



**Town of West Newbury  
Select Board  
Monday, October 25, 2021 @ 6:00pm**  
381 Main Street, Town Office Building  
[www.wnewbury.org](http://www.wnewbury.org)

**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

**Open Session:** Open session was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairperson Parker.

**Participation at the Meeting:**

Richard Parker, David Archibald, and Wendy Reed *Select Board Members*

Angus Jennings, *Town Manager*

Lynne Spencer, *Architectural Consultant*

Doug Manley, *Architectural Consultant*

Wayne Amaral, *DPW Director*

Kevin Bowe

Brian Conn

Brian Dow & Josie Dow

Blake Seale

Ivars Jakobsons

Dick Cushing

Bob Janes

Elke O'Donnell

Elisa Grammer

KC Swallow & Steve Swallow

Rich Baker

Tom Salvo

**Announcements:**

- This meeting is being broadcast on local cable TV and recorded for rebroadcast on the local cable channels and on the internet. Meeting also accessible by remote participation (see agenda for details).
- Trick or Treating: Sunday, October 31 from 5:30-7:30pm. Safe practices can be found on the Town website.
- Call for volunteers: current opportunities at <https://www.wnewbury.org/volunteer>
- Thank you to all who attended the Town Meeting!
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town news/announcements at <https://www.wnewbury.org/subscribe>

**Regular Business**

**A. Discussion of Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Building (a/k/a “Carr Post”)**

Parker gave a brief overview of the approved appropriation of funds to renovate the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building and stated the bids received had exceeded the appropriation. Parker explained the cost of construction materials and labor due to COVID-19 had risen dramatically and the town would need to decide how to move forward.

Parker reviewed the options outlined in a memo from Lynne Spencer, Architectural Consultant, for the town to consider. The first option, with limited funds the town could address necessary structural work and “mothball” the building. With this option the town could wait until the cost of construction materials decreased, but this was warned against as there was guarantee of when, or if, this would happen. The second option, the town could complete the structural work, repair of the turret, and complete other exterior repairs for an estimated cost of \$850,000. This option would leave the interior of the building to be completed at a later time at an additional cost. The third option, the town could sell the building in the current condition with an

enforceable preservation restriction. The last option, the town could lease the building in the current condition with a preservation restriction.

Lynne Spencer, Architectural Consultant, appeared before the Select Board remotely and discussed the obstacles involved with the residential zoning of the property and provided examples of municipalities that had sold or leased property with a historic preservation restriction and gone through the public procurement process with success.

Kevin Bowe appeared before the Select Board in person. Bowe questioned if \$200,000 would cover the costs of “mothballing” and tightening up the structure to eliminate additional damage from occurring. Doug Manley, Architectural Consultant, appeared before the Select Board remotely and confirmed Bowe’s figure was an accurate estimate of the costs to mothball.

Brian Conn appeared before the Select Board in person and asked if demolishing and rebuilding the building would be more cost effective. Manley stated that it would be much more costly than renovating the existing building. Spencer stated that the turret would require reconstruction, but the gable roof, windows, and a few other areas of the structure were remarkably intact.

Brian Dow appeared before the Select Board in person and asked if any areas could be cut back on to reduce the bid estimates received. Wayne Amaral, DPW Director, appeared before the Select Board in person. Amaral stated the design was created with the intention of reusing as much as possible. When the bids were received, the plans were reviewed and it was determined the design did not include any extra design elements and there were no areas to cut back on. Amaral stated HVAC materials had doubled since the design plan had been created and any material involving metal had increased in cost and was subject to supply chain delays.

Blake Seale appeared before the Select Board in person and asked if the town had considered selling the property to a developer without any restrictions on what could be built. Seale believed this option would eliminate costs for the town. Parker stated the property envelope was a sub-standard size of less than a quarter of an acre and was zoned for residential use. The sub-standard size could not accommodate a septic system on the land and there was not adequate frontage. Parker stated the existing building was a memorial for veterans and that would need to be taken into consideration.

Ivars Jakobsons appeared before the Select Board in person and suggested to remove the back of the building and to keep the façade as the memorial. Jakobsons believed that if the building was renovated, it would not be used very often and only keeping the façade would eliminate the need for an HVAC system. Spencer stated that a demolition of that nature would remove the building from the national registry for historic places and the cost of repair for the turret was estimated around \$400,000.

Josie Dow appeared before the Select Board in person. Dow believed it would be a waste of money for the town to maintain the property and that it should be rezoned to allow for a meeting space, café, or to sublet to a private entity where the restorations would not be the responsibility of the town or the taxpayers.

Dick Cushing appeared before the Select Board in person and advocated for the building to be restored. Cushing believed the building represented not only war, but the struggle to gain peace and could be used to display wartime documents dating back to the 1800’s. Cushing requested Bob Janes to speak more on this topic. Janes appeared before the Select Board in person and spoke of the significance of the war memorial and how it represented the sacrifices made to achieve peace. Janes stated there were nineteen boxes at the library of handwritten letters and notes granting permission for residents to serve in wars dating back to 1812. Janes believed the documents should be displayed and the Soldiers and Sailors building was the most suitable.

Elke O’Donnell appeared before the Select Board and stated the building was historic, could not be replaced, and discussed lack of parking if a commercial entity was to acquire the property. O’Donnell suggested looking into organizations that could help with the restoration.

Elisa Grammer appeared before the Select Board remotely and discussed financial concerns surrounding the approval of \$100,000 in 2015 to stabilize and preserve the building. Grammer questioned what had previously been done and stated the town could not continuously spend money on the building when the Middle Street Bridge and the Page School needed town support. Grammer suggested forming a working group to weed through the ideas for the property with the charge of making a recommendation to the town.

Parker informed Grammer that the funds approved in 2015 had paid for interior collar ties to be installed and it was not intended to be a long-term solution. Parker suggested a memorial park could be created with a quarter scale monument of the building, potentially built with the materials from the existing building. The Select Board briefly discussed a fundraising opportunity to engrave a brick with a person's name who was connected to the building or to the military.

KC Swallow appeared before the Select Board and asked how much additional funding would be needed to complete the restoration. Jennings stated the approved appropriation Town meeting was for \$1.5 million dollars and an additional \$850,000 would need to be approved through the next Town Meeting if they were to move forward with the restoration. KC Swallow believed a park would not have the same impact as the building and supported the preservation of the exterior of the building while a committee explored possible uses for the building.

Rich Baker appeared before the Select Board and suggested creating 3-4 units of veteran housing, stating that this option would give the building a purpose and would honor veterans. The Select Board and Baker discussed potential placement for a septic system and the possibility of various companies, such as Home Depot, providing additional funding to build the housing.

Tom Salvo appeared before the Select Board in person and asked if water was still penetrating the basement and if the water could freeze and effect the foundation. Amaral stated the basement had not flooded, but water was still present but the pump had been able to keep up with it. Amaral stated the building had gone through multiple winters without heat and the foundation had not been affected. Salvo asked what it would mean for the town if the state no longer offered CPC funds. Jennings stated the town would still be liable if the funding was discontinued. Due to the limited parking available, Salvo believed the building should not be leased and was in favor of building a memorial. Manley stated the eight parking spaces were included in the plans for the site along the back of the building.

Steve Swallow appeared before the Select Board in person and suggested using the appropriated money to make the building structurally sound, button up the building against the elements, and complete landscaping to make the exterior look good. Steve Swallow supported the idea for a committee to determine how to use the building and complete the restoration.

Parker stated the vote at the Town Meeting had won by one vote in the required 2/3 majority and understood that the town was passionate about the building. Parker expressed concerns over forming a committee with people that have already decided what should happen with the building. The Select Board discussed how the town did not have adequate funds to follow through with the original plan and would need to take a step back and review all the options. Parker thanked all of the participants for their input.

Jennings informed the Select Board the developer of Drake's Landing had notified the town the improvements could be completed in the next few weeks. Jennings stated the improvements would consist of paving the rear parking lot, removing paving from front yard, and removing curb cuts from Main Street and replacing them with 6-inch loam and seed. Amaral did not expect any damage would occur on the new pavement and reviewed that it was a MassDOT requirement to fix the front and remove the cut outs. The Select Board discussed that they would receive more from the developer through the completion of the improvements that getting a cash payout.

**Archibald made a motion to authorize the cottage advisors to carry out the work that was detailed and requested. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously approved (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**Parker made motion to adjourn. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 9:00pm**