

MINUTES FOR THE FALL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2023

At 7:00 pm, Town Moderator, Jack Conway, opened the Annual Town Meeting.

To begin tonight's meeting, I would ask that you all stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ladies and gentlemen, children of all ages - welcome to the Fall Town Meeting. I am Town Moderator Jack Conway. Next to me is Town Clerk Lucia Longhurst, who has the unenviable job of keeping me on task tonight. May the odds be ever in her favor. Also joining me on the stage are Paula Daniels and Bonnie Yezukevich, the chair and fill-in vice chair of your Finance Committee.

Moderator Conway welcomed State Representative Jay Barrows.

With those introductions and pleasantries out of the way, I'd like to sincerely thank you for coming out tonight to participate in our town's legislative process. You folks in this room tonight will be making decisions that will guide Norton forward. On behalf of your elected representatives and resident volunteers, thank you for coming out and thank you for caring.

Before we get into the delicious nitty gritty of tonight's business, I need to review the ground rules for this meeting.

1. I ask everyone to please find a seat for this meeting. Standing in the back and on the sides creates problems both on a noise level and in counting standing votes.
2. If you are not a registered voter in the Town of Norton, you are welcome to attend but must sit in the section of seats where I indicate. If you are a registered voter, please sit anywhere else, because your vote will not be counted if you are sitting in the non-voting section.
3. If you wish to address this meeting, you must do so only after being recognized by the Moderator. There are two microphones located in the back aisle for this purpose; the microphone down front will be used by town employees and presenters. Please move to one of those if you wish to speak and wait to be recognized. When speaking, please identify yourself by name and address for the record. Please try and keep your statements concise, direct and limited only to the matter under consideration at the time.
4. All speakers at this meeting will be treated with courtesy by the Moderator and everyone else in the room. No speaker will be allowed to use the meeting for personal attacks on any individual. All remarks will be directed towards the Moderator, and while I will allow questions to be asked of individuals, I will not allow cross-examination type discussions from the floor

5. In recognizing people to speak, I will endeavor to call upon those who have not yet spoken on a topic before recognizing those who have already spoken. I will recognize motions to move the question, but if in my opinion there are still people waiting to speak who may add to the discussion, I will exercise my authority to not accept a motion to move the question under those circumstances.

6. If a standing vote is required, you will be instructed to stand at your seats until your vote is counted. If a ballot vote is required, you will be given instructions by the Moderator and Town Clerk as to how to proceed.

7. If you wish to make an amendment to any motion, you must do so in writing and present it to the moderator. Please prepare your amendment in writing and bring it to me up here. If you are moving an article that has not been recommended and moved by the Finance Committee, you must also present that motion to the Town Clerk in writing, and it must be done in the proper form.

8. I remind you all that no motion to reconsider any article will be accepted by the Moderator until at least three articles following the article being reconsidered have been acted upon by this meeting. If the article is one of the last three on the warrant, I will accept any motions to reconsider them at any time prior to adjourning. Please be aware that any article you act upon tonight can be reconsidered as few as three articles later, so keep that in mind before you rush out after your article.

9. There may be requests this evening to allow non-voters to speak on certain articles. This must be done by a motion voted upon by this meeting. While it is the right and the decision of the meeting to allow or not allow non-residents to speak, please keep in mind they may have information to add to the discussion. All non-voters must approach the moderator if they wish to be heard.

Now I would like to ask Madam Clerk, do we have a return of this warrant?

Town Clerk Lucia Longhurst read the return of the warrant.

ARTICLE 1

No action.

ARTICLE LOST FOR LACK OF MOTION AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 2 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$117,544.00 from Free Cash to pay all outstanding separation expenses associated with the retirement of various

employees from the Town of Norton and to authorize the Town Accountant, in consultation with the Town Manager, to allocate amounts to appropriate departments.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 3 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the total amount of \$94,574.00 from Free Cash to fund and implement the first year of the three-year Collective Bargaining Agreements between the Town and the following Unions for the period beginning July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026, and to authorize the Town Accountant to allocate amounts to appropriate departments:

1. From Free Cash, the sum of \$80,156.00 for Norton Police Superior Officers Association; and,
2. From Free Cash, the sum of \$14,418.00 for United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union, AFL-CIO-CLC, Local Union 9517 Unit 15, f/k/a SENA-A.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 4 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to amend the vote taken under Article 7 of the May 15, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant by increasing appropriations for certain line items and, as funding therefor, to raise and appropriate the amount of \$499,524.00, to transfer the amount of \$8,205.00 from the Dog Fund, and to transfer the amount of \$513,628.00 from Free Cash, all as specified in the Finance Committee Recommendations for Article 4 of the October 23, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Account	Department	Use	Request
001-122-570	Select Board	Expenses	\$ 1,200.00
001-123-570	Town Manager	Expenses	\$ 1,000.00
001-147-510	Treasurer	Salary	\$ 2,450.00
001-155-510	Data Processing	Salary	\$ 387.00
001-158-570	Tax Title	Expense	\$ 41,103.00
001-161-510	Town Clerk	Part-Time Wages	\$ 11,684.00
001-192-570	Municipal Building	Expense	\$ 25,000.00
001-210-510	Police	Salary - Overtime and Special Police	\$ 116,000.00
001-210-570		Contractual Incentives	\$ 31,900.00

001-220-510	Fire	Salary - Overtime and Contractual Incentives	\$ 231,000.00
001-220-570		Expenses - Utilities	\$ 2,500.00
001-292-570	Animal Control	Vehicle Repairs	\$ 8,205.00
001-308-560	Bristol County Agricultural	Assessment - Tuition	\$ 8,757.00
001-425-570	Street Lights	Expense	\$ 20,000.00
001-541-510	Council on Aging	Salary	\$ 29,118.00
001-610-570	Library		\$ 18,125.00
001-711-594	Maturing Debt	Short-Term Debt Principal Retirement – School Project	\$ 26,410.00
001-750-590	Long-Term Interest	Expense	\$ 424,518.00
001-940-540	Miscellaneous	Expense - Fuel	\$ 12,000.00
001-940-570	Miscellaneous	Expense - Insurances	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL FY24 OPERATING BUDGET SUPPLEMENTS:			\$ 1,021,357.00

Town Manager Michael Yunits explained the Long-Term Interest is part of the debt exclusion for the three projects being the Council on Aging, Town Hall, and Sport Fields.

ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR

ARTICLE 5 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Water Enterprise operating budget as approved at the May 15, 2023, Annual Town Meeting by increasing appropriations for certain line items and by transferring from Water Enterprise Receipts (including but not limited to user charges, lease revenue, interest, permits, anticipated receipts, and miscellaneous revenues) an additional \$66,092.00, all as specified in the Finance Committee Recommendations for Article 5 of the October 23, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECCOMENDATIONS AS PRINTED IN WARRANT

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Recommended to amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Water Enterprise operating budget as approved at the May 15, 2023, Annual Town Meeting by increasing appropriations for certain line items and by transferring from Water Enterprise Receipts (including but not limited to user charges, lease revenue, interest, permits, anticipated receipts, and miscellaneous revenues) an additional \$66,092.00 as follows:

	05/15/23		10/23/23	
	Voted Article 5	Voted Article 4	Article 5 Supplement	Amendment

Personnel Services	\$1,242,231	\$ 10,760	\$ 8,563	\$1,261,554
Indirect Expenses	\$ 529,826	0	0	\$ 529,826
Other Charges & Expenditures	\$1,347,500	\$ 50	0	\$1,347,550
Debt Service	\$1,620,991	0	\$57,529	\$1,678,520
Total:	\$4,740,548	\$ 10,810	\$66,092	\$4,817,450

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 6 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Sewer Enterprise operating budget as approved at the May 15, 2023, Annual Town Meeting by increasing appropriations for certain line items and by transferring from Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings an additional \$16,484.00, all as specified in the Finance Committee Recommendations for Article 6 of the October 23, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

	05/15/23		10/23/23	
	Voted Article 6	Voted Article 4	Article 6 Supplement	Amendment
Personnel Services	\$ 439,422	\$1,922	\$16,483	\$ 457,827
Indirect Expenses	\$ 164,947			\$ 164,947
Other Charges & Expenditures	\$1,343,489			\$1,343,489
Debt Service	\$ 403,213		\$ 1	\$ 403,214
Total:	\$2,351,071	\$1,922	\$16,484	\$2,369,477

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 7 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from Free Cash to the Capital Improvements Fund.

Question was raised as to how much Free Cash the town has.

Town Manager, Michael Yunits noted that the Town is certified at \$4,928,970 for Free Cash.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 8 (2/3)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$806,981.00 from the Capital Improvements Account, \$100,000.00 from Sewer Retained Earnings, and \$499,500.00 from the Ambulance Reserve Fund for a total of \$1,406,481.00 to purchase, or lease with an option to purchase for periods of time up to or in excess of three years, new and/or replacement capital items for various Town Departments, including equipping any vehicles and all other incidental and related expenses, all as specified in the Finance Committee Recommendations for Article 8 of the October 23, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

A question was raised as to the cost of the Inspectional Services Vehicle Replacements.

Town Manager, Michael Yunits noted that the vehicles are electric pickup trucks which will help with the Green Communities Funding plan.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (210)	
Firing Range Ventilation System	\$ 88,300.00
Window Project	\$ 31,000.00
FIRE DEPARTMENT (220)	
Ambulance (\$475,000 Ambulance Fund)	\$ 475,000.00
Generator for Station 1 (50/50)* (\$25,000 Total: \$12,500 from Ambulance Fund and \$12,500 from Capital Improvements Fund)	\$ 25,000.00
Ambulance Stair Chairs (Two) (\$12,000 Ambulance Fund)	\$ 12,000.00
NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (300)	
Install New Fire Protection Devices (NMS)	\$ 127,055.00
Safety Requirements & Protocols - Exterior Doors (DW)	\$ 87,525.00
Technology Displays (DW) (Lease Year 1 of 5)	\$ 41,051.00

Resurface Gym Floors (NMS)	\$ 35,000.00
HIGHWAY (420)	
Wood Chipper for Tree Cutting	\$ 60,000.00
4-Post Vehicle Lift	\$ 50,000.00
2024 Peterbilt J. Hook (Year 1 of 5)	\$ 70,000.00
BOARD OF HEALTH (510), INSPECTION (241) and CONSERVATION (171)	
Inspectional Services Vehicle Replacement (Three)	\$ 182,700.00
RECREATION (630) AND NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (300)	
Pickle Ball Court	\$ 21,850.00
SEWER (440)	
Cobb Street Sewerage Pumping Station Phase 2 (Retained Earnings)	\$ 100,000.00

**ARTICLE PASSES BY 2/3 MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 9 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$2,000.00 from Free Cash to purchase and accessorize an automated external defibrillator (AED).

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 10 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$201,801.00 from Free Cash to be expended only for any lawful purposes and consistent with the applicable opioid settlement agreement, including but not limited to those purposes outlined in the Massachusetts State Subdivision Agreement for Statewide Opioid Settlements and more specifically in Section III of the attachment thereto entitled, “Massachusetts Abatement Terms” to support opioid education, prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm prevention.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 11 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$35,000.00 from Free Cash to be expended only for any lawful purposes and consistent with the cannabis host

community agreements for the implementation of mitigation measures associated with the sale of recreational marijuana.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 12 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$10,000.00 from Free Cash for the costs associated with complying with the federally mandated actuarial reporting requirements of post-employment benefits (GASB 74/75).

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 13 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c.44, §54(b)(1), as most recently amended by Section 26 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023, to allow Town trust funds to be invested using the so-called Prudent Investor Rule found in G.L. c.203C.

Question was raised as to the level of risk involved in Town trust funds.

Town Manager, Michael Yunits and Town Accountant, James Puello explained the Town trust and investments in more detail.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 14 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 140, Section 139(c), to exempt from licensing fees service animals and dogs owned by a person aged seventy or over.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 15 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$16,720.00 from Free Cash to remove, expand, and replace the rear parking lot area, including all incidental and related expenses, at the Norton Historical Society site identified as 18 West Main Street,

Norton and shown on Assessor's Map 23 as Parcel 39, or take any other action relative thereto.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 16 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$27,000.00 from Free Cash for the installation of municipal sewerage, including all incidental and related expenses, at the Norton Historical Society site identified as 18 West Main Street, Norton, and shown on Assessor's Map 23 as Parcel 39.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 17 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to approve Article 17 as printed in the October 23, 2023, Annual Town Meeting Warrant, to transfer the amount of \$1,400.00 from Free Cash for this purpose, and to authorize the Town Accountant, in consultation with the Town Manager, to allocate amounts to appropriate departments.

ARTICLE 17 AS PRINTED IN THE WARRANT

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 110, Article V, §110-31, of the Town's Bylaws, as on file with the Town Clerk, by replacing the existing schedule with the following:

YEARS OF SERVICE	LONGEVITY PAY EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023
After Five (5) Years	\$1,000.00
After Ten (10) Years	\$1,100.00
After Fifteen (15) Years	\$1,200.00
After Twenty (20) Years	\$1,400.00
After Twenty-Five (25) Years	\$1,500.00

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS
DECLARED BY THE MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 18 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$120,000.00 from Free Cash to the “Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund” established to cover the unfunded actuarial liability for retirees’ health care and life insurance benefits.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 19 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, in accordance with G.L. c. 40, §5B.

Question was raised as to reasoning for not allocating more money to Stabilization Fund.

Town Manager, Michael Yunits noted that the Town holds money for snow and ice, budgets for following year, and other costs, can look to add more in the future.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 20 (Majority)

I Paula Daniels MOVE that the Town vote to revoke the acceptance of Civil Service Laws for the Town of Norton Fire Department at all ranks effective January 1, 2024, thereby removing the fire department force from the provisions of the Civil Service Laws, and the rules and regulations relating to the same, provided that this revocation will not affect the Civil Service status of existing personnel in their current positions.

**ARTICLE PASSES BY MAJORITY VOTE AS DECLARED BY THE
MODERATOR**

ARTICLE 21 (Majority)

I Daniel Pearson MOVE that Town vote to adopt for itself the motto “ACVMEN ACVTVM,” (Latin for “sharp point *or* intellect”).

Petitioner Daniel Pearson reached out to Town Manager, Michael Yunits for the article to be withdrawn.

ARTICLE LOST BY LACK OF MOTION AS DECLARED BY MODERATOR

At 7:44 pm Moderator Jack Conway made a motion to adjourn the Fall Annual Town Meeting. The motion was second.

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

**Lucia B. Longhurst
Town Clerk**