



**Town of West Newbury  
Select Board  
Monday, December 20, 2021 @ 7:00pm  
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 7:12pm by Chairperson Parker.

**Participation at the meeting:**

Richard Parker, David Archibald, and Wendy Reed; *Select Board Members*  
Angus Jennings, *Town Manager (remote)*  
James Blatchford, *Town Clerk*  
Fred Chania  
Ashley Adams  
Heather Connor, Paula Breger, Sandy Nawrocki, Laura Collins, and Marcia Sellos-Maura  
Vanessa Johnson-Hall, *Greenbelt*  
Brad Buschur  
Stephanie Frontiera, *Town Accountants*

**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.
- Regional Vaccination Clinics for COVID booster shots. See Town website for dates and details.
- Call to Boards/Commissions/Committees and Town Departments for FY21 Town Reports!
- 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. Joint mtg w/Library Board of Trustees: application for appointment of Ashley Adams to Library Board**

A joint meeting of the Select Board and the Library Board of Trustees was convened. Fred Chania, Chairperson of the G.A.R Library Board of Trustees, appeared remotely and stated a quorum had been reached as there were 6 Trustees in attendance. Heather Connor, Paula Breger, Sandy Nawrocki, Laura Collins, Marcia Sellos-Maura attended the meeting remotely (see exhibit A pages 6-8 for details). Ashley Adams appeared remotely for the requested appointment. Reed stated Adams had served on the Library Director Search Committee and proved to be a valuable member. Chania stated the Board of Trustees had voted unanimously to recommend Adams for appointment at the last meeting. **Parker made a motion to appoint Ashley Adams to fill the remaining period of the vacancy on the Library Board of Trustees. Chania seconded. Motion unanimously passed (9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).** Blatchford stated arrangements to be sworn into office would be made.

**B. Request for endorsement to seek Tree City USA designation – Fred Chania, Tree Committee**

Chania explained that the Tree City USA program emerged from the Arbor Day Foundation (see exhibit B pages 9-14 for details). Chania stated the designation would recognize the community's commitment to the trees and landscape of the town and there was no obligation or fee associated with the designation. As the application was due by the end of the month, Chania requested the endorsement of the Select Board to submit the application. **Archibald made a motion to support the application for Tree City USA designation. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**C. Review/potential approval of draft Coffin Street Conservation Restrictions – Vanessa Johnson-Hall, Greenbelt**

Vanessa Johnson-Hall appeared before the Select Board in person (see exhibit C pages 15-81 for details). Johnson-Hall stated the conservation restriction had not yet been reviewed by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, explained the two conservation restrictions associated with the Coffin Street project, and discussed the temporary unrestricted easement on the adjacent property that would allow the opportunity to create trails around the wetlands.

Johnson-Hall discussed comments received from Patricia Reeser that requested the town would be allowed the right to maintain and create trails on the property. While the request was a departure from typical conservation restrictions, Johnson-Hall stated there were several ways to work through the request with Judy Mizner and Patricia Reeser.

Parker requested a revised draft of the conservation restrictions be brought back before the Select Board before a vote of approval was cast. Johnson-Hall stated the revised draft could be completed by the January 18, 2022 meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **D. Used Car License Renewal applications**

See exhibit D pages 82-95 for details. **Archibald made a motion to approve Main Street Auto, Pearson's Automotive, and Crane Neck Auto used car licenses effective January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

#### **E. Review/potential approval of Sullivan's Court trail easement (cont'd from 12/6/21)**

Brad Buschur appeared in person and discussed the design of the trail that would include wooden sections that could be lifted out of place in the event the water line required repair. The Select Board and Buschur reviewed the proposal and discussed changes noted from the original proposal (see exhibit E pages 96-117 for details). Jennings clarified the Select Board was requested to approve the easement and not the design at this time. **Parker made a motion to approve the easement Sullivan's Court. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

#### **F. Review/potential revisions to COVID protocols in Town buildings**

Jennings and the Select Board discussed the proposed revisions to the Covid-19 protocols in Town buildings (see exhibit F pages 118-131 for details). Jennings stated that CDC guidance continued to change as the original guidance had been written when no one had been vaccinated. The proposed changes to the policy hoped to distinguish the different protocols to follow vaccinated versus unvaccinated employees if exposure occurred should occur. The Select Board and Jennings discussed remaining aware of employee safety concerns and allowing employees to continue to work remotely if desired.

Town Accountant, Stephanie Frontiera, appeared before the Select Board remotely. Fronteira stated the current Covid-19 protocol was very strict when compared to other communities. Fronteira suggested the Board to consider a policy that followed CDC guidelines and that could be updated, with the help of the Health Agent, as CDC guidelines were changed.

The Select Board discussed how each modification to the policy would have to be brought before the Board and discussed transferring the authority to update the policy as CDC guidelines changed. Jennings stated the Town Manager Act granted the authority to enforce policy set forth by the Select Board, but the Board would be required to vote to modify or repeal the policy as it had been adopted. **Parker made a motion to change the Covid 19 protocol to follow the CDC recommendations; continue to require masking and safe social distancing within the Town Office Building for all people in the building, whether employees or visitors. And to continue to be accommodating for any employee uncomfortable being within the space of the building given the above set of conditions, to allow them to work remotely. Archibald seconded.** Reed questioned how the motion reflected the requested amendments to the current policy or if the motion would replace the current policy. Archibald stated a clear sunset date was needed for the policy as it would not be feasible to continue to allow remote work to occur multiple years from now. Parker agreed and stated the addition "effective through the end of the fiscal year" could be added to the motion.

The Select Board, Jennings, and Fronteira discussed whether the Town could legally ask employees their vaccination status or if the Town would rely on employees independently self-reporting. The Select Board and Jennings discussed how best to approach amendments to the policy. The Select Board expressed the main goals of people remaining healthy and the Town Offices to continue to operate. **Parker withdrew the motion.** The Select Board continued to discuss how the policy should reflect the most current CDC guidelines concerning vaccinated and unvaccinated employees. Jennings reviewed the policy from East Bridgewater included in the packet and the Select Board agreed the language listed was favorable. Reed stated a few sentences concerning quarantine requirements for vaccinated employees needed to be inserted to clarify the different requirements. **Parker made a motion to accept the proposed draft with the exception removing the word "vaccinated" on the second page under "Compensation During Time Off", include the discussed language from the East Bridgewater model concerning the CDC, and to change the sunset date to read "this protocol, as may be amended by the Town Manager, shall be in effect through June 30, 2022". Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

#### **G. Discussion of FY23 budget policy direction (cont'd from 12/6/21)**

Archibald noted a minor typo in the first paragraph to be updated (see exhibit G pages 132-134 for details). Parker agreed that the increase to the expense budget should be set to no more than 2.5% as costs had continued to rise over the past year. As questions surrounding the retirement budget arose, Jennings stated an invitation to appear before the Select Board would be extended to a representative from the Essex Retirement Board. Lastly, Jennings stated the language within section two concerning COVID-19 related expenses had been revised as continuing expenses going forward would have to be absorbed by the Town. **Parker made a motion to approve the budget policy direction. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

#### **H. Report on research regarding MVRTA levels of service, process to seek potential changes**

Blatchford stated the recent attendance at the MVRTA Communities meeting was the first instance a representative from West Newbury had participated. Blatchford discussed the Ring & Ride service available to the residents of West Newbury with the cost of \$2.00 per ride to any location within the MVRTA community (see exhibit H pages 135-136 for details) and how the service was primarily aimed to serve members elderly of

the community and those with disabilities. Blatchford and the Select Board discussed how the service and cost of the service may not be known to residents but could be promoted through the Council on Aging. Discussion continued surrounding the current MVRTA bus routes and the lack of services in West Newbury. Blatchford stated that increased use of the Ring & Ride service could provide clear evidence of the need for MVRTA services with the Town.

Blatchford informed the Select Board of a Federal/State program that would allow the Town to lease a vehicle from the MVRTA to provide transportation to the elderly and individuals with disabilities. Blatchford stated this program could prove to be beneficial as the Council on Aging Van would likely need replacement in the next 4-5 years. Jennings stated the turn around time was roughly 18 months and recommended the Town look into what would be needed to be placed on the list for the leasing program. **No motion was made at this time.**

**I. Notice regarding applicability of “MBTA Communities” legislation to West Newbury**

The Select Board, Jennings, and Blatchford discussed the new legislation for “MBTA Communities” and the requirement for communities adjacent to a transit station to identify a multifamily zoning district (see exhibit I pages 137-139 for details). Jennings stated the requirement for communities was to identify the new zoning district but the communities were not required to build any units. Jennings informed the Select Board that a plan for the zoning district would need to be submitted by the end of December 2022. Failure to submit a plan would deem the community out of compliance and ineligible for grants and other state funding. Parker stated a proposal for funding should be pursued in the spring in order to engage a consultant to assist with the requirements. **No motion was made at this time.**

**J. Update on CPC review of proposal for CPA admin funds (re Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Bldg.)**

Reed stated the topic had been discussed at the CPC meeting and the comments were overall favorable, but the details surrounding the sewage disposal were a topic of concern (see exhibit J page 140-166 for details). Jennings stated the Board of Health would be reviewing if a tight tank could be used at the location at their meeting the following day or in a meeting held in early January. Due to the building remaining vacant for more than two years, the zoning for the property only allowed for a 1-2 family dwelling, municipal office, or a religious, agricultural, or educational center under the Dover Amendment. **No motion was made at this time.**

**K. Update re discussion w/School Building Committee re use of native plantings**

Reed stated that although the topic was not on the School Building Committee agenda, the topic was briefly discussed without a definitive consensus (see exhibit K pages 167-170 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

**L. Discussion of policy regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations**

The Select Board discussed placing more definitive signage limiting the EV charging spaces for electric cars only (see exhibit L pages 171-185 for details). Discussion continued surrounding the usage of the stations and allowing for flexibility in parking during events such as the vaccination clinics and Town meetings. Jennings stated more definitive signage could be placed at the Town Office Building but the charging station at the Page School would need to be discussed with the new principal. The Select Board discussed promoting the usage of the charging station at Page School as the usage was close to zero. **No motion was made at this time.**

**M. Review charge of Personnel Committee**

The Select Board and Jennings discussed the charge of the Personnel Committee and how the responsibilities for personnel administration now rest within the Town Managers Office after the adoption of the Town Manager Act (see exhibit M pages 186-189 for details). Jennings stated that any change to the Personnel Committee would need to be brought before Town Meeting as the Personnel bylaw had been adopted in 1999. **No motion was made at this time.**

**N. Amendments to FY22 wage schedule**

The Select Board stated a slight adjustment in hourly rate for two positions had been approved in executive session (see exhibit N page 190 for details). **Parker made a motion to approve the change in the employee compensation schedule for two positions as shown on page 186 of the December 20, 2022 open session packet. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**Town Manager Updates**

**O. Vendor contract, Wage Classification Study**

Jennings stated the draft had not been finalized yet but the scope of the study had been determined (see exhibit O pages 191-194 for details). Jennings stated that each position and job description would be reviewed in a systematic approach. Reed stated a similar study had been conducted in Rowley and Topsfield. **No motion was made at this time.**

**P. Update re potential staffing structure for 2022 summer rec program**

Jennings stated the summer rec program was going to resume after two years of the program being on

hold due to COVID-19. Jennings stated staffing structure and wages would be brought before the Select Board at the January 18, 2022 meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

**Q. Project timeline, Page School/Pipestave/Main Street safety audit**

Jennings stated the town would solicit public input and be made aware the safety audit and traffic count would take place in the spring (see exhibit Q page 195 for details). The completion of the audit would position the town in a good spot to apply for the Safe Routes to School grant in the fall. **No motion was made at this time.**

**R. Project timeline, Mill Pond All Persons Trail**

Jennings stated a contract had been signed with the vendor that included the timeline and scope of the work (see exhibit R pages 196-201 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

**S. Upcoming meeting w Town Administrators in Merrimac and Groveland**

Jennings stated the meeting would provide an opportunity for enhanced collaboration of existing and future collaboration between the towns. **No motion was made at this time.**

**T. Acknowledge receipt of recent report Moody's Annual Issuer Comment Report**

Jennings stated the information included in the packet was a brief snapshot of the Town's finances (see exhibit T pages 202-207 for details). Jennings stated that some numbers did not align with the certified assessments and further discussion with Moody's would take place. **No motion was made at this time.**

**U. Follow up meeting assignment; placing items for future agendas**

No items were stated at this time.

**Parker made a motion to adjourn. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 10:54pm.**