

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

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1/15/2025 - 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

Pat St. Pierre

John Donohue

Members Absent:

Kathleen Prescott

Staff Present:

Town Manager Michael Borg

Assistant Town Manager Antonio Morabito

Council on Aging Director Karen Testa

Public Facilities Director Timothy Chouinard

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

Treasurer/Tax Collector Chris Sweet

NAPD Chief Rick McQuade

NAFD Chief Chris Coleman

North TV Director Peter Gay

Residents:

None at this time.

Invited Guests Present:

None at this time.

Documents Reviewed:

- Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 01/08/2025
- Measure 2025-029- Authorization to finance Dispatch Console Replacement project with free cash re-purposed from Emergency Operations Center Upgrade project and Capital Improvement Program Stabilization funds in the amount of \$248,634.00
- Measure 2025-030- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$294,076.00 to the School Department for Chapter 70 Differential.
- Measure 2025-032- **Authorization to repurpose funds in the amount of \$28,786.00** from the Martin Boiler Project to the Roosevelt Hot Water Heater Replacement Project
- Measure 2025-033- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$3.2 mm to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account
- Measure 2025-035- Authorization to Transfer \$22,945.04 accumulated interest from Sewer Retained Earnings to Sewer I&I Stabilization Fund
- Measure 2025-038- Appropriation request for use of FY25 retained earnings from Comcast PEG Access for North TV information technology equipment replacement in the amount of \$23,031.70
- Measure 2025-039- Authorization to transfer \$37,042.94 from the Reserve Account to the Insurance Premiums Account to pay the Insurance Premium for the Town's Insurance Policies
- Measure 2025-040- Authorization to Re-purpose Funds from Town Clerk's CIP

Digitization Project to Purchase Office Furniture in the amount of \$11,485.83

II. Approval Of Minutes

- a. Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of January 8, 2025

Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of January 8, 2025

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of January 8, 2025.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

III. Resident And Community Comment

None at this time.

IV. Old Business

- a. None at this time

V. New Business

- a. Measure 2025-029- Authorization to finance Dispatch Console Replacement project with free cash re-purposed from Emergency Operations Center Upgrade project and Capital Improvement Program Stabilization funds in the amount of \$248,634.00

Measure 2025-029- Authorization to finance Dispatch Console Replacement project with free cash re-purposed from Emergency Operations Center Upgrade project and Capital Improvement Program Stabilization funds in the amount of \$248,634.00

During the FY 2025 budget process, the Town Council approved the Dispatch Console Replacement project, an effort aimed at replacing the furniture and associated hardware for the dispatcher console located at the police facility. Both Chiefs of NAPD and NAFD cite this as a critical need as current obsolete console is failing, and the manufacturer no longer produces parts or components. **If current console were to fail, dispatchers would need to resort to using inefficient portable radios, and NAFD would lose emergency buttons and automatic station alerting that would result in less efficient emergency response.** The fund source for this project remained unspecified.

Total amount needed to complete the Dispatch Console Replacement project is **\$498,634.00.**

On November 7, 2023, the Town Council unanimously approved measure 2023-015, Approval of the General Government Capital Improvement Plan Projects - FY2023 Free Cash. This measure included the project, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Upgrade, for \$250,000.00. The ongoing Police Facility HVAC Replacement Project initially delayed this project, and changes in technology and methods of staff collaboration have rendered the planned EOC upgrades obsolete and unnecessary. The Town Manager contends that it is in the best interest of the Town to transfer this funding to the Dispatch Control Replacement Project.

To complete funding for the Dispatch Control Replacement project, the Town Manager requests a transfer of \$248,634.00 from Capital Improvement Program Stabilization funds.

NAPD Chief Rick McQuade was in attendance to address the Committee and answer any questions that they may have had regarding this request. Chief explained that this request is an urgent matter and the Police Department is in need of this new equipment. He explained that this current equipment is from the 90's, is 20 to 30 years old, and is outdated and impossible to find replacement parts for when repairs are needed. This old system is phasing out and the NAPD is in dyer need of ne new updated dispatch equipment. Both the Police Department and Fire Department share this equipment, as all of the emergencies come to the one dispatch location.

There was discussion amongst the Town Manager, Police Chief McQuade, and the Committee. Everyone was in agreement that this new equipment was needed for communication within the Town as well as surrounding Towns, and is in the best interest of the Community.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-029- Authorization to finance Dispatch Console Replacement project with free cash re-purposed from Emergency Operations Center Upgrade project and Capital Improvement Program Stabilization funds in the amount of \$248,634.00 back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- b. Measure 2025-030-Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$294,076.00 to the School Department for Chapter 70 Differential

Measure 2025-030-Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$294,076.00 to the School Department for Chapter 70 Differential.

Purpose:

To allocate \$294,076 in additional Chapter 70 state aid to the School Department for FY25 from certified FY25 Free Cash. This funding reflects the differential between the Chapter 70 appropriation in the Governor's initial budget proposal and the final budget signed into law after July 1, 2024, which occurred following the Town Council's budget approval and passage.

Justification:

The allocation of \$294,076 from certified FY25 Free Cash provides the School Department with access to additional state aid without increasing their FY25 operating budget. Instead, these funds would be made available outside of their general fund allocation to address critical needs and priorities.

The School Department may, but not limited to, utilize this funding to:

-Address Emerging Needs

-Offset Inflationary Pressures and help mitigate the impact of rising costs in areas such as supplies, transportation, curriculum, or student programs.

-Fund FY25 Capital Projects

By allocating these funds from FY25 free cash, the Town ensures that the School Department has the financial support necessary to maintain and enhance educational services while adhering to budgetary constraints. This allocation reinforces the Town's commitment to supporting public education.

We respectfully request approval for the allocation of \$294,076 from certified FY25 Free Cash to the School Department for their use in alignment with their strategic priorities.

Town Manager Borg explained this request to the Committee.

There was discussion amongst the Committee and the Town Manager.

Discussions included:

- Town Budget passes first, and then the Commonwealth passes their budget
- Would like to allocate Free Cash of FY25 to Chapter 70 Differential
- Governor builds a recommendation and puts in an amount of money to be allocated towards education. When the Governor's Budget was finalized, it was a higher differential, this Free Cash would supplement and bring in line with the budget
- Mr. Cameron asked if we ask departments to turn back any unspent money, and maybe could put that excess towards this?
- Town Manager Borg responded that we build the budget, and we don't ask Departments to turn back money.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-030-Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$294,076.00 to the School Department for Chapter 70 Differential back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- c. Measure 2025-032- Authorization to repurpose funds in the amount of \$28,786.00 from the Martin Boiler Project to the Roosevelt Hot Water Heater Replacement Project

Measure 2025-032- Authorization to repurpose funds in the amount of \$28,786.00 from the Martin Boiler Project to the Roosevelt Hot Water Heater Replacement Project

The purpose of this measure is that the Town Council approve the request to repurpose funds in the amount of \$28,786.00 that was allocated in Measure 2024-028- Approval to repurpose funds for the Falls Elementary boiler (Measure 2023-062) to be used to fund the design and engineering of the Falls and Martin boilers, and the boiler replacement at Martin School, to fund the Roosevelt Hot Water Replacement Project.

The remaining balance in the Martin Boiler Project Account is \$165,864.61. This project is nearing completion and will be closed out after some controls for the boiler are added to the building.

If approved, the funds in the amount of \$28,786.00 will be used to complete the Roosevelt Hot Water Replacement Project.

Martin Boiler Account 30300428 - 530000 Capital

Facilities Director Tim Chouinard was in attendance to explain this request and answer any questions that the Committee may have had.

There was discussion amongst the Committee and Mr. Chouinard regarding this request. Discussions included:

- This replacement needs to be done as soon as possible.
- There were funds left over from the Martin Boiler Project that could be used to fund this project.
- We only got 10 years out of this tank, ideally would have expected to get 15 years of useful life. Unfortunately, may have had a defect when it was put in.
- Put out an RFP and did receive 4 responses.
- Lowest bid was \$28,000.00
- This project will consist of installing 2 tankless natural fired gas heaters and will be more conducive to this building. Much more efficient than what was previously installed.
- Tank that is currently there is a residential style and not recommended for commercial use.
- The new system is much more efficient.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-032- Authorization to repurpose funds in the amount of \$28,786.00 from the Martin Boiler Project to the Roosevelt Hot Water Heater Replacement Project back to the Full Town Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- d. Measure 2025-033- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$3.2 mm to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account

Measure 2025-033- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$3.2 mm to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account

Purpose:

To request that the Town Council authorize the transfer of \$3.2 million from FY25 certified Free Cash to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Stabilization Account.

Justification:

The Department of Revenue (DOR) certified the Town's FY25 Free Cash at \$5,540,000. This strong Free Cash position reflects the Town's commitment to long-standing fiscal policies and sound financial management.

This transfer supports the approved Free Cash strategy by reallocating funds designated for key projects as follows:

\$2.1 million allocated for the Tri-County Vocational High School Building Project

\$1.1 million allocated for the Health Insurance Stabilization

By transferring these funds to the CIP Stabilization Account, the Town has the opportunity to earn a higher rate of return on the investment while maintaining flexibility to withdraw the funds later for their intended purposes through the appropriate measures and required approvals.

This initiative not only aligns with the Town's commitment to fiscal prudence but also ensures that funds allocated for significant capital projects are managed in a way that maximizes financial growth and stability.

We respectfully request the Town Council approve the transfer of \$3.2 million in FY25 Free Cash to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account.

Town Manager Borg explained this request to the Committee.

There was discussion amongst the Town Manager and the Committee regarding this request. Discussions included:

- We currently do not have a Health Care Stabilization Account, so we will leave these funds in the CIP Stabilization Account to gain more interest and then we can move it to where we need it.
- Corporate Interest Rate of Return of 4.7%
- Councilor St. Pierre reported that we had already discussed this approach at a previous meeting.
- Town Manager Borg stated that this is his commitment to gain more interest.
- The Committee thanked him for his commitment.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-033- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$3.2 mm to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account back to the Full Town Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- e. Measure 2025-035- Authorization to Transfer \$22,945.04 accumulated interest from Sewer Retained Earnings to Sewer I & I Stabilization Fund

Measure 2025-035- Authorization to Transfer \$22,945.04 accumulated interest from Sewer Retained Earnings to Sewer I&I Stabilization Fund

Interest earned on the funds within the Sewer Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) Stabilization Account was not properly attributed to the account in prior years. This oversight was recently identified and corrected to ensure that interest on these funds is properly allocated moving forward.

To rectify the missed attribution for prior periods, this measure requests the transfer of \$22,945.04 from Sewer Retained Earnings to the Sewer I&I Stabilization Account. This correction ensures the account reflects the appropriate interest earnings and aligns with the Town's commitment to accurate financial management and transparency.

We respectfully request the Town Council approve this transfer.

Treasurer/Tax Collector Chris Sweet was in attendance to explain this request and answer any questions that the Committee may have had.

Discussions included:

- This measure is to realign funding into the correct stabilization account.
- Town Accountant was doing housekeeping.
- Interest was always being earned but it was not being booked in the correct bucket.
- This measure was brought to the attention of the Finance Sub-Committee because it is a Stabilization Account and authorization is needed.
- All of the money was in the bank account and earning interest, it was just in the incorrect ledger account. This measure will rectify the issue.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-035- Authorization to Transfer \$22,945.04 accumulated interest from Sewer Retained Earnings to Sewer I&I Stabilization Fund back to the Full Tow Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- f. Measure 2025-038- Appropriation request for use of FY25 retained earnings from Comcast PEG Access for North TV information technology equipment replacement in the amount of \$23,031.70

Measure 2025-038- Appropriation request for use of FY25 retained earnings from Comcast PEG Access for North TV information technology equipment replacement in the amount of \$23,031.70

Each year, the Town receives funds from Comcast for the funding of North TV capital improvement projects necessary to produce PEG access programing. The North TV information technology equipment replacement project meets this criteria.

North TV information technology equipment is at the end of its useful service life as current assets are nearly ten years old. Current assets are extremely slow when editing and processing video footage, and this has resulted in slower production time and inefficient use of staff time.

North TV requests funds to purchase the following information technology equipment:

- Five (5) Apple Mac Mini computers with the following features:
\$12,494.95
 - 14-core CPU and 20-core GPU
 - 16-core Neural Engine
 - 48 GB unified memory
 - 1 TB SSD storage

- Three Thunderbolt 5 ports, HDMI port, and Two USB-C ports
- Final Cut Pro software

- Five (5) Apple Studio Displays with the following features:
\$7,995.00
 - 27-inch 5k display
 - 12 MP Ultra Wide camera with Center Stage
 - Studio-quality microphones
 - Six-speaker sound system with Spatial Audio
 - Standard glass display

- Five (5) Razor Thunderbolt Docking Stations
\$1,445.00

- 5% Contingency
\$1,096.75

Total Project Cost: \$23,031.70

I request that the Town Council approve the request for the use of FY'25 retained earnings for the Comcast PEG Access for the North TV information technology replacement project in the amount of \$23,031.70.

North TV Director Peter Gay was in attendance to explain this request and answer any of the questions that the Committee may have had.

Discussions included:

- This is of NO COST to the Taxpayers.
- Not from appropriated funds from the Town
- Funds are User Fees for Cable TV Subscribers. This fee pays for this measure.
- Councilor Donovan asked if Mr. Gay has thought about leasing this equipment as opposed to purchasing it?
- Mr. Gay said that financially leasing this equipment doesn't make sense.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-038- Appropriation request for use of FY25 retained earnings from Comcast PEG Access for North TV information technology equipment replacement in the amount of \$23,031.70 back to the Full Town Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- g. Measure 2025-039- Authorization to transfer \$37,042.94 from the Reserve Account to the Insurance Premiums Account to pay the Insurance Premium for the Town's Insurance Policies

Measure 2025-039- Authorization to transfer \$37,042.94 from the Reserve Account to the Insurance Premiums Account to pay the Insurance Premium for the Town's Insurance Policies

The purpose of this Measure is to authorize the transfer of \$37,042.94 from the Town's Reserve Fund Line Item to support increased insurance premiums and enhanced coverage for liability, cybersecurity, and cultural asset protection following a comprehensive review of the Town's policies and deductible structure.

Since April 2024, the Town has been engaged in negotiations with its insurance broker and providers to establish new deductible levels for building and automobile coverage. Historically, the Town carried low deductible levels, which resulted in higher premiums. After evaluation of risk tolerance, supported by a general stabilization reserve of \$8 million, the Town has implemented higher deductibles that achieve cost efficiencies while maintaining appropriate coverage levels.

Additionally, recognizing the growing importance of cybersecurity in municipal operations, the Town has expanded its cybersecurity insurance coverage to provide enhanced protection for its critical operating systems and infrastructure. This increased coverage reflects best practices for safeguarding municipal operations against cyber threats and reinforces the Town's commitment to continuity of services.

A final component of this Measure is funding for the valuation of the Afghan painting, a historical and cultural asset that requires accurate appraisal to ensure appropriate insurance protection.

The breakdown of the additional costs is as follows:

Liability Insurance Policy: \$28,372

Cyber Insurance Policy: \$21,448.44

Afghan Painting Appraisal: \$2,500

The transfer of \$37,042.94 from the Reserve Fund in addition \$15,277.50 from the existing budget fulfills this requirement.

Town Manager Borg explained this request to the Committee.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-039- Authorization to transfer \$37,042.94 from the Reserve Account to the Insurance Premiums Account to pay the Insurance Premium for the Town's Insurance Policies back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- h. Measure 2025-040- Authorization to Re-purpose Funds from Town Clerk’s CIP Digitization Project to Purchase Office Furniture in the amount of \$11,485.83

Measure 2025-040- Authorization to Re-purpose Funds from Town Clerk’s CIP Digitization Project to Purchase Office Furniture in the amount of \$11,485.83

On November 8, 2022, the Town Council unanimously approved measure 2023-015, Approval of the General Government Capital Improvement Plan Projects - FY2023 Free Cash. This measure included the Permanent Record Digitization project, an effort aimed at reducing paperwork and improving access to Town records, for \$160,000. In December 2024, the Town Clerk reported that this project is complete. The following details the remaining funds:

Org. Code	Description	Amount	
30161114	M2024-0114 4114-24-538010-	\$3,500.00	3000- 1-161-000-0000-0-
30161315	M2023-015 2315-23-538010-	\$7,985.83	3000-1-161-000-0000-0-
TOTAL REMAINING FUNDS:		\$11,485.83	

In December 2024, the Town Manager directed the Elections, Tax Collector and Treasurer Offices to swap locations in order to enhance inter-office coordination and effectiveness. However, the furniture in each office was uniquely designed for its previous space, and in some cases, does not serve its intended purpose in its new space.

To fund replacement furniture, the Town Manager requests the Town Council authorize to re-purpose funds from the Permanent Record Digitization project to purchase office furniture in the amount of \$11,485.83.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-040- Authorization to Re-purpose Funds from Town Clerk’s CIP Digitization Project to Purchase Office Furniture in the amount of \$11,485.83 back to the Full Town Council with a positive 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 7:50PM.