

## **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: N/A**

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote: 0 – 0 – 0

Date: X, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Cody Jacobs

Secretary

Natick Finance Committee

Finance Committee  
Town of Natick  
Minutes for the meeting of July 20, 2023

Meeting Location: Natick Town Hall, School Committee Meeting Room  
And virtual by Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87641770717>  
Meeting ID: 876 4177 0717  
One tap mobile +19292056099,,87641770717# US (New York)

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.

## AGENDA

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. New Business
  - a. Annual Reorganization - Election of Finance Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
5. Old Business
  - a. DLS Financial Management Review
6. Meeting Minutes
  - a. Minutes for February 1, 2023, March 7, 2023, March 21, 2023, and March 23, 2023
7. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
8. Committee Discussion (for items not on the agenda)
9. Adjourn

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. The chair noted that a quorum was present in person and a few others were online.

## Roll Call

Members present; Note R-denotes members attending remotely

Leona Bessonova - R  
Grace Keeney - R  
[Linda Wollschlager](#)  
Todd Gillenwater  
Richard Pope  
Garth Gayle

Patti Sciarra  
Toby Metcalf  
Kat Monahan  
Cody Jacobs  
Betty Yobaccio  
Dirk Coburn

## **Announcements**

Ms. Wollschlager introduced new members Leona Bessonova and Garth Gayle and welcomed back returning member Kat Monahan.

**Public Comments** - none

## **Annual Reorganization**

Ms. Wollschlager nominated Mr. Jacobs for the position of secretary, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. All present voted yes (12-0-0).

Ms. Wollschlager nominated Mr. Gillenwater for the position of vice chair, seconded by Mr. Coburn. All present voted yes (12-0-0).

Mr. Coburn nominated Ms. Wollschlager for the position of chair, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. All present voted yes (12-0-0).

## **DLS Financial Management Review**

Jaime Errickson, Town Administrator, introduced the report.

[John Townsend](#), Deputy Town Administrator, presented the report. The report covered many aspects of the town's financial operations. Mr. Townsend summarized the findings of the report and then described the action plans the town has in place to address the issues the report identified.

Mr. Coburn asked where the prioritization came from for each task (high, priority, and low)—whether it was from the review from DLS or internally by Natick's finance team. Mr. Townsend explained that it was an internal process to come up with the prioritization ranking.

Mr. Coburn also asked whether many of the "low priority" items were in that category because they were already done and Mr. Townsend confirmed that was correct for some items.

Mr. Gillenwater asked if the internal audit for digitized records was on the low priority list because it isn't likely to happen. Mr. Townsend confirmed that was likely the case. He also confirmed that item was more about document management than finance.

Ms. Monahan asked what the most recently closed month was. Mr. Townsend said it was June.

Ms. Keeney asked whether DLS commented on what they thought was the highest priority. Mr. Townsend said they did not.

Mr. Gayle asked whether the plans to shift the billing for certain items to individual departments was something the finance department thought was a good idea. Mr. Townsend said they haven't had a lot of discussions internally about that and so do not think it is feasible in the near term because it's a large lift, especially for water and sewer. Mr. Errickson said he did think it was a good idea in general but they wanted to make sure they were ready.

Mr. Pope asked whether the update to Munis would speed up the certification process for free cash. Mr. Townsend said that while they don't forecast free cash that he anticipates filing for free cash around September 15, which suggests they might have a certified number by Fall Town Meeting.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if the structure DLS suggests is one that the department thinks it should adopt. Mr. Townsend explained that the department mostly does operate consistently with their suggestions already even if some things need to be "cleaned up" so that the structure in the governing documents matches the actual operation.

Mr. Gillenwater asked about integrating the schools financing into the town finance department and whether that was on the future agenda. Mr. Townsend explained that this issue wasn't covered by the DLS report. He did say that in looking at the workflow with respect to certain things with the schools that it could come up. Mr. Errickson also explained that there are some areas that are already integrated such as the town side handling all payroll.

Ms. Wollschlager asked with regard to the business application manager position proposal if we already had someone centrally who was making sure that each department's applications were the best possible. Mr. Errickson said a lot of the software is very department specific but that this is something he thinks is a good idea long term.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if the assessing team is on board with the idea of an appointed board of assessors. Mr. Errickson said his understanding is that they are.

Mr. Coburn asked if an appointed board of assessors is something that should wait on a potential charter commission to be part of that broader discussion. Mr. Errickson said that may be but that he doesn't have a fully formed opinion yet about whether that should wait for the charter commission or not.

Mr. Gayle asked whether there was a cost-benefit analysis of the items on the list. Mr. Errickson said they very much do for most of the items on the list. Mr. Townsend explained that the items that are high priority are there in part because of the benefit they provide (example, using all the capabilities of MUNIS).

Ms. Wollschlager asked why the assessing staff was singled out in the report as necessary for succession planning. Mr. Townsend answered that while everyone's succession planning was important, making sure we have people with the specialized skills for assessing was very important.

Ms. Keeney asked what specific measures there are to see if the finance department is a good place to work. Mr. Townsend said part of coming up with job descriptions and workflow adjustments will include consulting with each employee about what they need and what they do.

Mr. Errickson said as an administration overall they have done some targeted internal surveys and are looking to ramp up and do more.

Mr. Gillenwater asked whether at some point the public could get a copy of the procedures and policies the finance department follows. Mr. Townsend said that he can't put something out there without running it by the Select Board because they are the primary policy making body of the town.

Mr. Gillenwater asked if there was an existing policy we could see but Mr. Townsend explained that this is a totally new policy manual so there isn't really an existing one to share.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if the town agreed with the DLS philosophy that the consumer should pay the fee for all credit cards. Mr. Errickson answered that it may vary depending on the service involved.

Mr. Gillenwater asked whether there can be more aggressive efforts to take corrective action following annual audits. Mr. Errickson said they have internal procedures in place and are working to clear recurrent audit findings that aren't being addressed.

Ms. Wollschlager asked why implementing better corrective plans following annual audits was assigned just "priority" rather than "high priority." Mr. Townsend explained that there are other projects that need to be done in order to work towards fixing some of the issues in those audits.

Ms. Wollschlager asked whether it is accurate that capital projects got started before securing funding in some instances. Mr. Townsend said that was the case and they are trying to do a better job of educating department heads about when they can start these projects.

Ms. Wollschlager asked whether other towns process abatement work-off programs through payroll as this recommends. Mr. Townsend indicated that they would do that soon but they haven't yet.

Mr. Jacobs asked how they were processed now and Mr. Townsend said that they were considered independent contractors with 1099s.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if there was anything not in the report that should have been. Mr. Errickson explained that nothing specific but just that the report has limits on what it can cover but in general there's always a broader look at improving especially with respect to customer service.

Ms. Monahan asked whether DLS could do this again and if so, when. Mr. Errickson said he didn't know but that this type of outside analysis should happen approximately every 5-10 years.

Frank Foss, Town Moderator said he was happy to hear the report but wanted to know why we have more re-occurring issues and asked the finance committee itself what it was going to do about it, especially since fincom has the ability to audit any department independently of any committee and board of the town.

Several members of the committee agreed with the idea behind Mr. Foss' remarks and suggested future meetings on this topic.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for February 1, 2023, March 7, 2023, March 21, 2023, and March 23, 2023 were discussed.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to approve all the minutes above, seconded by Mr. Metcalf. All members of the committee present voted yes (12-0-0).

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Coburn moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pope. All members present voted yes (12-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.