



**Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, February 28, 2022 @ 7:00pm**
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Open Session: The meeting was called to order at 7:10 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*
Jeff Durand, *West Newbury Police Chief*
Chris Wile
Walter Burmeister
Kevin Bowe
Charles Kostro
Linda Schaefer
Annie Madden
Brad Buschur, *Parks & Recreation*

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.
- Council on Aging meals, events, and activities – see Town website for details (see Newsletter pages 2-9)
- **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. Request for appointments of Reserve Police Officers: Edvin Crnolic, Victor Munoz, Dean Royson – Police Chief Jeff Durand

Jeff Durand, West Newbury Police Chief, appeared before the Select Board and gave a brief overview of each applicant's experience (see exhibit A page 10 for details). Durand informed the Select Board the applicants had attended part-time police academy and they had all passed their background checks. **Parker made a motion to appoint Edvin Crnolic, Victor Munoz, and Dean Royson as Reserve Police Officers through June 30, 2022. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed. (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

Duran requested the Select Board consider an additional appointment for the part-time dispatch position as it was not included on the agenda. **Parker made a motion to add the appointment of a part-time dispatch position to the agenda. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed. (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).** Duran gave a brief overview of the applicant's experience. **Parker made a motion to appoint Joseph Eluszkiewicz to the part-time dispatch position effective through June 30, 2022. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed. (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

B. Request for appointment(s) to Finance Committee

Parker stated the Select Board had received three applications for the Finance Committee and two positions were available (see exhibit B pages 11-12 for details). Chris Wile appeared before the Select Board and described educational background and prior experience serving on various committees. Walter Burmeister appeared before the Select Board and described educational background in finance. Kevin Bowe appeared before the Select Board remotely and discussed previous experience on the Cable Advisory Committee and prior experience in finance. Bowe did not realize two additional applicants had stepped forward to serve on the Finance Committee and expressed interest in serving on the Affordable Housing Trust once the trust was established.

Parker made a motion to appoint Chris Wile to the Finance Committee effective through June 30, 2023 and to appoint Walter Burmeister to the Finance Committee effective through June 30, 2023. Reed seconded. Archibald requested the motions to be separated. **The motions were separated. The motion to appoint Chris Wile to the Finance Committee effective through June 30, 2023 unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0). The motion to appoint Walter Burmeister to the Finance Committee effective through June 30, 2023 passed (Yes 2, No 1, Abstain 0).** Archibald explained the opposition to the motion. Jennings stated Burmeister and Wile would need to be sworn in before participating in the next Finance Committee meeting.

Item D was taken out of order at this time.

D. Presentation of FY23 Essex Regional Retirement System (ERRS) assessment – Charles Kostro

Charles Kostro appeared before the Select Board remotely to review the appropriation side of the retirement assessment (see exhibit D pages 18-63 for details). Kostro informed the Select Board of the requirement for all Massachusetts public pension systems to be fully funded by 2040. Kostro explained how the appropriation was determined each fiscal year, with the funding schedule for the next year at 6.5% for FY23. The Select Board thanked Kostro for attending the meeting and providing the information. **No motion was made at this time.**

Item F was taken out of order at this time.

F. Proposal to install bed of plantings at DPW building – Linda Schaeffer

Linda Schaefer appeared before the Select Board in person and Annie Madden appeared virtually (see exhibit C pages 13-17 for details). Schaefer proposed to install a demonstration garden, made up of native plants, near the DPW building at Pipestave. Schaefer stated the garden would attract insects and pollinators to the Mill Pond area and would have no monetary cost on the town. The Select Board and Schaefer discussed the upcoming safety study and the possibility that the vendor's recommendations could affect the proposed location of the garden. Schaefer stated the project was in the early development stages and the construction of the garden would not take place until at least the fall. **Parker made a motion to approve the placement of a demonstration garden in the location shown, with the stipulation that adjustments may need to be made given the results of the safety study.** Archibald added that dependent upon the recommendation of the vendor, utility installation could be needed and could impact the location. Jennings stated a conceptual design would be submitted by the vendor at the end of the safety study. Schaefer requested to receive a copy of the conceptual design once it was available. **Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).** Annie Madden thanked the Select Board for the support.

Item G was taken at this time

G. Update regarding Whetstone Greenway project – Brad Buschur

Brad Buschur appeared before the Select Board remotely (see exhibit G pages 71- 94 for details) and requested the Select Board to review the plans and authorize Jennings to sign the letter of intent. Buschur stated the project was designed to have the least amount of impact on the existing vegetation and stated the walkway would be made in 8ft segments in the event the walkway would need to be moved in the future. The Select Board asked if the Water Department had given any feedback on the plans. Buschur stated the Water Department had not been spoken to directly concerning the current set of plans. Buschur hoped to bring the project before the Conservation Commission in March and to have the project fully permitted by the end of the fiscal year. **Reed made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the letters of intent for the Whetstone Greenway Trail contingent on discussion with the Water Department. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

Item C was taken at this time

C. Request for fee waiver/reduction for rental of Town Hall for youth theatre rehearsals – Port Players

Jennings stated the Port Players was not currently a non-profit group but was working towards gaining non-profit status. It was explained that the group had been using a property in Newburyport for rehearsals but the space was unexpectedly condemned. The Port Players were now looking for a rehearsal space for approximately 9 weeks. The Select Board discussed allowing the group to use the Annex instead of the Town Hall for rehearsal as the library book sale conflicted with some of the days requested for use. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the labor costs of the town for cleaning the space after use and the fees charged to various groups in the past. The Select Board agreed that more information was needed and this item should be discussed at the next Select Board meeting. Jennings stated the requestor would be invited to attend the meeting in order to answer any questions that might arise. **No motion was made at this time.**

Item E was taken at this time

E. Request for waiver of 15-day waiting period for Town Manager appointment of Christine Marshall as Council on Aging Director

Parker made a motion to approve the waiver of a 15-day waiting period for the Town Manager to appoint Christine Marshall as the Director of the Council on Aging. Archibald seconded. Reed asked for clarification surrounding the 15-day waiting period. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0). Jennings stated an offer letter would be presented the following day. If found agreeable, the appointment would become effective immediately.

Item H was taken at this time

H. Discussion of proposed Bachelor Street/Cammett Park community engagement and site planning proposal to CPC – Brad Buschur, Parks & Rec Commission

Brad Buschur arrived at the meeting and appeared before the Select Board in person (see exhibit H page 95 for details). Buschur discussed the lack of connectivity in the Bachelor Street/ Cammett Park area and the difficulty navigating from one area to the next. The condition of the baseball fields, lack of a maintenance plan for the fields, and the possibility of adding additional amenities to attract other age brackets to the park was discussed. Buschur and the Select Board discussed the lack of a water source to maintain the fields and the cost associated with artificial turf replacement. It was stated that CPC funds could not be used to install artificial turf and the lifespan of artificial turf was 5-10 years. The Select Board discussed the land and if it was part of the Parks & Recreation conveyance or town owned land. Buschur stated the project would require a survey, wetland delineation, and engagement with the community for suggestions in the design phase. **Parker made a motion to consent to inclusion of land under the current custody of the Select Board**

within the CPC proposal. Reed seconded. Archibald voiced concerns that the project could be more than the town could handle given other planned projects within the town. The Select Board discussed delaying the project for one year, the need for an RFQ, and contracting a design firm to complete the conceptual design. Buschur stated fundraising would be required to financially support the project and the town could not rely solely on CPC funding and state grants. **Motion passed (Yes 2, No 1, Abstain 0).**

I. Discussion of process for reservation/use of ballfields at Page School

Jennings stated the Page School was under a lease agreement and therefore it was not for the town to decide if a third party could rent the ball field (see exhibit I pages 96-113 for details). Buschur stated the principal of Page School spoke with the Superintendent and the Facilities Manager and they did not think an adjustment to how the fields were reserved was needed. Buschur discussed how the Parks & Recreation Committee was in the early stages of rental fee development and had starting looking into how surrounding communities had structured rental fees for playing fields. Jennings stated the town rental agreement for facilities currently included the rental for playing fields, which was not suitable as the two were managed by different groups and required different levels of documentation. The Select Board agreed that the facility rentals and field rentals should not appear under the same agreement. Jennings stated the MyRec application should help streamline the rental requests and payments once up and running. **No motion was made at this time.**

J. Set date for Select Board meeting with design consultant for Mill Pond All Persons Trail

Jennings stated the original intent was to have the designer appear before the Select Board, but believed a stand-alone meeting would be the most suitable for the time the designer required (see exhibit F pages 114-116 for details). The Select Board agreed a stand-alone meeting would be the best course of action and decided to schedule the meeting for March 22, 2022 at 7pm if agreeable with the vendor. **No motion was made at this time.**

K. Presentation of proposed FY23 operating budget – Angus Jennings, Town Manager

Jennings presented the proposed operating budget and asked for a referral of the budget to the Finance Committee with or without changes. Jennings stated the town plus school budget would increase just over \$1.6 million (9.7%). The town budget would increase \$382,000 (4.8%) driven by staff and wage increases. Jennings discussed the proposed increase of staffing and the reorganization of duties to support various departments. Jennings stated various union contracts were in the process of bargaining. Health insurance was an increase of 2% for employees and retirees. Jennings shared the upcoming Finance Committee meetings and the final report would be due March 28, 2022. Archibald stated the opinion that the Stabilization Fund appropriation should not exceed more than \$500,000 and the Select Board discussed the number proposed. Jennings stated the budget did not reflect the changes to come from the wage study. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the presented draft budget which did not include COLA increases. **Parker made a motion to refer the proposed budget to the Finance Committee. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

L. Select Board discussion of proposed operating budget, and referral to Finance Committee

See item K for details of the discussion surrounding the proposed FY23 budget.

M. Review list of proposed warrant articles for spring Annual and Special Town Meetings scheduled for Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 9am

The Select Board reviewed the list of proposed warrant articles and discussed the article involving the old Highway Garage building. **No motion was made at this time.**

N. Review of proposed revision(s) to FY22 wage schedule

Jennings presented the revisions to the FY22 budget referred by the Parks & Recreation Committee (see exhibit N pages 117 for details). **Parker made a motion to accept. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

O. Cont'd discussion re Middle Street Bridge; recent change order due to MassDEP Ch. 91 permitting

Parker made a motion to issue a change order for Ch. 91 permitting in order to increase the probability to receive funding (see exhibit O pages 118- 131 for details). **Reed seconded.** Reed expressed concerns that the bid estimate was too high at \$35,000 and the appearance that West Newbury was on its own with this project. Jennings stated Newburyport had originally paid for the design and it was now West Newbury that had the funding to continue to push this project forward. Discussion continued as to whether the minor modification was worth the time and money. **The motion was withdrawn at this time.**

P. Meeting minutes: September 20, 2021

The Select Board reviewed clerical errors in the name of a participant (see exhibit P pages 132- 141 for details). Further edits would be noted and submitted to the Town Clerk. **Parker made a motion to approve the minutes as to be received modified. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0).**

Town Manager Updates

Q. Updates regarding wage/classification study

No additional comments were made at this time (see exhibit Q pages 142- 143 for details).

R. Updates re Summer Rec Program and buildout of new platform for online registration and payment

Jennings stated the new online registration and payment platform could be completed in the next two weeks (see exhibit R pages 144- 146 for details).

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

No items were addressed at this time.

Archibald made a motion to adjourn. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (Yes 3, No 0, Abstain 0). Open Session adjourned at 11:21pm.