



**Office of the Board of Selectmen
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NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021

TIME: 6:00PM

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

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Chairman Foote called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. In attendance were Selectmen, Lawrence B. Foote; Chairman, Charles R. Melvin Sr.; Vice-Chairman, Kathryn Michaels, Matthew A. Burrill, Edwin Crnolic, Town Administrator Nancy J. Wrigley, and Selectmen's Secretary Diane M. Morin. The public meeting was audio and video taped; the public meeting minutes transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin. Selectman Michaels attended the meeting via Zoom Audio Conferencing.

II. Scheduled Business

A. Fire Department – Internet connection review

Chairman Foote reviewed the issues beginning in 2020 at the Fire Station with the internet connection dropping intermittently. The Board approved installing a new firewall in February 2021.

Selectman Burrill thanked the representatives from RMON and Comcast for meeting with them tonight.

Chief Alcaindinho stated that the issues started with the wireless network. RMON and Comcast have been on site several times trying to resolve the issues. At some point Comcast replaced the cable modem. The firewall was replaced in February and since then there have been issues accessing some sites. He believes the firewall is too restrictive. He was asked to provide a list of sites but is unable to predict which sites will be needed. He stated that he never asked for a new firewall. He expressed his concerns that in an emergency they would not be able to access a site. He stated that this delay could be a life safety issue. He will be recommending that the fire trucks be equipped with laptops and hotspots. He has been told that it is only the Fire Department that seems to have issues with the internet connection. He stated that in previous meetings he recommended the Town get new IT and ISP providers.

Selectman Melvin asked Chief Alcaindinho to speak about a time when a member was filling out a report and the connection was lost. Chief Alcaindinho stated that the member kept losing connection to the internet. The member took snapshots of the screen and Chief Alcaindinho emailed them to the Board. The members are now using their own cellular data to file reports.

Selectman Melvin asked Chief Alcaindinho to explain how emergency calls are received at the station. Chief Alcaindinho explained that it is a on call fire department. In the past pagers were used. Now the Town has 2 means of dispatching emergency calls. One is known as E-Dispatch and the other is "I AM RESPONDING". Both utilize cellular phones to tone out the call. When Rockingham Dispatch tones out a call, it is picked up by E-Dispatch. E-Dispatch will notify members as long as there is an internet connection. He relies on E-Dispatch. The other service "I AM RESPONDING", sends the emergency call through the station. In order for E-Dispatch to work, the 911 operator needs to type in the information. If they do not, then "I AM RESPONDING" will not work. Depending on the nature of the call, certain calls are not routed through "I AM RESPONDING". Therefore, the department relies on E-Dispatch and pagers. Other area fire departments do not seem to have issues.

Mrs. McCarthy addressed the Board. She reminded them that the issues are a life safety issue. Our communications should be 120% better. She explained that there are some sites that they are unable to access such as the state or federal government websites. She stated that they have been asked to notify IT but sometimes they are too busy to make note of the site. She stated that it does not matter if the PC is wired or wireless. If a member is taking training and the connection is lost, they need to start the training over. She stated that the internet disconnection is a liability issue for the Town.

Chief Alcadinho stated that he was unaware that the Police Department had an issue. Secretary Morin stated that she asked the Police Department and was told that they did not have the same issues. She was told that if there is an issue, they reboot the cable modem. Mrs. McCarthy stated that the Police Department did have an issue the same time the Fire Department did on weekend night.

Selectman Michaels stated that the issue is unacceptable. She asked what shows on the PC when the connection is disconnected. Chairman Foote stated that he did not know what the PC showed. Mrs. McCarthy stated that it does not matter if the PC is wired or wireless. She has tried her personal PC and had the same issues.

Darryl from RMON Networks addressed the Board. He stated that reports were run to analyze the outages which included the Fire, Police and Town Hall. They did see correlation between all 3 sites where the internet connection was lost. They are using 2 third party services to monitor the connection. These services are from Amazon and Microsoft. The services are located on the internet and they send a signal to the firewalls at each location. If the firewall does not respond, a message is reported. The report aligned several outages between all 3 sites.

Darryl stated that RMON will adjust the firewall settings to allow more sites in. If needed, it could be disabled. Darryl stressed that it would not be the best solution as it would be a security vulnerability. They could loosen the settings on the guest network but will not be held responsible for any device that is hacked. Darryl will see about adjusting the setting himself on the firewall.

Darryl went on to explain that from the report they are seeing errors with the gateway addresses failing. This is normally an issue with routing on the internet or the modem. He explained how RMON monitors the network. He asked that they be allowed to install a PC to monitor at the Fire Department network from the inside. At one point the issue seemed to happen when it rains and RMON would dispatch a technician to the site. Unfortunately, the internet would be back up before they could get on site.

Tim Costello, from RMON, addressed the Board and stated that RMON is not placing the blame on anyone but is working to resolve the issues. The problem at the Fire Department is they are using a real time web application that is constantly in use. Whereas the Police and Town Hall lose connection but because they do not use an application such as E-Dispatch it is not noticeable. The reports indicate that there is a wider issue than just the Fire Department. The tools they would like to install at the Fire Station will help them monitor the network from the inside while the Amazon and Microsoft services will monitor from the outside. Darryl stated that PC's will re-send the data multiple times before timing out and that is the reason the Police and Town Hall may not notice the interruption.

Tim stated that they would like to share this information with Comcast and work to resolve the issues.

Mr. Bryan Christiansen, Government Relations, from Comcast addressed the Board. He introduced John Grey, Sales Engineer, and Yvette Kahawa, Area Technical Operations Manager. He stated that it seems that there are multiple issues. He stated that Comcast has been monitoring the Fire Departments cable modem for a while and have not noticed any outages. They will setup a meeting with RMON to work on the issues.

John addressed the Board and stated that RMON was on point describing the issues and that a meeting with RMON is the next step. He asked RMON if they could do a network traffic study to see if the bandwidth needs to be increased. A redundant backup maybe needed. Bryan asked to have the other sites sent to him so they can be monitored as well.

Selectman Michaels asked what is meant by the circuit. John answered that it is the physical cable into the building. She asked if the modem has been replaced. Bryan stated it was replaced in April.

Yvette stated that recently Comcast dispatched their network team to optimize the connection at the Fire Department. She asked if there has been any disconnect since they were out there. Comcast's network team are the ones actively monitoring the connection. If so, they may need to be re-engaged to tweak the settings further.

Chief Alcainho stated that Comcast did swap out the modem. The PC that runs "I AM RESPONDING" was on the outside of the firewall through the Comcast modem. When the modem was recently swapped out in April the wireless password was lost. The PC is now connected behind the firewall. He stated that Mrs. McCarthy and he are relieved that it is not just the Fire Department having issues.

Selectman Crnolic asked Chief Alcainho to have "I AM RESPONDING" at the meeting with Comcast and RMON. Chief Alcainho will see what he can do. He stated that when E-Dispatch is down for more than 30 minutes he is notified.

Selectman Burrill stated that if a decision is needed by the Board, Chief Alcainho should let the Secretary know so it does not have to wait until the next meeting.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that since both vendors were onsite there have been some disconnects.

Bryan Christiansen and Aaron Chisling will coordinator the meeting. Selectman Burrill would like to have both Chiefs involved.

B. Interview 2 candidates for the Treasurer's position

Selectman Burrill recommends using the same format as on Candidates' Night. Each candidate will introduce themselves. The Board and the public will then be allowed to ask questions of each candidate.

Mr. William Harding addressed the Board. He stated that he found out about the open position at the March election and that the write-in candidate resigned the position. A neighbor of his informed him that the position was open and that no one had stepped up. Mr. Harding stated that he then spoke with Secretary Morin about the position and confirmed it was an interim position. He did not want the position nor needed the work. He merely wanted to help the Town. He then spoke with Selectman Burrill and explained he would take the position if no one else applied. He recently found out that another person would like the position and he stated that she should have the job.

Selectman Burrill asked Secretary Morin if she intends to remain on as Deputy Treasurer. Secretary Moring stated that she does not believe she qualifies for the position at this time. Mr. Harding is willing to take on the Deputy Treasurer's position.

Selectman Michaels asked if the Deputy Treasurer was elected. Secretary Morin stated that the Treasurer chooses the Deputy.

Ms. McCullough addressed the Board. We have been waiting for over 2 months for the position to be filled. The Board advertised for the position and Ms. Gonyer replied that she was interested and is qualified for the position. Mr. Harding has stated that he would be willing to be the Deputy so why is the Board discussing this. There are no other candidates. Chairman Foote stated that there is a process to follow. Ms. McCullough reiterated that there is only one candidate what is the issue?

Ms. Gonyer addressed the Board and reviewed her qualifications so the Board and public would see that she is qualified for the position. Below are her qualifications that she stated:

1. Have a background in accounting practices and reporting: I have 8 years of Municipal Accounting experience working with over 100 Massachusetts City/Town Accountants, Auditors, and Bookkeepers
2. Have a background in bookkeeping: As a small business owner for the past 14 years, I have performed all the bookkeeping duties for the business
3. Working knowledge of banking procedures: I have over 5 years' experience working for banks such as Arlington Trust and Washington Savings Bank in various positions including as an Operations Clerk
4. Working knowledge of office software applications: I am well versed in many Accounting software applications as well as the MS Office Suite
5. Able to work with other departments in a timely manner: My full-time position requires me to coordinate with multiple teams and meet deadlines. I coordinate with teams worldwide.
6. Computer skills a must: I have a bachelor's degree in Computer Science
7. Background in investing is desirable - I can learn what is needed for the interim position.

Mr. Harding addressed the Board. He stated that he has over 40 years as a consultant. He has a master's degree and teamwork was a part of his profession. He has a degree in accounting from many years ago. He stated that his experience does not come close to Lisa's experience and would be willingly to be her deputy.

Ms. Hughes addressed the Board. Asked the candidates their availability to work during the week. Would they be able to put in extra time to bring the accounts up to date? Mr. Harding stated that he is available because he is retired. Selectmen Michaels asked if he resides in New Hampshire. Mr. Harding stated that he takes an eight week vacation once a year. Ms. Gonyer stated that she can put the time in that is necessary to bring the accounts up to date.

Selectman Michaels thanked both candidates.

Selectman Michaels moved to vote to appoint one of the candidates to the Treasurer's position in public at this meeting. Seconded by Selectman Burrill for discussion.

Selectman Michaels stated she has no issue voting tonight in public.

Chairman Foote stated that the vote should be in non-public. He stated that it is not an elected official. Selectman Burrill and Michaels stated that it is. The Board is appointing a Treasurer that would have been elected.

Selectman Michaels stated that she has firsthand knowledge that Ms. Gonyer has experience in these matters.

Selectman Melvin would like to discuss the candidates in a non-public session.

Selectman Burrill – aye, Selectman Michaels – aye. Selectman Crnolic – nay, Selectman Melvin – nay, Chairman Foote – nay. The motion failed.

Selectman Burrill moved to appoint Lisa Gonyer as Interim Treasurer until such time in 2022 the new treasurer is sworn in. Seconded for discussion by Selectman Michaels.

There was no discussion.

Selectman Burrill – aye, Selectman Michaels – aye. Selectman Crnolic – nay, Selectman Melvin – nay, Chairman Foote – nay. The motion failed.

Ms. Gonyer asked the Board to explain why the Board does not think she is qualified for the position. Selectman Crnolic stated that because we are hiring it should be discussed in non-public. Ms. Gonyer stated that this is an appointed position and has no problem with it being discussed in public.

Selectman Crnolic moved to go into non-public after the public meeting to discuss the open treasurer's position. Seconded by Selectman Michaels for discussion.

Selectman Michaels stated that by doing this in a non-public session we could be doing it illegally. It was her understanding from an email the Board received regarding the appointment of the treasurer should be done in public. Chairman Foote stated that the Board has a right to discuss the matter in non-public. Secretary Morin state that they can only go into non-public if it will ruin someone's reputation.

Ms. Hughes addressed the Board and expressed concern if the Board delays filing the position. There is a lot that needs to be accomplished before the year end. Delaying will only make it a harder process for the staff at the Town Hall. The delay will also affect departments and their ability to know what is left in their budgets.

Selectman Burrill suggested that the non-public be held now so that those individuals will not have to wait for the Board's decision.

Selectman Crnolic rescinded his motion.

Selectman Crnolic made a motion to go into non-public but the motion was not seconded.

Selectman Melvin stated that he did not want to decide tonight.

Ms. McCullough asked why the Board was going into non-public. Selectman Crnolic stated the RSA91-A:3 II (b) Hiring a public employee. Ms. McCullough, Town Administrator Wrigley, Secretary Morin, and Ms. Hughes stated the Board is not hiring an employee. They are appointing a person. Ms. McCullough explained again that they are replacing an elected official therefore it needs to be done in public. Selectman Burrill stated that a public official is done in front of the public. As an elected official your reputation is not a reason to go into non-public.

Ms. McCullough asked Selectman Melvin why he does not want to decide tonight. Selectman Melvin did not respond.

Selectman Crnolic rescinded his motion.

Chairman Foote moved to appoint Mr. William Harding as the Interim Treasurer and to appoint Ms. Lisa Gonyer as the Deputy Treasurer. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic for discussion.

Chairman Foote stated that Mr. Harding is more qualified than Ms. Gonyer. Ms. Gonyer would be the deputy. Selectman Michaels stated that she disagrees with Chairman Foote. With no disrespect to Mr. Harding, Ms. Gonyer has been on the Board of Selectmen and can come up to speed quickly.

Selectman Crnolic – aye, Selectman Melvin – aye, Chairman – Foote – aye. Selectman Burrill – nay, Selectman Michaels – nay. The motion passed.

Ms. Gonyer stated that three members of the Board have made it obvious that they would not appoint her to any position within the Town. She stated that those 3 members have made this personal. She stated that she did not say that she would accept the deputy position. She stated that Mr. Harding in this meeting clearly stated that he would defer to her. Chairman Foote stated that he went by the qualification and offered it to Mr. Harding.

Mr. Harding asked for Ms. Gonyer to not leave the meeting. Ms. Gonyer remained. Mr. Harding stated that he would appreciate the opportunity to work with Ms. Gonyer as her Deputy Treasurer as she is more qualified than he is. Mr. Harding conceded the role to Ms. Gonyer.

Selectman Crnolic moved to appoint Ms. Lisa Gonyer as the Interim Treasurer and to appoint Mr. William Harding as Deputy Treasurer effective May 5, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Michaels for discussion.

Ms. Gonyer thanked Mr. Harding for his words and if appointed would look forward to working with Mr. Harding as her deputy.

Selectman Michaels – aye, Selectman Burrill – aye, Selectman Crnolic – aye, Chairman Foote – aye. Selectman Melvin --- nay.

Mr. Gonyer addressed the Board and stated that 3 members of the Board have already decide how they will vote before they come to the meeting and he feels that is wrong.

C. ECO update

Mrs. McCarthy updated the Board with the latest status of COVID-19 cases at the schools.

On May 7, the Governor will be holding a briefing on the State of Emergency (SoE). The SoE will still be in place so that municipalities that have personnel working at vaccine clinics will still be reimbursed the wages paid to the personnel. The SoE will probably remain in effect until sometime in September. The briefing will have updates on many events/activities.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that she spoke with Kingston about the Memorial Day parade and they do not want to go out of town. Newton can still have a rolling parade with a small ceremony at the Willow Grove cemetery on Whittier Street. Social distancing is recommended. Police Chief Jewett informed Mrs. McCarthy that the police could do a 5 gun salute.

The State suggested that each municipality review the updates to the re-opening guidelines when they are available after May 7th. Municipalities can use stricter rules than the State but cannot be less restrictive.

Remote meeting executive order may be changing after the briefing on May 7.

Selectman Burrill stated that the if the Board approves, the Town will hold a rolling parade with a brief ceremony at the cemetery. The plan is to have the rolling parade start at 10:00am from the Safety Complex and finish at the Whittier Cemetery. There will be no marchers. There were no objections.

D. Review Household Hazardous Waste Bids

Secretary Morin stated Transfer Station Manager Gagnon was not able to make the meeting. He recommended accepting the bid from Care Environmental Services. She explained that the spreadsheet with the cost was based on the 2019 collection results. The actual cost will probably be different.

Chairman Foote asked if this company was the same one, we used last time. Secretary Morin stated yes.

Selectman Crnolic moved to accept the household hazardous waste day bid from Care Environmental Services not to exceed \$30,000.00 of which \$25,000.00 to come from Warrant Article 7 and the remainder from the Transfer Station budget. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

E. Communication between Town Administration and Department Heads

Chairman Foote read the following email that he sent to Department Heads and Town Administration.

"From this day on no one from town hall Administration will be allowed to talk to departments heads there's to much confusion between bos secretary and town administrator and department heads if you have issues with department heads you go to their liaisons until further notice thank you"

He explained that recently there was confusion on whether to have the Fire Chief order the vehicle exhaust system for the station. He was told he had approval. Was then told to hold off as the funds have not been transferred to the account. The other issue is with purchasing items and when a requisition is required or requires sealed bids.

Town Administrator Wrigley stated that there is a purchase policy that the Board signed off on. She was instructed by the Board to enforce the policy. Recently a requisition was submitted for a LifePak Monitor Defibrillator device for the ambulance that would have required sealed bids due to the cost.

Selectman Burrill stated that the Board can override the policy if it has prior knowledge about the purchase.

Chief Alcadinho addressed the Board and stated that previously the system had been working fine. He explained the current defibrillator is outdated and has been taken out of service. The requisition was turned into the Town Administrator who sent it back because it was over the \$5,000.00 requirement. If the device is not purchased, then the ambulance will lose a qualification. He would like to see the amount limit of \$5,000.00 be increased to at least \$15,000.00. The defibrillator that is needed now is a specialty item.

Chairman Foote stated that they have 3 quotes and if it went out to bid the Board would probably have accepted the same bid.

Selectman Burrill recommends that the next time a department has a purchase over \$5,000.00 and it is a specialty item, they should bring it before the Board first. The Board can then decide if it should go out to bid or not.

Chief Alcadinho asked who the Department Head should see for any concerns or questions.

Town Administrator Wrigley stated that she had no knowledge of the requisition for the defibrillator and was not told it was an emergency order. She returned the requisition to the Fire Department because they did not follow the bid policy and they used the wrong form. Chief Alcadinho stated that Town Administrator Wrigley did her job and that he forgot about the \$5,000.00 limit.

Chairman Foote asked where the funds are to come from for the new AED defibrillator. Town Administrator Wrigley stated the request is to come from the Ambulance Revolving Fund but only the Board can approve the funds to come the account.

The Board agreed that no changes will be made on how the Department Heads communicate with Town Hall Administration. Any policy changes will be made by the Board and not by an individual member of the Board.

F. Fire Warden invoice

Selectman Melvin moved to sign the Fire Warden invoice in the amount of \$62.24. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

G. License to sell pistols and revolvers

Secretary Morin informed the Board that no inspections by the Building Inspector or Fire Department are required for this specific home business.

Selectman Crnolic moved to sign the license to sell pistols and revolvers for Mr. Sedat Uguz of 57 Pond Street. Seconded by Melvin with a unanimous vote.

III. Other Business

A. Eagle Scout project

Selectman Burrill explained that this was a project brought before the Board a while ago. The young man is going to build a patio at the Town Beach for his Eagle Scout project. The Chairman needs to sign the beneficiary form for him.

Selectman Burrill moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the beneficiary form. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

B. Manifest

Selectman Melvin moved to sign vendor manifest dated May 5, 2021 in the amount of \$122,346.60. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to sign Cable Revolving Fund vendor manifest dated May 5, 2021 in the amount of \$5,773.14. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to sign payroll manifest pay period April 11-24, 2021 with a pay date of April 29, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

C. Requisitions

Selectman Melvin moved to sign requisition #2021-0101 in the amount of \$1,745.47 for Fire Department to purchase new radio for new fire truck. Funds to come from Fire Department budget line item 4220312. Seconded by Selectman Burrill with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Crnolic asked what the fund balance is for the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Town Administrator Wrigley stated the fund balance is over \$44,000.00. The cost of the AED defibrillator is \$33,937.51.

Secretary Morin asked Chief Alcainho why the recommendation is not the least expensive device. Chief Alcainho stated that the members demoed several devices and recommended the one from Stryker Medical because it had more features, ease of use and would be able to communicate with hospitals via cellular services. Selectman Burrill stated that value to the Town is taken into consideration and the quote may not be the lowest.

Selectman Crnolic moved to sign requisition number 2021-0102 in the amount of \$33,937.51. Funds to come from the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

D. Appointments

Selectman Melvin moved to appoint Sandra Estabrook to the Conservation Commission for a 3-year term. Term to expire on April 30, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to appoint Lawrence B. Foote as the Emergency Management Director for a 3-year term. Term to expire on April 30, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to appoint Trisha McCarthy as the Deputy Emergency Management Director for a 3-year term. Term to expire on April 30, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Michaels with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Burrill stated that an employee evaluation needs to be done for the Mrs. McCarthy. Chairman Foote will submit the evaluation for her. Town Administrator Wrigley will submit the evaluation for the Emergency Management Director Foote. Both evaluations will be presented to the Board at a later meeting.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Selectman Burrill moved to accept the non-public and public meeting minutes dated April 20, 2021 as written. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

V. Adjourn

Selectman Burrill moved to adjourn at 8:02pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin
Board of Selectmen Secretary