first established, the transportation subsidy article was funds devoted towards helping keep the cost of bus fees reasonable to parents and children who needed bus transportation that did not fall under our ridership rules from DESE. It started in 2006 and it currently continues in the format, which you will see soon. We're requesting our typical increase, which is about 2 and 1/2 percent from the previous year. It is \$429,844 from tax levy. These funds are used to keep our bus fees reasonable. Current fee for one child is \$200, with a family maximum of \$400. If you don't fall into the DESE guidelines for free bus, this is the town's appropriation to help keep that \$200/\$400 fee within the current guidelines.

Questions from the Committee:

Ms. Sciarra asked without the subsidy, what would the fees go up to? Dr. Gray answered \$429,844 divided by 3100 riders. Dr. Nolin replied it's \$138 per child.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 12: School Bus Transportation Subsidy in the amount of \$429,844 from tax levy and to request that the Moderator put it on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Debate:

Mr. Gillenwater replied this is a good use of the funds for this year. In debate Mr. Gillenwater recommended that the schools and the town municipal administration look to see whether or not this is the best use of \$430,000. From my understanding the bus expenses are built that people outside of two miles get free bus service. People inside of two miles who can demonstrate financial need get either free or reduced bus services. What is being subsidized is people within

two miles, who have no demonstrated need. I understand from a popularity perspective, why this is this is a good thing to spend the money on, because it reduces the expense for people inside of two miles who don't have an otherwise demonstrated financial need. Town wide going forward, I would question whether or not that is the segment of our population that needs to be subsidized, either within the school system or just within the town in general. I think maybe we should look to see whether or not this is where we should be devoting the money. I am in favor of it this year.

Mr. Conaway added it may be an incentive to actually have more people ride the bus, which is probably better for the community in terms of environmental impact and impact on school parking lots and operations before school, after school.

Ms. Monahan added she supports this and make all public transit free. The kids can't drive.

Ms. Wollschlager added grade six and above, you do have to pay. Ms. Sciarra asked was it under a mile if you're in a lower grade? Ms. Wollschlager replied two miles. Dr. Gray answered it is K to 6 get free transportation. If you're under two miles or you're in the higher grades, you have to pay. Dr. Nolin added unless you have a demonstrated need. Dr. Gray added unless you have a demonstrated need and they apply for subsidy. Ms. Sciarra asked it's two miles for every grade, even kindergartners? Dr. Gray answered, no, K to 6 is free. Ms. Sciarra asked even if you live half a mile away? Dr. Nolin answered, no, two miles. Ms. Sciarra clarified so inside of two miles you pay; outside of two miles, even the kindergartners? Dr. Nolin said, no, K to 6 is free.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion A1: Education & Learning

Mr. Townsend asked that this board support the motion to appropriate from the total budget amount for the operations of the public schools under the direction of the school committee, the total amount of \$79 million, and that that would be funded from the tax levy fiscal year 2023 for \$79 million dollars.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion A1: Education & Learning in the amount of \$79 million from tax levy, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Ms. Wollschlager thanked the Town Administrator and the Superintendent for their leadership and cooperative spirit.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes

Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Yobaccio = yes

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion A2: South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation in the amount of \$1,141,089 to be expended under the direction of the school committee in support of the payment of the assessment for the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School or the Joseph P. Keefe Technical School, and that will be funded from the tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$1,141,089.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion A2 in the amount of \$1,141,089 from tax levy to fund the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion B1: Public Safety

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to support Public Safety expended under the direction of the chief of police to cover the emergency management expenses, parking, parking enforcement salaries and expenses, and the police salaries and expenses in the total amount of \$8,473,085. This would be sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$8,458,085 and from parking meter revenues of \$15,000.

Ms. Wollschlager added this matches the vote that we took on March 3, where we had 11-0-0 votes for all those budgets.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion B1: Public Safety in the amount of \$8,473,085 from tax levy in the amount of \$8,458,085 and from parking meter revenues in the amount of \$15,000, seconded by Mr. Conway, voted 8-1-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = no
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion B2: Fire Department

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation for the operations of the fire department to be expended under the direction of the fire chief, for salaries \$9,317,855 and for expenses \$290,800, for a total fire budget of \$9,608,655, sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$9,608,655.

Ms. Wollschlager added this matches the vote that we took on March 3, where we had 11-0-0 vote.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion B2: Fire Department in the amount of \$9,608,655 from tax levy, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion C: Public Works Department

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to fund the Department of Public Works to be expended under the direction of the Director of the Department of Public Works, for salaries \$4,279,347; for expenses \$3,293,652; municipal energy \$1,612,180; and snow and ice \$550,000, for a total Department of Public Works budget of \$9,735,179, sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$9,735,179.

Ms. Wollschlager added this was voted March 22 in the same amount, with vote of 13-0-0.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion C: Public Works Department in the amount of \$9,735,179 sourced from tax levy, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion D: Community Services and Health Services

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to fund the Community Services and Health Services Departments to be expended under the direction of the respective department heads. For Community Services, salaries of \$1,589,456 and expenses of \$551,428, for a total Community Services Budget of \$2,140,884. For the Board of Health, requesting salaries of \$633,947 and expenses of \$79,350, for a total

Board of Health Budget of \$713,297, for a total amount of Motion D of \$2,854,181, sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$2,854,181.

Ms. Wollschlager added this matches the vote on three occasions. The Board of Health was voted March 10 in the amount of \$713,297. The Community Services is comprised of a number of different budgets: The Community Organic Farm, voted on March 15, 10-0-0; the Community Services Administration, voted on March 15, 11-0-0; Council on Aging, voted on March 15, 10-0-0; Recreation and Parks, voted on March 17, 8-0-1; Veteran Services, voted on March 15, 10-0-0. The total adds up to \$2,854,181.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion D: Community Services and Health Services in the amount of \$2,854,181 sourced from tax levy, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 8-0-1.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = abstain
Mr. Krentzman = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Yobaccio = yes

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion E: Administrative Support Services

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to fund the following departments, to be expended under the direction of the department head or the director for that particular area: Select Board, salaries \$1,157,777 and expenses \$468,850, for a total Select Board Budget of \$1,626,627; Personnel Board, expenses \$1,000, for a total Personnel Board Budget of \$1,000; Town Report, expenses \$4,100, for a total Town Report Budget of \$4,100; Legal Budget, expenses \$700,000, for a total Legal Services Budget of \$700,000; Finance Department, salaries \$1,347,227 and expenses \$377,080, for a total Finance Department Budget of \$1,724,307; Information Technology Department, salaries \$310,348 and expenses \$1,428,000, for a total Information Technology Budget of \$1,738,348; Town Clerk, salaries \$361,000 and expenses \$50,900, for a total Town Clerk's Budget of \$411,900; Board of Registrars Budget, salaries \$99,700 and expenses \$68,000, for a total Board of Registrars Budget of \$167,700; Weights and Measures, salaries \$31,631 and expenses \$990, for a total Weights and Measures Budget of \$32,629; Community Development Budget, salaries \$1,019,655 and expenses \$78,400, for a total Community Development Budget of \$1,098,055. The total requested amount for budget amount for Motion E is \$7,504,658, sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$7,504,658.

Ms. Wollschlager added these are comprised of 10 different budgets that were voted on separate occasions. The Select Board, voted on March 17, 9-0-0; Finance Department, voted on March 17, 9-0-0; Information Technology, voted on March 8, 11-0-0; Legal Services, voted on March 17, 9-0-0; Personnel Board, voted on March 10, 11-0-0; Town Clerk, Town Report, Board of Registrars and Community Development were all heard on March 8, they all received 11-0-0 vote; Sealer of Weights and Measures was on March 17, and that was 9-0-0. All the totals agree with all of our votes that we took on those various days.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion E: Administrative Support Services in the amount of \$7,504,658 sourced from tax levy, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion F: Committees and Commissions

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to fund the committees and commissions, to be expended under the direction of each of the multi-member boards: Finance Committee, expenses \$32,800, for a total budget of \$32,800; Commissions on Disabilities, expenses \$750, for a total budget of \$750; Natick Cultural Council, expenses \$700, for a total budget of \$700; Historical Commission, expenses \$750, for a total budget of \$750; Historic District Commission, expenses \$550, for a total budget of \$550; Affordable Housing Trust, expenses of \$80,000, for a total budget of \$80,000. The total budget amount for Motion F is \$115,550, sourced from tax levy of fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$115,550.

Ms. Wollschlager added all of these six budgets were heard on March 10 and they all had a vote of 11-0-0.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion F: Committees and Commissions in the amount of \$115,550 sourced from tax levy, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion G: Shared Expenses

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation of the budgets set forth below. The officials responsible for these items are: Fringe Benefits, the town administrator; Property and Liability Insurance, the town administrator; Contributory Retirement Systems Pensions Liability, the collector treasurer; Non-contributory Retirement Pension Liabilities, the comptroller; Debt Service, the Collector/Treasurer; Reserve Fund, Finance Committee; Facilities Management, town administrator and the superintendent of the public schools.

First is Insurance & Benefits, Employee Fringe, the bulk of this particular item is the health insurance for the employees of both the town and for the school department. We're requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$18,284,868; other personnel services would be merit increases for town employees, \$150,000, for a total budget for the Employee Fringe of \$18,434,868. Property and Liability Insurance, this is Purchased Services and the total amount that we're requesting is \$961,600. Moving on to retirement, it has two particular items. First is the Contributory Retirement, Pension Assessment, in the amount of \$12,369,086. We also have the non-contributory retirement pensions, and that would be for \$20,500. For debt service, we are requesting the amount of \$14,254,224. Reserve Fund, which is under the Finance Committee, is an expense for \$250,000. Facilities Management, which is a department that's overseen by both the town administrator and the superintendent of schools, has Salaries in the amount of \$3,085,643 and expenses in the amount of \$988,300, for a total Facilities Management Budget of \$4,073,943.

The total requested amount for the budget amount for Motion G is \$50,364,221.

This is broken down as follows: tax levy for fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$12,926,209; state aid in the amount of \$17,132,772; local receipts in the amount of \$12,757,292; free cash in the amount of \$3,486,988; overlay surplus in the amount of \$1 million; and water and sewer indirects in the amount of \$3,060,960. The total amount to be raised from those particular revenues is \$50,364,221.

Ms. Wollschlager added Employee Fringe, voted on March 17, 9-0-0; Property and Liability Insurance, voted on March 17, 8-0-0; Contributory Retirement, March 17, 8-0-1; Non-contributory Retirement, March 17, 9-0-0; Debt Service, March 31, 10-0-0; Finance Committee Reserves, March 31, 10-0-0; Facilities Management, March 17, 9-0-0.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion G: Shared Services, in the amount of \$50,364,221, sourced as follows: Tax Levy, \$12,926,209; state aid, \$17,132,772; Local Receipts, \$12,757,292; Free Cash, \$3,486,988; Overlay Surplus, \$1 Million, Water and Sewer Indirects, \$3,060,960, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 8-0-1.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = abstain	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion H1: Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to be expended under the direction of the department head or director. For Water & Sanitary Sewer Operations, salaries of \$2,230,500 and expenses of \$8,946,074, for a total Sanitary Sewer budget of \$11,176,574; Utility Billing, salaries of \$106,497 and expenses of \$74,000, for a total Utility Billing budget of \$180,497; Fringe Benefits, expenses of \$439,180; Water & Sewer Debt Service, principal in the amount of \$2,049,465 and interest in the amount

of \$582,412, for a total Debt Service budget for Water & Sewer of \$2,631,877; Water & Sewer Reserve Fund, and a total Water & Sewer Reserve Fund of \$200,000. The total requested budget for Motion H1 for the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund is \$14,628,128. This is to be raised from water and sewer user fees in the amount of \$14,628,128.

Ms. Wollschlager added the Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund was voted on March 22 and that was a 13-0-0 vote. The amount voted was \$17,899,088 because it included the indirects, which are under Motion H2 of \$3,060,960.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion H1: Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund, in the amount of \$14,628,128, sourced from Water & Sewer user fees, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion H2: Water/Sewer Indirect Cost Allocations

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an approval of the following indirect cost allocations raised in the General Fund. This is to provide support for the town services that are provided to the Enterprise Fund. It is operated as a separate entity from the town. The total amount of allocations for the indirects is \$3,245,026. It is offset by the services provided by the Water & Sewer staff for the town in the amount of \$184,066, for a total amount of \$3,060,960. This is to be raised from the Water & Sewer user fees in the amount of \$3,060,960.

Ms. Wollschlager added the Water/Sewer Indirect Cost Allocations was voted on March 22 and that was a 13-0-0 vote. The amount voted was \$3,060,960.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion H2: Water/Sewer Indirect Cost Allocations, in the amount of \$3,060,960, sourced from Water & Sewer indirect costs, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion I1: Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation for an appropriation to be expended under the direction of the director of the Sassamon Trace Golf operations. Sassamon Trace operations salaries of \$385,312, expenses of \$331,057, for a total Golf Course Operations of \$716,369; the Sassamon Trace Fringe Benefits, personal services of \$28,251, other retirement assessments of \$5,006, for a total Golf Course Fringe Benefit budget of \$33,257; the Sassamon Trace Debt Service Payment principal \$165,000, interest \$56,425, for a Total Debt Service for the golf course of \$221,425; Golf Reserve Fund \$20,000, for a total Golf Reserve Fund of \$20,000. The total budget amount of motion I1, \$991,051. The total budget amount to be raised from the following sources: tax levy of fiscal 2023 in the amount of \$240,000 and golf users fees in the amount of \$751,051, for total sourcing of \$991,051.

Ms. Wollschlager added the Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund was voted on March 31 and that was a 10-0-0 vote. The amount voted was \$1,062,628, which included the indirects.

Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Gillenwater had a wording question. Under "Sassamon Trace Fringe Benefits," is that "Other Personal Services" or "Other Personnel Services"? Mr. Townsend answered, no, it's not personal. It should be personnel.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion I1: Sassamon Trace Golf Course, in the amount of \$991,051, sourced from tax levy in the amount of \$240,000 and Golf User Fees in the amount of \$751,051, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Article 7: Fiscal 2023 Omnibus Budget, Motion I2: Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund Indirect Allocations

Mr. Townsend asked that the Finance Committee make a Favorable Recommendation to approve the following indirect costs allocations raised in the General Fund in the amount of \$71,577.

Ms. Wollschlager added this voted on March 15 and that was a 10-0-0 vote.

Mr. Gillenwater, moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 7, Motion I2: Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund Indirect Allocation, in the amount of \$71,577, sourced from Golf Indirect Costs, seconded by Mr. Krentzman, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes

Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Mr. Gillenwater moved to close the public hearings on the FY23 Town Administrator's Budget and the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrants Articles, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling:

The committee discussed the schedules and topics for upcoming meetings.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Conaway, voted 9-0-0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Conaway = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Krentzman = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Yobaccio = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes	

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:24 P.M.