

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of November 4, 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

SELECTMAN ABSENT: William Wilmot, Jr

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director; Liz Emerson, Zoning Administrator

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding, Sr.

NCTV: Robert Merritt

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: Add under Information: Tax Rate (Kessler)

PUBLIC HEARINGS: To gather comments on the draft Brownsfields Cleanup Grant application being submitted to the federal EPA for the cleanup of the former Ambargis Mill Site, Newport, NH.

Chairman Kessler opened the Public Hearing on the grant submission and read the Public Hearing Notice into the record:

Town of Newport
Board of Selectmen
Public Hearing Notice

The Town of Newport will be conducting a Public Hearing meeting on **Monday, November 4, 2019 at 6:30 PM, in the Board of Selectmen** meeting room at 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH to gather comments on the draft Brownfields Cleanup Grant application being submitted to the federal EPA for the cleanup of the former Ambargis Mill Site, Newport, NH.

The draft grant application is available for public review and comment in the Planning & Zoning Office, Town of Newport, 15 Sunapee Street Newport, NH. The draft grant application will be available for public comment from November 1, 2019 through November 20, 2019. An electronic version of the draft document can also be emailed to any interested party. Please contact Liz Emerson, Zoning Administrator, at 603-863-8010 or lemerson@newportnh.gov to receive a copy or to submit formal comments on the draft documents.

Chairman Kessler acknowledged Ms. Liz Emerson, Zoning Administrator. Ms. Emerson stated the BOS had been given the grant application information in their packets. The public hearing was a mandate to acquire any community input and to take it into consideration.

Ms. Emerson stated the application deadline is December 3, 2019. If there is input needed to be added, it would be included in the final application. She stated the Town was applying for a \$500,000 grant to help clean up the Ambargis property. Ms. Emerson explained the types of contaminants that were in the soil at the site and how deep into the ground it penetrated. When the site was clean of contaminants, the proposed use was to be a community park.

For clarification, Chairman Kessler asked if it was the lot next to the new bridge (on Oak Street). He was told yes, that it was between the “rail to trail” and the Sugar River.

Town Manager Rieseberg addressed the BOS and stated there is a financial obligation with the acceptance of the grant. It was an 80/20 match grant. The Town would have to match the \$500,000 with \$100,000 if the Town acquired the grant (state \$500,000/Newport \$100,000).

Chairman Kessler asked if there was a cost estimate for the clean-up. Ms. Emerson stated there were two options:

- 1) \$400,000: put an environmental membrane over the site to contain the contamination and make sure it stays where it is.
- 2) \$2.1 million: removes all of the contaminated soil; has it correctly removed. Test drilling indicates that the depth of the soil to be removed is between five and eight feet.

Chairman Kessler asked if the membrane had been used in other areas and how successful it had been. Ms. Emerson stated it had been used and worked (containing the contamination) approximately 80% of the time. It was designed to prevent the contamination from leaching up to the topsoil. She gave a further explanation. She then stated if the contaminated soil was removed it was gone. Chairman Kessler asked who made the final decision whether to use the membrane or to remove the soil. Ms. Emerson stated the Board of Selectmen; they would also approve how much the Town would spend. There was a short discussion between Ms. Emerson and the BOS on the cleanup of the site.

Chairman Kessler asked if there were questions from the public. Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. asked if the Town had cleaned up the site before. Ms. Emerson stated that in 1999 the federal EPA came in. She explained the reasons and stated they did not take the contaminated soil at that time. In 2003 the monitoring wells were put in to ensure that contaminants were not spreading. Ms. Emerson stated that if the Town removed the eight feet of soil, they would keep the monitoring wells there.

Selectman Fratzel asked who prepared the draft analysis report in the BOS packets. He was told Judd Newcomb. Selectman Fratzel said that the report stated the membrane was the recommended procedure for the project. Ms. Emerson concurred with his statement (less expensive and 80%). Chairman Kessler asked if the test wells have indicated movement of the contamination over time. Ms. Emerson stated that to the best of her knowledge, no. Chairman Kessler stated, for clarification, that the containment of the contaminated soil has been stable. He was told yes.

Finance Director Brown addressed the Chair and stated that the work that had been done in 1999 was paid for by the State; the Town was informed of it, but it was done through State hazmat.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked, for clarification, if the Town owned the land. He was told yes. Ms. Emerson then reiterated that a Brownfields grant specialized in hazardous cleanup. She explained the types of hazardous waste at the site that needed to be cleaned up.

Chairman Kessler addressed Ms. Emerson and asked that two items be corrected in her report.

- 1) One was the population of Newport (different in two places). He asked that numbers be consistent.

- 2) The tax rate in her application needed to be updated to the current tax rate.

There was no further comment.

Chairman Kessler closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Emerson thanked the Board.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): October 21, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Fratzel abstained).*

NPS minutes October 21, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the NPS minutes of the October 21, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Fratzel abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: November 4, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of November 4, 2019 as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Selectman Hooper announced that Mr. Lunn had asked to report if there were TV issues. He has been told that the November 4, 2019 broadcast was 'black'. The videographer stated that he was trying to get the internet going. The meeting was being recorded for future viewing.

Finance Director Brown addressed the Board and stated that at the October 21, 2019 BOS meeting he had addressed the Board and asked for an emergency expenditure per NH RSA 32:11 for \$3,426,000. It has been preliminarily approved. The Commissioner of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration asked for two things:

1. That a statement (he presented it to the Selectboard) be signed by all the Selectmen.
2. Finance Director Brown would attach the approved minutes of the October 21, 2019 BOS meeting.

For clarification, Chairman Kessler stated that he would have to check the October 21, 2019 BOS minutes. They stated that the BOS authorized him to sign any and all documents related to the request. Finance Director Brown stated the Board had directed the Chair to sign. He did not know if the Board needed to take additional action, or just sign the document from the NH DRA Commissioner.

Selectman Fratzel asked Finance Director Brown to give a synopsis of the emergency expenditure action. Finance Director Brown complied with his request and explained the revolving fund loan and emergency expenditure action.

Chairman Kessler asked for a motion to modify the motion to have the Board of Selectmen sign. Selectman Fratzel stated that because he was not part of the original vote (October 21, 2019) he did not believe he should sign the document.

Selectman Hooper made a motion; *to reconsider the motion to request permission from the Commissioner of the NH Department of Revenue for emergency appropriations for the repayment of a revolving loan fund loan, the amount not to exceed \$3,426,000.* It was seconded by Selectman Connell. Chairman Kessler called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Selectman Fratzel made a motion; *for the Board to request permission from the Commissioner of the NH Department of Revenue for emergency appropriations for the repayment of a revolving loan fund, the amount not to exceed \$3,426,000.* It was seconded by Selectman Hooper. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Finance Director Brown addressed the Board and stated that the auditors had been at the Town Office. One thing asked annually was that the BOS fill out a questionnaire regarding fraud and other questions. He asked that a motion be made for Chairman Kessler to fill out the questionnaire and sign it. After a short discussion, Selectman Fratzel made a motion *to authorize Chairman Jeffrey Kessler to answer and sign the questionnaire from (Newport's auditors) Plodzick and Sanderson on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.* It was seconded by Selectman Hooper. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Connell had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Fratzel informed the Board and viewing audience that:

1. The Newport Varsity Football team would be going to the State playoffs. They would compete against Trinity High School (Manchester) on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at 1 pm.
2. The Community Center Committee was waiting for an update from BreadLoaf on cost estimating of renovating the existing Rec Center instead of building a new Community Center. They will be meeting after they have the financial information. There was a general discussion on the proposed Center.

Selectman Hooper stated that:

1. The Gallery of Gifts at the Library Arts Center will open this week.
2. On Saturday, November 9th the Opera House will host the "Taste of Sullivan County".

Chairman Kessler had nothing to share at this time.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: 2020 Census-Thomas Simmons, Partnership Specialist: Mr. Simmons explained he was a partnership specialist for the 2020 Census. He gave a synopsis of:

- ❖ The history of the census
- ❖ The process of the census
- ❖ The importance of the census
- ❖ Timeline for census 2020
- ❖ The 2020 census form was nine questions; no long form in 2020

He asked the BOS for avenues into the Newport community:

- senior center
- library
- Town Times
- civic groups
- newspapers
- local cable access NCTV
- social service facilities

Mr. Simmons gave examples of how he and the census enumerators have accomplished their work in various towns. He hoped to be able to work with the Town and its avenues to get a complete, accurate Newport census for 2020.

Mr. Simmons thanked the Board for their time.

Town Warrant-Sports Betting: Discussion was postponed to a future meeting.

Town Tax Rate: Finance Director Brown passed out a sheet with the breakdown of the Newport tax rate (into County, Local, State Education and Local Education categories). There was a discussion on each category. Finance Director Brown stated the tax bills will be mailed on Friday, November 8, 2019 and will be due on December 10, 2019.

ACTION ITEMS: Accept New Hampshire Moose Plate Conservation License Plate Grant of \$9,335.00 and to authorize the Town Manager to sign any related Documents: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to accept the New Hampshire Moose Plate Conservation License Plate Grant of \$9,335.00 and to authorize Town Manager Hunter F. Rieseberg to sign any related Documents. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Town Manager Rieseberg and the Selectmen thanked the Town Clerk Office and Adelaide Kozlik for their hard work in acquiring the grant for Newport.

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted by roll call vote to enter into NPS pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, (a) Personnel and RSA 91-A:3, (d) Real Estate at 7:46 p.m. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Present were Selectboard members Jeffrey Kessler, Barry Connell, John Hooper and Todd Fratzel. Also in attendance were Town Manager Hunter Rieseberg and Finance Director Paul Brown.

The Board exited the non-public session at 9:24 p.m.

No action was taken.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for November 18, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: December 16, 2019