



**TOWN OF NAHANT  
Advisory and Finance Committee**

**Members**

Robert Vanderslice, Chairman  
Julie Tarmy, Secretary  
Peter Barba  
Barbara Beatty  
DeWitt Brown  
Dan McMackin  
Dana Sheehan  
Deborah Warren  
Judy Zahora

Wednesday March 9, 2022 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Barba, Beatty, Brown, Vanderslice, Tarmy, Sheehan, Warren, McMackin, Zahora

Members Absent: none

Others present: A. Barletta, A. Nieto, T. Pierantozzi, L. Sherlock, P. Karas, A. Antrim, K. Marden,

Meeting Called to order at: 7:05

**Motion made by Barba to approve minutes of March 2, 2022, seconded by Beatty; Beatty, aye; Brown, aye; Warren, aye; Tarmy, aye; Barba, aye; McMackin, aye; Vanderslice, aye; Sheehan, aye; Zahora, abstain. Approved 8/1.**

Barletta gave a quick update on schedule of Warrant; Printer needs 10 business days plus 5 days for mailing. Final FinCom book needs to be to printer by April 25 at the very latest. FinCom schedule has it at 4/22 so this is fine. This is approximately 6 weeks away

**School Budget:**

L. Sherlock and P. Karas of School Committee and School Superintendent T. Pierantozzi spoke on the school budget. **Pierantozzi shared his screen with a PowerPoint of school budget breakdown.** Appreciated having FinCom liaisons, Beatty and Warren, at School Committee meetings. School budget shows and increase of \$111,394 over last year, or a 2.62 percent increase. New 5-year contract with Swampscott, 2.5% per year going forward. This model worked well for the last term of 5 years compared to a per pupil cost which would vary depending on the number of students attending Swampscott. Per Pupil cost went up dramatically during first 5-year contract, but we were not affected. No additional cost for additional students coming in to Middle and High school years. Teacher and Para contracts still being negotiated. Feel that Teacher contracts are nearing agreement and should be in place by Town Meeting. Para contracts may take longer but have smaller impact on budget. **Please see PowerPoint for breakdown of expenses.**

“breakage” savings to budget: Veteran teachers have retired or moved to other districts and were replaced with new, lower-paid teachers. There is a slight discrepancy of \$4 between school budget number and town number due to the ability of the town’s accounting software to round to the nearest dollar.

Sheehan inquired about possible capital improvements, HVAC, air filtration. Grants used?

Pierantozzi explained that the Johnson School if not a ‘closed’ building. Almost all spaces have windows that can be opened and have a Univac system that vents to the outside and brings in fresh air. All rooms have been equipped with air purifiers and fans, the larger spaces have more than one purifier. Air filters have been replaced and upgraded to finer HEPA filtration. Air purifiers are the same used in other town buildings.

Vanderslice inquired about possible events that could affect the budget. Pierantozzi stated that it could go off the rails, especially where Special Education costs are concerned. One significantly disabled student with multiple



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support needs could cost upwards of \$500K/year. The School works diligently to bring these students back to the Johnson School, or Swampscott, when it is determined to be the correct and best thing for the student. Zahora stated that, to be clear, we are being responsible to the child while being fiscally responsible. Pierantozzi agreed – it is not about saving money but is about getting the best education available.

Barba inquired about the ‘circuit breaker’ amount for State aid. Pierantozzi stated that currently for student costs that go over \$44K, state will kick in 25%. Transportation was not counted until last year. Currently the school has very few students who would qualify, which is a good thing.

As for foreseeable capital expenses, the roof of the school gym needs to be replaced. Cost could be between \$200K and \$300K. It would be an MSBA project. Will need to have an assessment. Looking at Gale Associates, the #1 ‘Envelope’ experts. Can’t go forward without a Scope and Sequence. Helps protect Town and school.

Superintendent Pierantozzi builds a budget that can succeed and handle unexpected expenses. Usually has unexpended funds at the end of the year that are returned to Town’s Free Cash. School does not spend money just because they have it.

L. Sherlock spoke highly of Superintendent Pierantozzi and has been impressed with his ability to work professionally with staff, teachers, and others while assuring that the needs of the students are met. Also stated how please the School Committee was that the Johnson School was able to offer in-school learning since fall of 2020.

**Pandemic relief:**

Sheehan and Brown met with Barletta and Nieto to discuss possible uses of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. \$1,050,000 in funds were awarded to the town. \$320,000 has been spent as of 2/28/22, leaving \$730,000. The town is looking at using some of this money to pay half the cost of a new fire truck, as opposed to borrowing the entire amount. ARPA funds do not require FinCom approval or recommendations, but input is welcome. These funds are approved by the BOS. Any balance not spent by 2024, will be returned to the state. There are a large number of guidelines that change frequently. These funds cannot be put in Free Cash or used to pay down dept. Can be used for one-time capital expenses. Barletta and Nieto are reaching out to financial advisor for guidance on the best way to proceed with the use of these funds.

Brief discussion on possible ways to spend these funds, including possible new Public Safety building. Barletta is reaching out to other communities to ascertain the expense of doing a study and creating a design plan. Wright Pierce will be looking into plans for a Public Safety building. Barletta recommends FinCom arrange to have them attend an upcoming meeting for a presentation. Brief discussion on Police Dept. process for rotating police cruisers. Barba inquired if this would be a good use of ARPA funds.



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BOS, Barletta, and Nieto want to be transparent on plans for use. Also need to look at keeping some of these funds for next year.

**Water/Sewer:**

SRF has approved \$17 million for work on water/sewer infrastructure. This amount has not been authorized by Town Meeting. This money would cover the cost of repairs to Ward Road pump station, Willow Road water main, Infiltration/Inflow issues, and causeway force main. The Town Meeting vote would be to authorize the borrowing of these approved funds, but they do not need to be completely used. SRF would be a 2.1% interest. If Town authorizes a lesser amount, we potentially lose the low interest rate for future funds. Strong Public education will be necessary. Barletta intends to hold public meetings, as well as write a full explanation to be included in the Warrant book.

Vanderslice suggested we move the scheduled meetings around to accommodate a meeting with Wright Pierce on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Fire and Police will be invited to present their budgets on March 16<sup>th</sup>. **Wright Pierce will be invited to present on March 23<sup>rd</sup>**. General Government will be moved to March 30<sup>th</sup>, to allow Barletta to attend.

Warrant has a total of 32 Articles. No major controversies known – possibly some concern over a projected CPC article on property located at 9 Little Nahant Road. This CPC Article has not yet been approved.

As of today, Town Meeting is expected to be held at Flash Road to accommodate a larger crowd and taking into account any changes to COVID numbers and concerns. ARPA funds could possibly be used to cover this cost.

**Motion to adjourn made by Brown, seconded by Barba. Zahora, aye; Warren, aye; Vanderslice, aye; McMackin, aye; Sheehan, aye; Brown, aye; Barba, aye; Beatty, aye.**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.**

**School PowerPoint document on record.**

**Respectfully submitted by Julie Tarmy, Secretary, as approved at 3/16/2022 FinCom meeting.**

