

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: October 3, 2023

Town of Natick Finance Committee
Meeting Date: October 3, 2023

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present; R-denotes members attending remotely

Hossam Behery - R (joined at approximately 7:00 p.m.)

Dirk Coburn

Todd Gillenwater

Cody Jacobs

Grace Keeney - R

Toby Metcalf

Kat Monahan

Richard Pope (joined at 6:38 p.m.)

Patti Sciarra

Betty Yobaccio

Linda Wollschlager

Call to Order

Announcements

Public Comments

2023 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing

Motion to open the public hearing on the 2023 Fall Town Meeting Warrant by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. The motion was approved unanimously (9-0-0).

Article 27: Roles and Responsibilities of the Personnel Board

Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator presented Article 27. Mr. Errickson explained that this Article covers changes to the Personnel Board's role and responsibilities. The bulk of these changes are to both reflect current practice and to move their role to more of an advisory role. Mr. Errickson noted that some of the by-law language limits the town's ability to act quickly with respect to getting job descriptions changed and getting job postings out there. That said, there is a strong need for the Personnel Board in an advisory capacity.

Mr. Errickson's view was that many of the functions of the Personnel Board are now handled in house and the by-law should be amended to reflect that reality.

Mr. Errickson walked through the changes as written in the motion. Many of them were to make the by-law consistent with actual practice in terms of the notice being provided to the Personnel Board. Others were to more substantively remove responsibilities that are allocated to the Personnel Board under current by-laws.

Rich Sidney, member of the Select Board, reported that the Select Board had unanimously recommended favorable action on the subject matter of Article 27.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action with respect to Article 27, and to recommend placement on the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Sciarra.

Mr. Coburn explained that he thought this was very well done and certainly reflects current practice so we should do it.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (10-0-0).

Article 28: Appointment Authority for Comptroller, Police Chief, Fire Chief

Mr. Sidney presented on Article 28. He explained that the Select Board had a brief discussion of Article 28 at a previous meeting but that they took no position on it and they do not have a recommendation on it but they believe that there is language in what the Charter and By-Law Review Committee (CBRC) is doing that covers the same topic. Mr. Sidney said he personally did not have a recommendation on it but as long as the CBRC is covering it it does not need to be taken up at Town Meeting.

Kathryn Coughlin, Select Board Member, said that they were waiting to get copies of the actual motions from the CBRC before they would have an actual vote. So their decision to recommend no action didn't have to do with the CBRC.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend no action on the subject matter of Article 28, seconded by Mr. Jacobs.

The committee voted unanimously to pass the motion (10-0-0).

Article 2: Fiscal 2024 Omnibus Budget

Motion A

Mr. [John Townsend](#), Deputy Town Administrator and Finance Director, presented Article 2. Mr. Townsend explained that the funding here comes from new growth. The Town is confident that DOR will approve our number for new growth.

This motion would allocate 70,000 dollars to supplement the budget by adding 35,000 dollars to "Select Board Salaries" for half year funding for a staff person for sustainability initiatives of the town. It would also supplement the shared expenses budget by adding 35,000 dollars to Other Personnel Services. This is to fund a cancer screening initiative for the fire department.

Questions from the Committee

Ms. Monahan asked whether a person was being paid to do the cancer screenings or if we were covering the firefighters' cost. Mr. Townsend said it was a reimbursement being provided to firefighters who are doing this.

Ms. Monahan asked about this being a revaluation year for the town and what that means. Mr. Townsend said that this means that it is a once every five year process where we must reevaluate each property in the town.

Ms. Sciarra asked if the extra money for the sustainability position was adding headcount (a permanent staff position). Mr. Townsend explained that this would be a new full time person on the budget, so yes, it is adding to headcount. Mr. Errickson added that there is a lot of grant writing and grant reporting work right now and this position would support the sustainability coordinator in that work.

Ms. Sciarra clarified that this means we previously had one person (just the sustainability coordinator), but now we would have two. Mr. Errickson indicated that is correct.

Ms. Keeney asked whether the cancer screening was a one time thing or something we would expect every year. Mr. Townsend explained that it's for every five years of seniority for each firefighter but there are always a large portion of the force up for it at a certain five year interval (this year), because this is 10 years from when we started this program.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater.

Mr. Coburn said he was supporting this with enthusiasm because of the great work coming out of sustainability. He added that he hoped that as the capacity becomes more productive that they are able to seek funding for the established directions and missions of the town rather than drive the priorities of the town by the availability of funds.

Ms. Wollschlager agreed that we were potentially letting opportunities go by because we didn't have more support for the sustainability coordinator.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0)

Motion B

Mr. Townsend explained that this was an appropriation of a little over 25,000 dollars to supplement the shared expenses budget in order to acquire tasers for the police department as part of a lease purchase finance agreement.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Gillenwater asked why it looked like we would be spending 1000 dollars per week on tasers? Relatedly, how much do we actually use tasers?

Mr. Townsend explained that this allocation is to replace all the tasers in the entire department. One of the problems we have is the inability of the provider to provide service after three years on a lot of the tasers. The idea is to replace them all and by using the lease-purchase-finance we can include the service as part of the transaction because we are guaranteed they will service them for five years. With regard to how often they are used, he said he did not know

and would have to defer to Chief Hicks.

Mr. Jacobs asked what a lease purchase finance agreement is. Mr. Townsend said it was like a "lease to own" program. At the end of the five year period, we would own them. The lease program also includes service and replacement parts.

Ms. Wollschlager asked what the rationale is for a lease purchase agreement if we only expect this to be a five year lifespan. Mr. Townsend said that if we actually purchased the product, the warranty would be only one year or so as opposed to five years.

Mr. Coburn asked if this proposal was run by town counsel. Mr. Townsend confirmed that it had been reviewed by town counsel and bond counsel.

Ms. Wollschlager asked how this related to the Article 7 motions. Mr. Townsend explained that Article 7 is approving the lease process, but that this is appropriating the first payment. If Article 7 doesn't pass, the money simply wouldn't be expended.

Jon Marshall, Deputy Town Administrator for Operations explained that the individual cost of these was 85.81/month, per unit, over a sixty month term.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved that the committee recommend favorable action with respect to Motion B of Article 2, seconded by Ms. Sciarra.

Mr. Coburn explained that we need to make sure we have appropriate equipment for our police force. He also explained that he was concerned that requiring a purchaser to go to leasing to get an extended warranty seems to him like a violation of antitrust laws.

Ms. Monahan added that she was not surprised the taser industry could be colluding to make prices high.

Mr. Pope added he would reluctantly support this because he agreed with the concerns about the industry.

Mr. Jacobs added that he hoped the legislature might take action on this issue to help make the pricing a little lower.

Ms. Wollschlager agreed with previous speakers that this seemed a little expensive but that she was going to support it to protect our public safety employees.

The committee voted 10-1-0 to pass the measure. The vote was as follows:

Hossam Behery - Yes
Dirk Coburn - Yes
Todd Gillenwater - Yes
Cody Jacobs - Yes
Grace Keeney - Yes

Toby Metcalf - Yes
Kat Monahan - No
Richard Pope - Yes
Patti Sciarra - Yes
Betty Yobaccio - Yes
Linda Wollschlager - Yes

Article 5: Stabilization Funds

Mr. Townsend presented Article 5. He explained that this would allocate money from new growth to supplement the general stabilization fund and the capital stabilization fund.

Mr. Townsend explained that this would put the general stabilization fund back to the minimum target they want it to be at.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Gillenwater asked where we were on our targets for capital stabilization. Mr. Townsend explained that we don't have a set target for that stabilization fund.

Mr. Behery asked what the value is of the general stabilization fund and where we are in comparison to how much we had in that fund before COVID. Mr. Townsend said right now the balance of the general stabilization fund is 2,919,211 dollars, projected balance after this appropriation would be 3,420,415 dollars. He said he did not have the 2019 amounts in front of him but that he could get them to the committee.

Mr. Coburn asked when this new growth was certified. Mr. Townsend said it hadn't been certified yet but it has been submitted to DOR.

Mr. Coburn asked, if these measures go through, what will remain of the new growth for appropriation. Mr. Townsend said that was about 54,000 dollars.

Ms. Sciarra asked, are we going to see the remaining 1.1 million dollars of new growth later or if it was already appropriated. Mr. Townsend explained that we already appropriated it in spring and this is excess new growth we are dealing with in this motion.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Gillenwater, seconded by Mr. Metcalf moved for favorable action on the subject matter of Article 5.

Mr. Gillenwater explained that he was always in favor of supporting the stabilization funds and was glad to hear that the general stabilization fund was nearing the town's target.

The committee passed the motion unanimously (11-0-0).

Article 6: PEG Access and Cable Related Fund

Mr. Townsend presented Article 6. He explained that this was to allocate fees that have been collected from cable users that are passed on to us in order to fund the pegasus access channel programming.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Coburn asked if we heard this tomorrow would there be more money. Mr. Townsend said that was possible. A couple of the funds are due at the end of September and it does take time to get those checks in. But he didn't think it was very likely.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved that we recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Article 6 with the motion as presented tonight, seconded by Mr. Behery.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Article 7: Capital Equipment and Improvement

Mr. Marshall presented Article 7.

Motion A

This motion dealt with funding for several capital items including HVAC upgrades, park and rec renovations, vehicle replacement, roadway and sidewalk supplemental funding, and fixing a booster pump in the water system.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Jacobs asked whether it was okay to vote for items funded by water/sewer borrowing at the same time as things funded by tax levy borrowing. Mr. Marshall said they hadn't done it that way in the past but that they checked with Town Counsel and it was allowed so this just makes it more efficient.

Mr. Coburn noted a minor error in the motion text where a zero was missing from the total appropriation. Mr. Marshall said he would correct it.

Ms. Keeney asked about the street sweeper and sanitation truck about how they were both from 2017 or 2018 and she wanted to know if the life expectancy for those was normal. Mr. Marshall explained that the street sweeper in particular deteriorates quickly because of the nature of its use. He also added that due to supply chain issues, it will take over a year before they actually get a replacement vehicle. With respect to the sanitation truck, it is similar where there is a lot of wear and tear on it with the type of use it gets and, again, very long supply chains.

Ms. Keeney asked whether the costs were subject to change. Mr. Marshall said they do get quotes leading up to Town Meeting but until we actually execute an agreement, the quote can change.

Mr. Coburn asked if Mr. Marshall could unpack the road and sidewalk supplement and what that does. Mr. Marshall said that the roadway and sidewalk supplemental is tied to the five year roadway and sidewalk plan. This funding will allow us to tackle a year of that plan, but this is only a portion of that funding because there is also Chapter 90 funding from the state. This is planned out a few years in advance.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if this has been run by the public works department as to whether we can spend the 2.5 million being allocated for roadway and sidewalks. Mr. Marshall explained that Town Meeting would be authorizing this borrowing but the actual borrowing wouldn't happen unless we were ready to move forward with a project.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action with respect to the subject matter of Article 7, Motion A, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Motion B

Motion B relates to items that we are using capital stabilization funding for. It includes miscellaneous items such as a firewall replacement project through the schools, a street acceptance preparation plan, and more vehicle replacement funding.

Ms. Keeney asked where the pedestrian warning beacons this proposes funding would be placed. Mr. Marshall explained that they are working through a backlog of locations that have already been approved by the Select Board and the Safety Committee. He didn't have the exact locations in front of him but said that he would get that for Town Meeting.

Ms. Keeney asked if the street acceptance preparation plan was for a consultant. Mr. Marshall explained that this funding would be used to prepare survey work if a street reaches that stage in the street acceptance process recently approved by the Select Board.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs moved that we recommend favorable action on Article 7, motion B, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Motion C

Motion C is related to the tasers that are being funded as part of the omnibus budget but the authorization for the total amount for the tasers needs to come in this motion under the law. Mr. Marshall noted that the unit cost of 85 he quoted earlier was a little higher than the actual cost because of a discount that actually puts it at 71 dollars. There is software tied to this that is also included in the price.

Mr. Townsend explained that the Select Board would also be voting on this tomorrow night.

Mr. Jacobs asked whether this motion actually authorizes borrowing of this amount so that the administration would not have to seek funding for this later. Mr. Marshall confirmed that was

correct.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Pope moved that we recommend favorable action on Article 7, motion C as presented tonight, seconded by Mr. Coburn.

Mr. Pope explained that this explanation was a little less concerning than it seemed when we discussed this earlier. It allows our police to do their work with the safety of our citizens in mind so he supports it.

Mr. Coburn agreed and appreciated the service and monitoring aspects of what this would provide.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Article 25: Charter Changes

Paul Griesmer, chair of the Charter and By-Law Review Committee presented on behalf of the committee.

Changes to the Amendments (Motions)

The committee and Mr. Griesmer agreed after some discussion that these "motions" are actually properly styled as "amendments" since what each would do is amend the main motion under Article 25 by adding to the petition to the legislature for a charter change.

Mr. Griesmer explained that he wanted to highlight changes since he last spoke to us:

Amendment C

There were some changes to clarify the quorum requirement for Town Meeting that it would be the smallest whole number greater than fifty percent of the sum of the total number of representative town meeting members currently sitting.

Amendment E

The text was altered to empower the moderator to create procedures to contact town employees without having to have a by-law authorizing that first.

Mr. Coburn wanted to understand whether this would still allow Town Meeting to pass a by-law compelling the moderator to do this. Mr. Griesmer said that it would.

Amendment G

This one was altered to make it clearer that the words “excluding Town Moderator” were an addition rather than something in the existing charter.

Amendment J

This amendment was altered to further emphasize that no omission of a review of a town administrator would be an impediment to the removal of a town administrator. Mr. Griesmer said this was suggested by committee counsel because of a concern that reviews are always “soft pedaled” and that without this language an incumbent town administrator could theoretically say that they had no notice that they might be fired.

Amendment M

This was adjusted to make changes to gender and the title of the Town Administrator (to Town Manager and neutral pronouns) in Article 5.

Amendment N

There was a change here to make sure it clarified that the charter and by-laws would take precedence over any reorganization instead of just the by-laws. It also added language that the Town Administrator can create new or abolish existing positions without advance notice or approval of the Select Board but must report those changes to the Select Board within 30 days.

Amendment P

This changes the language about the length of the Town Administrator’s appointment to make it where the Select Board could appoint a Town Administrator for a term not to exceed 3 years, but by a vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Select Board could go up to 5 years. Mr. Griesmer explained that this was a compromise that allowed for an extended term for an exceptional candidate but did not make that the default.

Mr. Sidney added that the board discussed this issue at length. They wanted to remove the minimum length of the contract because they could see some conditions where they might want a shorter contract than three years. They also wanted to keep the ability to go to five years and we got a special act from the legislature allowing us to go to five and we didn’t want the charter to take that away from us. The Select Board never took a vote on the supermajority proposal, but to Mr. Sidney it does make sense.

Ms. Coughlin asked whether there were discussions with outside counsel about the terms of Police Chief and Fire Chief which were five years. She also asked whether with a five member board $\frac{2}{3}$ would be $\frac{4}{5}$.

Mr. Griesmer said that the fire and police issue was discussed with special counsel. He said these appointments are a “dramatically different character” because their reviews happen in private and are more candid. Therefore, not requiring a supermajority vote for the contracts in those cases to go longer made sense to the committee.

Mr. Griesmer agreed that $\frac{2}{3}$ would operate as $\frac{4}{5}$ in this case.

Ms. Coughlin reminded the committee that the town went through an extensive year and a half process to get rid of one of those chiefs even though the evaluation there was not done in public. So it is incorrect to say that a chief can be easily dismissed. Mr. Griesmer disagreed.

Paul Joseph, Select Board Member, clarified that the Select Board never said that the supermajority requirement was reasonable.

Bruce Evans, Chair of the Select Board, emphasized that we did not take a vote on this but that he thinks, in his individual opinion, it is a good compromise. He thought it would take an exceptional candidate to go for a five year contract.

Amendment P

Mr. Griesmer explained that Town Counsel suggested adding the language “notwithstanding any law to the contrary” to some points. The idea was to make sure this wasn’t inconsistent with statutes the town had already opted into.

Amendment Q

This change just clarifies that the potential special counsel appointment for elected officials applies to all elected officers and boards and committees in Article 3.

Hearings and Debate on the Amendments

The committee agreed to consider the amendments tonight despite the possibility that there could be changes after a Town Counsel review tomorrow.

Amendment A

Amendment A would change the title of Town Administrator to Town Manager.

Ms. Keeney asked why the reference to lowercase and uppercase letters exists here rather than the charter being uniform. Mr. Griesmer explained that it was used differently in different parts so this was to make sure all references were covered.

Ms. Sciarra asked why it says “moved” instead of “move” for the amendment text. Mr Griesmer agreed that it should say move and that they would change it.

Mr. Pope asked whether this change would cause any conflict with the existing contract or status of anyone. Mr. Griesmer said no, because you can’t have a by-law in conflict with state law and it would not invalidate a contract.

Mr. Coburn moved, seconded by Mr. Metcalf for favorable action on the subject matter of Amendment A.

Mr. Jacobs explained that he was supportive of many of the things being proposed by the CBRC, but that he had some concerns about the process. He noted that when the Moderator came before Town Meeting to sponsor the Article that created the CBRC he was specifically

asked about the scope of the work and whether it would be a wholesale substantive re-working of the charter or more small scale administrative changes and the Moderator indicated that while the CBRC could propose any changes, that typically in the past they have done the latter and that he would expect a Charter Commission to handle bigger re-working of the Charter. Mr. Jacobs said that he thought there was a reason that big changes don't usually happen through the CBRC because Town Meeting is ill equipped to "reform itself." Instead, in Mr. Jacobs' opinion, the appropriate vehicle for larger reforms is a Charter Commission, which would be independently elected by the voters. Mr. Jacobs emphasized that he agreed with the CBRC's recommendations for the most part and appreciated their work but didn't want people to think it was inconsistent with also going for a Charter Commission.

Mr. Griesmer responded that the language in the charter directs the Charter and By-Law review committee to make any recommendations the committee deems desirable and based on this charge, the committee reviewed everything closely and stated that anything and everything that can be done by a commission can be done by a special act. He also said the committee looked at every recommendation by the government study committee.

Mr. Griesmer added that one thing that a Charter Commission cannot do is reform a Town Meeting and change the way that it functions because to do that you have to look at things beyond the Charter such as the by-laws and Town Meeting's rules.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment B

Amendment B would change the way vacancies are filled at Town Meeting. It would involve the Moderator in that process since the Town Clerk, who currently runs this process, is no longer an elected position and we should have an elected official involved in this.

Questions from the Committee

Ms. Keeney asked how the Moderator feels about this change in responsibilities. Mr. Griesmer said that the current moderator is okay with it.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action on Amendment B, seconded by Ms. Sciarra.

Mr. Coburn argued that this needs to happen because of the change to an appointed Town Clerk and that this is consistent with the CBRC's job of having things make sense as a whole in light of changes we have made in other areas.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment C

This motion would change the quorum requirement at Town Meeting to be fifty percent plus one of the total number of representative town meeting members currently in office.

Mr. Joseph asked whether all the things we are voting on need a special act of the legislature to take effect or if there is an alternative methodology. Mr. Griesmer said that the Article is for a Special Act and a Special Act only.

Mr. Joseph asked if the Finance Committee is going to discuss the actual motion. Ms. Wollschlager explained that right now we are just looking at the individual pieces until we have more clarity about how we can review the underlying motion based on what will happen at Town Meeting.

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action on the subject matter of Amendment C with the change indicated in redline in the version presented tonight, seconded by Ms. Sciarra.

Mr. Coburn said that he thought of this as a proactive reform but that this was needed because he had the experience of waiting a while for a quorum to arrive and therefore saw the wisdom of this simple amendment.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment D

This deals with making clear that valid citizen petition warrant articles go into the warrant. It also makes it clear that town boards and committees sponsoring warrant articles to only include multi-member bodies created by law and given a specific responsibility.

Questions from the Committee

Ms. Wollschlager asked if the Moderator was amenable to the format that the committee was using for the amendment. Mr. Griesmer said that he was and that this is an approach the General Court is very familiar with.

Mr. Coburn asked whether this would impact the Town Administrator and Superintendent's ability to propose a warrant article. Mr. Griesmer said it would not.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs moved that we recommend favorable action with respect to Amendment D, seconded by Mr. Metcalf.

Ms. Wollschlager explained that she was a little hesitant about it at first because she thought it might allow a flawed petition to go through but after reviewing it, concluded that it wouldn't really do that so she supported it.

The committee unanimously approved the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment E

This deals with the attendance requirement for town agencies at town meeting. This gives the moderator discretion to require them to appear when needed and allows flexibility for the

moderator to allow them to appear in different ways.

After Ms. Keeney pointed out some inconsistencies in the amendment language, Ms. Wollschlager decided that we should defer this one to another day.

Amendment F

This deals with preliminary elections and adds a provision that if the state creates something that allows ranked choice voting, we won't have to do preliminaries or amend the charter.

Mr. Coburn asked whether it's true that depending on how the state creates that capability, we may have to accept a law that they've passed for ranked choice voting to go into effect here. Mr. Griesmer agreed and said that's why it only becomes effective if Natick accepts it.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, moved for recommending favorable action on Amendment F.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment G

This amendment makes it clear that there is a separation between the executive and the administrative side of the government by making it clear that the Select Board cannot require the Moderator or Finance Committee members to appear in front of them.

Mr. Coburn, seconded by Ms. Sciarra, moved to recommend favorable action on Amendment G.

Mr. Coburn noted we discussed this at length at a previous meeting and that while he is still wrestling with how this might apply in specific situations, he appreciated and supported the principle of separation of powers.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment H

This amendment would have the recreation and parks commission, which is advisory, advise not only the town administrator, but also the Select Board itself, recognizing that the Select Board is the policy authority.

Mr. Jacobs moved to recommend favorable action with respect to Amendment H, seconded by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Coburn added that this reflects current practice as he has observed it.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0)

Amendment I

This amendment authorizes the appointment of a deputy moderator to preside over town meeting in the absence of the moderator. This would fix a current problem that the charter has no one who would become moderator in the event that the moderator had to step away.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Pope asked whether the Deputy Town Moderator could take over in the absence of a specific direction from the Town Moderator. Mr. Griesmer said if the Moderator fell ill that the Deputy Town Moderator would take over automatically.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action with regard to Amendment I, seconded by Ms. Sciarra.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment J

Mr. Griesmer explained that this clarifies that the Select Board has the power to make policies for the town. This makes it clear that the Select Board's policy authority extends to all town departments under it. It also removes "bizarre" language that limits the Select Board to "broad policy guidelines" which Mr. Griesmer said they are not aware exists anywhere else in the commonwealth. Mr. Griesmer explained that this strengthens and clarifies the Select Board's role.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Coburn asked if any of the Select Board members in attendance have any thoughts on this, including if the Select Board has taken a position. Mr. Sidney said the board had not explicitly discussed this provision but that there was some consensus that it was a good idea.

Ms. Coughlin added that the Select Board is interested in discussing whether or not we want to be directly involved in the hiring of the fire and police chief.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Metcalf, moved to recommend favorable action with respect to Amendment J.

The committee voted unanimously to pass the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment K

This deals with the removal of the Town Administrator. It changes the requirement to do this to a majority vote with a requirement of notice to all members instead of the current rule which

requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote and the presence of all members.

Mr. Jacobs asked if the Select Board endorsed this motion. Mr. Sidney said there have been discussions but no formal votes.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, moved that we recommend favorable action with respect to Amendment K.

Ms. Wollschlager said she was a little uncomfortable with it being a majority instead of four votes but the failsafe in terms of what it takes to remove a Town Administrator reassures her and she is going to support this.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion (11-0-0).

Amendment L

This amendment allows the Select Board by a majority vote to appoint a Town Manager to serve for a term of not more than 3 years, but up to 5 with a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote.

Ms. Sciarra asked if part C should be gender neutral. Mr. Griesmer confirmed that it should but in looking at that there were a few more issues with the language and the chair decided we should look at this one tomorrow.

Amendment M

This one does the most fixes with respect to gender—making things gender neutral throughout the charter. It also makes it clear that even though Administrator appointments usually become effective in 15 days, there are others that require an affirmative vote of the Select Board. Finally, it makes the Personnel Board advisory.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend favorable action on Amendment M with scrivener's errors corrected, seconded by Mr. Jacobs.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment N

This is the one that primarily provides a third mechanism for re-organizing town agencies by allowing the Town Administrator to make those changes subject to it being codified in a by-law within two years.

Mr. Gillenwater moved that we recommend favorable action on Amendment N, seconded by Mr. Pope.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment O

This deals with the provisions dealing with the comptroller, assistant comptroller, and other positions that the committee is recommending moving out of the charter because the detailed descriptions of these jobs belong in a job description rather than the Charter.

Motions and Debate

Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater moved to recommend favorable action with respect to Amendment O.

Ms. Keeney praised the CBRC in general for all of its work on these items.

The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Amendment P

Amendment P does a number of things. Mr. Griesmer said the Select Board asked to take out the appointments of the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, and other appointments to have appointments be made by the Select Board or the Town Manager, with the Town Manager appointments subject to Select Board approval.

Mr. Sidney said that the Select Board has taken no votes. The idea of moving the appointment of the two chiefs and the comptroller was first raised during a joint meeting with the CBRC and during the working group there was substantial discussion about moving the comptroller to the Town Administrator but they decided by consensus that this was a bad idea. He added that there was some agreement that moving the chiefs was a good idea but there is some question among board members about whether that's really what they want.

Ms. Coughlin added that at their joint meeting on July 10 they did discuss this. The working group she noted had only met for three hours. Her personal opinion was that while it is important to move some appointments to the town administrator, the Police Chief and Fire Chief are unique and those don't happen every year and don't take up too much time. As an elected body, the Select Board should be held accountable for the Fire Chief and Police Chief.

Ms. Wollschlager suspended discussion on this issue until our next meeting.

Mr. Coburn moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. The motion passed unanimously (11-0-0).

Adjourn

Motion by Mr. Coburn to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater. The motion was approved unanimously (11-0-0). The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 p.m.