

## MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Tuesday December 3rd , 2019 7pm

Location : 1910 Building 1st Floor Hearing Room

Attendees: Gary L. Roberts Jr., Chairman, Forbes Durey, Nathan Kelly, Angus Jennings, Jim Sperelakis, Brad Beaudoin, Jessica Knezek, Stephany Frontiera, Meredith Stone, Jen Polistno

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment, Public Comment is limited to residents of West Newbury and to items on the Agenda. Residents will be allowed 2 minutes to share their comments, the Chair may allow for more time at their discretion.
3. Discussion Regarding Home Value assessment with the Assessors office, Per request of Jessica Knezek.  
-Walt Burmeister had concerns about how neighborhood codes are determined as they pertain to property valuations. He noted that in his case property sales along the Merrimack River had inflated property values for his entire road, many houses that would not be considered “on the river”. Walt also noted that through his research, many town employee’s assessed values seemed to be going up less then the public at large. Stone responded that the assessments are done by an outside vendor that knows nothing of the individual town members affiliations. The assessors dept. further reviewed how neighborhood codes are determined- via mass appraisal through an outside vendor, Patriot Properties, based on complex but highly regulated formulae. The assessors office has reviewed this issue with the Mass. Dept. of Revenue to verify their information is accurate and has been as forthcoming as possible. Stone does note that ultimately any questions on assessments are the responsibility of each citizen to posit to the assessors office. When questioned Walt noted that the assessors office was very professional and did their best to answer his questions, even if the answer was unsatisfying - that it is very complicated, but after review, his assessment was found to be correct. Beaudoin thanked Walt for taking an active interest in how assessments are determined and for engaging the civic process.
3. Review of Town of West Newbury expenditures to date in preparation of the Budget season.  
The Board of Selectmen’s budgetary directive is to form a 3-year balanced budget forecast. The Middle St. bridge needs to be added to the capital improvement table or otherwise budgeted for. Of note, the police union contract expires at the end of the year. Formalizing the SRO with Pentucket and the Board of Selectmen is also a priority. The effect of the new school project is likely to impact the taxes starting in 2021. Durey requested

that funding stabilization needs to be a priority. He also noted a few recommendations of town finance metrics other towns use to help the tax payers understand the impact of decisions at town meeting will have on their taxes.

4. Discussion and Compilation of a list of issues the committee wishes to address with next years budget.

5. Adjournment