



Finance Committee Town of Natick Massachusetts 01760

April 17, 2010

Greetings to all Town Meeting Members and Citizens of Natick,

This report contains the Town of Natick Finance Committee recommendation regarding appropriations for Fiscal Year 2011 budgets as well as capital equipment and improvement requests, among other financial matters. In addition, this report contains recommendations on the non-financial 2010 Annual Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles, in accordance with the Finance Committee's responsibilities outlined within the Town's Charter & Bylaws.

Each of the Finance Committee recommendations was made after conducting a duly noticed public hearing and open meetings of the both the Finance Committee as a whole and Finance Committee sub-committees. We took into account comments and data gathered from Warrant Article sponsors, town department heads, the town administration, town boards, commissions and committees, and the public at-large.

The Finance Committee made its recommendations after having held eighteen (16) Public Hearings for input and discussion during our full committee hearings held on February 1st, 18th, 25th, and March 2nd, 4th, 9th, 11th, 16th, 18th, 23rd, 25th and April 1st, 6th, 8th, 13th and finally on the 15th. In addition to this, there was a 5 hour Sub-Committee meeting on the By-Law and Charter Articles alone. As has become tradition, there is an additional Finance Committee hearing date scheduled for April 27th the first night of Town Meeting at Wilson Middle School.

The Fiscal Year 2011 Budget season has been a frustrating process for the Finance Committee due to the lack of final Revenue numbers from the State and Federal Aid programs, as well as the unsettled Town & School Union contracts, as well as the ongoing negotiations for healthcare benefit reforms.

The Financial Planning Committee maintained their recommendation that all "shared" expenses and revenues, be split between the School (61%) and Town (39%) departments. This split then moved forward to the Board of Selectmen & School Committee for the final ratification process.

The Finance Committee has reviewed each department's budget patiently to provide insight into the process of the potential Town and School employee layoffs, and position reassignments due to the shortfall of revenues. The Finance Committee maintained a "wish list" of items within the budgets, that we felt were important, during our hearing process and we were able to work with the administration to incorporate some of those line items back into the final budgets.

I personally want to thank all of the citizens that have continued to comment favorably on the amount of information that we continue to dig in to while they watch our televised meetings on Pegasus. It is nice to know that folks really do watch our meetings and are gaining a better perspective of how the budgets of this Town are being managed.

As Chairman, I have continued to maintain a bit of humor during our hearings. I do wish to reassure all of you, that all of the members do take the responsibilities of our Committee seriously and that humor is used to maintain our patience during the long hours of our meetings.

I would like to thank each and every one of my members and I would ask that if you happen to meet one of our members, please say "Thank You" for a job well done as a VOLUNTEER!!

The Finance Committee as a whole would like to especially express its thanks and appreciation for the patience of the Town Administrator Martha White, Deputy Town Administrator Michael Young, the Town Department heads and officials. I would also like to thank the School Administration for allowing our committee to begin to develop a more comprehensive overview of the Schools budget. This hopefully is a first step towards improving the Finance Committee's evaluation of the Town's largest budget. I would also like to thank all of the other members of boards and committees, and to Natick's citizens for their cooperation and participation during the Warrant Article hearings, the budget planning process.

I would also like to give a HUGE thank you to our recording secretary, Ms. Joyce Tower. Joyce spends many hours attending our meetings, and this year she has transcribed our minutes seemingly overnight with great detail, which allows us the opportunity to approve the minutes more promptly for posting on the Town web site, as well as becoming a huge part of the information that you are being provided within this book. Thank you Joyce!!

I would note that we are not out of the woods yet for the FY 2011 budgets. With all of the unknowns, such as the revenues, contracts and healthcare, we have yet to really "balance" the budget. Both the School & Town Administrations have a LOT of work to do yet before they are done.

Please remember that while these seem like very difficult times for our community, there are many places in this world that have far greater struggles to deal with. We should all consider ourselves blessed with the quality of life as well as the level of services that are maintained by the Town's Administrations and the hundreds of volunteers that are committed to making this a community that our citizens can be proud of.

There is a phrase that I have spoken during this year's hearings and I would like to think that we are best served by remembering that we are and always should be:

ONE TOWN, ONE TEAM !!

Respectfully Submitted,



Richard P. Jennett, Chairman
on behalf of the Natick Finance Committee

Committee Members:

James Everett, Vice Chairman
Jonathan Freedman, Secretary
Mari Barrera
James Brown
Cathi Collins

Bruce Gorton
Patrick Haswell
Robert Hickman
John Horrigan
Kenneth Hoyt

Tony Lista
Jerry Pierce
Richard Sidney
Harlee Straus