



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: September 4, 2014

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:	Approval
Made by:	Jonathan Freedman
Seconded by:	Jerry Pierce
Vote:	12.0.0
Date:	9-18-2014

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Evans

Secretary

Natick Finance Committee

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Page 2

NATICK FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2014

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

This meeting has been properly posted as required by law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mari Barrera
John Ciccariello
Karen Adelman Foster

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Agenda for this evening's meeting
- B. Memorandum to Town Meeting Members from James L. Everett, Natick Finance Committee Chair, regarding Finance Committee Town Meeting hearing schedule
- C. Town of Natick Finance Committee Public Hearing Schedule dated September 3, 2014
- D. Natick Finance Committee Standard Warrant Article Questions – Article No. 4, Title: Appropriate L.A. Fitness Mitigation Funds for Upgrades to the Travis Road Sewer Pumping Station; Sponsor(s): Town Administrator

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Page 3

- E. Natick Finance Committee Standard Warrant Article Questions – Article No. 10, dated 8/29/14, Title: Update to the General Bylaws, Article 50, Section 16.4 (Restraint of Pets); Sponsor(s): Melissa Cusson, Kelly McPherson, Randy Johnson, Nancy Murphy, Kim Condon
- F. Natick Dog Park – FIDO of Natick Feasibility Report, August 15, 2014 – Draft V1, Horne + Johnson Architects / StepONE
- G. Memorandum to Finance Committee, M. White, B. Chenard and J. Flynn from Diane Packer, dated September 3, 2014, RE: Article 18: Charter Codification

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Everett at 7:01 p.m.

The Chairman reminded all that the Finance Committee would be holding hearings on a total of 40 Warrant Articles during eight scheduled sessions (Attachment C) for the upcoming Fall Town Meeting which would present a very challenging schedule. He reviewed guidelines proposed to keep these sessions on track which included limiting sponsor presentations to 10 minutes or less and public comments to five minutes or less, if possible, and requests for questions to be submitted to subcommittee chairs in advance. He also requested that members introduce any information or research they might have on various topics during the question/answer period rather than during debate in order to permit presenter response and dialogue.

PUBLIC CONCERNS/COMMENTS:

Ms. Cathi Collins, speaking on behalf of herself as a Natick resident and taxpayer from precinct 9, asked that the Chairman schedule a future session of the Finance Committee to review the final audit report from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on the High School Project to review the \$14 million difference between the \$81.2 million in expenses submitted for reimbursement and the \$67 million reimbursed.

Ms. Diane Packer, Natick Town Clerk, reminded all that State primary elections would take place on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. She urged all to vote.

The Chairman reviewed the evening's agenda and materials included in the meeting packet, highlighting a letter (Attachment B) sent to Town Meeting members inviting anyone interested to join an email distribution list to receive ongoing updates to the Finance Committee hearing schedule and agenda.

Mr. Everett also announced that the Chair of the 22 Pleasant Street Rezoning Study Committee, which is the subject matter of Article 13, had invited Finance Committee members to attend their meeting on September 10th, beginning at 7 p.m., at which Town Counsel would be addressing a long list of questions. It was suggested that this could facilitate the Finance Committee's subsequent discussion of this Article.

Mr. Brown said he was putting together a suggested outline and guide to facilitate the subcommittee process for the upcoming hearings. He invited input and suggestions from members and urged that questions regarding any of the Articles be forwarded to the appropriate subcommittee chairs in advance, with copies to him, to allow time for any research and communication with presenters. He requested that members review the items scheduled for the Finance Committee's September 11 meeting and get any questions to him as soon as possible as there was limited time to schedule a subcommittee meeting prior to that date.

OLD BUSINESS:

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Public Hearing FY 2014 Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

A motion was made, at 7:12 p.m., to open the public hearing on the FY 2014 Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
Seconded by:	Mr. Pierce
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Article 18 – Codification of Town of Natick Home Rule Charter:

Ms. Packer took the podium to address Article 18.

The members were referred to Attachment G which provided supporting information.

Ms. Packer explained that a recommendation of no action was being requested as the anticipated redlined version of the proposed revisions was not yet available and this item would therefore be postponed to 2015 Spring Town Meeting.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- Most of the changes which will be proposed deal with issues of formatting consistency related to grammar, spelling, capitalization and punctuation.
- Any Charter changes resulting from this process must ultimately go before the voters.
- The schedule for this project continues to evolve and bylaw changes continue to be made simultaneous to this codification.
- The target for completion of this process is 2015 Spring Town Meeting.
- Determining the most current version of the bylaws is a challenge since the document continues to evolve. The Town Clerk plans to update the online version following the upcoming election.
- The project is on budget despite the elongated schedule.

A motion was made, at 7:28 p.m., to move no action on the subject matter of Article 18.

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
Seconded by:	Mr. Evans
Motions or Debates:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ms. Collins noted that, based on the Town Clerk’s statement that this item was not ready to move forward at this time, she supported the request for no action.2. Mr. Evans noted that, although this project was slightly behind the planned schedule, he was reassured by the Town Clerk’s assurance that the project was on budget despite the delay.
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Planning Committee Update:

As the presenters for Article 10 were not all yet in attendance, Mr. Everett asked Mr. Freedman to provide an update on the August 12th Financial Planning Committee meeting.

Mr. Freedman highlighted the following:

- School Committee and Financial Planning Committee member Paul Laurent provided an update on the School Committee’s Long Term needs assessment currently underway. All budgets, as well as enrollment projections, are being closely scrutinized and the results of

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Page 5

the study will guide budgeting decisions going forward. One objective is to try to provide stakeholders with a long-term view of the Natick Public Schools and its needs. A report on this will be presented to Fall Town Meeting and the working committee anticipates meeting twice weekly between now and Town Meeting with more extensive reports to the School Committee planned in the interim.

- The School Committee plans to provide information on the School Department budgeting process, as well as the support provided to the Schools by the town during upcoming School Committee meetings to help School constituents, particularly those new to the town or the school system to gain a greater understanding of these issues.
- Mr. Josh Ostroff, Board of Selectmen Chair, will chair the Committee for the upcoming year. Amy Mistrot, School Committee Chair, will serve as Vice Chair, and Mr. Freedman will serve as Clerk.
- The Committee is expected to hold its next meeting sometime in mid- to late October.
- In response to a request, Mr. Freedman made a commitment to keep Finance Committee members advised of the schedule of upcoming meetings and to provide updates going forward.

Article 4 – Appropriate L.A. Fitness Mitigation Funds for Upgrades to the Travis Road Sewer Pumping Station:

Mr. William Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations, took the podium to speak to Article 4.

The members were referred to the responses to the Standard Questions for this Article (Attachment D).

Mr. Chenard explained that the developers of the L.A. Fitness project had requested improvements to the nearby Travis Road sewer pumping station and had provided funding to cover the estimated \$164,000 cost to install an odor control system and upgrade the aesthetics.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- If this is approved by Town Meeting the work can be effectively coordinated with work currently underway on the Travis Road station.
- If the appropriation is not approved, the funds will need to be returned as they were provided specifically for this purpose.
- The responses to the Standard Questions for this Article (Attachment D) were reviewed by the Planning Board who have approved the use of these funds for this project.

A motion was made, at 7:41 p.m., to move favorable action on the subject matter of Article 4 to appropriate \$164,000 from mitigation funds from the L.A. Fitness Project to fund upgrades to the Travis Road sewer pumping station.

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
Seconded by:	Ms. Coughlin
Motions or Debates:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ms. Collins pointed out that the funds had been provided by the Fitness Center project owners for this purpose and if this work was not done as requested, not only would the project personnel be unhappy, but the funds would have to be returned so it made no sense not to proceed.2. Ms. Coughlin concurred.3. Mr. Freedman agreed that this was a “no lose” for the town and

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

	said he would assume that provisions were in place so the town would not be liable for any possible cost overruns.
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Article 10 – Amend By-Laws: 50: Dog Park, Dog Exercise Area:

The Chair welcomed Ms. Melissa Cusson and Ms. Kelly McPherson, sponsors of Article 10, to the podium.

The members were referred to the responses to the Standard Questions for this Article (Attachment E) and a feasibility report (Attachment F) in support of this proposal included in the handouts.

The sponsors gave a brief overview of the project, detailed in Attachment F, to create an off-leash dog park in the town, and explained that the proposed bylaw amendment is a necessary first step to relax the current provision which requires pets to be restrained except on the owner’s property.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- The proposal reflects research on other towns’ experience developing similar parks and collaboration with the Open Space Committee, Town Administration, Horne + Johnson / StepONE architects, the Conservation Commission, Recreation & Parks and the Safety Committee, as well as a large number of interested and supportive volunteers and town residents.
- Grant funding is available to offset a considerable portion of the development costs, provided a 10% match can be raised from donations and/or other sources, which can include “in kind” services from volunteers. The granting agency is also a potential source of funding for future capital needed to maintain the facility.
- Given the extensive community support which this initiative has generated, it is anticipated that ongoing donor support can be facilitated to cover minimal operating expenses.
- The proponents will present the concept to the Board of Selectmen on September 8 in hopes of gaining the necessary approval from that body for use of the proposed site.
- The proposed bylaw amendment language includes three different terms used to designate an area of this type in order to allow for whichever terminology is eventually selected.
- If the bylaw amendment passes, but the anticipated project doesn’t proceed, the amendment would, in effect, be superfluous.
- Articles of incorporation to create a 501(c) 3 organization to enable fund raising have already been drafted pro bono by a lawyer in town who is also a dog owner.
- Any future funding needs associated with this proposal will come before the Finance Committee at the appropriate time.
- Because the project will involve alteration to town-owned property it is expected this will eventually go before the Planning Board for their review as well.

A motion was made, at 8:06 p.m., to move favorable action to amend the town Bylaws, Article 50, Section 16.4 (Restraint of Pets) by adding the following sentence after the words “...occupant of the property...” : “This provision shall not apply, however, in any area designated by the Town as a ‘Dog Park’, ‘Dog Run’ or ‘Dog Exercise Area’.”

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
--------------------	-------------

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Seconded by:	Mr. Pierce
Motions or Debates:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Collins noted that she had been in attendance at the initial organizational meeting of this group and said this was desperately needed in the town. She pointed out that all this bylaw change did was to clear the way for creation of a dog park if everything else fell into place. She acknowledged that this might end up to be a superfluous provision in the bylaws if the subsequent project was not completed, but said she hoped that would not be the case. She suggested that, if such a legally sanctioned area became available, she believed there would be far less unsanctioned activity occurring in other parts of town. She said she hoped the rest of the plan was successful. 2. Mr. Pierce agreed with the previous speaker, noting he was the owner of two dogs. 3. Mr. Kelleher said he was always concerned about potential future costs, but said he was reassured that if any additional cost to the town arose in the future that would be brought to the Finance Committee. 4. Mr. Brown commended the presenters for the quality of their presentation. 5. Mr. Evans agreed with the previous speaker regarding the thoroughness of the presentation. 6. Mr. Everett echoed the comments of the maker of the motion saying he believed the planned project would address the issue of the many dogs allowed to run in areas near the schools and elsewhere where dogs weren't necessarily appreciated, and whose owners were not always responsible about picking up after their dogs.
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

A motion was made, at 8:11 p.m., to close the public hearing on the FY 2014 Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
Seconded by:	Mr. Hayes
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Reserve Fund Transfer – Finance Committee I-Pads:

Mr. Everett explained that options were being explored for possible alternative sources of funding to obtain iPads for use by Finance Committee members during their Town Meeting preparation each year, and one option was to use the Reserve Fund which was under the control of the Finance Committee.

Ms. White stated that the School Department had been contacted to see if the Schools might have as many as 16 spare devices that could be loaned to the Finance Committee for this purpose, but she had not yet received an answer to the inquiry.

Member questions and discussion included the following:

- A total of 16 devices would provide one for each of the 15 Finance Committee members as well as one for the Recording Secretary; however, several members indicated they would prefer to use their own equipment, and it was determined that a device for the Recording Secretary would not be needed at this time.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014

Page 8

- After further discussion, it was determined that 13 devices would be sufficient for the current season and, based on an estimated cost of \$650 per unit, the current supplies budget for the Finance Committee could cover the purchase at this time, and a supplement to the existing budget to replace these funds could be included under the Fiscal 2015 Omnibus Budget Article.
- Consensus was reached that purchase would be preferable to borrowing devices from the Schools for several reasons, including the possibility that 13 units could not be made available for the duration of the Finance Committee’s need. Several members also expressed the view that this would not truly meet the criterion of an “extraordinary and unforeseen” emergency for which Reserve funds were intended, and that a purchase from the Finance Committee budget would offer greater transparency.

A motion was made, at 8:49 p.m., to move forward with purchase, from the Finance Committee’s budget, of thirteen tablets at a cost of \$650 each – not to exceed \$8,450 – for Finance Committee members’ use, with the proviso that reimbursement of the funds be considered at Fall Town Meeting.

Moved/Motioned by:	Ms. Collins
Seconded by:	Mr. Freedman
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)

Mr. Chenard said he expected the equipment would be available for use by the Committee’s September 11 meeting.

ADJOURN (8:55 P.M.):

A motion was made to Adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Moved/Motioned by:	Mr. Pierce
Seconded by:	Ms. Collins
Motions or Debates:	None
Vote:	12 – 0 – 0 (unanimous)