FINAL DRAFT

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 21, 2021
The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:	Approval, as amended
Made by:	Mr. Gillenwater
Seconded by:	Ms. Wollschlager
Vote:	10 – 0 – 0
Date:	September 28, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Evans

Secretary

Natick Finance Committee

TOWN OF NATICK

Meeting Notice

POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 30A, Sections 18-25

Natick Finance Committee

DAY, DATE AND TIME
September 21, 2021 at 7:00 PM
PLACE OF MEETING
Virtual Meeting accessed via Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7949362580 Meeting ID: 794 936 2580 Passcode: 220129 One tap mobile +19292056099,,7949362580# US (New York) Dial by your location +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Notice to the Public: 1) Finance Committee meetings may be broadcast/recorded by Natick Pegasus. 2) The meeting is an open public meeting and interested parties can attend the meeting. 3) Those seeking to make public comments (for topics not on the agenda or for specific agenda items) are requested to submit their comments in advance, by 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting, to fincom@natickma.org. Comments will be posted on NovusAgenda and read aloud for the proper agenda item. Please keep comments to 350-400 words. 4) The Chat function on Zoom Conferencing will be disabled.

MEETING AGENDA

Posted: September 16, 2021 10:47 AM
Revised September 20, 2021 7:20 PM

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. New Business
   a. Possible Reconsideration of Article 16: Amend Bylaws: Personnel Bylaw Amendments
5. 2021 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles - Public Hearing
   a. Article 3: Rescind Authorized, Unissued Debt
   b. Article 10: Create a Natick Town Bylaw to provide for Tax Payment Agreements pursuant to M.G.L c.60 section 62A
   c. Article 13: Collective Bargaining
   d. Article 19: Diversity Officer
   e. Article 36: Town Seal Report and Design Services
   f. Article 38: Fiscal Information (TMPRC)
6. Meeting Minutes
   a. Review & Approve Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2021, September 2, 2021, and September 9, 2021
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

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.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Hossam Behery, Member
Dirk Coburn, Member (arr. 7:15 PM)
David Coffey, Member
Cathy Coughlin, Member
Jeff DeLuca, Member (arr. 7:35 PM)
Bruce Evans, Secretary
Todd Gillenwater, Vice-Chairman
Bill Grome, Member
Kat Monahan, Member
Richard Pope, Member
Chris Resmini, Member
Phil Rooney, Member
Patti Sciarra, Member
Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Julien LaFleur, Member

Town Administration Attendees
Mr. Jamie Errickson. Town Administrator
Mr. John Townsend, Ass't Town Administrator, Finance

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Linda Wollschlager, Chairperson.

Announcements - None

Public Comments: None
Mr. Evans moved to open the public hearing on the Fall 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article review, seconded by Mr. Pope, voted 12 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Grome = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Article 38: Fiscal Information (TMPRC)
Ms, Cathi Collins, Vice Chair, TMPRC
[Link to Article 38 Motion]

Ms. Collins said this Article was first presented at Spring Annual Town Meeting where town administration, particularly the Deputy Town Administrator - Finance was concerned about what this would require of town administration. She stated that, if she remembered correctly, the Finance Committee had no recommendation, and they chose to request for Referral at Town Meeting. They have since worked with town administration and made a total of six changes based on those discussions (three in Section a and three in Section b) and agreed that this is a workable plan (more on this later). This Article provides specificity to town charter language that requires a complete financial plan be provided by town administration. In order to develop the budget, these items had to be considered. The intent of this article is to be more specific about the information requested because the charter uses very general language and to make these visible to Town Meeting members and residents.

Ms. Collins reviewed the changes agreed to with town administration:

- Section a item 4, previously said "then current balances including *accrued* interest" Town administration pointed out that's not how sound finances work - they post the interest that is received, but don't do accruals on the interest, so we removed the word accrued.
- Section a, item 5 A has a couple of minor changes: 1) it used to read "*the amount of last three years Overlay and an estimate of how much if any, can be declared surplus*". Now it reads "*the amount of the last of the previous three years of overlay*". Although of overlay balance and an estimate of how much, if

any, can be declared surplus according to the Board of assessors, because they are the only ones that can declare a surplus - it's not up to town administration.

- Section B, item 2, we added the word *"major"*, so it's reads "*the major component sources*".
- In Section B, item 2iI used to say "*revenues received in excess of/below budgeted amounts"*, and we changed it to *"estimated versus actual revenues"*.

We removed Section B item 6 *"Updated estimate of employee health insurance budget needs based on actual employee signups compared to such budget needs estimated prior to actual sign ups.*" because the town doesn't have the health insurance information until February.

At Spring Annual Town Meeting, we suggesting deleting the current section two of Article 20 and putting this in its place. But, since town administration has an Article for Fall Annual Town Meeting that might affect Article, we suggested creating a new Article 20 Section 3 and the current sections 3, 4, and 5 would be renumbered 4, 5, and 6. The town charter is very clear and says copies of the preliminary budget and accompanying materials are available for examination by the public, including the budget and budget message. The goal is to provide a comprehensive overview of the budget that explains the town's fiscal condition including various revenues and expenses, reserves and the debt position. It's much more comprehensive than just what town administration is spending and what the revenues the town is receiving. This change provides greater specificity and provides an easy reminder list review each year. Another advantage is that it's workable for Town Meeting and the public – they know what to expect each year. Town Meeting can vote the specifics at Town Meeting and could change the specifics if in the future it decided it wanted something more or didn't want something it was getting. It also covers town administration because if they provide everything on the list, Town Meeting can't claim the town administration is in providing something that ought to be provided and avoids any attempt to withhold information from the public.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Evans asked for town administrations thoughts on Article 38 are. Mr. Townsend said town administration sat down with Ms. Collins and Mr. Griesmer to go over this and made some of the changes that you have heard tonight. We also discussed the way this information needs to be displayed in the actual budget materials. Mr. Townsend can opine on they think is useful or not, but they will provide this in a readable format and present to the Finance Committee and, ultimately, to Town Meeting. Mr. Errickson noted that this is a workable plan and we will comply with it should Town Meeting approve Article 38.

Mr. Pope asked how many out manpower hours would providing this information requires. Ms. Collins said she doesn't expect it to take any more time than right now because they already have the information and need to include it to develop the preliminary budget. The only additional work would be the work to format this information so it could be presented as part of the budget to Town Meeting and the public.

Mr. Pope asked if Article 38 and Article 20 (?) where we are considering a bylaw change to delay the due date of the preliminary budget to February 1 are related in any way or are they separate. Ms. Wollschlager noted that this is different and that the Finance Committee did not have a recommendation to Town Meeting on Article 20, so this should be considered as a separate Article. Mr. Errickson said town administration will provide this information and will need to take a test run at this in the upcoming budget season to come up with a workable format. It may take time for us to get to a format that works for the transparency and openness objectives of this Article. So, there is a time commitment is going to a time commitment to come up with a format that works and it might be a couple budget cycles before we can get fully into it. Mr. Errickson said he wants to be transparent with the Finance Committee and Town Meeting that if something is not quite what they thought it was going to lead to, we would want the ability to have an open conversation about maybe bringing that back and adjusting some of the language, if necessary. Ms. Collins noted that this is part of the reason that they're making this as a bylaw change rather than a charter change because a bylaw change can be approved by Town Meeting and go into effect following approval; whereas a charter change needs to wait until the annual election to be voted on by the residents.

Mr. Evans moved to recommend favorable action on Article 38, seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 13 – 0 – 0

Roll-call vote :

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate

Mr. Evans said he was pleased to hear that the TMPRC met with town administration and worked things through. This puts a little bit of a burden on them, but they're willing to provide this information. When we talked about it last year, town administration noted that this would require what they called a "Finance Committee" wrapper to explain the context of this information. So it also involves a little bit of work for the Finance Committee to interpret this information and I think we're prepared to do it since these are all questions that those of us who are Town Meeting members have heard more than once. If these are in the bylaw, we have a better opportunity to see this information on a more consistent basis.

Mr. Coburn said it was encouraging that the TMPRC and town administration came together and identified their common interest in providing this information in a highly informed and responsible way not only to Town Meeting members were for residents as well. He added that this information makes a foundation for good, sustainable, responsible government and applauded the good work to bring this to fruition.

Ms. Wollschlager added her kudos to the TMPRC, noting that she knew that committee was probably a little disheartened that this did not pass at Spring Town Meeting. However, the effort that has gone in to make this something that everyone can live with was well worth the time. As Ms. Collins pointed out as those of us who have vast years of experience with this, this information was not always available. She noted that she thinks it's important that this is codified in the bylaws so town administration and residents have their expectations set properly know what our expectations are. That said, she asked town administration to let the Finance Committee know if this really is not a practical thing to have at the time of the preliminary budget. From her perspective, maybe you can get a little bit of a pass this first time around in the next budget in January, but maybe can provide this should the preliminary budget due date move to February 1. She noted that where there are difficulties, let's try to figure out how to make this work because this information should be available and hopefully we will see this information at the beginning of next year.

Article 16 - Possible Reconsideration of Article 16: Amend Bylaws: Personnel Bylaw Amendments

Ms. Wollschlager said that when we discussed this on September we had voted two motions:

- Motion A for favorable action and that on the list of holidays that added Juneteenth and Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Motion B where we voted Favorable Action with an amendment changing the amount of vacation carryover from one week to two weeks.

Town administration is requesting reconsideration on this article and Mr. Errickson will specify the reasons they're looking for reconsideration and then we will vote to see if we would like to reconsider our votes.

Mr. Errickson said town administration is seeking reconsideration on Article 16 because it believes Motion B is not required. Motion A adds the Juneteenth holiday, a new federal and state holiday as well as adding the term Indigenous Peoples Day to the Columbus Day holiday. Regarding motion B, you may recall that we were seeking to implement a new policy whereby nonunion employees we were trying to provide guidance to state the policy that those employees could only carry over a maximum of one week of vacation time from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year. As you know, these employees accrue all their vacation at the beginning of the fiscal year and have the entire fiscal year to utilize that vacation. This was a policy that was reviewed several months ago by the interim Town Administrator and Article 16 is the proposed bylaw amendments to implement this plan. At the time the policy was proposed, which dates back to last May, it was reviewed by the interim Town Administrator and that motion was reviewed by Town Counsel leading into the September 2 Finance Committee meeting. After the questions of the Finance Committee regarding whether the language of the proposed bylaw amendments accomplish what the intent was, he went back to Town Counsel to review the policy and get more clarity with as to the intent of the policy and what we could/could not do under statute. In brief, the intent of the policy and what the can do under state statute are not necessarily consistent with each other, so they are withdrawing Motion B, so that motion a is the only bylaw change they are seeking, so Article 16 will only be labeled Article 16.

<u>Questions from the Committee</u>

Mr. Rooney asked whether, by removing motion B, town administration is not trying to solve the problem of vacation carryover. Mr. Errickson said the town can solve the majority of the problem through policy. There are two problems that they are trying to solve. One is that when a new fiscal year starts, accrued vacation resets to zero unless somebody carries over vacation from the previous year into the new fiscal year. Noting that the fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 and those summer months are the time when people want to utilize their vacation time, this was not fair. So, the intent was to provide for the vacation of the beginning of the fiscal year so that, at the end of the fiscal year, folks would not need to seek carryover of vacation time. The second part of the problem they trying was the constant seeking of vacation carryover at the end of the fiscal year to be used in the following summer. There were a few employees with relatively high balances of vacation that had accumulated over several years Mr. Errickson noted that the typical carryover request is in the 1-2 week range so town administration can accomplish keeping the vacation carryover at less than two weeks without any bylaw changes at this time. They will review their options with Town Counsel and are considering setting a maximum of no more than three weeks carryover and or seeking Town Counsel guidance to understand how we can prevent having large balances of more than 2 weeks carried over. This should allow individual some flexibility to determine if they seek to carry over vacation time from one fiscal year to the next so that they can still utilize that vacation time during the summer months while their accruals are beginning for the fiscal year.

Mr. Errickson said the first issue is that vacation time is accrued at the fiscal year basis leading into the summer months. This then leads to a second issue that almost all people seek vacation carryover time so that they can utilize that time summer months in the new fiscal year. Unfortunately, by front-loading the vacation time, that provides an inability for us to then recapture any used vacation time that had not been caught up with the accruals during the course of the fiscal year and that's what state law does not allow us to do so that's why we're seeking no action on Motion B and are reverting back to our current practice. However, we will specify to staff that the Town Administrator’s policy will be to not allow more than two weeks of vacation carryover time. And, if anybody has above that accrued balance, we would have to likely do either some type payout or we would have a very clear understanding that we would encourage staff to utilize that time in advance of the end of the fiscal year. I'm a firm believer that if people have vacation time, they should really be utilizing that vacation time during the course of the year for better work life balance and better work product. That's just an added benefit for our staff from a mental health and that type of perspective. We would work with Town Counsel on cases where there's an excess of two weeks carryover - our intention is not to have a “use-it-or-lose-it policy.

Mr. Evans requested confirmation that this is for nonunion personnel only. Mr. Errickson said this is for nonunion personnel. The vacation accrual and carryover policy for union personnel is governed by their collective bargaining agreements. Mr. Evans said he asked that question because a number of members weren't at the September 2 meeting and I wanted to make sure they heard that.

Mr. Pope noted that, at the last meeting, town administration proposed to change the bylaw so that you could have one week carryover and the Finance Committee opined that two weeks would be better and town administration said the policy is one week carryover with exceptions based on Town Administrator approval. Mr. Pope asked whether the Town Administrator would be empowered to do this without the bylaw change

(Motion B). Mr. Errickson said the main intent of the bylaw proposal was to change how vacation was accrued over the course of the fiscal year. Presently, at the beginning of the fiscal year, unless an employee carries over a vacation time from one year to the next, they start with a zero balance. The intent of the proposed language change was to have an entire years vacation available at the beginning of the fiscal year so that they would not have a zero balance beginning on July 1, So town administration limited the amount of carryover vacation time because they would have access to their entire year's allotment on the first day of the fiscal year. In talking with Town Counsel, the proposed bylaw change did not quite accomplish what we intended it to accomplish. Thus, he said they removed Motion B. At present, the policy states vacation carryover for nonunion personnel is at the discretion of Town Administrator. His intention is to allow for carryover of up to two weeks on a general case basis so that people can have access to some type of vacation beginning of the fiscal year.

Mr. DeLuca asked how the town's vacation carryover compared with state or federal employees. Mr. Errickson said he did not know.

Mr. Coburn moved to reconsider Article 16, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 14 – 0 – 0
Roll-call vote :

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate

Ms. Wollschlager pointed out that this means that our previous votes on Article 16 are gone, so we would have to reaffirm our vote on Motion A.

Mr. Coburn thanked the Town Administrator and noted that tonight's explanation was much clearer and the intent to address the administrative solution to the problems that were addressed in the former Motion B makes sense.

Mr. Evans said this is definitely the cleanest way to make this happen and provide the Town Administrator the latitude to implement a sound vacation carryover policy.

Article 16 Motion

Move that the Town vote to amend Article 24, Section 7.1 Holidays of the General Bylaws for the purposes of adding the Juneteenth holiday and adding “Indigenous Peoples Day” to the title of the Columbus Day holiday, so that the amended bylaw reads:

“7.1 **Holidays**

All "Full-Time" and "Regular Part-Time" employees shall be paid for the following holidays, if such employee has been in a regular pay status during the pay period preceding said holiday:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day
Washington's Birthday	Veteran's Day
Patriot's Day	Thanksgiving
Memorial	Day after
Day	Thanksgiving
Juneteenth	Christmas Day
Independence Day	

If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday, and if the holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday.

If a holiday listed above falls on a Full-Time or Regular Part-Time employee’s approved vacation day, the employee shall receive holiday pay in lieu of being charged vacation time.”

Mr. Errickson said the intent is to be consistent with the state law.

Mr. Evans moved to approve Article 16 and to request that it be considered by the Moderator to be put on the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Behery, voted 14 – 0 – 0

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate – no further debate

Article 3 – Rescind authorized unused debt.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that town administration is requesting ‘No action’ and asked Mr. Errickson to explain the rationale. Mr. Errickson said town administration has no authorized unused debt to bring forward for consideration on this article, so they are seeking no action. Mr. Errickson noted that this is a standing article at most, if not all Town Meetings. He noted that they may have something at the next Spring Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Evans moved to recommend no action on Article 3 and to request that it be considered by the Moderator to put it on the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, voted 14 – 0 – 0

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes
Mr. Evans = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Grome = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. Rooney = yes
Ms. Sciarra = yes
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate – None

Article 10: Create a Natick Town Bylaw to provide for Tax Payment Agreements pursuant to M.G.L c.60 section 62A

Mr. Townsend noted that during our discussion with the Finance Committee, two issues were identified. First, it had not received Town Counsel review. It has now received Town Counsel's review and she made some modifications to the formatting of the Article and added a section four that is a typical attorney section that reserves our rights under other articles or other sections or, or statutes. It has the same substance as the previous version does and reads a little better than it did previously. It also didn't have a reference to a bylaw article number and that has also been corrected – it is now proposed as Article 43 of the Natick town bylaws. In summary, this is the acceptance of MGL c. 60, § 62A which allows towns to create a payment plan for individuals who are in tax title. It allows the Town Treasurer to enter into an agreement for up to five years and to waive 50% of the interest and other provisions and put together a payment plan for the individual who then has to make those payments in order to avoid tax title. Mr. Townsend noted that the town doesn't expect to use stress very often, but as you may recall during our discussions of COVID impact on taxpayers, the issue of being unable to pay property taxes may increase. This bylaw would provide the Treasurer with another tool in their toolkit to help residents who may need assistance to help them avoid tax title. It also helps the town avoid potential litigation fees to pursue tax title.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. DeLuca asked whether these requests are granted automatically or reviewed individually and, if they are reviewed individually what the standards for approval are. Mr. Townsend said each request would be individually reviewed. There's a provision in the law here that all classes of tax title would have to be treated the same. So if you had a tax title and there was a due to outstanding utility bill payments. All people who have that particular issue would have to be offered these same provisions of a settlement agreement. So, if the Treasurer offers this to an individual, all individuals who are in that same condition would be offered those same agreement provisions.

Mr. DeLuca requested confirmation that this sets precedent going forward in future tax years, not just for that individual tax year. Mr. Townsend confirmed this.

Mr. Coburn asked whether towns comparable to Natick have adopted this. Mr. Townsend said that he doesn't have a list in front of him, but Town Counsel mentioned that this provision is fairly commonly used in municipalities, as it is been around since 2006.

Ms. Coughlin noted that Mr. Townsend mentioned in your answer to the questionnaire that failure to pass Article 10 at Town Meeting could result in more tax title cases and there will be a delay of revenue because the tax title process would take longer than this process. Ms. Coughlin asked whether there was any downside to passing

Article 10. Mr. Townsend said because the town doesn't have the provision now, it's unclear how many people will request this, but our belief is it probably will be a small number. It is also beneficial to the residents who can avoid tax title and would expedite them getting out of tax title status. For any individual case, this could provide much speedier resolution of this particular issue,

Ms. Sciarra asked how many tax title cases are there in town. Mr. Townsend said the town currently has have 230 cases in tax title.

Mr. Evans moved to recommend no action on Article 10, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, voted 14 – 0 – 0
<u>Roll-call vote :</u>

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate – None

Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Townsend, for getting this reviewed buy Town Counsel and appreciated the addition of section four provide the town with greater legal protection him, so I urge approval.

Mr. DeLuca stated that this is a win-win in a lot of situations. First off, it offers more opportunities to work out a solution without litigation and that benefits not only the constituents of Natick but also the bottom line of the town because it can take a long time and a lot of legal expenses resolve tax title cases. This offers an opportunity for property owner to resolve a property tax issue of what's past due and outstanding, while also offering relief in the accrued interest. With the ever-increasing taxes, this offers some additional potential relief going forward. , I think everyone should approve of this action. So thank you.

Mr. Coburn stated that this provides good flexibility and encourages dialogue and resolution among parties that might have divergent interests - including the town and property owners. However he noted that he is wary that this could have unforeseen consequences and asked if town administration could present a summary of how this is working to town meeting. Mr. Coburn noted that when he was a little surprised by the number of properties in tax title

Ms. Wollschlager added that she also is interested in the data that comes from this and is concerned about some of the things that are in this agreement, notably, that someone has to come up with 25% up-front, and thought that this may be a real barrier to people who are already struggling, so I would be interested to find out if our number of properties in text title goes down as a result of this, and how many people take advantage of this bylaw change. She noted that we wouldn't want to cause people to lose their properties through unintended consequences.

<u>Article 13 – Collective Bargaining</u>

Mr. Errickson said that town administration is requesting no action on Article 13. He noted that while they are actively negotiating with all the town's collective bargaining units on contracts, they have no agreements to bring forward to Town Meeting. Mr. Errickson noted that it is remotely possible that they may have an agreement to bring forward prior to fall town meeting, but given the tight timeframe between today and the start of Town Meeting, in all likelihood, the town will, hopefully, bring all the agreements forward for ratification by Town Meeting at 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Rooney asked what the oldest contracts are for town administration to secure agreement on. Mr. Errickson said the agreements for all of the collective bargaining units on the town side expired at the end of last fiscal year (June 30). Some of them had one year or two year agreements, just to bring them up to that point that were negotiated by prior town administrators or the interim town administrator, but that all expired, and we have opened negotiations with union leadership and are seeking to do three year terms starting July 1 2021.

Mr. Coburn moved to recommend no action on Article 13 and to request that it be considered by the Moderator to put it on the consent agenda , seconded by Mr. Behery, voted 14 – 0 – 0

Roll-call vote :

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate:

Mr. Coburn said he was hopeful that these agreements can move forward and be ready for 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Evans said he is hopeful the town that administration is successful in bringing forward some (or all) of the union contract agreements so that we can get this settled at 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting and not have go into the second year without a contract, then having to reserve money for retroactive pay to the start of the contract period.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that she is happy to hear that the goal is to have all union contracts settled by 2022 Spring Town Meeting. She said, in all her years on Town Meeting, she could not ever recall agreements with all unions and if Mr. Errickson can make that happen, it would be a truly amazing feat.

Article 19 – Diversity Officer

Ms. Wollschlager noted that the sponsor, the Select Board is seeking 'No action' under this article.

Ms. Karen Adelman-Foster, Chair, Select Board

Ms. Adelman-Foster said, as most of you know that, Natick received approximately $10 million in America Rescue Plan Recovery Act (ARPA) funding for COVID recovery and to be spent over multiple years, under the auspices of the Select Board. Last night, the Select Board voted to devote some of those funds to the funding of this position of Diversity Officer. Therefore, our request is for 'No Action' to fund the Diversity Officer position as it will be funded through ARPA. She assured the Committee that the Select Board's support for this position is strong and unanimous. The Select Board believes it will fund the first year and perhaps the second year through ARPA funding. There are many restrictions on the ARPA funds, but they are intended in part to support work that supports historically underprivileged or disadvantaged communities and this position is a position that will help address those issues in Natick.

Questions from the Committee

Mr. Rooney noted that the ARPA funding takes care of the first one or two years and asked how this would be funded after that. Ms. Adelman-Foster said, it is a grant-funded position and town administration will need to determine whether it should be funded after the grant is no longer available or not and put that question to Town Meeting for their decision on whether to fund this position permanently.

Mr. Rooney asked for examples of historically underprivileged or disadvantaged communities in Natick. Ms. Wollschlager noted that this is outside the scope of discussion for article 19 which is about the funding for this position

Mr. Rooney said he isn’t challenging the need for the position, but trying to understand the role of the position. Ms. Adelman-Foster said the job description will be discussed in a forthcoming article sponsored by the Personnel Board where this can be discussed in greater detail.

Ms. Sciarra asked, when a position is funded through the Select Board, does the position have to already have been created through the Personnel Board. Mr. Errickson said that for any nonunion personnel board employee, there are a number of items that need to be completed - funding is one of them, as well as the creation of the position which includes the job description, and then the placement of that position on the Personnel Pay plan. That action is taken by the Personnel Board and then must be ratified by Town Meeting. Under the town's bylaws, as soon as the Personnel Board votes on a position and then places that position on the Personnel Pay plan or makes some modification to an existing position that could be a job description or a job title and adjustment on the Personnel Pay plan, a town administration has the ability to act on that action the next day. It does then get subsequently ratified by the following Town Meeting. From an example of timing, if, in November, the personnel board voted to create a position could be any position, nonunion position, and time administration can act the following day to fill that position assuming there is funding. And then that position would be considered for the following time meaning or the springtime meaning would then be the overall adjustments to the Personnel Pay plan, which would include any language changes to job descriptions, any adjustments to the Personnel pipeline for other positions, would then be in front of Town Meeting for review and ratification.

Ms. Sciarra asked what would happen if Town Meeting were not to ratify this position. Mr Errickson said, to his knowledge, that has not happened, so would need to defer to Town Counsel on that question.

Ms. Sciarra asked whether any other positions have been created through grants that have just been approved by the Select Board and not yet approved by Town Meeting. Mr. Errickson said a social worker position for the Police Department was grant funded subsequently added to the police department budget.

Ms. Sciarra asked for a little more information on ARPA funding. Mr. Errickson said ARPA has a series of eligible uses and infrastructure can be a portion of it, meaning water and sewer infrastructure. A big target of the federal dollars are for what's known as disproportionately impacted populations, disenfranchised populations, low income populations or populations that were low wage job workers that were disproportionately impacted by the COVID crisis. So the intent of a Diversity Officer position is to engage with those disproportionately impacted populations in Natick and address their needs. Any use of the ARPA funds goes through an approval process - it ultimately goes through the state, but gets reviewed by the federal government.

Ms. Sciarra asked whether the use of these funds for this position would need to be approved by the grant maker before you were able to hire somebody for this position. Mr. Errickson said that the ARPA funds are distributed in two clumps - Natick has received half of the funding allotted to it in its accounts. The town is in the process of creating the structure to track and administer the spending from these funds and ensure that they are being spent within the guidelines of this funding.

Mr. DeLuca noted that he understands the ARPA funding, but asked what's the contract duration for this position and will it match the pay structure in the Personnel Pay plan because that's going to impact whether we should take no action on this Article. Mr. DeLuca asked what the duration of the contract period is because if the contract period goes beyond the grant, it would then be an unfunded position.

Ms. Adelman-Foster said it's not a contract position – the town would be establishing the position and hiring a person for it so it wouldn't be for a set period of time. Mr. DeLuca asked whether, hypothetically, if we didn't secure funding, and the grant ends, the position would be terminated. Ms. Adelman-Foster said, theoretically, it's a risk. This is a proof-of-concept and we'd like to hire for this position, fund it via grant funding, and we're betting that we'll want to fund it in the future. Mr. Errickson said that Natick has received $10.7 million in ARPA funding and the town must allocate these funds by the end of calendar year 2024 and spend it on appropriate items by the end of calendar year 2026 under this jurisdiction or approval of the Select Board

Mr. DeLuca asked how much of that funding is allocated. Mr. Errickson said the Select Board voted last night to fund the allocation for the first year ($810,000) and town administration reviewed a spending plan over the course of the grant. This spending plan is subject to change based on the demands on the funding, the success of various projects and the costs of various projects or initiatives. The spending plan proposes approximately $300,000 over the course of the grant for this position, and they allocated $60,000 to cover the remainder of the fiscal year to support this position.

Mr. DeLuca a clarification for what period of time is covered by the $300,000. Mr. Errickson said it's over the course of the grant period, but that spending really depends on how quickly the town can hire for this position, what the salary is, and what other benefits such as fringe benefits and the like are included. If we hire at a higher rate because we have to do due to a competitive market or a lower rate because of the competition of the market, that'll determine ultimately how quickly that $300,000 gets utilized over the course of the next two to three years.

Mr. Coffey asked whether the use of ARPA funding need to be approved by the granting authority before a person can be hired to fill this position. Mr. Errickson said that it doesn't need approval.

Mr. Coffey pressed and asked if the ARPA administrators say this is an improper usage, what happens then. Mr. Errickson said ARPA is such a new program that they're learning daily how the federal government is implementing this program. They currently know that they need to submit ideas on how the town intends to use this funding. There are guidelines on what the funding can be used for on the US Treasury Department website, and there is 200 page set of regulations as well as FAQs fact sheets and the like that we are also using for guidance, They've attended multiple webinars. Further, Mr. Errickson said they've already received the funding and our understanding is that we can spend it on this specific purpose.

Ms. Coughlin asked whether Town Counsel has been consulted about whether this use of funds is appropriate use of the funds that Natick has received. Mr. Errickson said they've been working with Town Counsel throughout the ARPA funding program. Again, it's so new for all of us that even Town Counsel is saying they need to continue to work with our funders through the state and federal government. We reviewed the first year spending plan in-house and with Town Counsel and our understanding is that these meet the criteria of ARPA. Funding this position is among 10-12 initiatives included in the first year of funding.

Mr. Coffey asked whether fringe benefits would be covered under the ARPA grant. Mr. Errickson said the position is a nonunion position that would be eligible for health care and other benefits. Our understanding is that the town could utilize grant funding to cover the fringe benefits for this position.

Ms. Wollschlager asked Mr. Errickson to provide more information to the Finance Committee regarding the ARPA funds. Although the Select Board controls the allocation, she suggested that it would help alleviate a lot of the concern members have if we understand what the plan is and where the money is intended to go. Mr. Errickson agreed to provide that information and Ms. Wollschlager said she would distributed to the rest of Committee.

Mr. Evans moved to recommend No Action on Article 19 seconded by Mr. Grome, Voted 8 – 0 – 6
<u>Roll-call vote:</u>

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = abstain	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = abstain	Mr. Resmini = abstain

Mr. DeLuca = abstain Mr. Rooney = abstain
Mr. Evans = yes Ms. Sciarra = abstain
Mr. Gillenwater = yes Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate

Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Errickson and Ms. Adelman-Foster for the detailed explanation and thanked Ms. Wollschlager for requesting more information on the ARPA program which is new to all of us and will provide helpful context for us moving forward. Town Administration has worked with the Select Board and Town Counsel to identify projects for their first pass in this grant program. In his opinion, the Diversity Officer seems aligned to the goals of this grant program.

Mr. Grome agreed with these comments.

Mr. DeLuca said he will abstain on this vote because he wants to step back and assess whether this is appropriate usage of funds. He opined that he is usually on board with using grant funding for positions because it's an excellent way to minimize the impact on town taxpayers. However, he is concerned because he is not sure whether this is appropriate use of these funds.

Mr. Pope said he will support this Article because he supports the initiative to have a Diversity Officer in Natick and views it as consistent with the largesse of the federal government and the ARPA grant program, consistent with relatively high unemployment rates have the relative two year change in unemployment rates amongst different races in Massachusetts, and the potential that this role could have and in alleviating it in Natick, and potentially addressing other policies that the Diversity Officer might address in the future. I look forward to supporting paying for this out of Natick town funds when the grant money is no longer available and would pay for it now if the ARPA funds weren't available. He definitely supports using federal grant money on to fund items that are permitted under the grant program.

Article 36: Town Seal Report and Design Services

Presenter: Mia Kheyfetz

Article 36 Presentation

Ms. Kheyfetz provided an update on what the Town Seal Review Committee (TSRC) has been up to and explain what the $11,000 funding request. This presentation is an overview of the process and the steps that the TSRC will be going through at various points. Ms. Kheyfetz noted that this is a working document that has been approved by the TSRC and shows some of the prep work that they've done with reviewing early town history as relevant to the current seal such as the TSRC brainstorming what the message of the Natick seal should convey and set up a public presence on the internet for updates. Ms. Kheyfetz said the Committee is now at the stage where it wishes to engage a designer, establish the design parameters and evaluate town department needs. The Committee has also looked at about 75 other Massachusetts communities and what their seals look like. The Committee has discussed the message of the seal, what individual members think of the current seal, and what it should potentially evolve into. They're looking to create a website similar to what the Finance Committee has done, a Google website to share more information and find other ways to engage with Natick as a whole. Once the Committee has enough data, they seek to engage a designer and going through the rounds of design. And, later in the process, this will involve and implementation plan, and ultimately present a proposed new seal to Town Meeting. At each of these steps, they will provide details to Town Meeting.

Ms. Kheyfetz said they arrived at the $11,000 figure by using the framework that Framingham used when they went through this whole process a couple years ago. They were gracious to share a lot of the work they did, including the documents they uses to solicit quotes and we used that as the starting point. The Committee also reached out to a couple designers for very informal quotes, recognizing that we don't have all the information we need right now to give you a general idea what a reasonable cost for this work would be. So the first two quotes there are from local native designers that were just willing to talk through the project and see what they might charge for a project.

The range of estimates for design work is as follows:

Estimates for design work from three graphic designers

• Informal quote A $1,000- $5,000

• Informal quote B $5,000-$10,000

• Informal quote C $5,000

• Estimate from former committee member who is a professional graphic designer $8,500

• Natick Center Cultural District- Wayfinding Signs $15,000 (grant-funded). Ms. Kheyfetz said the designer who did this work did the research with the town, conducted workshops and gathered information, as well as doing the graphic design work. She spoke with him and he said that the same project is being funded next year through a $25,000 grant.

• Framingham City Seal Committee bids after RFQ $250-$12,000 and they approved $5,000 eventually approved for design services. The work was done for much less, though additional funds were awarded because actual work far exceeded original estimate of the scope.

<u>Article 36 Motion</u>

To hear a progress report from the Town Seal Review Committee and to see what sum the Town will appropriate for design and associated services of a new Town Seal, or otherwise act thereon.

- Motion A - Move to hear and discuss a progress report from the Town Seal Review Committee.
- Motion B - Move to appropriate $11,000 from free cash to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator and upon the request of the Town Seal Review Committee for design and associated services for a new Town Seal.

Ms. Kheyfetz said that when she came before the Finance Committee with Article 16 prior to 2020 Fall Annual Town Meeting, the TSRC planned to ask for $2,000 to be used for kind of miscellaneous things for honoraria and stuff like that. However, town administration made the decision that all Articles that required financial appropriation be heard at the Special Town Meeting, so we removed that funding and have now combined it with the design services so it’s included in the $11,000 figure.

<u>Questions from the Committee</u>

Mr. Evans asked what the Town Administrator’s preference for the source to fund Motion B would be. Mr. Errickson said his choice was free cash.

Ms. Coughlin asked who has the final say on what the Town Seal will be. Ms. Kheyfetz said that the Committee would present the option(s) before Town Meeting and Town Meeting has the final say on it.

Mr. Grome said he thought that this committee’s charge was to review the Town Seal to see whether or not changes were required. He asked for clarification on what is objectionable with the current Town Seal that they feel like they have to go through a process of designing a new one, Ms. Kheyfetz said the charge to the Committee on Article 16 was to review and revise the seal and it was determined that the Town Seal was not respectful and accurate of Natick history. The Committee went through a long process to get there, reviewing the history of the Town Seal and recommending that the town move forward on revising it.

Mr. DeLuca asked whether the Committee has sought any grant program funding or private fundraising for this. Ms. Kheyfetz said they have not done so yet because they are trying to get an estimate of how much it should cost, and put together the request for quotation. Our intention is that, once we have Town Meeting approval to do this, we will seek every funding option from pro bono up to full design services and we have not yet pursued private funding sources or grant funding. Mr. DeLuca asked if this might be a project that Keefe Tech might be interested in doing. Ms. Kheyfetz said they will send the RFQ far and wide and ask for quotes from everybody.

Mr. DeLuca noted that this is the initial part of the process and asked what the expected total implementation costs for of the selection and replacement of the Town Seal is. Ms. Kheyfetz said she can't give a definitive answer on that, but noted that there are two parts to the Town Seal redesign and replacement. The scope of our project is to work on the Town Seal which is an embosser that the Town Clerk holds and uses on official town documents – the town is mandated by state law to have this town seal, which is not terribly expensive (last time the Town Seal was changed was in 1980 and cost approximately $500). Ms. Kheyfetz said she cannot tell the Finance Committee what the implementation cost could be if other town departments decide to use this image on town vehicles, patches, letterhead, things like that - that's beyond the scope of what the Committee was asked to do.

Mr. Behery asked why the Committee is requesting funding if the exact cost is not clear yet and we did not really look at all the avenues that could be used to fund this, so why are we asking and funding in advance. Ms. Kheyfetz said part of it is timing because the Committee knew that it would need to request funding for design services in the next few months and didn’t want to delay this until Spring Town Meeting, the intent was to get this approved as the maximum amount that would be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator. She said they are hopeful that this will not require the full $11,000, but this gives us some options in the designer selection process

Mr. Evans noted that the motion has a question regarding the funding source and requested that town administration weigh in on which source of funds is preferred. Mr. Errickson said he would recommend that.

Mr. Rooney asked whether town administration had any “contingency” funds that could cover this expense. Mr. Errickson said the town doesn’t typically have a pot of funding that is considered “contingency” and they specify funding for specific purposes. He did note, that if this was at the end of the fiscal year, there might be money that was available, but since we're at the beginning part of the fiscal year, it's harder for him to identify a specific place that he could get the $11,000, which is why he recommended that free cash be used.

Ms. Wollschlager said in re-reading the charge of the TSRC, the last part of it says “to provide a report and recommendation to a future Town Meeting that shall consider implementation of a new seal.” In my reading, this would indicate that that there needs to be a plan in place about how it might be implemented and she asked if the Committee is undertaking the work of what would be involved with fully implementing the Town Seal in terms of potential costs and the process of potentially bringing it in and different places over time. Ms. Kheyfetz said this is definitely part of the work of the committee and is among the next steps that the Committee must take before presenting the redesigned image of the Town Seal to Town Meeting for their approval. The implementation plan is something we need to speak to town administration him he about. Again, when you're talking about implementation, the implementation that we’re specifying there is for the embosser. However, Ms. Kheyfetz would hope that the TSRC can include ways to implement that imagery in other places in the town as part of the town. But, that is ultimately up to those town departments, for example whether DPW wants to adopt the redesigned seal as their image on their trucks, but our charge from Town Meeting is the embosser, at bare minimum. And then, because that will become the official seal of the town, others will probably consider adopting it. It’s a good suggestion for us to examine what town departments might need in terms of format in the process of redesigning the Seal.

Ms. Wollschlager asked if the TSRC could check with town administration to find out if there is any current fiscal year funding associated with implementing the Town Seal. Ms. Kheyfetz said they would do so.

Mr. Coburn noted that racial offense has been identified as a significant issue with regard to this whole Town Seal redesign initiative and asked whether the conversion of the Town Seal might qualify for the ARPA funds referred to earlier tonight. Ms. Adelman-Foster said the Select Board hasn’t contemplated that.

Mr. Coffey asked what the total cost of implementation of the Town Seal is. Ms. Kheyfetz said the $11,000 to get us off the ground for design services - that does not include fabrication of an embosser or if people decided that they wanted to change the DPW trucks or things like that.

Mr. Coffey asked if the Committee envisions that DPW will have one seal on their trucks, the Police Department another seal, the Fire Department would have a third seal and the town's letterhead would have a fourth seal separate from the embosser. Ms. Kheyfetz said, with all due respect, that's what we have right now, and noted that with the availability of a new properly formatted, Town Seal that is fully approved by the town that others may adopt its usage, but that's not for us to mandate.

Mr. DeLuca asked whether the Committee will put forward multiple proposed seals or a single design for Town Meeting approval. Ms. Kheyfetz said that the designer will provide multiple designs that will likely be reviewed by the Committee, as well as soliciting feedback from town residents prior to Town Meeting. Ultimately, there will most likely be one proposed design that will be reviewed and voted upon. From past experience working with designers and printing logos and things on assorted materials, there's only a finite number of file types and usually a graphic designer provides all of those for a design project and they would be applicable for embossers, trucks, embroidery, things like that.

Mr. DeLuca asked what happens if Town Meeting doesn't approved this one design, whether there will be a request to fund an additional design to be presented to Town Meeting, Ms. Kheyfetz said that the intention, by the time they get to Town Meeting, we will have broad input from people on the design and will not be a surprise to Town Meeting when it appears there. This is an attempt to build consensus and have something that everybody can be proud of in the community.

Ms. Coughlin asked who had the final say on the Town Seal that is presented to Town Meeting. The TSRC is tasked with working with the designer, and coming up with the ultimate design that will be presented to Town Meeting. The Committee has seven members and two associate members, appointed by the Moderator to go through this process and it is to be done with the input from anybody and everybody in our community who would like to be involved. Once that design is chosen, the Committee would go to Town Meeting for approval.

Ms. Coughlin asked when the Select Board members would weigh in on the redesigned town seal. Ms. Kheyfetz said the TSRC would bring the design to Town Meeting, and the Committee will be taking this around everywhere and previewing it throughout the process and get input from everybody in the Natick community, including the Select Board during this process.

Ms. Coughlin asked whether there is a website now or is that part of the $11,000 funding. Ms. Kheyfetz said the website is being done in the committee and no funding is required. The Committee website is hosted on the town's website as are other committees. At the moment, it only has agendas and minutes. The Committee intends to build something out similar to what Finance Committee did to allow us to have the flexibility to post without having to the Town Clerk's office to post things and move things around. Everything that needs to be posted will still be posted on the town website, but additional information resources, surveys, ways to get in touch with us and to engage with the committee will be on another website.

Ms. Coughlin asked whether the survey would require funding. Ms. Kheyfetz said the $11,000 is calculated to include some money for things like photocopying a survey because we can't expect everybody to only engage with us through a computer. They believe the $11,000 will cover the design services and what we're calling the associated service services and we're not planning to hire an outside professional to do a survey. We haven't discussed whether the survey would be mailed or made available in public locations, such as the libraries, Town Hall and the Senior center. We may need some funding to do the outreach, but we do not have a figure for that yet.

Mr. Behery asked why the Committee will only present one image to Town Meeting when any design service will give you three or four choices to work with and presenting this to Town Meeting. Ms. Kheyfetz said it is not set in stone that it needs to be one image that's brought to Town Meeting, but I don't think the Committee should present six images to Town Meeting. She said that Framingham presented their old seal with slight changes that they needed to make because they went from town to a city and one was a new seal and they had the voting based on that. It is not outside the scope of possibility that there would be two options or something like that, but the Committee should narrow it down to probably two choices based on town-wide input.

Mr. Rooney noted that, at some point, you will get to two options to present to Town Meeting and the work you're doing is designed mainly to serve the purpose of the Town Clerk's office to have a redesigned Town Seal to put on documents and such. If Town Meeting approves it, beyond the Town Clerk's office, my understanding is that it's going to be up to individual departments to decide whether they want to put it on the vehicles or not. Ms. Kheyfetz said it's difficult to answer that question because the way we got to the images on the trucks and the police officers patches is that they were all derived from the Town Seal image that was approved in 1980. Until that point, all the departments were using different things and that is still the case today, with slight variations of the same thing. To my knowledge, there never has been a mandate that you must use this kind of image. Our Committee is starting with changing the Town Seal and we will make everything available, and do everything we can to be helpful for departments to make the change to the new Town Seal if they choose. But the actual mandate is for the embosser that the Town Clerk is required to use. Ms. Kheyfetz stated that she, personally, would like to have a unified image across all of the Natick departments, but that is not up to the committee. In the course of development of the implementation plan, they will endeavor to figure out what those costs are. She stated that she didn't think anyone envisions a wholesale replacement; more likely it will be, as things wear out, they'll be replaced with the new imagery.

Ms. Wollschlager asked whether their RFP will include multiple revision levels because, depending on the number of revisions, there will be an increased cost. Ms. Kheyfetz said the ultimate RFQ has to include the number of revisions that we plan to have, and we have not finalized what that number is. We're basing this on the estimates of a typical design and review project, knowing that it's going to have multiple rounds of review.

<u>Comments from the Public</u>

Mr. Ostroff thanked Ms. Kheyfetz for her presentation and all the Committee's diligence from the time we started talking about this in June 2020. Mr. Ostroff wanted to make it clear to the Finance Committee, as you get into debate and motions and voting, where we're at in the process. Last November, the affirmative vote of Town Meeting was "to establish a Town Seal Review Committee of up to seven individuals appointed by the Moderator, said committee to include persons suited to the charge of the committee by their interest and familiarity with history, design, and civic participation, and whose charge shall be to review the history of Town Seals in Natick; to propose a new Town Seal after a public process that shall include consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders including members of Indigenous communities; to hold at least one public forum; and to provide a report and recommendation to a future Town Meeting that shall consider implementation of a new seal; and further, to appropriate $2000 from Free Cash for purposes of providing honoraria to individuals for consultation with the committee, to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator." Mr. Ostroff noted that the Committee had made considerable progress since they were formed in January, and in working with a designer, it could be quite some time before the Committee is in a position to answer many of the good questions that have been raised tonight - things like implementation, certainly very important. At Town Meeting, it was made clear in the debate that this is just about the Town Seal. But as the chair and the Finance Committee noted, that would be the foundation upon which other branding and logos could be standardized. That's a worthy goal, but it's really within the domain of town administration to see if they want to carry that forward. Mr. Ostroff said the implementation plan would include consultation with departments to gain and understanding of the incremental cost to utilize the redesigned Town Seal outside of the Town Clerk's office. He opined that the TSRC has been meeting in good faith, and is offering a progress report and a request to fund design services. In addition, he said that doing group design in the public sphere is very difficult, and he is grateful to those will to serve on the TSRC. Mr. Ostroff ask the Finance Committee to recommend favorable consideration because this committee is carrying out the overwhelmingly expressed will of Town Meeting. Many of the questions asked tonight are very good input, but are better suited for a future Finance Committee hearing when there is more meat on the bones and the process is more fully advanced.

Mr. DeLuca moved to recommend favorable action on article 36 motion A, seconded by Mr. Evans voted 14 – 0 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate - None

Mr. DeLuca moved to recommend referral to the sponsor on Article 36 motion B, seconded by Mr. Coffey voted 2 –12 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = no	Mr. Grome = no
Mr. Coburn = no	Ms. Monahan = no
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = no
Ms. Coughlin = no	Mr. Resmini = no
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = no
Mr. Evans = no	Ms. Sciarra = no
Mr. Gillenwater = no	Ms. Wollschlager = no

Mr. Evans moved to recommend Favorable Action on Article 36 motion B, seconded by Mr. Pope voted 12 –2 – 0.

Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = no	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = no	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Debate

Mr. DeLuca said he is referring this to the sponsor because he thinks there needs to be a little bit more legwork done before we get to a point where we fund this and therefore scope of work. The legwork includes getting input on the design from the public from Natick constituents and that's important in determining the actual scope of work. It's a much different price difference between having just a giant N as our seal and an actual picture of something depicted, like our current seal. The Committee should also provide information from that community outreach in a report to the Finance Committee. He also stated that he would like to see alternative funding sources investigated before allocating tax dollars to this.

Mr. Coffey said he is concerned about the financial aspect of this. Right now, we're being asked to put forward $11,000 with no idea what the ultimate cost of this is going to be. He'd rather there be a much more concrete idea of what it's going to cost. For instance, if you change the Town Seal, police officers would have to change the logos on their uniforms – five long sleeve shirts, 5 short sleeve shirts, and a couple of jackets for each police officer. He opined that until we know what this is going to cost the town, he cannot approve this because he doesn't know what it's going to cost us in the long run.

Mr. Evans said he would recommend that his colleagues on the Finance Committee, especially those new to the Finance Committee to read the Recommendation Book for Fall 2020 Town Meeting. There was lengthy discussion at Finance Committee about what the problems were with the existing seal. Also, what's noteworthy is the differentiation between the Town Seal, and the town logo - those are separate things. And, you know, as far as uniforms and things like that, that isn't necessarily affected by this, right, the Town Seal is the legal seal for documents received or processed by the Town Clerk (the embossed seal). That is differentiated from the town logo. The town doesn't have to use the Town Seal, a town can opt to use the Town Seal in the town logo, but it is not required. In addition, the sponsors noted that the town has multiple variations of the town logo in use at the present time. In his view, he thinks the TSRC fulfilled, at least to this point, their remit from the moderator. Allocating $11,000 to design a Town Seal is not an unrealistic figure. The sponsor also said that they are going to review choices of the town seal throughout the town and try to get to two options to bring to Town Meeting. It is clear that, with the nearly unanimous vote of Town Meeting to form this Committee, that we should vote favorably on this to move it to the next step.

Mr. Pope said he see this as being a deliberative process that has been going on that when Town Meeting made this vote, they were focused on changing the town seal and they would envision one day that town departments would consider using this new seal as the basis for the logo across and there might be more funding required, but they're not at that point yet. The town is at the point of considering what the Town Seal might look like and funding the committee to get design work done and for the Committee to do outreach to as many sources they can to get feedback. The sponsors provided information on the estimated costs were for this design work. This Committee has done good work that they've done and we should give them the funding to move ahead and find out what's best for Natick.

Mr. Coburn noted that the nature inherent nature of this process is a little bit chicken-and-egg. The potential scope of this change is within a wide range, but that range is big and decentralized and there are many decision makers who are not members of the multi-member body appointed by the Moderator and do not report to the same central authorities who are going to be wondering whether or when to move to using a new logo based on the redesigned Town Seal. In order to make that decision, they need something concrete on which to base that decision and that's not unreasonable. He said that it takes a little investment to and I don't think that $11,000 is an unreasonable amount to start this process. He also appreciates that the motion puts the expenditure under the control of the Town Administrator who will be able to work with the TSRC, department heads and decision makers to get a good result. The decision on when and how to utilize the new town seal is a great theme for the next phase of the committee's work.

Kat Monahan said the committee has done some great legwork so far to give us this information. She noted that she disputes the idea that the costs will spiral out of control as to who may or may not adopt a design that doesn't exist yet. These are good points to discuss after the town seal work is completed, but uniforms and trucks get replaced every year and changing the logos on those is not something that will happen overnight.

Ms. Coughlin said that she is reluctantly going to vote favorable action and agree with everything that the maker and the seconder of the referral motion said, She commended the presenter for doing a wonderful job, but noted that her reluctance is because she dislikes having placeholders for money, but she does recognize that they do need to start the design work somewhere. She also suggested that the TSRC consider mailing the survey to make a more equitable as not everyone goes to these places in town that were mentioned as sites to get the survey and something as significant as changing the town seal should be accessible to every single person in town

Mr. Behery said, in his work he works with design in many different forms, and the ask here is completely within scope. He noted that the Committee has a difficult job because they have to present the design(s) to a large audience with a variety of opinions, as it is very difficult to design by committee. This is the first step to create a design and the Committee presented a good plan with a clearly defined process. This process is the same way that I would do it right doing it - they need to get idea about rough estimate, then you go about it step-by-step. Everybody agrees that this change is really important for the purpose, so we cannot ask tie the hands of the TSRC when the town and the state have to make the change. He thinks this small amount of funding will start process

Mr. Rooney said he now fully understand the scope of what the TSRC was asked to do, noting that all the other issues raised are not within the scope of what they were asked to do, so he will support this. Through our approval, he expects the Committee to do within their power to stay within the budget of the funds that we've approved.

Ms. Wollschlager said she would not reiterate the excellent points made by my colleagues and thanked Ms. Kheyfetz for adroitly fielding our questions and thanked the Finance Committee for bringing up all these questions because our Committee has given the TSRC a lot to think about and this information will be very useful for Town Meeting as well.

Mr. Evans moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Coburn, voted 14 – 0 – 0
<u>Roll-call vote:</u>

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Rooney = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes

<u>Meeting Minutes</u>

September 2, 2021 minutes:

Ms. Wollschlager moved to approve the September 2, 2021 minutes, as amended, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, voted 11 – 0 – 2.
<u>Roll-call vote:</u>

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. DeLuca = abstain	Ms. Sciarra = abstain
Mr. Evans = yes	Ms. Wollschlager = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	

September 9, 2021 minutes:

Ms. Wollschlager moved to approve the September 9, 2021 minutes, as amended, seconded by Mr. Gillenwater, voted 11 – 0 – 2.
Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes
Mr. DeLuca = abstain
Mr. Evans = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Grome = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = abstain
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

September 14, 2021 minutes:

Mr. Gillenwater moved to approve the September 14, 2021 minutes, as amended, seconded by Mr. Grome, voted 11 – 0 – 2.
Roll-call vote:

Mr. Behery = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes
Mr. Coffey = yes
Ms. Coughlin = yes
Mr. DeLuca = abstain
Mr. Evans = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes
Mr. Grome = yes
Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Resmini = yes
Ms. Sciarra = abstain
Ms. Wollschlager = yes

Meeting and Subcommittee Scheduling

Ms. Wollschlager said the Finance Committee is meeting every Tuesday and Thursday, until at least October 5, and the Zoom link will probably be the same for all those meetings and I'll try to get everything posted as quickly as possible. I think we already have a lot of stuff for Thursday, and will have a lot of stuff for next Tuesday too as soon as I get that meeting posted. She said we're getting very good cooperation from town administration on things and it's very much appreciated.

Mr. Evans said there is an Education and Learning subcommittee meeting tomorrow afternoon, 5 PM to 6:45 PM. Tonight, we heard a lot of information tonight about grant funding and federal funding so one objective of this meeting is to understand what's been committed to NPS and to get an idea of what their financial needs are from town-generated revenue. This will let us know what's covered by grants and what's been spent so far using these grants so far. As you also heard earlier, there are varying different timeframes that these grants cover: 1) ESSER (Elementary School and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) that's specifically in response to helping NPS respond to COVID. It includes all the education implications of COVID including anything from pool testing through hiring people to help remedy some of the issues that have arisen as a result of virtual learning environment. There's a lot of things with a lot of moving parts so we're working with NPS administration to get a clearer picture of what their financial picture looks like heading into next fiscal year. Mr. Evans said he sent out a Zoom link to the Committee with information on the spreadsheets. There's a lot of detail, so I'd encourage people to look at the summary pages in the worksheets.

Ms. Wollschlager said that information will come in handy as we get to our fiscal articles, which we're still hoping will be available by October 5, but that's going to be predicated on certified free cash availability. At this point, that looks good

Mr. DeLuca referred members to U.S. Treasury Department ARPA website to get an understanding what that funding is to be used on. One area that he highlighted was that it's geared at the systemic public health and economic challenges that contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic.

Mr. Evans moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Grome, voted 11 – 0 – 0
<u>Roll-call vote:</u>

Mr. Behery = yes	Mr. Grome = yes
Mr. Coburn = yes	Ms. Monahan = yes
Mr. DeLuca = yes	Mr. Pope = yes
Mr. Evans = yes	Mr. Resmini = yes
Mr. Gillenwater = yes	Ms. Sciarra = yes