

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

4/22/2025 - Minutes

I. 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 Kathleen Prescott

Dan Donovan

Craig Cameron

John Costello

Pat St. Pierre

John Donohue

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Town Manager Michael Borg

Assistant Town Manager Antonio Morabito

Town Council Clerk, Kerrin Billinghoff

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

Town Accountant Linda Catanzariti

Treasurer/Collector Chris Sweet

Senior Center Director Karen Testa

Health Director/Town Health Nurse AnneMaire Fleming

Library Director Deb Clifton

Veterans Agent Scott Smith

Parks & Recreation Director Steven Carvalho

Residents:

None at this time

Invited Guests Present:

Senator Paul Feeney

Representative Adam Scanlon

Documents Reviewed:

- Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 04.15.2025
- Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 04.16.2025
- **Measure 2025-047**- To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals.
AMENDED
- **Measure 2025-054 – Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures**
- FY26 Health & Human Services Power Point
- FY26 Health & Human Services MUNIS Sheets
- DLS Handouts from Representative Scanlon

II. Approval Of Minutes

- a. Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 15, 2025

Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 15, 2025

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 15, 2025.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

- b. Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 16, 2025

Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 16, 2025

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of April 16, 2025.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

III. Resident And Community Comment

None at this time.

IV. Old Business

- a. Measure 2025-047- To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals. AMENDED

Measure 2025-047 - To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals. AMENDED

- b. Measure 2025-054 – Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures

Measure 2025-054 – Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures

Senator Paul Feeny and State Representative Scanlon were both in attendance to address the Committee.

The Finance Committee invited them to the meeting so that they could both provide additional information on efforts at the state level to provide tax relief to seniors. They wanted to discuss the Senior Circuit Breaker as it seems like many residents who need relief don't qualify for it under the current rules.

Beyond the circuit breaker they were looking for updates on the various bills related to senior tax freezes and/or exemptions (either bill amounts or assessments) and to see if there is anything we are missing with the circuit breaker or other tax exemptions we are not utilizing. This information will help the Committee in their deliberations on a potential home rule petition related to senior tax exemptions.

Discussions included:

- Rise in Health Care Costs are unbelievable

- Municipal and Public Health Care Costs are increasing everywhere
- Worried about Medicare
- Increased costs of prescriptions
- Increased costs in housing
- The State is also dealing with these increases as well
- Facing Seniors' Economic Headwinds
- Slowing Growth
- Currently looking ahead and worried about 2027
- Capital Gains
- Will have a better picture after April, as April is a big month for receipts
- High bond rating at State level
- Good stabilization fund
- Tough times for those on fixed incomes
- Budget will not be complete until next month
- Public Hearings have just started
- Lots of challenges ahead of us

Vice President Simmons explained that the Town Council has been hearing about the rise in Health Care since October 2024. The Town will be switching from 41C to 41D. The Finance Committee is trying to craft a plan to give relief to those to qualify for the Senior Circuit Breaker. The Town Council would like to help as many individuals as possible. Vice President Simmons explained that they are currently looking into a Home Rule Petition in July.

Councilor Donovan expressed that Primary Care Physicians are very limited at this time. There is a shortage of doctors in the state because of the high cost of living in the area.

John Donohue made a motion to continue Measure 2025-047 and Measure 2025-054 to the May 21, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting.

Councilor Donvan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

V. New Business

a. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Senior Director Karen Testa, Health Director and Public Health Nurse AnneMarie Fleming, Library Director Deb Clifton, Veterans Agent Scott Smith, and Park & Recreation Director Steve Carvalho were all in attendance to present their FY26 Budgets and answer any of

the questions the Committee may have had. They each reviewed the Budget Slides for their department and their MUNIS Slides.

i. Council on Aging (541)

Council on Aging (541)

- **MISSION**: To enrich the lives of North Attleborough's older adults by providing programs, services, and support that promote physical and emotional well-being through recreation, nutrition, education, social engagement, and volunteer opportunities.
- **SERVICES**: The Senior Center offers Medicare and insurance counseling, outreach and referral services, home visits, and assistance with housing, SNAP, fuel, and caregiver support. We provide Meals on Wheels and congregate meals to support senior nutrition, along with the Senior Tax Work-Off Program, which offers a property tax abatement in exchange for part-time service. Transportation is available through GATRA and our Big Red bus, and we continue to expand programs, activities, and volunteer opportunities to keep seniors active, engaged, and connected to the community.
- **DISCUSSIONS**:
 - Senior Center will be moving to 451 Elm Street
 - Main focus is to have a smooth transition
 - Programs will focus on Health Aid & reducing isolation
 - Past four months they have strengthened partnerships with local businesses.
 - **Formula Grant will help with funding a Shine Councilor**
 - Will strengthen intergenerational programs with Elementary Schools and High Schools
 - Looking for more grants for Expanded Transportation for the seniors
 - Health Wellness Programs are bursting at the seams
 - Outreach Councilors are available at Senior Center to help seniors with the Circuit Breaker

ii. Health (511)

Health (511)

- **MISSION**: The North Attleborough Health Department, in partnership with the Board of Health, is dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing the health and well-being of our community. We achieve this through proactive prevention, health promotion, equitable access to services, and the enforcement of public health regulations, ensuring a safe and thriving environment for all residents.
- **SERVICES**: Protects public health through inspections (food, housing, septic, body art, camps), disease prevention, immunizations, emergency preparedness, and social service referrals. Issues permits, enforces tobacco laws, conducts health screenings, and operates Lenore's Pantry for food-insecure residents.
- **DISCUSSIONS**:
 - Career Counseling Feedback-Positive feedback
 - Are there enough people in the office to perform inspections? There is a full time and part time inspector.
 - **How many complaints end of in violations?**
 - Complaints include Housing/Restaurant/Rats
 - YMCA will be taking over a lot of Lenore's Pantry duty's.
 - Health Services Representative will be freed up to have more interaction &

connection with the community when the YMCA takes over pantry responsibilities.

iii. Library (610)

Library (610)

- **MISSION**: Richards Memorial Library serves the North Attleborough community by providing free and equitable access to information, resources, and programs that support lifelong learning, personal enrichment, and educational success. We are committed to fostering a welcoming environment that encourages reading, creativity, and community engagement for residents of all ages.
- **SERVICES**: The library provides access to collections through the SAILS Network and statewide via the Commonwealth Catalog, along with digital content from platforms like Libby, Hoopla, and statewide databases. We offer programs for all ages, a safe and inclusive space, and essential services including free Wi-Fi, public computers, affordable printing, free scanning and faxing, and homebound delivery for those unable to visit in person.
- **DISCUSSIONS**:
 - Library repairs and refurbishment is complete
 - More comfortable seating areas
 - More desks for the public
 - We have created a warm and open space- lobby looks beautiful.
 - Great collaboration with Solid Waste
 - Great collaboration with the Senior Center
 - Bookcases have been set up at Elm St. for Seniors
 - Still in line to receive our State Aid

iv. Veterans (543)

Veterans (543)

- **MISSION**: The Veterans' Services Department supports veterans and their families in North Attleborough, Plainville, and Wrentham by providing guidance and assistance in accessing state and federal benefits, including those under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115 and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **SERVICES**: The North Attleborough, Plainville, Wrentham Veterans District processes Chapter 115 benefits and assists veterans and their families with VA claims across all three towns. The District Director also coordinates events honoring veterans throughout the year, in collaboration with the Veterans Advisory Board and local veterans' organizations.
- **DISCUSSIONS**:
 - May 24, 2025 at 10:00AM- Memorial Day Ceremony at Barrows Park
 - #'s are very low for Plainville & Wrentham

- We as a Town front 100% of the costs

v. Parks and Recreation

***MISSION:** The North Attleborough Parks & Recreation Department enhances community life by providing quality parks, open spaces, and recreational programs that reflect the values and traditions of our Town. We promote personal well-being, social connection, and environmental health through inclusive programming, stewardship of natural areas, and opportunities for leadership and engagement. Our mission is to strengthen community spirit and preserve the vibrant character of North Attleborough for all residents.

***SERVICES:** The Parks & Recreation Department provides year-round programming and maintains community assets including athletic fields, trails, swimming pools, beaches, and the zoo, offering residents a wide range of recreational opportunities and outdoor experiences.

***DISCUSSIONS:**

- Responsible for 27 properties in the town
- Lifeguards at the beaches is a problem this season. Currently working to see what can be done. YMCA can no longer insure the lifeguards for open bodies of water.

1. Pools and Beaches (640)
2. Parks (650)

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Donovan made a motion to adjourn.

John Donohue seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:1PM.