



Town of West Newbury
Select Board Working Session
 Tuesday, November 28, 2023 @ 4:00pm
 381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
MEETING MINUTES

Open Session: Chairwoman Reed opened the session at 4:00pm.

Participation at the Meeting:

- Rick Parker, Wendy Reed, Chris Wile- Select Board
- Angus Jennings- Town Manager

Announcements:

No announcements were read at this meeting.

Regular Business:

A. Discuss/Finalize letter to Whittier Tech

Board members reviewed the draft prepared by Reed and discussed edits and next steps. Reed was to incorporate revisions and work with the Town Manager's office to print on letterhead for signature, mailing and email distribution by Thursday November 30, 2023. **No motion was made at this time.**

B. Restructuring of Select Board meetings/agendas

Reed reviewed the memo and proposed meeting agenda format distributed to Board members and the Town Manager. She noted that one factor responsible for the overly long meeting agendas and burdensome work by the Town Manager to prepare meeting packets is that the Select Board is still reviewing too many operational items. This is inconsistent with the role of the Board under a Town Manager form of government. Reed proposed that until a Town Charter or formal policies are enacted that establish the Town Manager as the operational manager of the Town; the Board should act as if these are in place when setting the agenda.

In order to facilitate this change, a new meeting agenda format was proposed by Reed. The target end time for meetings going forward will be 9:30 p.m. with a hard stop at 10:00 p.m. The proposed agenda reformatting has non action items at the end in case tabling to the next meeting is required. Agenda items requiring staff and BCC presence will be placed first on the agenda along with a consent agenda for routine approvals required by the Board.

There was discussion about the consent agenda item and the upfront work necessary to have these items ready for vote in the meeting. The Town Clerk's office will make sure that all license and use applications are complete prior to including in a meeting agenda. The Select Board clerk will be responsible for reviewing the meeting minutes and working with the Assistant Town Clerk to incorporate any revisions prior to inclusion in the meeting packet

The Board also discussed the burden that preparing extensive background documents for each meeting places on the Town Manager. These packets are an important public resource, but Board members agreed that this benefit was not worth having the Town Manager work all weekend before each meeting to prepare them. The Town Manager will consider other options for preparing meeting materials, including getting staff up to speed to prepare them during the workweek and alternate forms for meeting packets. **No motion was made at this time.**

C. Use of Select Board management consultant

There was discussion about the intended use of a management consultant to assist with setting Select Board priorities. While this may still be scheduled later, it was agreed that the changes proposed at this meeting would be incorporated and the need for the management consultant assessed at a later date. **No motion was made at this time.**

D. Potential assignment of financial planning tasks to Finance Committee

The two items that the Finance Committee has been interested in assisting the Select Board/Town Manager with were discussed. The evaluation of the target Free Cash and Stabilization Fund balances could be of value to the Select Board, however, the need for staff time to assist with this are a major concern for the Town Manager. It was agreed that Reed would reach out to the Chair of the Finance Committee and request a list of data/information that would be necessary to complete this evaluation. Preparation of a Water Financial Plan as included in the 2023 Annual Town Meeting instructions to the

Board of Water Commissioners was discussed. The Town Manager noted that the instructions state that the Town Manager's office was responsible for producing this document and that he would be able to provide an outline of the plan in the coming weeks. This would be circulated to the Board of Water Commissioners and the Finance Committee for comment. **No motion was made at this time.**

E. Discussion of public engagement

The need to engage a broader segment of the community to volunteer for Town BCC, as well be informed on decisions and issues facing the Town was discussed. The possibility of using an online survey platform to gather resident opinions, and other outreach ideas will be considered in the coming months to address this. **No motion was made at this time.**

A Board member motioned to adjourn the Session. The motion was properly seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). The Session adjourned at 5:00pm.

To access a video recording of the meeting, use the link below:

No recording was made of this meeting.