

Town of Northbridge
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2023 at 6:30PM

Committee Members in Attendance: Plato Adams, Jim Barron, Sean Ferry, David Graham, Steve Gogolinski, and Chris Thompson

Finance Committee Member not in Attendance: Chris Pilla

Town of Northbridge Administration and Department Managers in Attendance:

Adam Gaudette, Town Manager, Town of Northbridge, MA

Amy McKinstry, Superintendent, Town of Northbridge, MA - Northbridge Public Schools (NPS)

Melissa Walker, Director of Business and Finance, Town of Northbridge, MA – Northbridge Public Schools (NPS)

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent – Director, Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Other: Taxpayer(s) in Attendance:

W. Robert Knapik, Local Area Attorney / Attorney for the Petitioner(s)

Barry Gallant, Taxpayer, Town of Northbridge

Finance Committee Meeting:

At 6:32PM the meeting was called to order by Finance Committee Chair Plato Adams

Petition Articles

Local Attorney W. Robert Knapik discussed / presented Petition Article 26 and Petition Article 27 to the Finance Committee.

A recap of the Articles is listed below:

ARTICLE 26: (Petition) To see if the Town will vote to extend the existing Residential Three (R-3) zoning district across a portion of Wing Road by rezoning from Business Three (B-3) to Residential Three (R-3).

ARTICLE 27: (Petition) To see if the Town will vote to extend the existing Business Two (B-2) zoning district southerly from Union Street by rezoning from Business One (B-1) to Business Two (B-2).

Approval of Previous Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the Finance Committee Meeting of 3/8/2023 was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by David Graham and approved. Note that Chris Thompson was not present at the 3/8/2023 and therefore abstained from voting on the approval of the 3/08/2023 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

A motion to approve the Finance Committee Meeting of 3/15/2023 was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

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Vote Positions on Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) 2023 Town Meeting

ARTICLE 1: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury and/or transfer from the unexpended appropriated funds of one or more of the departments of the Town the following sums of money and authorize the payment of prior year bills; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 2: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to amend the votes taken under Article 2 of the 2022 Spring Session of the Annual Town Meeting (May 3, 2022), and under Article 1 of the 2022 Fall Session of the Annual Town Meeting (October 25, 2022), appropriations and transfers under the Omnibus Budget Article; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 3: (Finance Committee) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds in the Treasury and/or transfer from the Health Insurance Stabilization Fund such sums of money, not to exceed \$52,889,577.05 to defray the necessary and usual expenses of the several departments of the Town for FY 2024, beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 4: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from the Retained Earnings Account of the Sewer Enterprise Fund a sum of money to operate the Sewer Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2024; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 5: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from the Retained Earnings Account of the Water Enterprise Fund a sum of money to operate the Water Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2024; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 6: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money and such additional funds as may become available from the Commonwealth's Department of Transportation, Chapter 90 Bond Issue proceeds, to be used by the Department of Public Works for the repair and maintenance of Town roads in conformance with MGL and further to see if the Town will vote to meet said appropriation by borrowing and to authorize the Treasurer/Collector, with approval of the Board of Selectmen, to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor in anticipation of the receipt of said State Aid; or take any other action relative thereto.

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A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 7: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer/Collector to enter into a compensating balance agreement or agreements for FY 2024, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53F of the M.G.L.; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 8: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to set the FY 2024 spending limits for the Town's revolving funds under section 5-113 of the Northbridge Code as follows: Program or Purpose FY 2024 Spending Limit Playgrounds and Recreation \$20,000 Food Health and Safety \$25,000 Compost Site \$10,000 or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 9: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer a sum of money from the Pine Grove Cemetery Trust to fund operations of the Pine Grove Cemetery for FY 2024 beginning July 1, 2023 and ending on June 30, 2024, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 10: (Community Preservation Committee) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or reserve for future appropriation from the Community Preservation Fund annual revenues, the amounts of money recommended by the Northbridge Community Preservation Committee for community preservation projects and other expenses for the Fiscal Year 2024, with each item to be considered a separate appropriation; or take any other action relative thereto. Reserves: 1. a) From FY2024 estimated revenues for Historic Resources Reserve -the sum of \$ 2. b) From FY2024 estimated revenues for Community Housing Reserve -the sum of \$ 3. c) From FY 2024 estimated revenues for Open Space & Recreation Reserve -the sum of \$ 4. d) From FY 2024 estimated revenues for Budgeted Reserve -the sum of \$

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by David Graham, seconded by Jim Barron and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 11: (Community Preservation Committee) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from the Community Preservation Fund reserves to the Northbridge Community Preservation Committee for expenses associated with the implementation of the Community Preservation Act, including but not limited to clerical assistance, office supplies, property surveys, appraisals, attorney fees, and other professional services, recording fees, printing and all other necessary and proper expenses for the Fiscal Year 2024; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by David Graham and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 12: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$1,813.28 from the unexpended balance of the Pine Grove Cemetery Zero-Turn Lawnmower Account 01022109-XXXXXX for the following cemetery maintenance project: Tree and Stump Removal, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

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ARTICLE 13: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$517,000 from the Retained Earnings Account of the Sewer Enterprise Fund to be expended under the direction of the Director of Public Works for the following purposes: the sum of \$150,000 for the purpose of funding work recommended as a result of the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) and infiltration & inflow reports for the multi-year program to make physical improvements to the Town's sewer collection system, including the sealing/replacement of leaking manhole structures and relining/replacement of deficient/cracked/broken sewer lines; the sum of \$17,000 for the purpose of replacing the inspection camera system, the sum of \$150,000 to replace three (3) raw sewage pumps at the WWTP; and the sum of \$200,000 to completely retrofit the UV system; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 14: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$60,000 from the Retained Earnings Account of the Water Enterprise Fund, for the purpose of replacing nine (9) fire hydrants under the direction of the DPW Director; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 15: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to fund the capital projects shown below by appropriating and transferring the total sum of \$2,306,644 from the undesignated fund balance (free cash).

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by David Graham, seconded by Chris Thompson and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 16: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the following unexpended sums from appropriations of prior years

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Sean Ferry and approved. David Graham did not support the Article as proposed.

ARTICLE 17: (School Committee) To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of \$193,775 from the Town Building Maintenance Fund, established pursuant to Chapter 438 of the Acts of 2012, for maintenance of Town owned buildings and facilities in Fiscal Year 2024

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by David Graham, seconded by Chris Thompson and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 18: (Board of Selectmen) Dispose Main Street Fire Station

A motion to approve the Warrant Article as proposed was made by David Graham, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 19: (Board of Selectmen) Dispose NES

A motion to Pass Over the Warrant Article as proposed was made by David Graham, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

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ARTICLE 20: (Board of Selectmen) Dispose Providence Road Land

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 21: (Board of Selectmen) To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to grant to National Grid (electric), and also to Eversource (propane), a perpetual right and easement to construct, reconstruct, operate, maintain, replace and remove, lines, cables and appurtenances for the transmission of intelligence and telecommunications upon, over, under and across a portion of the Town-owned land located at 1681 Providence Road, the site of the new Fire Station Headquarters; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take any and all action necessary for the purpose of accomplishing such easement conveyance; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Chris Thompson and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 22: (Bylaw Review Committee) To see if the Town will vote to approve the grammatical and stylistic amendments to the Code of Northbridge (Bylaws) in accordance with the final report of the Bylaw Review Committee appointed in 2021 pursuant to Section 8-9(b) of the Home Rule Charter, said report being on file with the Town Clerk; or take any other action relative thereto.

Since this proposed Warrant Article would most likely be Passed Over / Removed from the 2023 Spring Annual Warrant Articles it was suggested that the Finance Committee hold off on reviewing / approving the proposed Warrant Article.

ARTICLE 23: (Bylaw Review Committee) To see if the Town will vote to approve the substantive amendments to the Code of the Town of Northbridge (Bylaws) in accordance with the final report of the Bylaw Review Committee appointed in 2021 pursuant to Section 8-9(b) of the Home Rule Charter, said report being on file with the Town Clerk; or take any other action relative thereto.

Since this proposed Warrant Article would most likely be Passed Over / Removed from the 2023 Spring Annual Warrant Articles it was suggested that the Finance Committee hold off on reviewing / approving the proposed Warrant Article.

ARTICLE 24: (Finance Committee) To see if the Town will vote to transfer the balance of the Health Stabilization Fund to the General Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by David Graham, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 25: (Finance Committee) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or to transfer from the undesignated fund balance (free cash), a sum of money to the Stabilization Fund; or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by David Graham, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 26: (Petition) To see if the Town will vote to extend the existing Residential Three (R-3) zoning district across a portion of Wing Road by rezoning from Business Three (B-3) to Residential Three (R-3).

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A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by David Graham, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

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ARTICLE 27: (Petition) To see if the Town will vote to extend the existing Business Two (B-2) zoning district southerly from Union Street by rezoning from Business One (B-1) to Business Two (B-2).

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

A motion to approve the proposed Warrant Article was made by David Graham, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Since no further business was to be transacted, a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:13PM was made by David Graham, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ James P. Barron, Clerk, Town of Northbridge Finance Committee