



**Office of the Board of Selectmen  
2 Town Hall Road, Newton, NH 03858  
Tel: 382-4405 Option 5 Fax 382-9140**

[www.newton-nh.gov](http://www.newton-nh.gov)

**NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**DATE: TUESDAY, March 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>

**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, Jim O'Mara, Interim Town Administrator, and Selectmen's Secretary Diane M. Morin. The public meeting was videotaped; the non-public session minutes and the public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

Selectman Lawrence Foote was not present.

Chairman Burrill joined the meeting via Zoom and stated that he was alone in the room.

**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 6:16pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Vice Chairman Marchand moved to go into non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) – Hiring of any public employee at 6:16pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Vice Chairman Marchand moved to close the non-public session at 6:19pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye. Motion passed 4-0.**

**Vice Chairman Marchand moved to go into non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) – Reputation at 6:20pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Vice Chairman Marchand moved to close the non-public session at 6:40pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye. Motion passed 4-0.**

**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 (a) - (c) and that they keep all matters discussed confidential until in the opinion of the majority of the Board the circumstances no longer apply. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**B. ARPA/EOC update**

Acting Emergency Management Director (AEMD) Trisha McCarthy stated that the AED have arrived. Deputy Fire Chief Kane will be replacing the old ones. She explained the reason for the new AED is because the ambulance company, Trinity, and the Town had incompatible units. If the first responders had to use their AED, they would have to send the unit with the patient. Getting them back was proving to be difficult. Now that the units are compatible, they will not have to be transported with the patient.

The rescue boat will be delivered sometime in April. There are 17 certified boat safety personnel that will be able to operate the boat.

The flat screen security TV's have been installed at the Police Station. They are still waiting for installation of the rest of the equipment.

The new voting booths have arrived and will be used at the March 14 Town elections. The privacy curtains will not be delivered until April. The company sent panels that can be used as a privacy screen.

The deposit for the generator for the Transfer Station was hand delivered by her. The unit is on order.

She stated that the EOC has been active for the past 14 days due to inclement weather. The EOC warming center was available for residents.

The State has received the E-911 application that the Board approved at the last meeting. The State will be setting up a time to be onsite for training on the system. This system will be used to alert residents that sign up for the service of any Town emergency and some non-emergencies such as the Transfer Station closing. Once the service is available, a link will be posted on the Town's EMD website for residents to sign up.

She reminded everyone that the pandemic is still here. If you are not feeling well, please stay home. Should you test positive for the virus, please contact the EOC so contact tracing can be done. The information provided will be kept confidential.

A new grant was made available for security systems that she will be applying for. This is a matching grant.

Selectman Marchand asked if the Town receives the grant, can those funds be used towards the security cameras that were recently purchased. EMD McCarthy stated no because they would need to be associated with the EOC. The Town Hall would probably qualify for the grant because it is a warming/cooling center. The safety complex would qualify because the EOC is housed there.

She encouraged voters to approve the warrant articles 2, 7 and 8.

Selectman Marchand stated that warrant articles 7 & 8 will not increase taxes.

AEMD McCarthy stated that the funds the Town receives for using the electronic message board would go into the new fund being requested in article 8. The funds could then be used to keep the EOC running.

AEMD McCarthy stated that she ran into an issue when trying to send a message out to residents about the transfer station opening late on March 4. There was an issue with the system that has since been resolved.

**C. Review Proposed Personnel Policy**

Interim Town Administrator Jim O'Mara addressed the Board and stated that the Town has been having trouble hiring employees. By offering benefits to employees who work 35 or more hours, the Town is more in line with other municipalities.

**Selectman Marchand moved to sign the amended personnel policy which changes the number of hours per week to be considered a full time employee from 40 to 35. Seconded by Selectman Connolly. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**D. 2023 Voter's Guide**

Chairman Burrill stated that the Town usually post a voter's guide to assist resident in making an informed decision when voting.

Secretary Morin read the following to be included in the 2023 Voter's Guide.

A NO vote would mean...

\$4,056,763 will be raised to fund the operating costs of the town. This amount is insufficient to maintain the same level of service to which we are accustomed.

The default budget would require the town to absorb all of the increases in utilities, gasoline, diesel, heat fuels, goods and services. In doing so Newton town government will have to curb, reduce, or eliminate selected services.

We are experiencing great difficulty recruiting and retaining employees primarily because we are competing with surrounding New Hampshire communities and Massachusetts communities that offer higher pay. Simply said Newton is not an attractive employer. The default budget does not contain the planned increase to our wage scale which would make us somewhat appealing to job seekers.

Our call fire fighters, six to be exact, were poached by border towns. Lured to Kingston and Danville for the pay and in some cases benefits. Call departments, across the country, are becoming a thing of the past. Transitioning all call departments to a hybrid model of a combination of full time and call. If we want to maintain the current model; we must become competitive.

In addition, due to the historic inflation we are all experiencing, the default budget would result in reductions in public safety personnel, a reduction in the number of emergency vehicles that respond to calls for assistance. Trinity EMS currently provides hospital transports are currently free of charge, are planning to start charging communities for transports. For which there is no funding.

Our police department planned for hiring two additional officers to increase shift coverage so that no officer will be required to work alone and to free up seasoned officers to devote their time to the increasing number of cases requiring investigation. These initiatives will not occur.

The transfer station may be required to reduce hours of operation to cover a 35% to 40% increase in the cost of hauling and disposal totaling approximately \$80,000. There is a projected 30% increase in the cost of recycling and a 50% increase in the cost of recycling tires. We may be forced to increase the fee schedule.

The cost of winter maintenance materials (sand & salt) has nearly doubled creating a situation whereby the town's road agent will be unable to provide appropriate attention to road improvements. Summer weather work such as roadside drainage, culvert maintenance, swale cleaning and paving will have to be scaled back due to the lack of appropriate funding to accomplish these services.

Although the Recreation Department has a small budget, the commission planned to start special mailings throughout the year to advise the community of available programs and special events. This enhanced communication effort cannot be undertaken due to a lack of funding.

Our Library Trustees have expressed concern about having to work with a default budget. Purchasing fewer books and DVDs, fewer programs, including supplies needed for children's story times. Having to

choose between child and adult programs. The discontinuance of digital lending and genealogy services. Reduce the number of current learning and research books Newton students rely on.

By voting against the proposed 2023 operating budget in support of the default budget the town's elected officials, appointed officials and municipal employees cannot provide the same quality and level of services you are accustomed to.

Chairman Burrill stated that if the proposed budget does not pass the Town will not shut down but it will make it more difficult to keep services going. Like everyone else the Town is feeling the effects of rising costs.

Selectman Marchand stated that the Town will need to cut back on services just as any resident would.

Selectman Connolly stated that to move the Town forward we need to be more competitive with hiring.

The Board agreed to the above verbiage be included in the 2023 Voter's Guide.

III. Other Business

**A. Veteran's Tax Credit**

**Selectman Marchand moved to sign veterans tax credit for tax map 13-3-13 beginning tax year 2023. Seconded by Selectman Connolly. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Selectman Marchand moved to sign veterans tax credits for tax map 8-3-11-80 beginning tax year 2023. Seconded by Selectman Connolly. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**B. Tax Abatement**

**Selectman Marchand moved to sign abatement, per recommendation from the Assessor to lower the assessment value for tax map 7-2-01-4 from \$20,000 to \$0 because the structure on the property has been removed. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**C. Appointments**

**Selectman Marchand moved to hire Melinda Stanley as the Finance Specialist at an hourly rate of \$28.00 for 35 hours per week with a start date of March 13, 2023. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Selectman Marchand moved to hire Robyn Sparks as the Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator with an annual salary of \$55,000, for 40 hours a week with a start date of Monday March 27, 2023. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

**Selectman Marchand moved to appoint Trisha McCarthy to the position of Emergency Management Director at the rate of \$20.67 an hour with a start date of Wednesday March 8, 2023. Seconded by Selectman Melvin for discussion.**

Chairman Burrill stated that Ms. McCarthy has been doing the job for almost a year and the Town appreciates all the work she has done.

The Board thanked EMD McCarthy for the dedication to the Town.

**Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

IV. Approval of Minutes

**Selectman Marchand moved to accept the non-public and public meeting minutes dated February 21 and 27, 2023 as written. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

V. Announcements

Chairman Burrill reminded everyone that Town Elections will be on March 14, 2023, from 8:00am to 8:00pm at the Fire/Rescue Station.

VI. Adjourn

**Selectman Marchand moved to adjourn at 7:37pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Melvin – aye, Marchand – aye, Connolly – aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin  
Board of Selectmen Secretary