



**Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, July 10, 2023 @ 7:00pm
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Meeting Minutes**

Open Session: Chairwoman Reed opened the session at 7:11pm.

Participation at the Meeting:

- Rick Parker, Wendy Reed, Chris Wile- Select Board
- Angus Jennings- Town Manager
- Jim Blatchford- Town Clerk
- Jennifer Walsh- Town Accountant
- Sam Joslin- Inspections, via Zoom
- Julianne Ruscio- Council on Aging Applicant
- Walter Burmeister- Finance Committee Applicant
- Eric Boucher- Harborside Half Marathon Representative, via Zoom
- Denise Allard, Mark Cappadonna- Colonial Power Representatives, via Zoom
- PTO Representatives, via Zoom

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; instructions below.
- West Newbury Historical Commission Tales of Our Town, July 2023 – “The West Newbury Cadet Band”
- 2023 Summer Bandstand Concert Series – Thursdays at 6:30pm – list of performers located on Town website
- Call for volunteers! FY24 positions on Boards/Commissions/Committees. See www.wnewbury.org/volunteer
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town agendas/news/announcements at www.wnewbury.org/subscribe

Regular Business

- A. **Request for appointment of Julianne Ruscio to Council on Aging**
(See Exhibit A). Ruscio offered insight on her background and her interest in joining the Board for the balance of a three-year term. **Parker motioned to appoint Ruscio to the Council. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**
- B. **Request for reappointment of Walter Burmeister to Finance Committee**
(See Exhibit B). Parker stated that he felt Burmeister’s reaching out to other Finance Committees in a “unilateral” fashion was not proper, and Wile provided examples of this from his tenure with Burmeister on the Committee. The re-appointee defended his actions saying that he always notified the Chair of his actions. Wile suggested to Burmeister the proper methods for representing the Town properly in future. **Wile motioned to reappoint Burmeister the Committee. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**
- C. **Requests for Special Event permits**
 - a. **Apple Harvest Road Race – Oct. 15, 2023 from 8am-3pm – West Newbury PTO**
(See Exhibit Ca). Wile was curious if a police detail was needed for the event. The representative from the PTO offered to send further information to the Select Board if any was missing, as it was determined it might be from the Board’s meeting materials. **The Item was tabled for a future meeting.**
 - b. **Harborside Half Marathon and 5K – Nov. 12, 2023 from 9am-1pm – Loco Sports**
(See Exhibit Cb). The Board questioned the race representative about the police detail needed for the half marathon. Boucher told the Board he believed the approval of the police had been given, but Chief Dwyer had not yet sent the approval to the Select Board. Reed requested that the information be sent to the Board directly by the representative. Reed also requested that the applicants include the physical address of the water stations. **The Item was tabled for a future meeting.**
- D. **Review of draft Municipal Energy Aggregation Plan and vote to post for public comment – Denise Allard and Mark Cappadonna, Colonial Power Group, Inc.**
(See Exhibit D). The representatives from the Group outlined the fundamentals of the Aggregation Plan. The community would be offered a choice between the standard rates of National Grid, or Colonial Power Group Inc. acting as a negotiating entity on behalf of the Town to secure a potentially lower rate for energy. The Town had previously approved the pursuit of this Plan at the Fall Town Meeting. Rick Parker explained to the representative that much of the power in West Newbury was generated locally through the Town’s solar installation, but confirmed that despite this West Newbury would intend to participate, and that the Colonial Power Plan would provide additional power to the community as needed at the potentially lower rate. Wile asked if the Town could have an opt-in versus an opt-out option for consumers and Cappadonna explained the need for the program to work this way, but that citizens could opt-out at any time they wished. Wile emphasized the point that consumers would be forced to look at their bills each month to determine if buying through the Colonial Power program or through National Grid directly was more efficient which he thought was perhaps burdensome. The conversation wound down confirming the next steps in the implementation of the plan, and what cybersecurity steps would be undertaken to protect consumers and their data. **Parker motioned to approve posting the notice of the Aggregation Plan for public comment on the Town website and other locations, and to have Counsel review. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**
- E. **Review of proposed FY23 Line-Item Transfer requests**
(See Exhibit E). The Town Manager briefed the Board on a handful of invoices that caused changes on some of the line items presented in the Select Board Packet. Going through a review/explanation of each of the transfer requests, the Board asked questions. On tax title and foreclosure over-expenditure, Wile wanted to know if the costs were recovered by the Town. Jennings said it would be, except in the case of properties with unknown owners. On funds for the maintenance and operations of Town buildings, Reed confirmed that this transfer was in addition to funds raised at Town Meeting. Wile raised questions about the usage of funds and predictions of expenses for the Department of Public Works. The Board discussed the mistaken usage of standard Board of Health funds for their purchase of trash collection barrels for Town residents, leading to

a buildup of funds in the appropriate account that went unused. Discussion occurred on best usage of Board of Health funds to manage these expenses. On Parade funding, the group discussed how funds had been used/unused in past and whether it made sense to change the approach for future (specifically for the Memorial Day Parade). Wile suggested keeping the line item in future even if it was not fully utilized year to year. **Wile motioned to approve the transfers as presented. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

F. Discussion of Short-Term Rental bylaw

(See Exhibit F). Joslin offered his perspective regarding this issue, stating he had also discussed the matter with Town Planner Sue Brown. He listed off problems he had faced in past monitoring short-term rentals on Plum Island with regard to health and safety. He believed that the Town wasn't facing a major issue with regard to an abundance of short-term rental applicants and additionally he stated he did not feel the present Bylaw was "very good" and could be rescinded, with hopes to further hash out language surrounding usage of Accessory Dwelling Units as short-term rentals. The Board discussed bringing the matters to Town Meeting concurrently. **No motion was made at this time.**

G. Review of draft questionnaire to Boards / Commissions / Committees

(See Exhibit G). Reed explained the origins of this questionnaire, which seeks to establish the purview and work of the BCCs and puts it in step with the Select Board's needs/approval, as well as the Town Manager form of local government. The document would establish and confirm the BCC's charge, goals, and membership. Wile floated the idea of combining Boards, Committees, and Commissions with similar purviews. Reed felt that potentially a Select Board member should be appointed to each BCC, and Jennings wholeheartedly agreed, calling it a great suggestion. The Select Board settled on interviewing the Personnel Committee and the Historic District Commission at the next Select Board meeting to begin the process. **No motion was made at this time.**

H. Review of Elliot Fund draft program summary; update on work to create draft loan application

Reed provided background on the Fund, and the Board's interest in establishing a standard set of procedures around the Fund with input from the Town Counsel and the Town Accountant. A formal application will be eventually available on the Town website. **No motion was made at this time.**

I. DPW structure- review of proposal to restructure staffing in the Department

Jennings presented his case for the restructuring, to allow current long-time employees to gain and grow, and to redistribute hours for DPW employees to allow for administrative responsibilities. The idea to restructure the Department came about throughout the DPW Director interview process. The restructuring would allow the duties of the Director to be distributed to other employees, many of whom are already fulfilling those obligations as part of their work. Jennings also recapped changes in hours of the Project Manager and Business Manager positions, among others. The largest byproduct of the restructuring would be the elimination of the Director position in favor of four Division heads to lead the DPW, reporting directly to the Town Manager which are Administration, Procurement, and Contracting (to include the Chief Procurement Officer for West Newbury); Highway; Buildings and Grounds; and Programs and Projects. Jennings made suggestions on the parameters and sequence of promotions and hirings that would occur under this proposal. As a result of the discussion, **Parker motioned to withdraw the job listing post for a DPW Director. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

J. Referral to public hearing: proposed amendment to Personnel Policy, Sec. 5.7 Jury Duty Leave

(See Exhibit J). This Item followed up discussion from the previous Select Board meeting to establish a hearing on the amendment of the Policy. The proposal is to cover five days of jury duty, with a rate of pay covering the difference between the employee's wage and the stipend provided by the court system. **Parker motioned to refer the amendment to the Personnel Policy to a hearing. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

K. Acknowledgement of receipt of Ethics Disclosure from Town Manager regarding proposed appointment (as a Groveland resident) to Groveland Economic Development Committee

(See Exhibit K). Jennings told the group he had received the appointment to the Development Committee but was unsure he could manage the time commitment. His statement served as his disclosure, and he promised to follow up if he accepted the appointment. **Wile motioned to acknowledge receipt of the disclosure. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

L. Meeting minutes: Feb. 13, 2023; Feb. 27, 2023; March 29, 2023; June 26, 2023

(See Exhibit L). **Parker motioned to approve the minutes for February 13 (without corrections), February 27 (with corrections), and March 29 (with corrections). Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed (2 Yes, 0 No, Wile Abstaining). Parker motioned to approve minutes for June 26 (with corrections). Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

Town Manager Updates

M. Update from initial mtg w/Weston & Sampson re Dole Place review

(See Exhibit M). Jennings recapped a productive meeting with Weston and Sampson. Jennings felt that they would be an ideal partner in the wellfield development process. **No motion was made at this time.**

N. Update from Planning Board housing opportunities session held on June 27th

(See Exhibit N). Jennings stated Planner Sue Brown was working on a recap of the event, which would be finalized shortly. Jennings said the presentation at the session provided relevant examples to high-density housing in semi-rural settings, which he felt were valuable. Reed, who attended the session, stated she enjoyed the hands-on portion which demonstrated what physical structures would look like on certain West Newbury sites. **No motion was made at this time.**

O. Procurement updates

Jennings let the Select Board know a contract for the Page School Assessment had been signed. **No motion was made at this time.**

P. Updates on other ongoing/active projects/initiatives

Jennings said he signed a change order for the Town Hall painting, to update the instructions for the project based on recommendations from Building and Grounds to apply two coats and not one. Jennings also stated he was actively pushing to wrap up ongoing paving projects and investment management activities. **No motion was made at this time.**

Q. Follow up meeting assignment; placing items for future agendas

(See Exhibit Q). Parker discussed the adoption of Flashvote in Newburyport, which allows residents to provide feedback to municipal government through text messages. It struck Parker that it seemed like it was a good way to gain and synthesize information. The Flashvote system would require a contract to sign on, and Reed asked if there was a way to trial the system. **The Item was tabled for a future meeting.** Reed also requested that a remote work policy for official use be brought before the Board for a future session. **No motion was made at this time.** Wile stated that a wrap-up discussion on Ash Street would be a valuable addition to the next agenda, noting that Conservation Agent Michelle Greene would be meeting with the

Massachusetts Dept. of Fish and Wildlife on the topic. Additionally, he urged consideration of planning a joint Finance Committee and Select Board meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

Reed motioned to adjourn the session. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). The session adjourned at 10:20pm.

To access a video recording of the meeting, use the link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHTh-Zm37r4>

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