

## WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

Date, Time, Location: **Weds Sept 7, 2022, 6 PM** (1910 Bldg.)

Attendees (& initials): Rob Phillips (RP), Chris Wile (CW), Walter Burmeister (WB), Dan Innis (DI), Ross Capolupo (RC), Angus Jennings (AJ), Stephanie Frontiera (SF). Christian Kuhn (CK) Absent: Jim Sperelakis (JS) Guests/Participants Wendy Reed (WR), Richard Parker (RP2) (Select Board)

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Public Comment: None
3. Approval of Minutes Meeting of July 26,2022  
**Motion to approve: WB. 2<sup>nd</sup>: DI Approved 5-0**
4. Review and Discuss proposed Articles for Fall Town Meeting:  
(Note Preliminary descriptions of each article are available here:  
[https://www.wnewbury.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf1436/f/uploads/stm\\_articles\\_list\\_-\\_draft\\_redacted\\_0.pdf](https://www.wnewbury.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf1436/f/uploads/stm_articles_list_-_draft_redacted_0.pdf) )

#### **1 Affordable Housing Trust – funds transfer**

The Attorney General has approved the Town's establishment of the Housing Trust, which took place at the May 2022 Town Meeting. Now that the Trust is legally in effect this Article would transfer funds previously received from developers into the Trust. There was a brief discussion of the purpose and management of the new Trust.

**Motion to approve: WB. 2<sup>nd</sup>: DI Approved 5-0**

#### **2 Assessing – CAMA software**

Christian Kuhn discussed the fact that the current software used by the Assessing department is outdated and is no longer receiving updates from the developer. In upgrading to new software, the assessing office will be able to produce more refined and accurate assessments for the property owners of West Newbury

RP questioned whether this should be considered a Capital Investment. AJ

replied that software like this was not considered a capital Investment

DI questioned whether CK had considered lease vs own, whether upgrades were included in the price, whether additional hardware was required, and whether ongoing costs would be covered by the existing Assessment Budget.

CK provided satisfactory responses.

A Sunset date of 6/30/24 was assigned.

**Motion to approve: RP. 2<sup>nd</sup>:DI Approved 5-0**

#### **4 CPC – re-vote Historical Property Survey, Phase 3**

The project will be the third Property Survey that will take place in the Town of West Newbury. It would build upon the first two surveys and look to document the remaining properties in West Newbury of 100 years of age or older.

AJ explained that this Article calls for reconsideration of the Historic Properties Survey Phase 3 sunset date and revision of the cost to \$30,000. The Project was previously approved in the amount of \$25,000 in a Town Meeting with a sunset date of the end of FY22. That sunset date caused the \$25,000 approval to be cancelled. Approval for \$27,500 is requested to be added to \$2,500 approved in the May 22 Town Meeting to ensure that we can meet matching Grant requirements.

A new Sunset date of 6/30/24 was assigned.

**Motion to approve: RP. 2<sup>nd</sup>: WB Approved 5-0**

#### **5 CPC – Almshouse Cemetery**

This project will use ground penetrating radar to locate and mark the burial sites of the former residents of the towns Almshouse. There are no stones marking the graves so, it's important to note the location of each.

WR described the need to perform this survey before further degradation of the site takes place.

A Sunset date of 6/30/24 was assigned.

**Motion to approve: RP. 2<sup>nd</sup>: DI Approved 5-0**

#### **7 CPC Bylaw Amendment**

**This article has no financial effect and was not addressed.**

#### **10 Municipal energy aggregation**

To see if the Town will vote to grant the Select Board authority to research, develop and participate in a contract, or contracts, to aggregate the electricity load of the residents and businesses in the Town.

RP2 described the possible benefits of the town negotiating with one or more electricity wholesalers to lock in electricity rates that could potentially lower costs and raise the percentage of renewable energy the town consumes. All town facilities and all town residents would be eligible to participate. Residents could be given an opportunity to opt out at any time.

RP questioned the mechanics of opting out. RP2 replied that a communications program was being developed to fully inform residents.

**Motion to approve:WB. 2<sup>nd</sup>: DI Approved 5-0**

#### **11 MVP grant matching funds**

To see if the Town will vote to allocate and/or reserve \$50,000 to be used for the 25% municipal matching funds required to qualify for \$200,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant (MVP) from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The MVP Grant will be sought to hire a qualified environmental engineering consultant to assess the conditions of the Merrimack River shoreline along River Road.

RP2 stated that erosion was threatening portions of River Road and rising sea levels were making the condition worse.

RP stated that if we did not respond quickly we could have a situation similar to other nearby towns whereby portions of the road could be washed out and be too expensive to repair.

A Sunset date of 6/30/25 was assigned.

**Motion to approve:RP. 2<sup>nd</sup>: WB Approved 5-0**

#### **14 Safe Routes to Schools Grant**

This Article would seek funding to conduct an overall safety audit and review options to improve pedestrian access to both the Page School and Pipestave Hill.

AJ stated that a small appropriation was being requested to support a request for a larger grant from the State to study traffic patterns on this section of Route 113 that may lead to a larger state grant for improving both vehicle and foot traffic in this area.

A Sunset date of 6/30/23 was assigned

**Motion to approve:RP. 2<sup>nd</sup>: RC Approved 5-0**

#### **5 Communication**

AJ passed out a spreadsheet showing Town Meeting Impacts on Town Accounts if all the currently contemplated Articles were placed on the Town Meeting agenda.

WB asked if this showed all Town Accounts.

AJ responded that there were many other Town Accounts, some containing large amounts of funds. It was agreed that in a future session AJ would review these accounts with FinCom.

#### **6 Schedule of future meeting dates**

CW reviewed the following dates:

September 13, 22, & 29<sup>th</sup>.

October 5<sup>th</sup>- booklet complete.

October 24<sup>th</sup>- STM.

November 1- meeting to review last years budget

#### **7 Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn, approved 5-0. 7:59PM**