

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen
Petitions Articles

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

Article # 12	Date Form Completed: 8/22/23
Article Title: Rescind Article 35 of the 2001 Spring Annual Town Meeting	
Sponsor Name: Select Board	Email: selectboard@natickma.org

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	Move to rescind the Town’s acceptance of M.GL. c. 31 Section 58A accepted by Article 35 of the April 2001 Annual Town Meeting which provides a maximum age of 32 years for original appointment to the position of firefighter or police officer
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	This would remove the maximum age limit of 32 years of age for original appointment to the position of firefighter or police officer. The objective is to increase the number of qualified candidates eligible to fill vacancies in the departments.
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	This is original language which was adopted by Town Meeting in April 2001 (Article 35) which decreases the available candidate pool for both police and fire applicants. In today’s current climate, it has become extremely difficult to recruit both police officers and firefighters. Removal of the upper age limit would enable the departments access to an increased candidate pool for vacancies.
4	Describe with some specificity how the sponsor envisions how: the benefits will be realized; the problem will be solved; the community at large will gain value in the outcome through the accompanied motion?
Response	Removal of the upper age limit (32 years old) would allow both departments access to an additional pool of candidates that are currently excluded. Both departments are currently plagued by numerous vacancies and have had to turn away many qualified candidates in the last

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

	year because this law is in place. Allowing the departments access to qualified candidates to fill vacancies will lead to decreased personnel costs (overtime).
5	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations
Response	There is no impact to capital budgeting. The operating budget implication would be positive. Filling of vacancies will help manage overtime expenses. This would be a benefit to both the police and fire departments.

6	Have you considered and assessed, qualified and quantified the various impacts to the community such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Town infrastructure (traffic, parking, etc.) ● Neighbors (noise, traffic, etc.); ● Environment and green issues (energy conservation, pollution, trash, encouraging walking and biking, etc.);
Response	The police department is currently in the process of withdrawing from Civil Service which would address this issue for them long term. The fire department currently remains in Civil Service. This would in the short term help the police (while awaiting full removal from Civil Service) and the fire department long term.
7	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion? To this point what efforts have been made to involve those participants who may be accountable, responsible, consulted or just advised/informed on the impacts of executing the motion?

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

Response	Police and fire departments
8	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process, that ● Appropriate town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held
Response	The article was discussed with the Chiefs, Labor Unions, Town Administrator, and presented to the Select Board to sponsor the article. Select Board voted 5-0 on 8/16/23 to sponsor article.
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	This action is imperative to help the departments fill current vacancies in the departments. Both Chiefs are in agreement that the demand to fill vacancies outpaces the available pool of candidates. This article is intended to increase access to additional candidates that were previously excluded.
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No
11	What are other towns and communities in the Metro West area, or the Commonwealth of MA doing similar to what your motion seeks to accomplish

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen
Petitions Articles

Response	Any community which is not under the jurisdiction of Civil Service does not currently have this restriction in place. There have been other communities in Civil Service which have adopted this law and are or have rescinded their acceptance of this law.
12	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	The departments will continue to struggle to fill vacancies. This impact can be felt both in additional overtime expenses to maintain staffing levels. This will also lead to the need to hire less qualified candidates with the need to invest in additional education/training above and beyond the normal training.