

**ARTICLE 1
(Town Administrator)**

To determine what sum or sums of money the Town will appropriate and raise, or transfer from available funds, for the operation of the government of the Town of Natick, including debt and interest, and to provide for a reserve fund for Fiscal Year 2003 (July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003), and to see what budgets for Fiscal 2003 will be reduced to offset said additional appropriations, or take any action relative thereto.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By the votes indicated below (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 1 and that the following Fiscal Year 2003 budgets be amended and/or supplemented as follows:

1) Budget: Sassamon Trace Revenue Deficit, by a vote of 8-2-0

<u>Action</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Other Financing Source	Free Cash	Sassamon Trace Revenue Deficit	\$200,000

2) Budget: Sanitary Sewer Collection & Disposal Services, by a vote of 10-0-0

<u>Action</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Appropriation	Water/Sewer Retained Earnings	Sewer Line Maintenance	\$40,000

3) Budget: Town Collector, by a vote of 10-0-0

<u>Action</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Transfer	Treasurer – Banking Services	Operational Staff Overtime	\$2,000

4) Budget: Utility Billing, by a vote of 10-0-0

<u>Action</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Transfer	Treasurer – Banking Services	Operational Staff Overtime	\$2,000

The purpose of this article is to supplement and/or amend the various Fiscal Year 2003 (current year) Town of Natick (hereafter “Town”) operating budgets. Specifically, the Finance Committee recommends two (2) budget/supplementations and two (2) budget amendments.

Concerning Item #1, the Finance Committee recommends that Town Meeting approve the additional funding for the Sassamon Trace Golf Course Budget Fiscal Year 2003 (FY03). The Finance Committee spent a tremendous amount of its time during this budget review cycle to understand the revenue shortfalls, based on current revenue projections, for FY03. Clearly there is a need to fund the anticipated shortfall due to the Town’s obligation under Massachusetts General Laws regarding “enterprise funds”.

The Finance Committee provided information regarding enterprise fund shortfalls at the time of Town Meeting’s initial approval of the Sassamon Trace Enterprise Fund. Any shortfall must be funded in the subsequent fiscal year. The Town administration anticipates the shortfall for FY03 to be up to \$288,000 (but possibly less). A majority of Finance Committee members voting on this matter agreed that it would be prudent to fund the account, as indicated above, so that the amount needed in FY04 to cover the FY03 shortfall is minimized. Therefore, by supplementing the \$200,000 recommended herein, the projected shortfall is estimated to be no more than \$88,000.

Concerning Item #2, the Finance Committee recommends that Town Meeting approve the additional funding for the Storm Water Master Plan project, which was approved at a prior Town Meeting. The Finance Committee understands that the initial appropriation was \$300,000. However, as our contractors proceeded to map out our storm water system they identified many more storm water system extensions which were not on record. Therefore, to complete the GIS element of the project the Department of Public Works and Town Administrator are seeking additional funding. The source of these funds is from Water/Sewer Retained Earnings – funds that can only be spent on water/sewer activities.

Concerning Items #3and #4, the Finance Committee recommends that Town Meeting approve the transfers to the requisite accounts. These funds from the Treasurer’s – Banking Service are available due to the diligent efforts of the Town Assistant Treasurer and departmental staff to minimize or otherwise make more cost efficient regular collection services. Specifically, a reduced reliance on the use of lockbox services has made these funds available. We concur with the Town administration that \$4,000 be halved and appropriated to the operational staff overtime line items in the Collector and Utility Budgets (\$2,000 to each budget as indicated above).

The Finance Committee seeks Town Meeting’s support for these budget amendments and supplementations.

Motion A:

Move that the town vote to authorize the sum of \$200,000 to supplement the Sassamon Trace Golf Course to further reduce the projected shortfalls for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2003.

And that the sum of \$200,000 be raised from Free Cash

Motion B:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works to fund the Storm Water Master Plan project.

And that the sum of \$40,000 be raised from Water/Sewer Retained Earnings.

Motion C:

Move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$4,000 from the Treasurer’s Budget originally voted under Article 3 of the Annual Town Meeting of April 9, 2002 to the Collector’s Operational Staff Overtime account in the amount of \$2,000 and the Utility Billing Operational Staff Overtime account in the amount of \$2,000.

**ARTICLE 2
(Town Administrator)**

To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, to supplement previous appropriations for the operation of the government of the Town of Natick for fiscal year 2003 (July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003); or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 9-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 2 and that the sum of \$410,000 be funded from FREE CASH:

<u>Action</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Other Financing Source	Free Cash	Replace Decrease in State Aid Projection	\$410,000

The purpose of this article is to appropriate funds to supplement Fiscal Year 2003 revenue or State Aid shortfalls (revenue projections) which would otherwise negatively affect operational budgets of the Town. As mentioned in the Finance Committee's cover letter to these Town Meeting Recommendations, State Aid was reduced for the current fiscal year - FY03.

The recommended \$410,000 from Free Cash was planned to be held for FY04 or FY05 Tax Levy and State Aid funding shortfalls. The Finance Committee understands and agreed with the Town Administrator, School Superintendent and School Committee that these reserve funds be used to fund State Aid shortfalls in the FY03 Budget. Furthermore, we understand that these funds were earmarked as the resource that would have funded Natick Public School salary and/or benefit increases for FY04.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$410,000 from Free Cash to be used as an other financing source in the general fund for Fiscal Year 2003.

**ARTICLE 3
(Town Administrator)**

To determine what sum or sums of money the Town will appropriate and raise, or transfer from available funds, for the operation of the government of the Town of Natick, including debt and interest, and to provide for a reserve fund for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004), or take any action relative thereto.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 13-0-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 3 and the appropriation of the sum of \$86,886,522 to operate various Town departments during Fiscal Year 2004.

The purpose of this Article is to fund the operation of various Town of Natick departments for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004).

As summarized in the Finance Committee's cover letter, the Town met with many uncertainties early in the Fiscal Year 2004 budget process. Moreover, we may face even more uncertainties of a magnitude that no one can quantitatively predict or know with certainty today. Nevertheless, we feel that the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget recommendations are founded on sound fiscal principles and supported by an in-depth assessment of our anticipated expenses and revenues.

We do feel it is important to highlight a number of budgets, as we have deliberated thoroughly such budgets, and have made alterations to their original form. Please review the following summary overviews.

The Finance Committee seeks Town Meeting's support for the appropriations as summarized by local government sub-divisions, as indicated below.

Revenues and Free Cash:

Revenues: As the Finance Committee began the budget process, we were presented a revenue picture that showed a dramatic change from the previous year's estimated revenues from State Aid. As indicated in the our cover letter to this Report, State Aid was anticipated to decrease from the previous year's level as much as fifteen percent (15%). The Finance Committee and Town Administrator and began with the assumption of that 15% decrease of State Aid. To that end, FY04's tax levy is supported with funds from Town reserve accounts. Specifically, we used \$2,696,506.00 from the current Free Cash Reserve, \$750,000.00 from the Stabilization Fund Account and \$900,000.00 from the Overlay Surplus Account – totaling \$4,346,506.00. Use of these funds, based on previous fiscal years' uses, is greatly increased due to the decrease in State Aid.

Notwithstanding the above, the Finance Committee reviewed the general estimated receipts and other available funds, to the extent that they are reasonably estimated based on past practices. That is to say, those estimates are conservative and realizable under the current economic paradigm.

Free Cash: First, we hope that Town Meeting members review the definitions in the back of this recommendation book, which include the definition of Free Cash.

We want to inform Town Meeting Members that the Town Administrator has laid a plan to utilize Free Cash as a "buffer" to any future State Aid decreases that may occur in Fiscal Year 2005. Therefore, any additional use of Free Cash for FY04 will diminish the FY05 use of Free Cash, among other reserve funds.

In addition, Town Meeting Members should be aware that use of reserve funds, especially Free Cash, for operating purposes negatively affects the following year's fiscal budget. Such could effect our financial well

being to the extent that future appropriations of Free Cash would cause a negative “spiraling effect” to our future fiscal position. This will cause dire, negative fiscal positions that would be extremely hard, at best, to make up during fiscally stable times, and could cause future service cuts that could be devastating.

Education:

The Education portion of our budget recommendation comprises two budgets – Natick Public Schools and South Middlesex Vocational School District – Keefe Technical School.

Keefe Technical School Budget: FY04 school enrollment of students from Natick has decreased by six (6). However, due to collective bargaining agreement increases (3%), increases in general and health insurances (17% and 15% respectively) and increases in utility costs estimates to be 21% (electricity cost increase of 31%), the Keefe Technical administrators and Keefe Technical School Committee have decreased budget line items such as equipment purchases and not filled vacant positions. The total increase, at this time, in the Keefe Technical Budget is \$41,000.00, based on FY03’s appropriation.

Keefe Technical School representatives informed the Finance Committee that they constructed their FY04 budget based on a ten percent (10 %) decrease in Chapter 70 – State Aid. Currently, the Keefe Technical School representatives understand that the governor’s proposed State Aid support regarding Keefe Technical School’s Chapter 70 support and Transportation funds could decrease 40% and 50% respectively. These facts alone exemplify the tenuous nature of the FY04 State Aid support and Natick’s contribution. To that end, Natick’s contribution could increase to approximately \$1,400,000.00 from \$1,190,994.00, if there are no changes in the staffing, revenues and fees, and other fixed costs of the school.

Representatives from Keefe Technical School should be available to provide additional information regarding this request.

Natick Public Schools Budget: The Finance Committee was presented a recommended budget from the Town Administration that was approximately \$79,000.00 less than the initial budget requested by the Natick School Department. Unlike last fiscal year this divergence is relatively small. We understand that the School Committee and School Administration has resolved the \$79,000.00 by modifying their request. Discussion of the budget resolution should be available from Natick Public School officials.

As the Town’s administrators were resolving the \$79,000.00 difference, the governor imposed a Section 9c cut of \$441,349 of which \$410,000.00 was cut from FY03 Lottery and Additional Assistance Aid. Collectively, the administrations and the Finance Committee fully anticipate that the FY03 decrease in State Aid to public schools will carry over into FY04.

The Finance Committee understands that the reduction of \$410,000.00 represents funds which were imbedded in the initial departmental request for salary increases. Thus, there is no funding in the current Natick School Budget for collective bargaining purposes.

The Finance Committee seeks Town Meeting members’ support of the Finance Committee’s \$33,898,552 FY04 Natick Public School Budget recommendation.

Public Safety:

Natick Fire Department Budget: A recommendation from the Fire Chief and Town Administrator was discussed at great length due to requests for changes in staffing and increases in staff overtime. These matters constitute most of the increases of the Fire Department Budget (approximately 4% more than FY03).

To that end, the Finance Committee voted a budget recommendation increasing staff overtime line items to a reasonable level for FY04.

Natick Police Department: The Police Chief and Town Administrator presented a budget which takes into account approximately two percent (2%) increase. This increase is due to small increases in staffing step changes, among other things. The Finance Committee voted a budget recommendation increasing such staffing costs for FY04.

Public Works Divisions:

Excluding the Rubbish Collection Budget, the Public Works (PW) budgets represent less than one percent (1%) incremental increase over their collective FY03 budgets. However, one PW budget increased more the 1% - Rubbish Collection Budget (9.1% increase).

Rubbish Collection and Disposal Division: Two primary reasons constitute the 9.1% increase as indicated above. First, the implementation of a new, one-year contract with the provider of the Town's recycling services has resulted in a \$157,000.00 increase in the Recycling – curbside line item. The remaining increases are related to increases in staffing costs.

Health and Human Resources:

Neighborhood Bus: The Finance Committee discussed with the Director of Community Development the proposed changes to the neighborhood Bus services, which will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for their approval. Details of the proposed changes are as follows:

Summary of Revised Recommendations

1. Provide a total of 98 hours of Natick Neighborhood Bus Service weekly, as follows:
 - a. On weekdays, from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM, and from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM, use one bus to provide service between the Natick Center Commuter Rail station and Natick Labs and Math Works, and between the Route 9/27 area and the station (total 20 service hours per week).
 - b. On weekdays, from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, use one bus to provide hourly loop route service (as shown) in one direction for a total of 10 hours per weekday (total 50 service hours per week). The 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM trips also will stop at Natick High School.
 - c. On weekdays, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, use one bus to provide hourly loop route service in the opposite direction for a total of four hours per weekday (total 20 service hours per week).
 - d. On Saturday, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, provide hourly loop route service in one direction (total eight hours per week).
2. Revise the Van service to provide service through the Council on Aging for a total of 30 hours per week. It may be possible to supplement this service with the Recreation Department in the mornings with volunteer drivers.
3. Provide Transportation services for Town functions (Concerts on the Common and Thursday Open Kitchen
4. Fully utilize available taxi voucher services as well as the MBTA's RIDE service to provide mobility to those who need it.

5. Hire a part-time transportation coordinator to oversee these services and to serve as single point-of-contact for anyone needing available transportation; supplement this part-time position with contracted or volunteer personnel to provide at least eight hours of phone coverage per weekday.
6. Enhance revenues by considering a 50% fare increase, but only at least three months after implementation of service changes. Pursue other avenues of revenue, including advertising on vehicles, maps, or schedules. Explore additional fare options as well as increasing their availability.
7. Ensure adequate vehicle maintenance through the Natick Public Works Equipment Maintenance Division.
8. Implement a significant marketing program, including an updated web site, installation of bus stop signs, and increased availability of schedules and maps.
9. Conduct an evaluation of the service changes after six months, and periodically thereafter, and continually consider prudent service modifications and expansion to capture additional ridership.
10. Institute an ongoing bus advisory task force.

Taking the above suggested changes to the operation of the Neighborhood Bus operations, the Finance Committee recommends the budget as provided to Town Meeting in this Report.

Parks & Recreation: The Finance Committee concurs with the changes made to the Parks & Recreation Budget, which is being presented to Town Meeting with a reduction of nearly \$15,000.00. The reductions in this budget are staffing changes and program supplies reductions or funding from alternative sources.

Human Services: The Finance Committee concurred with the Town Administrator's budget recommendation to reduce this department's salaries Management line item by one half of the FY03 appropriation. The Finance Committee gathered information regarding the services provided by this department and concluded that the Town Administrator's initiative to integrating some of these responsibilities into existing departments is a reasonable plan.

General Government:

Assessing, Town Collector, Town Comptroller and Town Treasurers Departments: The Finance Committee was presented a plan to move existing or unfilled town staff and/or positions, and implement new staff positions in these departments. Movement of these positions in conjunction with staffing and operating practices changes saves the Town nearly \$85,000.00, when considering the four departments as a whole.

Selectmen Budget: After hearing issues with regard to Fire Department overtime, the Finance Committee moved \$35,000.00 from the Employee Fringe Benefits and Insurance Budget to the Selectmen Budget. This change is in lieu of conducting a Fire Department operational and facilities study under the direction of the Board of Selectmen.

Unclassified:

Sassamon Trace Golf Course Enterprise Fund Town Meeting Members will note that this budget is only funded with \$400,000.00 (excluding the recommendation for \$278,715 for Sassamon Trace Golf Course Debt), not the Town Administrator's initial request of \$686,070.00.

To that end, we provide the following comprehensive report:

The Sassamon Trace Golf Course budget is a significant concern to the Finance Committee and the Town Administrator. The Sassamon Trace budget consists of two parts; 1) the operating budget and 2) the debt service budget.

- The operating budget consists of the course revenues and the operating expenses for the golf course.
- The debt service budget consists of the principal and interest on the bonds used to finance the construction of the golf course.

When originally contemplated and proposed to Town Meeting in 1996, expectations were and projections indicated that operating revenues would exceed operating expenses within three years and that net operating income would begin to contribute to and ultimately fund all of the principal and interest (debt).

In its opening year, Sassamon Trace failed to cover its operating expenses generating a net operating deficit. Projected operating deficits for FY 2004 in the Town Administrator's proposed budget are \$150,000. In addition to funding these amounts, the Town also funded approximately \$278,000 in principal and interest expense. Sassamon Trace is anticipated to continue to generate operating deficits and to require a complete debt service subsidy for FY 2004.

Although originally projected to have operating deficits for the initial 3-year period, serious concern exists about Sassamon Trace for the following reasons.

- First, the size of the operating deficits is larger than anticipated.
- Second, the general economic conditions prevailing when the decision to build the golf course was made have declined.
- Third, the fiscal outlook for the Town has changed substantially since the decision was made to construct and operate the golf course.
- Fourth, there are potential, though not yet definitive, indications that Sassamon Trace might not recover its debt service for an extended period of time, and that Sassamon Trace might not have reasonably been expected to have ever covered its debt service.
- Finally, Projections for Sassamon Trace may have been too optimistic from the start. Specifically, the Town Administrator indicated that Sassamon Trace may lack the capacity in terms of number of golf rounds to achieve its original projections.

Questions were raised by Finance Committee members regarding the level of monthly play and monthly expenses necessary to achieve the current total annual operating budget. Members expressed concern that the current level of monthly revenue required in peak months might not be sufficient to achieve the estimated annual budget. In response to questions from the Finance Committee, The Town Administrator indicated that it might take five to seven additional years for the golf course to cover its current operating expenses, and that longer term significant contributions from Golf course operations towards debt service may be partial or problematic.

Questions were also raised concerning some previous Golf Course payments and whether these payments were the responsibility of the Town or of the Golf Course management company. In response to questions, the Town Administrator outlined the nature of the Town's contractual commitments concerning the Golf Course. The Town is contractually obligated to fund the debt service, to continue with the management contract through December 31, 2003, and to pay for the lease of the land in Sherborn on which five of the nine holes are located.

The Finance Committee also heard preliminary information concerning other communities and the ways in which the structure of their golf course management contracts differs from Natick's

Four key issues/questions emerged from the Finance Committee's consideration of the Sassamon Trace budget.

- First, has the course been operated consistent with the original projection and the terms of the original RFP?
- Second, what is the realistic short and long term projection of the Golf Course operations? Specifically, when might the Golf Course realistically be expected to contribute to its debt service and what is the magnitude and timing of operating deficits in the meantime?
- Third, what opportunities exist to restructure or re-bid the Golf Course operations?
- Fourth, how best does the Town either cut its loss, or otherwise expedite its recovery?

To address the questions and concerns about the Golf Course, the Town Administrator has decided to conduct an independent audit of the Golf Course expenditures and the consistency of the original projection with the management of the course and with the original RFP. Also, preliminarily the Town Administrator will be proposing to the Board of Selectmen that a special study committee consisting of members of multiple town boards be formed to evaluate the future direction of the Golf Course on a thorough but expedited basis and report to the Selectmen and/or Fall Town Meeting.

To those ends, by unanimous vote, the Finance Committee directed the Chair of the Finance Committee to request this course of action of the Board of Selectmen, and to have the outlines of this course of action available and presented to 2003 Annual Town Meeting.

After careful consideration of the Sassamon Trace Golf Course Budget and recognizing that the Town has contractual commitments, and that the Town's best course of action remains to be developed, the Finance Committee recommends funding the proposed Sassamon Trace Golf Course operating expense budget of \$686,070.00 to \$400,000.00 and place the remaining \$286,070.00, of the proposed operating budget, in the Reserve Fund. The Finance Committee also recommends funding the Sassamon Trace debt service budget of \$278,715.

The Finance Committee's recommendations on the operating and debt budgets are intended to allow for the continued operation of the Golf Course pending outcome of long term plan and to compel the development of a long term plan, by the Selectmen, for Fall Town Meeting.

Employee Fringe Benefit Insurance and Self Insurance: As it was evident in last fiscal year's budget preparation, increased costs of group health and life insurance are of concern. This is not an anomaly by any means. Towns and private enterprises are grappling with how to deal with such increased costs. We must maintain such line item funding in accordance with our contractual agreements and equitable support for non-contracted employees. In addition to such increased costs, pension costs are also rising, although at a slower rate than group health and life insurance costs. As mentioned above, this budget was reduced by \$35,000.00 to accommodate adding such to the Board of Selectmen Budget for a Fire Department study.

Reserve Fund: This year the Finance Committee has presented budget recommendations to Town Meeting members, which have been further reduced from last fiscal year's appropriation. In addition, the Finance Committee placed a sizable amount (\$286,070), which is the balance not recommended to be funded within the Sassamon Trace Golf Course Enterprise Fund. As a result, it is our best judgment that we must maintain a Reserve Fund Budget at the recommended level.

**ARTICLE 3 Continued
(Town Administrator)**

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the following sums for the operation of the government of the Town of Natick for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004). The funds are appropriated for the specific purposes indicated in each budget and are to be expended under the direction of the officials indicated (in parentheses after the budget category).

	<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Responsible Official</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	<u>Section A Education – Natick Public Schools</u>		
PAGE B5	Natick Public Schools	(School Committee)	
	A. Salaries		\$27,143,201
	B. Operating Expenses		<u>6,755,351</u>
			\$33,898,552
	<u>Section A1 Education – South Middlesex Regional Vocational School District</u>		
PAGE B5	South Middlesex Regional Vocational School District	(Board of Selectmen)	
	C. Other		\$ 1,190,994
	Total Section A – Public Education		\$35,089,546
	<u>Section B – Public Safety</u>		
PAGE B6	Natick Emergency Management	(Fire Chief)	
	B. Operating Expense		\$ 1,100
PAGE B8	Natick Fire Department	(Fire Chief)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 5,102,764
	B. Operating Expense		<u>172,875</u>
			\$ 5,275,639
PAGE B10	Natick Police Department	(Police Chief)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 4,374,154
	B. Operating Expense		<u>228,125</u>
			\$ 4,602,279
PAGE B11	Street Lighting	(Town Administrator)	
	B. Operating Expense		\$ 301,000
	Total Section B – Public Safety		\$10,180,018

**ARTICLE 3 Continued
(Town Administrator)**

Section D – Health & Human Services

PAGE B20	Public Health Services	(Board of Health)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 287,924
	B. Operating Expenses		23,000
	C. Other		<u>15,000</u>
			\$ 325,924
PAGE B21	Council on Aging	(Council on Aging)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 181,675
	B. Operating Expense		<u>12,745</u>
			\$ 194,420
PAGE B22	Neighborhood Bus	(Director Community Development)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 153,426
	B. Operating Expense		27,700
	C. Other		<u>9,800</u>
			\$ 190,926
PAGE B24	Parks & Recreation	(Superintendent Parks & Recreation)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 434,477
	B. Operating Expense		40,357
	C. Other		<u>26,170</u>
			\$ 501,004
PAGE B25	Human Services	(Director Human Services)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 35,972
	B. Operating Expense		<u>15,660</u>
			\$ 51,632
PAGE B26	Veterans Services	(Director Veterans Services)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 90,932
	B. Operating Expense		6,350
	C. Other		<u>59,950</u>
			\$ 157,232
		Total Section D – Health & Human Services	\$ 1,421,138

Section E – General Government

PAGE B29	Assessing Department	(Director of Assessing)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 294,070
	B. Operating Expense		52,800
	C. Other		<u>80,000</u>
			\$ 426,870
PAGE B30	Board of Selectmen	(Town Administrator)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 291,306
	B. Operating Expense		136,510
	C. Other		<u>35,000</u>
			\$ 462,816
PAGE B31	Community Development	(Director Community Development)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 479,025
	B. Operating Expense		<u>31,780</u>
			\$ 510,805

**ARTICLE 3 Continued
(Town Administrator)
Section E – General Government**

PAGE B32	Finance Committee A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Finance Committee)	\$ 3,200 <u>3,860</u> \$ 7,060
PAGE B33	Information Technology A. Salaries B. Operating Expense C. Other	(Director Information Technology)	\$ 272,297 230,600 <u>279,045</u> \$ 781,942
PAGE B34	Parking Enforcement A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Parking Clerk)	\$ 32,904 <u>37,600</u> \$ 70,504
PAGE B35	Personnel Board B. Operating Expense	(Personnel Board)	\$ 1,500
PAGE B36	Registrar of Voters A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Town Clerk)	\$ 18,720 <u>14,000</u> \$ 32,720
PAGE B37	Weights & Measures A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Sealer Weights & Measures)	\$ 12,346 <u>1,150</u> \$ 13,496
PAGE B38	Town Clerk A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Town Clerk)	\$ 175,413 <u>13,200</u> \$ 188,613
PAGE B39	Town Treasurer A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Town Treasurer/Collector)	\$ 117,138 <u>70,450</u> \$ 187,588
PAGE B40	Town Collector A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Town Treasurer/Collector)	\$ 179,806 <u>100,200</u> \$ 280,006
PAGE B41	Town Comptroller A. Salaries B. Operating Expense	(Town Comptroller)	\$ 217,289 <u>6,750</u> \$ 224,039
PAGE B42	Town Counsel B. Operating Expense C. Other	(Town Administrator)	\$ 42,500 <u>250,000</u> \$ 292,500
PAGE B43	Town Report B. Operating Expense	(Town Administrator)	\$ 4,500
Total Section E – General Government			\$ 3,484,959

**ARTICLE 3 Continued
(Town Administrator)**

Section F – Commissions/Special Committees

PAGE B44	Natick Cultural Arts B. Operating Expense	(Cultural Arts Committee)	\$ 700
PAGE B45	Commission for the Disabled B. Operating Expense	(Commission for the Disabled)	\$ 1,300
PAGE B46	Historical Commission B. Operating Expense	(Historical Commission)	\$ 1,000
PAGE B47	Historical District Commission B. Operating Expense	(Historical District Commission)	\$ 500
Total Section F Commissions/Special Committees			\$ 3,500

Section G – Unclassified

PAGE B49	Debt Service And Lease Purchase Obligations C. Other	(Town Administrator)	\$ 7,528,483
PAGE B50	Insurance – Employee Benefits B. Operating Expense	(Town Administrator)	\$ 8,396,533
PAGE B51	Property & Liability Insurance B. Operating Expense	(Town Administrator)	\$ 309,500
PAGE B52	Reserve Fund C. Other	(Finance Committee)	\$ 536,070
PAGE B53	Contributory Retirement System C. Other	(Town Comptroller)	\$ 3,701,400
PAGE B54	Non Contributory Pensions A. Salaries	(Town Comptroller)	\$ 228,319
Total Section G – Unclassified			\$20,700,305

Section H – Enterprise Funds

PAGE B55	Sassamon Trace Golf Course B. Operating Expense C. Other	(Town Administrator)	\$ 114,756 <u>285,244</u> \$ 400,000
PAGE B56	Sassamon Trace Golf Course Debt C. Other	(Town Administrator)	\$ 278,715

**ARTICLE 3 Continued
(Town Administrator)
Section H – Enterprise Funds**

PAGE B57	Sanitary Sewer & Collection	(Director Public Works)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 580,763
	B. Operating Expense		123,500
	C. Other		<u>3,796,225</u>
			\$ 4,500,488
PAGE B59	Water Supply & Distribution	(Director Public Works)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 685,470
	B. Operating Expense		702,850
	C. Other		<u>236,000</u>
			\$ 1,624,320
PAGE B61	Water & Sewer Debt Service	(Town Administrator)	
	C. Other		\$ 1,954,592
PAGE B62	Water & Sewer Fringe Benefits	(Town Administrator)	
	B. Operating Expense		\$ 292,276
	C. Other		<u>529,421</u>
			\$ 821,697
PAGE B63	Utility Billing	(Town Collector/Treasurer)	
	A. Salaries		\$ 78,114
	B. Operating Expense		<u>79,730</u>
			\$ 157,844
Total Section H – Enterprise Funds			\$ 9,737,656

And that the sum of \$86,886,522 be raised from the following sources:

Tax Levy of Fiscal Year 2004	\$73,572,235
Free Cash	1,608,000
Enterprise Funds Revenue	9,555,750
Overlay Surplus	900,000
MBTA Contract Assistance	70,000
Parking Meter Revenue	50,000
Stabilization Fund	750,000
Title 5 Septic Tank Reserve	7,684
Cable Fees Receipts Reserved	24,674
Sale of Surplus Property	166,273
Water & Sewer Retained Earnings	181,906

**ARTICLE 4
(Morse Institute Library)**

To see what sums of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide, for the maintenance and operation of the Morse Institute Library, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 12-1-0 (February 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 4 and that the sum of \$1,342,915 be appropriated from the Tax Levy.

The purpose of this Article is to fund the operating budget for the Morse Institute Library for the Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 through June 30 2004). The detailed budget line itemization can be found in Section B of this Finance Committee Recommendations Report (Report). Morse Institute Library administrators and/or representatives of the Morse Institute Library Board of Trustees should be available to provide additional information and/or answer questions.

The Finance Committee seeks Town Meeting's support for this appropriation.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,342,915 to be expended under the direction of the Morse Institute Library Board of Trustees for the operation of the Morse Institute Library, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

And that the sum of \$1,342,915 be raised from the Tax Levy of Fiscal Year 2004.

**ARTICLE 5
(Bacon Free Library)**

To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise, borrow or transfer and appropriate for the maintenance of the Bacon Free Library, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a the vote of 13-0-0 (February 11, 2003), the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 5 and that the sum of \$84,497.00 be appropriated from the TAX LEVY.

The purpose of this Article is to fund the operating budget for the Bacon Free Library for the Fiscal Year 2003 (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004). The detailed budget line itemization can be found in Section B of this Report. Town Meeting may recall that the Bacon Free Library completed interconnection with the Minuteman Network for libraries. To that end, there is a decrease in cost items related to such interconnection. However, some of the increased costs in this budget's line itemizations are due to staff step increases, and heating and electricity cost increases. It warrants noting that the budget now shows a line itemization of "\$6,450.00", which represents an amount of funds provided by the library's trust for related capital improvements.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$84,497 to be expended under the direction of the Bacon Free Library Committee for the maintenance and operation of the Bacon Free Library for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004.

And that the sum of \$84,497 be raised from the Tax Levy of Fiscal Year 2004.

**ARTICLE 6
(Town Administrator)**

To see if the Town will vote to fix the salary and compensation of all elective officers of the Town of Natick for the fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2003 as provided by Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the General Laws, as amended.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 6 and that the salaries be set for the following Natick elective officials:

Natick Town Clerk	\$66,950.00
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The purpose of this article is to set the salaries of all elective officers of the Town. Natick has one such elective officer – Town Clerk. The Finance Committee recommends that Town Meeting approve the amount of \$66,950 for such salary.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to fix the salary and compensation of the following elective officer of the Town for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2003, as provided by Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Town Clerk	\$66,950.00
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**ARTICLE 7
(Town Administrator)**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise, or otherwise provide, a sum or sums of money as may be required for capital equipment for the various departments of the Town of Natick, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 7, and the sum of \$90,000 to be funded from FREE CASH for the following purposes:

Department	Description	Amount	Funding Source
Police	3-Police Cruisers & Other Related Electronic Accessories	\$90,000	Free Cash

The purpose of this article is to fund capital equipment purchases of the Town. Specifically, the Finance Committee is recommending that Town Meeting approve the appropriation request (\$90,000) for three (3) police cruisers, including other related electronic accessory equipment (in-vehicle computers).

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$90,000 to be expended under the direction of the Police Chief and the Town Administrator for the purchase of capital equipment as follows:

Cruisers (3) With Electronic Accessories	\$90,000
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And that the sum of \$90,000 be raised from Free Cash.

**ARTICLE 8
(Town Administrator)**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise, or otherwise provide, a sum or sums of money to implement a Capital Improvement Program, to protect the physical infrastructure of the Town of Natick, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 8 and an appropriation in the amount of \$102,000 to be expended by the various department(s) for capital improvements. The funds are to be appropriated and expended as follows:

Department	Description	Amount	Funding Source
Board of Selectmen	Soil Containment & Remediation	\$102,000	Free Cash

The purpose of this article is to fund capital improvements of the Town. Specifically, the Finance Committee concurs with the Town administration's recommendation to fund one class of capital improvement – soil contamination and remediation. This recommendation is a continuation of previous appropriations primarily for soil remediation projects at Lilja School (\$50,000), Murphy Recreation Center (\$22,000), Natick District Courthouse (\$15,000) and Natick Department of Public Works (\$15,000).

Last year Town Meeting appropriated \$270,300 for similar purposes at the above locations among others (Bennett Hemenway School and Eliot School - Oil Tank replacement). These FY02 appropriations were the first in a five-year plan to remediate soil contamination on Town-owned properties. We are pleased to report that the Bennett Hemenway School and Eliot School projects are complete.

The continuation of this appropriation will maintain the Town's compliance with applicable rules, regulations and laws regarding such related environmental remediation projects.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$102,000 to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator to remove and replace underground fuel storage tanks on town owned property.

And that the sum of \$102,000 be raised from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 9
(Town Administrator)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise, or otherwise provide, a sum or sums of money as may be required for the lease and/or repair of equipment for various departments of the Town of Natick, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Finance Committee recommends NO ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 9.

The purpose of this article is to fund any equipment lease and/or repairs. As of the time of this writing, there are no such request(s) and thus no action is recommended by the Finance Committee.

Motion:

No Action.

ARTICLE 10
(Commission on Disability)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise, or otherwise provide a sum of money for the purchase and installation of audio tactile push button walk signals at various intersections in Natick, curb cut and access route installation and repairs and to provide for disability awareness/educational materials to be used with the public and private sector or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 10 and that the sum of \$3,800 be funded from Free Cash.

Each year Town Meeting funds certain capital improvement projects, among other things, that are funded from handicapped parking violation fines. The \$3,800 being requested is 50% of such fines collected in the previous fiscal year. If appropriated, these funds will provide curb cuts at certain locations in the Town, including curb cuts at Speen Street, Hartford Street and Mill Street. In addition these funds may be used for educational materials or efforts related to the Commission on Disability. Commission on Disability spokespersons should be available to elaborate on such funding uses.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,800 to be expended under the direction of the Commission for the Disabled for the purchase and installation of audio tactile push button walk signals at various intersections in Natick, curb cut and access route installation and repairs and to provide for disability awareness/educational materials to be used with the public and private sector.

And that the sum of \$3,800 be raised from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 11
(Town Administrator)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or otherwise provide such sums of money as may be required for the payment of unpaid bills of previous years, incurred by the departments, boards and officers of the Town of Natick, or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Finance Committee recommends NO ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 11.

The purpose of this article is to appropriate funds to pay unpaid bills from previous fiscal years. The Town Comptroller reported that there are no such unpaid bills, at this time.

Motion:

No Action

ARTICLE 12
(Council on Aging)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 44, Section 53E 1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws which allows towns to authorize separate revolving funds to which shall be credited receipts received in connection with the programs supported by such revolving fund. The Council on Aging would establish a revolving fund for a subsidized transportation program with receipts credited to this revolving fund, expended by the Council on Aging Director with the oversight by the Council on Aging and not to exceed \$15,000 expenditures in fiscal 2004.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 11, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 12.

Each year Town Meeting authorizes the establishment of revolving funds. This revolving fund is a "re-authorization" of an existing fund under the direction of the Council on Aging Director and administered by the Natick Council on Aging. This fund supports transportation user expenses of qualifying elderly persons. Also, this program has been administered for a number of years. Members of the Council on Aging should be available to answer questions and detail the transportation program.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to authorize the Council on Aging Director, with oversight by the Council on Aging, to expend up to and including \$15,000 during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003 for the purposes of operating a subsidized transportation program for senior citizens, pursuant to Chapter 44 Section 53E1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, from the revolving fund established by vote of the April, 1995 Annual Town Meeting under Article 27 for receipts received in connection with the subsidized transportation program.

ARTICLE 13
(Town Administrator)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53E 1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to establish a revolving fund in order to utilize fees paid to the Conservation Commission by applicants pursuant to the Natick Wetlands Protection By Law for the purpose of hiring consultants; to authorize the Conservation Commission to expend money from said revolving fund; to establish a limit of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) on the total amount which may be expended from such fund in the fiscal year 2004; or take any other action relative thereto.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 8-0-0 (March 13, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 13.

Each year Town meeting authorizes the establishment of revolving funds. This revolving fund is a "re-authorization" of an existing fund for the use of the Natick Conservation Commission in accordance with the Natick By-Laws and the General Laws of the Commonwealth.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to authorize the Conservation Commission to expend up to and including \$25,000 during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003, in order to utilize fees paid to the Conservation Commission by applicants for the purpose of hiring consultants pursuant to Chapter 44 Section 53E1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, from the revolving fund established by vote of the October 2000 Fall Special Town Meeting #2 under Article 8.

ARTICLE 14
(Town Administrator)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53E-1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to establish a revolving fund to utilize money received from use of facilities at the West Suburban Arena, including without limitation rental charges, gate receipts and concession receipts, for the purpose of operation, maintenance and repair of the West Suburban Arena; to authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend money from such revolving fund; to determine a limit on the total amount which may be expended from such revolving fund in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003; or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Finance Committee recommends NO ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 14.

The purpose of this article is to establish a revolving fund for receipts received from the operation or use of the West Suburban Arena facilities. It was reported to the Finance Committee that the Town administration is not ready at this time to request the establishment of such fund under this article.

Motion:

No Action

ARTICLE 15
(Board of Assessors)

To see if the Town will vote to increase the Personal Exemption Amounts by 17.5% under the provisions of Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988 which provides for “Optional Additional Property Tax Exemptions” allowing an annually determined, uniform increase in the amount of exemption in General Laws, Chapter 59 Section 5 Clauses 17D, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 37A, and 41C (elderly person, disabled veteran, or blind person).

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 13, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 15.

The purpose of this article is to increase the personal exemption amount with regard to qualified taxpayers who meet elderly, disable veteran or blind person criterion, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws.

Town meeting may remember that it increased the exemption for qualifying individuals last year from 12.5% to 15%. This year Town Meeting is asked to approve an additional increase from 15% to 17.5% for such individuals. The Town administration estimated costs relative to action to be \$3,596.25 which will be funded from Overlay Account funds.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to increase the Personal Exemptions Amounts to 17.5%, as amended, under the provisions of Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988 which provides for “Optional Additional Property Tax Exemptions” allowing an annual determined, uniform increase in the amount of exemption in General Laws, Chapter 59 Section 5 Clauses 17D, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 37A and 41C (elderly persons, disabled veteran or blind person).

ARTICLE 16
(Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Natick By-Laws by adding a new Article 32, which reads:

Open Space Advisory Committee
Section 1 Composition, Term of Office

There shall be an Open Space Advisory Committee consisting of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Open Space Advisory Committee shall include one member of the Conservation Commission, one member of the Planning Board, one member of the Recreation and Parks Commission, and four at large members. Each person appointed to the Open Space Advisory Committee shall be a resident of the Town of Natick.

At the initial formation of the Open Space Advisory Committee the Board of Selectmen shall appoint three members to a three year term each, beginning July 1, 2003, two members to a two year term each, beginning July 1, 2003, and two members to a one year term each, beginning July 1, 2003. Thereafter each successor shall be appointed for a three year term.

Section 2 Powers and Duties

The Open Space Advisory Committee shall be an advisory body and a resource to the Board of Selectmen in carrying out the major goals outlined in the Natick Open Space and Recreation Plan and in revising the Natick Open Space and Recreation Plan as needed to comply with federal and Commonwealth of Massachusetts requirements and guidelines.

At least once during each calendar year the Open Space Advisory Committee shall report to the Board of Selectmen regarding its activities.

Or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 9-1-1 (March 13, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 16.

The purpose of this article is to amend the Natick By-Laws and add a new Article 32, which would permit the formation and appointment, by the Board of Selectmen, of an Open Space Committee. The proposed Open Space Committee's composition, powers and duties, and reporting requirements are delineated in the text of the article.

Members of the public spoke to the past performances and accomplishments of the Open Space Advisory Committee, which was constituted by the Board of Selectmen. The speakers also spoke to the future needs to continue such on an advisory basis with regard to the Natick Open Space and Recreation Plan. Proponents should be available to elaborate further on specifics of such advisory responsibilities.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to amend its By-Laws as stated in the warrant article.

ARTICLE 17
(Council on Aging)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of Section 51 of Chapter 184 of the Acts and Resolves of 2002, to change the following factors in the provisions of Clause Forty-first C of Section 5 of Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Laws by:

- 1) reducing the age of eligibility from 70 years to 65 years;
 - 2) changing the real estate to which the exemption applies from four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) of taxable value or the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) whichever would amount in an exemption of the greater amount of taxes due, to eight thousand dollars (\$8,000.00) of taxable value or the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), whichever would amount in an exemption of the greater amount of taxes due;
 - 3) increasing the eligibility amount for preceding year gross receipts from all sources from less than thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000.00) to not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) for an unmarried person and from combined gross receipts with spouse of not less than fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) to not more than thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) for married persons;
 - 4) increasing the eligibility requirement for whole estate, real and personal, from not in excess of twenty-eight thousand dollars (\$28,000.00) to not in excess of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) for single persons and from not in excess of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) to not in excess of fifty-five thousand dollars (\$55,000.00) for married persons; and
 - 5) increasing the whole estate exclusion for the value of real property occupied as the occupant's domicile from up to two (2) dwelling units in addition to the dwelling unit occupied by the applicant to up to three (3) dwelling units in addition to the dwelling unit occupied by the applicant;
- or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 14-0-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends REFERRAL TO THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND COUNCIL ON AGING with regard to the subject matter of Article 17.

The purpose of this article is to change and/or accept certain factors related to tax abatements in accordance with Clause Forty-first C of Section 5 of Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Law. The changes being proposed are criteria that would be followed for the eligibility for certain aged and income leveled taxpayers, who would receive an abatement of Natick property taxes.

This local option would provide for five key changes specified in the Article itself. The Article would increase the exemptions and abatements for senior citizens from real property taxes. Exemptions and abatements are currently granted by the Assessor to any person who qualifies and files for such relief. These exemptions and abatements are not subject to annual action or appropriation of Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee heard information and testimony from the Town Administrator and Town Finance Director. The Town Administrator and the Finance Director provided a detailed analysis indicating that the potential cost to the Town would approximate \$500,000 per year in lost revenue. This estimate was based on Town census and real estate property tax assessment data and the most recent assessed values in the Town. This analysis estimated the effect of adopting all five provisions of the Article. The Finance Committee also requested input from the Council on Aging regarding the potential cost of adopting this article. The Council on Aging does not have an estimate at this time.

ARTICLE 17 Continued
(Council on Aging)

The Finance Committee was informed that the revenue lost from exemptions and abatements cannot be made up from either other residential taxpayers or commercial taxpayers within the Town under the limits of Proposition 2 and ½. While generally supportive of providing tax relief for seniors, the Finance Committee is clearly concerned about the potential cost to the Town especially in the current fiscal environment.

The Finance Committee was informed that local options such as this Article 17 , if adopted by Town Meeting, cannot be undone by a subsequent vote of Town Meeting. Barring special permission of the Legislature, adoption of local option statutes, such as being proposed in Article 17, is permanent. The Finance Committee also inquired as to whether the five provisions of the local option could a) be adopted separately or b) could be adopted with different age or dollar amounts that do not go as far as the Article 17. The Finance Committee was also informed that the provisions of Article 17 would not be available to eligible seniors until December 2003 after the assessed values and tax rate are set for the next calendar year.

To that end, the Finance Committee recommends referral to the Town Administrator and Council on Aging, so that sufficient review of financial impacts and economic conditions both current and future are considered more comprehensively, and that the matter be proposed under a future warrant article.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to refer the subject matter of Article 17 to the Town Administrator and the Council on Aging.

ARTICLE 18
(Council on Aging)

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 59, Section 5K of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended by Section 52 of Chapter 184 of the Acts and Resolves of 2002, thereby increasing from five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) the maximum amount of reduction of a real property tax bill in a given tax year which may be granted to a person over the age of sixty (60) who provides volunteer services to the Town of Natick under the program established pursuant to Chapter 59, Section 5K of the Massachusetts General Laws; said increase to take effect in the fiscal year which begins July 1, 2003;

Or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 14-0-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends REFERRAL TO THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND COUNCIL ON AGING with regard to the subject matter of Article 18.

The purpose of this article is increase the total amount of real estate reduction that may be granted to residents over sixty years old, who provide volunteer services. Qualifying residents are currently limited to receiving a \$500.00 benefit when performing tasks for the Town in accordance with the provisions of the Board of Selectmen's related program, which is authorized under MGL 184, Section 52. This article seeks to increase the \$500.00 cap to \$750.00, but does not alter the criteria for the current program. If authorized by Town Meeting, this benefit or cap increase would become effective July 1, 2003. The Town currently provides a property tax work off program for certain eligible seniors. However, this Article does not seek funding for this increase.

The exact cost of this program would depend upon the number of persons volunteering under the program and the number of Town departments providing opportunities to serve. Finance Committee members asked questions as to whether the increase from \$500 to \$750 represented an increase in the amount per hour of service or represented an increase in the number of hours for which an individual could receive benefit. The Finance Committee also sought to understand whether more seniors would benefit by expanding the number of persons who receive the \$500 benefit or by increasing the amount for the current participants to \$750 since the funding for this program is subject to annual action and appropriation by Town Meeting.

Based on data provided to the Finance Committee during its hearing, the committee raised questions about the implementation and financial impact that the program would have. Taking into account these uncertainties, the committee is recommending that the matter be referred to the Town Administrator and the Council on Aging, so that additional data can be provided for future consideration.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to refer the subject matter of Article 18 to the Town Administrator and the Council on Aging.

ARTICLE 19
(Charter & By-Law Review Committee)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 90 of the Town of Natick By-Laws so that the language will apply to any amendment of the By-Laws and not just to the substitution of a complete new set as was done in 1967.

Rewrite Article 90 in its entirety so that it now reads as follows:

ARTICLE 90
TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 1 **Previous Actions Not Affected**

The adoption or repeal of any by-law or portion of a by-law shall not affect any act done, any right accrued, any penalty or liability incurred, or any suit, prosecution, or proceeding pending at the time of taking effect.

Section 2 **Time of Taking Effect**

The adoption or repeal of any by-law or portion of a by-law shall take effect when it is approved and published as required by statute.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 14-0-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT with regard to the subject matter of Article 19.

The purpose of this article is to amend Article 90 of the Town of Natick By-Laws – Transitional Provisions, having the effect of including any amendment of the By-Laws of the Town. This article is similar to one provided to the Finance Committee last fall. At that time, the committee recommended referral to the Charter and By-Law Review Committee and Town Counsel, which was approved by Town Meeting. Town Counsel did advise Town Meeting Members as follows:

“Article 56 of the warrant would repeal Article 90 of the By-Laws. Although this By-Law article may appear to be moot, I recommend that it be retained if the intent is to apply to By-Law amendments as well as to the original enactment of the By-Laws.”(Finance Committee Recommendation Report 2002 Fall Town Meeting)

Even though the above statement seems to concur with this article’s intended amendment, the Finance Committee unanimously recommends indefinite postponement at this time, with regard to the subject matter of this article.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote indefinite postponement with regards to the subject matter of Article 19.

ARTICLE 20
(Town Moderator)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 23 of the Town of Natick By-Laws in order to clarify or change eligibility for membership on the Finance Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 8-6-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 20.

The purpose of this article is to amend Article 23 of the Natick By-Laws – THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. Specifically, the proponent seeks to amend the current text of Section 1 – Composition, Term of Office. The Finance Committee studied the matter and jointly with the proponent developed amended text for Town Meeting Members’ consideration.

As Town Meeting Members may remember, this matter was referred last fall for further consideration. Issues such as Finance Committee Members’ participation on other appointed town committees and/or boards, removal from the Finance Committee due to appointment or nomination to a “Town Office” and exemptions to other “Town Offices” were taken into consideration. We provide a “redlined” version below for your perusal to illustrate such recommended changes:

Section 1 Composition, Term of Office

There shall be a Finance Committee, consisting of fifteen (15) citizens of the Town, ~~other than Town Officers, appointed or elected~~ appointed by the ~~The Town~~ Moderator shall appoint five (5) members each year for a term of three (3) years, ~~the terms of said members to expire on the first day of beginning May 1, so arraigned that five (5) members are appointed each year.~~ Persons holding an elective Town office, except Town Meeting member or constable, and those serving on appointed committees or boards that have responsibility for issuing permits, approving expenditure of funds, or exercising final authority over any matter are not eligible to be Finance Committee members. Finance Committee members may serve on committees that advise decision-making Town agencies or Town Meeting. No Finance Committee member shall serve for more than four (4) terms of a total of twelve (12) years. Any member of said Committee who ~~shall file~~ for any Town elective office except that of Town Meeting or constable shall cease to be a member of said Committee. ~~, or who shall be appointed to any Town Office except that of a member of a bargaining committee or of the Industrial Council, shall forthwith upon his qualification in such office if appointive or upon such filing if elective, and any member who shall remove from the Town shall upon such removal cease to be a member of said Committee.~~ Members may resign by sending a notice of resignation to the Finance Committee chairman, the Town Moderator, and the Town Clerk; and they shall resign when they are no longer eligible to be Finance Committee members.

In the Finance Committee hearings on By-law changes last fall, the Finance Committee was informed by the Moderator that the existing language in the By-law would preclude Finance Committee members from serving on ad hoc, special, advisory, or study committees of the Town. Town Counsel has informed the Finance Committee that the By-law is open to this interpretation and that no case law or statute prevents this interpretation.

The Town has a history of Finance Committee members serving on such advisory committees including: the Middle School Task Force, the Middle School Building Committee, the High School Building Study Committee, the Downtown Complex Building Committee, the Pay as You Throw Task Force, the Split Tax Rate Study Committee, the Charter and By-law Review Committee and the AQV/Country Club Study Committee. The consensus of the Finance Committee is that the Town is well served by this participation.

ARTICLE 20 Continued
(Town Moderator)

Although the Town Moderator, as the appointing authority for the Finance Committee, has not yet acted either to request Finance Committee members to resign from such special committees of the Town or to remove persons who currently serve on such special committees from the Finance Committee, concern exists about the clarity of the By-law and the future ability of Finance Committee members to serve on such special or advisory Town committees after Spring Town Meeting.

A majority of the Finance Committee recommends the changes outlined above to address this problem and to allow persons as constable to serve on the Finance Committee. A majority of the committee member believe that the changes to the By-law achieve this objective and keep important requirements such as elective office (other than Town Meeting Member) as incompatible with Finance Committee membership. The majority believes that the clarification in the proposed changes also maintains an important requirement that persons on appointed committees or boards which either a) issue permits (such as the ZBA or Conservation Commission), b) approve expenditure or use of funds (such as Personel Board or Conservation Commission) or c) exercise final authority or any matter (such as ZBA) cannot be Finance committee members. The majority requests approval of Town Meeting on these proposed changes so that appointments or re-appointments to the Finance Committee, which must be made by May 1st, can be made with both clarity and consistency with the Town's By-laws.

A minority of 6 committee members recommended referral to the Finance Committee to consider this Article in greater depth. The minority agrees that the Town has been well served by Finance Committee members participating in special, advisory or ad hoc study committees of the Town and that this practice should be allowed to continue. However, the minority believes that the wording of the proposed changes does not accomplish the intended purpose and that further analysis is necessary.

Specifically, the minority notes the following as problems. First, the proposed change makes only elective office or membership on certain appointed committees or boards reasons for ineligibility. Individual appointed offices such as Town Administrator, Deputy Town Administrator, etc are not precluded by the proposed change. Further, persons who are appointed to elected boards or committees because of vacancies on those boards or committees appear to be eligible for continuation on the Finance Committee. Vacancies on elected boards periodically occur and are filled through an appointment process until the next Town election.

For example, as recently as 1999, a sitting Finance Committee member was appointed to fill such a vacancy on the School Committee. Under such circumstance is the office appointed or elected for the purposes of the proposed By Law change? Under the current By Law, cessation from Finance Committee membership is automatic for either appointment to individual Town office or appointment to any office including appointment to a vacancy on an elected board.

The existing By-law also provides that any person who "removes" from the Town (i.e. moves to another town) automatically ceases to a Finance Committee member. The proposed change would instead require their resignation. Admittedly, the Town Moderator as the appointing authority could follow the process in the Charter to remove such a person. However, automatic removal for ceasing to be a citizen of the Town is preferable. The proposed change also complicates the resignation process. The proposed change would require that the notice of resignation be sent to the Finance Committee Chair, the Town Moderator, and the Town Clerk. Resignation to the Town Moderator and not three people should be sufficient. Finally, the proposed change has an inherent conflict. The proposed change would prohibit anyone from serving on the Finance Committee who serves on any appointed committee or board that approves expenditure of funds

ARTICLE 20 Continued
(Town Moderator)

However, the entire Finance Committee approves the expenditure of funds from the Reserve Fund. For these and other reasons, the minority does not support the proposed change.

Town Meeting members should note that members of both the majority and the minority opinion have agreed to develop language before Town Meeting commences, which hopefully will accomplish the purpose of the proposed changes and address the objections and concerns of the minority while taking into account the tenants of the majority opinion.

Motion:

Move to amend the Town of Natick By-Laws, Article 20, Section 1 – Composition, Term of Office by removing the existing text and inserting in its place the following text:

There shall be a Finance Committee, consisting of fifteen (15) citizens of the Town appointed by the Town Moderator for terms of three (3) years beginning May 1, so arraigned that five (5) members are appointed each year. Persons holding an elective Town office, except Town Meeting member or constable, and those serving on appointed committees or boards that have responsibility for issuing permits, approving expenditure of funds, or exercising final authority over any matter are not eligible to be Finance Committee members. Finance Committee members may serve on committees that advise decision-making Town agencies or Town Meeting. No Finance Committee member shall serve for more than four (4) terms of a total of twelve (12) years. Any member of said Committee who files for any Town elective office except that of Town Meeting or constable shall cease to be a member of said Committee. Members may resign by sending a notice of resignation to the Finance Committee chairman, the Town Moderator, and the Town Clerk; and they shall resign when they are no longer eligible to be Finance Committee members.

ARTICLE 21
(Town Moderator)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 1 of the Town of Natick By-Laws in order to change the requirement to publish the full text of the warrant in a newspaper and substitute instead a list of the topics on the warrant or a concise summary of the warrant or a notice where the full text of the warrant may be obtained; or, alternatively, to eliminate the requirement to publish anything in a newspaper.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends REFERRAL TO THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR with regard to the subject matter of Article 21.

The purpose of this article is to amend the Natick By-Laws, so that the publication requirements are altered from publishing the entire warrant in a newspaper, among other requirements. The Finance Committee could not come to a consensus as to the proper method and/or content of such notifications for Town Meeting. As Town Meeting Members may remember, last fall an article sought to include another requirement for publication on the Town's web site. That article was referred so that the Town Administrator, among others, could further review notification requirements. Referral of the subject matter of Article 21 will allow it to be considered in conjunction with the earlier referred matter.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to refer the subject matter of Article 21 to the Town Administrator.

ARTICLE 22
(Town Moderator)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 3 of the Town of Natick By-Laws in order to allow debate on the motion to dissolve when there is unfinished business at Town Meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 11-3-0 (March 20, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT with regard to the subject matter of Article 22.

The purpose of this article is to amend the Natick By-Laws, Article 3, Section 11 – Review of Unfinished Business and Section 12 – Motions for the Previous Question. Specifically, the proponent sought to provide an amendment to this By-Law so that Town Meeting may debate a motion to dissolve, when unfinished business remains.

The Finance Committee heard public input supporting both pro and con positions regarding this proposed change. After proponents raised reasons based on their past procedural experiences why such an amendment should be approved and opponents substantiated not changing the By-law citing the general practices of Town Meeting indicated in Town Meeting Times, among other publications, the Finance Committee recommended not to change this procedural practice of Town Meeting.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote indefinite postponement with regards to the subject matter of Article 22.

ARTICLE 23
(Town Administrator)

To see if the Town will vote to accept Stillman Circle and appurtenant easements as laid out and filed with the Town Clerk, and as shown on the street acceptance plan on file with the Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDATIONS: By a vote of 10-0-0 (March 13, 2003) the Finance Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 23.

The purpose of this article is to accept a specific street, including related easements as such have been appropriately filed with the Town. It was reported to the Finance Committee that Stillman Circle is now complete, in accordance with such plans. Also, the committee understands that the Natick Board of Selectmen (5-0), Stillman Circle residents and Natick Planning Board are all in favor of this request.

Motion:

Move that the Town vote to accept Stillman Circle and appurtenant easements as laid out and filed with the Town Clerk, and as shown on the street acceptance plan on file with the Town Clerk.

ARTICLE 24
(Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey all or a portion of the Eliot School property, which property is shown on the Natick Assessors' Maps as Map 63, Lot 1; to determine the minimum consideration which shall be paid for such conveyance; to determine what conditions and restrictions shall apply to said conveyance; or otherwise act thereon.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Finance Committee recommends NO ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 24.

The purpose of this article is to provide authorization to the Natick Board of Selectmen so that it may convey real property known as the Elliot School. It was reported to the Finance Committee that the Natick Board of Selectmen is seeking no action with regard the subject matter of this article.

Motion:

No Action

ARTICLE 25
(Board of Selectmen)

To hear and act upon the reports of the several Town officers and reports of committees authorized by vote of any further Town Meeting and to authorize a sum of money for the purpose thereof.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Finance Committee recommends NO ACTION with regard to the subject matter of Article 25.

The purpose of this article is to hear and/or act upon reports of any committee that Town Meeting may have established.

Motion:

No Action.