

Justin Paré, President  
John Simmons, Vice President  
John Costello  
Daniel Donovan  
Mark Gould, Jr.



Darius Gregory  
Andrew Shanahan  
Andrea Slobogan  
Patricia St. Pierre

Town of North Attleborough

**TOWN COUNCIL**

43 South Washington Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760

Phone: (508) 699-0100

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1/8/2025 - Minutes

**I. Pledge Of Allegiance**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-President Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and lead the Committee and the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

**Members Present:**

John Simmons

Craig Cameron

John Costello

Dan Donovan

Kathleen Prescott

**Members Absent:**

John Donohue

**Staff Present:**

Town Manager Michael Borg

Assistant Town Manager Antonio Morabito

Clerk of the Town Council Kerrin Billinghoff

Council on Aging Director Karen Testa

Public Facilities Director Timothy Chouinard

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

**Residents:**

Parents of Martin School

Martin School Principal Dr. Jennifer Evans

Paul Keenan Chair of Commission on Disabilities

**Invited Guests Present:**

None at this time.

**Documents Reviewed:**

- Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 12/4/2024
- **Measure 2025-026**- Approval of Purchase and Installation of Playground Equipment for Martin School
- **Measure 2025-027**- Approval of Purchase of Office Furniture for Senior Center
- **Measure 2025-028**- Approval to adopt a section of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Section 5K to allow taxpayer(s) over the age of 60 to earn a property tax credit for a maximum tax exemption of \$1,500.00

**II. Approval Of Minutes**

- a. Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of December 4, 2024

Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of December 4, 2024

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of October 2, 2024.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

**III. Resident And Community Comment**

None at this time.

**IV. Old Business**

None at this time.

**V. New Business**

- a. Measure 2025-026- Approval of Purchase and Installation of Playground Equipment for Martin School

**Measure 2025-026-** Approval of Purchase and Installation of Playground Equipment for Martin School

The play structures at the Joseph W. Martin Elementary School are not accessible to all students. To enhance inclusion among the student body, school administration solicited design and pricing for equipment to augment - not replace - their current playground equipment, and they engaged the State Representative for a \$50,000 earmark. An enthusiastic parent group raised an additional \$12,000. School administration and the parent group brought the plans to the Commission on Disability, and they won their endorsement. The Schools Department brought the project to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee, and the body voted to recommend approval of the project to the Town Manager. The \$50,000 earmark from the Commonwealth will expire on 30 June 2025, therefore the Town Manager approves the project and recommends the Town Council take this CIP project out of cycle. Approval will allow adequate time to use the state earmark and enable construction while school is recessed for the summer.

To complete the project, the Public Facilities Department will require funding beyond the state earmark and donations collected by the parent group:

Ultiplay quote:	\$201,995.32
State Earmark:	-\$50,000
Donations:	-\$12,000
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Total Required:	\$139,995.32

Facilities Director Timothy Chouinard was in attendance to address the Committee and explain the request and answer any questions the committee may have had.

There was discussion amongst the Committee, Mr. Chouinard, and the Town Manager.

Dr. Jenifer Evans, Principal of the Martin Elementary School, was also in attendance to thank the Committee for their consideration on this project. She thanked them, the Town Manager and the Town Council for the contribution and collaboration of this playground. Dr. Evans commented that this ADA Accessible Playground means so much to her, the school, and the Community. She expressed her gratitude for all of the help from the Town in bringing this playground to fruition.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-026- Approval of Purchase and Installation of Accessible Playground Equipment and Associated Landscaping and Fencing for Joseph W. Martin Elementary School in the amount of \$139,995.32 to be funded from Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Fund as AMENDED back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. Measure 2025-027- Approval of Purchase of Office Furniture for Senior Center located at 451 Elm Street

**Measure 2025-027- Approval of Purchase of Office Furniture for Senior Center**

Purpose:

The move of the North Attleborough Senior Center to its new location at 451 Elm Street has highlighted the need for updated and additional furniture & equipment. To fund the requirement, Own officials engaged the State Representative, and he secured a \$65,000.00 earmark. The Senior Center Director brought a furnishing and equipment procurement project to the Town Manager. The \$65,000.00 earmark will expire on June 30, 2025, therefore the Town Manager approves the project and recommends that Town Council take this CIP Project out of cycle. Approval will allow adequate time to use the state earmark and allow the Senior Center to execute its planned move in July 2025.

The CIP Projects feature the following:

- Senior Center Reception Desk
- Office Desk & Chairs
- **Filing Cabinets**
- Bookcases
- Dining Table
- Stackable Chairs/with Storage Dolly
- Wire Shelving
- Kitchen Equipment
- Tabletop Bingo Game
- Electric Fireplace
- Card Tables & Chairs
- Easy Chairs
- Decorations

Town Manager Borg explained that this measure is also for a CIP Project that is out of the normal CIP cycle and will require a Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will be held on January 13, 2025. Town Mager Borg requested that this measure be referred to the Finance Sub-Committee for further review and discussion.

Senior Center Director Karen Testa was in attendance to address the Committee and **explain her request.**

There was discussion amongst the Committee, Karen Testa, and the Town Manager.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-027- Approval of Purchase of

Office Furniture for Senior Center at 451 Elm Street back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. Measure 2025-028- Approval to adopt a section of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Section 5K to allow to allow taxpayer(s) over the age of 60 to earn a property tax credit for a maximum tax exemption of \$1,500.00

**Measure 2025-028-** Approval to adopt a section of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Section 5K to allow taxpayer(s) over the age of 60 to earn a property tax credit for a maximum tax exemption of \$1,500.00

**Purpose:**

To amend the Town's Senior Work-Off Program by adopting a provision of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 5K, which increases the maximum property tax credit that eligible senior taxpayers can earn from \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually. This measure seeks to provide greater financial relief to senior residents who contribute their time and skills to the Town through volunteer work, recognizing their valuable contributions while addressing rising costs of living. The Town currently caps the total program funding at \$50,000 annually paid from the Town's **Overlay account**.

**Description:**

The Senior Work-Off Program, authorized under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 5K, allows taxpayers aged 60 or older to earn a property tax credit by volunteering for the Town in various capacities. Currently, the Town provides a maximum property tax exemption of \$1,000 annually, with the overall program capped at \$50,000 annually by the Town.

This measure proposes to increase the allowable maximum exemption to \$2,000.00 annually to better align the program with rising property taxes and living expenses faced by seniors. **By adopting this adjustment, the Town will:**

Expand financial support for senior homeowners, helping them to remain in their homes and maintain their quality of life.

Enhance the program's value, encouraging more participation and creating opportunities for seniors to contribute their skills and knowledge to Town operations.

Acknowledge the economic challenges faced by seniors in North Attleborough and demonstrate the Town's commitment to supporting its senior community.

Approval of this measure will ensure that the Senior Work-Off Program remains an effective and meaningful way to support our senior residents while benefiting the Town through their dedicated service.

Senior Center Director Karen Testa was in attendance to explain this measure and request. Ms. Testa was also there to answer any questions the Committee may have had.

There was discussion amongst the Committee, Ms. Testa, The Town Manager, and Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith. Discussions included:

- Maximum exemption proposed is \$1,500.00 per household
- This is a way to help out our Seniors
- At this time the program is capped at \$50,000.00
- Mr. Cameron asked why not more? Why is it capped at this amount?
- Mr. Cameron in favor of making this big and not putting a cap on it. He would love to get more people involved in this program
- Ms. Prescott in favor of helping as many Seniors as possible. Asked if we could reconsider not limiting and not letting Seniors participate two years in a row. What if they need this help two years in a row? We shouldn't restrict them.
- Town Manager Borg explained that we recently increased this program from \$25,000 to \$50,000. At this time, \$50,000 is a number that we feel comfortable with the Overlay
- Committee Members asked if we could increase maximum amount to \$2,000 instead of \$1,500
- Mr. Cameron asked if Free Cash could be used to supplement this program?
- Mr. Cameron asked if there was a limitation of where the money would need to come from? Can it only be from the Overlay? Or can it be supplemented from Free Cash as well? Can we take excess funds from anywhere in the budget to fund this program?
- Town Manager Borg is going to find out more information and will get back to the Committee
- Vice-President Simmons expressed that helping out the Seniors is very important to the Town Council!
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Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-028- Approval to adopt a section of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Section 5K to allow taxpayer(s) over the age of 60 to earn a property tax credit for a maximum tax exemption of \$2,000.00 as **AMENDED** back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

## **VI. Adjournment**

Councilor Donovan made a motion to adjourn.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.**