

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

5/15/2025 - Minutes

I. Pledge Of Allegiance

1. 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

John Costello

Craig Cameron

Pat St. Pierre

Dan Donovan

John Donohue

Kathleen Prescott

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Town Manager Michael Borg

Assistant Town Manager Antonio Morabito

Town Council Clerk, Kerrin Billinghoff

Town Accountant Linda Catanzariti

Assistant Town Accountant Tammy Baillargeon

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

DPW Director Mark Hollowell

School Superintendent Dr. John Antonucci

Assistant School Superintendent Michelle McKeon

Facilities Director Ernie Sandland

School Committee Chair Tasha Buzzell

School Committee Member Sarah Stone

Residents:

None at this time.

Invited Guests Present:

None at this time.

Documents Reviewed:

- Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of May 8, 2025
- **FY26 Final Budget Presentation- Schools Capital Improvement Slides**
- **North Attleborough Public Schools Proposed FY26 Operating Budget Power Point**
- **FY26 Education MUNIS Sheets**
- **Measure 2025-083**- Rescind Borrowing Authorization-PFA's Removal & Fluoride Injection (McKeon Plant) \$2,749,939.00 & Repair, Replacement, & Maintenance- Roads, Bridges, & Sidewalks \$500,000.00
- **Measure 2025-084**-Funding for Snow & Ice Deficit
- **FY26 Final Budget Measures**
- **Measure 2025-060**- FY26 General Fund Annual Appropriation
- **Measure 2025-061**- FY26 OPEB Funding
- **Measure 2025-063**- FY26 Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Transfer
- **Measure 2025-064**- FY26 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- **Measure 2025-065**-FY26 Sewer Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- **Measure 2025-066**- FY26 Water Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation

- **Measure 2025-067** - FY26 Comcast PEG Access Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- **Measure 2025-068** - FY26 Verizon PEG Access Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- **Measure 2025-069** - FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by CIP Stabilization
- **Measure 2025-070** - FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by FY25 Free Cash
- **Measure 2025-071** - FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects without specified funding
- **Measure 2025-072** - FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by the Fire Alarm Revolving Account
- **Measure 2025-073** - FY26 Water Enterprise Fund Capital Projects to be funded by Borrowing
- **Measure 2025-074** - FY26 Sewer Enterprise Fund Capital Projects to be funded by Borrowing
- **Measure 2025-075** - FY26 Revolving Account Annual Authorization
- **Measure 2025-076** - FY26 Additional Real Estate Property Tax Exemption of One Hundred Percent (100%)
- **Measure 2025-077** - FY26 Local Acceptance of Certain Property Tax Exemptions
- **Measure 2025-078** - FY26 Establish the Amount for Town Manager Line-Item Transfers
- **FY2026 FINAL Revenue Projections** - Updated from Preliminary Revenue Projections
- **FY2026 FINAL Expense Projections** - Updated from Preliminary Expense Projections
- **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
- **Email Letter from Tasha Buzzell School Committee Chair "Special Education Funding Letter from NA SEPAC and the COD"**

II. Approval Of Minutes

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

Approval of Minutes of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of May 8, 2025.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Minutes May 8, 2025.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

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

Town Manager Borg explained that a new draft proposal was submitted:

Establish a Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Relief Exemption effective July 1, 2026 (FY27), subject to an annual vote for implementation by the Town Council.

Purpose and Justification:

To provide targeted, means-tested property tax relief to qualifying senior residents of North Attleborough who meet eligibility requirements established by the Town Council. This measure supports long-term, income-limited senior homeowners and reinforces the Town's commitment to aging in place through a sustainable and equitable tax policy. This measure shall form the basis of a Home Rule Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature.

Program Outline:

The North Attleborough Town Council hereby establishes a Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Relief Exemption Program beginning Fiscal Year 2027 and continuing annually thereafter, contingent upon the annual vote of the Town Council. This program shall be governed by the following provisions:

1. Annual Authorization: The Town Council shall annually vote to:

- Authorize the continuation of the Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Relief Program.
- Establish all eligibility criteria, including income and/or asset limits, property qualifications, and any other conditions as defined by this measure.
- Set the senior exemption value amount per qualifying parcel.

2. Funding Source: The exemption shall be funded through a residential tax classification shift within the tax levy. No overlay funds shall be used.

3. Eligibility Requirements: To qualify, all of the following criteria must be met:

- Applicant must own and occupy a qualifying residential parcel (property classifications 101, 102, or 104) as their principal residence as of July 1 of the fiscal year.
- If the property is held in trust, the applicant must have a legal interest in the trust.
- The applicant must have been domiciled and owned a home in Massachusetts for at least 10 consecutive years prior to application.

- The applicant must meet the normal, full Social Security full retirement age, currently 67, as of July 1 of the fiscal year. For joint applications, the co-applicant must also be at least the minimum

retirement age, currently 62.

- Household income must not exceed the annually defined threshold as

established by the Council.

Initial income criteria are:

1. Single Applicants: \$70,000

2. Head of Household: \$80,000

3. Joint Applicants: \$90,000

- Property assessed value must not exceed the prior year's average of the qualifying class as

determined by the Assessor's Office.

- Applicants may not simultaneously participate in the Senior Tax Work-Off Program for the same fiscal year.

- Applications must be submitted annually by September 1 to the Assessor's Office, with all required income and asset documentation.

- Applications must be submitted on the official form created by the Board of Assessors and include all required documentation of income and assets.

- Applications must be submitted annually to maintain eligibility.

4. Exemption Limitations:

- A maximum of 500 exemptions will be granted each fiscal year on a first-qualified, first-served basis.

- Relief applies only to the residential portion of the parcel.

- No exemption shall be granted until the Department of Revenue certifies a residential tax rate that reflects the exemption cost absorbed

within the residential levy.

5. Review and Adjustment: The program shall be reviewed annually by the Town Council, with all criteria and financial thresholds subject to annual vote and adjustment.

6. Implementation: This measure shall take effect beginning July 1, 2026, for FY27, and serve as the basis for filing a Home Rule Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature to authorize the program's legal implementation.

There was a lengthy discussion amongst the Town Manager and the Committee Members.

- This should help people that didn't qualify for any other relief.
- Keep this in line with the Social Security and Retirement age. Tie to Social Security- age 67 full retirement age according to SS.
- Board of Assessors will create the form
- There will have to be rules
- Communication will be key- Need to get this message out there- social media, Face Book, Website, Paper etc....
- 500 will be the cap for the number of Seniors that can apply
- **What are the Qualifications?**
- Eligibility requirements
- What constitutes factors of need?
- Be careful that we are helping those who truly need to be helped.
- House values have increased.
- Granting Tax Relief to some should not burden other Taxpayers
- Can apply July 1 and submitted by September 1

Councilor Donovan made a motion to amend the Draft Measure for Finance Committee proposed by Town Manager Borg to the Finance Sub-Committee to the following:

1. **Summary of Proposed Measure:** Add a third bullet point "Eligibility Requirements" and under that bullet, "Must Meet All."

2. **Eligibility Requirements (Must Meet All):** Change the language under the **bullet Age Requirement** to read: "A single applicant must be equal to or older than the full retirement age (FRA) as determined by the Social Security Administration as of July 1 of the fiscal year. If jointly owned, at least one owner must be at the Full Retirement Age or older, and the joint applicant must be at least the minimum Retirement Age as determined by the Social Security Administration."

3. **Eligibility Requirements (Must Meet All):** Change the language under the **bullet Application Requirements** to read: " Must be submitted on an official form created by the Board of Assessors...."

John Donohue seconded the Motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

Councilor Donovan made a motion for Town Manager Borg to create this measure.

John Donohue seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer to the Full Town Council the Draft Measure related to Measure 2025-047.

John Donohue seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

- 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

SUMMARY

- The exemption was created by St. 2023 c. 50, signed into law on October 4, 2023.
- It applies to residential unit owners renting to income-qualifying persons at affordable rates.
- Municipalities must vote to accept the exemption, with the first available fiscal year being 2025.
- Acceptance can be revoked after three years, also by vote.
- The exemption applies only to class one residential units, with no domicile requirement unless locally specified.

SCOPE OF ABATEMENT

- Exemption amount is locally determined, not exceeding the tax due based on assessed value.
- Residential unit owners must rent to income-qualifying persons at rates set by the municipality.
- Occupants' income must not exceed 200% of area median income, as defined by HUD.
- Units must be rented annually to qualifying persons for the entire fiscal year.

APPLICATIONS TO ASSESSORS

- Applicants must submit STF 50 annually to local assessors, including signed leases and proof of income.
- Applications are due by the first actual tax bill's due date.
- Abatements granted will be charged against the overlay account, impacting annual overlay needs.

Town Manager Borg explained that he would like to craft and then see if the Committee would then except. He explained that more time is needed and requested to continue this item to the next scheduled meeting on June 4, 2025.

V. New Business

a. FY26 Budget Presentations

Dr. John Antonucci and School Committee Chair Tasha Buzzell were both in attendance to present the School's FY26 Budget and answer any questions that the Finance Sub-Committee may have had. Dr. Antonucci presented the North Attleborough Public Schools Proposed FY26 Operating Budget Power Point. Dr. Antonucci reviewed everything that had changed in the budget, Expenses, and Revenue. He focused on the "Budget Driver Slide."

- Major Budget Drivers:
 - Salaries for Existing Personnel: \$2.11M
 - Operations & Maintenance Non-Salary/Utilities: +\$303K
 - Athletics Budget: +\$100K
 - Homeless Transportation: +160K
 - Other Non-Salary Accounts: +\$170K
 - New Personnel: +\$1.55M
 - 7.5 FTE High Need
 - 6.2 FTE Moderate Need
 - 7.0 FTE Enhancement
 - New Computer Hardware (Chromebooks): +\$100K
 - New World Language Curriculum Materials: +\$40K

There was discussion amongst the Committee, Dr. Antonucci, and Ms. Buzzell. Discussions included:

- Revenue
- Expenses
- Cannot sustain the Athletic Budget
- Transportation Challenges
- Major class size issues at this time.
- Stabilization Fund that was created a few years ago- Special Education Fund

- What can the Special Education Fund be used for?
- Class size
- 80 Classes/80 Teachers
- 21 perfect class size- Currently 26-27 class size
- Bubble Classes
- Special Education/ General Education/ AP Classes
- What education needs to look like for the next 50 years
- Level Service Budget
- What would their ideal number be? 2.1MM additional is needed for FY26 Budget
- Athletic Fees/Parking Fees have not been raised since 2010
- Chromebooks- Should they be bought or leased?
- Concession Stand/ Scoreboard- Have either created any revenue?

i. EDUCATION

1. School Department (300)
2. Crossing Guards
3. School Transportation
4. Bristol County

ii. FY26 CIP- School Projects

Dr. Antonucci reviewed each of his CIP Projects with the Committee. CIP Projects included:

- SPED Bus Replacement
- District-Wide Chromebook Replacement
- Marching Band Uniform Replacement
- Woodcock Building Elevator Repair
- Amvet School Fire Alarm Replacement
- Community School Ceiling Replacement
- School Safety and Security Upgrades
- Falls School Building Envelope (Sealant)
- NAMS Room 328 Renovation

b. FY26 Final Budget Measures

Vice-President Simmons reported that at the May 15, 2025 Finance Sub-Committee Meeting, Measures i. through xviii. were referred back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation. Unanimous 7-0.

John Donohue made a motion to refer the FY26 Budget Measures 2025-060 through 2025-078 back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

i. Measure 2025-060- FY26 General Fund Annual Appropriation

- ii. Measure 2025-061- FY26 OPEB Funding
- iii. Measure 2025-063- FY26 Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Transfer
- iv. Measure 2025-064- FY26 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- v. Measure 2025-065- FY26 Sewer Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- vi. Measure 2025-066- FY26 Water Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- vii. Measure 2025-067- FY26 Comcast PEG Access Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- viii. Measure 2025-068- FY26 Verizon PEG Access Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation
- ix. Measure 2025-069- FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by CIP Stabilization
- x. Measure 2025-070- FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by FY25 Free Cash
- xi. Measure 2025-071- FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects without specified funding
- xii. Measure 2025-072- FY26 Capital Improvement Program Projects to be funded by the Fire Alarm Revolving Account
- xiii. Measure 2025-073- FY26 Water Enterprise Fund Capital Projects to be funded by Borrowing
- xiv. Measure 2025-074- FY26 Sewer Enterprise Fund Capital Projects to be funded by Borrowing
- xv. Measure 2025-075- FY26 Revolving Account Annual Authorization
- xvi. Measure 2025-076- FY26 Additional Real Estate Property Tax Exemption of One Hundred Percent (100%)
- xvii. Measure 2025-077- FY26 Local Acceptance of Certain Property Tax Exemptions
- xviii. Measure 2025-078- FY26 Establish the Amount for Town Manager Line-Item Transfers
- c. Measure 2025-083- Rescind Borrowing Authorization- PFA's Removal & Fluoride Injection (McKeon Plant) \$2,749,939.00 & Repair, Replacement, & Maintenance- Roads, Bridges, & Sidewalks \$500,000.00

Measure 2025-083- Rescind Borrowing Authorization- PFA's Removal & Fluoride Injection (McKeon Plant) \$2,749,939.00 & Repair, Replacement, & Maintenance- Roads, Bridges, & Sidewalks \$500,000.00

To rescind the borrowing authorization for the authorized and unissued amount of \$2,749,939.00 for which borrowing authority is no longer required for PFAs Removal & Fluoride Injection (McKeon Plant) - authorized for \$10mm and approved at the 2/27/2023 Town Council Meeting - Measure 2023-040,

and

To rescind the borrowing authorization for the authorized and unissued amount of \$500,000.00 for which borrowing authority is no longer required for the Repair, Replacement, & Maintenance - Roads, Bridges, & Sidewalks - authorized for \$1mm and approved at the 6/12/2023 Town Council Meeting - Measure 2023-066 Item #2.

Total to rescind: \$3,249,939

These projects are either complete or are using funding from other sources.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer Measure 2025-083- Rescind Borrowing Authorization-PFA's Removal & Fluoride Injection (McKeon Plant) \$2,749,939.00 & Repair, Replacement, & Maintenance- Roads, Bridges, & Sidewalks \$500,000.00 back to the Full Town Council with a favorable recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

d. Measure 2025-084-Funding for Snow and Ice Deficit FY2025

Measure 2025-084-Funding for Snow & Ice Deficit

The Snow and Ice Budget is currently in deficit due to expenses incurred for snow removal, salting and sanding and the purchase of materials during the winter snow season. The Total deficit is \$188,440.13. The DPW Director provided spreadsheets itemizing the expenses by snow and ice event, which are attached to this measure. The spreadsheets indicate the current deficit within the budget and the total amount needed to fund the account.

Therefore, I respectfully request the Town Council vote "To approve the transfer of \$27,050.13 from Free Cash to the Snow and Ice Salary Line 014238", and vote "To approve the transfer of \$161,390.00 from Free Cash to the Snow and Ice Expense Line 014239."

DPW Director Mark Hollowell was in attendance to answer any of the questions that the Committee may have had.

Vice-President Simmons stated that this is the only line item in the budget that we are allowed to overspend.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to refer **Measure 2025-084**-Funding for Snow & Ice Deficit back to the Full Town Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

- e. a. FY2026 FINAL Revenue Projections- Updated from Preliminary Revenue Projections

Town Manager Borg explained that this number did not change.

- f. FY2026 FINAL Expense Projections- Updated with Reductions- General Fund-May 15, 2025

Town Manager Borg explained that this is a new Expense Projection, but the bottom number did not change.

VI. Adjournment

Councilor Pat St. Pierre made a motion to adjourn.

Councilor Prescott seconded the motion.

Motion carried 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04PM.