



Town of Newton Meetings, Instructions, Resolves & Correspondence

Transcribed by Jonathan C. Lane, Revolution 250 Coordinator

At a Town Meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of Newton the 21st Day of October AD 1765, then the Town made choice of Mr Edward Durant Moderator of said meeting. To Capt. Abraham Fuller Representative of said Town at this most important and alarming crisis when the British American subjects are everywhere loudly complaining of arbitrary and unconstitutional measures and Innovations the Town of Newtown judge it altogether improper to be wholly silent, we therefore the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of said Town being legally assembled in our meeting house. Judge it proper to impart to you our United sentiments more especially with regard to the Stamp Act (so called) by which a very grievous and we apprehend unconstitutional tax is laid upon the Colonies, and as it is a standing maxim of English Liberty, that no man shall be taxed but with his own consent, so we very well know that we were in no sense represented in Parliament when this Tax was imposed by the Royal Charter granted to our Ancestors the power of making laws for our internal government and of levying taxes is vested in the General Assembly, and by the same charter the inhabitants of this Province are entitled to all the Rights and privileges of natural free born subjects of Great Britain, the most essential rights of British subjects are those of being represented in the body which exercises the power of levying taxes upon them and of having their property-tryed by juries, whereas this unconstitutional tax or burdensome law admits of our properties being tried by courts of Admiralty with out a jury. Consequently, this at once destroys the most valuable privileges of our Charter, deprives us of the most essential rights of Britons and greatly weakens the best security of our lives, liberties and estates. We therefore think it our indispensable duty in justice to ourselves and to our posterity as it is our undoubted privilege to declare our greatest dissatisfaction with this law, and we think it incumbent on you by no means to join in any public measures for countenancing and assisting in the execution of said act but to use your best endeavors in the General Assembly to have the unalienable rights of the people of this Province asserted and vindicated and left upon Public record that posterity may never have reason to charge the Present times with the guilt of tamely giving them away. We further instruct you to take particular care that the best prudence may be used in expending the public monies, that no unaccustomed grants may be made to those who serve the Government, and we in general recommend to your care that the monies of the Province drawn from the individuals of the People may not be applied to any other purposes under any pretense of necessary contingent charges but what are evidently intended in the act for supplying the Treasury. Voted that the foregoing instructions, be the instructions to the Representative of this Town and that he now is enjoined firmly to adhere to the same also that the same be recorded in the Town Book that posterity may see and know, the great concern the People at this Day had for their invaluable rights, privileges and liberties.

At a Town Meeting of the Inhabitants of Newton duly warned and regularly assembled at our meeting house on Monday the 27th Day of October AD 1766 to act on sundry articles mentioned in the warrant reference thereunto....

The passed the following Vote, vizt.

Whereas the Town of Newton detests with the utmost abhorrence all acts of violence and ravages committed on the estates and properties of any of his Majesty's subjects and whereas such violent outrages were committed on August 26th, 1765 by a number of persons unknown, on the estates both real & personal of several Gentlemen in Boston which losses amount to a considerable sum, and as his majesty has been pleased to recommend it to the Great and General Court of this Province that the losses the sufferers sustained in the late Great disturbances be made up, We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, inhabitants of Newton having taken into our consideration his Majesty's most mild recommendation and out of a just sense of duty and loyalty to the best of Kings and out of a tender regard to our fellow subjects, the sufferers, have come into the following vote:

Voted – that on proper application made to the General Assemblies (agreeable with the method of Parliament) by the sufferers, the person who represents this Town be directed and instructed in his best discretion to use what influence he may have that such losses be made up in such a way and manner as may be most Loyal and respectful to his Majesty; most safe relative to our invaluable rights, privileges and liberties, and most kind and generous to the sufferers.

At a town meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of Newton duly warned and regularly assembled at our meeting house on Monday the 23rd day of November AD 1767...

Voted unanimously that the Town will take all prudent and legal measures to encourage the produce and manufactures of this province and to lessen the use of the superfluities & particularly the following enumerated articles imported from abroad, Vizt.

Loaf sugar, cordage, anchors, coaches, chaises and carriages of all sorts, horse furniture, men & women's hats, men's & women's apparel, ready made household furniture, gloves, men's & women's shoes, sole leather, sheathing and dock nails, gold & silver and thread lace of all sorts, gold and silver buttons, wrought plate of all sorts, diamond stone and paste ware, snuff, mustard, Clocks & watches, silversmiths and jeweler's ware, broad cloths that cost above 10/ per yard, muffs, furs & tippets, and all sorts of millinery ware, starch, women's & children's stays, fire engines, china ware, silk & cotton velvets, gauze, pewterer's hollow ware, linseed oil, glue, lawns, cambrics, silk of all kinds for garments, malt liquor and cheese, also

Voted strictly to adhere to the late regulations respecting Funerals and not use any gloves what are manufactured here, nor procure any new garments upon such occasions but what shall be absolutely necessary.

At a Town meeting of the freeholders & other inhabitants of Newton qualified to vote in Town affairs, regularly assembled at our meeting house on Friday the 23rd day of September AD 1768.

The Question was put whether they would send a person for a committee man to join with others; as soon as may be in a convention held at Faneuil Hall in Boston, in order that such measures may be consulted and advised as - - - - - the Peace and safety of the subjects in the Province may require. – Then the Town unanimously made choice of Abraham Fuller for a Committee man for said purposes.

At a town meeting of the inhabitants of Newton duly warned and regularly assembled at our Meeting House on Monday the 4th Day of March AD 1771

The Question was put whether the Town would build a house for the stowage of the Town's stock of powder & other Military Stores and the vote passed in the negative.

At a Town meeting of the Inhabitants of Newton regularly assembled on Monday the 4th Day of January 1773

19 January 1773

We the Subscribers being a committee appointed by the Town of Newton to consider and report what we think may be proper for the Town to do relating to the present unhappy situation of this Country is reduced to by some late attacks made on our natural and constitutional, rights and privileges; have duly attended that service, and do report as follows, viz.

1st We judge it just and expedient, and do recommend it to the Town, as a Testimony of their due sense of the invaluable rights and privileges belonging to them both as Men, as Members of the British Empire, and as colonists, to come into the following resolves, viz. –

Resolved, that no good Man can be silent, or inactive in the cause of Liberty, at this alarming period, when such arbitrary measures are taken as tend to destroy, that glorious constitution which has cost the laborers of ages and the blood of Thousands and that all who abet Tyranny merit the detestation of this people and the contempt of mankind.

Resolved, that we ever did and now do, bear true loyalty to the King and affection to our brethren in Great Britain & shall ever contribute to the utmost of our ability to promote the honor & dignity of the Crown and the prosperity of the present state, so far as may be consistent with our rights & privileges as Colonists.

Resolved, that no civil officer who (properly considered) is a servant of the people can constitutionally or with safety to them be dependent on the crown for his Support, therefore any Grant or Grants made or that may be made by the Crown to the Judges of our Superior Court must naturally (at least hereafter) tend to destroy all confidence in these Judges and change the Courts of Justice into Engines of Slavery.

Resolved. That all taxations imposed on the Inhabitants of the Colonies without their consent of representation in parliament, for the express purpose of raising a revenue, are unconstitutional & oppression.

Resolved That it is the firm opinion of this Town the establishment of a Board of Commissioners with a great number of Officers under them, at an enormous and unnecessary expense; that the large extension of the power of the Court of Admiralty whereby the Lives and Liberties of his Majesty's Subjects in the Colonies are rendered precarious and unsafe – That the introducing & keeping a Military force in our Metropolis in a time of profound peace to the great disturbance of the People. – That the providing for the Support of the Governor in any other way than by Grants of our General Court and thereby rendering him entirely independent of the people over whom he presides, and many other late proceedings of his Majesty's Ministry are Grievances of which we justly complain and must in faithfulness to ourselves and our Posterity continue so to do until they are redressed.

2nd We judge it necessary at this Time & do recommend it to the Town to give their Representative Abraham Fuller Esq^r; the following Instructions Viz.

To Abraham Fuller Esq^r. Representative of Newton in General Assembly

Sir –

At this Alarming Aera when the British American subjects are loudly complaining of Arbitrary and unconstitutional measures and Innovations, the Town of Newton Judge it altogether improper to be wholly silent.

We therefore his Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of said Town in Town Meeting legally assembled on Monday the 4th day of January 1773 – by adjournment from the 28 of December last; Judge it not only proper but absolutely necessary to impart to you our united Sentiments being as on the one hand ever ready to give all due assistance for encouraging and supporting the exercise of Government in a constitutional manner, so on the other hand deeply concerned that the rights and privileges of British Subjects that best birthright and noblest inheritance of Mankind may be securely enjoyed by us and transmitted to our posterity cannot but express how greatly our fears have been increased respecting the late Alarming Report added to the other Grievances under which this people have for a number of years groaned Viz. That stipends are fixed by Order of the Crown to the Offices of the Judges of the Superior Court of Judicature of this Province, consequently instead of receiving their Salaries or Support from Annual Grants made by the Great and General Court as heretofore, they are to depend solely on the Sovereign Will and Pleasure of the Crown for their support. This Change we cannot but consider as a most important and dangerous Change creating an undue and unconstitutional dependence quite repugnant to the Spirit of the British Constitution and which will we apprehend lay an unhappy foundation for the subverting public Justice and we also cannot but take notice how much more hard and grievous it is that when all possible Care has been taken by Acts of Parliament and express desire even from his present Majesty upon his first accession to the Throne to make the Judges of England wholly independent of the Crown – that the Judges of our Superior Court should be rendered absolutely

dependent on the Crown, in the important Article of their Salaries whereby we are thus cruelly distinguished from his Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain – We therefore think it proper to instruct you our Representative in General Assembly, that you unite in such measures as shall place the Judges of the Superior Court of Judicature of this province upon a Constitutional Basis and make (when that is done) suitable provision for their Support adequate to their Merit and Station. We further instruct you that you use your utmost endeavors that all our Rights be restored and established as heretofore and that a decent though manly remonstrance be sent to the King assuring his Majesty that universal discontent prevails in America, and nothing will restore harmony and insure the attachment of the people to the Crown but a full restoration of all their Liberties. –

3dly We judge it proper & think it may answer a good Purpose and do therefore recommend it to the Town to return the following answer to a Letter of 20 of November last from the Town of Boston directed to the Selectmen of this Town.

Lastly We do recommend it to the Town that they order the foregoing Resolves and Instructions to the Representative and Letter to the Town of Boston to be recorded in the Book of Records belonging to the Town that posterity may see and know the great concern the people of this Day had for their invaluable Rights and Privileges and Liberties – Thus we think we have completed the Business committed to us and if we meet with the approbation of the Town we shall think ourselves amply rewarded.

Edward Durant

Aexr. Shephard

William Phillips

Charles Pellham

Noah Hide

Unanimously Voted that the foregoing Resolves, Instructions, and the Letter to the Selectmen of Boston be accepted and recorded in the Town Book.

Abr: Fuller Town Clerk

A true Copy from Newtons Book of Records

Attest Abr Fuller Town Cler.

Newton Jan 4 1773 [to the Boston Comm. of Correspondence]

Gentlemen –

We the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Newton in Town Meeting legally assembled this Day by adjournment, think it incumbent on us to acknowledge the Rect. of your Letter of November last past directed to the Selectmen of Newton. We greatly applaud you and

think ourselves as well as the whole Province much obliged to you for your generous exertion of that patriotic Spirit for which you stand distinguished and However unsuccessful may have been the measures you have taken for obtaining redress of sundry Grievances of which we justly complain; Yet as far as in us lies we would encourage your Hearts to persevere in all legal, loyal, regular and Constitutional Methods for the redress of those Grievances we feel, and for preventing those we have reason to fear. We are greatly concerned at the report which prevails, that our Judges of the Circuits are to receive their Salaries from Home which must render them dependent on the crown and Independent of the People, the natural evil Consequences of which are too obvious and truly alarming.

We regret the odium cast on the respectable Town of Boston as being of a factious spirit, and cannot but think that a properly expressed union of Sentiment by the several Towns in the Province when made known to our most gracious Sovereign must tend to convince him and his Ministry that the resentment shewn on the many unconstitutional impositions laid on the Country in general and the Province of Massachusetts Bay in particular is not the ravings of a faction but the cool dispassionate and just complaining of the generality of his Majesty's dutiful & loyal Subjects in this populous Province and we can but hope would render his Majesty in his great Wisdom and Goodness still more disposed to grant us all due relief to promote which valuable purposes as far as our influence will serve, we have passed a number of Resolves and voted Instructions to our Representative Copies of which are enclosed.

We heartily commend the present distressed State of this Country to the Great and good King of Kings praying for his blessing on and directions to the whole British Empire.

With all due Respect and Esteem, and in the cause of true Liberty, we are,

Gentlemen

your Brethren & most humble servants

By order and in behalf of the Town of Newton

Ab. Fuller Town Clerk

To the Gentlemen Selectmen of Boston.

At a Town Meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of Newton regularly assembled at our meeting house on Monday the 20th Day of December AD 1773 to Act on Sunday Articles in the Warrant reference thereto being had.....

Voted to choose a committee to make a draught of such measures as they shall think best for the Town to come into at this Emergency and report to the Town at the meeting, on the next adjournment then made choice of Charles Pelham, Esqr., Mr. Edward Durant, Capt. John Woodward, Mr. Joshua Hammond, Dr. John King for said committee.

...Voted to choose a committee to consist of fifteen persons to confer with the Inhabitants of this Town, as, to the expediency of leaving off, Buying, selling or using any India Teas. Then made

choice of Mr. Thomas Miller, Capt. Ephraim Jackson, Mr. Phinehas Bond, Lieut. Jeremiah Wiswall, Mr. John Palmer, Mr. James Grimes, Deacon David Stone, Deacon William Bowley, Capt. Benjamin Hammond, Mr. Amariah Fuller, Mr. Phineas Cook, Lieut. Michael Jackson, Captain John Woodward, Mr. Joseph Cheney, Ens. Samuel Craft

The Committee was chosen the 20th of December last, made the following report to the Town (which passed by a very full vote) Vizt.

The Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Newton legally assembled on Monday the 20th of December 1773, and continued by adjournment to 6th of January following, taking into consideration the present difficulty of our public affairs, are greatly alarmed at the reiterated attempts of the parliament of Great Britain to undermine our happy Constitution, and deprive us of those rights and privileges, which we justly claim as Men, as Members of the British Empire, and as Chartered Colonists. And although we always have, and still do bear true and sincere loyalty and Affection to our most Gracious Sovereign, yet we cannot but consider and regret the great and undue influence of his Ministry both in and out of parliament, which (especially if corrupt and selfish Men should be in place) we look upon as a sore scourge to the nation and all its dependencies. We do Therefore with firmness of mind, on mature deliberation establish the following Resolves Vizt.

1st That an Act passed in the last session of Parliament empowering the Honorable East India Company to export Tea to America, subject to a duty upon its arrival in America is a fresh attack upon our rights, craftily planned by a few of our inveterate enemies in the Ministry in order to establish a tax on us plainly contrary to the Constitution of England itself, and glaringly repugnant to our Charter which we deem a grievance greatly aggravated by the cruel partiality therein shown against Millions of his Majesty's Loyal and good subjects in America, in favor of a few, very few, opulent subjects in Britain. This we cannot brook and do therefore solemnly bear testimony against it.

2nd That in justice to ourselves, our fellow colonists, and our posterity we cannot nor will voluntarily and tamely submit to this or any tax laid on us for the express purpose of raising a Revenue, when impressed without our consent given by ourselves or our Representatives

3^{ly} That as part of the Colonies laboring under oppression we are determined to join the rest in all and every lawful and just method for obtaining redress or preventing the oppression even at the risk of our lives and fortunes.

4th That all and every person or persons who have been are, or shall be advising or assisting in the aforesaid or any such Acts; or are active or aiding in the execution of them, are (so far at least) inimical to this Country, and thereby incur our just resentment; in which light we shall view all Merchants, traders and others who shall henceforth presume to import or sell any India Tea until the duty we so justly complain of be taken off.

5th that we each and every of us, will not directly or indirectly by ourselves, or any for or under us purchase or use, or suffer to be used in our respective families any India Tea, while such Tea is subject to a Duty payable upon its arrival in America.

6th that a Committee of Correspondence be chosen to confer or correspond with the committee of any, or all our sister towns in the Province as occasion may require.

We the subscribers, a committee appointed by the town of Newton to draft what might be proper for said Town to do, in the present exigence of our public affairs do report the foregoing for the consideration of the town and do further recommend that a copy thereof be transmitted to the committee of correspondence in Boston attested by the Town Clerk, Cha! Pelham, Edward Durant, John Woodward, Joshua Hammond, John King

Voted to choose a Committee of Correspondence (to consist of five persons) for the purpose aforesaid then made choice of Mr. Edward Durant, Mr. William Clark, Mr. John Pigeon, Mr. Joshua Hammond, & Capt. John Woodward to said committee.

Voted that the Committee consisting of fifteen persons, lay before the Inhabitants of this town a paper or papers that each of said inhabitants may have an opportunity to signify it under their hands that they will not buy, sell or use any of the India Teas, until the duties are taken off, and such as will not sign to return their name to the town at the adjournment. Then adjourned to Thursday the 13th of January Inst. – Abraham Fuller, Town Clerk

ON the adjournment, March 7th, 1774, voted the papers relating to the Tea, that were recommitted the 13th of January last, be now repositied in the Town Clerk's Office. & said meeting dissolved.

At a Town Meeting of the Inhabitants of Newton, duly warned and regularly assembled at our meeting House on Monday the 26th day of September AD 1774,...

Voted then the report of the Congress for the County of Middlesex that convened at Concord on the 30th & 31st days of August last, was read. Voted to Accept the same & that it be kept on file in the Clerk's office.

Voted to give Instructions to their Representative.

Voted to choose a committee to consist of five persons to prepare said Instructions, then made choice of Ens. John Pigeon, Capt. Jonas Stone, Dr. John King, Mr. Alexander Shepard & Capt. Benj. Hammond for said committee.

Voted to choose two persons to join the Provincial Congress at Concord on the second Tuesday of October next, or at any other time or place where the Provincial Congress shall meet then made Choice of Mr. John Pigeon & Mr. Edward Durant for that purpose.

30th September 1774 – On the adjournment the committee that was appointed to prepare Instructions for the Representatives, made their report, which was read to the Town and put for their acceptance, and it passed in the Affirmative and ordered said report to lie on file & be instructions for their Representatives.