



**Town of West Newbury**  
**Select Board**  
**Monday, January 30, 2023 @ 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 7:05pm 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*

Christine Marshall, *Council on Aging 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 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHprfb51LOM>
- 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. Request for determination of COA Van as surplus property – COA Director Christine Marshall**

Council on Aging Director, Christine Marshall, appeared before the Select Board in person. Marshall stated that due to the retirement of the Council on Aging van driver, the utilization of Northern Essex Elder Transportation (NEET) for transportation to and from medical appointments, and Mini MEVA (formerly known as Ring-and Ride) the Council on Aging van had not been utilized since March of 2022. Marshall presented data from Mini MEVA that outlined the usage of transportation through the service and clarified that the service was not isolated for medical appointment transportation and could be used for shopping trips as well. Marshall and Blatchford explained the service was free, required a reservation two days prior to the requested transportation date, and that there were no age restrictions for the transportation service. Marshall highlighted that while the COA van could hold 7 passengers the MEVA vans could hold 12-14 passengers. **Archibald made a motion to declare the van as surplus. Reed seconded.** The Select Board and Jennings discussed the interest Pentucket School had expressed in purchasing the van. The Select Board members requested the Chief Procurement Officer to get a value on the van. It was decided to hold off on the disposition of the van until further information could be gathered. **Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**B. Review of ERRS proposed 5% Retiree COLA for FY23, FY24**

It was stated that the Essex Regional Retirement Board had proposed to increase retiree COLA to 5% for FY23 and FY24. The Select Board discussed the impact on the town assessment and how the increase would be greater than the COLA increase for the existing employees of the town. Jennings stated a decision was not required that night and that it was unknown if any of the other towns had voted in favor of the increase. The Select Board discussed the formula for total costs provided by Essex Regional Retirement and questioned its accuracy. It was decided to table this item until further information was gathered. **No motion was made at this time.**

**C. Recap of January 24<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting regarding FY24 budgeting**

The Select Board and Jennings discussed the operating budget for the Pentucket Region School, the estimated shortfall of \$1.67 million, and the need for an override to pass Town Meeting vote in the other two

towns of the district. The Select Board and Jennings discussed the benefit of the information sharing sessions between the school and the towns in advance of the Town Meetings. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **D. Review of known/anticipated articles for Spring 2023 Town Meeting**

Jennings and the Select Board reviewed the list of known/anticipated articles for the Spring Town Meeting. It was decided to keep the placeholder for the Solar Bylaw article but to remove the Stormwater placeholder as that would likely appear on the Town Meeting warrant the following year. Jennings informed the Select Board that Town Moderator, KC Swallow, would not be available the day of the Town Meeting. Blatchford explained the process of electing an interim Town Moderator on the floor of Town Meeting. Jennings stated the articles would be presented to the board in a draft order of how would appear at the following meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **E. Town Manager performance evaluation**

It was stated that one of the charges of the Select Board, as the appointing authority of the Town Manager, was to conduct a performance evaluation. Archibald stated that the areas of fiscal management, relationship with the board, town meeting, long-range planning, and staff and personnel relations were evaluated as well as several subcategories within those headings. Archibald stated that each board member had completed the evaluation and provided feedback on areas to focus improvement. Overall, Archibald stated that the board was in agreement and happy with Jennings' performance. Jennings thanked the board members and stated the evaluation process was a positive experience. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **F. Meeting minutes: December 6, 2021; December 20, 2021**

Clerical errors were noted for correction. **Parker made a motion to approve the minutes. Reed seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

### **Town Manager Updates**

#### **G. Middle Street Bridge updates**

Jennings reviewed the status of the Chapter 85 and Chapter 91 permits and stated the MassWorks grant would expire in June if the extension was not granted. Jennings stated BCS was working on an updated cost estimate but projected an estimated \$1 million shortfall. The Select Board and Jennings discussed whether additional grants were available to fill the gap. Jennings reviewed the recent meeting held with Mayor Reardon of Newburyport and asked the board if West Newbury would be willing to commit more funds toward the bridge. The Select Board briefly discussed their initial thoughts on contributing additional funds before deciding to revisit this topic after the status of the MassWorks grant extension was determined. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **H. RFQ issued for MBTA Communities consultant**

Jennings gave an informational update and stated the Planning Board had taken ownership of this item. Jennings informed the Select Board that some questions had been received and the Town Planner had sent the answers to all the firms. Jennings stated the town website would soon have a "Town Projects" page to help communicate updates to the public. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **I. 2022 CyberStrength training, Final Report Card**

Jennings stated the Cyber Security Officer was working on how to build on the cyber security training that was in place. **No motion was made at this time.**

#### **J. Updates re active/pending projects**

Jennings stated the intermunicipal agreement for the Animal Control Officer and the finalization of the Summer Recreation budget were in progress. It was stated the negotiations for the Verizon contract and the cable contract were approaching. **No motion was made at this time.**

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

It was stated further information on the budget would appear on the following agendas.

**Archibald made a motion to recess to executive session and then adjourn with no further open session. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session recessed to executive session at 9:27pm.**

**Open session was resumed at 10:36pm. Archibald made a motion to adjourn. Parker seconded. Motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Open session adjourned at 10:36pm.**

**To view a recording of the meeting, see the link below:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHprfb51LOM>**