



Natick Finance Committee

aPursuant 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 20, 2022

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote: 0 – 0 – 0

Date: October 6, 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

DAY, DATE AND TIME

September 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM

PLACE OF MEETING

Virtual Meeting accessed via 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 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, September 15 at 10:30AM

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 and Approve minutes from August 30, 2022](#)
5. 2022 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles – Public Hearing
 - a. [Article 10: Personnel Board Classification and Pay Plan](#)
 - b. [Article 14: Create a Natick Town Bylaw to provide for Tax Payment Agreements pursuant to M.G.L c.60 section 62A - postponed](#)
 - c. [Article 18: Home Rule Petition: Remove Minimum Seating Capacity Requirements for All Alcohol and Wine and Malt Beverages On Premises Licenses](#)
 - d. [Article 26: 246 N. Main St.](#)
6. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
 - a. Update on upcoming Committee and Subcommittee meetings
7. Committee Discussion (for items not on agenda)
8. 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.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = yes, remote	Mr. Coburn = yes, remote
Mr. Coffey = yes, remote	Mr. Gillenwater = yes, in person
Mr. Jacobs = yes, in person	Ms. Keeney = yes, remote
Ms. Monahan = yes, in person	Mr. Pope = yes, in person
Ms. Sciarra = yes, in person	Ms. Wollschlager = yes, in person
Ms. Yobaccio = yes, in person	Mr. Zitnick = yes, remote

Article 14 is postponed until Thursday, September 20, 2022.

Announcements – Mr. Zitnick was welcomed to the Finance Committee as a new member.

Public Comments

Mr. Paul Joseph, Select Board Chair, stated that tomorrow evening at the Select Board meeting, we will be beginning the hearing process to receive a report from the South Natick Charles River Dam Committee. The public is welcome to participate in the process or you're welcome to send emails to the Select Board at selectboard@natick.org.

2022 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing

Move to open the public hearing on the 2022 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles, made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Coffey. *Passed 12-0-0.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Jacobs = yes	Ms. Keeney = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes
Ms. Yobaccio = yes	Mr. Zitnick = yes

Article 10: Personnel Board Classification and Pay Plan

Presenters: Mr. Steve Levinsky, Personnel Board Chair and Dorothy Blondiet, Director of Human Resources

Note: Article 10 materials are available here:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=12909&MeetingID=1092>

Changes to the Full-Time Pay Plan:

- Grade 1, the Police Records Coordinator moved from a union to a non-union position
- Grade 2, the Data Analyst position was removed and a new Business Manager position in Grade 3 was created, which reflects new responsibilities
- Grade 3, the Communication Information Officer title was changed to Communications Director
- Grade 3, the Community and Economic Development Administrator title was changed to Community and Economic Development Office Manager
- Grade 4, the Director of Senior Center and Community Services title has changed to Deputy Community Service Director Council on Aging and Human Services
- Grade 4, the Director of Recreation and Parks title has changed to Deputy Community Services Director of Recreation and Parks
- Grade 4, a new position for Deputy Director of Public Works was added, which was previously funded at 2022 SATM Town Meeting
- Grade 5, the Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships position was eliminated and replaced with a Director of Community Services, which was reinstated. That was a position we had in the town previously that we have brought back with updated responsibilities.

There were no changes to the Part-Time pay plan.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Pope asked about the Deputy Director and the Assistant Director and asked if these roles were redundant - could there be a Deputy and then an Assistant Director in any department? The member said they believe there is an Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks that would serve under two Deputy Directors. Could you explain how that works?

Mr. Levinsky stated that there are times we have positions on the pay plan that do not have incumbents. And the thought there is that at some time, we may want to hire into those, so we leave them on there. Other times there are positions that organizationally may seem like they are close but their responsibilities are different and it is just a title change. Ms. Blondiet added that these positions were enhanced to reflect added responsibilities so we elevated the position to a Deputy role. And the Assistant Director of Rec. would be sitting below that as a secondary in the absence of the Deputy.

Mr. Jacobs asked if the sponsor could walk us through the change from Communications Information Officer to Communications Director. What was the thought process?

Mr. Levinsky said the prior title was misleading and was tough to recruit. Initially, we weren't getting the caliber of applicants we had hoped for. We wanted to take a look at the responsibilities, enhance them, and then rename it to bring the need to be more appropriate to what the current trends are. The market did not support the title.

Mr. Errickson, Town Administrator, added that Mr. Levinsky and Ms. Blondiet explained the change well. When he came into the role, the CIO role was in place. After 1-2 rounds of recruitment we were not getting the right type of applicants. He stated that the job description and the title were not reflective of the type of position or applicant we were expecting. So we wanted to make sure we got the right applicant for the right job description to reflect the job role.

A motion for Favorable Action was made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Pope and to recommend to the Moderator to place on the consent agenda. *The motion passed 12-0-0.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = yes

Mr. Coburn = yes

Mr. Coffey = yes

Mr. Gillenwater = yes

Mr. Jacobs = yes

Ms. Keeney = yes

Ms. Monahan = yes

Mr. Pope = yes

Ms. Sciarra = yes

Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Ms. Yobaccio = yes

Mr. Zitnick = yes

Article 18: Home Rule Petition: Remove Minimum Seating Capacity Requirements for All Alcohol and Wine and Malt Beverages On Premises Licenses

Presenter: Mr. Paul Joseph, Chair of the Natick Select Board

Note: Article 18 materials are available here:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=12907&MeetingID=1092>

Article 18 is a home rule petition that would remove minimum seating requirements for all alcohol and wine and malt beverages on premises licenses. Current law in Natick requires that all businesses with an on-premises all-alcohol license must have a minimum seating capacity of 100. For businesses with a beer and wine license, the capacity must be between 50 and 99 seats. This motion would ask the Massachusetts legislature to remove those requirements.

Mr. Joseph noted that this article came out of a year-long process in which the Select Board has sought to review all of its policies. The first set of policies the board decided to review was its policies related to alcohol licensing. In doing that, the board recognized that there was a need for greater agility in being

able to grant licenses to businesses with different business models that may not easily be able to comply with the current seating requirements. Coming out of COVID especially, the board thought it was important to our economic competitiveness to have more flexibility in looking at these different models. Finally, Mr. Joseph noted that there just aren't many commercial properties available in Natick that are able to accommodate establishments with the required seating.

Mr. Joseph mentioned several important limitations on what this Article would do. First, it does not have any impact on off-premises alcohol licenses. Second, Natick law currently only allows on-premises alcohol licenses to be granted in conjunction with a victualler license (a license to serve food)--this Article and motion would not change that.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Pope and Mr. Coburn asked about similar restrictions in peer communities. Mr. Joseph mentioned that Medford has a restriction that is a formulaic approach to seating capacity but that Natick is fairly unique in having a strict numerical restriction. A working group reached out to peer groups in other comparable communities.

Mr. Behery asked for an example of why Natick is at a disadvantage from having the seating capacity minimum. Mr. Joseph replied that alcohol service is a very profitable product in the food and beverage industry so when people want to open a restaurant, it is often only financially feasible with an on-premises alcohol license. Mr. Joseph mentioned that he is aware of several times when the town has been approached by restaurateurs who wanted to open businesses in Natick but were unable to due to the seating capacity restrictions.

Ms. Keeney asked why these restrictions were originally adopted. Mr. Joseph responded that at the time, Natick was moving from being a dry town to allowing these on-premises sales for the first time and there was some apprehension about that so the seating restriction was a way of dissuading too many of these establishments from opening.

Ms. Keeney, Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Yobaccio asked about the total number of licenses and whether there was a limit on the number of on-premises alcohol licenses Natick may issue. Mr. Joseph replied that there is such a limitation based on a statutory formula, but he wasn't sure of the exact numbers. Mr. Joseph later provided supplemental information to the committee (as an appendix to the Warrant Article Questionnaire). That information indicated that Natick is entitled to issue 56 total on premises retail licenses. 36 licenses have currently been issued but 4 of them are subject to exemptions from counting towards the limit either because they were authorized by special legislation or because they fall into an exempt category (ex. veterans' clubs and farmer/agricultural permits). Thus, Natick currently has 24 available on premises retail licenses available.

Mr. Zitnick asked about the process for coming up with this idea and who was consulted during that process. Mr. Joseph said that a small working group was convened that included the town's Executive Administrative Assistant, Deputy Chief of Police, and the Director of Community and Economic Development. He said this group sought input from Natick 180, the Board of Health, and the public through an online survey. Then the Select Board itself held several public meetings on the topic.

Ms. Wollschlager asked what the criteria are for the Select Board to grant an on-premises alcohol license to a business that applies for one. Mr. Joseph noted that he can only speak for himself personally rather than the entire board but that there are no formal criteria established but he looks at things like public safety issues, previous violations by the applicant, and their experience running these kinds of businesses.

Mr. Coffey asked whether the Select Board has the authority to revoke a license prior to the normal annual review. Mr. Joseph said that it did.

Steve Levinsky, speaking on behalf of Natick Center Associates, expressed support for the article and provided several anecdotes about how the seating capacity requirement had caused Natick to lose business opportunities.

A motion for Favorable Action was made by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. *The motion passed 12-0-0.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Jacobs = yes	Ms. Keeney = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes
Ms. Yobaccio = yes	Mr. Zitnick = yes

Article 26: 246 N. Main St.

Presenter: Randy Johnson, Chair, Natick Affordable Housing Trust

Note: Article 26 materials are available here:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=12908&MeetingID=1092>

The Natick Affordable Housing Trust (NAHT) is requesting that tax title property at 246 North Main Street be transferred to the NAHT. The NAHT intends to commit an additional \$30,000 of its funds and to issue an RFP to a nonprofit developer to build a deed restricted single-family house. The NAHT has been working on this project since 2019. At the request of the Select Board, the NAHT verified that there is a clear title to the property at 246 North Main St. and provided an outline of the process to make such a transfer of tax title property from the Select Board to the NAHT.

Town Administration indicated that the vacant land is currently being used as a staging ground for equipment and supplies needed for the route 27 project which likely has two more consecutive seasons, and the Town has made a commitment to the project contractor to provide the site for construction staging although it has not been determined how long they will need to use the site. Town Administration also indicated that they have not had time to review this property from a Town need

perspective and would recommend that this review happen before any action on the disposition of this property be taken.

Questions from the Committee

Ms. Monahan asked if a copy of the Declaration of Trust could be provided. Mr. Errickson sent it.

Ms. Monahan asked questions about who the Trust answers to and the relationship to other town functions.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the status of the land currently and were other uses considered. Mr. Johnson indicated that it is now a vacant residential property. He stated that the Select Board public process is where the alternative uses come in to play.

Mr. Jacobs also asked what the consequences are of transferring a property from control of the treasurer to the control of the Select Board. Mr. Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator, stated that the transfer from a treasurer control to Select Board control, has relatively minimal impact. It's really just who has the care, custody and control of the property.

Mr. Jacobs further inquired would this article require the Select Board to convey the property? Mr. Errickson said we would want to confirm this with Town Counsel but if the Select Board were to choose to act on the authority given to them by Town Meeting, in this case, it would only be to dispose of the property to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Ms. Yobaccio asked is the intent to transfer the land for free or for fair market value. Mr. Johnson replied essentially for free.

Mr. Coburn asked about the status of the strategic planning process for the Trust. Mr. Johnson indicated it is about 80% done. Mr. Coburn continued by asking if there is a set of goals for the trust that can be described concisely. Mr. Johnson replied that the stated mission of the trust is to create affordable housing opportunities for families and individuals. Goals so far have emphasized production on a larger scale than we have been doing.

Mr. Coburn also asked about the proposal process and how to ensure the property ends up on the tax rolls. Mr. Johnson thought the best way to get that done is to have a condition of the RFP that the property will be sold to an eligible buyer.

Mr. Coburn asked what the Town's goals regarding affordable housing were. Mr. Errickson indicated that the Town does have a very proactive set of goals and objectives in partnership with the Affordable Housing Trust through the Community and Economic Development Office and that they work through policies to promote affordable housing. The Town partnered with the NAHT to complete a housing production plan and is increasing affordable housing through policies and programs based on feedback from the Natick 2030+ Master Plan. The Town currently funds \$80,000 per year through the town budget and has made policy adjustments to the inclusionary zoning section of the Zoning Bylaws to increase the number of affordable housing units in new development projects.

Mr. Coburn asked what other projects the Affordable Housing Trust is currently contemplating. Mr. Johnson said the Trust is highly interested in Auburn Street. We've hired a historic preservation consultant, and a development consultant to look at developing a pro forma that would show a feasible project of approximately 25 units of senior housing at the site.

Mr. Zitnick asked how many units of affordable housing are needed in Natick. Mr. Johnson said state-wide you hear people saying we need 10,000 units in the next five years to meet the demand and Natick is part of this part of the solution.

Mr. Pope asked if there is a timing need for this request and what would happen if it were delayed. Mr. Johnson indicated that authorizing the Select Board to transfer the land to the NAHT is the first step in the process and that it will take additional time to complete the RFP process and then go through the necessary steps to complete the project. The NAHT has been working on this for 5 years and would like to move the process forward without delay. Additionally, this article does not set a time or require the Select Board to transfer the property. It just authorizes them to do so at a time that they deem appropriate.

Mr. Pope also asked if you were to receive the property, would you be amenable to allow the town use of the property during the 9/27 construction period? Or would you be trying to immediately pull it out for immediate construction? Mr. Johnson said he thought the Trust would advocate for the 9/27 interchange reconstruction to search for a more appropriate staging area.

Mr. Coffey asked how ready the Trust is to begin, and how ready is the town. Mr. Johnson said about 85% and Mr. Errickson said the town is more at the 15 to 20% stage.

Mr. Coffey asked about the RFP process, the sale of the land to a developer and whether a developer would make a profit on this project. Mr. Johnson explained that there are nonprofit developers who complete affordable housing projects without a profit motive and that any profit on such development is rare. The land is awarded as part of the RFP process which would restrict the developer and specify that the house must be sold to an eligible family and be eligible to be included on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

Mr. Errickson noted that he provided some of initial thoughts in a memo to the Finance Committee, and he welcomes a continued conversation on this particular property as well as general affordable housing in town.

In debate, members of the committee were supportive of the mission of the NAHT and of increasing the number of affordable units in Natick. Although details of the RFP process are still in the planning stages, a member pointed out that this article only authorizes the Select Board to make a conveyance, if in its judgment, is a good idea to do. This article limits such conveyance by the Select Board to the NAHT and the decision and timing of such would rest in the hands of the Select Board. Another member noted that the biggest challenge to building affordable housing in Natick is the lack of available land. Although this article would add only 1 unit of housing it's a step in the right direction, is a good use of this vacant lot of land that sits between 2 other residential properties, adds affordable housing to another part of town and is the step that is needed to move this worthy project forward.

A motion for Referral to the sponsor was made by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Coffey. *The motion failed 5-7-0.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = no	Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Gillenwater = no
Mr. Jacobs = no	Ms. Keeney = no
Ms. Monahan = no	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = no	Ms. Wollschlager = yes
Ms. Yobaccio = yes	Mr. Zitnick = no

A motion for Favorable Action was made by Mr. Jacobs, seconded by Ms. Sciarra. *The motion passed 9-2-1.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Coburn = abstain
Mr. Coffey = no	Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Jacobs = yes	Ms. Keeney = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = no
Ms. Yobaccio = yes	Mr. Zitnick = yes

A motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Pope. All members voted in favor, 12-0-0.

Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the August 30, 2022, minutes was made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Jacobs. All members voted in favor, 12-0-0.

Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling / Committee Discussion (for items not on agenda)

The Chair discussed upcoming meetings and the process for members to sign up to write the Recommendation Book article narratives.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Ms. Monahan. All members voted in favor, 12-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 pm.