



**Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, November 1, 2021 @ 7:00pm**
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Open Session: 7:07pm by in-person attendance or remote participation (instructions below)

Participation at the Meeting:

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

Angus Jennings, *Town Manager*

James Blatchford, *Town Clerk*

Lark Madden

Geordie Vining

Francesca Pomerantz

Molly Hawkins, Elisa Grammer, Bob Janes, Dot Cavanaugh; *Historical Commission*

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
- FY22 Tax Rate Hearing – joint Select Board meeting with Board of Assessors scheduled for November 15, 2021 at 7pm
- Call for volunteers: current opportunities at <https://www.wnewbury.org/volunteer>
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town news/announcements at <https://www.wnewbury.org/subscribe>

Regular Business

A. Applications for Committee appointments:

a. Lark Madden – Personnel Committee

Lark Madden appeared before the Select Board remotely (see exhibit A.a page 4 for details).

Madden expressed the need for a clear charge to be given to the committee and timeframe for the work to be completed. **Parker made a motion to appoint Lark Madden to the Personnel Committee effective immediately through June 30, 2022. Reed seconded.** Jennings stated the official charge of the committee was set by the Personnel bylaw but the Select Board could define the charge to specific areas of focus. **Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

b. Carly Ramos – Cultural Council

It was stated that Carly Ramos was out of town and would not be able to attend the meeting. Jennings placed this item on the agenda for the following meeting on November 15, 2021 (see exhibit A.b pages 5-8 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

B. Consideration of proposal to remove two interpretive signs regarding Native Americans (at Indian Hill and Garden Street; and on Turkey Hill Road)

Geordie Vining and Francesca Pomerantz appeared before the Select Board remotely (see exhibit B pages 9-19 for details). Vining and Pomerantz stated they had drafted the request in the hopes of getting all town officials on the same page as the newspaper reported the Historic Commission hoped to bring this item before the Select Board.

Molly Hawkins appeared before the Select Board in person and stated the Historical Commission had discussed one of the two signs and appeared to be in favor of removal or re-wording to make more inclusive. Elisa Grammer appeared before the Select Board remotely and explained the Commission would need to discuss the other sign as it had not been reviewed by the group as a whole. Bob Janes appeared before the Select Board in person and agreed that the sign should be reviewed by the Commission before discussing it any further. The Historical Commission members present discussed to need to conduct research before providing a recommendation to the Select Board.

The Select Board reviewed the dates of the scheduled Select Board meetings and the scheduled Historical Commission meetings. Dot Cavanaugh appeared before the Select Board in person and suggested the Historical Commission hold a special meeting to discuss removing or replacing the verbiage on the signs. Jennings stated the Select Board could wait for the recommendation of the Historic Commission or choose to take action that evening as the request was brought forward by a resident. The Select Board asked the Historical Commission to make a recommendation by the end of the month as it would be discussed at the first Select Board meeting in December. **No motion was made at this time.**

C. Review of draft Memorandum of Agreement with Amesbury re regional COVID-19 vaccination clinics (see exhibit C page 20 for details)

Archibald made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Amesbury re regional COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Parker seconded. Jennings stated the idea was to approve the agreement in the current form with any minor non-substantive edits. The Select Board discussed the timeframes for the agreement to be reviewed by the City of Amesbury and the Town Accountant Business Manager. **Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

D. Discussion of Affordable Housing Trust: potential next steps; and call for residents interested in potential appointment to Trust

It was stated the Affordable Housing Trust was approved at the Town Meeting (see exhibit D page 21 for details) and Parker invited residents to apply for appointment. The Select Board discussed how many appointments would be needed and the various skill sets that would be helpful for the Trust. Jennings discussed presenting a charge for the Annual Spring Town Meeting and that the Trust should contain a Select Board member and a Planning Board member. The Select Board and Jennings discussed potentially increasing the Town Planner's hours and creating an Affordable Housing Trust page to the Town website. **No motion was made at this time.**

E. Discussion of Soldiers & Sailors Building, potential next steps from recent special Select Board meeting on 10/25/21

The Select Board discussed if the Board should propose one or more articles for Spring Town Meeting to give the community the choice on which direction to go (see exhibit E pages 22-32 for details). The Select Board discussed how two conflicting articles could be crafted within the warrant. Jennings advised the Board to only propose articles they supported and not articles that merely conflicted with each other.

Jennings stated that due to its designation as a public building, prevailing wage would be required and full price labor rates would apply. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the requirement for a town vote to sell the building and how to complete the procurement process with a historical preservation in place. Conversation continued surrounding the requirement to re-zone the parcel to allow for commercial or business use for either a lease or procurement. Parker stated that any article surrounding the building should be brought forward during an Annual Town Meeting in order to truly capture the Town's will. Jennings stated a proposal for disposition with a historic preservation could be completed by the Annual Spring Town meeting and a cost estimate would be sought over the following weeks. **No motion was made at this time.**

F. Overview of active and anticipated projects / initiatives – Town Manager

Jennings presented the working draft of active/anticipated projects within the town (see exhibit F page 33-49 for details) and discussed the categories of municipal work. Jennings stated that most work hours were spent on baseline services which led to fewer hours to contribute to unplanned or crisis tasks. Jennings continued stating that it was inefficient to provide updates on a bi-weekly basis for long-term projects and suggested providing quarterly updates where more substantial information could be provided.

The Select Board and Jennings reviewed the goal and priorities list created by the Select Board for the first 90 days – 6 months and the items that had been subsequently added on. Jennings discussed ways to approach the list through the different matrix components of department category, present/future projects, and importance level. Jennings stated a project management versus capacity mismatch was present and additional projects should not be added to a workload that was presently in triage mode. As an example, Jennings stated the town had managed 35 grants the previous year on top of baseline services provided to the town. While the expanded staffing and hours had made a difference, Jennings stated significant gaps were still present in HR, Grants Administration, and Purchasing & Procurement. **No motion was made at this time.**

G. Update on ongoing review of fields management / mowing

Parker stated a preliminary conversation had occurred roughly two weeks prior concerning agricultural fields management (see exhibit G page 50-79 for details). Parker expressed concern over invasive species taking over areas of open space the town had spent millions of dollars to preserve. Parker stated the DPW would implement a mowing plan, but a strategy for individual fields would be needed to maintain healthy versions of the town parcels. **No motion was made at this time.**

H. Discussion of affordable housing policy/strategy

Carry over from previous agenda- No discussion at this time.

I. Meeting minutes: August 9, 2021

Reed addressed clerical error within the minutes (see exhibit I pages 80-87 for details). **Parker made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain)**

Town Manager Updates

J. Receipt of FY21 Audit; presentation by Auditor scheduled for November 15 Select Board meeting

Jennings confirmed this item would be addressed at the November 15, 2021 Select Board meeting.

K. Town Clerk's office setting up option for online purchase/payment for vital records (birth / death / marriage certificates), burial permits, and dog licenses – coming soon

Blatchford informed the Select Board of the new option to purchase vital records online through the Clerk's Office (see exhibit K pages 88-91 for details). Blatchford stated the online payment option was provided through the current vendor with no additional cost to the town. Blatchford informed the Select Board that both the Clerk's Office and Treasurer's Office would have credit card point of sale options for residents who chose to pay in the office by credit card. **No motion was made at this time.**

L. Update on pending paving contract, and streets scheduled for paving in coming weeks

Jennings stated the paving bid had been awarded (see exhibit L page 92 for details). Jennings stated a map or a list of streets would be provided through News & Announcements to inform the community of the streets that would be repaved.

M. Update on grant for Safety Audit of Page/Pipestave/Main Street intersection

Jennings stated the vendors were highly recommended and had completed 90% of the Safe Routes to School Grants in the state (see exhibit M pages 93-116 for details). Jennings stated the Safety Audit would identify deficiencies and would most likely result in a conceptual design. **No motion was made at this time.**

N. Update on Community Compact grant award to support study of wages/position classifications / organizational structure

Jennings reviewed the experience the Collin's Center had in municipal consulting with wage and classification as well as management capacity versus workload (see exhibit N pages 117-118 for details). Jennings stated the town was waiting for the scope and budget to take the next step forward, but the \$15,000 grant should cover the majority of the work. **No motion was made at this time.**

O. Follow up meeting assignments

P. Placing items for future agendas

Jennings stated the following items would appear on the next Select Board meeting agenda;

- Public Hearing for the proposed personnel policy on the approval of overtime worked above budgeted hours
- Tax Classification Hearing
- Town Audit Presentation

Parker made a motion to adjourn. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 10:46pm.