

TOWN OF NEW BOSTON
New Boston Select Board

November 21, 2022

APPROVED

In attendance at New Boston Town Hall: Donna Mombourquette [6:08pm], David Litwinovich, and Jennifer Brown

Staff present: Paul Branscombe, Town Administrator

A. CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by David Litwinovich at 6:05PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda- The Selectmen reviewed the November 21, 2022 consent agenda.

David Litwinovich moved to approve the November 21, 2022 consent agenda items including payroll, Accounts Payable and other signed official documents. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; and Jennifer Brown – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Donna Mombourquette entered the meeting at 6:08pm.

B. APPOINTMENTS

Item 1: Police Department Needs – Chief Brace

Donna Mombourquette explained that the Board recently made a decision regarding the proposed safety complex idea. She stated that the Board has been wanting to speak with Chief Brace regarding the Police Department's needs. She noted that the Police Department's current facility has needs which need to be revisited and made clear.

Chief Brace stated that he outlined the needs of his Department in a presentation in 2020. These were also outlined in the Department's Master Plan. Nothing has changed since that time and the needs are still the same. He stated that the safety complex project was to address the needs of both the Fire and Police Departments for the long-term. Chief Brace stated that he reviewed meeting minutes of 2012 which stated the Department's need for holding rooms. This need is still the same and cannot be accomplished without an addition. He explained that, with the exception of an expansion of some sort, he has met all of the Master Plan goals for the Department within five years. He noted that the Police Department is the only Town building which is not sprinkled. This was a need identified prior to 2005. Chief Brace explained that, by State statute, the Department must retain certain records. Due to how some records are currently stored and the lack of a sprinkled building, a fire would likely destroy these and leave the Department in violation of this statute. There is not space in the building for all of the fire protected cabinets that are needed. Chief Brace noted that leaving someone handcuffed to a bench in the booking room is not reasonable and unsafe for the officers. There is also no way to allow these people to use the bathroom or wash their hands after being fingerprinted.

Chief Brace noted that none of the Board members have been down to the Station for a tour. He noted that he could call Primex regarding some of the best practices that are not currently being

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45 followed. He explained that he put his trust in the Fire Station Building Committee, which made
46 a recommendation for a safety complex. He learned of the vote on this item in the Beacon,
47 instead of being informed directly.

48
49 Donna Mombourquette stated that Town Administrator Branscombe previously issued an
50 apology to the Police Chief for how he learned of this decision.

51
52 Chief Brace stated that he believes the discussions held at that meeting make it clear that the
53 Police Department's needs are not as important. Donna Mombourquette stated that she does not
54 believe this to be true. Chief Brace stated that David Litwinovich spoke well regarding the
55 purpose of the safety complex. He stated that it was a failure in communication for him to find
56 out about the decision through the Beacon. He stated that he has been telling his Department's
57 employees that the Board supports them, yet the Department has not been invited to a Board
58 meeting to discuss the issues.

59
60 Donna Mombourquette stated that she does not believe there is a single Board member or
61 member of the Town's administration that does not support the Police Department. Chief Brace
62 stated that more than support is needed at this time.

63
64 Donna Mombourquette stated that she voted against the safety complex due to cost only. She
65 explained that there are many increases in costs to the budget this year and she could not, in good
66 faith, put the proposed safety complex before the voters, based on its projected cost at
67 approximately \$11M. Chief Brace stated that he believes the projected cost was closer to \$8.9M,
68 which was attempting to be reduced further. He noted that the figures being thrown around are
69 only ballpark numbers without first putting the project out to bid.

70
71 Donna Mombourquette stated that the Board has not yet had a discussion regarding how to move
72 forward with the Police Department's needs at this time. No decisions have been made. Chief
73 Brace stated that he has heard from others in Town and heard mention during Board meetings
74 that there is interest from the Board to keep the Fire and Police Department renovation/expansion
75 projects separate at this time. Donna Mombourquette stated that she does believe this is the right
76 way to move forward at this time. Chief Brace stated that separate warrant articles for these
77 projects will split the Town vote. Donna Mombourquette stated that she supports separate
78 projects as they will likely cost less than one large safety complex project. Chief Brace stated
79 that he does not believe a complete review of all of the information was done before the decision
80 was made. Donna Mombourquette again noted that the only reason she voted against the safety
81 complex was because she could not put a project that costly in front of the voters this year. She
82 stated that she also believes the needs of each department are separate and different.

83
84 Donna Mombourquette stated that the needs of the Fire Department do not negate the needs of
85 the Police Department. The Board is committed to addressing those needs, but first needed to
86 speak with the Chief regarding the details. Chief Brace stated that the needs include booking
87 rooms, a secure booking area, modifications to the building such as a separate female locker
88 room and extra space to store evidence. The original proposal was for an extra 1,400 s.f., at a

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89 cost of approximately \$305,000 from the taxpayer, or \$124 on the average \$300,000 house. He
90 stated that he does not feel the plan ever had the full support of the Board. Chief Brace stated that
91 the Board has asked that the project be scaled down to the minimum possible, but the existing
92 building is 30 years old, so it is only a matter of time until the septic needs to be replaced.

93
94 Donna Mombourquette stated that she would like to have conversations about the possibility of
95 making modifications to the plan. Chief Brace stated that he is unsure if any modifications can
96 be made. The plan, as proposed, will address the needs of the Department for the next 20 years.
97 The proposal addresses the septic system, siding, roof, and other necessary items. This project
98 will likely now cost approximately \$600,000, due to the current market. This project was already
99 stripped down to make it more palatable to the voters. To reduce it further, one of the only things
100 that could be removed from the proposal would be the sprinkler system. Donna Mombourquette
101 noted that the entire building is not required to be sprinkled. Chief Brace stated that the Town
102 identified 17 years ago that it would like the building sprinkled.

103
104 Chief Brace stated that he is not interested in creating a building or addition that only “makes
105 do.” He has reviewed all of the history for this item in the Town. The square footage being
106 requested has not changed along the way. The proposed plan is based on the Master Plan from
107 three years ago. He stated that he believes his proposal was presented as a fiscally responsible
108 plan. The proposal was put to the Town and was not approved. The suggestion was then made to
109 move toward a safety complex and the Town spent approximately \$22,000 on plans for this.

110
111 Donna Mombourquette stated that all of these points are recognized, but she still does not believe
112 this project can be brought to the Town this year. It is clear that the building does not work for
113 the Department. She explained that this conversation seemed to make clear that there are no
114 further modifications or reductions that can be made to the plan at this time. The Board has not
115 discussed the funding mechanism to move forward with the plan at this time and it is unclear if
116 there is enough time to have the discussions necessary to put this forth on the ballot for the
117 upcoming vote.

118
119 David Litwinovich stated that, while he did not tour the Station, he has carefully reviewed the
120 plan and believes there is no fat on it.

121
122 Jennifer Brown stated that her vote was partly made because she believed it would be faster to
123 complete a separate Police Department project than the entire safety complex. She stated that she
124 believes separate projects will give each Department the space it needs.

125
126 Donna Mombourquette stated that she will make sure the Police Department staff knows that the
127 Board understands there are important needs to be addressed.

128
129 Chief Brace stated that he heard from another resident that Donna Mombourquette believes that
130 there is not enough space at the proposed location for a safety complex. This is not true. Donna
131 Mombourquette stated that she has seen the plans and knows it will fit on this piece of property,
132 although some residents do not believe this to be true.

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Donna Mombourquette requested a five-minute recess for the Board.

Donna Mombourquette moved to recess for five-minutes at 6:46pm. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Jennifer Brown moved to reconvene the meeting at 6:48pm. Seconded by David Litwinovich.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that there is still time to put forth this project to the ballot next year. The plans will be revisited Turnstone or Stantec right after Thanksgiving. There is a chance to discuss this project as part of the unassigned fund balance conversation.

C. NEW BUSINESS:

Item 2: Boston Post Cane Policy

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that research will be completed on this item and presented to the Board at its December 5, 2022, meeting.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

Item 3: Approval of Public Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2022

David Litwinovich moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 7, 2022, as amended. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Item 4: Review of Select Board Procedures Related to Meetings

Donna Mombourquette asked the Board how it felt regarding removal of the first public comment period from meetings. David Litwinovich stated that he has concerns with moving to only one comment period. He stated that the loss of one public comment period removes the opportunity for members of the public to make comments both before and after certain agenda items are addressed. Jennifer Brown agreed that she prefers two public comment periods.

Donna Mombourquette stated that an additional suggestion is to include a sign-in sheet for those residents who wish to make public comments during the meeting. Jennifer Brown stated that someone may not know that they are planning to speak until later in the later. David Litwinovich stated that this could be useful for the record. It was agreed that members of the public could approach the Board's table and sign-in, prior to making a comment.

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Donna Mombourquette explained that, as an order of business, notice of proposed non-public sessions should be added to the beginning of the meeting.

Donna Mombourquette suggested that the Internal Reports be first reviewed and formally accepted by the Board, before being released to the public. Jennifer Brown stated that she agreed with this proposal, as long as the reports are released to the public afterward. David Litwinovich suggested that these reports be available in draft form to the public prior to the meeting, similarly to the draft meeting minutes. Donna Mombourquette noted that the draft reports would not be available to the public for as long as the draft minutes, as they are often only received on the Thursday or Friday before the meeting. She suggested that the reports not be available prior to the meeting in draft form, but only made public once formally accepted by the Board. She noted that there are no rules regarding Internal Reports and that these only recently were added to the Board's agendas. David Litwinovich stated that he is opposed to this, unless the draft reports will be released prior to the meeting. He believes they should be handled similarly to the draft minutes or consent agenda. He stated that he believes the public should be able to review these reports prior to a meeting. Jennifer Brown agreed that this would be the most transparent way to handle this item. Donna Mombourquette agreed that the draft reports will be placed in a folder with the rest of the meeting materials at Town Hall by Friday afternoons before a meeting.

Donna Mombourquette suggested a motion to approve the changes to the Board's procedures as discussed. David Litwinovich stated that he would like to see all of these proposed changes in writing before voting on them.

E. INTERNAL REPORTS

Item 5: Town Administrator Report

Town Administrator Branscombe explained that, per the most recent tax rate setting meeting, the tax rate was \$19.18, an increase of \$0.68 from last year. He explained that the municipal portion of the tax rate only increase \$0.45. He suggested that the Board not use any of the excess funds from the unassigned fund balance to lower this tax rate. He explained that this would do a disservice to the taxpayers and give them a false sense of security. Using the unassigned fund balance year after year will deplete the Town's savings. This rate can be presented to the taxpayers to show them that the community is doing well.

In response to a question from David Litwinovich regarding the 11.2% unassigned fund balance of the Town's general operating budget, Town Administrator Branscombe explained that the DRA has a recommend balance amount of 5%-17%, and the GFOA has a recommended balance of 7%-15%. The Town's balance is right in the middle of both of these suggestions. Excess funds could be used to fund certain one-time only warrant articles or other projects.

Finance Director Jennifer Allocca explained that the Town could consider creating a Contingency Fund with some of the excess funds. The Board would be able to use this for unanticipated expenses throughout the year. The Town's current policy is to keep a minimum

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7% of the unassigned fund balance. The Board should consider keeping this percentage and spending anything above that on things like special projects, one-time projects, warrant articles, etc.

In response to a question from Donna Mombourquette regarding how the unassigned fund balance will be replenished if money is spent from it, Jennifer Allocca stated that this will be based on the Department's operating budgets. She noted that the 7% figure includes the schools, as it is a figure from the entire Town's general operating budget. The difference between 7% and the existing 11.2% is approximately \$870,000. This extra funding could be great to use toward bridge and culvert projects, or other projects in Town.

David Litwinovich suggested a flow chart that shows the current unassigned fund balance versus the proposed. Jennifer Allocca stated that she will present this at the Board's upcoming work session.

Town Administrator Branscombe explained that a committee has been formed to review the soldier's monument project, as previously discussed by the Board. This group is made up of Jennifer Allocca, David Woodbury, and Dick Jardine.

Town Administrator Branscombe explained that he reached out to Colonial Penn to discuss life insurance, as previously was discussed with New York Life. Colonial Penn was not able to offer this at this time. He recommended that the Board move forward with allowing New York Life to offer life insurance to the Town's employees. This will be at no cost to the Town, unless an employee signs up for this, which would lead to a deduction from the payroll. The Board agreed with this proposal.

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that Primex conducted a Harassment Class at the Library for employees on November 9th. Another opportunity will be presented in the future. He stated that he participated in the webinar offered by the Community Development Finance Authority regarding municipal Economic Development resources. On November 10th, the Finance Committee reviewed the budgets for Recreation, Library, Fire Department, EMD and Cemetery. On the 17th, they covered the Community Development Department, Highway and Transfer Station budgets and reviewed the Capital Improvements Plan. On November 15th, Road Agent Benji Knapp met with Josif Bicja, Hoyle Tanner Associates, to discuss the three bridges in Town, and then with Kevin Leonard regarding several topics. Town Administrator Branscombe stated that he and Jennifer Allocca participated in the two-day NHMA Annual Conference. Frank Fraitzl, new Fire Department Chief of Operations, began in his position today. Town Administrator Branscombe noted that there will be a meeting at Town Hall on December 7th regarding information to the public for the Tucker Mill and Great Mill bridge projects.

Item 6: Health Officer Report

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that, on November 9th, he participated in a webinar put on by DHHS to introduce Health Officers to the Office of Professional Licensure and

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Certification. This webinar was to help Health Officers understand the role of the OPLC in licensing and enforcement and to help Health Officers enforce health laws in establishments such as Barbers and Cosmetologists. He noted that the Health Officer page contains an update on the Coronavirus Omicron sub-variant strain along with resources regarding the increasing RSV virus.

Item 7: Department Manager Reports: Transfer Station, Recreation, Fire, Highway, Community Development, Police, Building

Town Administrator Branscombe noted that the Police Department requested a meeting with the Board to discuss the Police Station project on November 21, 2022. He also stated that the roof of the Police Station will be completed by Monday.

In response to a question from Donna Mombourquette regarding sand being moved from the sand pit, Jennifer Allocca explained that this needs further discussion.

In response to a question from Donna Mombourquette regarding the proposed requirement for clear bags at the Transfer Station, David Litwinovich stated that he would like to see a formal procedure outline for this item.

Item 8: Select Board Reports: Donna Mombourquette, David Litwinovich, and Jennifer Brown

The Select Board reviewed the submitted reports.

F. 2nd PUBLIC COMMENT:

Donna Mombourquette stated that this is a business meeting of the New Boston Select Board. Comments and feedback are welcomed but because this is not a public forum or public hearing, comments will be on the agenda items only. Dialogue or answering of questions will not be part of the meeting. Should you have an issue you wish to discuss, please communicate with the Town Administrator who may resolve your issue or potentially schedule your appearance before the Board at a later date. The Board appreciates your understanding and cooperation.

Bill McFadden, Dane Road, stated that, prior to this meeting he attempted to access the Internal Reports for review. These were not accessible online. He contacted the Town Administrator, who informed him that the Board Chair requested they not be released. He asked why this was done prior to discussion by the Board. He stated that the lack of transparency from the Board is concerning. He stated that it appears the Chair is trying to silo the leadership role. The Town voted for three Selectmen. He stated that he would like for agenda information to be posted more than 30 minutes prior to the meeting for the public's review.

Karen Scott, Dane Road, stated that citizens should be able to review the Internal Reports. She asked why the Board should be able to review and potentially make changes to these reports prior to their release to the public. She explained that residents like to have these reports

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available ahead of time in order to be prepared for the meetings. She noted that there was no first public comment period this evening, prior to discussion by the Board of this item. She stated that the Board should not discuss any details related to the Police Station, unless done during a public meeting. She explained that she has heard from the Board that the Fire Department needs a new station because due to short staffing, however, this has nothing to do with a new building. There is a national shortage for Fire and EMS personnel. She stated that she watched the video from the last Fire Station Building Committee meeting, and that Donna Mombourquette stated that a new Police Station would wait until next year and that a new Fire Station was urgent. This is a slap in the face to the Police Department. She stated that Chief Brace eloquently explained the Department's needs, and the Fire Station Building Committee recommended a safety complex. She believes the citizens would agree.

Seeing no additional public comment, Donna Mombourquette closed the second session.

G. Requests for Non-Public per RSA 91-A: 3, II(a) and (a)

David Litwinovich moved to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) at 7:59pm. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

The Board moved into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) at 8:44pm

David Litwinovich moved to approve a change in status for George St. John from part-time to regular part-time Facilities & Grounds Manager, with associated increased responsibilities, at a rate of \$25/hour, for 24 hours/week . Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

David Litwinovich moved to award Town Administrator Branscombe a bonus commensurate with performance. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

David Litwinovich moved to exit Non-Public Session at 9:11pm. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

David Litwinovich moved to seal the minutes of both Non-Public sessions for five years. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

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H. ADJOURNMENT

David Litwinovich moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm. Seconded by Jennifer Brown.

Roll Call Vote: David Litwinovich – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Donna Mombourquette – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

**Next Scheduled Meeting: November 30, 2022 (6:00 PM)
7 Meetinghouse Hill Road- New Boston, NH 03070
Phone: (603) 487-2500-www.newbostonnh.gov
Handicap Access available**