



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE Tuesday, January 2, 2024
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 6:03 PM. Selectmen in attendance were Chairman Robert Marchand Jr., Vice- Chairman Michael Connolly, 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 Minutes were transcribed by ITA O'Mara. The public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by EA Sparks.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Citizen's Input

No discussion.

4. Public Hearing

4.1 Municipal Bridge-Special One Time Payment

Chairman Marchand acknowledged the receipt of a onetime payment from the NH DOT Bridge payment in the amount of \$18,479.46 received December 2023. Public hearing is required and will be posted for January 2, 2024.

No comments on the public hearing.

Selectboard moved to accept the Bridge Grant money. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Public Hearing closed at 6:07PM

5. Administration

5.1 Food Pantry Donations

ITA O'Mara acknowledged the \$30.00 Market Basket Gift Card donation from Joanne and Scott McGough. ITA O'Mara stated that just an acknowledgement was needed in regard to the donation, no formal acceptance required for the overall process.

Resignation

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

Chairman Marchand announced the Resignation of Newton Police Department, Sargent Ryan Geary.

Chairman Marchand moved to accept the resignation of Newton Police Department's Sargent Ryan Geary, effective January 11, 2024, with thanks and appreciation for all his hard work. Seconded by Selectman Simone. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

5.2 Warrant Articles

ITA stated that the following proposed Warrant Articles are a work in progress and have not yet been finalized: (see below as written and presented in draft form)

Road Reconstruction Bond

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of 10 million dollars (\$10,000,000) (Gross Budget) to reconstruct approximately twenty-three miles of roads deemed in need of reconstruction as more particularly identified on the 2010 Proposed Road Reconstruction List derived from the Road Management Study of 2009, which list is dated January 11, 2010 and to authorize the issuance of bonds or notes therefore of not more than ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and other conditions of the bonds or notes in their judgment, it being further understood that said bonding authority shall be on the condition that the Selectmen shall NOT issue or negotiate bonds or notes for this appropriation in any given year for more than four million (\$4,000,000), it being contemplated that the overall bonding authority will not lapse until the project is completed but that the project will be completed in annual increments, borrowing for which shall not exceed four million dollars (\$4,000,000) in any given year, and to take all other action relative thereto. This is a special Article in accordance with RSA 32. 3/5 Ballot Vote Required (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$x.xx.

ITA O'Mara stated that he wanted to emphasize that 4,000,000 will not be spent in any given year. The Road Agent supports this article.

Engineering & Renovation Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be deposited into the Engineering & Renovation Capital Reserve Fund established in 2015; said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

No comment from the Selectboard.

Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be deposited into the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund established in 2006. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

No comment from the Selectboard.

Police Cruisers and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be deposited into the Police Cruisers and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund established in 2021. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated that the Article was removed and is now back on. Interim Police Chief Kane feels this is necessary and supports this Article.

No discussion from the Selectboard.

Fire Apparatus and Equipment / Refurbishment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be deposited into the Fire Apparatus and Equipment / Refurbishment Fund Capital Reserve Fund established in 2005 and amended in 2011. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

No discussion from the Selectboard.

Lease of Town Owned Land

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 Maple Avenue, identified as Tax Map 10, Lot 7-5-1, for a period not to exceed 20 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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated that he included 20 years to make it more attractive to the vendor leasing the land.

Recreation Coordinator Position

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) 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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated that the Recreation Position is a one-time ask, if passed it will be part of the department's budget in years to come.

ITA O'Mara stated that the above Warrant Articles excluding the Road Bond and Operating Budget, are funded from the Unassigned Fund Account and will not increase taxes.

275th Anniversary Revolving Fund

To see if the Town will authorize the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund, pursuant to RSA 35, which will be known as the 275th Anniversary Revolving Fund and raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in this fund the purpose of which shall be to support the celebration of the tow's 275th anniversary and appoint the selectmen as agents to expend from the fund. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

No Selectboard Discussion.

Cyclical Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

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 fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) 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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated that the next Revaluation will need to be done in 2025. This will prevent a spike in the budget.

Municipal Buildings Study Capital Reserve

To see if the Town of will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to be known as the Municipal Building Study Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of assessing the space needs of the town and to make recommendations based on the outcome of the study and to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) 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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

Chairman Marchand stated Selectboard previously agreed to remove said Article, it will not be included on the Warrant.

Highway Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

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 one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) 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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

Chairman Marchand sated this Article is fully supported by the Road Agent, Mike Pivero.

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Lake Host Program (by petition)

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 three thousand dollars (\$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. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$x.xx.

ITA O'Mara stated he has not yet received a petition; he assumes he will receive it by this coming Thursday. The tax impact will be \$3,000.00.

Highway Department Revolving Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be deposited into the Highway Department Revolving Fund previously established to purchase vehicles and equipment. Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Account. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

Bridge and Culvert Revolving Fund

To see if the town will vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, to be known as the Bridge and Culvert Revolving Fund for the purpose of maintaining, repairing and/or replacement of bridges and culverts. All revenues and grants will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund and shall pay out the same only upon order of the governing body and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. (Majority vote required) (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

Selectboard Discussion ensued. Article was removed by Selectboard because it shared a likewise to other Articles on the Warrant.

Highway Paving Fund

To see if the Town will vote to approve the deposit of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) into the Highway Paving Fund for further road improvement and upgrades.

Said funds will come from the Unassigned Fund Balance. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated this would be a separate account for the Bridge monies received.

Town Clerk & Tax Collector Compensation

To see if the Town will vote to approve, pursuant to the provisions of RSA 41:25, in lieu of base salary and fees, to change the compensation of the Town Clerk & Tax Collector to a Salary basis only, with all fees collected being returned to the town, and to authorize the Select Board to make subsequent adjustments to the Town Clerk & Tax Collector's salary on an annual basis, to be effective immediately following March 2024 elections. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact.

ITA O'Mara stated this would change the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to salary rather than fee based. He noted that this will be zero impact, because the monies are identical. This will make the position more stable and attractive when vacant.

Social Service Agencies

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty thousand three hundred sixty-three dollars (\$30,363). This article has no tax impact. for the following Social Service Agencies:

AREA HOMECARE & FAMILY SERVICES	\$ 3,800.00
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER	2,000.00
DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS	2,500.00
HAVEN	3,050.00
NHSPCA	750.00
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION	5,000.00
ROCKINGHAM NUTRITION MEALS ON WHEELS	2,927.00
ROCKINGHAM NUTRITION MEALS ON WHEELS TRANSPORTATION	700.00
SOROCK COALITION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH	4,936.00
VIC GEARY CENTER	2,700.00
WAYPOINT	2,000.00
	\$30,363.00

Said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance.

This article is contingent upon the Town Meeting's approval of Article X (proposed 2024 operating budget), and, if the Town Meeting does approve Article X, this Article shall be null and void. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$x.xx

ITA O'Mara stated this is also in the operating budget. If the budget passes this Article will be null and void.

Cemetery Trustees Stipend

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate, as proposed by the Cemetery Trustees, the sum of twelve hundred dollars (\$1,200) for the purpose of providing an annual four hundred (\$400) stipend to each of the three (3) Cemetery Trustees. The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$x.xx.

ITA O'Mara stated the Cemetery Trustee's submitted this Article. This would also make these positions more attractive to prospects.

Contingency Fund

To see if the town will vote to establish a contingency fund, pursuant to the provisions of RSA 52:4-a, for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) to put in the fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. (The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.) This article has no tax impact. (Majority vote required).

ITA O'Mara explained that the Selectboard is authorized to create an Article for a contingency fund, which can't be more than 1% of the gross operating budget that is being requested. The funds are set aside and can't be withdrawn without a public hearing. The unused annual funds will then go to the unassigned fund balance.

ITA O'Mara stated after the review he will amend the Warrant based on the discussion. Selectboard discussion ensued on the differences between Engineering Capital Reserve Fund and the Building Capital Reserve.

Diane Morin of Juniper Lane provided clarity by stating that one account is for the purpose of depositing the rental income received from the municipal complex and the other is for improvements made on town buildings. Selectboard discussion ensued around use of accounts. ITA O'Mara discussed the definition of unanticipated revenue, stating income regularly received, is not unanticipated. Selectboard Discussion around Department of Revenue's Definition of anticipated revenue.

Diane Morin also wanted clarification on the proposed article regarding the Bridge and Culverts, and how much money to open a revolving fund would be used. She suggested \$1.00 could be used to open an account. Selectboard discussion ensued.

Mike Pivero, Road Agent (RA), stated that last year was the first time that he applied for the Bridge Grant. These funds need to be kept separately. Hence establishing a fund.

Selectman Burrill asked about the status of the Warrant Article regarding a town funded EMS/Ambulance Program. He supports the idea of including the article on this Warrant, also including an amount of cost it would take to develop this.

Chief Alcainho, stated he could ask Deputy Kane for an overall number which would include any improvements that would need to be made to the fire station. Selectman Burrill asked that the Chief connect with the Building Inspector to make sure the building would be up to code and would need no further requirements.

Sam Zannini, Building Inspector, suggested reaching SFC Engineering, who help coordinate the original Fire Building Project.

ITA O'Mara stated that there is an existing Ambulance Service Revolving Fund, in which ambulance transport revenue are deposited into. Selectboard Discussion ensued around actual hard cost to fund the in house EMS/ Ambulance service.

Chief Alcainho stated he would provide a cost analysis along with a quote to continue to do a hypothetical private service if other partnered communities were to leave the mutual aid. A Voter's guide explaining this would provide clarity to the voters.

5.3 2024 Budget

ITA O'Mara discussed the increasing departmental costs town wide, mainly attributed to wage increases. The total operating default budget for 2023 was \$3,927,433. and the request for the proposed 2024 is \$4,537,317. He stated the budget has increased \$580,000.00 over the previous default. These increases include wages along with additional positions that are needed or vacant.

RA Pivero would like to include a contingency fund for weather related events. He stated that over the past 5 years, it averaged to be 5 unexpected storm events. This accounts for 10% of the Highway budget, which is significant. Other departments such as EOC, and Police as also affected. Adding a contingency fund would make the cost more manageable amongst departments.

6. Approvals

6.1 Veterans Tax Credit 6-7-3

Selectman Simone moved to approve the application for Veteran's Tax Credit for tax map 6-7-3 beginning tax year 2024. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote. Chairman Marchand for discussion, asked if this property was the same property that had a code enforcement violation. Further asking if the credit could be prevented due to the pending alleged violation. Selectboard discussion ensued and deemed they could not. **5-0 with a unanimous vote.**

6.2 BOS Meeting Schedule

ITA O'Mara stated that EA Sparks formalized the 2024 Board of Selectman meeting scheduling. Stating it did not need approval, however, just a review.

6.3 Manifests

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$2,586.20 from the Emergency Management Checking Account, to pay an invoice to C& M Auto repair in the amount of \$2,261.20 and \$325.00 to Dukes State Line Store. Seconded by Selectman Connolly. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve Vendor Manifest in the amount of \$1,043,411.04 with a pay date of December 26, 2023, Payments to include \$1,030,695.00 to the Sanborn Regional School District and \$5,460.13 to Cardmember Service. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve Vendor Manifest in the amount of \$42,939.95, with a pay date of January 2, 2024. Payments include \$21,605.96 to Municipal Resources, Inc and \$3,036.28 to Palmer Gas & Oil for Fuel Services. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$11,810.00 from the Highway Construction Checking Account, to pay an invoice to Eastern Seaboard Concrete. Construction Co with a pay date of January 2, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve a withdrawal in the amount of \$718.60 from the Cable Revolving Fund , to pay an invoices to Hewlett-Packard Financial Services CO., in the amount of \$478.52 and \$240.02 totaling \$718.60, with a pay date of January 2, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Selectman Simone moved to approve payroll manifest in the amount of \$65,981.49 for pay period -December 17th -30th, with a pay date of January 4 ,2024. This manifest includes \$149.90 in ARPA administrative costs. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

6.4 Minutes

Selectman Simone moved to approve and accept the Non- public meeting minutes dated December 19, 2023, as written. Seconded by Selectman Guide. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

7. Action Items New/ Old Business

7.1 Terex Christmas Tree Disposal

Selectman Simone stated that Terex will be collecting Christmas Trees until January 13th at the transfer station. These trees will are being recycled by Terex.

Selectman Simone stated that the 275th Celebration Committee has not met in a couple of weeks but is looking for volunteers.

Selectman Burrill announced January 23rd is the New Hampshire primary election and polls will be open 8AM-8PM. Selectboard members will be onsite. He is concerned with the amount of write in votes that could be submitted by the voters. Volunteers are needed to count votes, he urged anyone interested to contact the Town Clerk.

Selectman Burrill moved to go into non-public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) – Hiring. 5-0 with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Sparks

Robyn Sparks
Executive Administrative Assistant