

Article # 32	Date Form Completed: 09/04/2023
Article Title: Paid Family Medical Leave for Town of Natick Employees	
Sponsor Name: Kat Monahan	Email: katmonahan01760@gmail.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	<p>Move that, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law - Part I, Title I, Chapter 4, Section 4 and Massachusetts General Law - Part I, Title XXII, Chapter 175M, Section 10, the Town vote to accept the following Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to Paid Family Medical Leave:</p> <p>M.G.L. Chapter 175M</p>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	<p>The purpose of this Warrant Article is to take advantage of the local option provision of Massachusetts General Laws so that Town of Natick employees may participate in the commonwealth's paid family medical leave program (PFML). The PFML program has been in place since 2019 for all private employers and is a cost-effective way to provide paid family & medical leave to eligible workers in Massachusetts. PFML is funded through a payroll tax and benefits are paid from the state fund, not by the employer.</p> <p>Once the town has adopted the law, the Town of Natick will enact appropriate employee withholding and employer contributions through payroll. Town of Natick employees will have the ability to apply for Paid Family Medical Leave.</p> <p>The 2023 payroll withholding rates for PFML were: Employee withholding: 0.318% of taxable wages Employer withholding: 0.312% of taxable wages</p>

2 Continued	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response Continued	<p>These rates have actually decreased for two consecutive years. For 2023, the total employer contribution for the Town of Natick would have been approximately \$300,000, or 0.312% of the \$96,200,682 salary and wages for FY24.</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-employer-contribution-rates-and-calculator#2023-</p>
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	Sponsor does not personally gain from a positive action on the motion other than general community benefits described in subsequent responses.
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	<p>Benefits will be realized:</p> <p>The town will accept the law. Employees of the Town of Natick will have access to apply for PFML. If an employee's application for PFML is approved by the state, benefits are paid from the state fund, not by the Town of Natick. The Town of Natick will still maintain its current pay and leave policies and obligations.</p> <p>Problem will be solved: Many employees of the Town of Natick are also residents. Acknowledging that they deserve paid leave is a display of care for our community members. It keeps more people in their homes and financially stable. It also provides an incentive in recruiting and retaining the best employees in a competitive market.</p>

4 Continued	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 Continued	Outcomes gained by community: Access to the PFML program will give the Town of Natick a competitive advantage over other communities who do not offer the benefit to all employees. This is a step forward for equity, and Natick has an opportunity to lead the commonwealth by adopting these laws and granting over 1,000 members of our community access to paid family and medical leave.
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	<p>Implementation: Once the Town of Natick has accepted the law, the town’s payroll department will implement the appropriate withholding and employer contributions. For 2023, this would be 0.312% employer liability and 0.318% employee withholding. The town will need to appoint someone within the Human Resources office to be the PFML employer administrator to supply the program with relevant employee information. Estimated administrative time on this would be under 30 minutes per employee leave application. The town may need to create separate accounts if it employs people under different EINs.</p> <p>The Mass.gov site has specific information about required steps and paperwork to be filed, Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) coverage for statutorily excluded employers Mass.gov</p> <p>How to opt-into PFML as municipalities, districts, political subdivisions or authorities</p> <p>As a governing body, you must hold a vote to opt-into PFML under M.G.L. 157M Section 10. Once your vote has been finalized, you will need a notarized letter confirming the vote. In addition to the notarized letter, you will need to complete and submit the DFML's Employer Notice of Election.</p> <p>When the required documentation is complete, you should fill out this form to notify DFML of your request to opt into PFML and submit your Notice of Election. After you have submitted the forms, you will need to create a PFML account through the Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s MassTaxConnect system to make contributions.</p>

5 Continued	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 Continued	<p>Relevant Laws: Massachusetts General Law - Part I, Title I, Chapter 4, Section 4</p> <p>Section 4. Wherever a statute is to take effect upon its acceptance by a municipality or district, or is to be effective in municipalities or districts accepting its provisions, this acceptance shall be, except as otherwise provided in that statute, in a municipality, by vote of the legislative body, subject to the charter of the municipality, or, in a district, by vote of the district at a district meeting.</p> <p>Massachusetts General Law - Part I, Title XXII, Chapter 175M, Section 10, Section 10. A municipality, district, political subdivision or authority may adopt this chapter upon a majority vote of the local legislative body or the governing body. For the purposes of this section, a vote of the legislative body shall take place in a city by a vote of the city council subject to its charter, in a town by a vote at town meeting, for an authority by a vote of its governing body, in a district, by a vote of the district in a district meeting and by any other political subdivision or instrumentality, by a vote of its legislative body in accordance with its charter or enabling act.</p> <p>Comprehensive plan and community values:</p> <p>At Fall Annual Town Meeting 2022, Natick adopted the portions of MGL known as The Brave Act. Positive action on FATM 2022 Article 28 entitled town employees to the same paid leave for military training and deployment that their peers in state government were granted in 2018. Adopting the Brave Act was a step towards equity for our town employees, and we need to continue this journey.</p> <p>If Natick has employees who feel valued and have the peace of mind and economic stability of access to paid leave, the town will experience less employee turnover and better outcomes. It is the right thing to do.</p> <p>Financial and capital plan:</p> <p>The town of Natick will incur additional employer tax liability equivalent to 0.312% of total Massachusetts taxable salary. For comparison, employer Medicare liability is 1.45% of taxable salary and wages.</p> <p>The Fiscal Year 2024 budget had a total payroll expense of \$96,200,683, so the town's PFMLA liability would be \$300,000. To give a benefit like this to 2,000 people - 1,500 FTE in the Natick Public Schools and 400 FTE across the rest of the town for just \$300,000 (or less!) should be an easy choice to make.</p>

Total Salary & Wages pulled from Town Administrators Ammended FY24 Budget			
Dept	FY23 Revised	FY24 Amended	# of FTEs
Natick Public Schools	\$62,000,000	\$65,790,516	1500
Keefe Tech	\$0	\$0	0
Morse Institute Library	\$2,091,327	\$2,120,031	
Bacon Free Library	\$192,744	\$196,071	
PS Emergency Management	\$5,000	\$5,000	
PS Parking Enforcement	\$114,114	\$115,455	
PS Police	\$8,407,402	\$8,001,272	
PS Fire	\$10,597,973	\$10,494,245	
Public Works	\$4,436,691	\$4,791,379	
Community Svc	\$1,620,212	\$1,653,225	
Board of Health	\$664,355	\$633,099	
Board of Selec Salaried	\$1,192,890	\$1,256,845	
Finance	\$1,395,107	\$147,106	
IT	\$329,878	\$408,668	
Town Clerk	\$374,842	\$373,343	
Board of Records	\$99,700	\$73,850	
Weights & Measures	\$31,631	\$32,908	
CED Salaries	\$1,036,784	\$107,670	
			400
Total	\$94,590,650.00	\$96,200,683	1900
PFML Employer Rate	0.336%	0.312%	
PFML Employer Contribution	\$317,825	\$300,146	

6	<p>Have you considered and assessed, qualified, and quantified the various impacts to the community such as:</p> <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	<p>Community impact is minimal but positive. None of the aspects listed apply to the paid leave policy of the town.</p>
7	<p>Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?</p> <p>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?</p>
Response	<p>I am requesting meetings with the town’s HR Director, Payroll Manager, NPS HR Director, and the executive assistant to Select Board.</p> <p>Met with Town Administrator on 08/31/2023. Discussed timeline, motive of article, and need for memoranda of agreement with various municipal unions.</p> <p>I believe the topic has been discussed in previous Finance Committee meetings with the Town Administrator.</p>
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appropriate town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held
Response	<p>Citizen petition process was used. We are having the public hearing at FinCom and Town Meeting. The law requires that we adopt this through a vote at Town Meeting.</p>

9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	It is required that we implement this through a Town Meeting due to the way the law was written. Action on this matter is required in that it is the right thing to do for the people that serve our community and are employed by Natick.
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
Response	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed the law in 2018. Executive department employees can apply for PFML, and in some cases have paid family and medical leave benefits which exceed those of the PFML program.</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/guides/family-and-medical-leave-options-fmla-and-pfml-for-commonwealth-employees</p> <p>To date, no other municipalities have made a local adoption of the law.</p> <p>Since 2019, all private employers have had to comply with this law. It's possible that some current employees of the Town Natick paid into PFML through their wages from previous or concurrent paid positions and are currently exempt from the program.</p>
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	If the Article is not passed, it could potentially erode the confidence, trust, and morale of employees who are living and working in the Town.