



Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, December 19, 2022 @ 7:00pm
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Open Session: Open session was called to order at 7:04pm 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*
Tony Roselli, *Roselli, Clark & Associates CPAs*
Christine Wallace, *DPW Projects Manager*
Wayne Amaral, *DPW Director*
Ryan Goodwin, *Mill Pond Committee Chairperson*
Patricia Reeser, *Open Space Representative*
Brad Buschur, *Park & Recreation Chairperson*

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=K-PvqfGWd2U> .
- Call for volunteers! Open positions on Boards/Commissions/Committees. See www.wnewbury.org/volunteer
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town agendas/news/announcements at www.wnewbury.org/subscribe
- Holiday Party by Sage Center received positive community response and will be an annual event going forward.

Regular Business

A. Presentation of FY22 Audit – Tony Roselli, Roselli, Clark & Associates, CPAs

Tony Roselli appeared before the Select Board in person and presented the findings from the FY22 Audit (see exhibit A pages 3-67 for details). Roselli stated the financial trends were excellent and congratulated the Town for receiving a AAA bond rating from S&P. Roselli discussed maintaining the amount of free cash the Town had in reserves to preserve a cushion from rising costs and inflation. Discussion continued surrounding OPEB and the costs associated with a longer life expectancy of pension recipients. Roselli informed the finalization of checks that had never been cashed by recipients should be completed by the end of 2023 and suggested posting the information on the town website and in the newspaper. **No motion was made at this time.**

B. Presentation of recommendations by Page School Feasibility Study Working Group

Christine Wallace, DPW Projects Manager, appeared before the Select Board remotely (see exhibit B pages 68-72 for details) and presented a draft scope of work to be used in the vendor procurement/selection process. Wallace stated the next step in the process was to finalize the scope and to disband the working group with the aim of procurement in the spring. Wallace estimated the consultant selected would require 6-8 months to complete the assessment and scope of work outlined. Wallace informed the Select Board a spreadsheet of previous renovations throughout the years completed at the school was in the process of being compiled and would be shared once completed. The spreadsheet would cut down of the workload of the consultant and help the town remain within the Feasibility Study allocation of \$85,000 approved at the 2022 May Town Meeting. Wayne Amaral, DPW Director, appeared before the Select Board in person. Amaral, Wallace, and the Select Board discussed the recommendation and cost estimates that would be requested through the scope of work. Amaral discussed the creation and appointment of a Design Selection Committee that would evaluate, score, and rank qualified respondents to RFQ. The list of ranked finalists would then be brought before the Select Board. Amaral stated authorization for the Procurement Officer to conduct the project and proceed with the process would be required from the Select Board. **Reed made a motion to authorize the Chief Procurement Officer to proceed with the Page School Feasibility Study selection process as described. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

C. Review of Committee/Commission recommendations re Mill Pond All Persons Trail project

Ryan Goodwin, Mill Pond Committee Chairperson, appeared before the Select Board in person and stated the Open Space Committee, Mill Pond Committee, and Park and Recreation Commission agreed the land needed accessibility and that parking was a problem (see exhibit C pages 73-76 for details). Patricia Reeser, representing Open Space, appeared before the Select Board remotely. Reeser stated the Open Space Committee was in favor of the construction of the All Persons Trail, but the plan involving rerouting parking and driveways was a complicated plan not required to build the trail. For that reason, Reeser stated the Open Space Committee

did not feel it could, or should, steward the project. Reeser stated the design vendor did not fulfill all aspects of the contract as permitting requirements and accessibility guidelines had not been completed. Reeser stated accommodations for hearing or vision impaired, viewing points, educational areas, and stopping points had not been included in the report.

Brad Buschur, Park and Recreation Chairperson, appeared before the Select Board remotely and stated the Commission was in support of the project. Buschur discussed the need to focus on what accessibility means for the Town of West Newbury. Buschur then discussed information received at a Mass Trails Workshop from November that explained how every trail was different and Mass Trails that were staffed provided the services required for all disabilities. Buschur stated the organization was only focused on providing services to staffed locations at this time.

Goodwin, Reeser, and Buschur discussed concerns surrounding intensifying the parking problem if the parking by the waterfront was removed. The Select Board stated the committee did not appear to arrive at a consensus. Discussion continued surrounding the proposed expansion of the scope as it was needed to be able to access the proposed trail. Jennings stated roughly \$12,600 of funding was remaining with a sunset date of June FY23. Reed expressed the opinion that the project was too large for a committee to take on and that it should be handled by Town staff. It was decided at this time to continue discussion on this topic at a later time. **No motion was made at this time.**

D. Review of draft Wage/Classification study; consideration of Board endorsement of grade/step schedule, designation of non-union personnel into position grades, and review of FY23 non-union compensation

Jennings reviewed the recommendation for grade/step schedule with minimum and maximum wages and the Select Board was favorable. It was agreed to finalize the wage schedule and grade/step per position in executive session following open session. **Parker made a motion to adopt the proposed grades with the min/max range for FY23 as shown. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker made a motion to approve the position grade schedule as shown. Reed seconded.** Reed stated some of the position titles required modification as they were listed from the draft report. **Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

E. Review updated memo regarding personnel appointment authority

Jennings reviewed the appointing authority spreadsheet and stated Town Counsel had addressed two ambiguities (see exhibit E pages 77-82 for details). Jennings then informed the Select Board that due to legislation that had not been repealed, the Select Board was the appointing authority for the DPW Director. **No motion was made at this time.**

F. Discussion of FY24 Conservation staffing and Intermunicipal Agreement with Merrimac

Jennings asked the Select Board if it was their intent to move toward a full-time Conservation Agent or to continue with the intermunicipal agreement with Merrimac and continue with a part-time Conservation Agent (see exhibit F pages 83-90 for details). Jennings stated the deadline to communicate non-renewal of the intermunicipal agreement with Merrimac was January 15th. Archibald shared concerns surrounding budgeting in a full-time position at the wage schedule dictated by the wage study. The Select Board discussed if enough work was available for the position to transition into full-time. Parker believed a full-time position would support the care and maintenance of town owned land, as well as, assist in the coordination in trail maintenance. **Parker made a motion to change the Conservation Agent/Land Agent position to a full time West Newbury position for FY24 and that the town would not re-engage in the Intermunicipal Agreement. Reed seconded.** Jennings asked if the board wished to send a formal notice to Merrimac or a formal letter of withdrawal from the intermunicipal agreement. The Select Board discussed the increase to the operating budget by transitioning the position to full-time. **Motion passed (2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain).** Archibald abstained as it was stated a decision could not be made at that time. Archibald stated that there was no consistency of full-time or part-time Conservation Agents in other towns. Archibald questioned how Ipswich that had more wetlands than West Newbury, had a part-time Conservation Agent. The Select Board discussed how other towns had conservation assistants that appeared to share the workload of the Conservation Agents. After further discussion, Archibald requested to change the vote to support this item. **Reed made a motion to reconsider. Parker seconded. Motion to reconsider unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker made a motion to change the Conservation Agent/Land Agent position to a full time West Newbury position for FY24 and that the town would not re-engage in the Intermunicipal Agreement. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

G. Requests for renewal of Retail Liquor licenses for 2023 – Town Clerk's Office

a. GN Enterprises Inc. d/b/a West Newbury Pizza Company (restaurant/wines and malt §12)

Blatchford stated both alcohol license renewals had submitted the required paperwork, payments, and were in compliance (see exhibit G pages 91-92 for details). Blatchford stated any violations would be brought before the Select Board as they were the Local Licensing Authority. **Parker made a motion to approve the renewal of the retail alcohol license for G.N Enterprises Inc d/b/a West Newbury Pizza Company for 2023. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

b. West Newbury Food Mart, Inc. (package store/all alcoholic beverages §15)

Parker made a motion to approve the retail alcohol license for the West Newbury Food Mart, Inc for 2023. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

H. Requests for renewal of Class II Used Car Dealer licenses for 2023 – *Town Clerk's Office*

a. Newburyport Automotive, Inc. (330 Main Street)

(See exhibit H pages 93-98 for details). Parker made a motion to approve the renewal for the Class II used car dealer license for 2023 for Newburyport Automotive, Inc. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

b. RTI Enterprises, Inc. (289 Main Street)

Parker made a motion to approve the renewal for the Class II used car dealer license for 2023 for RTI Enterprises, Inc d/b/a Main Street Auto. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

c. Crane Neck Auto, LLC (5 Crane Neck Street)

Parker made a motion to approve the renewal for the Class II used car dealer license for 2023 for Crane Neck Auto, LLC. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

I. Review of proposed updates to 1-day liquor license paperwork – *James Blatchford, Town Clerk*

(See exhibit I pages 99-101 for details). Archibald made a motion to approve the changes made to the one-day liquor license paperwork as shown. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

J. Review of proposed updates to Special Event Permit Guidelines – *James Blatchford, Town Clerk*

(See exhibit J pages 102-18 for details). Archibald made a motion to approve the changes made to the Special Event Permit Guidelines as shown. Parker seconded. Reed requested recycling to be added to the removal of trash section of the guidelines. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

K. Recap of recent working meetings re Sea Level Rise projections / scenarios

Jennings stated a number of meetings had taken place over the last few weeks with the Climate Change Resiliency Committee and the City Engineer of Newburyport to discuss models and projections of sea rise scenarios (see exhibit K pages 109-113 for details). Parker informed the board members that Newburyport had settled on 6ft of elevation to be added to the FEMA Flood Inundation maps. Parker discussed the need to be aware that brackish water would move further up the river and importance of determining the existing conditions through data. **No motion was made at this time.**

L. Meeting minutes: November 7, 2022; November 14, 2022

(See exhibit L pages 114- 118 for details). Parker made a motion to accept the minutes for Monday, November 7, 2022. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously approved (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker made a motion to accept the minutes for November 14, 2022. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously approved (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

Town Manager Updates

M. MassDOR certification of FY23 tax rate

Jennings stated the tax rate for FY23 had been certified at 11.03 (see exhibit M pages 119-130 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

N. FY22 OPEB Actuarial Valuation

(See exhibit N pages 131-183 for details). **This item was tabled.**

O. Follow-up from recent ratings call with Moody's

Jennings informed the Select Board Moody's had not followed up at this time. Jennings stated additional information would be provided as received. **No motion was made at this time.**

P. Middle Street Bridge updates

Jennings stated the Middle Street Bridge was going through the Chapter 91 process (See exhibit P pages 184-189 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

Q. Public Notice from National Grid: 45 Day Yearly Operational Plan, opportunity for review/comment

Jennings and the Select Board discussed posting the notice on the Town website (see exhibit Q pages 190-193 for details) and stated the comment period would close at 5pm January 20th. **No motion was made at this time.**

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

No items were discussed at this time.

Archibald made a motion to recess into Executive session. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously approved (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain) at 10:41pm.

Archibald made a motion to reconvene in Open Session to vote on salary and wage comps analysis; a working draft dated December 20, 2022 at 12:09am.

The Select Board and Jennings briefly discussed the “various laborer” position and agreed to adjusted the step for the position. **Parker made a motion to adopted the position wage schedule as presented, with the modification discussed, applicable for all of FY23. Reed seconded.** Jennings confirmed the motion would authorize expenditures from the article with the annualized amount based on the estimate. **Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

Parker made a motion to adjourn. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 12:15am.