

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Board of Selectmen Minutes of October 16, 2023 – Regular Business Meeting

Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

Meeting ID: 858 1789 5821

Passcode: 934517

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85817895821?pwd=TTYzY0Q0Tms1VGZ2YXAvQmZ1dnNGZz09>

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

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

SELECTMAN ABSENT: Keith Sayer

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Brown, Interim Town Manager & Finance Director, Police Chief Lee, Aaron Waterman, Robert Selfridge, Alexander Marvin, Fire Chief Yannuzzi, Rick Kloeppel, Airport Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding Sr., Herb Tellor, Margaret Coulter, Kurt Minich

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)

AGENDA REVIEW: Interim Town Manager requests to add Action Item c. Flagpole Donation

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Minutes from September 18, 2023, were accepted by the board on a *motion made by Selectman Burroughs, seconded by Selectman Kessler, the board voted unanimously. 4-0-0*

Minutes from September 25, 2023, were accepted by the board on a *motion made by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, the board voted unanimously. 4-0-0*

Minutes from October 2, 2023, were accepted by the board on a *motion made by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, the board voted unanimously. 4-0-0*

Minutes from October 2, 2023, Non-public Session were accepted by the board on a *motion made by Selectman Burroughs, seconded by Selectman Kessler, the board voted unanimously. 4-0-0*

CONSENT AGENDA: *Selectman Kessler made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, the board voted unanimously. 4-0-0.*

INFORMATIONAL: Aurora Bakery: Margaret Coulter, the director of Road to Independence, thanks the community for their support regarding Aurora Bakery over the past six years. Coulter informs due to finances and societal needs they are closing the bakery. She states the bakery is bigger than they can take on. Coulter relays to the board she is looking for another way to help the community and people with differing abilities and they are open to collaborating with others in the future. Connell speaks on behalf of the board; they are thankful and happy for what they have done for the community. Aurora

Bakery's official close date is Friday, October 27, 2023, they will have their six-year anniversary specials happening the week of.

Airport CDS Funding: Interim Town Manager Brown states the town was awarded an excess of \$600,000 congressionally directed spending for paving the airport runway. The town had to go through the FAA to get the money, where they would need to be compliant with FAA standards. This would require widening the runway by ten feet and fixing the drainage problems. This project estimate is \$2,500,000. There has been discussion on rescoping the award to expend it towards doing an environmental analysis, which would be necessary to start construction. The environmental analysis is about \$150,000. There has also been discussion about planning the design for the construction. Interim Town Manager asks the board if they would support the rescoping change for the environmental analysis or environmental analysis and design. Kessler states the town has an obligation and a requirement to maintain the runway. Brown says the airport crew has been working on crack sealing to keep up with the maintenance. Rick Kloeppel, Co-Manager of Parlin Field Airport, states the last 600 feet of the runway needs to be raised a couple feet and the culvert under the runway needs to be replaced. He says this is an issue of timely manner. Brown expresses concern with the grant needing to be expended by the middle of 2024. Herb Tellor asked if there are still issues with the fuel dispensary. Brown responded by saying it was a sealant issue with the boot, but the issue has been resolved. Selectman Kessler feels the town should try to redirect the award to address pertinent issues at hand to then move along with the construction. Selectman Burroughs states he would like to see the framework be completed as soon as possible to get accurate pricing, with Selectman North agreeing. Chairman Connell says he would like to see this be a priority.

Board & Committee Vacancies: Airport Advisory Board: Two Alternate Members – Terms to expire June 2024

Capital Improvements Program: Three At-Large Members – Terms to expire June 2026, 2025, & 2024; 1 BAC Representative – Term to expire June 2025; 1 Town Staff Representative – Term to expire June 2024

Conservation Commission: Two Alternate Members – Term to expire June 2024

Monuments & Memorials Committee: One Heritage Commission Representative - Term to expire June 2026

Planning Board: One Alternate Member - Term to expire June 2026

Recreation Advisory Council: One Alternate Member - Term to expire June 2026; One Student Representative – Term to expire June 2024

Zoning Board of Adjustment: One Regular Member – Term to expire June 2024; two Alternate Member – Terms to expire June 2024 & 2025

Budget Advisory Committee: Five Public Member positions are open.

Individuals may nominate themselves for consideration. Volunteering to serve on a board or committee for the Town of Newport can provide an opportunity to learn more about your town. It can also be a rewarding and worthwhile experience.

For more information on these positions or to obtain a nomination form, contact the Selectman's Office by phone (603)863-1877 or email jdufour@newportnh.gov. Nomination forms are also available on the Town's website, which can be found at www.newportnh.gov.

Town Manager Search Committee Report: Mr. Brown informs the board there are currently eleven applicants, and others have until Friday, October 20, 2023, to apply. The Committee is meeting on Monday to sift through and set up interviews via zoom. Mr. Brown says he will give a recommendation during a meeting in November.

Newport Times Holiday Edition: Selectman Connell is asking the other board members if they would be willing to help write or brainstorm ideas for the Board of Selectman updates published in the *Newport Times*. Selectman Burroughs says he would be happy to help write the article for the Holiday Edition. He states he has some ideas for upcoming articles.

Sewer Rates: There will be a public hearing after the November 6, 2023, meeting where there will be a vote on the new sewer rate increases. Interim Town Manager Brown gave a presentation about how the change in rates would affect the forecast of the future project working capital in relation to the size of the wastewater treatment plant. With the current sewer rates, Brown showed there is an \$8,000,000 deficit. Previously, Brown suggested a 175% increase of rates, which would eliminate any deficits and be in the suggested working capital range. Over five years, Brown states if the rates are worked in, there is more flexibility with year-to-year increases. This would allow financial stability and flexibility in the future. Selectman Kessler states the town has been at a flat rate and he suggests getting into the mindset to manage for future needs. There has been a neglect of adaptability to inflation. Selectman North adds this is tentative; he said he hopes other variables would be able to offset the rate increases.

ACTION ITEMS: Appointment To Planning Board – Herbert R. Tellor, Jr., Alternate Member; Term to Expire June 2026: *On a motion made by Selectman Kessler to appoint Herbert R. Tellor, Jr., Alternate Member of the Planning Board, term to expire June 2026, seconded by Selectman Burroughs. The board voted unanimously, 4-0-0.*

Authorize Current and Active Town Manager to Apply for NHDES Drinking Water/Groundwater Grant and Loan for Unity Road Project: Brown states there has been an initial approval of \$100,000 for engineering design in 2018. In 2021 the town approved \$1,330,000 for the project to rebuild the pressure reducing valve, piping, and watermain work on Pike Hill Road. The town received a \$600,000 Northern Borders Regional Commission grant towards the project. The town currently has \$2.1 million, with the current estimated cost of \$2.5 million. Brown states they are finalizing an application requesting a \$350,000 loan to cover the difference. Additionally, the town is requesting a loan to borrow the \$1.3 from the state to avoid having to go to local banks as the state has more favorable rates. *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to authorize the current and active Town Manager to apply for NHDES drinking water/groundwater grant and loan for the Unity Road project, seconded by Selectman Kessler. The board voted unanimously, 4-0-0.*

Flagpole Donation: Brown informs the board there is a local veteran who has expressed concerns about the flagpole in the North Newport Cemetery. The veteran has offered to donate three flagpoles for the cemetery, one of thirty feet, and the other two twenty-five feet. The board agrees the town will install the poles and cover the necessary expenses. The board thanked the local veteran. *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to accept the flagpole donation, seconded by Selectman Kessler. 4-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Bert Spaulding speaks to the board about the Ruger Mill building. He states there are five parties contemplating rehearing or suing the town. Spaulding feels there has been violation of the constitution through this process, and Selectman and Zoning Board members are inadequately running meetings. Spaulding proceeds to read a case law. He wants there to be a rehearing where Burroughs and Kessler to admit they made a mistake. The board expresses they do not need to speak on what the Zoning Board as done. Spaulding has not written an appeal to the Zoning Board.

COMMUNICATIONS: Jeff Kessler states there is an expo at Newport Middle High on Thursday and encourages people to go. Jim Burroughs asks for an update regarding the new information booth. Brown

responds by saying the Chamber has been looking into different ideas but will ultimately be a spring project. **Jeff North** acknowledges the potholes downtown on the state roads needing to be fixed. Selectman Burroughs says they will have to communicate to the state we need a more robust repair system as they cannot maintain those roads. **Town Manager** asking for a nonpublic 91-A:3 II, (d) Real Estate.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs, seconded by Selectman Kessler, to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Real Estate; RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation at 7:55 p.m. The board voted unanimously via roll call vote, 4-0-0.*

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II (d) Real Estate; RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation. *The Board voted unanimously to exit the non-public session at 8:19 p.m.*

On a motion by Selectman Burroughs, seconded by Selectman Kessler, *the Board voted unanimously to authorize the current and acting town manager to sign Settlement Agreements with Occum Properties and Spring Street Apartments, upon finalization.*

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs, seconded by Selectman Kessler, *the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:21 p.m., 4-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,



Riely Skarin
Recording Secretary

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