



## 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: February 6, 2014**

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:	Approval
Made by:	Mr. Pierce
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Vote:	11-0-0
Date:	February 11, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

James Everett  
Secretary  
Natick Finance Committee

**NATICK FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**February 6, 2014**

**Natick Town Hall  
School Committee Meeting Room, Third Floor**

This meeting has been properly posted as required by law.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jonathan Freedman, Chairman	Michael Ferrari
Karen Adelman Foster	Patrick Hayes
Jimmy Brown	Mark Kelleher
John Ciccariello	Jerry Pierce
Catherine M. Coughlin	Christopher Resmini
Bruce Evans, Vice Chairman	Edward Shooshanian
James Everett, Clerk	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mari Barrera  
Cathleen Collins

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Agenda for this evening's meeting
- B. Town of Natick Finance Committee FY 2015 Budget and FY 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting Public Hearing Schedule – February 5, 2014 Update
- C. Natick Police Department Crime Report – For the Year of 2013
- D. Police Department Overtime FY 2010 – FY 2014 YTD
- E. Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program – Participating Agencies FY2014
- F. Police dept. certification offers benefits
- G. 2013 YTD Significant CAD Temporal Analysis
- H. DRAFT Meeting Minutes: February 4, 2014 Public Safety Subcommittee Meeting
- I. Replacement Budget Book pages IV.27-IV.39: Fire Department, *Revised February 6, 2014*
- J. Replacement Budget Book pages VII.43-VII.48: Information Technology Department, *Revised February 6, 2014*
- K. Replacement Budget Book pages VII.49-VII.54: Town Clerk & Elections Departments, *Revised February 6, 2014*

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Freedman at 7:05 p.m.

The Chairman reviewed the evening’s agenda and the materials included in the handouts.

**PUBLIC CONCERNS/COMMENTS:**

None

**MEETING MINUTES:**

Mr. Freedman turned the floor over to Mr. Everett to chair discussion of Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Everett referred the members to draft Minutes of the Public Safety Subcommittee’s February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting which had been distributed previously via email. He advised that four of the members present were eligible to vote these Minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. There were none.

A motion was made, at 7:09 p.m., to approve the Minutes of the February 4, 2014 Public Safety Subcommittee as written.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Pierce
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	4 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Hearing Schedule Changes:**

Mr. Freedman referred the members to an updated Finance Committee hearing schedule in the meeting packet (Attachment B) noting that the hearing on the Board of Selectmen budget was now scheduled for February 11<sup>th</sup> and the Reserve Fund budget would be heard on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

Ms. Coughlin advised that the Public Safety Subcommittee had not conducted a preliminary hearing on the Water & Sewer Enterprise budgets which would be heard at the Finance Committee’s next meeting and asked that any members with questions on these budgets forward them to her and she would communicate them to the department management in preparation for the hearing.

Mr. Hayes announced that the Community Services, Committees & Technology Subcommittee would meet at the Community-Senior Center at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, to review the Community Services and Sassamon Trace Enterprise budgets.

**Public Hearing – FY 2015 Proposed Budget:**

**Police:**

Mr. Freedman welcomed Natick Chief of Police James Hicks and Sergeant Leo Fitzpatrick to the podium to present information regarding the proposed FY 2015 budget for the Police Department.

Chief Hicks referred the members to information included in the handouts relating to department activity and data requested during the preliminary meeting with the Public Safety Subcommittee.

Sgt. Fitzpatrick presented an overview of the proposed budget as detailed in the Budget Books highlighting the following:

- Staffing will be increased by two FTE’s in FY 2015 with the addition of one patrol officer and one full-time dispatch position.

- Salary and overtime budgets reflect contractual increases of 2%.
- In addition to the two new positions, Program Improvement Requests (PIR) for \$2,000 to cover maintenance costs of critical Motorola equipment coming off warranty and \$12,000 to fund consultant support for the departmental accreditation effort were approved by Town Administration and included in the proposed FY 2015 budget.
- No funding for an Assessment Center is included in the FY 2015 request as the relevant examination is offered every two years. This projected \$36,000 expense is expected to be included again in the FY 2016 budget.
- The addition of the full-time dispatcher is expected to reduce overtime expense in this area as well as increase flexibility in scheduling, training and deployment of existing dispatch personnel.

Ms. Coughlin reported that the Public Safety Subcommittee had voted unanimously to recommend this budget as presented.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- The addition of the patrol officer is not expected to reduce overtime use significantly since the primary objective is to facilitate greater focus on investigation and interdiction of narcotics activity within the town and related collaboration with regional and federal partners.
- Increased security requirements associated with the 2014 Boston Marathon are expected to add to overtime costs. It is hoped that state and federal reimbursement will be available to assist in funding these additional costs. The Boston Athletic Association (BAA) has traditionally provided funding to towns along the marathon route and, in past years, this funding has generally exceeded the town’s incremental expenses.
- The department is very aggressive in seeking grant funding for various department activities. Every opportunity identified is pursued and successive applications made when initial efforts are not successful.
- Although the Chief continues to support the addition of a Deputy Chief position to the department roster, this position was viewed as a lower priority than those put forward for funding in the proposed FY 2015 budget.
- The accreditation process will focus on expansion and update of the department’s policies and procedures, many of which have not been updated for as many as thirty years and establish best practices within the department. The assistance of consulting support is expected to both accelerate and increase the efficiency of the developmental process and eventual onsite evaluation.
- It is anticipated that town funding will eventually be needed to maintain the K9 unit when grant funding is no longer available. Ongoing costs are not expected to be as high as the start-up costs which have been covered by the current grants.

A motion was made, at 7:52 p.m., to move favorable action on the amount of \$6,607,169, \$6,390,831 for Salaries, \$208,838 for Operating Expenses and \$7,500 for Other Charges & Expenditures, as printed on page IV.9 of the Budget Books, for the FY 2015 Police Department budget.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Everett
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Motions or Debates:	1. Mr. Everett said the Subcommittee Minutes reflected the good meeting held with the Police department and the valuable

	<p>discussions which had taken place. He said the focus had been on the changes being proposed and the notes documented the answers which had been provided to questions raised regarding the new positions being proposed and questions regarding overtime. Noting the increased focus planned for investigation of drug-related issues and the resulting benefits that is anticipated to have on other crime within the community he said he felt the additional officer position was appropriate. With respect to the additional dispatcher position, he said the point had been made that it was often difficult to schedule needed training or coverage for vacation, sick and other time off due to the commitments of part-time staff to other employment, and the addition of a full-time position was expected to address that problem. Lastly, he said the accreditation process would help to bring the department up to the standards of best practices within the field noting that 30 years was a long time to have policies in place without review and update. He said the Subcommittee had all agreed that this budget was well presented and well thought out and he recommended approval.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ms. Coughlin said she agreed with the previous speaker’s comments and highlighted a comment made by the Chief during the subcommittee meeting that he would at all times prefer to spend other people’s money before spending the town’s and she endorsed that view. In addition, she said the information provided to explain the need for the additional officer was a serious issue and an eye-opener for all town residents.</li> <li>3. Mr. Pierce thanked the Chief for the presentation and for reassuring the community that the town had a comprehensive and progressive public safety program in place and for making all feel well protected by this department.</li> <li>4. Mr. Freedman agreed with the previous comments and said he had anticipated there would be considerable discussion regarding the two new positions but it was evident that the collaborative and thorough discussion at the Subcommittee meeting and the subcommittee’s ability to report that back to the full Committee was beneficial in contributing to an efficient and comprehensive review of this budget. He said he felt the case had been well stated and justified and he was pleased to note that the Chief was thinking holistically in setting priorities for managing the department and clearly put the best interests of the community ahead of his own. He said he believed these were the right priorities and he was in full support of this budget.</li> </ol>
Vote:	13 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Fire:

Mr. Freedman welcomed Acting Fire Chief Rick White and Mr. Jeff Towne, Director of Finance, to the podium.

The members were referred to replacement Budget Book pages (Attachment I) containing updates to the proposed FY 2015 budget for the Fire Department. Mr. Towne reviewed the changes which, he noted, increased the total for these budgets by \$18,606, as the following:

- Wage line items were modified to reflect minor adjustments including reduction in FLSA costs of \$2,000.
- Supervisory and Operational Staff Overtime increased by \$19,428 as a result of reinstating the dive team and one person being on the technical rescue team.
- Dues and subscriptions were increased by \$1,200 due a rise in cost of one association.

Acting Chief White and Mr. Towne provided a brief overview of the proposed budget highlighting the following:

- Reinstatement of the department's dive team, suspended earlier due to financial constraints, was authorized by the Selectmen in the summer; however no additional funding to cover the monthly training needed to get the team up and running was included in the FY 2014 budget. Additional training was required in conjunction with the participation of one firefighter in a regional technical rescue team. These items have added to department overtime costs.
- The firefighters' contract is the only one not yet ratified and therefore no funding for cost of living adjustments is included in the FY 2015 budget projections. Potential funding is presently included in the Selectmen's budget and the hope is the contract will be ratified before Town Meeting begins and the associated funding can be transferred from the Selectmen's to the Fire Department budget.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- Overtime usage is being closely monitored with monthly usage data reviewed by Town Administration. The current projection is that the FY 2014 overtime budget will be exceeded by approximately \$100,000 requiring transfer of supplemental funding. There was a request to receive further detail regarding where the overtime costs were incurred when a transfer request is presented.
- Although the department received funding in the FY 2014 budget to hire five new firefighters, the lengthy hiring process and training requirements have delayed full deployment of these additional personnel for most of the current fiscal year, necessitating that overtime has been required to maintain minimum staffing levels with a total of nine firefighters out for a minimum of 30 days during the past year, and some for as long as 4.5 months due to injuries.
- A question was raised regarding the status of turnout gear replacement. Follow up clarification on this was requested.
- Performance indicator statistics included in the Budget Books appear to be inaccurate. These will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- The acting chief has not explored alternative staffing models but would be receptive to exploring any alternatives which would not jeopardize the safety of the town's residents.
- The town is currently funding the salaries of a department Chief as well as the acting Chief with an incremental cost of approximately \$90,000 in the current fiscal year.
- Additional staffing will be required in conjunction with the April 2014 Boston Marathon. It is hoped funding from the BAA will offset the incremental expense.
- Grant funded CPR training for the town's high school students and faculty is nearly complete.
- Although the acting Chief is not confident the proposed FY 2015 overtime budget, which is only \$20,000 higher than FY 2014, will be sufficient, this complies with the

Administration’s instructions to present a level-funded budget request, and it is hoped the five additional personnel will be fully trained and available for deployment to reduce the need for overtime in FY 2015.

- Ms. White noted that the instructions to level fund the overtime was a conservative approach and not only reflected the hopeful reduced need because of the new fire fighters but would ensure more scrutiny during the year.=

A motion was made, at 8:54 p.m., to move favorable action on the amount of \$7,531,589, \$7,311,239 for Salaries and \$220,350 for Operating Expenses, as printed on *February 6, 2014 revised* page IV.27 of the Budget Books, for the FY 2015 Fire Department budget.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Ciccariello
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Motions or Debates:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noting that the budget proposed for FY 2015 was relatively flat, Mr. Ciccariello said he was shocked by the overtime number projected for the current year with the additional amount related to the fire chief’s situation; nevertheless, he understood the issues involved and hoped some ways could be found to reduce these costs going forward. He reminded all that programs had been cut under recent fiscal constraints and it had been hoped that elimination of five firefighter positions would save money, but that didn’t happen because the money was spent in overtime. He was glad to see the five positions now reinstated, and soon to be fully functional, and he hoped this would provide the Chief some operational flexibility. He was also happy to see the dive team back as he had always felt that to be a very important part of this department’s services. He said the point was that all of the town’s public safety departments were getting increasingly stressed as the town continued to grow, with a substantial number of additional housing units coming online – and more to come – most of which were rental units, which he believed placed a greater burden on these services than single family dwellings. He encouraged looking at ways to do things differently and said he had seen some good things in the past six months and expected more to continue.</li> <li>2. Ms. Coughlin said she thought the acting Chief had provided valid explanations and reasons for the overtime costs and said she looked forward to seeing how these costs were affected as the additional firefighters came online in the upcoming year. She also noted that, as with the Police Department, this department was utilizing grant funding wherever possible to offset some program costs. She said she thought the acting Chief had done a good job in the past few months.</li> <li>3. Mr. Hayes said, although he appreciated that some analysis had been done in anticipation of this evening’s meeting, he was still extremely frustrated with the overtime situation saying, for three years on the Finance Committee and for a number of years prior to that on the Expense Control Task Force, he had continued to hear about excessive overtime and the reasons why there was an overtime problem. Despite this, he said he had yet to see any serious effort to address this except hiring five more people; yet firefighters were still being sent out on overtime to do CPR</li> </ol>

	<p>classes and install carbon monoxide monitors, and he felt that related directly to why there was an overtime problem – in addition to the number of people out on extended sick leave. He said he understood how the department was staffed and why things were being done, but did not think the current model or the way things were being done was appropriate, and he would therefore not vote to support this budget either this evening or at Town Meeting unless some changes were made. He said he had some ideas he would gladly share based on research he had done on this issue over the past several years, but at this time he would not support a budget which simply funded the way the department was currently operating.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="544 619 1429 1249">4. Mr. Brown said he had a different opinion from the previous speaker and thanked the acting Chief for the explanation of the current overtime figure. He said he thought it was unfair to say there was something wrong with how the department was being run pointing out that the Chief had been given a budget in which 10% of total salaries was overtime and he didn't believe that this was entirely due to management; and suggested looking at this in terms of total number of hours rather than dollars, citing the duplicate hours covered at straight time and time and one-half when illness or injury created a vacancy requiring coverage. He said it was the nature of this work that individuals would get hurt at a higher rate than in other fields. He shared the concern regarding this budget and agreed it needed to be looked at, but said he didn't expect the overtime budget would ever approach zero, and thought greater attention was now being given to this than for a long time previously and he hoped it would continue. He said he thought the acting Chief should be "cut some slack" since some progress was being made and he couldn't be held personally responsible for the nine personnel out on extended leave due to injuries.</li><li data-bbox="544 1249 1429 1564">5. Mr. Everett questioned whether further analysis of the reasons for injuries and sick time might reveal the need for review of procedures and training to better prevent injuries, or additional equipment which could help in injury prevention. He cited the efforts related to accreditation in the Police Department which would review and update procedures and policies to develop best practices in that department, and suggested that similar focus in the Fire Department might have a beneficial effect on reducing work-related injuries and thereby help to reduce overtime expense.</li><li data-bbox="544 1564 1429 1816">6. Mr. Kelleher said he agreed with comments made by previous speakers and said he believed the overtime problem related to how the department was structured rather than how it was run. Citing a previous speaker's offer of expertise, he agreed there were alternatives which should be explored, but said at present, with a Chief and an acting Chief, it was not an optimal time to try to fix structural problems. He said he would support the budget as presented.</li><li data-bbox="544 1816 1429 1890">7. Mr. Pierce commended the acting Chief and the department for the service they provide to the town and pointed out that Chief</li></ol>
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	<p>White’s years of service in this department enabled him to provide helpful explanations for the overtime costs and other questions raised.</p> <p>8. Mr. Freedman said he appreciated the difficulty of the acting Chief’s position and commended the observations made by previous speakers. Noting that similar conversations had taken place with the Chief’s predecessor, he pointed out that relatively little was within his control given the policies governing the department’s operations and staffing, and the recent trend toward increasing medical vs. fire service calls. He encouraged thinking “outside the box” and looking for even small, incremental changes which might be implemented within these constraints, but conceded that these conversations were likely to continue to the frustration of everyone. He said he agreed with others’ concern that the overtime budget might be underfunded, but said he thought that might be preferable as it would assure continued close scrutiny by both department management and the Administration with the likely result that any subsequent need for supplementary funding would be well anticipated and not a surprise. He said he would support the budget as presented.</p>
<p>Vote:</p>	<p>12 – 1 – 0</p>

Information Systems:

Mr. Freedman referred the members to revised Budget Book pages for the Information Technology budget (Attachment J) included in the meeting packet. Mr. Towne reviewed the changes which, he noted, resulted in a total reduction of \$34,000, as the following:

- Repairs and Maintenance – decreased by \$8,000
- Maintenance Contract Software – decreased by \$11,000
- Elimination of the Public Safety IT Contractor PIR – decrease of \$15,000

Mr. Freedman welcomed Mr. Bob Lefrancois, Information Technology Director, and Mr. William Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations, to the podium.

Mr. Lefrancois provided an overview of the proposed IT budget and priorities for FY 2015, as detailed in the Budget Books, noting that the recently hired Information/Communication Specialist was a welcome addition to the department and that weekly meetings with the Information Systems Advisory Board were providing valuable support to advancing the department’s goals and priorities.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- The initially proposed PIR for a Public Safety IT Contractor has been withdrawn from this operating budget and will be integrated into a capital request being developed for review at a later time.
- Questions were raised regarding inclusion of relatively larger equipment items in this operating budget vs. capital, as well as including potential personnel costs relating to the planned Dispatch upgrade within a capital request rather than the operating budget.
- Although the question of consolidating IT functions in the Schools with those of the town has been raised in the past, given that infrastructure, purchasing options, software and customer base are all distinctly different and the fact that the ratio of personnel to non-personnel expense is relatively low, this has not been viewed as a high priority or to have significant potential for cost savings.

A motion was made, at 9:45 p.m., to move favorable action on the amount of \$1,114,663, \$315,863 for Salaries and \$798,800 for Operating Expenses, as printed on the *February 6, 2014 revised* page VII.43 of the Budget Books, for the FY 2015 Information Technology budget.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Everett
Seconded by:	Mr. Evans
Motions or Debates:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Although he said the amounts appeared to be reasonable, Mr. Everett questioned the inclusion of large equipment items in this operating budget vs. capital, and potential consulting costs in the capital budget. Saying he thought the town received a good return in services from the four personnel in this department, he said he had some concern with regard to the planned migration of the town’s email system to Google Apps if these would not be fully backed up as he pointed out that everything needed to be backed up to assure no loss of critical data. Apart from these concerns he said he was in full support of this proposed budget.</li> <li>2. Mr. Evans concurred with the comments of the previous speaker saying this department did an exceptional job with a very reasonable budget and the plan to move off the exchange server was a great idea and a trend underway in many companies to reduce costs. He said he liked the idea of reducing the server footprint as that would save money in several areas and he commended the department’s activities and efforts to help reduce costs and increase efficiencies for the town.</li> <li>3. Mr. Pierce commended Mr. Lefrancois for all the assistance he had provided to the Community-Senior Center in its IT planning and implementation and noted that assistance had also been provided to the Friends of the Senior Center in helping them find a replacement for a 10-year old computer and getting that set up. He said the personnel in this department were very generous with their time in helping anyone who sought assistance.</li> <li>4. Mr. Shooshanian reminded all that the message environment was subject to discovery and the changes being planned needed to assure compliance with those requirements.</li> </ol>
Vote:	13 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Town Clerk:

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Diane Packer, Natick Town Clerk, to the podium.

The members were referred to revised Budget Book pages for the Town Clerk’s and Elections budgets (Attachment K) included in the meeting packet. Mr. Chenard reviewed the changes which consisted of the following:

- Various spelling and grammatical corrections;
- An increase in the Town Clerk’s wages from \$76,292 as listed in the January 2 recommended budget to \$78,200 which represents a 2 ½% increase;
- Correction of the FY14 figure for the Town Clerk’s wages; and
- Deletion of a formula error on Page VII.52 under Other Services – Misc which showed a -48 in the 2014 vs. 2015 variance column.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- Two extra elections were held in FY 2013 and there will be two special elections in the 2014 fiscal year.

A motion was made, at 9:59 p.m., to move favorable action on the amount of \$252,793, \$230,643 for Salaries and \$22,150 for Operating Expenses, as printed on the *February 6, 2014 revised* page VII.49 of the Budget Books, for the FY 2015 Town Clerk’s budget.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Ciccariello
Seconded by:	Mr. Pierce
Motions or Debates:	1. Noting that the proposed budget was relatively flat, Mr. Ciccariello said this department continued to improve and commended the department and its staff for their responsiveness to everyone’s needs. 2. Mr. Pierce echoed the previous speaker’s comments saying the staff was consistently pleasant and helpful.
Vote:	13 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Elections:

The members were referred to revised Budget Book pages (Attachment K) for this department in the handouts. Mr. Chenard noted the correction of a number of items in the FY12 and FY13 actual columns which had been listed on the wrong lines.

Ms. Packer reported that the town had received reimbursement from the State of approximately \$40,000 late in calendar 2013 to offset additional expenses associated with the two special elections which occurred in fiscal 2013.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- Three elections are budgeted for FY 2015.
- Additional funding for signs for voting locations is included in the proposed budget.
- There was a suggestion that statistics on voter turnout be provided.
- Expansion of early voting is anticipated to increase costs for this department; however, until the legislation is finalized the amount of additional expense cannot be estimated as two distinctly different approaches are under consideration. It’s hoped the State may provide some funding to offset additional expenses but that can’t be predicted.

A motion was made, at 10:12 p.m., to move favorable action on the amount of \$99,170, \$50,570 for Salaries and \$48,600 for Operating Expenses, as printed on the *February 6, 2014 revised* page VII.53 of the Budget Books, for the FY 2015 Elections budget.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Ciccariello
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	13 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Mr. Freedman thanked all for their time and participation and urged the members to review the relevant budget materials in advance of next Tuesday’s meeting and send any questions to him to facilitate and expedite that discussion.

**ADJOURN (10:14 P.M.):**

A motion was made to Adjourn at 10:14 p.m.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Pierce
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Seconded by:	Mr. Evans
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	13 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)