



**TOWN OF NAHANT**  
**Advisory and Finance Committee**

**Members**

Robert Vanderslice, Co-Chair  
John Fulghum, Co-Chair  
Barbara Beatty  
DeWitt Brown  
Jeff Lewis  
Dana Sheehan  
Julie Tarmy  
Judy Zahora

Tuesday February 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Beatty, Brown, Lewis, Fulghum, Tarmy, Vanderslice, Zahora

Members Absent: Sheehan

Others Present: D. Palombo, A. Barletta, A. Antrim, A. Nieto, Call-in

Meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Barletta went through the FY2022 Warrant Articles

- Art 1 & 2: transfers – snow and ice – only two that impact current fiscal year
- Art 3: prior year bills – as we get closer to meeting, we will have \$ amounts
- Art 4 & 5: salary classification and wages for appointed and elected position – no new union agreements this year
- Art 6: omnibus
- Art 7: water and sewer enterprise
- Art 8: typical authorization to use enterprise funds for water/sewer breaks, emergencies – amount is usually \$30K
- Art 9: rubbish enterprise
- Art 10: \$50K to compost removal
- Art 11: Chapter 90 Highway paving
- Art 12: Recreation revolving account – annual article
- Art 13: intentionally left blank for now -article to create a revolving account for permitting – essentially would be for ConCom & ZBA application fees. Application fees would go into this account and the we could spend from that account to pay for advertising fees, professionals, anything that these committees might need. This year, because of all the details that come along with Zoom/Webex meetings, the published notices are much longer and therefore cost more to print. Until this account is set up, applicants will have to pay meeting notice costs directly. Going forward, we can increase our fees, and this would cover costs. Professional cost could be, for example, Kristin Kent who heads ConCom sometimes acts as an agent for the town and puts time in over weekends to investigate or do site visits – which falls outside of the responsibilities of a volunteer. We could also pay for agents from out of town to act on our behalf:
- Art 14 & 15: OPEB and Stabilization: These amounts fall in line with the commitment made with 2 ½ override to contribute to these funds annually. Also follows recommendation of Division of Local Services from 2015 to build up these funds. These funds protect our bond rating. Goal is to put \$25K annually to OPEB and to eventually bring the Stabilization fund to \$1million over time.
- Art16: Paving - \$100K to supplement Chap. 90 fund annually. Normally we borrow this amount, but this year we can use free cash to pay.



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Art 17: MWRA borrowing – 0% interest loan. This is an authorization, does not require that we borrow. Good to have in place if needed. Need comes down to Capital Plan

JF: question on Art 16: Plan this year from free cash. Does this cover us if we do not have free cash available?

AB: We need the authorization to be able to borrow if necessary.

Art 18, 19, 20: Capital borrowings that were on warrant last year which were pulled due to COVID. 18 is for Municipal Finance software. This will be increased by \$50k due to current cost. A. Nieto agrees that this would be the best of the best and most Mass communities use it. Current system is the most difficult Allison has ever used. Not user friendly. With Munic, individual dept heads could run reports. 19 is Police Capital – two-way radio communications. Old system, communication difficult between station and officers in the field.

JT: Did police recently receive a grant for this?

AB: That was for portable radios – used by reserve officers.

20: DPW capital – last year we were borrowing for Utility truck and backhoe We will use free cash for utility truck. We are currently renting a backhoe, with rental fees going toward purchase. The amount this year is less than was planned for last year.

Art 21: CPC – there will be a number of subarticles under this article. There may be potential changes to some of last year's requests and some new requests for this year. We do not have these specifics as of this date.

Art 22: Eminent Domain – to authorized acquisition of a parcel of land from Northeastern at East Point. The CPC article to fund precedes this article. If CPC article does not pass there would be no imminent eminent domain.

Art 23: Coast Guard Housing Design & Development

JZ: suggests moving this article above Eminent Domain due to concerns that Eminent Domain will take a lot of time. Move to before CPC as well.

AB: Will talk to BOS about moving this placement. Agrees CPC will be a marathon to get through. Eminent will be the heart of the meeting.

BB: Clarification as to whether 'easement' should be included in Eminent Domain article.



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AB: will make a note to check.

Art 24: Waste water by-law amendment– required per Mass DEP and administrative consent order. All communities are being handed pressure to include 'inflow and infiltration' in to bylaws of waste water removal. Language with DEP currently for approval.

Art 25: Police by-law amendment – firearms discharge – current by-law states that firearms cannot be discharged within 300 yards offshore. BOS is looking to increase.

Art 26: Snow removal on sidewalks – language pulled from Swampscott by-laws. This can be a hot topic. BOS has ability to give waivers to disabled, elderly, etc.

Art 27 & 28: On last year's warrant. Short-term rental excise. Revenue source which would come from non-residents. 27 authorizes the tax. 28 creates a committee.

JZ: How would you know someone is renting to someone else:

AB: If you Air bnb or VRB- people need to register with the state. We want to make sure there are regulations regarding fire alarms, emergency egress, parking, trash.

Art 29 & 30: Marijuana excise and by-law. Town has received inquiries. Town voted in favor of legalizing marijuana on the State ballot question, we cannot prohibit this business in town but can limit liquor sales outlets. We can limit it to just one under art 30. Art 29 will levy the tax.

JZ: If this business comes into town they pay a fee, correct?

AB: They are required to have a community host agreement and have a public meeting in order to get their state approval.

Art 31: Veteran's work-off program. Similar to current senior work-off program

Art 32: Senior deferred property tax – submitted by Assessor's office. This would lower the interest on deferred tax payment for senior from 4% to 2.5%.

Art 33 & 34: 192 sq-ft section on Antigo Way. Corner of home extends over roadway. Roadway was laid in a spot that differs from the existing map. This would change the map location. Procedurally requires vote at Town Hall:

JZ: Does resident pay for this piece of property?

AB: Yes. This will go to TOLSC for review and value would come from Assessor's office.



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JZ: Do we have survey and maps related to this?

AB: Yes. They will be available in the clerks office. The responsibility for these surveys is put on the resident.

Art 35: Tree by-law – effort through SWIM to have town become a ‘Tree City’. BOS, DPW, Town Manager supportive. Cost would come from the existing Tree fund in DPW budget.

JZ: Does this include trees blocking the view?

JT: Not this in particular, but we were waiting for verbiage.

AB: Not sure this would be a part of this article. Would want to talk to Vi.

JL: Remembers going to legal review about private property.

JT: It had committee vs private property. Did research on this. Town or committee could insist private person to treat a diseased tree.

JF: Remembers revisions to text. Will check documents and talk to Vi. Believe concerns were dealt with reasonably.

Art 36: Parking violations. We were talking about the ability to increase parking ticket fees. We discovered that we already charge the highest amounts possible but can only find the town accepting section 20A in 1964. We need to adopt 20 ½ to bring verbiage up to match fees being charged.

AB: We have actually ramped up ticketing and have realized in only six months what we collected in the previous 12 months.

Art 37, 38 & 19: Citizens petitions originally on last year. Best option for Art 37 – Lowland’s drainage - would be to borrow ‘up to’ \$100K.

JZ: Doesn’t a citizen’s petitioner have to state where the money will come from:

AB: It does. We will be working with the petitioner to make the verbiage work. If the town did not think at petition could not be handled, we would make that argument on the floor. The petitioner would have to then identify where the funds would come from. We mention at the start of Town Meeting that the reserve fund will be held harmless. We do want to make this article work and we do need to include it in the article but feel the language needs to adjusted.

JZ: If the Town feels it is something we need, why are we continuing it as a Citizen Petition?

AB: They met the requirements with signatures, so it has to be present as thus. Town can offer as a floor amendment.

JZ: Can we ask the citizen to withdraw this petition and put it on as a regular article?

AB: In order to withdraw, all those who signed the petition would have to sigh for withdrawing.



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Discussed the history of providing 'No Recommendation' as a policy or simply as an item by item need. JF will check fact vs mythology – not aware of any overt language citing to not make a recommendation on Citizen Petition. We have made 'no recommendation' when article was not clear, did not have all the information, not integrated properly into the system. There is no 'blanket we will not weigh in'.

RV: Agrees with JF – may be policy or tradition – no set rules.

DB: Does not agree that Cit Pet should have money in it, even though this is a very good cause.

RV: If it is part of a capital plan, it should come from the BOS not a Cit Pet.

JF: FinCom has at times seemed dismissive of Citizen petitions – due to misuse of language. We should not dismiss them just because they are not aware of how the system works.

JZ: Agrees, but some Citizen petitions are not items that FinCom has anything to do with.

AB: Agrees that we are not required to make a recommendation, but where there is a financial impact there should be consideration by FinCom. We want to make sure citizens are informed – respect the process – we are governed by open town meeting – citizens have the right to petition. Down want to interfere with originality. Will take to BOS for feedback and the lead petitioner.

Art 40: Continuing Committees – Some are in the Charter so do not require a vote. Some were not created at Town Meeting, and some are defunct, some have the wrong name. We can eliminate end dates or extend it so that it is not an annual renewal. Just do it for those that need renewal. – still have to work to find which committee requires what.

Missing this year is the usual article on gifts. Checked with legal. Don't have to vote at Town Meeting. We can accept gifts if the BOS votes to accept. Possibly could include a report on gifts received in the Annual report or in the Warrant. Trying to eliminate articles that are not necessary.

JZ: This would be nice to include. A little bit of good news.

AB: That's the warrant.

JZ: question on compost article.

AB: We have only done one year. Did not include last year due to COVID. This was a three-year process to clean everything out. Money comes from retained earnings in Rubbish enterprise. Comes from rubbish fees paid by taxpayers. Going forward: to run it as a true compost site, a additional person would need to be hired. Running it as a transfer station would be best. Residents use it to deposit yard waste and town removes on a yearly basis.

JF: Can you remind us about possibly formation of committee to assess how trash fees are used?

AB: Has a call scheduled for tomorrow with Waste Management. We currently have a one-year contract up for renewal soon. Volatility of recycling – tonnage has gone way up due to home deliveries.



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Revamped distribution of enterprise in fees based on per parcel. Now charging per unit. Multi-family homes no longer getting same fee as single family. Fee went from \$345 to \$352 per unit cost. Otherwise, it would be \$400 per parcel. Distribution is more fair now.

RV: Moving on to budget. Fire department first as Chief Palombo is in attendance.

AB: Brief Overview – Second largest change is to the Fire Dept budget. Experimented with ‘working chief’ style of management. Chief has done remarkable job, but this arrangement just doesn’t work with the needs of the Town/Dept. A full-time chief is needed.

JZ: Thanks for trying this.

D. Palombo states he will be retiring effective June 31, 2021.

AB: With the budget, we stuck to leveling off in supply except for ambulance supplies mandated by COVID.

JF asked if before going through budget we get a high-level explanation of how the Fire Dept works, for the benefit of the four new FinCom committee members.

DP explained 8-man rotation – groups of 2 people 24/7/365. Supplemented by 12-man call dept. Full-time Chief would be at the station Mon – Fri and would man phones and be an extra man on emergencies, in addition to usual Chief duties.

JF: Does this budget include contracts and full-time Chief?

DP: Pretty much level funded. Rec’d new Ocean Rescue Truck from National Grid for \$1, so this will not be in the Warrant. Dept is outfitting truck. Town has not paid for new apparatus since the 60s. Dept has one truck coming up in near future capital plan.

AB: In effort to save funds – transition of backfilling Chief’s position – plan to hire new employee soon to avoid having employee at Training and avoid OT before Chief Palombo retires.

JF: Will chief come from within?

AB: No determination made yet.

RV: Any Capital needs coming up?

DP: Looking to purchase radios.





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A.Antrim: There were capital needs in this year's budget in hopes of purchasing portable radios, which are getting old. Cap. Funds are going toward outfitting rescue truck. Very happy with this truck. Also seeking grant opportunity to get portables paid for – approx. \$4K - \$5k each. Long shot because radios are not at the 'desirable' old age. Working with Lynn on this.

Looking at other grants – emergency extraction equipment needs to be replaced. \$12K - \$13K each. Dept needs four. Good shot at grant \$.

Truck from 2004 needs to be replaced. Pump on this truck has issues – mechanics have tried to fix – needs about \$2K for each of 12 valves. Does not make sense to put this kind of money into this vehicle. Cost would be \$600 - \$650K to replace this vehicle. There will be an article on next year's warrant. As for building – too many issues. Everything is shared. Small living space, single bathroom, small common space. COVID has been challenging due to cramped space. Chronic ice dam – roof leaking. Rec'd grant for machinery used to remove carcinogens from vehicles. Cannot use this due to problem with drain in building floor.

RV: Would new fire truck fit in the existing building:

AA: Any new vehicle will not fit in rear bay, which currently housed the rescue boat. Still have temporary structure for now.

JL: Is there space for a reserve truck?

AA: We do not keep reserve vehicles. As for working chief vs full-time chief – Dean has done great job.

Lt. Doyle doing payroll, AA assisting where needed – just impossible to do this sharing effectively.

Current software – vendors have gone out of business during COVID. Researching other options. These additional duties are causing other projects to be behind. Not sustainable to go without a full-time chief.

JL: Would Munic softward have a module for each dept?

AB: yes.

JL: What does the \$350K for the munic include?

AG: The base would allow all depts to have access. We could possibly negotiate for extras. There are also other less expensive software programs that can 'talk' with Munic.

JZ: We want to make sure that what we have integrates well.

AB: Huge undertaking just to get the basic transition done.

JF: In the context of the needs for anew firehouse – are we in a place where we can come to an agreement on how to potentially move forward?

AB: We have been talking about reaching out to Congress reps to see what is available for funding sources. Potential event – 'Wall That Heals' - could draw politicians to town – give them a tour and make an ask. Last year, Senator Crighton was going to put an earmark of \$50K for Fire, but COVID stopped that.



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AA: News article – 2009 – Obama – one-year Fire Station construction grant. Built about 250 stations around country. Requirement is that depts are construction ready to receive grant. Would need to have design. Biden admin may try to do another one-year round. Incentive to move forward on station designs.

JZ: Need to find funding for design.

AA: Correct. The state has a process for this.

RV: No articles on this year's warrant for Fire Dept?

AB: Deferring to next year after looking at current budget. Due to COVID, we are behind a year on everything. Due to continued uncertainties of COVID, we did not want to add more borrowing. Will work with A. Nieto to get into Financial Planning and Forecasting over this coming summer.

Thank you Chief Palombo and Austin Antrim. Appreciate learning how everything works.

AB: Highlights of Budget:

- Extremely proud of budget
- Accomplishing big items while following goals that were committed to
- Only a 1.2% increase overall
- Importance of not exceeding prop 2 ½ cap
- Using free cash in line with what DLS recommended, mostly using for one-time expenses
- Using portion for operation costs
- Last year we would have jumped for joy that for the first time in many years we were not using all of our free cash to balance the budget
- When COVID hit, we thought best to move cash in to reserve fund.
- This year the budget does not use all free cash balance of about \$175K to drop this year
- COVID aide could be worse this year

JZ: why worse this year than last.

AB: Impacts of the unknowns. Residents and businesses are struggling – some businesses may not be able to survive much longer. Nahant is unique where most of our revenue comes from property tax, but there was definitely an increase of utility and prop tax bills not being paid by residents. We are taking a conservative approach on estimating revenues. 2% increase only.

AN: State support – we are getting 0% increase.

AB: Fire dept – second priority due to COVID making public health the #1 priority. Created separate dept in the general fund – Public Health. Increased budget appropriation from \$20K to \$117K.

Preparing to use these funds IF we do not get additional funding from state. We are currently paying





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more that \$117K on COVID expenses. Bringing this to the forefront so public is fully aware of expenses. We are applying for additional funding from FEMA.

Public Health and full time Fire Chief are the biggest changes to budget. Everything else has been right on.

JF: Looking through Public Health category – You talked about the logic for binging up nurse and inspector. What is the health assistant line item?

AB: Deb Murphy was putting in 40 – 50 hours/week before vaccine clinic. Posted for an assistant to split these hours up and support Deb. Position went from supporting flu clinic to everything COVID with 60 hours a week.

BB: Do we have someone at the vaccination clinic?

AB: we have three folks that we pay for at the clinic. Health Insp, Health Nurse, new Asst, and Carl Maccario. We have also sent over three more nurses that we recruited but Lynn is paying for from Cares Act money. We are looking for FEMA funds of \$50K. Not sure what the total cost will be. Constantly in touch with Lynn about staffing. Providing support in this way allows us to get our residents the opportunity to be vaccinated.

BB: Heard that vaccine process is going very well.

AB: It's an unbelievable operation. Success story. Nahant staff, Nahant health, Lynn Health, Lynn Staff, Lynn Mayor, Fire Departments, Nahant COA. Lynn Community Clinic is ranked at top of the state. They handled more that Gillette Stadium facility.

BB: Much praise for operation.

AB: Next phase of 65+ should hit end of February. Encourage folks to contact our call center and get on the list.

Another thing on the budget – borrowing amount only about \$800K. Last year we had a huge amount of borrowing with the sewer project. This year we really tried to tow the line.

Anticipated changes affected by:

- State \$
- MWRA
- Waste Management

JZ: Really well done.



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**RV: Ok approve minutes of February 4<sup>th</sup>. Motion made by Beatty, seconded by Brown. Unanimous ayes.**

JZ: What happened with upgrading Website?

AB: First draft looks good. Have not had oppty to go through with Dept heads. Ideally launch this July. Improvements would be:

- Easier to schedule meetings
- Posting electronically through clerk's office more efficient
- Make on-line payments easier

AB: Last item, we will put together the FinCom binders. Will let you know when these are available at Town Hall.

Public Forum: No questions or comments

Next meeting: Tuesday Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. Schedule has DPW, W/S, Enterprise funds. Going to try to get Police Chief.

JL: Haven't met with DPW.

AB: Thursday would be better. Snow removal and water break have kept DPW busy.

JF: Will reach out to School to see if they would be ready next week instead of 23<sup>rd</sup>. Push DPW to 23<sup>rd</sup>?

AB: Put school and Police on 16<sup>th</sup>. Good idea. Set up second Zoom account. Get your dates in soon to lock in. You can set up recurring meeting which would use the same meeting id each time.

**Motion made by Zahora to adjourn, seconded by Beatty. Unanimous ayes.**

**Meeting adjourned 9:39 p.m.**