



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

**DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2022**

**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>

**I. Call to Order**

Selectman Burrill called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. In attendance were Selectmen Kathryn Michaels, Matthew A. Burrill, Edwin Crnolic, Town Administrator Nancy J. Wrigley, and Selectmen's Secretary Diane M. Morin. The public meeting was videotaped; the public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

Selectman Michaels attended the meeting via Zoom due to health issues.

Selectman Burrill informed the public that the Board has been trying to have a meeting since last week but has not been able to assemble a quorum. Because there is Town business that needs to be handled, the remaining members, Selectman Michaels, Crnolic and himself are calling an emergency meeting.

Selectman Michaels stated that under RSA 91-A:2, II, allows the Board to meet for an emergency meeting.

**Selectman Michaels moved to appoint Selectman Burrill as interim chairman until the next Board of Selectmen's meeting is held where a chairman can be appointed by members of the Board. This is due to a conflict of interest of a certain member of the Board and due to illness of another member of the Board. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**II. Scheduled Business**

**A. Residents – Complaint**

Selectman Burrill stated that the Town received 2 complaints from residents concerning an elected official. He explained that a complaint is usually handled by the Town Administrator but because the complaint is against an elected official, the Board will be hiring a third party to investigate the allegations.

**Selectman Michaels moved to authorize Town Administrator Wrigley to engage the law firm of Jackson Lewis P.C. to investigate the complaints filed. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic for discussion.**

Ms. Laura Hillard addressed the Board. She stated that she was one of the complainants. She stated that the Town was made aware of a previous complaint that was filed by another person in October of 2021. That complainant was told that they would need to file a formal complaint at the Town Hall. She stated that the elected official, when made aware of the complaint, began to delete the social media posts that he had posted. Ms. Hillard stated that her concern moving forward is anyone filing a complaint will have their name released to the accused. She explained that her name was shown to the accused and later

she received what she felt was a threatening text message from him. She would like to see the process changed to protect the identity of the complainant for as long as possible.

She went on to ask why the Town has not taken the Town owned equipment from him.

Selectman Burrill stated that as far as the complaint from October is concerned, Town Administrator Wrigley did reach out to the complainant for more information but never heard back from them. Town Administrator Wrigley stated that she sent the form to the complainant 3 times. Selectman Burrill stated that the door is not closed should the person want to provide more information.

Selectman Burrill stated that if anyone feels threatened, they should report it to the police.

Town Administrator Wrigley stated that she reached out to Town Counsel and was never told to not provide the names of the complainants. She was told that the accused has the right to see the complaint.

Selectman Michaels stated that as individual members we cannot make any decisions on behalf of the Board. Decisions need to be made as a Board.

Mr. Mike Pivero addressed the Board. He believes strongly that there are other people in Town that would have come forward but because of the way this situation was handled, they will not, out of fear that their name will be given to the accused. He would suggest that any future complaints that come into the Town be handled such that the complainant's identity is not provided to the accused until necessary.

Selectman Michaels stated the Board is limited legally on what they can and cannot do.

Mr. Mike Pivero asked if someone could file a complaint without signing the form? Selectman Michaels stated that the Board would need to seek legal advice on this issue.

Ms. Lisa Gonyer addressed the Board. She stated that during her tenure as a Selectman, the complaint form was developed and adopted by the Board to streamline the process.

Selectman Michaels stated that the Board is taking the accusations very seriously.

**The motion passed. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**Selectman Michaels moved, on the advisement of counsel, what is considered best practices, to place town employee Lawrence B. Foote on paid administrative leave during the investigation effective immediately. This administrative leave includes his position as a member of the Fire Department and Emergency Management Director. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**Selectman Burrill moved to direct all town employees and officials to cooperate fully with the investigation of these alleged activities as we move forward and which may include surrendering any town devices such as laptops, smartphones, whatever maybe required. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

Selectman Burrill stated that the 3 members present did try to move on these complaints last week but because of a lack of quorum was unable to.

**Selectman Michaels moved to have the new policy committee draft a code of conduct policy. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

Selectman Crnolic explained why he was unavailable to attend the meeting last week. He stated that he was attending required training for his full-time position.

Selectman Burrill stated that members of the Board need to better communicate with other members.

Emergency Management Deputy Director (EMDD) Trisha McCarthy addressed the Board. She explained that Homeland Security, FEMA, Seabrook and the EOC are in the middle of several different things. She would like to know if the Board would allow her to sign any documents in place of Mr. Foote.

**Selectman Crnolic moved to appoint EMDD McCarthy as acting Emergency Management Director. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

Town Administrator Wrigley asked the Board if she should notify other departments to not include Mr. Foote on any emails. Selectman Burrill stated that he is on administrative leave so should not be receiving emails concerning the fire department or EOC.

Selectman Burrill stated that Selectman Foote is still a member of the Board of Selectmen because he is an elected official and cannot be removed from office. Selectman Michaels stated that there is no administrative leave for an elected official.

Ms. Hillard asked if access to any related town business is still going to Mr. Foote? Selectman Burrill stated that they need to seek legal advice on how to proceed.

**B. New hire – Cable Operator**

**Selectman Crnolic moved to hire Kevin O'Rourke as a Cable Operator I, Grade III, Step 5 effective March 7, 2022. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**C. Agreement for groundwater monitoring at the Transfer Station**

**Selectman Crnolic moved to authorize the acting chairman to sign the Groundwater Management agreement with R. W. Gillespie & Associates to monitor the groundwater in and around the Transfer Station. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**III. Other Business**

**A. Manifest**

**Selectman Crnolic moved to sign vendor manifest dated March 1, 2022, in the amount of \$783,047.40 of which \$731,037.00 goes towards the March Sanborn Regional School District payment. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**Selectman Crnolic moved to sign Cable Revolving Fund vendor manifest dated March 1, 2022, in the amount of \$941.50. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**Selectman Crnolic moved to sign payroll manifest pay period February 13-26, 2022, with a pay date of March 3, 2022. Total payroll is \$53,769.83 which includes \$182.70 ARPA administrative costs and \$3,225.00 ARPA payroll for vaccine clinic held on February 13, 2022. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

**Selectmen's non-public and public meeting minutes dated February 15, 2022**

**Selectman Burrill moved to accept the non-public and public meeting minutes dated February 15, 2022, as written. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic.**

EMD McCarthy asked if the cost of the wireless credit card readers for the Town Clerk office was covered. Selectman Burrill stated that was done at the last meeting.

**The motion passed. Michaels – aye, Burrill – aye, Crnolic – aye.**

**V. Announcements**

Selectman Crnolic and Burrill thanked Selectman Michaels for her service to the Town.

EMD McCarthy announced that there will be a vaccine clinic at the Fire Station on March 13 from 9am – 1pm. She has also scheduled a cleaning service to sanitize the station after the elections and clinic.

Selectman Michaels thanked the staff at the Town Hall for their support during her term as a Selectman. She knows that this is not the best time for the town, but she has high hopes for the town moving forward from this issue.

VI. Adjourn

**Selectman Burrill moved to adjourn at 6:45pm. Seconded by Selectman Crnolic.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin  
Board of Selectmen Secretary