



Natick Finance Committee

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

Town of Natick Finance Committee

Meeting Date: September 13, 2022

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote:

0 – 0 – 0

Date:

October 13, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

David Coffey

Secretary

Natick Finance Committee

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 3 of the by-laws of the Town of Natick I attest that the attached copy is the approved copy of the Minutes for the following meeting

Finance Committee
Town of Natick

Minutes for the meeting of September 13, 2022

Meeting Location: Natick Town Hall, School Committee Room and virtual by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89344253078>

Meeting ID: 893 4425 3078

Passcode: 979080

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,89344253078# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

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 advance, by 2:00PM on the day of the meeting, to fincom@natickma.org. Comments will be posted on Novus Agenda 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
The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Members present:

Linda Wollschlager

Patti Sciarra

David Coffey-R

Richard Pope

Todd Gillenwater

Cody Jacobs-R

Grace Keeney-R

Kat Monahan

Phillip Rooney-R

Mr. Coburn - R - arrived late

Mr. Behery - R - arrived late

The agenda was reviewed.

Agenda

Announcements

Public Comments

Public Hearing re:Fall Annual Town Meeting, Articles 19 & 29
Review of Minutes
Sub-Committee scheduling
Committee Discussion (for items not on the agenda)

Motion made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Ms. Sciarra to open the public hearing for the Fall 2022 Town Meeting Warrant, passed by a vote of 9-0-0.

Roll call R-denotes member participating remotely

Mr. Coffey - yes -R
Mr. Gillenwater - yes
Mr. Jacobs - yes -R
Ms. Keeney - yes-R
Ms. Monahan - yes
Mr. Pope - yes
Mr. Rooney - yes-R
Ms. Sciarra - yes
Ms. Wollschlager - yes
Mr. Coburn arrived at 7:45pm

Article 19 Personal Property tax

Presented by Mr. Eric Henderson, Director of Assessing

This article proposes to set a minimum personal property assessment in the amount of \$9,999 for taxation purposes starting in FY24.

The collection of personal property taxes, billed and collected by the Assessor's office was reviewed and explained, as well as the exemption. It was pointed out that efforts to collect smaller accounts was not cost effective. If we had done this exemption last year, it would have had absolutely no effect on the tax revenue.

Mr. Rooney asked if the threshold was going to be enforced on all accounts and the effect on the average taxpayer. Mr. Henderson stated we are not going to bill accounts under the threshold. The effect on the average single family home is minimal and would be \$3.37 if we could round the tax rate to four decimals, which we can't.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the if the exemption amount only applied to accounts less than the threshold. Mr. Henderson clarified that we are not exempting \$10,000 from accounts over the threshold, we are only choosing not to bill accounts under \$10,000.

Mr. Pope asked if exempting the first \$10,000 is worth about \$50,000 in revenue to the town, which Mr. Henderson confirmed.

Motion made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Ms. Sciarra to recommend Favorable Action regarding the subject matter of Article 17

Call of the Roll

Mr. Coffey - Yes
Mr. Gillenwater - Yes
Mr. Jacobs - Yes
Ms. Keeney - Yes
Ms. Monahan - Yes
Mr. Pope - Yes
Mr. Rooney - no
Ms. Sciarra - Yes
Ms. Wollschlager - Yes
Mr. Coburn - yes

Motion passed by a vote of 9-1-0

Article 29 Charles River Dam

Sponsor Mr. Saul Beaumont presented on the article, stressing the importance of the dam to the social and environmental impact to the town.

Ms. Sciarra asked about the funding sources of the original motions.

Mr. Rooney asked about the repair cost estimate of \$2.7 million and what resource was used to arrive at this number. It was stated that Mr. Marsette of the DPW gave this number. Mr. Rooney asked about issues raised in the questionnaire about environmental issues. He also asked about other issues mentioned in the questionnaire but not addressed. Mr. Rooney asked about question 8 in the questionnaire as to what boards and committees the sponsor consulted with. The answer was no boards or committees. Mr. Rooney was asked if any grants for repair existed and were researched and was told no.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there was any response to the letter by the Town Counsel. Mr. Beaumont said that he believes it says the Select Board is the policy maker. If this warrant article is approved at Town Meeting, the Select Board could choose not to implement it.

Mr. Gillenwater asked about previous votes and if removal or other options were presented. The answer was no.

Mr. Pope asked about renovation and removal as options and what is the change in

circumstances. Mr. Errickson answered about the appropriations and the initial project was halted after design to see what was practical. Based on feedback, the committee process was started but was placed on hold by the pandemic. Ms. Wilson-Martin also answered about the issues about changes in sentiment.

Mr. Coffey asked about the “historic value” of the dam as cited by the sponsor. None could be cited but some sentimental reasons were mentioned. Mr. Coffey then asked about the total cost was going to be and whether the \$900K would be sufficient to complete the project. Mr. Errickson noted we have not yet borrowed for this project, so debt payments are not included in our budgeting.

Several public speakers spoke to the historic value of the dam as situated in the Historic District and the process. Further mention was made as to the environmental impact. Another speaker spoke to the value of the dam to his family.

A member of the sustainability committee spoke to the issues regarding the loss of trees and the environmental issues. He spoke to the report issued by the committee and the opinion of the experts that the committee consulted.

A resident spoke to her opinion as to the fiscal aspects of the issue as well the ethical view that the river be restored to its natural state.

A resident spoke to the cost of the repair option regarding maintenance as well as the repair costs and the long-term costs going forward.

A resident spoke the value of the dam and other amenities to the residents of South Natick.

A motion was made by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. Coffey for Indefinite Postponement.

A motion was made by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Jacobs for referral to the Sponsor, the Town Administrator and the Select Board.

Mr. Rooney spoke to IP and said that while he may have voted to authorize funds in the past, based on prior information, he reserves the right to change his opinion.

Mr. Coffey spoke to IP regarding the long-term cost and that there was no need to refer a flawed article to the people who already had this issue before them.

Mr. Coburn spoke to both motions and that he had reservations about IP and its message. He discussed the long public process and the series of facts that have now emerged. He also spoke to the committee process, the ecological issues and other information presented to the committee.

Mr. Jacobs spoke to both motions and the process of how this should be addressed by the FinCom as opposed to the Select Board. He also spoke to the fact that prior authorizations and those could begin the removal process if that is the desire of the Select Board.

Ms. Keeney spoke to both and cited the issues on all sides.

Mr. Pope spoke to the FinCom viewpoint as to the financial aspects rather than the emotional value, without discounting those values.

Ms. Wollschlager spoke to the facts that unfortunately things do change.

Ms. Sciarra spoke to the budget issue facing the town and the long-term financial impact Motion for

Referral

Call of the Roll

Mr. Behery - No

Mr. Coburn - Yes

Mr. Coffey - No

Mr. Gillenwater - No

Mr. Jacobs - Yes

Ms. Keeney - No

Ms. Monahan - No

Mr. Pope - Yes

Mr. Rooney - No

Ms. Sciarra - No

Ms. Wollschlager - Yes

Motion failed of 4-7-0

Motion of Indefinite Postponement

Call of the Roll

Mr. Behery - Yes

Mr. Coburn - Yes

Mr. Coffey - Yes

Mr. Gillenwater - Yes

Mr. Jacobs - Yes

Ms. Keeney - Yes

Ms. Monahan - Yes

Mr. Pope - Yes

Mr. Rooney - Yes

Ms. Sciarra - Yes

Ms. Wollschlager - Yes

Motion for Indefinite Postponement passed 11-0-0.

Motion to close the Public Hearing made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Sciarra, passed by a vote of 11-0-0, all members present voting in the affirmative

Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Ms. Sciarra to approve the minutes of April 12, 2022 passed by a vote of 11-0-0, all members present voting in the affirmative.

Motion made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Ms. Sciarra to adjourn passed by a vote of 11-0-0, all members present voting in the affirmative

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.