



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

DATE: Tuesday, January 3, 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>

I. Call to Order

Chairman Burrill called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. In attendance were Selectmen Matthew A. Burrill, Chairman, Robert Marchand Jr, Vice-Chairman, Charles R. Melvin Sr., Michael Connolly, Mark Andrews, Town Administrator, and Selectmen's Secretary Diane M. Morin. The public meeting was videotaped. The non-public session minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin. The public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

Selectman Lawrence Foote was not present.

Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) – Reputation

Selectman Marchand moved to go into non-public session at 6:00pm under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) – Reputation. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.

Selectman Marchand moved to close the non-public session at 7:08pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.

II. Scheduled Business

A. Seal non-public minutes

Selectman Marchand moved that the Board just came out of a non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) and that they keep all matters discussed confidential until in the opinion of the majority of the Board the circumstances no longer apply except to provide the Bookkeeper/Payroll Administrator with the necessary information for payroll. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

B. ARPA/EOC update

Acting Emergency Manager Director (AEMD) Trisha McCarthy addressed the Board. She stated that the ARPA workgroup has not met since the Board's last meeting.

She stated that she worked with the Bookkeeper and reconciled the ARPA funds. Now her spreadsheet and the Bookkeeper's match up.

She reported that a new grant application for the electronic message board usage has been submitted to Homeland Security in the amount of \$49,040.54. She hopes that the Town will pass the 2 warrant articles

she is proposing. If they pass, then the funds can be moved into the new fund so that the EOC can access those monies to run the EOC.

She reported that the EOC was activated during the storm on December 23 and 24, 2022. The EOC utilized the reverse 911 to inform residents that the EOC warming center was open should they need it. She stated that if residents did not receive the call, they can contact her at the EOC to be added to the Alert Now call list.

The grant application for the twin culvert on Wilders Grove has been completed. She thanked the residents that provided photos of the problems with the culvert and if anyone has photos, they can email them to her at TMcCarthy@NewtonNH.net.

She reminded people that if they don't feel good to stay home.

Selectman Melvin asked about the requisition for the septic system design for the Transfer Station. She stated that it should be in tonight's Board vendor manifest.

Selectman Marchand thanked AEMD McCarthy, Police Sgt Chris Maguire, Road Agent Pivero and his crew along with the Fire Department for keeping the town as safe as can be during the recent storm. There were several areas in town that suffered a power loss due to down trees. AEMD McCarthy stated that they learned a few things that they will need to improve upon but overall, they were successful in keeping the town safe.

Residents were surprised and pleased to receive a follow up call from the EOC providing them with a status update on when power would be restored.

The Board thanked all those that responded during the storm.

C. Review – DOT proposal for Gould Hill Road and Amesbury Road

Chairman Burrill stated that the DOT held a public hearing in July of 2020 to take public input on how to reconfigure the intersection of route 108, Amesbury Road and Maple Avenue. The Board then sent a letter suggesting a 4-way stop be used.

The DOT will be holding a public hearing to take public input on the design for the intersection. The public hearing will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2023, beginning at 6:00pm.

Secretary Morin stated that the DOT design now includes removing the utility pole at the bottom of Gould Hill and Amesbury Road. Currently, the pole is in the middle of the road.

The DOT is encouraging the Board be present at the public hearing.

D. Assessor -- 2023 General Assessing Contract and Cyclical Contract

TA Andrews stated that there are 2 contracts being worked on with DRA, town counsel and Ms. Christine Murdough, the Assessor. One is the General Assessing contract and the other is the Cyclical Contract. This contract is for the assessor to perform site walks for the purpose of gathering assessing data for the town.

Selectman Melvin asked what the cost of the contracts are. TA Andrews stated that \$30,000.00 is for the general assessing contract and \$15,000.00 for the cyclical contract. The cyclical contract would allow the assessor to do approximately a quarter the town.

Selectman Melvin asked who receives this money. TA Andrews stated that the previous assessor retired and that Ms. Christine Murdough, who worked with the former assessor, has taken over.

Selectman Melvin and Chairman Burrill asked if we would be paying for 2 people and what the cost would be. TA Andrews stated that it would be a combination of both contracts for a total of \$45,000.00 for Ms. Murdough. Both Selectmen would like more clarification before signing the contract.

Mrs. Trisha McCarthy addressed the Board and stated that she believed at a prior Board meeting when this topic was brought up it was understood that the \$15,000.00 would pay for the Assistant Assessor.

E. Timber yield tax levy – New Boston Road, Tax map 3-1-12

Secretary Morin stated that the timber harvest on New Boston Road is complete. The Board needs to authorize the Town Clerk to collect the taxes on the timber yield.

Selectman Marchand moved to authorize the tax collector to collect the timber yield tax levy in the amount of \$3,819.28 for tax map 3-1-12. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

F. Review proposed

a. Updated Executive & EMD budgets

TA Andrews reviewed the update to the Executive budget. The salary line item was increased to cover the salary position for the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Marchand moved to accept as proposed the updated 2023 Executive Budget for inclusion in the proposed 2023 Town operating budget. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

AEMD McCarthy reviewed the changes to the 2023 proposed EMD Budget. There are additional costs that needed to be included. The EOC has a vehicle that will need maintenance and fuel, so a line was added to the budget. The fire station has one internet connection, and it is shared between the EOC and the Fire Department. For this reason, the EOC will pay 25% of the cost for the internet. Other line items were added such as grant matches, office supplies, and equipment.

Selectman Marchand moved to accept as proposed the updated 2023 EMD Budget for inclusion in the proposed 2023 Town operating budget. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

b. Default and Proposed Operating Budget

TA Andrews reviewed the proposed and default operating budget for 2023. He stated that costs to run the Town have increased. Some increase are for sand and salt, salaries, summer and winter equipment rentals, insurances including NH retirement, worker's compensation and property liability. Utility and fuel costs have also risen. The proposed budget includes 2 new police officers.

The cost difference to operate the Town from 2022 to 2023 is over \$500,000.00.

Chairman Burrill stated that most of the budgets were level except for salary and operational cost increases. For 2023 the difference between the proposed and default budget is \$370,126.00.

Mr. Joe Simone asked if the School District could come to a meeting and explain where the school funds are being spent. Selectman Marchand stated that the Selectmen are looking at options for schooling.

Mr. Simone asked about using some of the unassigned fund balance to offset the budget and what is the recommended percentage that DRA states the Town have in reserve. Secretary Morin stated that the Town has about 10% in reserve. The Board can use some of the funds to offset taxes once the tax rate is set.

The Board discussed how to reduce the budgets and concluded that the budgets are in line with the economic conditions. The Board will present the proposed and default budgets as is.

c. Warrant Articles

TA Andrews and Chairman Burrill reviewed the warrant articles. Some of the articles have no tax impact because the funds would come from the unassigned fund balance or specific funds.

Mr. Joe Simone asked about warrant article 12 which is adopting an ethics standards and what a conflict of interest would be. Chairman Burrill provided an example.

Secretary Morin asked if warrant article 13 passes would it reduce the budget the police salary line item? Chairman Burrill stated that it would for this year.

AEMD McCarthy expressed concern with the articles that are for Emergency Operation Center. Specifically, the concern is if article 15 which dissolves the expendable trust and article 16 which creates a new revolving fund. What would happen if article 15 passed but article 16 does not? What would happen to the funds from article 15? Selectman Marchand opinioned that the money can be moved to the newly created fund. TA Andrews will reach out to DRA and town counsel for an answer.

She asked to have the 2 articles closer to the beginning of the warrant articles. Secretary Morin will move re-order the warrant articles.

Secretary Morin asked the Board if they would like to sponsor warrant article 17 which will ask the voters if they would vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 with the funds to come from unassigned fund balances. If the Board does not sponsor the article the resident would need to bring forth a petition warrant article by January 10, 2023.

Chairman Burrill suggested it be a citizen's petition. The Board agreed and it will be removed from the warrant. TA Andrews will reach out to the citizen to inform him that a citizen's petition warrant article is needed.

Selectman Melvin stated that he is working on a citizen's petition warrant article concerning workforce housing.

The Board will present the 2023 warrant articles with the requested changes to the voters.

G. Memo – Non-resident request from December 20th meeting

TA Andrews stated that he reached out to Primex to see if it was possible to allow the request from a non-resident to clear, cleanup and/or hold a private event on town owned property. The recommendation from Primex was to not allow this type of activity due to liability.

Chairman Burrill asked if a company that removes junk could be utilized to cleanup the property and then ask the requestor to pay the bill. Selectman Melvin and Marchand stated that a landscaping company would be more appropriate for this type of work.

Selectman Melvin stated that any contractor that would be hired would need to carry insurance. Chairman Burrill stated that maybe our current landscaper could provide a quote. TA Andrews stated that cleaning the property could be covered by the contractor's insurance, but it would not cover the non-residents actual event which included the request for a bon fire.

Mrs. McCarthy addressed the Board and stated that the Boy Scouts used the Busch Farm for a weekend camping event. They provided insurance but the Conservation Commission hired the fire department to be onsite while the Boy Scouts held a bon fire. She expressed concern that if the Town does allow for this type of cleanup there will be other town owned properties that abutters may want cleanup as well.

Selectman Melvin suggested we sell the property to the abutter. He will ask them if they are still interested.

Selectman Marchand moved to authorize the Town Administrator to notify Renee Mueller that due to liability, the Board denied her request to clear, cleanup or hold a private event on town owned property at 74 Smith Corner Road. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye. Melvin abstained because the requestor is a relative.

H. 2023 IRS mileage rate

Secretary Morin stated that the IRS is raising the mileage rate to 65.5 cents per mile.

Selectman Marchand moved to approve the new mileage rate from 62.5 cents to 65.5 cents per mile effective January 1, 2023. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous vote.

III. Other Business

A. Thornell Road

Selectman Marchand stated that he spoke with the buyer for tax map 12-1-1 and was told that his attorney is researching the ownership of the property to ensure that the prior owner has no rights to the property.

B. Manifest

Selectman Melvin moved to sign vendor manifest dated January 3, 2023, in the amount of \$897,493.04 of which \$755,030.00 goes towards the January 2023 Sanborn Regional School District payment. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to sign Cable Revolving Fund vendor manifest dated January 3, 2023, in the amount of \$578.81. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to sign Uniformed Fire Watch Revolving Fund vendor manifest dated January 3, 2023, in the amount of \$77.00. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Melvin moved to sign payroll manifest pay period December 18-31, 2022, with a pay date of January 5, 2023. Total payroll is \$56,750.41 which includes \$264.92 ARPA administrative costs. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Selectman Melvin moved to accept the non-public and public meeting minutes dated December 20, 2022, as written. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

V. Other Business -- Continued

Chairman Burrill moved to authorize the Trustees of the Trust Funds to release a check in the amount of \$8,000.00 to Niklaus Painting and Construction for work done on the handicap ramp. Seconded by Selectman Marchand with a unanimous vote.

AEMD McCarthy asked that in the future any requisition that is APRA related and Board approved that she receives a copy of the signed requisition.

Selectman Melvin stated that the plan for the septic design at the Transfer Station has been approved by the State.

VI. Adjourn

Selectman Marchand moved to adjourn at 8:45pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin
Board of Selectmen Secretary