



**Town of West Newbury**  
**Select Board**  
**Monday, December 5, 2022 @ 7:00pm**  
381 Main Street, Town Office Building  
[www.wnewbury.org](http://www.wnewbury.org)  
**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

**Open Session:** Open session was called to order at 7:10pm by Chairperson Archibald

**Participation at the meeting:**

David Archibald, Richard Parker, and Wendy Reed *Select Board Members*  
Angus Jennings, *Town Manager*  
James Blatchford, *Town Clerk*  
Rock Dower, *Veteran Firemen's Association*  
Justin Bartholomew, *Pentucket Regional School District Superintendent*  
Walter Burmeister, *Finance Committee*  
Wayne Amaral, *DPW Director*

**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.
- Pentucket Arts Foundation – Makers' Market, Sat., Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10:30am-4pm, Veasey Mem. Park, Groveland
- Holiday Tree Lighting – Training Field – Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm – Caroling, cookies, hot chocolate!
- Holiday Luncheon and musical performance by the Page School Chorus – Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am, SAGE Center – spaghetti & meatballs, FREE to attend, advance registration required (see page 3 for details).
- Call for volunteers! Open positions on Boards/Commissions/Committees. See [www.wnewbury.org/volunteer](http://www.wnewbury.org/volunteer)
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town agendas/news/announcements at [www.wnewbury.org/subscribe](http://www.wnewbury.org/subscribe)

**Regular Business**

**A. Presentation of new Hand Tub Lane sign and confirm date for formal on-site unveiling –  
Rock Dower, Veteran Firemen's Association**

Rock Dower appeared before the Select Board in person. Dower presented the sign for the Select Board to view and discussed scheduling a date for the formal on-site unveiling (see exhibit A page 4 for details). The Select Board, Dower, and DPW Director Wayne Amaral scheduled the unveiling for December 17<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Dower briefly described the Veteran Firemen's Association and the historic 7 consecutive years of winning the Hand Tub Championship. Jennings stated the town would inform the local youth groups and scout troops of the event. **No motion was made at this time.**

**B. Discussion of Pentucket Regional Agreement; review of potential revisions to propose to  
other towns and PRSD Administration**

The Select Board discussed potential revisions to the Pentucket Regional Agreement, including adjusting the date for the school to provide the 5-year Capital Plan to October 15<sup>th</sup> from January 15<sup>th</sup> (see exhibit B pages 5-22 for details). Justin Bartholomew, Pentucket Regional School District Superintendent, appeared before the Select Board in person and stated the date change would not be a problem. Walter Burmeister appeared before the Select Board in person and stated revisions to the "Budget" section should be made as the language was unclear. The Select Board, Jennings, and Burmeister discussed how the section could be interpreted multiple ways and discussed the role of the School Committee in the budgeting process. Bartholomew stated an initial budget would be received in January, but a more defined budget would not be identified until after the submission of the Governor's budget in March. It was stated the PRSD Administration would host meetings in January and in March to discuss budget information as it becomes available. **No motion was made at this time.**

\*Item I was taken out of order at this time

**I. Update re recent meeting with PRSD Administration and Groveland, Merrimac Finance  
Directors**

Bartholomew stated the PRSD Administration was moving towards a needs-based approach regarding the FY24 budget (see exhibit I page 102 for details). The PRSD Administration would host two joint meetings for the towns Select Board members, Finance Committees, and Town Manager/Administrators January 24, 2023 and March 8, 2023. Bartholomew stated teachers would receive 2% COLA for the next few years and the operational costs would likely increase roughly 3% for FY24, but other items within the budget would not be known for the January meeting. Blatchford stated if a Prop 2 ½ override was needed, the ballot language would need to be submitted to the Clerk's Office no later than 45 days prior to the election. **No motion was made at this time.**

**Parker made a motion to add an unforeseen item to the agenda; approval of the Town Accountant contract. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

Jennings stated the Select Board had come to an agreement on a three-year employment contract for the newly appointed Town Accountant during the executive session that evening. Jennings stated the contract was effective immediately and explained that it was best practice to publicly disclose any contract execution. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **C. Discussion of Wage/Classification study**

Jennings stated that updated job descriptions had been circulated to all Town staff and an informational meeting was held December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Town Office Building (see exhibit C pages 23-47 for details). Wage grades with minimum and maximum rates would need to be established, as well as, step schedules within each grade. It was stated that any rate adjustments that would result in retroactive pay would be addressed at the December 19<sup>th</sup> Executive Session meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **D. Review/approve Select Board FY24 budget policy direction**

Jennings informed the Select Board of the Finance Committee's request for all article proposals to be presented in a standard uniform format. Jennings stated the Finance Committee was reminded that the Select Board had the ultimate choice as to which articles would be included on the warrant. The Select Board agreed that a standard format would not have a detrimental effect, but the format would need to be communicated to the departments, boards, committees, and commissions.

The Select Board and Jennings reviewed each section of the FY23 Budget Policy Direction and made edits to reflect the FY24 Budget Direction (see exhibit D pages 48-50 for details). It was decided to eliminate item two concerning COVID-19 operating expenses from the FY24 Budget Policy Direction. The Select Board and Jennings discussed utilizing the ARPA funds for one capital project or multiple smaller projects. Discussion continued surrounding whether the state would respond favorably to ARPA funds being put towards a water capital project. Amaral stated the ARPA funds would only cover a quarter of the water capital project and a consultant/project manager could be needed for the project. It was decided to include language stating the Town would "identify" which Town water capital project to move forward with.

The Select Board and Jennings discussed the debt payments ending in FY24 and noted that the tax rate would be under 2.5% due to the great financial management the Town has done. Jennings stated a draft FY24 Budget Policy Direction would be created from the existing FY23 policy with the revisions discussed that evening. The Select Board members would receive a copy of the draft for review once completed. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **E. Confirm date for 2023 Annual Town Meeting**

The Select Board confirmed the Annual Town Meeting would be held in the Annex April 24, 2023. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **F. Stormwater Work Group Update and Stormwater Management Project Request for Comments – Wayne Amaral, DPW Director**

Amaral reviewed the Stormwater Management Program and stated four names of town staff had been updated and the Town was on track for timeline items for year four (see exhibit F pages 51-89). Amaral stated a public presentation was required each year to solicit comments and to update outdated information. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **G. Review of proposal for Select Board hearing room design/furniture – Wayne Amaral, DPW Director**

Amaral reviewed the proposed hearing room furniture design and sales quote received from MassCor that was much more favorable than quotes from other vendors (see exhibit G pages 90-96 for details). Amaral explained that the Massachusetts Department of Correction created a program where residents were compensated for their labor and learned a vocational skill that could be utilized upon rejoining society. The Select Board, Amaral, and Jennings discussed the dimensions and formal design of the proposed replacement furniture, as well as, modifications from the current layout that could take place. Amaral stated the proposed furniture would be made of solid oak with a lockable drawer underneath each section for the Select Board members documents. Jennings informed the Select Board that any file from the Select Board Office could be digitized upon request. Amaral stated the current hearing room table would be moved the second-floor hearing room with the help of a moving company.

The Select Board discussed whether the design of the new furniture was too formal. After further discussion, the Select Board requested to modify the length of the Select Board desk and to see examples of different styles and finish colors. Amaral stated an updated rendering of the design, including options of finish colors and styles, would be brought before the board once received, as well as, a list of other towns the organization has completed work for in the past.

#### **H. Meeting minutes: October 17, 2022; October 24, 2022**

Clerical errors were noted for correction on the October 17, 2022 (see exhibit H pages 97-101 for details). No amendments were noted for the minutes for October 24, 2022. **Reed made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously approved (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**Town Manager Updates**

**J. Update re recent ratings call with Moody's**

Jennings informed the Select Board the call with Moody's had gone well and expected a response concerning the Town's bond rating the following week (see exhibit J pages 103-172 for details).

**K. Update re recent introductory meeting with MVPC staff regarding updates to Housing Production Plan**

Jennings informed the Select Board that the first meeting with the MVPC staff, Reed, and the Town Planner had taken place. Jennings stated that there was a nice alignment with the housing production plan updates and the parallel effort towards the MBTA Communities action plan.

**L. Follow up meeting assignment; placing items for future agendas**

Parker requested an update regarding cyber security and Jennings stated an update would be provided the following meeting. Jennings informed the Select Board discussion on the Mill Pond project, presentation of the FY22 audit, and recommendations from the Page School Working Group would appear on the next meeting agenda.

**Parker made a motion to adjourn. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 11:20pm**