

SELECT BOARD
6:00 p.m. January 26, 2021
Needham Town Hall
Revised Agenda

Under Governor Baker's emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, S20", issued March 12, 2020 and in effect until termination of the emergency, meetings of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

To listen and view this virtual meeting on a phone, computer, laptop, or tablet, download the "Zoom Cloud Meeting" app in any app store or at www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on "Join a Meeting" and enter the meeting 83012497485 or click the link below to join the webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83012497485>.

	5:45	Informal Meeting with Citizens <i>One or more members of the Select Board will be available between 5:45 and 6:00 p.m. for informal discussion with citizens. Because of planning constraints during the COVID emergency, residents wishing to speak during that time should call the Select Board Office at (781)-455-7500, extension 204, not later than 3PM on the business day before the meeting to request an appointment. This enables the Board to better assure opportunities for participation and respond to citizen concerns.</i>
1.	6:00	Close Public Hearing: Change of Control of RCN TELECOM SERVICES OF MA, LLC
2.	6:15	Town Manager • Budget Presentation • Temporary Vaccination Location in Needham Crossing • Town Manager's Report
3.	7:00	Board Discussion • Committee Reports – Needham Unite Against Racism • Committee Reports - Other

APPOINTMENTS

1.	Property Tax Assistance Committee	Jonathan Robbins (term expires 6/30/2024)
2.	Taxation Aid Committee	Jonathan Robbins (term expires 6/30/2022)

CONSENT AGENDA *=Backup attached

1.*	Approve Open Session minutes of November 10, 2020, and January 12, 2021 and Executive Session minutes of December 22, 2020.
2.	Accept the following donation made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Maintenance Donation Fund: \$100 from Sherry Joyce.
3.	Accept a \$133.97 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Gift of Warmth program from the First Baptist Church in Needham.
4.	Accept a \$100 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Domestic Violence Action Committee from Ann MacFate, a Needham resident.
5.	Accept a \$300 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Traveling Meals Program from Amy Sherman, a Canton resident.



**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 01/26/2021

Agenda Item	CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING: CHANGE OF CONTROL OF RCN TELECOM SERVICES OF MA, LLC
Presenter(s)	Select Board

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
The purpose of this public hearing will be to close the January 12th public hearing which was held to consider and receive public input regarding the FCC Form 394 transfer request received by the Town on December 2, 2020. Form 394 seeks the Select Board's approval for a change of control of the Cable Television Franchisee, RCN Telecom Services of MA, LLC, from Radiate Holdings, LP to Stonepeak Associates, IV LLC. The public hearing was held open until January 19th to receive responses to questions from Radiate/RCN/Stonepeak and to receive any input from the public. Receipt of the answers from Radiate/RCN/Stonepeak was made by the Town and there was no public input. This public hearing is now closed and the Board will meet again on February 23, 2021 to render a decision on the request.	
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
Not at this time.	
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
a.) Questions & Answers to and from Radiate/RCN/Stonepeak.	

**TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
RCN FCC FORM 394 TRANSFER REQUEST**

***QUESTIONS FOR RADIATE AND STONEPEAK FOR THE JANUARY 12, 2021
TRANSFER HEARING***

(1) Please give the Town a brief overview of the FCC Form 394 transfer request.

We provided a detailed description of the request with the Application materials. As discussed at the hearing, from your perspective as RCN's franchise authority, the proposed transaction will be entirely transparent. We do not propose to transfer or assign the franchise agreement itself. We propose merely to change control of RCN's ultimate parent from one private equity owner to another. RCN will remain subject to the terms of the franchise agreement, which will not change. And Tom Steel will remain your primary contact for compliance issues.

(2) When will STONEPEAK, as Transferee, actually assume control of the Needham Cable System?

Applicants must receive approval from a variety of regulatory entities, including franchise authorities such as Needham, state public utility commissions, and the Federal Communications Commission. Once Applicants receive sufficient requisite approvals, Stonepeak will assume control of RCN's parent company.

(3) Please explain in detail why STONEPEAK believes that it has the *financial capability* to assume control of the Needham Cable System.

As discussed at the hearing, Stonepeak chose to invest in RCN in part because of its high opinion of RCN's operations and management team. This transaction, in other words, does not involve a "distressed asset" situation or otherwise merit a fundamental change in RCN's operations. Accordingly, Stonepeak currently has no plans for major changes to RCN's management team or operations. This means, among other things, the Town of Needham can rely on RCN itself and its track record with respect to legal, technical, and financial qualifications.

To the extent Needham wishes to look at Stonepeak itself, Stonepeak is part of a family of funds that collectively have over \$29 billion of capital under management on behalf of their investors. This family of funds has invested across residential broadband, data centers, enterprise fiber, towers, and small cells that give expertise across the broader communications sector. Here, as with its other investments, Stonepeak currently plans to invest its resources to improve and expand RCN's network and services. So not only is Stonepeak legally, technically, and financially capable of running the Needham Cable System—including with current management in place—but it is also uniquely well positioned to help RCN offer better services and faster broadband speeds in the future.

(4) What is the purchase price for RADIATE?

The purchase price was \$8.1 billion.

(a) Is this cash? Assumption of RADIATE debt?

The purchase price includes \$3.6 billion in cash and the assumption of \$4.5 billion in existing debt.

(b) Can STONEPEAK certify that the purchase price will not have an adverse **effect** on RCN subscribers in the Town of Needham?

Yes. To the contrary, the point of this transaction is to make additional resources available to RCN in hopes of improving RCN's already excellent service.

(5) Please explain in detail why STONEPEAK believes that it has the *technical expertise* to assume control of the RADIATE'S Needham Cable System.

As discussed in more detail in our response to Question 3, Stonepeak has no current plans for significant changes to RCN's management team or operations. Thus, even setting aside Stonepeak's own significant experience in the communications sector, RCN's expertise—which is not in dispute—will remain.

(a) Please identify staff at STONEPEAK who possess such technical expertise.

Please see above. Tom Steel will remain your principal point of contact.

(6) Please explain in detail why STONEPEAK believes that it has the *management experience* to assume control of the Needham Cable System.

Please see above.

(a) Please identify staff at STONEPEAK who possess such management expertise.

Please see above.

(7) Please identify personnel at STONEPEAK will be responsible for cable television regulatory affairs and interacting with the Town of Needham.

Tom Steel.

(8) Please explain in detail why STONEPEAK believes that it has the *"legal ability to operate a cable system under the existing license"*.

As described above, RCN will remain the franchisee and will retain both the benefits of and responsibility for compliance with the existing franchise agreement.

(9) Section III, Question # 1 of the Form 394 requires that the Transferee, STONEPEAK, certify that "it has sufficient net liquid assets on hand or available from committed resources to consummate the transaction and operate the facilities for three months." STONEPEAK states that it will have such net liquid assets.

(a) Please explain this statement, including identification of such net liquid assets.

Here again, RCN will retain its own considerable liquid assets, and Stonepeak has no current plans to reduce those assets by (for example) increasing RCN's indebtedness. As for Stonepeak itself, its family of funds have over \$29 billion of capital under management on behalf of their investors, and it is seeking co-investment for this particular proposed transaction to make even more resources available.

(10) STONEPEAK has stated that it will have the "legal ability to operate a cable system under the existing license". To this end, regarding the Town's current RCN Cable Television Renewal License:

(i) Has STONEPEAK reviewed the current RCN Renewal License in the Town?

Yes, although, to be precise, RCN itself will retain responsibility for compliance.

(ii) Will STONEPEAK comply with all terms and conditions in the Renewal License?

Yes, although, to be precise, RCN itself will retain responsibility for compliance.

(ii) Are there any provisions that STONEPEAK believes that it will be unable to comply with?

No.

(a) If so, please specify such provisions and the reasons for such inability.

(iii) Are there any provisions in the Renewal License that STONEPEAK considers "commercially impracticable"?

No.

(a) If so, please specify such provisions and explain STONEPEAK's belief of such "commercial impracticability".

(11) Section I, Part I, Question # 2(b) of the Form 394 asks if the Merger Agreement "...embodies the full and complete agreement between the transferor/assignor and the transferee/assignee? RADIATE and STONEPEAK have specified that the Merger Agreement in Attachment A does not contain the full agreement. In explaining why it is not the complete agreement, RADIATE and STONEPEAK have stated that "...the omitted exhibits and schedules contain proprietary information and/or voluminous information which Applicants believe is not germane to the franchising authority's consideration of the qualifications of the parties to this application." (See Exhibit I.I.2 of the Form 394.)

(a) RADIATE and STONEPEAK should certify at this point for the record that such omitted information is **not** germane to the Issuing Authority's consideration of the Form 394.

So certified.

(12) Finally, please explain why the Needham Board of Selectmen should approve the Form 394 request to transfer control of the cable television system from RADIATE to STONEPEAK.

First, we appreciate the time you have spent in consideration of this proposed transaction, especially when you have so many other claims upon your time.

As set forth in our Application, in my testimony, and herein, the proposed transaction promises to make additional resources available to RCN's already excellent management and operations team. It raises no public interest concerns. And it sets the stage for significant improvement to RCN's network and services. We hope the Town of Needham will approve the proposed transaction expeditiously. And we are, of course, available to answer any further questions you might have.



**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 1/26/2021

Agenda Item	FY2022 Budget Presentation
Presenter(s)	Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
The Town Manager will present the proposed annual balanced budget for fiscal year 2022.	
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
<i>Suggested Motion:</i> That the Board vote to recommend approval of the Town Manager's Proposed Annual Budget for FY2022.	
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
a. FY2022 Town Manager's Budget Message to be Provided Under Separate Cover --Attached 1.26.2021 b. Proposed Annual Balanced Budget document to be Provided Under Separate Cover	



Town Manager's FY2022 Budget Message: Uncertainty & The "Now Normal"

"Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy. Now is the time to make brotherhood a reality. Now is the time." – *Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. April 23, 1965, Boston Massachusetts*

"So, while once we asked: How could we possibly prevail over catastrophe? Now we assert, How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?" *Amanda Gorman, January 20, 2021, Washington, District of Columbia*

To the Select Board and Finance Committee:

I hereby transmit this proposed annual budget for FY2022. The recommended FY2022 General Fund operating budget and other uses total \$209,396,808 representing a change of \$9,841,893 or 4.9% as compared to FY2021. A comparison of the FY2020 and FY2021 budgets to the FY2022 recommended budget is shown in Table 1.1. A full description of the FY2022 revenue projection is contained in Section 2 of this document.

**Table 1.1
Overall General Fund Budget Summary**

Description	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Budget	FY2022 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Sources					
Property Tax	\$150,349,498	\$162,438,801	\$170,244,638	\$7,805,837	4.8%
State Aid	\$13,091,197	\$13,695,326	\$13,342,938	(\$352,388)	-2.6%
Local Receipts	\$16,058,350	\$11,310,310	\$10,799,600	(\$510,710)	-4.5%
Free Cash	\$10,337,871	\$7,862,473	\$12,500,000	\$4,637,528	59.0%
Other Funds	\$3,879,196	\$1,492,947	\$238,235	(\$1,254,712)	-84.0%
Reimbursements	\$2,510,817	\$2,755,058	\$2,271,397	(\$483,661)	-17.6%
Total Sources	\$196,226,930	\$199,554,915	\$209,396,808	\$9,841,893	4.9%
Uses					
Municipal Departments	\$40,839,573	\$46,381,844	\$47,705,600	\$1,323,756	2.9%
Needham Schools	\$75,550,674	\$80,735,089	\$83,603,397	\$2,868,308	3.6%
Minuteman School	\$1,084,783	\$1,099,935	\$1,230,287	\$130,352	11.9%
Townwide Expenses	\$53,150,193	\$59,953,851	\$61,373,605	\$1,419,754	2.4%
Reserve Fund	\$0	\$2,077,091	\$2,077,091	\$0	0.0%
Capital Budget	\$10,162,752	\$3,939,433	\$6,769,544	\$2,830,111	71.8%
Financial Warrant Articles	\$1,639,079	\$1,869,177	\$2,589,945	\$720,769	38.6%
Other Appropriations	\$772,079	\$544,698	\$557,183	\$12,485	2.3%
Other Amounts to be Raised	\$3,788,454	\$2,953,797	\$3,490,156	\$536,359	18.2%
Total Uses	\$186,987,587	\$199,554,915	\$209,396,808	\$9,841,893	4.9%
Preliminary COVID-19 Expenses to be funded by Federal & State Grants, Town Reserves				\$4,845,143	

INTRODUCTION

The past year has been unlike any other in living memory. Public buildings were completely closed to the public from late March until June, with critical services performed remotely. Staff pivoted to working remotely, often with less than adequate technology. Police, Fire and Public Works staff worked in person through it all, with a variety of staggered shift schedules early in the pandemic. First responders operated without adequate PPE and with an ever-evolving understanding about the science of the transmission of the Coronavirus.

The Town stood up the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that ran continually from March through June, and then virtually to date. Schools ramped up remote learning through the end of School Year 2019/2020, and virtually every local event was cancelled. The Building Maintenance Division, with help from many other departments and a squad of outside consultants, upgraded the HVAC systems to provide an appropriate level of air exchange to allow in person learning in our schools. The School Department is running four separate cohorts in socially distanced schools as well as a fully remote academy for over 600 school children.

Public Health

The Public Health Division is at the heart of the Town's emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have led the Emergency Operations Center, disease monitoring, data collection, contact tracing, and the planning and implementation of influenza and COVID-19 vaccination clinics. The Division has handled a large volume of questions, concerns, and complaints related to the pandemic, monitored and enforced compliance with state and local orders, and provided ongoing guidance and support to businesses, restaurants, community organizations, housing complexes and other Town Departments for reopening safely.

Public Health staff, augmented by staff from other departments, have worked tirelessly to address the evolving landscape moving from searching for protective equipment to testing protocols to contract tracing and – finally – vaccinations. We expect that fully ramped up vaccination centers running five or six days a week will begin in Needham in the coming months.

During FY2020, the Town implemented additional spending restrictions in acknowledgement of the downturn in the economy due to COVID-19. The Town postponed or cancelled contracts, reduced hours of operations, and made other changes in response to the work restrictions that were imposed by the Commonwealth to battle the spread of COVID-19. Some resources were diverted from intended projects to meet costs incurred by the Town to address COVID-19 concerns. Through these efforts the Town was able to continue operations through FY2020 and FY2021 without recourse to widespread layoffs and furloughs.

In the past year, members of the Needham community, like many across the country, have raised their voices in opposition to systemic racism. The Select Board created the Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative during the summer of 2020, and a working group is hard at work developing a recommended vision for racial equity in Needham and determining guiding principles for future actions. I am confident that our residents, elected and appointed leaders, and staff will work together to identify barriers and create solutions, so that Needham can be a community free of racism, racial bias, prejudice, and discrimination.

The Proposed FY2022 Budget is an exercise in uncertainty. The next normal – especially in schools – may look like the old normal, the now normal, or something in between. The FY2022 Proposed Annual Budget continues our focus on maintaining a sustainable and resilient financial plan for the Town. We are mindful of the impact of spending growth on

taxpayers, and we review each budget request through that lens. Each of the program improvements recommended is related to a goal of the Select Board or other appointed or elected policy-making body, and all are intended to improve service delivery, increase the safety of the public and Town assets, and contribute to the Town's sustainability goals.

If additional revenue becomes available – such as through revised State Aid estimates – we recommend that financial warrant article items that are considered recurring be funded by receipts and not through Free Cash. These include the Building Maintenance Program (\$1,000,000), and the Workers Compensation Fund (\$337,000).

Office of the Town Manager

The Office of the Town Manager led the transition of all departmental responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town's Public Information Officer kept the public and staff continuously informed about the pandemic, its impact on municipal services, and resources for the community by sending daily COVID-19 updates, increasing the number of users of the Town's emergency alert system, and launching a new Covid-19 website. The Select Board and the Office provided robust support to small businesses, including retail stores and restaurants, by creating a Downtown Working Group to expedite requests for assistance, eliminating meter fees, reducing licensing fees, creating outdoor dining locations, and establishing 10-minute curbside pick-up locations. Human Resources staff track COVID-19-related absences, daily attestation forms for staff entering public buildings, and new pandemic-related policies.

We recommend that COVID-19-related expenses (in the Department of Public Works, Public Health Division, and the Needham Public Schools) be presented in a financial warrant article funded by one-time revenue such as Free Cash and through State and Federal grant funds. Final Free Cash certification and information on new Federal funding for K-12 initiatives will be available in the months leading up to Town Meeting. At the same time, we expect that the current COVID-19 cost estimates will continue to evolve.

BUDGETING BEST PRACTICES

1. Current revenues must be sufficient to support current expenditures. *The FY2022 operating budget is supported by current revenues. These are revenues that are reasonably expected to recur annually and can be relied on to fund on-going operations during strong and weak economic periods.*
2. The Operating and Capital Budgets must be developed in conformance with the Town's comprehensive financial policies and must not be reliant on one-time revenue or unsustainable practices. *Revenue that cannot reasonably be expected to recur annually in FY2022 is allocated to one-time costs and reserves and is not used to support the operating budget except as provided under the Town's Free Cash best practice.*
3. The five-year Pro Forma budget should be updated on a regular basis to ensure that the underlying assumptions are adjusted based upon changing conditions and data. *The Pro Forma budget is a planning tool that provides early opportunity for the Town to anticipate and prepare contingency plans for the operation of the government and the continuation of primary services. Updating the Pro Forma budget was deferred*

Youth & Family Services

Youth & Family Services has pivoted to respond to a significant increase in acute mental health needs and trauma experienced in the community. Staff have dedicated more time to provide virtual individual, group and family therapy and crisis management, increased the frequency of resource groups and Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT) meetings, reactivated the Suicide Coalition for prevention and education, led a community-based art therapy project to paint a mural on the fence along the Rail Trail, and partnered with Aging Services to have student volunteers make weekly calls to older adults, to minimize feelings of isolation and build community connection.

to fund operations will be minimized by limiting such use to no more than 2% of the prior year's appropriated operating budget, or the actual turn back, whichever is lower. The amount of Free Cash used to support on-going operations for FY2022 is \$3,527,570, which is in compliance with this best practice.

6. Adequate contingency funds must be maintained. *This proposed balanced budget allocates funding to the Athletic Facility Improvement Fund and the Workers Compensation Internal Reserve.*

7. Sufficient maintenance and replacement funds will be allocated to ensure that capital facilities and equipment are properly maintained. *The recommended operating budget and the Capital Improvement Plan include investment in facilities, equipment, and infrastructure, including a significant increase in the Building Maintenance Program.*

8. The Operating and Capital Budgets must be resilient – allowing the Town to maintain existing service levels, withstand typical local and regional economic disruptions, and meet the demands of natural growth, decline, and change. *The Town's ability to pivot and use alternative revenue sources to maintain the original approved budget for FY2021 during pandemic uncertainty is an example of budgetary resiliency.*
9. The Operating and Capital Budgets must be sustainable – meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. *Proposed increases in service delivery are focused and affordable within historical revenue growth assumptions. The Town's funding of its post-employment*

due to the immediate response to the pandemic and will be re-started in the coming year.

4. Debt must not be used to fund on-going operating expenses and will only be issued for capital improvements greater than \$250,000 with a useful life of five years or more. *The FY2022 – FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan includes two projects funded by debt and is in compliance with this best practice.*

5. The use of Free Cash

Park & Recreation

Park and Recreation welcomed the community back to the Pools at the Rosemary Recreation Complex serving 254 lap swimmers and 343 families assigned to their own designated pods or lanes to enjoy the pools safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department ran modified youth programs, and recreational opportunities throughout the year including tennis, coding, nature walks, trail walks, 5K virtual trail runs, arts, and yoga. Park and Recreation worked closely with youth sports organizations and permitted field users to ensure compliance with state and local health requirements.

employee benefits liability is an excellent example of sustainability in that currently accruing expenses are being funded with current revenue.

BUDGET DRIVERS: ENROLLMENT, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, AND STAFFING

As is true every year, expenditures relating to growth in the population served and the costs associated with providing those services are key drivers of budget growth.

School Enrollment For the period 2011/2012 through 2020/2021 school enrollment increased by just under 16%. However, for the second year in a row, school enrollment has declined – a minor reduction from 2018 to 2019 (0.3%), and a 3.7% reduction between October 1, 2019 and October 1, 2020, or 212 students. The current reduction is related to the pandemic, but the impact on the 2021/2022 school year is unknown. Reasons for the reduction include migration to private school, home school, and delayed or skipped kindergarten.

Needham Public Schools

The Needham Public Schools transitioned to a hybrid-learning model, with most students divided into two cohorts, with one cohort attending school in-person one week and participating remotely the next. A remote learning academy was created for students who are immunocompromised or whose families opted to participate in 100% remote learning. Some students with disabilities and English Language Learners with more intensive needs receive more frequent in-person instruction. All aspects of the District's operations, including teaching and learning, health and safety, transportation, and nutrition services have been adapted to keep students, teachers, and staff safe.

Employee Benefits The submitted FY2022 employee benefits budget was essentially flat at a 1% increase. However, the recommended budget is up \$333,751 or 2.1% to reflect the increase in employee headcount in both the School and Municipal budgets. Table 1.3 at the end of this document highlights group insurance enrollment for the last five years.

Staffing Targeted staffing increases are recommended to meet existing and growing services delivery needs, safety,

and sustainability of Town assets. The recommended FTE increase is a net of 3.3 FTE on the municipal side and 7.95 on the School side. Table 1.4 at the end of this document details the growth in Full-time Equivalent Employees from FY2016 to FY2021 – 27.4 or 7.7% on the municipal side, and 101.6 or 14.4% on the School side.

BALANCED BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The recommended FY2022 budget was developed mindful of the Select Board's voted budget priorities. The primary goal of the Board for FY2022 is the maintenance and optimization of existing Town services during a pandemic along with financial, social, and economic crises. Mindful of the availability of revenue for appropriation, the Board has set additional priorities including recovering from COVID-19 and advancing racial equity in Needham, continuing the Public Information Officer position, renovation, reconstruction and/or preservation of the Town's capital assets, ensuring financial sustainability, achieving greater coordination and efficiency among Town departments, and identifying a mechanism for mandated water quality (stormwater) expenses. A full list of the Select Board's Budget Priorities is included as Appendix A at the end of this document.

The following is a summary of significant changes from prior years and recommended changes to the submitted budgets. The full discussion of each department is included in the submitted departmental spending requests contained in Section 3. All departmental salary and wage items listed are exclusive of employee benefits costs, which are included in Townwide expenses.

Casualty, Liability, Property & Self-Insurance Program – \$758,900 The Insurance budget recommendation is 14% higher than FY2021 attributable primarily to a 19.7% increase in the total insured value of real property in the Town, and includes allowances for the new Fire Station #2 building and the police station portion of the Public Safety Building, which will come on line in FY2022.

General Fund Debt Service - \$20,764,142 The recommended debt budget is 1.6% lower than FY2021, attributable primarily to a reduction in excluded debt and Community Preservation Fund debt. Of the total debt budget, approximately 25.8% represents tax-levy

supported debt, 4.9% represents CPA-supported debt, and the balance is excluded debt.

Aging Services

The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older adults required the Aging Services Division to quickly adapt vital services to new models to meet ongoing needs, while protecting the safety of our residents. Social work counseling, crisis management, resource referral, SHINE appointments and a robust calendar of social programs are now virtual. Since March, Aging Services has delivered 17,319 Springwell lunches in addition to weekly deliveries of groceries and fresh produce in partnership with Trader Joes and Katsiroubas Bro.'s Produce, and up to 50 activity bags each week. Aging Services has utilized grants to provide tablets and training to reduce social isolation in high-risk individuals and taxi services to transport seniors, veterans, and residents with disabilities to maintain access to needed medical care.

Group Insurance, Employee Benefits, and Administrative Cost – \$16,462,059. The recommended budget for this line represents an increase of 2.1% and is \$216,140 higher than the submitted budget to reflect the increased cost of additional headcount contained in the FY2022 budget.

Needham Electric Light & Gas Program – \$3,858,097 This budget is 1.1% lower than FY2021. The primary factors that have influenced this budget submission are a decrease in the assumed average cost for natural

gas, a lower electric consumption estimate (for existing facilities), and the addition of new facilities in FY2022.

Retiree Insurance and Insurance Liability Fund - \$7,426,237 This line funds the on-going health insurance program for retirees and the reserve for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). The funding schedule is consistent with the actuarial analysis as of June 30, 2019 and is increasing by 3.2%. A new actuarial analysis is expected to be completed during FY2021. The submitted budget for this line was increased by \$27,747 to reflect the cost of additional headcount contained in the FY2022 budget.

Contributory Retirement Assessment – \$10,417,439 The Retirement Assessment is increasing by 9.5% over FY2021. The new funding schedule, which retains the planned FY2022 appropriation contained in the prior actuarial analysis, reduces the assumed rate of return from 7.25% to 6.5% and extends the funding schedule by three years. The funded status of the System on an actuarial basis as of January 1, 2020 is 65.5%.

Workers Compensation – \$828,731

The Workers Compensation budget is recommended to increase by 11% over FY2021 based on increased wage and medical costs. A financial warrant article is proposed to provide additional funding for the Workers Compensation Internal Reserve to meet the funding target. The submitted budget was increased by \$7,215 to reflect the cost of additional headcount contained in the FY2022 budget.

Office of the Town Clerk

The Town's Clerk Office effectively conducted a busy 2020 election season, which included requirements for voting by mail, absentee ballots, in-person early voting, and day-of voting. The Office played a key role in the success of historic, socially distanced Town Meetings held in the Memorial Park parking lot in June and October 2020. The Office also administered a high volume of marriage intentions, as other municipalities suspended that service.

Classification, Performance and Settlements (CPS) – \$858,000 This line provides a reserve for funding General Government personnel-related items as they occur during the year and fluctuates annually depending on the number of collective bargaining agreements that have not been settled for a given year. Those not settled for FY2022 include the Needham Police Union, the Needham Police Superior Officers Association, the Needham Fire Union, the Independent Town Workers Association, and the Needham Independent Public Employee Association. It is important to note that, with the exception of the Building Custodian and Trades employees in the Department of Public Works, the recommended budgets for individual departmental budgets do not include any general wage increase amounts for FY2022 – any such increases would be funded through the CPS line.

Reserve Fund – \$2,077,091 The recommended Reserve Fund Budget is \$80,402 lower than the submitted budget. This amount represents the FY2021 funding level.

Office of the Town Manager/Select Board – \$1,323,253 The recommended budget for the Office of the Town Manager/Select Board is increasing by 19.2%. The increase is primarily attributable to the transfer of the Economic Development Manager position from the Planning & Community Development Line, and the formalization of the Public Information Officer position that was previously funded in a financial warrant article for a two-year period. The amount of \$8,550 has been transferred to this budget from the Information Technology budget to fund software licenses in accordance with new Finance Department policy.

Finance Department

With fewer residents entering Town Hall, Finance Department staff have seen an increased number of phone and e-mail inquiries and requests to process bills and documents via mail. Staff have met these needs working remotely and in-person on rotating schedules. The Finance Department coordinates all needed documentation for CARES Act and FEMA reimbursement for eligible COVID-19-related expenditures. The Information Technology Center has supported the Town's workforce as they transitioned to working remotely, fulfilling requests for laptops, webcams for virtual meetings, remote access to software, online permitting, and more.

Town Clerk/Board of Registrars – \$427,622

The recommended budget for the Office of the Town Clerk/Board of Registrars is 7.8% less than FY2021 attributable to the fact that there will be fewer elections in FY2022.

Town Counsel – \$329,140

The amount recommended for legal services in FY2022 is the same as FY2021. The entire amount is allocated to the expense line

reflecting the decision by the Select Board to hire a law firm – not an individual – to serve as Town Counsel.

Finance Department – \$3,567,110 The recommended Finance Department budget is 1.7% higher than FY2021 and is reflective of a reduction and transfer of \$38,225 from the Finance Department budget for certain software licenses that will now be budgeted and carried by specific departments.

Finance Committee – \$41,082 No changes are proposed for the Finance Committee budget for FY2022.

Planning & Community Development – \$525,642. The recommended budget is 15.6% lower than the current budget due to the transfer of the Economic Development Manager position to the Office of the Town Manager/Select Board budget for operational reasons.

Police Department

The Needham Police Department has continued to respond to calls for service and emergencies throughout the pandemic, including an increase in mental health related calls for service with the closing of Norwood Hospital. The Department had to suspend walk-and-talk assignments and numerous community related initiatives to limit in-person contact but has continued administering licenses and permits virtually or by appointment. Shift assignments were adjusted, and some administrative staff work remotely to limit personnel at Hillside, the Department's temporary location during the construction of the Public Safety Complex.

Police Department – \$7,525,435

The Police Department budget is proposed to decrease by 1% and includes new funding for clinical support services in the amount of \$45,000. These services will be provided by a contracted vendor to advance the Town's goal of supporting evidence-based, culturally competent, trauma-informed and holistic responses to individuals with mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorders and trauma histories who might otherwise become incarcerated.

Fire Department – \$9,399,298 The recommended budget for the Fire Department budget is 4.2% higher than FY2021 and assumes that a portion of the eight firefighters funded by a Federal grant in FY2019 will be phased into the budget during FY2022. The budget also includes a performance increase of \$3,329 for the replacement of an aging Stryker Stair Chair. This chair is used on a regular basis to transport non-ambulatory patients.

Building Department – \$824,285 The recommended budget for the Building Department is 1.5% higher than FY2021 attributable to salary and wage increases for existing personnel.

Minuteman School Assessment - \$1,230,287 The estimated assessment from the Minuteman School is 11.9% higher than the FY2021 assessment based on budget growth assumptions and Needham's share of the total enrollment, as well as Needham's share of the capital investment in the new High School. The recommended amount is higher than the submitted budget as the preliminary estimate has now been provided to the Town from the Minuteman School District.

Needham Public Schools – \$83,603,397 The recommended budget for the School Department represents an increase of 3.6% over FY2021 and includes an increase in headcount of 7.95 FTEs. The voted budget of the Needham School Committee was not available at the time of the distribution of this proposed budget and will be included as an addendum if the voted number is different from this recommendation, in accordance with the

General By-laws of the Town. A request for funding of COVID-related costs (\$3,210,199 exclusive of benefits costs for 26 FTEs) has been incorporated into a recommended financial warrant article.

Building Design & Construction – \$391,112 The recommended Building Design & Construction Department budget is 29.9% lower than FY2021 due to the reduction of two FTEs. The reduction is based on the decline in the number of funded and approved construction projects beginning in FY2022. When future projects (including consideration of the School Master Plan) are approved and funded, project manager staffing within the operating budget will be reconsidered.

Public Works – \$17,610,638 The proposed Department of Public Works General Fund operating budget is increasing by 4.2%, The budget includes the addition of a Project Manager (\$106,552), a Plumber (87,168), and three part-time Co-op participants (\$30,933) all costs exclusive of related expenses and benefits. Additional program requests have been

Building Design & Construction

The Department has continued to manage the completion of the Public Safety Complex at 88 Chestnut Street and Fire Station 2 at 707 Highland Avenue. The Department has also played a key role in the formation and execution of the Ventilation Task Force charged with opening up the Town's school facilities for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, in coordination with the Needham Public Schools and the Department of Public Work's Building Maintenance Division. The Department also released the School Master Plan in CY2020.

deferred including additional temporary help, and a Fleet Service and Parts Manager. Both items should be reconsidered in FY2023 as there is no doubt that they are necessary. A request for funding of COVID-19-related costs has been incorporated into a recommended financial warrant article.

Municipal Parking - \$134,592 The recommended Municipal Parking budget is 3.1% higher than FY2021, attributable to increases in wage rates, leases, and expenses.

Health & Human Services (HHS) Department – \$2,353,387

The recommended FY2022 budget reflects an increase of 1.3%. The HHS budget for the Town's participation in the West Suburban Veterans District was reduced by \$40,057. This change reflects the reduction in Needham's share of the District budget due to the pending inclusion of the Town of Westwood in the District, and a reduction in the amount allocated for direct benefit payments to veterans based on historical trends and the availability of a reserve for this purpose in the District budget. A request for funding of COVID-19-related costs has been incorporated into a recommended financial warrant article.

Commission on Disabilities – \$2,050 There is no change proposed to the Commission on Disabilities budget for FY2022.

Historical Commission – \$1,050 There is no change proposed to the Historical Commission budget for FY2022.

Public Library – \$2,077,682 The recommended Library budget is 3.2% higher than FY2021, partially attributable to changes to the part-time and temporary employee pay scale. The budget also includes a recommendation for funding for the Overdrive Basic Subscription (\$26,000), the OverDrive Advantage program enhancement (\$17,000) and the On-line Computer Library Center WorldCat subscription (\$3,000). Library patrons increasingly rely on these digital services especially during the pandemic period. These services have been funded by the Library through the dedicated State Aid account. This budget assumes no State

Aid for Libraries in FY2022 and so we recommend absorption of these important services into the operating budget. Additional program requests have been deferred including a Reference Librarian/Digital Communications Specialist (\$56,640 exclusive of benefits), and Library Pages (\$14,415 exclusive of benefits).

Park and Recreation – \$1,171,472 The Park and Recreation budget is proposed to increase by 23.3%. This significant increase is attributable primarily to 1. absorption into the operating budget of the Rosemary Pool summer staff funding that was previously included in a financial warrant article, 2. increased staffing at the Rosemary pools to meet industry standards, 3. costs associated with opening, maintaining, and closing the pool and 4. increases in hourly pay rates due to the increase in the State minimum wage. Funding requests for additional program staffing in the amount of \$25,903 have been deferred.

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Building Department

The Building Department, working closely with the Information Technology Center, launched an online permitting system during the pandemic. This project "went live" early following the closure of Town buildings, allowing continuity of this core municipal service. Operations were reorganized to minimize the number of staff in the office at one time, with plumbing and electrical inspectors in the field in the mornings, building inspections occurring in the afternoons, and administrative staff working remotely on alternate days.

Sewer The recommended Sewer Enterprise Fund budget is 2.9% lower than in fiscal year 2021, primarily attributable to a reduction in the debt service line. The MWRA Sewer Assessment, which represents a significant portion of the Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget, has been level-funded as preliminary assessments are not yet available. During FY2021, we will once again consider recommending a dedicated funding source for stormwater expenses to account for increased revenue that will be necessary to accommodate the significant and growing complexity of complying with Federal and State stormwater regulations.

Water The recommended Water Enterprise Fund budget is 2.0% higher than the FY2021 budget, primarily attributable to increases in contractual expenses and operating capital, and the addition of a new Co-op position. The MWRA Water Assessment, which represents a significant portion of the Water Enterprise Fund Budget, has been level-funded as preliminary assessments are not yet available.

BEYOND THE OPERATING BUDGET

Capital Improvement Budget The Capital Improvement Plan Executive Summary is contained in Section 4 of this document. The recommended FY2022 capital budget has been updated to include the following items that were previously included under the "Tier 2" category: \$48,500 for Library Technology, \$56,000 for permanent message boards, \$436,000 for the balance of the Public Works Infrastructure Program, \$25,000 for School Furniture, \$284,119 for Unit 10, a Class 8 Dump Truck, and \$94,210 for Unit 39, a Class 5 Dump Truck.

Other Financial Warrant Articles

Given the amount of Free Cash available for appropriation, and consistent with the Town's policy to minimize the use of Free Cash for recurring operating expenses, the FY2022 proposed budget includes the allocation of funds to one-time programs and projects and reserves. Changes to the funding recommendations may be made during the coming months depending on updated revenue estimates.

COVID-19 Expenses – \$4,845,143

Three departments have submitted contingent budgets for FY2022 to cover extraordinary costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest category of expenses is for the continuation of the hybrid model at the Needham Public Schools and the corresponding remote academy in the amount of \$3,210,199 and associated benefit costs for 26 new FTEs of \$688,580. Costs for additional building maintenance (\$817,245) and a Public Health vaccination program (\$129,119) are also included. The funding plan for these expenses is expected to include a mix of sources included State and Federal grants and Free Cash. We expect to have a better estimate of the projected costs and the amount of available grant funding closer to Town Meeting.

Building Maintenance Program – \$1,000,000 This recurring warrant article funds the annual maintenance of public buildings throughout the Town and School department, including, but not limited to, asbestos abatement, duct cleaning, painting, and other repairs and upgrades. In CY2020, the School Facilities Master Plan was released, indicating several major repairs needed in the school buildings. Unless circumstances require otherwise, FY2022 funding will support upgrades to the Pollard and Mitchell schools, including structural repairs to the buildings, upgraded electrical service, upgraded heating systems, repairs to domestic hot water piping, installation of ADA compliant handrails, and replacement of ceiling tiles. Other projects include duct cleaning at the Eliot School, Library, and Hillside School, wood floor refinishing at various buildings, and public address system upgrades at the Mitchell School.

Planning & Community Development

Staff quickly transitioned to virtual protocols, which allowed the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Design Review Board to meet their statutory permitting obligations remotely and without interruption. The Housing Specialist led the creation and launch of an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for eligible residents who lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

and the potential enforcement intended for high hazard dams. Decommissioning will include the preparation of engineering reports, plans, and studies of the Rosemary Lake embankment

Public Library

The Needham Free Public Library successfully transitioned to a curbside pick-up model and expanded to 51 hours/week, operating late Monday evenings and all day on Saturday. Staff work continuously to meet the high demand, fulfilling all book requests within two hours, with circulation increasing each month. Reference Librarians offer recommendations to those who are not sure exactly what they want, the Children's staff have hosted virtual programs and daily activities, and the Young Adult Librarian runs weekly Craft and Chats, among other programs.

Compensated Absences Fund – \$125,000

Upon retirement, certain employees are compensated for a portion of their unused sick leave. All employees are entitled to payment of unused vacation leave upon termination of Town service.

Decommissioning the Rosemary Lake Dam – \$30,000

The Decommissioning of the dam will eliminate or reduce the frequent reporting, inspectional requirements,

and the documentation needed for the Town to request a reclassification hearing with the Commonwealth.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives – \$50,000 In the summer of CY2020 the Select Board created the Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative. A working group was formed to recommend a vision for racial equity in Needham and determine guiding principles for future actions. Members are working to prioritize areas for improvement including, but not limited to, education, policing, housing and the racial and ethnic makeup of Town Boards and Committees. This funding will provide resources for the implementation of recommendations, including staff training, community workshops, educational programming, and facilitated conversations.

Fleet Refurbishment – \$150,000 In FY2018, the Fleet Division implemented a refurbishment program for Fleet assets and related components. The goal of this program is to extend the life cycle of the vehicles, increase operational safety, and eventually reduce reactive maintenance. The funding requests are spread out to allow the Fleet Division time to plan multiple repairs at once, follow procurement practices, and have the work completed. Rehabilitation work includes corrosion abatement, treatment, and refinishing, replacing corroded chassis, air brake tanks or brake valves, rebuilding primary components, replacing suspension and brakes, and updating lighting and reflective striping.

NPDES Permit Compliance – \$195,000 This funding will allow the Town to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Needham is subject to a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement for phosphorus and pathogens. All stormwater discharges from urbanized areas must reduce the amount of phosphorus discharging to waterbodies and the tributaries thereto by 45% and pathogens must be eliminated and/or reduced to the maximum extent practicable through the use of enhanced structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs). This funding will be sought on an annual basis to inspect and evaluate all BMPs Town-wide, clean and inspect brooks and culverts, rehabilitate and/or replace catch basin and drainpipes, and respond to findings from CCTV inspections. This maintenance work will be performed in conjunction with the capital funding project request included in the General Fund Cash Capital Article.

Department of Public Works

DPW has quickly adjusted operations, dividing the workforce into staggered shifts to ensure continuing operations, mustering out of new locations to allow for social distancing, reducing Town vehicle usage to a single employee and disinfecting equipment between users, and adjusting snow response plans to allow personnel to sleep and eat safely during snow events. The Department has responded to increased usage of fields, trails, and open space, which has added more demand for maintenance and trash pickup. Staff have assisted with planning special projects including Town Meeting, outdoor dining, socially distant office layouts, and polling location floor plans. The Building Maintenance Division worked tirelessly throughout the summer to ensure a safe reopening of Needham Public Schools through retro-commissioning HVAC systems, increasing air flow, installing new filters, and hiring additional custodial staff. DPW made site adjustments at the Recycling and Transfer Station to protect the health of employees and residents, while maintaining this core service for the community.

Planning Consulting Assistance – \$60,000 The Planning and Community Development Department is requesting funding for professional and technical assistance in support of planning and zoning initiatives, development applications, land use regulations, and related

activities. Planning consulting assistance funds are used to conduct build-out, traffic, and fiscal impact analyses of zoning initiatives that the Planning Board is studying. In addition, funds would be used to help the Department research and advise appropriate Town boards when presented with complex development projects requiring advanced technical input.

Property Tax Assistance Program – \$50,000 The Property Tax Assistance Program provides small grants to taxpayers in need.

Public Health Consulting/Scientific Experts and Consultants – \$50,000 This funding would enable the Board of Health (BOH) to retain outside scientific experts and consultants to evaluate novel and emerging health issues about which the Board and the Public Health Division lack the necessary expertise. For example, this fund would allow for the retention of an outside expert to evaluate a proposed utility project that has unknown or uncertain environmental and health impacts, such as the Eversource Energy Reliability project. When there is a permit application process, the BOH has the ability (via regulation) to require applicants to pay an outside consultant fee so that the BOH may retain an independent expert to review the application and to advise the BOH. This funding request addresses the need to access expertise to evaluate community impact in instances when there is no public health division permit application.

Veterans Services

Veterans Services remains in close contact, via phone and e-mail, with Needham's veterans and their families. Memorial Day observances were modified, with wreaths placed at nine locations around Town available for public viewing. A limited, socially distant ceremony was held at Memorial Park on Veteran's Day to honor the service and sacrifice of all Needham veterans, past and present.

Small Repair Grant Program – \$50,000 The Small Repair Grant Program provides financial assistance to low- and moderate-income Needham residents to make repairs and alterations to their homes for health and safety reasons. Up to \$5,000 in grant funding is available per participant, and applications will be evaluated and prioritized based on the extent of the health and safety problems and the financial need of the applicants. Eligible applicants must be 60 years or older or have a disability with incomes at or below 80% of area median income. Eligible work items include minor plumbing or electrical work, light carpentry, doorbell switches, window or door repairs or replacements, railing repairs, broken or clogged gutters or downspouts, step or porch improvements, work on locks, smoke/CO2 detectors, weather stripping, bathroom grab bars, raised toilets, hand-held shower heads, among others.

Drains/Sewer Contribution – \$526,368 The annual contribution to the Sewer Enterprise Fund offsets the cost of the Drains program. The Drains program, which is a General Fund expense, is appropriated to the Sewer Enterprise Fund as it is more efficient to account for the program in that manner. We continue to evaluate the benefits and challenges of funding the drains/stormwater program within the General Fund and will be recommending changes to the financial structure in the coming years.

Athletic Facility Improvement Fund – \$30,815 The purpose of the Athletic Facility Improvement Fund is to set aside capital funds for renovation and reconstruction of the Town's athletic facilities and associated structures. Table 1.5 outlines appropriations to the fund over the past five years and is included at the end of this document. The funding recommendation is based on the four-year average of field administration fee collections.

Workers Compensation Internal Fund – \$337,000 The Workers Compensation Internal Fund is a reserve for work-related medical and indemnity payments for injured employees.

Allowance for Abatements and Exemptions – \$1,927,821 These funds are reserved for property tax abatements and statutory exemptions. After the actual new growth revenue for FY2022 is known, the amount of overlay may be increased. The final amount of the reserve is determined by the Department of Revenue when it approves the tax rate in December.

CONCLUSION

This balanced budget proposal is promulgated prior to the completion of the budget process for the Commonwealth. As revenue estimates are refined in the winter and spring, we will work with the various Town boards and committees in preparing the final budget to be presented to Town Meeting.

Fire Department

The Needham Fire Department has continued to provide fire prevention and protection services and Emergency Medical Services to the community throughout the pandemic. The Department moved into its new headquarters at the Public Safety Complex in September and welcomed a new Emergency Management Administrator amid the Town's COVID-19 response, a critical component of Needham's Emergency Operations Center and Incident Command System.

Our entire management team has worked collectively to implement creative ways of meeting the Town's sustainability goals. Efforts have been made to implement measures that will maximize the productivity of our organization and deliver the highest quality of services within available resources. I would especially like to thank Superintendent of Schools Dan Gutekanst, Assistant Town Manager David Davison, Assistant Town

Manager Katie King, Finance and Procurement Coordinator Tatiana Swanson and Support Services Manager Sandy Cincotta for their work in the development of this budget.

I appreciate the spirit of cooperation that has been demonstrated by the Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee in the development of this budget, and applaud the commitment to sustainability on the part of Town boards and committees, Town Meeting, and ultimately the community. We are fortunate to have dedicated staff working every day to maintain the high quality of life our residents expect and deserve.

At the Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting this month, author and activist Wes Moore called on local government professionals to be dream protectors. He urged us all to make sure that we protect the dreams of those we know have no one to protect them. I couldn't be prouder to be associated with local government and the Town of Needham during these turbulent days. Our staff are on the front lines protecting the public and, in a small way, protecting their dreams.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve the residents and businesses in the Town of Needham.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Fitzpatrick

Town Manager

Appendix A

Select Board Budget Priorities

The Select Board has adopted the following core budget priorities for general government operations. These priorities served as a key guideline in our evaluation of departmental spending requests.

1. The primary goal of the Board is the maintenance and optimization of existing Town services during a pandemic along with financial, social, and economic crises.
2. In addition, mindful of the availability of revenue for appropriation, the Board has set the following priorities:
 - a. Support for items that contribute to the achievement of Town wide goals and objectives, including recovering from COVID-19 and advancing racial equity in Needham.
 - b. Support for the continuation of the Public Information Officer position.
 - c. Support for a five to ten-year plan for the renovation, reconstruction and/or preservation of the Town's capital assets in the most prudent, realistic, and efficient manner, including continued investment in buildings infrastructure, and fleet maintenance.
 - d. Support for initiatives that contribute to financial sustainability, including the maintenance of a debt service plan that balances capital needs with the Town's ability to pay, identification of alternative funding sources for traditional cash capital needs, evaluation of financing alternatives, and alignment of capital and maintenance needs with appropriate funding sources.
 - e. Support for initiatives aimed at achieving greater coordination and efficiency among Town departments and providing adequate resources to address identified service delivery and general administrative needs of the Town in a cost-effective manner.
 - f. Support for a funding mechanism for mandated water quality (stormwater) expenses.

Table 1.2
School Enrollment 2011/2012 to 2020/2021

School Year	Enrollment	Percentage Change
2011/2012	5,409	1.0%
2012/2013	5,476	1.2%
2013/2014	5,523	0.9%
2014/2015	5,519	-0.1%
2015/2016	5,581	1.1%
2016/2017	5,588	0.1%
2017/2018	5,665	1.4%
2018/2019	5,721	1.0%
2019/2020	5,707	-0.2%
2020/2021	5,495	-3.7%

Source: Department of Elementary & Secondary Education; Needham Public Schools

Table 1.3
Group Health Insurance Enrollment FY2017 to FY2021

Fiscal Year	Town	% Increase over Prior Year	School	% Increase over Prior Year	Total Actives	% Increase over Prior Year
FY2017	286	-2.72%	544	2.64%	830	0.73%
FY2018	291	1.75%	540	-0.74%	831	0.12%
FY2019	291	0.00%	540	0.00%	831	0.00%
FY2020	298	2.41%	557	3.15%	855	2.89%
FY2021	293	-1.68%	563	1.08%	856	0.12%

Table 1.4
**General and Enterprise Fund Full-time Equivalent Benefit-Eligible Positions
FY2016 – FY2022 (excluding grant funded positions)**

Function	Funded FY16	Funded FY17	Funded FY18	Funded FY19	Funded FY20	Funded FY21	FY16 - FY21 # Change	Proposed FY2022
General Government & Land Use	41.4	40.8	41.8	42.9	43.3	43.4	2.0	44.4
Public Safety	138.6	139.8	139.8	140.8	144.8	148.8	10.2	150.8
Public Works and Facilities	144.0	144.0	148.0	149.0	150.0	152.0	8.0	152.0
Community Services	30.8	30.9	33.7	36.6	37.1	38.0	7.2	38.3
Municipal Departments	354.8	355.5	363.3	369.3	375.2	382.2	27.4	385.5
School Department#	706.8	724.1	739.4	749.3	794.2	808.4	101.6	816.3

Proposed FY22 reflects the Superintendent's submitted budget (excluding COVID-19)

Table 1.5

Athletic Facility Improvement Fund					
Year	Start	Interest	Appropriations to the Fund	Appropriations from the Fund	Balance
2017	\$2,643,428	\$31,290	\$1,671,990		\$4,346,708
2018	\$4,346,708	\$62,313			\$4,409,021
2019	\$4,409,021	\$68,830	\$63,378	-\$1,855,000	\$2,686,229
2020	\$2,686,229	\$8,469	\$75,000	-\$2,500,000	\$269,698
2021*	\$269,698	\$333			\$270,031
* Balance as of December 31, 2020					

Table 1.6

Capital Facility Fund					
Year	Start	Interest	Appropriations to the Fund	Appropriations from the Fund	Balance
2017	\$1,312,275	\$13,400	\$505,000		\$1,830,675
2018	\$1,830,675	\$13,249		-\$1,817,000	\$26,924
2019	\$26,924	\$42,452	\$1,817,000		\$1,886,376
2020	\$1,886,376	\$31,712			\$1,918,088
2021*	\$1,918,088	\$2,529			\$1,920,617
* Balance as of December 31, 2020					

Table 1.7

Capital Improvement Fund					
Year	Start	Interest	Appropriations to the Fund	Appropriations from the Fund	Balance
2017	\$701,081	\$6,426	\$28,051		\$735,558
2018	\$735,558	\$11,669			\$747,227
2019	\$747,227	\$21,937	\$141,413		\$910,577
2020	\$910,577	\$17,827	\$166,612		\$1,095,016
2021*	\$1,095,016	\$1,354			\$1,096,370
* Balance as of December 31, 2020					

Table 1.8

Debt Service Stabilization Fund					
Year	Start	Interest	Appropriations to the Fund	Appropriations from the Fund	Balance
2017	\$320,186	\$6,154	\$612,595		\$938,935
2018	\$938,935	\$32,143	\$1,091,874		\$2,062,952
2019	\$2,062,952	\$51,554			\$2,114,506
2020	\$2,114,506	\$35,545			\$2,150,051
2021*	\$2,150,051	\$2,658			\$2,152,709
* Balance as of December 31, 2020					

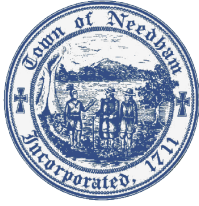


**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 1/26/2021

Agenda Item	Temporary Vaccination Location in Needham Crossing
Presenter(s)	Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
The Town Manager will recommend that the Select Board support a temporary emergency dispensing site in Needham Crossing.	
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
<i>Suggested Motion:</i> That the Board vote to ask the Board of Health to determine whether a temporary emergency dispensing site for COVID-19 vaccine at a location in Needham Crossing is an urgent local public health need to prevent the spread of the virus and to support of Governor Baker's declaration of a State of Emergency.	
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
None.	

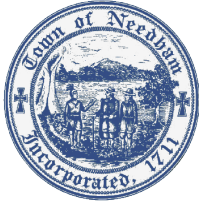


**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 01/26/2021

Agenda Item	Town Manager's Report
Presenter(s)	Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
The Town Manager will update the Board on issues not covered on the agenda.	
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
none	

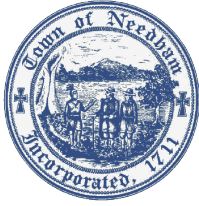


**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 01/26/2021

Agenda Item	Committee Reports- Needham Unite Against Racism
Presenter(s)	Board Discussion

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
<i>Ms. Cooley will report on the progress of the Needham Unite Against Racism Working Group.</i>	
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
(Describe backup below)	
None	



**Select Board
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
AGENDA FACT SHEET**

MEETING DATE: 01/26/2021

Agenda Item	Committee Reports
Presenter(s)	Board Discussion

1.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED
	<i>Board members will report on the progress and / or activities of their Committee assignments.</i>
2.	VOTE REQUIRED BY SELECT BOARD
3.	BACK UP INFORMATION ATTACHED
	(Describe backup below) None

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, November 10, 2020
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83012497485>**

5:30 p.m. Executive Session: Exception 6 - Acquisition of Real Property

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Maurice P. Handel.. Those present were Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John Bulian, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. Also attending were Dave Davison, ATM/Finance and Katie King ATM/Operations. Recording Secretary Mary Hunt joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board vote to enter into Executive Session.

Exception 3 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:00 p.m. Call to Order:
The public portion of the Select Board meeting of November 10, 2020, was convened by Chairman Maurice Handel.

Mr. Handel announced this open meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. He noted all public gatherings have been suspended as advised and directed by the Commonwealth. And, as such, suspending the requirement of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a public, accessible, physical location while encouraging and allowing members of all public bodies to participate remotely. Mr. Handel stated the meeting will include public comment and the Needham Select Board and all attendees are convening by Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. He said all supporting documents used at this meeting are available on the Town's website www.needhamma.gov.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the meeting be continued to Tuesday, November 24, 2020, if a technical problem develops that makes it impossible for the Select Board to conduct the meeting in this format.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:01 p.m. Veteran's Day Proclamation:
Mr. Borrelli read a Proclamation recognizing Wednesday, November 11, 2020 as Veterans' Day.

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board of the Town of Needham do hereby recognize Wednesday, November 11, 2020 as Veterans' Day and asks the citizens of the Town to join in appropriate observance of those who have served, preserving the principles of justice, freedom and democracy. Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:05 p.m. Public Hearing: CrownCastle Fiber Grant of Location - First Avenue
Fred York, Phoenix Communications spoke with the Board on behalf of CrownCastle LLC, who are requesting permission to lay and maintain underground conduits and hand holes, with cables placed therein, under the surface of the following public way or ways: Install a manhole over the existing conduit and then place approximately 75' of micro conduit from the manhole to the building at 300 First Avenue, Needham.

It was noted Phoenix Communications is their preferred contractor for this work and they have filed a bond with the Town of Needham for this construction.

The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on Phoenix Communications' commitment to adhere to regulation that **all conduit installed must be 3" schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, the conduit must be placed at 24" below grade to the top of the conduit.**

Ms. Fitzpatrick indicated all paperwork is in order.

Mr. Handel invited public comment. No comments were heard.

Motion Mr. Bulian by that the Select Board approve and sign a petition from CrownCastle LLC., to install a manhole over the existing conduit and then place approximately 75' of micro conduit from the manhole to the building at 300 First Avenue, Needham. Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:07 p.m. Director of Public Works:
Carys Lustig, Interim Director of Public Works appeared before the Board with five items to discuss:

1. Sign Notice of Traffic Regulation - Mason Road
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #SS20-11-10 requiring that Mason Road southbound be designated as a stopped street at the intersection of Great Plain Avenue. Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.
2. Sign Notice of Traffic Regulation - Bradford Street

Ms. Cooley asked about a crosswalk where the new stop sign will be located. She said signage is not clear and said it is good to have both crosswalks.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #SS20-11-10 requiring that Bradford Street southbound be designated as a stopped street at the intersection of Dedham Avenue.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

3. Downtown Infrastructure Improvement (“Streetscape”) Update

Ms. Lustig, along with Bob Mackie, BETA Group, and Anthony DelGaizo, Town Engineer provided an update on the design process for the second phase of the downtown renovation project.

Mr. Handel noted correspondence from Jackie DeWolfe, 242 Dedham Avenue was received regarding the streetscape project, which he said would be shared with the consultant and streetscape committee.

Mr. Mackie presented a PowerPoint presentation titled “Downtown Streetscape Phase II, Needham, MA” dated November 10, 2020. He commented on various aspects of the project including the project limits, west side at Maple Street, and the East side at Pickering Street. Discussion ensued on a bicycle mount/dismount area, sharrows, possible pedestrian boxes at Maple Street and/or Pickering Street, four gateway towers, rapid flashing beacons, lighting, landscaping, and mobile seasonal parklets for additional outdoor seating, among other features.

Ms. Cooley asked why the need for two lanes for car traffic each way in the downtown as it relates to pedestrians, bicyclists, and outside diners. She commented parklets should be aligned with restaurants. Ms. Cooley shared her concern for crosswalk boxes that are not signalized or very visible at each end of town.

Mr. Borrelli echoed Ms. Cooley's concern regarding restaurants and businesses. He asked about widening sidewalks on the west side of town to accommodate outdoor dining without having to use a parklet. He suggested consideration be given to installing a crosswalk at Garden Street with a right turn only onto Great Plain Avenue, and more thought be given to the gateway arches.

Mr. Bulian concurred with Mr. Borrelli regarding wider sidewalks for dining, especially for restaurants disadvantaged due to narrow sidewalks. He said he is interested in creative ways to increase sidewalk space.

Mr. Matthews said the plan is impressive and will be an improvement for the Town.

Mr. Handel concurred with Mr. Matthews. He said he likes the ability to use banners at each gateway but cautioned on using too many.

Ms. Cooley said the end result of the project should allow for restaurants, pedestrians, shoppers, bikers, and cars to coexist. She suggested more thought for ways bikers can pass safely through downtown, without using bicycle dismount/mount areas. Ms. Cooley asked for input from the police and fire chiefs regarding the use of planters as a sufficient barrier to hold back cars at each parklet.

Discussion ensued on previous streetscape committee conversations concerning bicycle travel in the downtown. Mr. Mackie commented on the lanes of traffic, widening sidewalks, space limitations, and how to strike the appropriate balance.

Ms. Lustig commented on coordination of the Downtown Streetscape project and Town Common Improvement project.

4. Town Common Improvement

Bob Mackie, BETA Group, and Edward Olsen, Superintendent of Parks & Forestry provided the Board an update on the design process for the Town Common renovation.

Mr. Mackie presented a PowerPoint presentation titled “Town Common Renovations Draft Concept” dated November 10, 2020. He commented on current conditions of the Common, as well as options for a new configuration. Renderings of possible options were viewed. Mr. Mackie commented on features including benches and swings, shade trees and structures, tables for eating, connection to Town Hall, recessed and catenary lighting, a sound system, and the location of a tent, among other items.

Discussion ensued on whether or not to remove and/or replace Garrity Way.

Mr. Bulian said the draft concept is very creative. He supports having a tent with a paver pad underneath. He said it is critical to maintain the eight parking spaces Garrity Way provides for residents doing business at Town Hall. Mr. Bulian said it may be challenging, should it become problematic, to keep groups from using the Great Lawn for sport.

Mr. Handel pointed out parking spaces would become available on the street on each side of the Common, should Garrity Way become a walkway. He noted not all eight spaces would be gone.

Mr. Borrelli agreed with Mr. Bulian, noting he would like benches and passive use of the grass. He said he prefers Option 3 for a tent and is open to options for Garrity Way.

Mr. Matthews said people are used to walking diagonally across the Common. He said more thought should be given to whether or not to have a tent, noting further limited use of alcohol may not be allowed post pandemic. He said Option 3 makes

the most sense. He noted Garrity Way is used seven days a week and should remain.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said colorful Adirondack chairs for the lawn are part of the plan, but not shown on the renderings.

Mr. Olsen commented it has been a pleasure to work on many projects that have had an incredible impact on the people of Needham. He said the Town Common is the “front yard” for Needham and he is proud of the committee who worked together to come up with a terrific design. He concluded he is thankful to have been a part of the design team and that it is time to renovate the Common.

Ms. Cooley said she prefers Option 3 and wants the Common and Great Lawn to be used by citizens. She said she favors more swings and appreciates the trees. She said she is not opposed to closing off Garrity Way but wants to make sure the Farmers Market will be able to fit the space.

Discussion ensued on uses for Garrity Way, parking spaces, relocation of Town Hall drop boxes, pavers to blend in with the rest of the Common, and the location of the Circle of Peace sculpture.

Ms. Lustig said the next steps include funding, construction effects on downtown businesses, applying for Community Preservation funds, and possible construction schedule. She said the estimated cost of the project is \$1.3 million and will take 6 to 12 months.

The Board asked for another update on the project early winter 2021, well before spring Town Meeting preparation.

5. LED Downtown Pilot

Ms. Lustig asked for feedback on the decorative LED lights that were converted at Great Plain Avenue and Pickering Street, and the new lights installed in the Heights to determine if the DPW should pursue additional conversions.

The Board concurred it favors transitioning to the LED lighting.

7:26 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS: No Appointments were made at this meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Accept a \$180 donation made to the Needham Health Department’s Gift of Warmth Program from First Baptist Church in Needham.**

2. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: \$100 from Josephine Li-McLeod and \$50 from Maureen Callahan.**
3. **Ratify the vote in the 2020 MPO election for the Town of Brookline for the At-Large Town seat, the City of Everett for the At-Large City seat, the City of Beverly for the North Shore Task Force sub-region seat, and the Town of Medway for the South West Advisory Planning Committee sub-region seat.**
4. **Approve open session minutes of October 13, 2020 and October 27, 2020, and executive session minutes of July 23, 2020, October 27, 2020 and November 3, 2020.**
5. **Water & Sewer Abatement Order #1298.**
6. **In accordance with Section 20B of the Town Charter, and upon the recommendation of the Town Manager and the Personnel Board, adopt a compensation plan for Schedule K for fiscal year 2021 that includes a 3% increase.**

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:30 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, Katie King, ATM/Operations, and Dave Davison, ATM/Finance spoke with the Board regarding 3 items:

1. Extend Authorization for Local Outdoor Dining Alcoholic Licensing Approval
Ms. King reminded the Board that on September 10, 2020 Governor Baker issued Covid 19 Order 50 - Order Making Certain Phase III Adjustments. Included in this order is an extension of outdoor dining provisions, allowing the Local Licensing Authority to permit outdoor dining with alcohol for a period past November 1, 2020. On June 9, 2020 the Board authorized the Town Manager to grant all local approvals necessary to allow existing local businesses to utilize outdoor dining with alcohol until November 1, 2020. On September 22, 2020, the Board extended this authorization to permit outdoor dining with alcohol through December 1, 2020. To continue supporting Needham's restaurants, it is requested that the Board extend this authorization until 60 days after Governor Bakers' March 10, 2020 Declaration of Emergency is rescinded.

Discussion ensued on the coming winter season and the importance of people being able to safely dine indoors so restaurants can survive through the winter. It was noted some merchants are now staying open later on Thursday evenings for holiday shopping. The Board encouraged residents to shop and dine in Needham.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that consistent with Governor Bakers' Declaration of Emergency and to provide a timely response to businesses seeking to remain open in the Town of Needham under occupancy and other operational limitations, the Select Board hereby extends the authorization granted to the Town Manager by its votes of June 9, 2020 and September 2020 to grant all local approvals necessary to allow existing local businesses to utilize outdoor

seating in parking lots, on-street parking spaces, sidewalks, landscaped yard areas or other appropriate locations to provide more space to serve patrons from December 1, 2020 until sixty days after the Declaration of Emergency is rescinded by the Governor, such authorization to remain subject to all the terms and conditions stated in the Board's original vote.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

2. Financial Update

Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance provided the Board with an update on COVID-19 cost projections as well as a preview of the FY2022 budget. He said there are currently more unknowns than knowns. He commented the state is now closing out the FY2020 budget, noting there could be funds made available for distribution to cities and towns for costs incurred from COVID-19. He reiterated the state has not yet passed a budget for FY2021, noting the goal is to have a budget presented to the governor by Thanksgiving. He said the governor filed an amended FY2020 budget based upon revised revenue updates, which effectively reduced state aid for cities, towns, and school districts by approximately 5%. He reminded the Board the Town of Needham has also made adjustments to its revenue forecasts for FY2021 going into Town Meeting in June 2020. Mr. Davison commented there are great unknowns for FY2022 at the federal, state, and local levels, noting he will have a better sense after January 1, 2021. He did note the contraction in the economy is affecting federal coffers just as much as at the state level. Discussion ensued on the budget outlook for FY2022, noting available resources to cities and towns for many core services is going to be critical. He noted millions of dollars in services are provided to Needham residents, businesses, and schools by way of federal monies and grants. Mr. Davison turned to more immediate items affected by the local economy, saying FY2020 was looking to be a banner year of economic activity in terms of growth and development. He said FY2022 is closing out to be a good year, rather than a banner year. He said activity started to drop in FY2020 in May and June as local receipts were down by 19.7% when compared to May 2019. He said June 2020 local receipts were down 27.6% when compared to June 2019. Mr. Davison said some of the decline was attributed to monies collected by the state on behalf of the Town and remitted to the Town, particularly in the area of meals and excise tax. He commented on slightly higher delinquent rates on property tax payments, which was not unanticipated due to the extension given because of the pandemic. He commented the delinquency rate on June 30, 2020 was 1.5% as compared to June 30, 2019 which was 0.9%. He said the higher delinquency rate was primarily due to one large commercial account, but that most uncollected taxes have been collected from FY2020, with the exception of the large commercial account and some residential and small commercial properties. He said most FY2021 was looking good, except for the major revenue drop off in May and June. Mr. Davison commented the Town is still impacted by delays and extensions granted to businesses in remitting their sales and use taxes to the Commonwealth, hence those being remitted to the Town. He commented on declines in permit activity, along with actions by the Town to lower some fees temporarily (i.e. parking meters and licensing fees). He noted November and

December will be critical for when funds funnel through to the Town in late December, January, and February. He admitted the mandatory closing of some establishments has forced shoppers online and some people are making purchases out of state where sales tax is not collected. He noted his concerns. He commented on the strong real estate market of single-family homes, educational expenses, and anticipated Covid-19 expenses totaling \$1.1 million, primarily associated with cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation systems. Mr. Davison said a number of costs are still to be incurred. Mr. Davison commented on legislative relief, noting our state representatives have reached out to the Town looking for input.

Mr. Borrelli asked if it might make sense to have a disaster fund for emergencies?

Mr. Davison said there are several funds, including a general stabilization fund. He acknowledged a “rainy day” fund should be considered in the future, noting more expenses are anticipated in January 2021. He commented on Covid-19 grants received including \$34,000 to the Health Department for their expenses and \$39,339 a reimbursement grant for transportation costs incurred by the elderly specifically related to Covid-19.

The Board thanked Mr. Davison for his work during this difficult time, noting the extra burden he is handling.

3. Potential New Banner for Symbols of Pride Program

The Board discussed the Community Revitalization Trust proposal of including the new banner “One World Together” into the Symbols of Pride Banner Program.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board voted to approve the inclusion of the “One World Together” banner into the Symbols of Pride Banner Program. Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote

Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Board the MetroWest Collaborative Development was selected to administer the Emergency Rental Assistance Program which will launch Monday, November 16, 2020, with a 3-week application period ending Friday, December 4, 2020. She reminded the Board that if more applicants apply than the Town can handle there will be a lottery. She thanked the Board for their help.

8:05 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports

Ms. Cooley reported Needham United Against Racism Initiative (NUARI) met last night, saying the group will be meeting regularly on the first and third Monday’s of the month. She said the most significant development is that a consultant was engaged to work with NUARI in developing their vision and guiding principles. She said discussion last night was also about policing, education, and housing. Ms. Cooley said the next couple of sessions will revolve around the vision, to be followed by an agenda based on priorities of the committee.

Mr. Borrelli said the committee was open and honest, and the meeting was very helpful in trying to get people involved in Town government, Town Meeting, or on committees. He said it was a robust conversation and a great kick off meeting.

Ms. Cooley said there are many resources available on the NUARI page of the Town's website. She thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick for her work.

8:10 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, November 10, 2020.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, January 12, 2021
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83012497485>**

5:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity.

6:02 p.m. Call to Order:

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Vice Chairman Matt Borrelli. In addition to the Select Board, also in attendance were Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, Dave Davison, ATM/Finance, and Katie King ATM/Operations. Recording Secretary Mary Hunt joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Maurice Handel joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Borrelli announced this open meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. He noted all public gatherings have been suspended as advised and directed by the Commonwealth. And, as such, suspending the requirement of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a public, accessible, physical location while encouraging and allowing members of all public bodies to participate remotely. Mr. Borrelli stated the meeting will include public comment and the Needham Select Board and all attendees are convening by Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. He said all supporting documents used at this meeting are available on the Town's website www.needhamma.gov.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that this meeting be continued to the Select Board's next scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2021, if a technical problem develops that makes it impossible for the Select Board to conduct the meeting in this format.

Second: Mr. Matthews. Unanimously approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

6:04 p.m. Trader Joe's Certificate of Appreciation:

Mr. Bulian read a Certificate of Appreciation awarded to Trader Joe's - Needham.

Motion by Mr. Bulian in recognition of Trader Joe's - Needham efforts to help keep Needham's seniors safe during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing and packing over 1,500 bags of groceries that we were able to deliver to this at-risk population. We thank you for your commitment to serving this community.

Second: Mr. Matthews. Unanimously approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

6:05 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS: No Appointments were made at this meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: \$3500 from JMS Family Foundation, Inc., \$50 from Adam Raff, and \$25 from Isaac Hughes.**
- 2. Accept the following donation made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Maintenance Donation Fund: \$2000 from William Jones, Jr. and \$40 from Jo-Ann & Rich Rosen.**
- 3. Approve technical change from approval of 12/22/2020 agenda – Executive Session minutes of 11/1/2020 should be 11/24/2020.**
- 4. Approve and sign application for recertification as Tree City USA for 2020.**
- 5. Upon the recommendation of the Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance, change the mileage reimbursement rate from 57.5 cents to 56 cents per mile consistent with the rate determined by the IRS.**
- 6. Authorize to extend Free Parking Meter Parking for Two Hours through June 30, 2021.**
- 7. Accept a \$5,000 donation made to Needham Youth & Family Services from the Highrock Metro West Church. These funds were raised by the Jog For Joy 5K held back in December 2020 in support of mental health awareness programs.**
- 8. Water and Sewer Abatement Order #1302.**
- 9. Approve Open Session minutes of 12/22/2020, and minutes from 11/18/2020.**
- 10. Accept the following gifts received by the Needham Public Library for the period of September 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020: John Comando gave the library a copy of his book, Walk by My Side (\$7.99); Debra Doxer donated two copies of her book, Where Butterflies Go (\$13.00 each); Elinor Brady donated a copy of Isabel Wilkerson's book Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents (\$32.00); Emily Richmond Wheeler donated \$55.00 that will be used to purchase a new book-on-CD; and Ellen Knizeski made a \$200.00 donation for the purchase of new mystery books in memory of her parents Bernie and Eileen Ford.**

Second: Mr. Matthews. Unanimously approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

6:06 p.m. Public Hearing: Change of Control of RCN Telecom Services of MA, LLC.
Mr. Borrelli read the Hearing Agenda and a prepared statement announcing the purpose of this public hearing is to consider FCC Form 394 transfer request received by the Town on December 2, 2020. Form 394 seeks the Select Board's approval for a change of control of the Cable Television Franchisee, RCN Telecom Services of MA, LLC, from Radiate Holdings, LP to Stonepeak Associates, IV LLC. He said this public hearing has been advertised in a local newspaper, Needham Times, on December 24, 2020 and December 31, 2020. A copy of the FCC Form 394 has been available in the Needham Town Clerk's Office for review by interested parties during regular business hours by appointment only. He noted the Select Board will meet on February 23, 2021 to render a decision on the request.

Mr. Borrelli asked Tom Steele, Jr., Vice President and Regulatory Counsel for RCN and Michael Nilsson, Counsel to Stonepeak Infrastructure Partners, Harris, Wiltshire & Grannis, LLP. to introduce themselves.

Mr. Nilsson told the Board equity ownership in a parent company of RCN Telecom Services of Massachusetts, LLC will be transferred to a different private equity firm from the one that now controls it. He said this transaction will not change the operations of RCN Telecom Services of Massachusetts, LLC, nor will it change RCN Telecom Services of Massachusetts, LLC's obligations to comply with its franchise agreement. It is, however, expected to make additional resources available to Needham in which it can enhance its network and improve services in the Town of Needham.

Mr. Steele stated this situation is similar to 2016 when TPG Capital, the parent company of Radiate Holdings, L.P., was purchasing RCN from ABRY Partners. He noted the result was no change in the management or operations of RCN Telecom Services in MA.

Mr. Handel asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Borrelli asked when will Stonepeak Partners assume control? He asked for information on the financial capabilities of Stonepeak Partners.

Mr. Nilsson said control would be assumed upon receipt of requisite approvals from various franchise authorities, hopefully in the first quarter of 2021. He commented on the financial capabilities of Stonepeak Partners, noting they manage approximately \$29 billion in investments.

Mr. Handel invited public comment. No comments were heard.

Discussion ensued on various prepared questions. Mr. Borrelli stated the applicant is expected to respond to all questions in writing by January 26, 2021.

Mr. Matthews commented on the history of cable television coming to Needham when residents, at that time, had only one cable option similar to a public utility. He commented on the statute adopted to provide a framework for the Board to oversee certain elements, noting there are also other things the public is interested in, such as programming and rates, which are not under the purview of the Select Board. He said that is why the proceedings involve a lot of discussion about the financials and management structure of the company, as the company was expected to be a permanent fixture in the Town and able to carry out all of its obligations, with renewal every 10 years. Mr. Matthews said there are now three cable franchises in Needham and a very different environment. He said when there is a corporate reorganization and a change of ownership, under the statute, due diligence is necessary with the expectation the transfer request will be readily

approved. He acknowledged the statement by Mr. Nilsson said service will continue without disruption as a result of proceedings.

The Board agreed all questions must be responded to in writing prior to January 19, 2021.

Mr. Handel continued the public hearing to January 26, 2021 for receipt of all follow-up written testimony and follow up responses from Radiate Holdings and Stonepeak Partners. He stated interested parties may submit written testimony to the Select Board no later than January 19, 2021 to the office of the Select Board at Needham Town Hall, and that anyone with questions about the transfer process may call Needham Town Hall at 781-455-7500.

6:30 p.m.

COVID-19 Update:

Tim McDonald, director of Health & Human Services and Tiffany Zike, Assistant Director of Public Health provided an update to the Board regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. McDonald showed a PowerPoint presentation with information on the current situation in Needham and surrounding communities. Mr. McDonald commented on the average daily cases, positivity rate, and Needham Public School's protocol expectations. He said Needham is currently in the "yellow" category, suggesting people are following (and still need to follow) protocols. He referred to state criteria for community risk, maps showing various stages of risk levels and their effect on communities over time, and a breakdown of cases by age. Mr. McDonald indicated there is cause for concern as the positive testing rate has increased substantially since Thanksgiving, suggesting people must make responsible decisions to decrease the positive testing rate.

Ms. Zike commented on cluster data and transmission in Needham. She said the majority of the 321 cases in December are from clusters and are household related. Ms. Zike commented vaccinations have begun and have been distributed to first responders and clinicians. She said Needham is assisting other towns with distribution, as Needham has the infrastructure to help surrounding communities. She commented on mass vaccination clinics, which will begin shortly once approval is received from the state.

Mr. Handel invited members of the Board of Health, including Steven Epstein and Kathleen Brown for comment.

Ms. Brown said she has been working with the schools on pool testing and arranging clinics.

Dr. Epstein said he is concerned with the rate of increase over the last two weeks, suggesting Needham will be in the "red" within a few weeks. He suggested the Board of Health must prevent Needham from going "red" and must take action. He

suggested the age breakdown numbers be looked at as a population adjusted rate, rather than an absolute number. He said it would be better to have a sense of where transmission is occurring. Mr. McDonald concurred.

Mr. Handel asked the Board for comment.

Ms. Cooley asked about ways to message people about how to avoid transmitting the virus within households.

Ms. Zike said it is difficult to isolate parents from children. She noted many adolescent children see their friends, then bring the virus home to their families. She said education is a key piece, but there have been too many cases to handle since the holidays. She commented on the vaccine rollout, and that people must continue to wear their mask, and distance themselves.

Mr. Matthews commented on the shift to upper age groups who are contracting the virus, which he said is of concern. Mr. Matthews said the situation is for the long haul and people cannot let their guard down even after getting the vaccine. He asked what else can Needham do? Mr. Matthews said it is important people know the Town has done a good job holding down the illness and fatalities because of vigilance and care. He said the public must continue with protocols for another 90 days.

Mr. McDonald commented on the public information messaging campaign to further highlight the issue, and that Town of Needham masks will be distributed to echo the message.

Mr. Handel said the efforts of Cindy Roy Gonzalez, Public Information Officer have been instrumental in getting the message out to the public. Mr. Borrelli said communication is critical and terrific. Discussion ensued on the vaccine waitlist, call list, and phased rollout.

Mr. Bulian said people still need to be vigilant, recognizing the public is fatigued. He said he is hopeful for robust daily clinics to distribute the vaccine. Mr. McDonald said the Town has hired many per diem nurses to assist with distribution. Dr. Epstein said Needham probably has one of the most robust vaccination responses in the Commonwealth and asked the Select Board to try and get as many vaccines as possible, as Needham has the infrastructure for distribution.

Mr. Handel said education is key in protecting the public. He thanked everyone for the participation.

7:10 p.m.

Ridge Hill Demolition Presentation:

Steve Popper, Director of Design & Construction, Mike Retzky, Project Manager, and Dave Mentzer, Dore & Whittier Architects updated the Board on the results of

the Ridge Hill Demolition Study. Funding for the demolition is included in the FY2022 Capital Budget.

A PowerPoint presentation titled “Ridge Hill Estate - Town of Needham, Estate (Manor) House & Garage Demolition Study” dated January 12, 2021 was viewed.

Mr. Retzky commented on the study overview, the scope, cost estimate, and duration schedule for the project. He spoke of historical concerns noted in the study and advisory comments provided, and that a six-month waiting period is included in the project duration. Mr. Retzky said this Study does not consider alternate uses of the site, only demolition scope of work and restoration of the site. Mr. Retzky said the total estimated project cost is \$756,891 and the project duration is anticipated to be one year.

Discussion ensued on the six-month waiting period and whether the waiting period can begin before the project starts, cost estimate and contingencies for site improvements, site MEP (Mechanical-Electrical-Plumbing). Also discussed was whether project costs could be lowered and whether the Town should keep the barn for possible remediation at a later time.

Ms. Cooley suggested contacting the Historical Commission to begin discussion regarding the 6-month waiting period.

The Board thanked the presenters for the update.

7:30 p.m.

Town Manager:

1. Open 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed a preliminary list of Warrant articles and asked the Board to open the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. She noted the Warrant is scheduled to be closed on February 9, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board vote to open the warrant for the 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

2. Town Manager’s Report

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported donations to the Vietnam Memorial were encouraged in the obituary of lifelong resident Tony Cefalo who passed away in November 2020. She said \$2,365 has been received to date.

She noted Needham’s Blue Tree will remain lit throughout January and free 2-hour parking has been extended through the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Board the Town agreed to extend the due date to February 2021 for Natasha Tidwell’s report on the investigation of an incident involving Marvin Henry on January 25, 2020.

7:38 p.m.

Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports - Needham Unite Against Racism

Ms. Cooley reported NUARI held a meeting last night and met with Police Chief John Schlittler and Lisa Smith-McQueenie. She said the meeting was open, helpful, and established a baseline where it was clear the chief was interested in hearing from the community, reflected on the work of his department, and was responsive to questions asked by the group. Ms. Cooley said discussion continued on the draft vision and guiding principles of NUARI. She commented that NUARI is preparing for a public meeting on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., to gather feedback on guiding principles and how the Town makes decisions and thinks about racial equity. Ms. Cooley suggested a police dashboard of data could include information such as motor vehicle stops, summonses, arrests, use of force, and call type by category. She said the topic could be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Borrelli concurred with Ms. Cooley's summary. He said the goal for the Select Board is to reach out to interested contacts for broader discussion. He said he is interested in finding the best data.

Mr. Matthews said the work is difficult. He suggested NUARI is a group with at least five years of work ahead before it will be able to look back on progress. He said the beginning phase is probably a two-year initial project of writing its vision and goal statement, while discussing education, housing, and economic opportunities. He commented he hopes NUARI will be able to give an interim report to Town Meeting, noting the work is urgent and important to get right. Mr. Matthews said people should follow the work of the committee and participate in public hearings.

Mr. Bulian observed the NUARI group coming together, interacting, and explaining how they feel. He said the work is challenging and difficult.

2. Committee Reports - Other

Ms. Cooley commented that a community meeting regarding Highway Commercial 1 will be held February 3, 2021 at 7:15 p.m. and will be an opportunity for residents to hear from the Planning Board.

Mr. Handel reminded residents that Town elections are coming up in April and encouraged people to become more involved in town government and run for town office.

8:00 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>