

# TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Board of Selectmen Minutes of October 2, 2023 - Regular Business Meeting

Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

Meeting ID: 829 5291 9637

Passcode: 900805

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82952919637?pwd=V3FCaEJaZkp1ZG5EL3ZfbHNoY3FSdz09>

+1 (253) 215 8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees apply)

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**SELECTMEN PRESENT:** Barry Connell, Chairman; James Burroughs, Vice Chairman; Jeffrey Kessler, Keith Sayer, and Jeffrey North

**SELECTMAN ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Paul Brown, Interim Town Manager & Finance Director, Police Chief Alex Lee, Officer Aaron Waterman, Officer Robert Selfridge, Officer Alexander Marvin, Fire Chief Steven Yannuzzi

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bert Spaulding Sr., Wayne Boardman, Mary Boardman, Mark Murphy, Doug Ring

**NCTV:** NCTV

**CALL TO ORDER:** Barry Connell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. (Full meeting can be found on [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org))

**ADGENDA REVIEW:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**SWEARING IN: Police Department – Aaron Waterman; Alexander Marvin, Promotion to Sergeant Robert Selfridge Promotion to Sergeant:** As Chief Lee states, Aaron Waterman graduated from Newport High School, where he served in the United States Army as a cannon crew member. He continues to serve today as a combat engineer holding the rank as Staff Sergeant. Prior to joining the Newport Police Department, he worked for the NH Department of Transportation as an equipment operator doing road maintenance. Chief Lee commends Waterman for his help with the storms this summer as he has a great deal of knowledge due to his previous experiences. Chief Lee states Waterman excelled at the Police Academy in all aspects, including holding leadership positions in his class. *Police Chief Lee appoints and swears in Aaron Waterman as a full-time police officer in the Newport Police Department.* Chief Lee states Alexander Marvin grew up in the Upper Valley and comes from a law enforcement family. Alex Marvin has been a police officer for eight years, with the vast majority being at NPD. He served for seven years in the patrol division in Newport, and has been a detective for roughly one year, where he has been lead investigator in most of the significant cases during that time period. Alex Marvin is widely respected by other law enforcement throughout Sullivan County. Marvin recently presented a case study on child abuse investigations at the Attorney Generals Training Conference, where he is being requested to present it again to a national audience in Denver, Colorado next year. Alex Marvin acts as a leader at the NPD guiding the lesser experienced officers. *Police Chief Lee appoints and swears in Alexander Marvin as Sergeant in the Newport Police Department.* Robert Selfridge, a resident of Newport, graduated from Plymouth State University in 2017. Shortly after, he worked as a patrolman for the Newbury Police Department. Selfridge has been with the Newport Police Department since 2019, where he has been a backbone of the patrol division ever since. Rob serves as a mentor for newer officers, not only for NPD but for other surrounding departments as well. Because of Rob Selfridge's prior experience

of serving at the Becket Facility for Juvenile Placements, he has become an expert in the intricacies of the juvenile justice system. Rob's peers voted for him to represent them in the Union Leadership. Selfridge also volunteers for the Town Manager Search Committee, which shows his dedication and commitment to the town. Chief Lee states he believes Selfridge will be training four new officers in the next nine months and has the upmost faith in him to do so. *Police Chief Lee appoints and swears in Robert Selfridge as Sergeant in the Newport Police Department.*

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** Minutes from September 18, 2023, were accepted by the board *on a motion made by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, the board voted unanimously. 5-0-0.*

**CONSENT AGENDA:** *Selectman Kessler made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, seconded by Selectman Sayer, the board voted unanimously. 5-0-0.*

**INFORMATIONAL: Main Street Fire Hydrant Relocation:** Interim Town Manager Brown reminds the board the last meeting they discussed removing one of the fire hydrants and relocating the other to the central strip. Fire Chief Steve Yannuzzi adds there will be no issue getting rid of one and relocating the other to the center. He says the location will be easily accessible if needed. Mr. Brown says he has been in contact with public works about the plan for cutting the lines that are currently connected to the hydrants, and there should be no problems. The new hydrant will have a straight pipe off one of the main water lines. The department stated they do not have the staff to complete the project before winter, so the project will be going out to bid soon. Selectman North is concerned about placing the fire hydrant too soon before the paving project because the new location of the hydrant would be in the center of a crosswalk. Mr. Brown says he will follow up with the specific location.

**Wastewater Treatment Plant:** Interim Town Manager Brown says he had a meeting with the state. The state is not requiring additional basins to be added. Mr. Brown relays to the board they are ready to move forward with the project, where it should be going out to bid in January. Selectman Sayer and North added they thought it was a good meeting. Selectman North states the board needs to address the changes and increases coming with the sewer prices. He adds there are grants available to help offset the costs the citizens will have to pay, and that is something that should be heavily considered. Selectman Burroughs thanked Mr. Brown and the town administration for the work they put in to find funding opportunities and including grants for all town-related projects to help minimize the cost for the residents. Selectman Kessler responds to North by saying deferring rates is sometimes counterproductive. He suggests they start with smaller incremental increases. Interim Town Manager Brown adds the town put in a pre-application last spring to the State Aid Grant. He says the town is in line for this grant. He adds there will be an information session at the meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>, and a Public Hearing on November 6<sup>th</sup> where there will be a decision made. Rate increases will be seen on the April bill.

**Available Employment Positions - Current Status:** Interim Town Manager Brown states the board was provided with a list of open positions. He believes there are around six applicants for the Town Manager position. Public Works Director is moving along as well. There has been an application for Building Inspector; the town is currently using a contractor that specializes in large commercial buildings. Background checks are being conducted on a laborer. Highway superintendent is vacant but is on hold. The town is currently in search of permanent or part-time custodian or maintenance. For Truck Driver Equipment Operator, there has been one hire, and one in the works. There has been a new Firefighter/EMT that has been hired, which is staffed as budgeted. Mr. Brown says he has sent three

letters of offer to police officer candidates, which will be staffed as budgeted as well. Selectman Burroughs asked if the salary increases have helped any. Mr. Brown responds by saying it has helped, both with candidates and retention within the town.

**Community Center:** Mr. Brown relays to the board he has been working with Breadloaf and have submitted the final package to USDA. USDA is reviewing and going to be in contact with the town soon. There has been a slight price increase, Mr. Brown states there should be enough to cover the differences in the current donation fund. Breadloaf anticipates a November 1<sup>st</sup> ground break. Selectman North expresses frustration with the board for not having enough discussion before a serious vote. He is heavily concerned about this project not being fully funded and feels it is not being discussed and voted on in the proper manner. North is concerned about increases due to inflation and the loan not going through, and how that will affect the process of the construction of the Community Center. Selectman Burroughs responds by saying this has been an ongoing discussion for over two years. He adds there has been a lot of planning and thought behind potential scenarios. Chairman Connell assures if the promised funds from the state do not materialize, it will be expected from the town to pay for the difference. He says there are people already looking into alternative sources of money. Connell adds there is an urgency to this project. Selectman Kessler states the executive councilors and governor know about this project and are fully on board to see it be built. North reiterates he is for the Community Center; however, he feels there needs to more of a discussion regarding we are \$1,000,000 short of the projected cost. Bert Spaulding Sr. wants to see anything that happens moving forward, be put to vote by the town.

**ACTION ITEMS: NH Department of Safety, Body Worn & Dashboard Camera Grant – Accept and Expand \$15,477.00 and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents:** Chief Lee informs the board Newport was one of the first towns to implement body worn cameras while Burroughs was Chief. The current cameras the NPD has are failing to serve the purpose they are needed for. Chief Lee is hoping to move towards cloud storage instead of the server the NPD owns and maintains, as well as upgrade cameras. Chief Lee states he tries to exhaust every grant opportunity when the department is in need of something. He says he applied for two grants of the same nature, and unexpectedly was awarded both. This allows the NPD to combine both grants and purchase thirteen new cameras, one for every officer. Selectman Kessler asks Chief Lee if the town is in jeopardy for accepting two of the same grants. Chief Lee responds by saying he has to notify them they are expanding the scope of work. These grants are 50% match; each grant needs \$15,477.00 matched over the course of five years. ***On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to accept and expand the NH Department of Safety Grant in the amount of \$15,477.00 for the purpose of reimbursement of a portion of the cost to purchase and maintain body worn and dashboard cameras and authorize the current and active Town Manager to sign all related documents, seconded by Selectman Sayer. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.***

**US Department of Justice, Body Worn & Dashboard Camera Grant – Accept and Expand \$15,477.00 and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents:** ***On a secondary motion made by Selectman Burroughs to accept and expand the US Department of Justice Grant in the amount of \$15,477.00 for the purpose of reimbursement of a portion of the cost to purchase and maintain body worn and dashboard cameras and authorize the current and active Town Manager to sign all related documents, seconded by Selectman Sayer. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.***

**OPEN FORUM:** Wayne Boardman thanked Mr. Paul Brown for the removal of trees in the cemetery on Pine Street. Additionally, he feels the speed of traffic on Pine Street is too fast. Selectman Kessler asks if it would be a possibility to add speed tables to help with the speed. Chief Lee states he patrolled Pine

Street last week, and the NPD will continue to during patrol shifts. Mr. Boardman questioned if there could be something done about the heavy equipment trucks using Pine Street since is not an accessible road for them with sharp turns. He suggested there be signs put up. Selectman Burroughs suggests the NPD reach out to GPS companies to identify Pine Street as a non-truck-route. Next, Boardman asked why the drainage system on Belknap Avenue overflows whenever there is heavy rain. Brown responds by saying the drainage system is undersized. This is the states drainage system, not the towns. **Mark Murphy**, a resident and business owner of Newport, comes to board concerned about the quality of water they are getting at their home located on North Main Street. He states over the past four weeks there has been sediment build up, and recently, the water has been brown. Murphy has reached out to Joe Branch, in the Water and Sewer Department, where he tested the water. As a result, the water tested for double the amount of iron as it should have. Joe relayed to Murphy this is an old cast iron pipe and they are planning to do a type of treatment to the water line on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Interim Town Manager Brown has met with Joe regarding this issue. Joe will be conducting tests on surrounding residential areas to pinpoint the problem. Chairman Connell is asking for an update at the next meeting.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Selectman Kessler reminds people if they want to change their political party affiliation, needs to do so by October 6, 2023, at the Town Clerk. **Selectman Burroughs** relayed he has heard many positive comments about the Homecoming Parade. He also heard there was a lack of advertising outside of social media about the times of the parade.

***On a motion made by Selectman Kessler to enter a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation; RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Real Estate; seconded by Selectman Sayer, the board voted unanimously via roll call vote at 8:28 p.m., 5-0-0.***

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation: RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Real Estate - *The board voted unanimously to exit the non-public session at 9:07 p.m.*

On a motion by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, ***the Board voted unanimously to seal the Non-Public Minutes of October 2, 2023 until December 4, 2023, 5-0-0.***

**ADJOURNMENT:** On a motion made by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, ***the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:08 p.m., 5-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,



Riely Skarin, Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectman is scheduled for **October 16, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**

*Approved: October 16, 2023*