

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

1/27/2025 - Minutes

I. Pledge Of Allegiance

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Pare' called the meeting to order at 7:05P.M. and lead the Town Council and the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

Town Council Members Present:

Members Absent:

Justin Pare'

Andrew Shanahan

John Simmons

Darius Gregory

Mark Gould

Dan Donovan

John Costello

Pat St. Pierre

Andrea Slobogan

Staff Present:

Town Manager Michael Borg

Assistant Town Manager Antonio Morabito

Clerk of the Council Kerrin Billinghoff

Treasurer/Tax Collector Chris Sweet

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

Facilities Director Tim Chouinard

Communications & Information Officer Taylor O'Neill

Keith Mueller I.T. Director

Sandra McCrory Conservation Administrator

Bryan Butler Acting Building Commissioner

Residents:

Charles Arienti Resident

Ed Begley Resident

Laura Wagner Member of the Charter Review Committee

Keith LaPointe Resident of 28 John J. Grimaldi Drive

Tyler LaFrenier of Risser Engineering

Joan Gustaff of 66 Hillside Ave.

Resident of 95 Arbor Way

Kevin Hustler of Draper Ave.

Sandy Forgel Resident

Bobby Bassilier

Mary Bray Resident of 152 South Broadway

Joe Rezza Resident

Paul Collopy of Historical Commission

Invited Guests Present:

Bhavi Mood Junior at NAHS

John Thomas Junior at NAHS

Documents Reviewed:

- Town Council Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2025
- Town Council Executive Session Minutes of January 13, 2025
- Measure 2025-018- Confirmation of Appointment of Sandra McCrory as the Conservation Administrator
- Measure 2025-022- Confirmation of Appointment of Bryan Butler as the Building Commissioner
- **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. AMENDED
- **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
- **Measure 2025-041**- Acceptance of the alteration of the layout of a portion of Plain Street Right of Way as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024, and the discontinuance of a portion of the Right of Way, "Parcel A" which contains 17,506 square feet more or less.
- **Measure 2025-042**- Request the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to conduct a sale utilizing M.G.L. C.30B S.16

of Parcel A on Plain Street, which contains 17,506 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC. by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024.

- **Measure 2025-043**- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for AT&T Firstnet Services for the IT Department in the amount of \$124.27.
- **Measure 2025-044**- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for Metasource LLC. for the I.T. Department in the amount of \$2,525.75.
- Town Manager Performance Evaluation
- **Measure 2025-045**- Adoption of Guidelines/Policy for Town Councilor Conduct on Social Media and Community Engagement

II. Approval Of Minutes

- a. Approval of Town Council Minutes of January 13, 2024

Approval of Town Council Minutes of January 13, 2025

Vice President Simmons made a motion to approve the Town Council Minutes of January 13, 2025.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0-2.

- b. Approval of Town Council Executive Session Minutes of January 13, 2025

III. Town Councilor Community Updates

Approval of Town Council Executive Session Minutes of January 13, 2025

Vice President Simmons made a motion to approve the Town Council Executive Session Minutes of January 13, 2025.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0-2.

IV. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Michael Borg recognized two North Attleboro High School Students Bhavi Mood and John Thomas both Juniors at NAHS.

North Attleborough Senior Technology Program (NASTP)

1. North Attleboro Senior Technology Program (NASTP) took place at the Richards Memorial Library during the week of December 9-13th from 3-4 p.m. The program was spearheaded by NAHS juniors John Thomas and Bhavi Mood.

2. Program was very well received, and the boys were given high praise from the patrons each day: "This was

incredibly informative," "I can't believe you're only juniors in high school," "you're very poised and knowledgeable,"

"thank you for providing this workshop... I learned a lot, "thank you for being so patient,"

V. Resident And Community Comment

1. Ed Begley a resident of North Attleboro was in attendance to address the Town Council and voice his opinion. Mr. Begley stated that he is a Taxpayer and a Senior in Town and in favor of building a new High School. He expressed his support and that a new High School will benefit the residents of the Town.

2. Keith Lapointe was in attendance to address the Town Council. Mr. Lapointe stated that we all need to come together as a Community. Mr. Lapointe said we have to carefully consider all the details before making the decision whether to subsidize the seniors. The vote is in June because we are not ready. The Town Council should not make a rash decision based on politics, but should do what is best for the community. Mr. Lapointe stated that we need to go through the process, go through the proposal, demand the facts before we vote, and stay the course.

3. Charles Arienti was in attendance to inform the Community that his cat has been missing and to please reach out to him if anyone sees it. The cat is white with orange striping. If you see him, please email Mr. Arienti @ ARIENTI1995@GMAIL.COM or call him at #857-526-3233.

VI. Confirmations

- a. Measure 2025-018- Confirmation of Appointment of Sandra McCrory as the Conservation Administrator

Measure 2025-018- Confirmation of Appointment of Sandra McCrory as the Conservation Administrator

I enthusiastically recommend that the Town Council confirm the appointment of Sandra McCrory as the Conservation Administrator for the Town of North Attleborough.

Earlier this month, the Chair of the Conservation Commission and I met with Ms. McCrory.

During this interview, Ms. McCrory's experience, knowledge and drive for self-improvement convinced us that she is the individual to fill the role as Conservation Administrator.

Ms. McCrory is experienced and knowledgeable. Originally employed by the Schools Department in 2013, she assumed her current role as Administrative Coordinator for Conservation in 2019. During this time, she served under two Conservation Administrators, and she learned all facets of the department's administration and many of the nuances of conservation field work. After, Ms. McCrory adopted the roles as Administrative Coordinator for Zoning and the Historical Commission further rounding out her professional experience and knowledge.

Ms. McCrory is driven by self-improvement. During her employment in the Town, she has made great efforts to learn the technical aspects of three organizational elements she serves, and this is evident in her thorough knowledge of the laws, regulations and procedures and her professional conduct during public meetings. She excelled during two Department of Environmental Protection courses on Conservation regulations and a fundamentals class executed by the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions. Her efforts led me to identify her as a superior employee during the FY'25 budget process.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Town Council confirm the appointment of Sandra McCrory as the Conservation Administrator for the Town of North Attleborough.

Ms. McCrory was in attendance and thanked the Town Manager and the Town Council for the opportunity and is excited to begin her new role as the Conservation Administrator for the Town of North Attleborough.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-018- Confirmation of

Appointment of Sandra McCrory as Conservation Administrator for the Town of North Attleborough.

Councilor Gregory seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- b. Measure 2025-022- Confirmation of Appointment of Bryan Butler as the Building Commissioner

Measure 2025-022- Confirmation of Appointment of Bryan Butler as the Building Commissioner

Bryan Butler, Assistant Building Inspector, who had been appointed as the Acting Building Commissioner on October 28, 2024, upon the departure of the previous Building Commissioner has been appointed as the new Building Commissioner. Mr. Butler has fulfilled his responsibilities of this role with professionalism and commitment. Mr. Butler has displayed expertise, dedication and leadership and we are confident that he will succeed in the position of Building Commissioner for the Town of North Attleborough upon the confirmation of appointment of the Town Council.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Town Council confirm the appointment of Bryan Butler as the Building Commissioner for the Town of North Attleborough.

Mr. Butler was in attendance and thanked the Town Manager and the Town Council for the opportunity and is excited to begin his official role as the Building Commissioner for the Town of North Attleborough.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-012- Confirmation of Appointment of Bryan Butler as Building Commissioner for the Town of North Attleborough.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

VII. Sub-Committee Reports

- a. Finance

- i. 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.

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.

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.

This measure was on the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda on January 15, 2025. At the meeting there was discussion amongst the Town Manager, Police Chief McQuade, and the Committee. This request is a matter of Public Safety for the entire Town and safety of our residents. 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. This measure was refereed back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation and voted unanimously 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve 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.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- ii. 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.

This measure was on the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda on January 15, 2025. 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.
- **No constraints on these funds.**
- 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.

This was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-030-Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$294,076.00 to the School Department for Chapter 70 Differential.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- iii. Measure 2025-032- Authorization to repurpose \$28,786.00 of funds that had been allocated from the Martin Boiler Project to be used to fund the Roosevelt Hot Water

Replacement Project for the School Department

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 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 at the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting on January 15, 2024 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.

This was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Facilities Director Tim Chouinard was in attendance to address the Council and answer any additional questions they may have had.

Councilor Gould asked when this Boiler Project would be completed.

Mr. Chouinard stated that the Boiler Project would be completed in a few weeks and the Roosevelt Hot Water Heater Project was completed on Friday, January 24, 2025.

Town Manager Borg stated the appropriation for leftover funds currently approximately \$165,000 will be recommended to be rescinded as soon as this project is closed out.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve 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 Project.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- iv. 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.

The Town Council met on January 13, 2025, and on behalf of the Town Council, a motion was made by Vice-President Simmons 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 to the Finance Sub-Committee for further review and discussion.

This measure was on the January 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda. 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.

This measure was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-033- Authorization to transfer FY25 Free Cash in the amount of \$3.2 mm to the Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Account.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- v. 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 transfers.

Treasurer/Tax Collector Chris Sweet was in attendance at the January 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting 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.

This measure was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-035- Authorization to Transfer \$22,945.04 accumulated interest from Sewer Retained Earnings to Sewer I&I Stabilization Fund.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- vi. 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

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.

This measure was on the January 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda. 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:

1. This is of NO COST to the Taxpayers.
2. Not from appropriated funds from the Town
3. Funds are User Fees for Cable TV Subscribers. This fee pays for this measure.
4. Councilor Donovan asked if Mr. Gay has thought about leasing this equipment as opposed to purchasing it?

5. Mr. Gay said that financially leasing this equipment doesn't make sense.

This measure was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-038- Appropriation request for use of FY25 retained earnings from Comcast PEG Access for North TV information technology equipment replacement.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- vii. 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.

This measure was on the January 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda. It was voted unanimously to positively recommend back to the Full Town Council with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve 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.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- viii. 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	\$3,500.00
3000-1-161-000-0000-0-4114-24-538010-		
30161315	M2023-015	\$7,985.83
3000-1-161-000-0000-0-2315-23-538010-		
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.

This measure was on the January 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Agenda and was referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation with a vote of 6-0.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve 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.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

b. Economic Growth & Sustainability

Nothing to report at this time.

c. By-Law

Nothing to report at this time.

d. Rules

Nothing to report at this time.

e. School Committee Representative

A pipe had burst at the Roosevelt Elementary School and has been repaired.

f. School Building Committee (MSBA)

A Public Forum will be held on February 13, 2025 at the North Attleborough High School.

g. Communication, Public Participation & Engagement

Nothing to report at this time.

h. Local Emergency Planning

A Joint LEPC Public Meeting to be held on 1/29/2025 via Zoom & In-Person at the Town Hall in the JoAnn Cathcart Conference Room at 10:00AM.

i. Audit Review Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

VIII. Old Business

a. None at this time

IX. New Business

- a. Measure 2025-041- Acceptance of the alteration of the layout of a portion of Plain Street Right of Way as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024, and the discontinuance of a portion of the Right of Way, "Parcel A" which contains 17,506 square feet more or less.

Measure 2025-041 - Acceptance of the alteration of the layout of a portion of Plain

Street Right of Way as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024, and the discontinuance of a portion of the Right of Way, "Parcel A" which contains 17,506 square feet more or less.

The purpose of this measure is request that the Town Council vote to layout and accept the alteration of the Right of Way for a portion of Plain Street.

A property owner has requested to purchase the proposed Parcel A.

This portion of Plain St. is part of the original layout of Plain St. prior to Route 95 being constructed. When the Highway came through, the State "straightened out the roadway and expanded the Right of Way (ROW) of Plain St. leaving a wide parcel adjacent to the Highway layout.

As part of the existing ROW, the resolution must go through the process to discontinue or abandon a portion of the roadway, which must follow MGL Ch. 82-32A , which requires the Board of Public Works as Road Commissioners to have a public hearing for a vote of approval (approved March 2024) and recommendation to Town Council to accept a new layout of Plain St. and discontinuance of the remaining parcel as a Right of Way .Once approved, the first order survey plan must be put on file with the Town Clerk. The Town Manager could then solicit Town Council to dispose of the new parcel through a 30B process.

Mr. Tyler LaFreniere of Risser Engineering was in attendance to answer any questions that the Town Council may have had. Mr. LaFreniere stated that the proposed property is in an I-60 Industrial District and that the intent was to combine the two parcels into one.

Town Manager Borg stated that once both Measures are approved, this property is subject to the RFP process and would need to go out to bid.

Councilor Slobogan made a motion to approve Measure 2025-041- Acceptance of the alteration of the layout of a portion of Plain Street Right of Way as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024, and the discontinuance of a portion of the Right of Way, "Parcel A" which contains 17,506 square feet more or less.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0-1.

- b. Measure 2025-042- Request the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to conduct a sale utilizing M.G.L. C.30B S.16 of Parcel A on Plain Street, which contains 17,506 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC. by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024

Measure 2025-042- Request the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to conduct a sale utilizing M.G.L. C.30B S.16 of Parcel A on Plain Street, which contains 17,506 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC. by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024.

The purpose of this measure is to give the Town Manager authorization to vote and put this property out to bid.

Chapter 30B Section 16: Real property; disposition or acquisition

(a) If a governmental body duly authorized by general or special law to engage in such transaction determines that it shall rent, convey, or otherwise dispose of real property, the governmental body shall declare the property available for disposition and shall specify the restrictions, if any, that it will place on the subsequent use of the property.

(b) The governmental body shall determine the value of the property through procedures customarily accepted by the appraising profession as valid.

(c) A governmental body shall solicit proposals prior to:

(1) acquiring by purchase or rental real property or an interest therein from any person at a cost exceeding \$35,000; or

(2) disposing of, by sale or rental to any person, real property or any interest therein, determined in accordance with paragraph (b) to exceed \$35,000 dollars in value.

(d) The governmental body shall place an advertisement inviting the submission of proposals in a newspaper with a circulation in the locality sufficient to inform the people of the affected locality. The governmental body shall publish the advertisement at least once a week for two consecutive weeks. The last publication shall occur at least eight days preceding the day for opening proposals.

The advertisement shall specify the geographical area, terms and requirements of the proposed transaction, and the time and place for the submission of proposals. In the case of the acquisition or disposition of more than twenty-five hundred square feet of real property, the governmental body shall also cause such advertisement to be published, at least thirty days before the opening of proposals, in the central register published by the state secretary pursuant to section twenty A of chapter nine.

(e) The governmental body may shorten or waive the advertising requirement if:

(1) the governmental body determines that an emergency exists and the time required to comply with the requirements would endanger the health or safety of the people or their property; provided, however, that the governmental body shall state the reasons for declaring the emergency in the central register at the earliest opportunity; or

(2) in the case of a proposed acquisition, the governmental body determines in writing that advertising will not benefit the governmental body's interest because of the unique qualities or location of the property needed. The determination shall specify the manner in which the property proposed for acquisition satisfies the unique requirements. The governmental body shall publish the determination and the reasons for the determination, along with the names of the parties having a beneficial interest in the property pursuant to section forty J of chapter seven, the location and size of the property, and the proposed purchase price or rental terms, in the central register not less than thirty days before the governmental body executes a binding agreement to acquire the property.

(f) Proposals shall be opened publicly at the time and place designated in the

advertisement. The governmental body shall submit the name of the person selected as party to a real property transaction, and the amount of the transaction, to the state secretary for publication in the central register.

(g) If the governmental body decides to dispose of property at a price less than the value as determined pursuant to paragraph (b), the governmental body shall publish notice of its decision in the central register, explaining the reasons for its decision and disclosing the difference between such value and the price to be received.

(h) This section shall not apply to the rental of residential property to qualified tenants by a housing authority or a community development authority.

(i) Acquisitions or dispositions of real property or any interest therein pursuant to this section between governmental bodies and the federal government, the commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions or another state or political subdivision thereof shall be subject to subsections (a), (b) and (g).

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve Measure 2025-042- Request the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to conduct a sale utilizing M.G.L. C.30B S.16 of Parcel A on Plain Street, which contains 17,506 square feet, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Street Layout Plan Plain Street North Attleboro MA", prepared for Groundrules LLC. by Risser Engineering Company, dated October 25, 2024.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0-1.

- c. Measure 2025-043- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for AT&T Firstnet Services for the IT Department in the amount of \$124.27.

Measure 2025-043- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for AT&T Firstnet Services for the IT Department in the amount of \$124.27.

Purpose and Justification:

The IT Department requests approval to pay outstanding invoices from AT&T Firstnet for services rendered between April and June 2024. The total amount due is \$124.27, to be charged to account 534003 (Data Lines).

Outstanding invoices from AT&T accumulated due to significant delays and failures in their billing processes. Despite initiating services as part of a multi-carrier backup solution research project, AT&T did not establish a functional invoicing system. This included a lack of timely delivery of both electronic and paper bills, as well as an inability to access their online billing portal until the subsequent fiscal year. Consequently, invoices could not be processed and paid during the service period. Although services with AT&T have since been terminated, these unresolved billing issues remain outstanding."

I.T. Director Keith Meuller was in attendance to explain this request and answer any questions that the Council may have had regarding the invoices.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-043- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for AT&T Firstnet Services for the IT Department in the amount of \$124.27.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- d. Measure 2025-044- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for Metasource LLC. for the I.T. Department in the amount of \$2,525.75

Measure 2025-044- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for Metasource LLC. for the I.T. Department in the amount of \$2,525.75.

Purpose and Justification:

The IT Department requests approval to pay outstanding invoices from Metasource LLC for services rendered in June 2024. The total amount due is \$2,525.75, to be charged to account 524302 (Maint of Computer Software).

Due to ongoing contract negotiations with Metasource for Fiscal Year 2025, there was a miscommunication regarding the expected timing of invoices. Consequently, this particular invoice, pertaining to Fiscal Year 2024, was inadvertently overlooked. The invoice was not identified until the FY25 contract was finalized and in place, at which point its FY24 status was recognized.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve Measure 2025-044- Authorization to pay FY24 Invoices for Metasource LLC. for the I.T. Department in the amount of \$2,525.75.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

- e. Town Manager Performance Evaluation

Town Manager Performance Evaluation

President Pare' stated that the Town Manager Performance Evaluation has been completed and submitted to Town Manager Borg and Human Resources. The Evaluation Summary will be posted to the website, and the individual evaluations will go in Town Manager Borg's file. Mr. Borg Exceeded or met expectations and is eligible to receive a contractual raise of 2%, but the Town Council can approve an additional 2% on top of the contractual 2% for a total of a 4% increase.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to approve a 4% increase for Town Manager Borg.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

Councilor Gould requested a Self Evaluation from Town Manager Borg.

- f. Measure 2025-045- Adoption of Guidelines/Policy for Town Councilor Conduct on Social Media and Community Engagement

Measure 2025-045- Adoption of Guidelines/Policy for Town Councilor Conduct on Social Media and Community Engagement

Councilor Slobogan brought this measure forward and presented a Power Point to the Town Council and the Residents.

Purpose:

To consider adopting a policy to provide clear guidelines for town councilors regarding the use of social media and engagement with the community, ensuring transparency, professionalism, and ethical conduct while protecting the integrity of the council.

Background:

In today's digital age, social media serves as a powerful tool for public officials to communicate with the community and address concerns. However, without clear guidelines, the potential for misrepresentation, misinformation, or unintentional violations of ethical standards can arise. Establishing a policy will ensure that councilors can effectively engage with residents while maintaining the trust and confidence of the public.

Scope of the Guidelines:

- Clarify the distinction between personal and official communication on social media.
- Define best practices for responding to public concerns on social platforms.

Ethical Standards:

- Outline expectations for accuracy and transparency when discussing council business or recapping meetings.
- Prohibit the use of official town symbols (e.g., town seal) or language that implies a councilor is speaking on behalf of the council without authorization.

Public Feedback Utilization:

- Encourage councilors to observe community concerns on social media and address recurring themes during council meetings under "Councilor Comments."
- Promote the use of meeting recordings or official minutes to ensure accurate information is accessible to the public.
 - Require councilors to conduct all town-related business through designated council email addresses to ensure compliance with public records laws and maintain transparency.

Transparency Measures:

- Discuss sharing meeting recordings or summaries via official town channels, such as North TV, Facebook, or the town website, to provide accurate recaps.

Ensure compliance with Open Meeting Law and public records requirements.

Enforcement and Training:

- Consider implementing training for councilors on social media ethics and conduct.
- Establish a process for addressing complaints or violations of the proposed policy.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Initiate a formal discussion of the proposed guidelines at the upcoming town council meeting.

- Collect feedback from councilors and the public to refine the policy

There was discussion amongst the Town Council. It was felt that this was a great first step in the right direction to come up with guidelines.

This policy was admittedly targeted at Councilor Gould. However, no one was able to cite any examples of inappropriate conduct. Councilor Gould noted the U.S. Supreme Court's has unanimously ruled that elected officials have a protected First Amendment right to criticize the government or disagree and that legislative bodies cannot silence or punish elected officials for expressing their views, particularly on matters of public interest. Councilor Gould noted this Council has an unhealthy culture of conformity and that in the real world it's okay for people to disagree. This policy could open the town up to liability on first amendment free speech grounds.

Councilor Gould stated that he does not agree with this policy, and instead of restricting free speech we should be encouraging free speech.

Councilor Slobogan expressed that this measure is not about limiting free speech and by adopting this policy- we can lead other Towns by leading by example. We need to spread the word factually as opposed to misinformation. Factual Information is the information that we want to share. Councilor Slobogan expressed that this measure is not to silence, but rather to put guidelines in place to give factual information for transparency. Councilor Slobogan would like this measure to be referred to the Rules Sub-Committee for further discussion and consideration.

Councilor Slobogan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-045- Adoption of Guidelines/Policy for Town Councilor Conduct on Social Media and Community Engagement to the Rules Sub-Committee for further review, discussion, and consideration.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-1.

- g. Discussion of Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion

Discussion of Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion

This measure was taken out of order and was discussed as the first item on the agenda as many residents were in attendance for this topic. This measure was on the agenda at Town Councilor Goulds request.

Council President Pare' stated that there will be a Public Hearing on this measure in the next 30-60 days, as this was not advertised as a Public Hearing or on the agenda as a Public Hearing. President Pare' explained that this vote will not happen until June and there is a lot to think about between now and then. A lot more information is needed before we can decide on a huge topic like this. Because many residents were in attendance for this topic and were here to voice their concerns, the Town Council will follow the process for a Public Hearing and allow everyone who would like to speak on this topic address the Council.

Town Councilors thanked the residents for showing up to the meeting and coming to voice their opinions on the above mentioned topic.

Vice-President Simmons expressed his concerns about this topic. The High School Project is a Town Project, it will benefit the entire Town as a whole, and therefore the entire Town should bear the burden as whole. Separating groups of residents is not the way to go as the Town as a whole will benefit from a New High School. A new High School is needed and the best option was chosen, with the State helping out with a percentage This vote is a Town Wide Vote, not a Town Council Vote. We cannot control the values of the homes in Town, but as a Town, we can look at what we have done with the Senior Exemptions, and we can change the shift and perhaps have businesses pay a larger burden. VP Simmons explained that there is no rush for this as we do not have any final numbers, we do not have all of the facts, and the School Vote has not even passed yet. It is too premature to be discussing and voting on this at this time.

Councilor Gould was in favor of voting on the "Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion" tonight. It was submitted January 9th and was noted as time sensitive at that time. The full and complete law was submitted January 25, a full two days before the 27th Council Meeting. Passing a Special Act takes time, usually months, Councilor Gould requested a timely follow up meeting to vote since it appeared the Council President wanted more time. Gould noted the cost of the Senior Exemption would be very small in relation to the project, a likely 1-4% shift, and would greatly help our Seniors who have given so much to North Attleboro. This whole idea was born of the fact that Council President and Vice President spoke of concern for how the Seniors would afford the new school. The tax shift idea would only shift one or two hundred dollars and would be very onerous on businesses. Public Comment: A standing room only crowd of residents were overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed Senior exemption to the high school project.

Councilor Donovan stated that given that there is not a measure to vote on or refer, he made a motion to postpone Item G. "Discussion of Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion" indefinitely.

Councilor Slobogan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to withdraw his motion.

Councilor Slobogan withdrew her second.

Motion carried 8-0.

President Pare' stated that there will be a Public Hearing on this topic in a month or two.

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to allow Public Comment on Item G. "Discussion of Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion."

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

Treasurer/Collector Chris Sweet was in attendance and stated that there is no time limit on this topic. The first shovel in the ground would not be until 2027 and we have plenty of time. There is no need to rush into this before we have all the information needed.

Public Comment: A standing room only crowd of residents were overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed Senior exemption to the high school project. Residents who addressed the Town Council: Joan Gustaff, Mary of 95 Arbor Way, Kevin Hustler, Sandy Forgell, Bobby Bassilier, Joe Rezza, Mary Bray, and other residents were all in attendance to voice their opinion and concern on the Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion. Discussions included:

- Increase in taxes

- Taxes have gone up in the past, what if they go up even more?
- Will they be able to afford to remain living in Town when taxes are increased?
- Would the Town Council consider a different plan for Senior Citizens that is affordable for them?
- Average appraised value of a home in Town is \$516,000.00
- As a community we need to bear the burden of building a new High School.
- Everyone would like their voice to be heard.
- Residents have already paid for a new High School in the 70's.
- Thank you to the Council for being as open and helping Seniors as much as they have by increasing from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00.
- A new High School is going to move the Town forward.
- All requested more information.
- Looking forward to future informative presentations.
- Veterans' benefits/ Disabled benefits
- Need to support the Town.
- Needs to be a balance.

President Pare' thanked everyone for their feedback on this topic and encouraged all to attend the next Community Forum on February 13, 2025 at the North Attleborough High School.

Councilor Costello stated that we need to make a well-informed decision. This is a decision that will affect everyone in Town. Councilor Costello stated for the record that he would be in favor of accepting the Exemption, but he would want more discussion.

Councilor Donovan stated that this is an extremely pre-mature discussion as the vote for the Debt Exclusion is not until June 3, 2025, and then we will have a couple of years to debate this. He stated that they need data and we do not have it yet.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to postpone the Public Hearing on Councilor Gould's Citizen's Petition "Discussion of Special Home Rule Act to Reduce Senior Tax Burden in the Event of a Positive Vote for a School Debt Exclusion."

Councilor Donovan withdrew his motion.

h. Discussion of Non-Binding Advisory Questions for the April or June Election Ballot

Discussion of Non-Binding Advisory Questions for the April or June Election Ballot

Councilor Gould brought this item forward and requested that it be placed on the Agenda. Councilor Gould would like to get feedback from the Community and find out what they want. Councilor Gould stated that examples of Ballot Questions could be:

- Should there be a Mayor?
- Should a Hockey Rink be built in Town?
- New Fire Station?

There was discussion amongst the Councilors on this topic. What is the goal of adding these non-binding questions to the ballot? Is this enough to get the conversation started? We need to think about the best way to ask these questions? Not sure ballot is the way. It was suggested that this topic be submitted as a measure.

X. Adjournment

Vice-President Simmons made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48PM.