



Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, February 7, 2022 @ 6:00pm
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
First Floor Hearing Room
www.wnewbury.org
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Open Session: Open session was called to order at 6:05pm by Chairperson Parker.

Participation at the Meeting:

Richard Parker, David Archibald, and Wendy Reed; *Select Board Members*

Angus Jennings, *Town Manager*

James Blatchford, *Town Clerk*

Stephanie Fronteira, *Town Accountant*

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;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PO9vpGehyo>
- Town Election Monday, May 2nd. Last day to obtain nomination papers from Town Clerk: March 10th at 5pm. Nomination papers due to Town Clerk by March 14th at 5pm.
- Annual & Special Town Meeting: Saturday, May 14, 2022. **Warrant articles due by/on Mon., Feb. 14**
- Regional Vaccination Clinics for COVID vaccination and booster shots. Town website for dates/details.
- Council on Aging meals, events and activities – see Town website for details.
- **Urgent call for residents interested in appointment to Finance Committee!** Call for other 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. Presentation of proposed FY23 Town Operating Budget – Angus Jennings, Town Manager

Jennings presented a working draft of the FY23 Town Operating Budget that included staffing proposals submitted by department heads of all departments, boards, and committees. Jennings stated a vote of approval was not being sought that evening and welcomed direction for refinement from the board members. Jennings informed the Select Board the numbers presented were the exact proposals submitted by the departments and numbers endorsed by the Town Manager would be presented at the February 14th meeting.

Jennings reviewed the budget direction, set forth by the Select Board, to increase the budget not greater than 2.5%, not including education or the middle school/high school project. Jennings discussed the continued efforts to match the capacity of staffing to the work demands of various departments, proposed staffing position additions, and the wage study classification that was currently in progress. Jennings made note of the intermunicipal agreement with Merrimac for the shared Conservation Agent and that the town would get reimbursed on a quarterly basis from Merrimac for their portion of the wages.

The Select Board and Jennings reviewed the numbers broken down by department and the FY21 turnbacks. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the change from in-house Town Counsel to contracted Town Counsel and the costs associated with personnel and backlog issues from prior years. Discussion continued surrounding school stabilization transfer request of \$395,325 to be brought before Town Meeting for approval to offset taxpayer impact. Jennings stated the same rate of draw down could continue for FY24 and FY25 with roughly \$68,000 to offset the FY26 costs. Jennings informed the Select Board of the enrollment of

two students at Essex Tech and five additional student enrollments at Whittier Tech that would increase the education line budget.

The Select Board and Jennings discussed the recreation budget, the fee schedule surrounding field rentals, and how the MyRec platform would assist with a consistent and automated fee structure system. Discussion continued surrounding the need for revenues generated to cover the expenses associated with portable toilet rentals and cleanings so the expense did not land on the taxpayer. Jennings informed the Select Board Blatchford was in the process of restructuring fees for the Town Clerk's Office in order to be more in line with surrounding communities. Another area of future potential revenue was through the COA where lunches provided to the community would have a suggested donation dollar amount for the meal.

Jennings discussed the significant increase in Essex Retirement fund and stated a member from the Essex Retirement was scheduled to appear at an upcoming meeting. Jennings reviewed the number listed for health insurance and explained the number would change as information surrounding the percentage increase on the premiums became available. Jennings stated contingency was built into the health insurance number in the event an employee changed from individual insurance to a family plan, or a new employee was hired that required health insurance.

Jennings stated the draft budget presented that evening was an overview of where the budget process was starting from. A detailed draft broken down by line would be presented or Select Board endorsement before submission to the Finance Committee. Jennings stated the Finance Committee meetings were scheduled for March 1st, 15th, 22nd, and 29th where they would review each section of the budget in detail and the deadline to post the warrant was April 31st.

B. Follow up meeting assignments; placing items for future agendas

No items were discussed at this time.

Parker made a motion to recess to executive session in accordance with MGL Ch. 30A §21(a) 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (FY23 staffing/wages). Reed seconded. Motion to recess unanimously passed by a roll call vote. Open session recessed at 8:37pm.

Parker made a motion to return to open session. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker made a motion to adjourn. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 10:58pm.