

ARTICLE 21

**FINAL VOTE OF TOWN MEETING**

MOVED: That the Town adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND REQUESTING THE BOARD OF  
SELECTMAN TO PETITION THE TOWN'S LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION TO  
STUDY THE INEQUITABLE NORFOLK COUNTY ASSESSMENT OF  
BROOKLINE AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES AND TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO  
REMEDY SUCH INEQUITIES.

WHEREAS. County governments are seen as outmoded and inefficient and in 1997 and 1998 the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts dissolved most county governments (Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Worcester Counties).

WHEREAS Most of the functions, services and duties of the dissolved county governments were transferred to state offices. For example, the duties of the Registries of Deeds all now come under the Office of the Secretary of State while the Sheriffs and jails come under the Executive Office of Public Safety.

WHEREAS In dissolving most county governments the Commonwealth took on liability for continuing liabilities associated with the dissolved county governments such as pensions and other post-employment benefits.

WHEREAS Norfolk County and several other county governments in southeastern Massachusetts remain.

WHEREAS The Town of Brookline continues to pay mandatory assessments to Norfolk County government.

WHEREAS For Fiscal Year 2012, the Norfolk County assessment for the Town of Brookline is nearly \$700,000, which is an increase of more than 9% over the prior year.

WHEREAS Municipalities which are located in counties where the county government has been dissolved receive essentially the same services from the Commonwealth as those formerly provided by the county but pay no mandatory assessment to a county government.

WHEREAS Municipalities which are located in counties where the county government has been dissolved do not contribute toward the continuing liabilities of the former county government.

WHEREAS It is unfair and inequitable that Brookline, and other similar municipalities, should be saddled with large county government assessments while municipalities located in counties where county government has been dissolved receive essentially the same services without paying an assessment.

WHEREAS Assessment paid by municipalities to the county government are based on the municipality's property tax assessments and, therefore, the Town of Brookline's financial contribution to Norfolk County government is dramatically disproportionate to its population and to the benefits the Town receives.

WHEREAS Except for the physical plant of the Brookline District Court, the Town of Brookline derives minimal benefit from Norfolk County government and the few benefits which are derived could easily be provided for in an alternative and more cost efficient means.

AND WHEREAS It is unfair and inequitable that the Town of Brookline should pay a disproportionate share of the Norfolk County government assessment relative to the benefits received by the Town of Brookline.

NOW IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Selectman are authorized and requested

1. To communicate with other Norfolk County municipalities about the inequities inherent in the current county government system and to coordinate with other Norfolk County communities who seek a remedy.
2. To petition the Town's legislative delegation to study the inequitable status, structure and assessment mechanism of remaining county governments.
3. To issue a written report on the progress made on or before September 15, 2011 and to report further in this regard at the next Town Meeting.

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