



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

DATE: Thursday, December 7, 2023

TIME: 6:00PM

**LOCATION: NEWTON TOWN HALL, 2 TOWN HALL ROAD and
ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Zoom Conference phone number 929-205-6099

Meeting ID 818 7979 5674

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81879795674>

1. Call to Order

Chairman Marchand called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM. Selectmen in attendance were Chairman Robert Marchand Jr., Matthew Burrill, Daniel Guide, and Joseph Simone. Also in attendance were Interim Town Administrator (ITA) James O'Mara, and Selectmen's Executive Assistant (EA) Robyn Sparks. The non-public meeting was scheduled for after the public session and the minutes were typed and transcribed by ITA James O'Mara. The public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by EA Sparks.

Vice- Chairman Michael Connolly was not present, he was excused from this meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Citizen's Input

Joseph Simone of Quaker Dr thanked the Recreation Commission, Police Department, John Silva, and the Road Agent for helping with the town tree lighting. He was impressed with the outcome and thankful for the community for hosting the tree lighting.

4. Administration

4.1 Town Seal Discussion

ITA O'Mara stated that the town seal exists by Statue of the Selectboard. The current town seal includes the year of establishment, 1749. He then presented another more detailed option with a carriage. ITA O'Mara stated that the new proposed seal could be adopted over time, for the employees who wear uniforms.

Selectman Burrill asked who created the draft proposed seal? Selectman Simone stated that Carol Zott, came up with different renditions. Selectman Burrill supported the draft but suggested adjusting the lettering to size.

ITA O'Mara stated Toni, Newtons Deputy Clerk created the draft logo. Selectman Simone stated Carol's design was a different one. Newton Town Clerk, Mary Jo McCullough, stated Toni Suslowicz, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector, created the design with no software. Selectman Burrill stated he supported the design conceptually but would like to see it fine-tuned.

Please check subsequent minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes

Diane Morin, Juniper Lane, stated it was similar to Amesbury, Massachusetts's town seal, just differed in color.

Chairman Marchand stated the 275th will be using a different logo and that a decision will be made next meeting.

4.2 Warrant Articles

ITA O'Mara stated the Selectboard will begin reviewing the revised Warrant Articles from the last meeting. There are currently two placeholders on the revised edit, which will be for the Articles submitted by the Planning Board.

ITA O'Mara stated that the final budget numbers have not yet been determined. Chairman Marchand stated that there are currently 16 Warrant Articles.

ITA O'Mara stated he has a question regarding number 6 (see below):

6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be deposited into the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund created in 2006. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised by taxation.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

He asked, if the Newton Municipal Study Complex allows the build of a new building as opposed to a renovation? Selectman Simone acknowledged the monies in the town building fund and stated it could be used for future repair needs of the Fire Station. ITA O'Mara stated the balance in that account is currently \$256,000.00. Chairman Marchand stated the current Town Hall Building is littered with problems. A study could be used to identify the problems, identify repairs and costs, updating needs and costs. The findings of the study could then be presented to the residents.

Selectman Burrill stated he supports the Article but would like to see it in 2025. He is concerned with the costs of the proposed budget and #13 not passing (see below):

13. To see if the Town will vote to establish a **Capital Reserve Fund** to be known as the "**Newton Municipal Complex Study Fund**" under the provisions of RSA 35:1 and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000** to be deposited into this fund and name the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised from taxation. The purpose of this fund would be to study the needs and develop a plan for a Town Hall and Library complex.

Selectman Simone stated he is concerned and would like to see town buildings addressed, while Selectman Burrill stated he is concerned with the value of #6 being \$50,000.00. He is unclear as to how that number was reached and the actual costs of the studies. Selectman Simone stated the \$50,000.00 value was added just as a figure, the mechanics and actual costs have not been determined.

Road Agent (RA) Mike Pivero referenced the Fire Station study, previously conducted before the new building was erected. Stating that over a period of multiple years, the Fire Station was evaluated on the structure. He stated that there is a generous resident who has mentioned helping the town in some form with land for the Library and Town Hall. RA Pivero stated the Municipal Complex Study would take multiple years from cradle to grave.

A discussion ensued regarding town buildings and the construction process.

Selectman Guide stated he fully supports the study.

RA Pivero stated sometime prior to 2017 a study was done on all of the town buildings; the Fire Station was found to be the most in need and became the priority. Followed by the Town Hall and Library.

Diane Morin stated there are two funds: 8 Merrimac RD, in which funds could be used to do the study. She stated in 2022 the Town received bids to conduct a study on the Police Station Building and the lowest bid was \$20,000.00

The second fund, General Government Town Building (or something of a similar name) could also be used to fund the study. Further stating a Warrant Article is not really needed.

RA Pivero stated the Police Station study of 2022 was not a fair comparison, it was not only a study, but it also came with a complete set of drawings.

Selectboard Discussion ensued on removing the Article and utilize existing funds.

Interim Chief Police (IPC) Kane asked if #7 (See below):

7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, as proposed by the Police Chief, the sum of \$25,000.00 to be deposited into the **"Police Cruisers and Equipment" Capital Reserve Fund** created in 2021.

This article would result in an estimated \$0.xxx increase per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxes.

was still on the existing Warrant? He stated that including it as a Warrant Article is a good way to avoid spikes in the budget, as vehicles along with staff are of the highest importance. He stated the last vehicle purchased was \$71,000.00, the next vehicle purchase will be in 2025, which will allow time for funds to accumulate. He is working on completing a vehicle rotation inventory which will prioritize purchases. He fully encourages voters to support this Article. Chairman Marchand stated funds would be supported from the Unassigned Fund Balance and have zero tax impact.

Emergency Management Director (EMD, Trisha McCarthy, stated that she is asking a question for someone, stating that the Fire Department is putting \$75,000.00 into the Apparatus Revolving Account, funds to come from the unanticipated fund account. The Selectboard stated that they were only aware of a \$25,000.00 value, also stating the Selectboard was not sure where the additional \$50,000.00 came from.

ITA O'Mara stated that with the exception of the operating budget, the other Warrant Articles are coming from the unassigned fund balance. Chairman Marchand stated the Selectboard is trying to minimize the tax impact which is attributed to the increase of taxes on the school's portion. ITA O'Mara stated a rough estimate of used funds from the Unassigned Fund Balance is \$347,000.00 to fund these current Warrant Articles. Selectman Burrill stated with the additional \$50,000.00, it will bring that number close to \$400,000.00. Chairman Marchand said this would still leave the Unassigned Fund Balance with a balance for emergency funds. Selectman Burrill added that costs of EMS Warrant Article could be 1 million, .

EMD McCarthy, stated she wanted to add that it was during deliberative session, another \$50,000.00, was added to the Fire Apparatus& Equipment, bringing the total to \$75,000.00.

Selectman Burrill stated for #8(See below)

8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, as proposed by the Fire Chief, the sum of \$25,000.00 to be deposited into the "Fire Apparatus and Equipment / Refurbishment Fund" Capital Reserve Fund created in 2005 and amended in 2011. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised by taxation.

This article would result in an estimated \$0.xxx increase per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxes.

a final number will later be decided once there are specific numbers.

Discussion ensued around adding the Social Services donations to the budget. The Selectboard concluded that due to time restrictions, it will be included in this Warrant Article.

Lisa Gonyer, Treasurer, spoke via zoom and gave the suggestion to put it on as a Warrant Article this year and if the operating budget passes to include the language if passes this Warrant Article is no longer effective. She also suggested having it taken out of taxes, rather than the Unassigned Fund Balance.

ITA O'Mara stated #9 is in regard to the leased land for hosting a cellular tower.

9. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey an easement, license, or leasehold interest ***on a portion of*** the property owned by the Town of Newton located at [INSERT STREET ADDRESS], identified as Tax Map __, Lot __, for a period not to exceed __ years for the purposes of constructing, installing, and operating a communications tower, ***in such dimensions and*** under such terms and consideration as the Board of Selectmen, in its discretion, deems suitable, and to further authorize the Board of Selectmen to execute such related contracts and agreements related to such communications tower. Such authority shall not lapse and shall remain effective until December 31, 2025.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

No Selectboard discussion.

#10

THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN DOES RECOMMEND THIS ARTICLE X-X

10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be deposited into the recreation operating budget to fund a new position called "Recreation Coordinator". Upon passage these funds will become part of the Recreation Department's annual operating Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised by taxation. expenses.

This article would result in an estimated \$0.xxx increase per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxes.

ITA O'Mara stated this is a placeholder for the Recreation Coordinator to help develop summer programs for children. Selectboard discussion ensued around detailed language on #10.

11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, the sum of \$40,000.00 to be deposited into a new revolving fund called the 275 Anniversary Revolving Fund. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised by taxation. expenses.

This article would result in an estimated \$0.xxx increase per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxes.

ITA O'Mara stated this would be \$40,000.00 to be dedicated to 275th town anniversary celebration, funded by the Unassigned Fund Balance.

12. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to be known as the **"Cyclical Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund"** for the purpose of funding the five year property valuation pursuant to NH RSA 75:8-a and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be placed in the fund and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from such fund. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

ITA O'Mara stated this is related to the cyclical reevaluation required to be conducted every 5 years. The next one is due 2025, which is by the amount is \$50,000.00. Going forward it would be \$20,000.00 each year, until reaching \$100,00.00.

Chairman Marchand stated #13 (see below) to be removed.

13. To see if the Town of will vote to establish a **Capital Reserve Fund** to be known as the **"Newton Municipal Complex Study Fund"** under the provisions of RSA 35:1 and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$50,000** to be deposited into this fund and name the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance with no monies to be raised from taxation. The purpose of this fund would be to study the needs and develop a plan for a Town Hall and Library complex.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

14. Warrant Article related to EMS, placeholder

15. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to be known as the **"Highway Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund"** for the purpose of purchasing, maintaining, repairing, and improving or replacing the **Highway Department vehicles and equipment Town's** and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to be placed in the fund and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from such fund. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

Highway Vehicle Capital Reserve Account to reserve or establish. \$100,000.00 to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. Selectman Burrill wants language will be changed from raise and appropriate.

16. By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Newton to see if the Town will vote to **raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000** to support a ***Lake Host Program at the Newton Town Boat Ramp for the 2023 summer season***. By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Newton to see if the Town will vote to **raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000** to support a ***Lake Host Program at the Newton Town Boat Ramp for the 2023 summer season***. The Lake Host Program is a collaborative effort between NH Department of Environmental Services, NH LAKES and local lake associations. It trains and employs individuals to provide courtesy boat inspections to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants, such as milfoil, from one lake to another thereby protecting public lake uses such as swimming, fishing, and boating.
This article would result in an estimated \$X.XXX increase per \$1,000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxes.

In 2022 Country Pond Lake Association (CPLA) of Newton organized a Lake Host program that provided over 266.25 hours of inspection time at the Newton Town Boat Ramp. In 2023 CPLA plans to expand that to 565 hours of inspection time with a total cost of \$5,300. Funding for this program will come from town support via this warrant article, a matching NH LAKES grant and CPLA member donations.

ITA O'Mara stated Patricia Masterson, Secretary of Recreation, said petitioned the Warrant Article is being constructed related to the boat ramp.

4.3 2024 Budget

ITA O'Mara along with Selectman Guide, and Diane Morin have reviewed the proposed budget along with the default. The proposed working budget as of now differs in the amount of \$363,006.28, additional costs need to be added to that total to reach a final number.

Selectboard discussion ensued around final budget numbers to ensure accuracy.

ITA O'Mara asked the Selectboard how they wanted to address wages, globally or individually? Further stating that some departments did not submit an increase for the employees.

ITA O'Mara to send an email to Department Heads asking for a percentage of increase and justification. These wage increases will require approval to go forward.

Selectman Guide asked if the Selectboard would remove the \$30,000.00 from Hazardous waste from the Transfer Station budget. All were in favor.

Diane Morin asked if they wanted to include the Social Services costs to the Welfare budget, which would require creating a line item. She asked for suggestions as to which budget it could be included. If the proposed budget passes item will be null and void.

RA Pivero supported putting the funds in the budget and on the Warrant Article this year.

Lisa Gonyer, Treasurer, spoke over zoom to add, the Warrant Articles that pass do not go against any budget line items and are tracked separately. If passed a line item would be added going forward. Further adding the only time, a \$1.00 is needed is when a new account is being created. Discussion ensued about adding funds to Departments budget totals.

Final numbers for the budget will be reached after wage adjustments and the EMS contract are added.

5. Approvals

5.1 Road Bond Release-TAX MAP 6-8-7-2

Selectman Simone moved to release the Road Bond provided for a driveway permit for 36 Thornell Road (TAX MAP 6-8-7-2) and the instruct The Treasurer to release the amount of \$5,000.00 plus accumulated interest at the North Shore Bank. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

5.2 Supplemental Tax Warrant-Tax Map 99-1-3

Selectman Simeone moved to approve the Supplemental Tax Warrant for Tax Map 99-1-3 for year 2023. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

5.3 Equalization Ratio Study

Selectman Simone moved to approve the 2023 Equalization Ratio Study. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

5.4 Manifest

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$300.00 from the Highway Construction Checking to pay the invoice from Pro Bark. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$239.71 from the Food Pantry Checking account to reimburse Tina O'Rourke for costs associated with items given out at Thanksgiving Dinner. Seconded by Selectman Burrill . 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$718.60 from the Cable Committee Revolving Account, for invoices in the amount of \$478.58 and \$240.02 made payable to Hewlett-Packard Financial Services. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$38,247.27 from the Police Special Detail Account to reimburse the General Fund for payment for police details in Quarter 3. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve Vendor Manifest in the amount of \$1,191,714.15 with a pay date of December 5, 2023, Payments include \$46,551.93 to Primex and \$1,030,695.00 to Sanborn Regional School District. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve Vendor Manifest in the amount of \$400.00 with a pay date of December 7, 2023, Payments include \$400.00 for an invoice to Aladdin's Home Improvements for door repair at the Police Station. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve payroll manifest in the amount of \$72,378.29 for pay period -November 19th-December 2nd, 2023, with a pay date of December 7th ,2023. This manifest includes \$41.34 in ARPA administrative costs. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

5.5 Minutes

Selectman Simone moved to approve and accept the public meeting minutes dated November 21st , 2023, as written. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 4-0 with a unanimous vote. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Discussion around Vendor Manifest paid to Aladdin's Improvements and why a \$400.00 invoice was on a separate Manifest. EA Sparks stated because a check was cut special for a missed invoice in March.

6. Action Items New/ Old Business

7.1 275th Anniversary Celebration-Update

No update provided.

Selectman Simone moved to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) & (d). Seconded by Selectman Burrill . 4-0 with a unanimous vote.

Chairman Marchand declared the meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Sparks

Robyn Sparks
Executive Administrative Assistant