

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of October 5, 2020 6:30 pm
Public Hearing and Regular Business Meeting
Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773
Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 889 2121 1005 Password: 488049
+1 (253) 215-8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees may apply)

SELECTMEN PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; Barry Connell, Herbert Tellor, Jr.; John Hooper II

SELECTMAN ABSENT: Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman

STAFF PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director *Via Zoom:* Liselle Dufort, Town Clerk

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Kathy Hubert, Dick Wentzell, Jenna Darling and Bert Spaulding, Sr.; *Via Zoom:* Virginia Irwin, Town Moderator

NCTV: John Lunn

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: was accepted as presented

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): September 14, 2020 - On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

NPS September 14, 2020 - On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the non-public session minutes of the September 14, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of the October 5, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Dick Wentzell addressed the Board and spoke about two things: the lack of an easement (written) into his property's deed for Town waterline rights and that he was planning to build a fence on his property line. Town Manager Rieseberg will address the concerns.

Mrs. Kathy Hubert announced to the Board and public that a program will be hosted by the NH School Funding Fairness Project on October 8th from 6pm-8pm via zoom. It will be a forum that focuses only on funding for education. Two Newport residents will make statements: Stephanie Gilson and Dwight LaFountain. People can go to the NH School Funding Fairness Facebook page for the log in code and password.

Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. addressed the Board with two issues:

1. Why the Town Hall (Opera House) won't be used for the Presidential election.

2. At the Primary (on September 8th) he was asked to leave the polls. He stated he was very upset and expected apologies from the individuals involved (he refused to leave). He said his right to observe (the voting process) will not be impeded.

Ms. Jenna Darling, school board member; was asked to give an update on how school was going. Ms. Darling said:

- ❖ The state received the food waiver; now all students eighteen years and under, both in-school and remote learners will receive free breakfast and lunch.
- ❖ There will be a school board meeting on Thursday, October 8, 2020.
- ❖ Remote learning is going well and has good attendance. In-school learners are learning how to use Chromebooks so if Newport has to go to only remote learning they will be ready (she explained the process they were taking).
- ❖ All (Covid-19) policies and procedures are going smoothly. Students are responding well to wearing masks all day.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. sent a compliment to the school board and staff that have made the in-school learning possible.

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Connell said a resident wanted the Board to know that with all the changes at the Opera House, the first priority was that it was a place for the arts. Town Manager Rieseberg said that the nine or ten things that have been done at the Opera House were maintenance items. The Newport Opera House Association (NOHA) Board has been working with the Town on some of the decisions of the renovations of the building. He explained there was a good line of communication and they have joint meetings. Chairman Kessler gave additional information from one joint NOHA/Town meeting.

Selectman Tellor had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Hooper

- Suggested, with the many new homeowners, that the Town send a letter or postcard welcoming and informing them of important Town contact information and things to do. It was stated that would be a wonderful thing to do in partnership with the Chamber or ECON.
- Asked about the winter sand that is made available to Newport residents. He was told the sand location was being revamped for easy usage 24/7.

Chairman Kessler stated the library is open with reduced hours. They still have curbside pickup.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: Elections Procedures Update - Chairman Kessler stated that up through the Primary, the Opera House was under renovation. He asked Town Moderator Irwin to give an update on the November 3, 2020 voting preparations.

Town Moderator Irwin gave the following update:

- 1) Location: Polls will be at the Newport high school gym (per BOS request)
- 2) Times: 7 am to 7 pm
- 3) Photo Identifications required (explained)
- 4) Voter can register at poll, day of voting
- 5) Publicity: electronic sign board, school message board, radio, NCTV, newspapers, Town website
- 6) Area: floor space schematics will be the same as primary (masked/unmasked/observer areas); it will flow the same as the Primary Elections (with appropriate social distancing). At the request of school board the observer area will also follow Covid-19 regulations.
- 7) Checklist will be divided into four stations for shorter lines.

- 8) Observers: Democratic and Republican representatives as well as the public will use the stage area.
- 9) BOS required at polls; school is requesting police presence for decorum.

School changed their Professional Day (PD) so there will not be students in the building. Parking will be at the back of the parking lot for poll workers and high school staff. Town Moderator Irwin said the school board wanted police there to direct people in and out of the building. She believed it was the role of the Selectboard as officials. Police needed to be there to move the flow of traffic in front of the building (limited to handicapped) and maintain voter decorum. Town Moderator Irwin explained the processing of absentee ballots in the BOS Room (October 29, 2020). The process will be open to the public. Ms. Darling informed the BOS that voter parking schematics will be worked out by the school board. Town Manager Rieseberg said that the school staff will disinfect after polling hours. Town staff will be responsible for setting up and taking down. The Town will cover the expense of disinfecting the room(s). Chairman Kessler stated that the BOS are required to be at the polls per the constitution. Town Moderator Irwin and Chairman Kessler discussed the requirement of the BOS presence and Selectmen pro temps as needed. He asked that people volunteering to be a Selectman pro temp contact Town Manager Rieseberg.

Selectman Tellor stated his concern of a police presence. Town Moderator Irwin explained there has always been a police presence at the polls.

Selectman Connell asked

- For a clarification; about voters wearing campaign material. He was told that federal law does not allow voters to wear or display any item that would indicate a political party/position/person or how to vote. Voters can bring in papers to use to guide them as to how to vote. They cannot leave the papers in the booth. Town Moderator Irwin reiterated that voters cannot have on their person any item that would indicate a political party, position or candidate.
- A limit to the number of observers allowed at polls. Town Moderator explained the history and guidelines for observers. She would ask if there was a limit to the number allowed.

Town Moderator Irwin stated the Opera House (Town Hall) was not being used because it was too small an area. She explained the additional room needed in 2020 with the Covid-19 restrictions. When asked, she said that there were many positive responses from voters concerning the change of venue from the Town Hall.

Chairman Kessler stated there were over 4,000 voters. He asked if 3,200 to 3,300 voters was a good estimate of the turnout. Town Moderator Irwin agreed and stated approximately 900 will be absentee ballots. When asked, Town Moderator Irwin said that if an individual is in line at 7 pm, they will be able to vote. Concluding, she stated that NH law is firm, the absentee ballot has to be received by the time the NH polls close (7 pm) in order to be counted. Addressing the public, she requested they vote (absentee) early and mail it in.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. addressed Town Clerk Dufort and Town Moderator Irwin and expressed his displeasure with the proposed schematics of the room and the preparations in general. Go to www.nctv-nh.org for the full discussion.

Chairman Kessler invited Town Moderator Irwin and Town Clerk Dufort to attend the October 19, 2020 BOS meeting with updates and on November 2, 2020 with what people can expect on November 3, 2020.

Review of Draft Stewardship Plan and Land Trust Alliance Standards - Town Manager Rieseberg gave a synopsis of the Draft and the reason for it: acquiring LCHIP Grants (one grant already awarded to Newport has been for the maintenance of the Opera House). He will provide additional information on the draft over the next few weeks. It needs to be finalized within one month.

Selectman Connell asked if the Conservation Commission should be involved in the Land Trust aspect of it. He was told no. Input from the Heritage Commission might be solicited.

ACTION ITEMS: NCTV Management Agreement - Chairman Kessler said a new management agreement had been signed between the NCTV Board and the BOS. Referring to the draft passed out to the Board on September 14, 2020 he reviewed the changes (formatting, date, etc.) that had been made. He stated that NCTV played a vital role for the Town and School. Mrs. Hubert said that she thought the finished document was great. It spells out each one's responsibility (Town and NCTV), gives NCTV the sustainability it needs and in 2023 both Boards will know how to proceed.

Selectman Connell made a motion *to accept the Management Agreement between the Town of Newport and Newport Community Television (NCTV) and the provisions that go with it. The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Jeffrey Kessler, is authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town.* It was seconded by Selectman Tellor. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Appointment to the Recreation Advisory Committee-Kim Gaddes - On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board appointed Ms. Kim Gaddes as a full member to the Recreation Advisory Committee with a three-year term ending in June 2023. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Vote to Accept and Expend a Conservation License Plate Grant of up to \$9,900.00 with the State of New Hampshire for Old Court House Painting and to Authorize Town Manager Hunter Rieseberg to Sign All Related Documents - After a discussion on the use of the revenues from the NH conservation license plates; Selectman Hooper made a motion *to accept and expend a Conservation License Plate Grant of up to \$9,900.00 with the State of New Hampshire for Old Court House painting and to authorize Town Manager Hunter Rieseberg to sign all related documents.* It was seconded by Selectman Tellor. There was further discussion on the Moose Plates and the use of their revenues. Town Manager Rieseberg will get information on its use to the Selectmen. *The motion passed 3-0-1 (Connell abstained).*

Review and Approve Proposed Bond Issue for Bridges-Coon Brook Bridge; Oak Street Bridge - Town Manager Rieseberg gave a short explanation on applying for a bond to pay for the two projects. Finance Director Brown explained the financial information pertaining to the three proposed bonds. After a discussion between the Board, Finance Director Brown and Town Manager Rieseberg on the proposed bond issues, on a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board approved the bond issue for both Coon Brook Bridge and Oak Street Bridge and awarded the project to the Sugar River Bank for a 10 year period. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Hooper, *the Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(d) Pending Litigation at 8:38 pm. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

The Board exited NPS at 9:44 pm.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for October 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: October 19, 2020