



**Town of West Newbury  
Select Board  
Monday, June 5, 2023 @ 5:30pm  
381 Main Street, Town Office Building  
[www.wnewbury.org](http://www.wnewbury.org)  
Meeting Minutes**

**Open Session:** Chairwoman Reed opened the session at 7:08pm.

**Participation at the Meeting:**

- Rick Parker, Wendy Reed, Chris Wile- Select Board
- Angus Jennings- Town Manager
- Jim Blatchford- Town Clerk
- Rob Phillips- Finance Committee
- Elisa Grammer- Energy and Sustainability Committee
- Christine Marshall- COA Director
- Fred Chanania- Tree Committee, via Zoom
- Michael Dwyer- Police and Fire Chief
- Diana Denning, Appointee
- Ian James- Appointee
- Bob Veator- Appointee

**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; instructions below.
- Upcoming SAGE Center events (will add specifics prior to posting)
- Historical Commission's Tales of Our Town: "Baseball Fever: West Newbury's Golden Days on the Diamond"
- Planning Board Listening Session, draft Accessory Dwelling Units Bylaw, Tues., June 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm via Zoom
- Housing Opportunities Initiative/MBTA Communities planning process: Community Forum, Tues. June 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm; and Design Workshop, Tues., June 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm
- Call for volunteers! FY24 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. Consideration of requests for Committee member appointments for FY24**

**a. Diana Denning to Tree Committee**

Ms. Denning presented her credentials to the Board, Town Manager, and Clerk. Wile queried Denning on her opinions on Emerald Ash Borer mitigation and ash tree loss. **Parker motioned to approve the appointment through FY26, with a start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**b. Ian Kenneth James to Energy & Sustainability Committee; Planning Board; Capital Improvements Committee; and/or Finance Committee**

Mr. James presented his credentials to the Board, Manager, and Clerk. He stated he had interest in being an Associate Member of the Planning Board, as well as a member of the other committees. Clerk Blatchford recommended presenting the candidate to the Planning Board to get their approval, and then return the candidate back to a Select Board meeting for an official vote. The Board explained to James the role of an Associate Planning Board Member. **Parker motioned to approve the appointment to the Energy and Sustainability Committee through FY24. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Reed motioned to present James to the Planning Board for their approval.**

**c. Bob Veator to Council on Aging**

Veator presented his credentials and enthusiasm for the COA and his desire to be on the COA Board. **Wile motioned to approve the appointment through FY26, with a start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

(See Exhibit A, p. 14-16).

**Item C was taken out of order at this time. See Item C below.**

**B. Consideration of requests for Committee member reappointments for FY24**

(See Exhibit B, p. 17-18). The Town Clerk presented the Board a chart of members who have been reappointed or not yet responded to reappointment- as well as vacant positions on various Boards, Committees, and Commissions. Reed informed the room that they are looking into term lengths, BCC makeup, and BCC charges in order to make them align better with Select Board objectives/understandings. Rob Phillips requested that membership numbers for the Finance Committee be redone to reduce their size. Wile thanked the reappointments for their continued interest. **Parker motioned to approve the reappointments to the Boards, Committees, and Commissions as outlined on the chart with the term limits shown with the exception of the Energy and Sustainability Committee and the Climate Change Resiliency Committee, which would be single year terms. There was no second. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

**C. Energy & Sustainability Committee recommended consultant and proposed contract terms regarding Municipal Energy Aggregation**

(See Exhibit C, p. 19-25). Grammer informed the Board about the history of Municipal Aggregation, and the next step being to find a consultant to file the necessary documents, locate contractors, and other matters. The process of establishing the aggregation would require approval from assorted State agencies, and then a contract from Colonial Power. Parker stated that the timeline for this process was nebulous at best. A question was posed wondering how home solar energy would be impacted, and Grammer and Parker stated that there would be no change in policy. **Parker motioned that the Board approve the contract signed with Colonial Power for municipal aggregation. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

Item F was taken out of order at this time. See Item F below.

- D. Request for authorization of invasive species interns' work on town-owned parcels (Cherry Hill, Mill Pond, River Bend Trail, Withers Property) and a request to authorize Town Manager to sign NOI for filing with Conservation Commission**  
(See Exhibit D, p. 26-37). **Parker motioned that the Board authorize the intern's work and the signing of the NOI.**
- E. Request for authorization of invasive species management firm's work on town-owned parcel(s) (specific locations TBD within vendor selection/contraction process), and authorize Town Manager to sign NOI for filing with Conservation Commission. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**  
(See Exhibit E, p. 38). Parker stated this work would make a dent in an omnipresent issue across the community. The Town Manager stated that the RFQ would be a joint effort between Town Manager's Office and the Conservation Agent. Wile was concerned that some of the proposals did not have numbers attached, to which Blatchford clarified that the funding would be flexible within the amount allotted at Town Meeting for the project. The Board discussed where the pulled invasives would be left. **Parker motioned to authorize the firm's work on town-owned parcels to be determined during contract negotiations, and for the Town Manager motioned to sign an NOI for filing with the Conservation Commission. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**
- F. Discussion of Ash Street posted speeds / speed limit enforcement**  
(See Exhibit F, p. 39-52). Reed framed the conversation by stating that social media would need an enhanced monitoring policy, and that the speed limit is posted on Ash Street, but very little attention has been paid by drivers. She then invited Chief Dwyer to offer testimony to the Board. Chief Dwyer offered his take on the speed limit and speed limit enforcement initiatives. He stated that there have been a lot of complaints about high rates of speed from pedestrians and that increased monitoring was taking place of Ash Street. Parker was curious if speed factored into accidents where individuals wrecked off the roadside, and how frequent these accidents were, which Dwyer responded that it was an annual occurrence. Wile also offered testimony that when he walked the swampy section of the Street he recorded oncoming traffic, which produced a slow-down from motorists- he suggested that pedestrians using the road record their passage through the swampy section. Wile suggested also putting up plastic mesh fencing on either side to prevent wildlife crossings. Discussion occurred on best approaches to solving the problem (closing the road, the potential costs of maintaining the road and patrolling it, paving it, etc.) between residents and members of Town government members. A member of the public urged that the road be closed, and testified that she knew people had been injured by debris. Another testified she came across maliciously killed goslings on the road's surface. A third stated she thought a weight limit posted might help- presently it is set at five tons. Another individual suggested that intensifying efforts to reopen other roads would help.
- G. Referral from Parks & Rec Commission regarding proposed updates to 2023 Summer Rec wages**  
(See Exhibit G, p. 53-56). The Budget was previously approved in Feb. 2023, but any changes in wages would only be tied to a change in duties. Jennings clarified the various steps in the Park and Rec program staff's rates (correlated to years of experience). **Parker motioned to accept the salary as proposed by the Town Manager. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**
- H. Request for approval of FY24 holiday recognition schedule**  
(See Exhibit H, p. 57). **The Item was tabled for a future meeting.**
- I. Meeting minutes: Feb. 6, 2023; March 13, 2023; March 27, 2023; April 5, 2023; April 10, 2023; April 13, 2023**  
(See Exhibit I, p. 58-71). **Parker motioned to approve the Feb. 6 minutes with corrections. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker motioned to approve the Mar. 13 minutes with corrections. Reed seconded. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). Parker motioned to approve the Mar. 27 minutes with corrections. Reed seconded. (2 Yes, 0 No, Reed abstained). Parker motioned to approve the Apr. 5 minutes. Reed seconded. (2 Yes, 0 No, Reed abstained). Parker motioned to approve the Apr. 10 minutes with corrections. Reed seconded. (2 Yes, 0 No, Reed abstained). Parker motioned to approve the Apr. 13 minutes. Reed seconded. (2 Yes, 0 No, Reed abstained).**

#### **Town Manager Updates**

- J. MassWorks grant application regarding Middle Street Bridge**  
(See Exhibit J, p. 72-123). The grant application was submitted the previous Friday before the meeting, according to the Town Manager, accompanied by 37 letters of support from residents. Jennings thanked the local politicians and residents for their support in this matter. Jennings informed the Board that the community would be eligible for the MASSDOT Small Bridge Grant (due June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023). Newburyport would be also be applying for this money, Jennings stated, and if either of the communities would receive the grant, it would result in a \$500,000 reduction in costs of the project. Board Members Reed and Parker stated that they would not be able to attend a meeting in Newburyport on the Middle Street Bridge project. **No motion was made at this time.**
- K. DPW Director search process**  
Jennings stated that the first round of interviews had been completed barring one late entry who the search committee was vetting at the last minute. Overall, despite the heavier workload on DPW affiliated staff, Jennings stated things remained operating smoothly in the Public Works Office, which he commended. **No motion was made at this time.**
- L. Continuing work with Greenbelt, Conservation Agent re LAND grant, other Greenbelt properties**  
Jennings stated that a walkthrough would be undertaken of various properties to establish a joint understanding with Greenbelt and Conservation with respect to parking and safeguard West Newbury interests. The walkthroughs would also help Michelle Greene, Conservation Agent, better grasp the projects underway in the Town, now that she will be promoted to full-time as of July 1, 2023. **No motion was made at this time.**
- M. Page School Study proposals received; review underway**  
(See Exhibit M, p. 124). 3 proposals had been received with regard to the Study, with three 50-minute interviews to be conducted with the submitters about their proposals. An advisory group would be invited to sit in, including the Building Inspector Sam Joslin, Elisa Grammer, Rick Parker, as well as Greg Hadden of the Page School. **No motion was made at this time.**
- N. Invasive Species Management proposals received; review underway**  
(See Exhibit N, p. 125-157). Jennings highlighted some of the language in the RFP and told the Board that a couple proposals had been received. A final selection would be forthcoming. **No motion was made at this time.**
- O. Updates on other ongoing/active projects/initiatives**

Jennings stated that Finance and Administrative Departments were having biweekly huddles to better improve communication (with additional huddles taking place with Planning and Development). Jennings stated that his intention was to increase the tradition to include other Town Departments but had not yet been initiated. The discussion blossomed into a reflection on the increasing interconnectedness of Town Departments, and the positive effects that have resulted. Following this, the Board and the Town Manager examined the “operating manual” for the DPW that would be shown to prospective DPW Directors to gauge their expertise and interests. The meeting continued with brief updates on the renovation of the hearing rooms. **No motion was made at this time.**

Rob Phillips queried the Board on one of the Announcements on “housing opportunities and initiatives/MBTA Communities” to understand if this was the same program. Reed clarified that the MBTA Communities efforts were part of the wider housing initiatives in West Newbury. Town Manager confirmed this. Phillips expressed reservations that such programs to create housing could have further consequences, and urged that a wider meeting with various Town commissions and committees should take place on these issues. Reed urged the Finance Committee to stay apprised of the mandates of the MBTA Communities initiatives and activities within Town government related thereto.

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

**No motion was made at this time.**

**Wile motioned to adjourn the session. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). The session adjourned at 9:29pm.**

**To access a video recording of the meeting, use the link below:**

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