

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of August 5, 2019 6:30 pm
Public Hearing and Regular Business Meeting, Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman; Barry Connell, John Hooper II; William Wilmot, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director

STATE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Linda Tanner, State Representative, Sullivan County; Skip Rollins State Representative, Sullivan County; Steven Smith, State Representative, Sullivan County; Ruth Ward, State Senator of District 8

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Rochford, Tobin Menard, Bert Spaulding, Sr. and Kurt Minich

NCTV: Louis Cassorla

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kessler called the meeting of the BOS to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW: Accepted as presented.

STATE BUDGET PROCESS/DISCUSSION: Chairman Kessler had volunteered to attend the informational session on Friday, July 19, 2019 at 10 am at the Sweeney Auditorium at the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, NH. He read aloud a prepared statement outlining the session and his interactions with politicians at the session. He then asked the legislators for their input.

Representative Smith stated the legislators said they did not want to change the education formula; they wanted to study it and possibly change it in two years. He discussed the history of stabilization grant funding and how it would have potentially assisted Newport (this year). The money was general fund money.

He requested that the BOS contact the Speaker of the House and ask why the bill (which would have benefitted Newport/Sullivan County) was killed.

He stated that one thing that was frustrating was a turnover rate of 100 representatives every two years. Those new members did not have to 'follow through' with previously passed funding bills.

Representative Smith again requested that the BOS contact the Speaker of the House and ask why House Bill (HB) 709 which would have benefitted Newport/Sullivan County was killed.

Chairman Kessler asked (rhetorically) if HB 709 had passed how it would have been funded. Representative Smith said that if it had passed, Finance had a mandate to fund it.

He then explained the two major bills: HB 2 is all the legal changes. HB1 is how much is spent.

Representative Tanner, Education Committee, stated that if Education was in the General Budget it would have to fight with all the other groups (Healthcare, etc.). She explained the committee's reason not to put education funding into the General Fund. She explained the Education Committee had wanted Disparity Aid in the budget. It would have gone to towns struggling with property taxes. It would have a stop gap stabilization at the 2016 fiscal year level. The Committee wanted outside help; not legislators.

Currently there is a "Continuing Resolution" in the legislature (90 day extension of last year's budget). The representatives have to convene before the end of September. The result is: Newport will lose more money from the state. Statewide, taxpayers will lose 9.1 million dollars in (state) education funding.

Concluding, Representative Tanner stated that a child's education should not depend on their zip code.

State Senator Ward spoke about her efforts to get money for the Town of Newport for Special Education and \$80,000 for fire alarms. This year, fiscal committees took all the available money, thus Newport didn't get any for their projects. She produced a letter which stated the Governor had set aside money for education and relief with property taxes.

She questioned Chairman Kessler about his prepared statement, stating she had not heard him mention these items when he read aloud his prepared statement. Chairman Kessler and State Senator Ward discussed this and the "number game" when discussing the budget.

Representative Tanner added that money would be put into the budget for local CTE funding. Senator Ward stated she was looking at the 24/7 special ed programs for children that needed funding in the smaller towns. Small towns that have an increase in special education costs need help from the state.

There was a discussion among the BOS and representatives on how the Town would spend money given to them from the state.

Selectman Fratzel addressed the state representatives and senator present and stated Newport was suffering. If money was given to Newport and then taken away in two years (legislator's term), it would be two years that Newport would have funding; that property owners would have use of. Selectman Fratzel expressed his overt feelings on the legislators and governor in Concord for forgetting the small towns and forgetting Newport who can't afford the unfunded mandates of special education costs. He stated they needed to come to a compromise and move forward because the towns are dying.

Representative Rollins stated he agreed with what Representatives Tanner and Smith had said at the BOS meeting. Newport's Representatives have voted to try and get as much money as they can for the town. One of the problems they have faced in Concord this term is that Democrats control the House and Democrats control the Senate (Smith, Rollins and Ward are Republicans). They choose who is on committees in the House and who is on the committees in the Senate. No voting republicans were on the Committee of Finance. One republican - a non-voting member - was allowed as an alternate.

Selectman Fratzel stated that currently Newport has no funding from the state. Legislators should all override the Governor's (Sununu) veto. Newport needs money.

Representatives Rollins and Smith agreed with Selectman Fratzel's statement. Representative Rollins listed the difficulties that the young, middle-aged and old alike face in Newport.

After a general discussion between the legislators and BOS members, Chairman Kessler thanked the representatives present and thanked them for everything they are doing for the Town of Newport.

Representative Rollins thanked the BOS for the letter sent to him stating that any money from the state would be for property tax relief or for programs in the school. He appreciated the honesty of the statement.

Chairman Kessler thanked the legislators for attending the BOS meeting. He told them they were welcome any time. The next meeting after voting in Concord is the third Monday in September (the 16th).

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): Minutes of July 15, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board voted to approve the BOS minutes of the July 15, 2019 meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

NPS Minutes of July 15, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board voted to approve the NPS minutes of the July 15, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; ***the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of July 15, 2019 as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. addressed the BOS and stated there was a petition going around for a Special School District Meeting. He read it aloud into the record and explained the reason for it. He then spoke of a 40 page climate and teacher survey and the reaction from administration and school board members. He explained the potential Special School District Meeting and what it would comprise. He urged people to sign the petition.

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Wilmot congratulated the Town Departments and Pinnacle Sports for their recently completed Pistol League. Sixty four people participated in the league. It was well run, safe and fun.

Selectman Hooper:

- Concurred with Selectman Wilmot. There will be another “Pistol League” in the fall of 2019. It was good to see the turnout. Five different police departments were represented in the League. Other towns said they would start one if Newport did not keep having one. The event benefitted the Town by raising money for the upkeep of the land the range was on as well as to support the Rec Department.
- Has received compliments on the quality paving jobs on East Mountain Road and Schoolhouse Road.
- The newly paved sidewalks are looking good. He requested doing the County Courthouse building sidewalk; it looks abysmal in comparison to the ones just done.

Selectman Connell:

- ❖ Went to his first Conservation Commission meeting. He stated they had an active agenda that the Selectboard needs to talk more about. The Commission needs help with some items. There were concerns expressed at the meeting about easements, whether the Town has an easement for Gilman Pond, etc. He would be talking to Town Manager Rieseberg and the other Selectmen.
- ❖ He concurred with Selectmen Wilmot and Hooper about items that are improving the Town. He recognized Town Manager Rieseberg for his efforts.
- ❖ Stated he had been a part of some Library Art Center (LAC) programs that were available for both adults and children. The LAC is doing a great job.

Selectman Fratzel stated his information was more serious. Newport has seen an increase in crime. He wanted to remind people that if they “see something, say something” - call 911. Everyone can help out.

Chairman Kessler had nothing to share at this time.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: Paving, Painting and Sidewalk Updates: Town Manager Rieseberg gave the following updates:

- ❖ Paving is almost done on East Mountain Road and Schoolhouse Road.
- ❖ Main Street sidewalk reconstruction continues to be under way. South Main Street has been completed. The contractor is currently working on the sidewalk on Park Street. There is a complication dealing with the existing curbing on Park Street; the old curbing has been taken off site and stored until new curbing of the same genre and condition is found to be used with the old curbing.
- ❖ The next sidewalk reconstruction area to be done will be on Main Street from Pearl Street to Oak Street. That work will provide a safe, smooth surface for walking and better surface for the sidewalk snowplow in the winter.
- ❖ Painting/stripping of crosswalks is behind schedule due to the need to grind off of the green paint the Town has previously used. Hatch mark striping will begin when the road surface is prepared and will be completed in time for the beginning of the school year (2019).
- ❖ Opera House work will commence in August- September 2019. The following will be done in 2019: the restoration of the clock tower, the face of the clock and painting, making sure the clock is working, exploring having the bell chime work, painting the trim, reinstall the half round stain glass windows in the building.
- ❖ We would like to add the reconstruction of the District Courthouse sidewalk to the list to be done this summer (2019).
- ❖ The Town hopes to get a new roof on the police department in the fall (2019)
- ❖ The Town plans to put a new roof on the District Courthouse in the year 2020.

The Town is currently on budget for the 2019 summer work. Selectman Hooper addressed Town Manager Rieseberg and requested that the Town look into fixing the potholes on Cedar Street.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Overview, Format, etc.: Finance Director Brown passed out a sheet of a working document for a Capital Improvement Plan. Town Manager Rieseberg explained that the draft showed a tentative schedule for replacing equipment and improving items in an attempt to spread out the cost of the improvements to minimize the tax impact in any one year. The target was to have the CIP Overview completed by September 2019. BOS members will have the information going into the budget year.

Finance Director Brown explained the Capital Improvement Plan Overview to the Board members. It included:

1. Annual Budget Appropriations
2. Proposed Capital Purchases (recommended by departments and outsourced studies done for the Town)
3. Bonded/leased/grant projects

Finance Director Brown answered all questions from the Board members.

Board members asked for the following:

- 1) Descriptions of each CIP item request

- 2) Reorganize list of proposed CIP purchases in order of priority. There was a discussion about “priority” objectivity.

Year End Surplus Expenditures/Projects: Town Manager Rieseberg stated the Town is proposing to finish incomplete projects with money left over from the 2018-2019 fiscal year (ended on July 1, 2019). He explained where the money came from in the budget. If the Selectboard authorized the expenditure of the funds there would not be much surplus funds left.

Finance Director Brown reviewed the list of outstanding 2019 Encumbrances. He answered all questions from the Board.

Finance Director Brown asked the Selectboard to authorize money from:

- A. Unused money from previous Main Street projects and rear door to the fire department building and retaining wall study money and the Old District Court Stairway and District Court Walkway money to pay for the District Court Sidewalk Project (\$59,087.00 total).
- B. Unused money from appropriations for a new Public Works Department garage roof and unexpended funds from additional PW projects to pay for a new police station roof and roof mounted air conditioner (\$70,309.00 total).
- C. Unused funds from a gravel road project and equipment maintenance money to pay for a new Public Works Director vehicle (\$16,329.00 total).
- D. Unexpended appropriations to pay for three front line fire truck radio repeaters. The Town has one radio repeater in a grant (not listed on the CIP) (\$10,000.00).

Town Manager Rieseberg was asked to explain the proposed District Court Sidewalk Project. He told the Board the tentative plans for the project which included improved ADA accessibility, relocating the existing fire hydrant and creating green space.

Finance Director Brown informed the Board members that if they approved all four projects the Town would still have a fund balance of \$850,000. In 2018 the Town had a fund balance of \$1,044,000.

Chairman Kessler asked for a motion for authorizing expenditures on the requested projects.

Selectman Hooper made a motion *to authorize Town Manager Hunter F. Rieseberg to proceed with the District Court Sidewalk Project and to fund it as explained in exhibit A.* It was seconded by Selectman Connell. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Selectman Fratzel made a motion that *we (the Board) include options B. C. and D.:*

- B. The Police Department Roof and air conditioning (\$47,309 from appropriations for a new Public Works Department garage roof and \$23,000 from unexpended appropriations) for a total of \$70,309.00;*
- C. The unused funds from a gravel road project (\$6,254) and equipment maintenance (\$8,075) and replacement (\$2,000) money to pay for a new Public Works Director vehicle for a total of \$16,329.00 and*
- D. \$10,000 of unexpended appropriations to pay for three front line fire trucks radio repeaters.* It was seconded by Selectman Hooper.

There was a lengthy discussion on the request of a new Public Works Director vehicle, the old PW vehicle and warranties. Chairman Kessler called for a vote. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Selectboard Planning Retreat: After a short consultation, the Board members agreed they would conduct their retreat on Thursday, September 5, 2019 from 4pm to 8pm. Location is TBD.

ACTION ITEMS: Approve Appointment of Deputy Treasurer: There was a discussion with Finance Director Brown about the responsibilities of the Deputy Treasurer and the Town Clerk. The BOS wanted to make sure there was no conflict of interest (the proposed applicant was a family member). After a short discussion citing state law and local responsibilities, it was decided there wouldn't be a conflict. It was also stated that the Deputy Treasurer was not a paid position. Chairman Kessler called for a motion.

Selectman Hooper made a motion *to approve the appointment of Mrs. Jaqueline Cote as Deputy Treasurer in accordance with RSA 41:29-a.* It was seconded by Selectman Connell. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

APPOINTMENTS: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted to appoint Ms. Christine Benner to the Community Center Committee. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to appoint Mr. Tobin Menard to the Community Center Committee. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

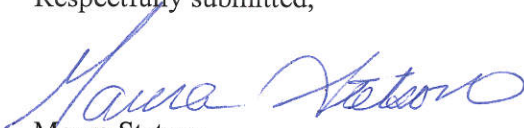
On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted by roll call vote to enter into NPS pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel and (d) Real Estate at 9:10 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

The Board exited NPS at 9:48 pm.

No decisions or votes were taken.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for August 26, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: August 26, 2019