



Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Tuesday, January 18, 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 7:25pm 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*
Jill Hudson
Bob Janes
Sam Joslin, *Building Inspector*
Nancy Pau
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; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-7qGtGdB5Q>
- Regional Vaccination Clinics for COVID vaccination and booster shots. Town website for dates/details.
- Council on Aging Jan/Feb newsletter – updated office hours – resumption of weekly lunches – etc. (see pages 4-12 for details).
- Affordable Housing Trust Bylaw Committee – listening session – Wed., Jan. 26 at 7pm (via zoom)
- Call for 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 appointment of Jill Hudson to Historic District Commission

Jill Hudson appeared before the Select Board remotely and stated interest in serving on the commission (see exhibit A pages 13-14 for details). Jennings informed Hudson the Training Field was the only formal Historic District at the moment, but other districts had been discussed and could be added in the future. **Reed made a motion to appoint Jill Hudson to the Historic District Commission effective through June 30, 2022. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

B. Discussion of Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Building

Jennings stated a zoning analysis had been completed by the Building Inspector, Sam Joslin, and the memo had been updated to reflect the Board of Health determination of allowable flow with the tight tank (see exhibit B pages 15-17 for details). Joslin appeared before the Select Board remotely and discussed the comprehensive list of options available through the current zoning for the property. Janes appeared before the Select Board in person. The Select Board and Janes discussed the allowable flow with a tight tank based on historical use and the estimated cost and required frequency to pump the tank.

Parker proposed that two mutually exclusive articles to be presented at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for consideration; one article that would offer the building to be sold with a well-defined historic preservation and the second to construct a respectful veterans memorial park on the site with the use of repurposed materials from the building. Jennings stated each option would have associated costs and would require appropriation of funding. The Select Board, Janes, and Jennings discussed the associated costs and agreed that further information for both options would need to be provided to the voters in order for them to cast a vote.

Janes suggested for the building to be renovated into municipal office use. Jennings reviewed the lowest bid received the prior year. The Select Board discussed the amount of the bid and how it had likely increased as of the current date. Parker stated a decision on the outcome of building would be difficult, would not be reached that evening, and that the Select Board needed to move on to other items on the agenda. Jennings clarified that the Select Board was generally in favor of including two potential proposals on the warrant with potential funding requests attached to each. **No motion was made at this time.**

C. Request to establish new “Whetstone Greenway Gift Account” and accept contribution of funds

Parker stated a gift from the developer had been offered in the amount of \$10,000 to be used in association with the design, permitting, and building of a trail between Sullivan’s Court Extension and River Meadow Drive (see exhibit C pages 18-24 for details). Jennings stated the Select Board would need to authorize the establishment of the gift account, accept the gift funds, and authorize the expenditure of the funds for the reason gifted. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the cost of the trail as it would likely exceed \$10,000. Jennings explained that the trail would be considered a pedestrian walkway, as it would connect two locations, and ADA regulations would be required which would drive the construction costs higher. **Archibald**

made a motion to establish the West Newbury Whetstone Greenway Gift Account in accordance with the provisions of MGL c. 44 §53A. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Archibald made a motion to accept the gift funds for said West Newbury Whetstone Greenway Gift Account and authorize the expenditure of such funds in support of the design, permitting and construction, and all other costs pertaining to the establishment of a trail connecting Sullivan's Court to River Meadow Drive. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

D. Update re consideration of public purchase of COVID-19 self-tests

Jennings informed the Select Board of the Board of Health's decision to not move forward with a large purchase of COVID-19 self-tests at this time (see exhibit D pages 25-29 for details). Jennings stated the Federal Government had announced each household could request up to eight COVID-19 self-test kits per month for free per month. Blatchford briefly reviewed the online request procedure and suggested promoting this new service to residents. The Select Board discussed rescinding the prior vote to allocate \$30,000 towards the purchase of test kits. It was decided to table this item until after the Federal roll out in order to see if further test kits would be needed. **This item was tabled.**

E. Anticipated submittal of Letter of Intent to seek Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) Action Grant

Parker informed the Select Board that a letter of intent to seek the Municipal Vulnerability Program Action Grant was anticipated to be submitted by the Climate Change and Resiliency Committee the following Monday (see exhibit E pages 30-60 for details). Parker stated the areas of focus were flooding and erosion risk on River Road, native and invasive plant management, and general stormwater drainage. Jennings discussed the need for a more robust stormwater map and wondered if the stormwater section could be expanded town wide as it would reduce local costs. Nancy Pau appeared before the Select Board remotely and discussed including a placeholder for the proposed expansion of stormwater drainage to town-wide for MVP feedback. **No motion was made at this time.**

F. Review of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) final rule: process to review potential allocations

Jennings and the Select Board reviewed the list of potential uses of ARPA funds (see exhibit F pages 61-64 for details) and how the funds would need to be expended in the next 2 ½ years. Discussion continued surrounding how a water project would directly impact many residents and if that would be the best use of the funds. Jennings stated a decision was not needed that evening and additional allocation ideas could be added to the list at any time. **No motion was made at this time.**

G. Set date for spring Annual and Special Town Meetings (ATM/STM); set date for closing of warrants

The Select Board discussed if an indoor meeting would be possible as COVID-19 was still an active virus in the community (see exhibit G page 65 for details). The Select Board discussed potential dates for an outdoor Town Meeting May 7th or May 14th and the need to confirm with youth sports if the fields on Bachelor Street would be in use. It was decided to determine the warrant close date that evening. **Parker made a motion to set February 14, 2022 as the warrant closing date. Archibald seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).** Jennings reminded the Select Board the warrant would not automatically close as an official vote would be needed on February 14, 2022.

H. Preliminary review of known/anticipated/potential ATM/STM warrant articles

Jennings briefly reviewed anticipated warrant articles listed on the memo provided within the packet (see exhibit H pages 66-73 for details). The Select Board and Jennings discussed the need for a new phone system within the Town Office Building as replacement pieces were difficult to find and the system was starting to fail. Jennings informed the Select Board the DPW and Fire Department had plans to submit articles to potentially be included on the warrant. Jennings stated placeholder articles could be worked on after the close of the warrant. **No motion was made at this time.**

Town Manager Updates

I. Update on work toward preparing proposed FY23 operating budget and capital proposals

Jennings stated the FY23 budget would be difficult as the policy direction bottom line increase target was set not to exceed a 2.5% (see exhibit I pages 74-106 for details). Jennings reviewed the known increase for Whittier Vocational Technical High School, due to an additional five student enrollment the coming year, and the expected increase in Essex Regional Retirement contributions. The Select Board discussed the increase in contributions for Essex Regional Retirement. Jennings stated a representative would be invited to a future meeting to explain the increase and answer any questions the board may have. **No motion was made at this time.**

J. Updates on personnel Wage/Classification Study

Jennings stated the Town was officially under contract with the Collins Center (see exhibit J pages

107-110 for details) and 45 positions would be included in the study. Stephanie Fronteira, Town Accountant, appeared before the Select Board remotely. Fronteira, Jennings, and the Select Board briefly discussed how the results of the wage study would be reflected in the operating budget. **No motion was made at this time.**

K. Updates on Page School/Pipestave/Main Street safety audit

Jennings stated the kick off meeting and site visit with the vendor and community members had gone well (see exhibit K pages 111-12 for details). Jennings informed the Select Board the Principal of Page School had planned to take steps toward the Safe Routes to School Grant for a smaller scale project surrounding internal pick-up. Jennings discussed how the smaller project could be implemented by DPW with Town funding. **No motion was made at this time.**

L. Updates re Parks/Rec, incl. “Budget 101” memo and potential staffing/financial structure for Summer Rec Program

Jennings stated work was continuing on the Summer Rec program and gave a brief update on the MyRec platform (see exhibit L pages 113-115 for details). **No motion was made at this time.**

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

No items were discussed at this time.

Parker motion to adjourn. Reed second. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 10:34pm.