

Warrant Article Questionnaire  
Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

Section III – Questions with Response Boxes – To Be Completed By Petition Sponsor

Article # 32	Date Form Completed:
Article Title: New Town Seal	
Sponsor Name: Town Seal Review Committee	Email:miaknatick@gmail.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it will appear in the Finance Committee Recommendation Book and presented to Town Meeting for action.
Response	<p><b>Motion A</b></p> <p>Move to hear and discuss the report of the Town Seal Review Committee.</p> <p><b>Motion B</b></p> <p><i>Move that pursuant to MGL c. 40 §47, to approve a Town Seal design, as set forth in the document titled Natick Town Seal Review Committee - Proposed Town Seal Design and dated March 30, 2023, which seal will become effective as the seal of the Town of Natick on September 1, 2023.</i></p> <p><b>Motion C</b></p> <p>Move to appropriate \$5,000 from tax levy to be expended under the direction of the Town Clerk for purposes of procuring new embossers.</p> <p><b>Motion D</b></p> <p>Move to discharge the Town Seal Review Committee.</p>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is the proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the accompanying Motion?
Response	The purpose of this article is for Town Meeting to hear and discuss the final report prepared by the Town Seal Review Committee, to vote on the proposed new town seal, and to discharge the committee. The article also provides for an appropriation for new embossers, but we do not anticipate seeking that action under this article.

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3	Has this article or one of a very similar scope and substance been on a previous Warrant Article and what have been the actions taken by the Finance Committee, other Boards or Committees and Town Meeting?																								
Response	<p>Related Articles</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 10px 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Warrant Period <small>Ex: 2021 SATM</small></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Other Committees <small>Ex: Planning Bd refer</small></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">FinCom Action <small>Ex: Referral</small></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Town Meeting <small>Ex: Referral</small></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2020 FATM</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">No Recommendation</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2021 FATM</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Favorable Action</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Comments:            Article 16 FATM 2020 - Created Town Seal Review Committee            Article 36 FATM 2021 - Appropriated \$11,000 for design and related services</p>	Warrant Period <small>Ex: 2021 SATM</small>	Other Committees <small>Ex: Planning Bd refer</small>	FinCom Action <small>Ex: Referral</small>	Town Meeting <small>Ex: Referral</small>	2020 FATM		No Recommendation	Approved	2021 FATM		Favorable Action	Approved												
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4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?																								
Response	<p>The Fall 2020 vote to establish the committee also required that a final report and recommendation be prepared for Town Meeting. A Town Meeting vote on a new Town Seal is required by MGL. The design work has been completed, and the committee is prepared to present the new seal design for consideration by Town Meeting. Please note this citation under <a href="#">Massachusetts General Law c. 40 §47</a>.</p> <p>Changing the Town seal is also consistent with other actions of the Town.</p> <p>In recent years, the Select Board in appointing a Task Force and subsequently establishing a committee and senior staff position for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, has identified as a priority the Town's need to update our approach to DEI. Excerpting from the approved job description for the Director of Equity, Inclusion and Outreach:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Director of Equity, Inclusion &amp; Outreach will work to develop and operationalize a long-term program of initiatives that will develop a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, target support for disproportionately impacted populations of the COVID-19 pandemic, and develop priorities that provide opportunities to build diversity and inclusive practices into the Town's operations.</i></p>																								

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	<p>At the state level, the Commonwealth in 2021 established a Special Commission on the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth (<a href="#">see link</a>) with a goal in part to “<i>make recommendations for a revised or new design of the seal of the commonwealth and a revised or new motto of the commonwealth and shall make recommendations for an educational program on the history and meaning of the seal and motto.</i>”</p> <p>In addition, several municipalities are revising their city and town seals to remove imagery that may be historically inaccurate and/or may marginalize or diminish Indigenous peoples.</p>
5	<p>Does this article require funding, how much, from what source of funds and under whose authority will the appropriation be managed and spent?</p>
Response	<p>If the town seal design is approved by Town Meeting, new embossers will need to be purchased, at the approximate cost of \$5,000. An appropriation has been proposed within the Town Clerk’s budget.</p> <p>Placement of this image in other locations where the seal currently appears is generally at the discretion of Town Administration and may be subject to Town Meeting appropriation. Implementation options have been provided by Town Administration which will be included in the final report of the committee to Town Meeting. This funding is not being requested by the Town Seal Review Committee.</p> <p>In the course of the committee’s work and with the able assistance of Town staff, we have learned that images based on the current seal are widespread on Town vehicles, uniforms, signage and other applications. These are discretionary uses and it is not required that a new seal be so widely used. The Committee report will lay out suggested priorities for replacing these images, but no implementation is currently requested of Town Meeting under this article other than procurement of embossers.</p>
6	<p>Does this article act in any way in concert with, in support of, or to extend any prior action of Natick Town Meeting, Massachusetts General Laws or CMR’s or other such legislation or actions?</p> <p>Does this article seek to amend, rescind or otherwise change any prior action of Natick Town Meeting?</p>
Response	<p>M.G.L., Ch.40 §47 establishes the requirement that towns have seals, and how they are to be approved and utilized.</p> <p>FATM 2020 Article 16 created the Town Seal Review Committee and charged it with review and redesign of the town seal.</p>

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	FATM 2021 Article 36 provided the funding for the design of the image the committee is putting forth for approval.
7	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive Master Plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations?
Response	N/A
8	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?
Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>Town Seal Review Committee</b> will provide Town Administration with all files needed to create and embosser from an approved image. Additional file formats will be provided in the event that Town Administration decides to use this image, or a derivative, in other applications.</li> <li>2. The <b>Town Clerk</b> and <b>Procurement Officer</b> will be involved in the procurement of the physical embossers.</li> <li>3. <b>Town Administration</b> with likely input from the <b>Select Board</b> will need to decide whether and where this image will be used beyond the embossers. If utilized town-wide other department heads and staff will be involved with implementation, and <b>Town Meeting</b> may be asked to support appropriations.</li> </ol>
9	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process</li> <li>● Appropriate Town Boards &amp; Committees were consulted</li> <li>● Required public hearings were held</li> </ul>
Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Town Seal Review Committee has maintained a website at <a href="http://www.natickseal.org">www.natickseal.org</a> since the beginning of our work; this website hosts all meeting minutes and other work product as well as contact information.</li> <li>2. All meetings have been public and posted with the required public notice.</li> <li>3. The committee has circulated two public surveys during its process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Community survey to collect opinions on current and future seal</li> <li>b. Design Feedback survey to collect opinions on the three final proposed designs</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

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	<p>4. A community open house was held at the Morse Institute Library in February 2023 to allow community members to talk directly to committee members and the graphic designer the committee hired.</p> <p>5. Committee members have been in communication with Town staff throughout the process (including the Town Administrator, Deputy Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Communications Director, and Procurement Officer).</p> <p>6. The committee has reached out to members of the Nipmuc and Massachusetts Tribes, Praying Indians, and has held discussions during our public meetings.</p>
10	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	<p>Since before the article was placed on the warrant, the committee has engaged with the Administration to quantify the use of the current seal image as part of its charge to consider implementation of new seal. Thanks to staff efforts, we have learned that the current seal image appears on about 24,000 assets across 42 categories, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,000 recycling containers</li> <li>• 1,200 street signs</li> <li>• Several hundred police badges and patches</li> <li>• DPW and CED apparel</li> <li>• DPW and Recreation &amp; Parks fleet</li> <li>• Use within Town facilities (Town Hall mural, DPW door, Cole Center, Public Safety training center podium, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>It is not required for the Town to replace all current imagery with a new design based on the proposed seal. Should a new seal be approved, it is likely that the Administration will advance a plan to replace these images with a new design, or remove the existing images, or replace on a normal cycle, considering in part the staff time and expenses associated with each alternative.</p> <p>The initial cost estimate developed by the Administration for replacing and removing the current image is approximately \$700,000, subject to further prioritization, development of alternatives for implementation, and phasing of the work.</p> <p>The committee recommends prioritizing the most public and visible assets for removal of the current seal as soon as is practicable and defers to Town Administration on whether the new seal should be as widely deployed or whether different images should be used.</p> <p>These activities are outside the scope of this Article, but the topic is part of the implementation considerations that are part of the Committee's initial charge. The Administration may seek an appropriation as early as Fall 2023 to implement a new design, remove the current design, or a combination. To replace the current design as part of a normal replacement cycle, there are few (if any) cost impacts.</p>

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<b>11</b>	If this Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting what are the consequences to the Town and to the sponsor(s)? Please be specific on both financial and other consequences?
Response	<p>While it is not possible to predict all debate and possible outcomes, in general if the proposed seal imagery is not approved, the town will continue to utilize for official purposes the image that was introduced in 1951.</p> <p>The sponsor of the original article presented several reasons why the seal should be phased out, and many responses to the committee's survey reflected those concerns.</p> <p>Whether or not a new seal is proposed, the Administration or other Town agencies may advance plans to remove or replace the widely used images based on the current seal. In that case, there will be financial implications. If the Town were to replace/remove the current image based on the estimates developed by Town staff, the cost may be comparable to the estimates provided in response to Question 10.</p>