



Town of Newbury
Municipal Town Offices
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**PUBLIC NOTICE POSTING REQUEST
TO OFFICE OF TOWN CLERK AND TOWN WEBSITE**

(Required to select all appropriate boxes)

BOARD/COMMITTEE/ORGANIZATION: Newbury Finance Committee

MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING

DAY of WEEK/DATE: Tue May 7, 2024

TIME (AM/PM): 7:000pm

ADDRESS: Newbury Municipal Offices, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922

Newbury Firemen's Hall, 3 Morgan Avenue, Newbury, MA 01951

Newbury Town Library, 0 Lunt Street, Byfield, MA 01922

Other: _____

(please specify building name/address)

ROOM: Newbury Municipal Offices, 2nd Floor Hearing Room

Other: _____

(when applicable, provide room name)

PURPOSE: General Business

SUBMITTED BY: Erica Coles Jacobsen, Chair

ALL PUBLIC NOTICE POSTING REQUESTS MUST BE FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK AND TIME STAMPED AT LEAST 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING TIME FOR POSTING ON THE MUNICIPAL BULLETIN BOARD (in accordance with the provisions of MGL 30A §18-25). Note: 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY HOURS ON A SATURDAY, SUNDAY OR LEGAL HOLIDAY. MUNICIPAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED ON FRIDAYS.

Newbury business hours are Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 8AM-4PM and Tuesday from 8AM-7PM. Faxed or e-mailed postings must reach the Town Clerk's office during business hours 48 hours prior to the meeting, not including the days noted above.

MEETING NOTICES WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED ON THE TOWN OF NEWBURY'S (www.townofnewbury.org) WEBSITE.

Agenda

- Roll call to establish quorum
- Review & approve meeting minutes: April 16, 2024 (attached)
- Public Comment
 - To receive oral communications from members of the public. Members of the public may address the Finance Committee for up to 3 minutes. The Finance Committee will not engage in discussion on topics raised during public comment but may choose to add the topic to a future agenda. This agenda segment will be limited to 15 minutes.
 - Chair to share written/email communications received since April 16, 2024
- To uncover the topics residents would like the Finance Committee to consider for future Town Meetings, public comment will be accepted for FY2025 Annual Town Meeting review.
 - To receive oral communications from members of the public. Members of the public may address the Finance Committee for up to 2 minutes. This agenda segment will be limited to 30 minutes. Please note, the comments must be relevant to the agenda item, and the Chair may interrupt comments if they are not relevant to the agenda item.
 - Note: Direct questions asked may be addressed during the Finance Committee discussion or at a future meeting.
- FY2025 - Annual Town Meeting review
 - Impact of Article 19 – Finance Committee appointments to Capital Planning
 - Lessons learned, and things to keep in mind for future Town Meetings
 - Finance Committee Appropriations booklet and cover letter
 - Finance Committee Presentation
- Old Business
 - FY2024 Financial Reports review - March Expenditure report
 - District Communication Committee (DCC) updates – Alternative Assessment subgroup update and May 23rd meeting
- New Business
- Schedule of upcoming meetings
 - Thr May 23, 2024, 6:30pm Rowley Town Hall – Triton DCC Joint meeting with Newbury Select Board and Select Boards & Finance Committee's from Rowley & Salisbury
 - Tue June 4, 2024, 7:00pm
- Adjourn

Note: The matters listed above are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. This Agenda may be updated or revised after initial posting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed, and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Town of Newbury
Finance Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 16 April 2024, 7:00 PM
Town Offices, 2nd Floor Meeting Room
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Members present: **Erica Jacobsen (chair), Frank Visconti, Eugene Case, Richard Keys, Vanessa Rossi**

Erica Jacobsen called the meeting to order at 7:05pm, and a quorum was established by roll call vote. The Chair also asked for and received approval of the April 2nd, 2024 meeting's minutes. One edit was suggested by Richard Keys and meeting minutes were approved 5-0 with no additional edits.

Public comment:

- Oral communications - No members of the public were in attendance. No oral communications received.
- Written/email communications: Review of all email communications received since April 2nd.
 - Steve Mangion – email asking for the Finance Committee meetings to be carried live on Channel 9. This request has been forwarded to the Select Board and IT department to see if it is possible within technical, human resources and budgetary concerns in FY2025
 - Series of communications from Jack Rybicki regarding the technical error in the recording of the Finance Committee's April 2nd meeting.
 - 2 emails sent on Sat April 5, to alert to the audio issues – the emails were sent to IT department and the technical issue was resolved by Sun April 6.
 - Email to Jonathan Temple asking for additional information on how the technical issue occurred. The explanation is that the issue is not related to the camera, but with a software error involved in the conversion to formats for YouTube and Comcast systems. There are new processes in for pre-load to review before uploading.
 - The recording is up, complete and available to the public.
 - Jack Rybicki public records request for Lower Green Schoolhouse roof replacement. This is handled by Tracy Blais, Town Administrator and completed. (multiple emails back and forth)
 - Jack Rybicki follow-up inquiry about money remaining in an NES Lock Change completed in FY2020, Town Account assures there is no money left in that appropriations, it was closed out to the General Fund and become a component of free cash.
 - Jack Rybicki follow-up inquiry regarding the status of funds appropriated for FY2023 for \$20,000 for a public safety gate at Wheeler Brook Bridge. This response will be handled by Tracy Blais, Town Administrator, upon her return from vacation.
 - Jack Rybicki public records request related to the HVAC replacement at Newbury Elementary School. This response will be handled by Tracy Blais, Town Administrator, upon her return from vacation.

Public comment to uncover the topics residents would like to see included in the Finance Committee's ATM presentation, public comment will be accepted for Finance Committee Appropriations booklet and Finance Committee Presentation

- Oral communications - No members of the public were in attendance. No oral communications received.

The Chair opened discussion of the outline of the Finance Committee presentation

- Welcome and rules around town meeting
- Overview of Free Cash to allow better understanding of what it is, annual cycle and historical views. Discussion of Free Cash principles and examples were discussed by all members of the committee. Also, discussion of the bid process, Town Meeting approval and what happens if not enough
- Vanessa Rossi suggested that any clarification of terms, policies would be helpful to understand the procedural items and to address misconceptions, in particular for those first-time attendees to Town Meeting. Discussed the idea of baby sitting or bringing children to Town Meeting.
- Gene Case suggested clarifying which articles require simple majority or 2/3rds majority or 4/5ths majority.
- Vanessa Rossi suggested it would be helpful to have clarity regarding the Triton operating budget. Brian Forget will be available to address budget issues. status of the Triton Middle/High school building project.
- Gene Case shared his research on taxes and our neighboring communities – Newbury has lowest tax rates, Newbury has among the highest home values and highest incomes. Average tax bill as % of income is 8.6% (compared with Amesbury at 21%). Education accounts for 50% of Newbury budget. Conversation followed regarding school financing among three towns.
- Frank and Vanessa shared that there is widespread confusion around Triton budgeting and the status of the school building project. Vanessa Rossi shared varied differences in understanding around the status of the Triton Middle/High school building project. Erica will get a statement from Brian Forget to be delivered at Town Meeting.
- Erica shared information about the Triton funding formulas – and the Operating Assessment based on Minimum Local Contribution (MLC) + % above minimum. MLC has not increased in real dollars. MLC is set by the state and has no predictability year over year. This year, MLC increased 5.5%; Newbury's MLC went up 7.9%, Rowley 5.7% and Salisbury 3.7%. For education, state funding as a proportion of Triton funding is low and remains low. Other challenges discussed included the tax rate and rising costs of Special Education which are required by law. Frank Visconti shared the perspective of empty nesters or residents who do not have children in the Triton district look at their taxes and what they receive for services.
- Article 5 – Education expenses, Erica explained that Triton regional agreement means if 2 of the 3 towns pass the operating budget the third town has to pay.
- Article 13 is grouped by funding source, Free Cash. There will be a separate motion for the \$499 bill due to needing 4/5th majority. Expectation is that Fire Department will speak to Fire related expenses, Capital Planning will speak to NES & Library and Historical Commission to speak to Lower Green Schoolhouse roof.

- Article 14 will be covered by the Planning Board. Article 15 (cell tower) will not be moved at the meeting because of feedback on a tower by Triton that occurred the night after the warrant was posted – will be revisited. Article 22 may not be moved.
- The Committee agreed that Erica will send a draft and individually send back comments on the presentation to avoid violations of open meeting law.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is set for April 30th at 6:30pm at Triton High School auditorium ahead of the Annual Town Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.