



**Town of West Newbury
Select Board
Monday, July 24, 2023 @ 7:00pm
381 Main Street, Town Office Building
www.wnewbury.org
Meeting Minutes**

Open Session: Chairwoman Reed opened the session at 7:06pm.

Participation at the Meeting:

- Wendy Reed, Chris Wile- Select Board
- Rick Parker- Select Board, via Zoom
- Angus Jennings- Town Manager
- Jim Blatchford- Town Clerk
- Michael Dwyer- West Newbury Fire and Police Chief
- Rob Phillips- Finance Committee Representative
- Fred Chanania, Tree Committee Representative
- Ron Ross- EEDDVS Representative
- Haley McCraven- Applicant for appointment to the Conservation Committee, via Zoom
- Alejandra Chandler- Applicant for appointment to the Conservation Committee
- Vanessa- Greenbelt Representative
- Mark Dickinson- Owner's representative of 31 Dole Place land

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.
- 2023 Summer Bandstand Concert Series – Thursdays at 6:30pm – list of performers located on Town website
- Call for volunteers! FY24 positions on Boards/Commissions/Committees. See www.wnewbury.org/volunteer
- Reminder to subscribe for emailed Town agendas/news/announcements at www.wnewbury.org/subscribe

Regular Business

A. Update regarding Eastern Essex District Department of Veterans' Services – Ron Ross, West Newbury Representative

(See Exhibit A). Ross announced that the Veterans' Services Director Karen Tyler was leaving her post 7/31/2023. He provided additional information on how the Services would be maintained and staffing changes in the near future until a replacement for Tyler would be brought on. Jennings stated that the Town Offices would promote the job listing when it was available. **No motion was made at this time.**

B. Requests for appointment to Conservation Commission

a. Haley McCraven

(See Exhibit B.a.) McCraven presented her credentials and background to the Board, Manager, and Clerk, and why she was interested in participating in conservation work in West Newbury. Chris Wile stated he would endorse the appointment, but felt that she would be a good potential member of the Finance Committee, as well. Reed asked if McCraven had any issues before the Commission.

b. Alejandra Chandler

(See Exhibit B.b.) Chandler presented her credentials and background to the Board, Manager, and Clerk, and why she was interested in joining the Commission (largely stemming from her prior participation on the Conservation Committee for the Town of Merrimac).

The Board asked McCraven if she would be open to joining the Finance Committee if not selected for Conservation Commission. McCraven asked for more details about the work to be done on the Committee, and Phillips and Wile provided further information. McCraven stated she wanted more information about the role before accepting any appointment to the Committee. **Wile motioned to appoint Chandler to the Commission. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

C. Request for authorization to pursue Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant to support costs to replace aging computers in police cruisers – Police Chief Dwyer

(See Exhibit C). Dwyer informed the Board that this tech upgrade grant would replace computers in all cruisers, to offset costs incurred by the Town of West Newbury in purchasing the items. Wile asked if

the costs included software or other expenses, and Dwyer responded that the costs would include everything upfront from installation to software. **Wile motioned to authorize pursuing the grant for the upgrade in conjunction with the Town Manager's Office. Parker seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

D. Request for authorization to pursue Office of Grants and Research Grant to support costs to purchase body cams – Police Chief Dwyer

(See Exhibit D). Chief Dwyer explained the Department was hoping to partner with the Town Manager's office to pursue both grants- for body cameras and technology upgrades. Dwyer stated the Department would also need to replace their Tasers, and it might be possible to get a package deal from the manufacturer of the cameras and the Tasers. Dwyer stated with regard to the infrastructure, they were examining the costs of local digital storage or cloud-based storage. Reed asked if the bodycams were mandated by law, and the Chief responded that "the [State] would like to get to that point" but it would stretch the Department's resources. Not every officer would be equipped the cameras at any given time, but nonetheless Dwyer raised concerns about the storage of the videos. Parker asked how long the Police Department would be required to hold onto the data. Dwyer responded that the grant would require a plan to develop and manage a retention schedule, within the constraints of the law. Wile asked what the Town's financial obligation for the cameras going forward would be, and Dwyer said that replacement costs and storage costs would need to be analyzed, and could not at that time offer Wile the exact number. Wile confirmed that the officer's union would not be a major player in the usage and procurement of the cameras. The grant could be applied for but would require sign-off at Fall Town Meeting in order to raise the funds (for reimbursement from the grant). Parker reflected on the high cost of the cameras when this issue had previously been discussed some years back, and Dwyer said that the prices had come down to some degree and that they would be cross-shopping vendors just to be sure the Town was getting the best deal. **Wile motioned to authorize pursuing the grant for the bodycams in conjunction with the Town Manager's Office. Reed seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).**

E. Follow-up re EAB tree injection program – Fred Chanania, Tree Committee Chair

The Town Manager offered a brief history of the program to date, stating that the company doing the work had charged far below what Town Meeting had authorized for the injections of the ash trees. Fred Chanania of the Tree Committee proposed using the balance of the funds to conduct monitoring of the efficacy. The follow-up assessment would take place in early October, according to Chanania, and it would determine which trees should receive additional injections next year with the balance of the Town Meeting funds, and which trees were a lost cause. The expense would be lessened, according to Chanania, because much of the work had already been done. The group debated if the continued activities would be outside of the scope of the Town Meeting article that brought in the funding, and whether it should be reintroduced at Town Meeting to largely make voters aware of the funding situation, with Reed feeling that it was and Chanania, Wile, and Jennings feeling that it might not be. **No motion was made at this time.**

F. Request from Essex County Greenbelt for authorization to conduct fundraising activities and install temporary sign at Pipestave/Mill Pond in support of proposed Sawmill Brook land acquisition

(See Exhibit F). In a two-fold request, the Greenbelt representative wanted to utilize heavily-trafficked Town-owned areas and events to raise awareness through information stations and signage to promote fundraising efforts for purchase of local land. The Board considered the temporary signage separate from the fundraising activities. Reed outlined the temporary sign guidelines to the representative, and asked what the signs would look like and where they would go specifically. The representative explained as best she could, and confirmed the process of getting approval for the signs. **The Board tabled a decision on the signage to their August 7th meeting.** With regard to fundraising activities and information, Reed was apprehensive about setting the precedent. Parker felt that the approval of this activity would benefit the Town, who were actively partnering with Greenbelt to conserve the land, and furthermore that in that case the use of Town space would be justified. He furthermore felt that it would not cause future problems with non-Town affiliated or commercial entities. The representative did not know where the stations would be set up, and suggested they would follow Town guidance on that front. Reed asked the representative to supply times and locations for the August 7th meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

G. Continued review of draft Elliot Fund program summary and loan application

(See Exhibit G). The Board continued their previous discussion on the Fund, particularly with regard to the use of loans or grants with regard to disbursing the money. Wile suggested that it be at the Select Board's discretion, and Parker agreed. The Board nailed down the age and residency requirements for applicants- Reed stated that the Housing Trust was using a three-year requirement for access to their small grant program. Parker preferred a year as the requirement. It was determined that the applicant was to be 18 years old, and a resident of at least one year. The discussion ranged through several topics, including on what language might be used with regard to the flexibility of the loans. **The Board tabled this Item to a future meeting.**

H. Select Board review of Committees' charge / function

a. Personnel Advisory Committee

(See Exhibit H.a.). Jennings provided a history of the Committee to the Board including his involvement therein. He felt that the Select Board served the function of the Committee under the Town Manager form of government, perhaps outmoding the Committee. Jennings thought it would be good to have a separate body to hear grievances- but suggested that an overhaul of the 1999 Personnel Bylaw should be undertaken in the near future to better reflect the Town Manager form of government. The group agreed to bring the matter before Town Meeting to nail down the purpose and future of the Committee. **No motion was made at this time.**

b. Harbor Committee

(See Exhibit H.b.) Reed pointed out that the Committee's functions were mainly devoted to the role of the Harbormaster. Jennings provided insight on the history of the Committee, the reasons for its establishment, after Reed read out the scope of the Committee. Jennings said over his tenure that the Committee had only met eight or nine times, much of it focusing on mooring fields, but other than a feasibility study for this, nothing had been accomplished. Other activities the Committee had looked into was stiffening enforcement of laws governing use of waterways. The group also discussed utilizing the Harbormaster in Salisbury for West Newbury enforcement duties. Like with the Personnel Advisory Committee, the Board determined that the functions and activities of the Harbor Committee should be fleshed out at Town Meeting, but vowed to explore using the Salisbury Harbormaster for enforcement activities. **No motion was made at this time.**

I. Set warrant closing date for Special Town Meeting to be held on October 23, 2023

Parker motioned that the last day to submit STM Articles would be at close of business, Thursday, August 31st, 2023. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain).

Town Manager Updates

J. Progress update regarding Tata & Howard water hydraulic plan/capital plan/rate study; and Weston & Sampson engineering study of 31 Dole Place

Jennings recapped what he told the Select Board at their most recent prior meeting regarding the success of the site visit with Weston and Sampson, and what next steps were going to be. Things were "off to a good start", in Jennings' words. Tata and Howard have yet to submit a rate study to the Town despite its criticality to the project and the ability to predict future financial loads on the town. Reed pointed out that this delay was breach of contract. Jennings stated he wasn't sure how the Water Commission felt about the delays, but that he has repeatedly followed up with the Water Commissioners to determine a timeline. There have been extenuating factors contributing to the delays, such as the death of a Tata and Howard subcontractor, but the Board discussed how best to reiterate in firm terms their desire for the delivery of the study. The group discussed the potential impacts of not knowing the budgetary needs of the Water Department and Commissioners both last year and potentially in the future. Wile suggested that it might be time to terminate the contract with Tata and Howard. Reed said she would draft a memo to send to the contractors in conjunction with the Commissioners. The owner of the land at 31 Dole Place, sitting in at the meeting, chimed in to discredit an article in the *Daily News* about the history of the Dole Place negotiations, and a spirited back and forth between Board and owner took place on the negotiations and the process of purchase as a whole, the owner feeling that he was being lowballed by the Town's offers to date. **No motion was made at this time.**

K. Ash Street updates

Jennings updated the Board on the search for any documentation related to Ash Street paving and conservation efforts. Initial discussions with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife had yielded next steps, Jennings stating that an inventory of roadkill would be undertaken each week to appraise the situation (taking into account other animal fatalities as well). Other meetings with State agencies both on- and off-site were scheduled to continue determining the parameters the Town has to operate within. The DPW and WNPd are in the process of determining appropriate enhanced signage. **No motion was made at this time.**

L. Update regarding MassWorks grant for Middle Street Bridge

(See Exhibit L). The Town has not received an extension of the MassWorks Grant previously offered to West Newbury. Wile expressed his frustration with the bridge replacement and its prohibitive expense- urging the Town to look into alternative arrangements (repair v. replacement). **No motion was made at this time.**

M. Upcoming Planning Board meeting (Aug. 15th) regarding MBTA Communities planning process

(See Exhibit M). Jennings said that this August 15th meeting would be a "big meeting" with conceptual renderings of West Newbury housing options to satisfy the MBTA Communities requirements being revealed to the public.

N. Work with Town Planner and DPW Projects Manager toward planning fall "land use summit"

Jennings clarified the focus of the summit, possibly to take place in early October, to aggregate the leadership of ongoing development projects in West Newbury (113 improvements, MBTA

Communities, etc.) and have community discussion and further public understanding of ongoing projects. **No motion was made at this time.**

O. Work with MVPC regarding Rte. 113 Corridor Planning

Jennings said that planners from MVPC had met with the Town to see what the Town was doing with regard with the 113 Corridor- with focus on specific areas pedestrian safety concern. MVPC stated they would reach out to MassDOT regarding the need for a crosswalk in front of the school buildings versus farther up the road where it is presently. **No motion was made at this time.**

P. Review of draft West Newbury Welcome Packet

(See Exhibit P). The Board provided feedback on the Packet. **The Item was tabled for future discussion.**

Q. Update on work to prepare investment manager RFP

Jennings said that the Investment Policy Committee would be meeting August 10th as local government moves toward a new investment management service. **No motion was made at this time.**

R. Updates on other ongoing/active projects/initiatives

No motion was made at this time.

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

Reed stated that future meetings would include discussion of the goals and priorities matrix developed by the Town Manager for final approval for a future meeting. **No motion was made at this time.**

Reed motioned to adjourn the session. Wile seconded. The motion unanimously passed. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain). The session adjourned at 9:46pm.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sQu7Z5MeNU>