

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: April 4, 2023

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:

Made by:

Seconded by:

Vote: 0 – 0 – 0

Date: X, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wollschlager
Chair
Natick Finance Committee

Finance Committee

Town of Natick

Minutes for the meeting of April 4, 2023

Meeting Location: Natick Town Hall, School Committee Meeting Room

And virtual by Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j88324467728>

Meeting: ID88324467728

Passcode: 906139

One tap mobile: +19292056099

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. Town Administrator's FY2024 Budget - Public Hearing
 - a. Information Technology budget
5. 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing
 - a. [Article 2: Committee Article](#)
 - b. [Article 15: Capital Equipment and Improvement](#)
 - c. [Article 24: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Establish Center Gateway Zoning District](#)
 - d. [Article 25: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Use Regulations Schedule](#)
 - e. [Article 26: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Open Space Cluster Development](#)
 - f. [Article 27: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Inclusionary Housing](#)
 - g. [Article 28: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Highway Mixed-Use-I\(HM-I\)](#)
 - h. [Article 29: Amend Zoning Map: Highway Mixed-Use – I\(HM-I\)](#)
 - i. [Article 32: New Town Seal](#)
6. Meeting Minutes
 - a. Draft minutes 9-29-22
 - b. Draft minutes 10-13-22
7. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
 - a. Update on upcoming Committee and Subcommittee meetings
8. Committee Discussion (for items not on the agenda)
9. Adjourn

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Members present; Note R-denotes members attending remotely

Hossam Behery – R
Dirk Coburn
Larry Forshner
Todd Gillenwater
Cody Jacobs
Grace Keeney – R
Toby Metcalf – R (joined at approx. 9 pm)
Richard Pope
Phil Rooney – R (left at approx. 8:50 pm)
Patti Sciarra
Linda Wollschlager
Betty Yobaccio
Daniel Zitnick - R

Announcements - None

Public Comments – None

Motion made by Ms. Sciarra seconded by Mr. Coburn, to open the public hearings for the FY24 Town Administrator’s Budget and the 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Town Administrator's FY2024 Budget

Information Technology Budget

Mr. Rooney reported on the subcommittee discussion with Bob LeFrancois, IT Director, noting the following:

- Around 80-90% of the budget is allocated to support services, including internet switches, network security, and antivirus.
- Munis rollout resulted in increased help calls, attributed to learning curves with the system. The ERP system upgrade is on track for full cutover by March 10.
- Phone system mitigation to the cloud is also on track.
- Google Workspace remains the largest hosted solution; Open Gov and ERP vendor use Amazon Web Services.

- There was a \$38,000 increase for annual vendor support, \$35,000 for new software applications, and \$80,000 for support renewal of existing antivirus and malware.
- Web development funds are now allocated to the communication director's budget for updating and redesigning the town website.
- Staffing challenges were highlighted. There's an initiative for a new IT manager position to reduce operational burden and provide tech support.

Note: Mr. LeFrancois was not present at the meeting. John Townsend, Finance Director, added there is a \$9,000 increase for ClearGov budgeting software and a \$35,000 increase for the First Due Fire Department EMS software. Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator, added that the town received a \$200,000 grant for updating some of our web presence.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the FY24 Information Technology budget of \$2,018,598, seconded by Mr. Behery.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Ms. Wollschlager stated that Articles 24 and 25 would be heard a week from today.

Article 2: Committee Article

Jillian Wilson-Martin, Sustainability Director, and Leo Ryan, Sustainability Committee Chair, spoke about the Net Zero presentation for Town Meeting. They answered questions about green initiatives for housing, emission reductions, public communication efforts, equity for those with limited incomes, stretch codes and challenges. Ms. Wilson-Martin stated that she is a part-time employee, and one challenge is that there is a lot of funding available, but we don't have the capacity to take advantage of it all. Mr. Ryan added that complacency is a problem and highlighted the potential for building "stranded assets" if we do things the way they've always been done. Ms. Wilson-Martin also mentioned the work specifically targeting Natick's environmental justice neighborhoods.

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend hearing and discussing the report from the Sustainability Committee under Article 2, seconded by Mr. Jacobs.

Mr. Rooney moved to recommend hearing the report from the Sustainability Committee under Article 2, seconded by Ms. Keeney. *(not voted)*

Motion to hear and discuss the Net Zero report from the Sustainability Committee was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Article 15: Capital Equipment and Improvement

Motion A

Mr. Jacobs stated that the Capital Subcommittee met twice to discuss the five-year capital plan and individual capital requests for Article 15. One important change is that the vehicle equipment and replacement program allocation is one line item, rather than separate ones for each individual vehicle. This will give the flexibility to accommodate price changes. If one vehicle comes in a little higher, and vehicle another comes in a little lower, the purchases can be made without having to come back to Town Meeting to reallocate the funding. This approach has been cleared with Town Counsel.

Mr. Jacobs highlighted the following items, which aim to enhance infrastructure, security, and water quality standards:

- Significant funding of \$290,000 is allocated for building exterior work, covering various buildings including the public safety building and others in need of upgrades.
- A security consultant's report pointed out serious issues with the town's security systems, such as broken cameras, requiring a \$300,000 allocation for replacements.
- In the water and sewer requests, there is a \$550,000 allocation for the ongoing sewer pump station rehabilitation project.
- Another substantial allocation of \$1.5 million is dedicated to improving water treatment systems to reduce the levels of contaminants like PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), aligning with new EPA standards.

Jon Marshall, Deputy Town Administrator Operations, discussed the stewardship program initiated by Mr. Spratt, which focuses on improving and enhancing facilities in a timely manner. The program includes activities such as exterior envelope repairs, window replacements, and space renewal to maintain and upgrade buildings effectively.

Mr. Marshall went into more detail on the challenges related to the vehicle and equipment replacement program, highlighting the issue of estimating costs. Quotes and estimates are typically valid for only 30 days, and by the time the public works department reviews them in November or December, they are often outdated. We have started refreshing estimates closer to when the funds can be spent, considering potential inflation. The single line item allows us to prioritize purchases based on cost changes and available funds, ensuring essential vehicles are acquired.

Mr. Marshall noted that we have added seasonal PFAS filters to the Tonka portion of our Springvale plant, but we need to have a longer-term plan for a more permanent solution as only 2/3 of our water is filtered.

Mr. Rooney asked if the Sustainability Committee was involved with capital planning. Mr. Marshall said there are frequent conversations, and we look at grant opportunities collectively.

Mr. Rooney asked if projects such as the window replacements could be funded by grants. Mr. Marshall said he needs the authorization first and if grants are available, they will be used.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion A, in the amount of \$1,940,000 from tax levy borrowing, seconded by Ms. Yobaccio.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Motion B

Mr. Zitnick asked if different approaches were considered to address price fluctuations. Mr. Marshall said yes, we did consider things such as adding a separate contingency line, but this approach seemed like the cleanest way for now.

Mr. Gillenwater asked if Town Counsel had an opinion about any limitations on which vehicles are purchased. Mr. Marshall replied that we are not specifying the actual vehicles that we're going to be purchasing.

Mr. Rooney asked if you would be able to move monies around between these projects. Could Recreation and Parks money get moved to Public Works and vice versa? Mr. Marshall said no.

Martin Kessel, Chair of the Open Space Advisory Committee, asked about the funding for South Natick Dam & Grove Park. Mr. Marshall answered this is for some initial conceptual design work for the parks. He envisions that the park enhancement work would likely be a phased approach.

Frank Foss, Town Moderator, asked if the vehicles would go through procurement process, with large purchases approved by the Select Board. Mr. Marshall said yes.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion B, in the amount of \$2,566,200 from free cash, seconded by Mr. Coburn.

Motion was approved 11-0-1, with Mr. Zitnick abstaining due to concerns about taking away the choice for Town Meeting to vote individually on items.

Motion C

Mr. Gillenwater asked about the future cost of filter media, given it's been more expensive and had less lifespan than anticipated. Mr. Marshall said we are considering alternatives. We're looking at the most cost effective and economical material that we can utilize for treatment.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion C, in the amount of \$2,725,000 from water/sewer borrowing, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater.

Motion was approved unanimously 11-0-0. (Mr. Rooney left at approx. 8:50 pm.)

Motion D

Mr. Coburn asked about the distinction between maintenance and enhancements. Mr. Marshall said some examples of enhancement would be fire hydrant replacements and water main repairs.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion D, in the amount of \$285,000 from water/sewer retained earnings, seconded by Mr. Coburn.

Motion was approved unanimously 11-0-0.

Motion E

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion E, in the amount of \$65,000 from golf course borrowing, seconded by Mr. Behery.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0. (Mr. Metcalf joined at approx. 9 pm.)

Motion F

Ms. Keeney asked about the shelf life of the fairway mover which was purchased three years ago. Mr. Marshall said that due to supply chain issues, we don't expect to have the mower for another year, and we typically get four years out of a fairway mower.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 15 Motion F, in the amount of \$105,000 from golf retained earnings, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Article 28: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Highway Mixed-Use-I(HM-I)

Ms. Wollschlager noted that at the March 23 Finance Committee meeting, we discussed Article 28 in depth, but there were not any motions ready for us to review at that time.

Amanda Loomis, Director of Community and Economic Development, described the motions. Motion A is a comprehensive update to Section III-B Highway Mixed Use-I (HM-I) District. The existing bylaw is being deleted and replaced. Motion B updates Section 200 (Definitions), Section IV-B (Intensity Regulations by Zoning District), and Section V-H (Signs and Advertising Devices) of the zoning bylaws. Ms. Loomis noted the Planning Board voted unanimously to support Article 28.

Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator, noted that the motions were reviewed with Town Counsel.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that is difficult for the Finance Committee to do its due diligence when motions are received at the last minute.

Motion A

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 28, Motion A, seconded by Mr. Behery.

Motion was approved 11-0-1, with Mr. Coburn abstaining.

Motion B

Mr. Forshner asked if the change in intensity regulations would have any impact on FAR (floor area ratio) monies received by the town. Mr. Errickson stated that there is some ability for MathWorks to build up further and still be under what has already been purchased under a prior special permit.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 28, Motion B, seconded by Mr. Behery.

Motion was approved 11-0-1, with Mr. Coburn abstaining.

Article 29: Amend Zoning Map: Highway Mixed-Use – I(HM-I)

Note: Article 29 was previously discussed at the March 23 Finance Committee meeting.

Ms. Loomis stated that there were no substantive changes to the map since Article 29 was last reviewed; however, symbols indicating the zoning districts were added.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that we're not actually voting the map you've been shown, we're voting to amend the official zoning map.

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 29, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Article 26: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Open Space Cluster Development

Ms. Loomis stated that this article is in response to the moratorium put in place on the cluster bylaw at 2022 Spring Town Meeting, which was extended at the 2022 Fall Town Meeting. We received the Attorney General's approval for the moratorium just last week. It expires on December 1, 2023.

The article deletes Section III-F in its entirety. The goal is to preserve open space while providing alternative options for housing developments. The new bylaw will allow for cluster development on a smaller portion of a large open space parcel of land while retaining more of its natural state. To provide clarity and direction, the bylaw includes a purpose that is consistent with the Master Plan and the open space and recreation plan.

The bylaw will still require a special permit, but we are increasing the lot area, which was previously set at two acres. If you are in the RSA or RSC districts, you're required to have a minimum of four acres, of which three must be defined as Preliminary Area. If you're in the RSB, there's a minimum of five acres, of which four have to meet the definition for Preliminary Area. The bylaw encourages alternative housing options such as two families, multi-families, townhouses, and cottage dwellings. There is a maximum size limit of 2200 square feet for 25% of the dwelling units created to ensure that the housing is at a smaller scale since they are

clustered together. The units can be placed on a common lot or individual lots, which allows for personalization of units, such as putting up sheds or having a patio.

The previous bylaw had a calculation that did not take out a lot of factors, resulting in more units than the property could reasonably hold. We wanted to make a realistic calculation, but also allow for a slight density bonus because the developers are creating smaller houses and being required to give affordable units.

The developer must create a survey of the land, which identifies any easements, wetlands, vernal pools, and their associated buffers, and riverfront areas that will be removed from the calculation. If the parcel has wetlands, vernal pools, or falls under conservation jurisdiction, it must go to Conservation first for a notice of determination and stormwater management bylaw permit if required. If they do not need to, then they come right to the Planning Board with their land or their survey plan with their calculation.

The Preliminary Area calculation takes into account the total area minus all of the factors mentioned above, including delineated wetlands and associated buffers, non-buildable easements, recorded restriction areas, priority or establish habitat areas, and footprints for structures that remain. A historic structure or a structure that they did not want to remove cannot be counted as open space, so it is considered the preliminary area. From there, 15% is taken away for roads or utilities, which is something the previous bylaw did not do. You would then divide that by 50% of the minimum lot area for that underlying zoning district to yield the number of units. We have run a couple of calculations and it does yield the right amount or just a couple more units.

Ms. Loomis summarized the dimensional requirements: minimum 5,000 square ft lot size, setbacks of 15 ft from the street or other buildings, building height not to exceed 35 ft. Each dwelling unit will have exclusive access to an outdoor area of at least 500 square feet for a yard, patio, or deck. Adjoining walls of attached dwellings can have a zero lot line.

For off-street parking, there is a minimum of one exterior parking space per unit, which does not include garage space. There's also a minimum of one space for every three dwelling units to provide for visitor parking.

Since one of the goals of this article is open space preservation, a minimum of 35% of the Preliminary Area will be preserved open space, permanently protected, in its natural habitat. Native trees over eight inches in diameter, habitat areas, and sloped areas are expected to be preserved. A conservation restriction an agricultural preservation restriction, or a deed restriction, would be required to ensure that the open space was preserved in perpetuity.

Inclusionary housing will comply with the requirements of Section V-J for the creation of the affordable units.

The obsolete cluster zoning district language will be deleted from other parts of the Zoning Bylaws.

Mr. Forshner asked to clarify lot size minimums. Ms. Loomis said under this bylaw, you would have to have a minimum of four acres for RSA and RSC and five acres for RSB.

Mr. Pope asked about how often waivers are used. Ms. Terri Evans, Planning Board member, stated that we have waiver provisions in our bylaws that normally allow a 10% waiver either way, for certain dimensional requirements. We use it very sparingly.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if there are any current projects that this bylaw might apply to. Ms. Loomis said no, although there was a recent project using the existing III-F that the Planning Board recently denied.

Mr. Martin Kessel, Chair of the Open Space Advisory Committee, asked about how this proposal compares to an earlier version which had 50% open space requirements based on total land area. Ms. Loomis said although each project is different, we did decrease it to 35% because we are removing the wetlands, removing the vernal pools, and the easements. If a parcel did not have any constraints, then we would be getting probably less. But if it had more constraints, you would be getting significantly more, because of those areas being in addition to the 35%.

Mr. Kessel asked about the requirement that 75% of the open space be upland or non-wetlands. Can wetlands or easements be included within the conservation restriction? Ms. Loomis stated you can always put a deed restriction on those wetlands. Most of the time, we're going to be seeing deed restrictions rather than conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation restrictions because the state doesn't want to hold small pieces that don't connect. We do require the homeowners association or trust to maintain those areas.

Motion A

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 26, Motion A, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Motion B

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 26, Motion B, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Motion C

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 26, Motion C, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Motion was approved unanimously 12-0-0.

Article 27: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Inclusionary Housing – will be discussed on April 11, 2023.

Article 32: New Town Seal

Members of the Town Seal Review Committee presented: Mia Kheyfetz, Chair, and Josh Ostroff, Clerk.

Ms. Kheyfetz explained that the charge of the Town Seal Review Committee was to work solely on the embosser used to certify documents by the Town. She then provided background on the process that started at the 2020 Fall Annual Town Meeting and took place over the past two and a half years. She highlighted community outreach and methods for procuring feedback. She briefly reviewed the process of selecting a designer, refining the designs, gathering feedback and finalizing the design. After reading a statement by the designer, Sebastian Ebarb, Ms. Kheyfetz highlighted portions of the committee's draft statement - stressing the need to better understand Natick's history, including diverse Indigenous culture through active, meaningful and sustained effort.

Ms. Kheyfetz explained that - if adopted - the new town seal would be used by the Town Clerk with two new embossers to certify all new official documents. Town Administration will decide where else the seal imagery may be used. Any implementations beyond the embossers is beyond the scope of the Town Seal Review Committee. However, Ms. Kheyfetz did provide an overview of possible implementation of the seal imagery around Town. Mr. Ostroff highlighted that some implementations could be free (digital assets) and some costs could rise to \$700,000 to replace visible locations (Town Hall, DPW building and Cole center emblems, street signs, etc.) over several years.

Mr. Ostroff explained that money for the embossers was already in the Town Clerk's budget, so he recommended that the Finance Committee vote no action on Motion C. He also noted that the committee voted unanimously that it be disbanded with the passage of Motion D.

Ms. Sciarra asked why the current town seal is considered offensive. Ms. Kheyfetz explained the history of the seal and many of the inaccuracies of the current image, including the image of a teepee, and how it does not reflect current understanding of the history of Natick's settling. It also depicts an inaccurate power dynamic between a standing White missionary preacher and Indigenous people sitting on the ground. This inaccurate depiction is similar to town seals in other communities like Newton and not unique to Natick. Mr. Ostroff added that this depiction erases the rich culture and history of Indigenous peoples at that time.

Ms. Sciarra asked if the Natick Praying Indian community weighed in on the new seal. Ms. Kheyfetz and Mr. Ostroff explained that they were contacted in the Fall of 2020, but they have not weighed in since. Ms. Kheyfetz said that they had spoken to many other Indigenous people since Fall 2020, but she did not want to speak for all of them at this time, as they gave a variety of opinions.

Mr. Forshner asked if members of the Natick Praying Indians were in favor of erasing images of their ancestors. Ms. Kheyfetz clarified that the committee could not give a monolithic opinion about this issue as individuals have different opinions.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the accuracy of the clothing in the seal. Mr. Ostroff confirmed that it was inaccurate. The member followed up by asking who created the image for the seal in 1951. Both Mr. Ostroff and Ms. Kheyfetz could not remember the artist's name. The member followed up by asking what historical sources were consulted for creating the image. Mr. Ostroff explained that the image is similar to other images of preachers from the mid 19th century. He speculated that it might have been based on these images.

Mr. Metcalf asked how the new seal honors Indigenous people and if the \$700,000 cost to implement the seal townwide could grow over time. Mr. Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator, explained that the \$700,000 is conservative and at the upper end of costs and that it could be anywhere between zero and that number. It depends on how things are phased out over time. The cost is not expected to balloon beyond that \$700,000. Mr. Ostroff explained that, in talking to Indigenous people, the committee heard a strong aversion to the appropriation of Indigenous culture. The committee did hear a range of opinions - with some concerned about erasure and some not wanting anything referring to Natick Nipmuc depicted. For more background, Mr. Ostroff explained that the committee sought out a design that less evoked Natick's industrial and modern era and focused on "bridging" the past and present.

Ms. Sciarra asked what percentage of Natick responded to the survey that decided the final seal image. Ms. Kheyfetz cited 200 respondents who voted for the image, but many efforts were expended to broaden participation. Mr. Ostroff concurred that this was the case.

Motion A

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 32, Motion A, seconded by Ms. Keeney.

Motion was approved 10-1-1, with Mr. Forshner voting no and Ms. Yobaccio abstaining.

Motion B

Ms. Sciarra moved to recommend referral to Sponsor on the subject matter of Article 32, Motion B, seconded by Mr. Metcalf. Referral motion failed 3-9-0.

Dirk Coburn - no

Larry Forshner - no

Todd Gillenwater - no

Cody Jacobs - no

Grace Keeney - no

Toby Metcalf - yes

Richard Pope - no

Patti Sciarra - yes

Linda Wollschlager - no

Betty Yobaccio - yes

Daniel Zitnick - no

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 32, Motion B, seconded by Mr. Jacobs. Motion passed 8-4-0.

Dirk Coburn - yes

Larry Forshner - no

Todd Gillenwater - yes

Cody Jacobs - yes

Grace Keeney - yes

Toby Metcalf - no

Richard Pope - yes

Patti Sciarra - no

Linda Wollschlager - yes

Betty Yobaccio - no

Daniel Zitnick – yes

Ms. Wollschlager said that it was 11:00 pm and we needed to adjourn. The remaining motions for Article 32 would have to be considered later.

Adjourn

Motion made by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater to close the public hearing and adjourn passed unanimously by a vote of 12-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 PM.