

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Board of Selectmen

Minutes for Meeting of February 4, 2019 6:30 pm

Regular Business Meeting, Municipal Building

15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

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

SELECTMEN ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding, Sr.; Jacqueline Cote, Melissa Mitchler, Lisa Ferrigno, Nancy Wilmot, Tim Renner, Ed O’Berhofer, Jeffrey Barrette (Chairman, County Commissioners); Ben Nelson (Vice Chairman, County Commissioners); Derek Ferland, County Manager; George Hebert, County Commissioner

NCTV: Louis Cassorla, John Lunn

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kessler called the regular meeting of the BOS to order at 6:31 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW: Accepted as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Newport, New Hampshire will hold two Public Hearings on Monday, February 4, 2019; and Thursday, February 14, 2019 to discuss the following:

The Planning Board and the Conservation Commission has recommended, pursuant to RSA 41:14-a, that the Town acquire property located on Meadow Road, Map 114, Lot 159, also known as the Newport Youth Activities property, by eminent domain.

All meetings will be held in the Board of Selectmen’s Meeting Room at the Newport Town Offices, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH, at 6:30 p.m.

Chairman Kessler read the public hearing notice into the record. Town Manager Rieseberg gave a synopsis of the reasons for taking the outer portion of the ball field next to the current Town building and grounds shed (on assessment role as owned by the Newport Youth Activities Association). The property is an “orphan lot”. In preparation of the Warrant Article passing for a Community Center, the Town is going through the process of taking the land by eminent domain.

Chairman Kessler asked Town Manager Rieseberg to explain to the general public the process needed to be undertaken so it can be taken by eminent domain by the Town. Town Manager Rieseberg complied with his request.

Chairman Kessler asked if there were questions from the public.

Looking at the site map projected on the TV; Mrs. Jacqueline Cote asked where Meadow Road was in relation to the ballfield. Chairman Kessler explained its location.

There being no further questions, Chairman Kessler closed the public hearing.

The second and last BOS public hearing on acquiring the land on Meadow Road, Map 114, Lot 159 will be on February 14, 2019.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): Minutes of January 7, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; *the Board voted to approve the BOS minutes of the January 7, 2019 meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-2 (Wilmot, Hooper abstained).*

Minutes of January 21, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to approve the BOS minutes of the January 21, 2019 meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-2 (Fratzel, Kessler abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of February 4, 2019 as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mrs. Jacqueline Cote addressed the Board and stated she wanted to present them with the brochure for the Corbin Covered Bridge Festival (she thanked Selectman Hooper for his business's sponsorship). The brochure was put together by Mr. Dean Stetson; she felt he did a phenomenal job. The brochures will soon be in many of the rest areas in NH, I-93 north and south in Hooksett, I-89 near Sutton, I-89 near Grantham; as well as being available locally beginning in April 2019.

Chairman Kessler asked Mrs. Cote to explain the Corbin Covered Bridge Festival.

Mrs. Cote explained that the festival (as stated in the brochure) honors the 25 years since the burning and rebuilding of the original Corbin Covered Bridge (circa 1843). It honors the people that were instrumental in raising money for the rebuilding; as well as Arnold Graton and Associates who did the bridge wright work to replicate the original structure (in 1994).

Mrs. Cote told the BOS about the advertising, events at the festival, and other activities in Town. Selectman Fratzel informed Mrs. Cote and the BOS that Oak Street Bridge would be closed that date. It was something to keep in mind when planning events.

Chairman Kessler asked Mrs. Cote to come back and address the BOS with a proposal to use the bridge. She stated that Mr. Dean Stetson would address them.

Concluding, Mrs. Cote stated that Mr. Stetson was on the Main Street Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Library Arts Center space next to the radio station. She invited anyone to go in and visit.

Mrs. Nancy Wilmot addressed the Board of Selectmen and viewing public about an upcoming program in the school system (grades 1-8) "Newport Reads" which would be held February 18, 2019-February 22, 2019. Mrs. Wilmot stated the goal of the program is to instill a love of reading in children. The school wants the involvement of citizens in our community who love to read. The school's request was to have community members come to the schools and read to (younger) children or do a "book talk" with older students in the Middle School. Mrs. Wilmot stated, "Reading changes lives". She said that students needed positive role models and she was soliciting the BOS and viewing public to get involved in this program and help instill a love of lifelong reading in the children. Concluding, Mrs. Wilmot stated they could contact her by email. She thanked the Board.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated he would like to comment on the recent school deliberative session. Chairman Kessler stated the subject was on the agenda for later in the meeting. He and Mr. Spaulding, Sr. debated as to whether the

appropriate time for him to speak was during Open Forum. Mr. Spaulding was allowed to continue. Addressing Mrs. Ferrigno he gave his opinion of her comments at the Session.

Mrs. Maura Stetson, speaking as the President of the Newport Service Organization (NSO), thanked the Board members for accepting the donations from the NSO of \$8,400 for Advanced EMT training and \$9,450 for funds to go to the USDA grant for a stretcher. She thanked Town Manager Rieseberg, Finance Director Brown and Deputy Fire Chief McCrillis for their kind words of support of the NSO.

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

Selectman Fratzel had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Wilmot informed the viewing public that Winter Carnival starts Thursday, February 7, 2019. After days filled with carnival activities, it will end with fireworks at the airport on Sunday, February 10, 2019.

Selectman Hooper stated the Heritage Commission met and he wanted to thank Liz Emerson. As Zoning Administrator she is doing a great job with a grant she is working on. Liz personally designed some beautiful panels to describe the Wright and Pier Bridges. One Newport Fact: two of the seven remaining railroad covered bridges in the world are in Newport. He explained the importance of the panels she has designed.

Chairman Kessler stated the school deliberative session was Saturday, February 2, 2019. Approximately 277 people attended. He thanked everyone who came out for it.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: Update from County Commissioners and County Manager: County Commissioner Ben Nelson (Vice Chair) addressed the BOS. He introduced County Commissioners George Hebert, Jeffrey Barrette (Chair) and Derek Ferland (County Manager). Commissioner Nelson said that the Commissioner met monthly in Newport and Unity. All were invited to attend. He gave a synopsis of the county's functions, taxes and apportionment, strategic plan, regional economic profile, upcoming initiatives by the county commissioners.

Commissioner Nelson

- Informed the BOS that the county nursing home is licensed for 155 beds, census is approximately 135 now. The county is not looking to double the size of the facility. Commissioner Nelson explained the conditions at the nursing home in Unity and the plans to improve them (with little or no impact on the tax rate).
- Told the BOS the county budget
- Revenue streams
- Tax rate is \$2.84/1000; down from \$2.97/1000
- In-house training to keep costs down
- Piggy backed with Unity (school) for higher speed internet
- "Love Sullivan" campaign- take picture, upload to website
- Program for released inmates from county jail
- Sullivan County hosted the Commissioners from around the state (slideshow is on NCTV)
- Discussed access to the elevator in the County Complex on Main Street Newport, NH (ADA to Opera House)

Chairman Kessler addressed Commissioner Nelson and asked about elevator access to the Opera House on Friday, February 8, 2019 for the Winter Carnival Queen Pageant. Commissioner Nelson stated that there would be access to the Opera House.

County Commissioner Nelson addressed Chairman Kessler and stated that the County and Town needed to sit down and discuss the lease of the county court house building. There was a discussion on Board quorums, using the facilities assessment of Town buildings and holding the discussion(s) in non-public session (NPS). The Commissioners would contact Town Manager Rieseberg to schedule a meeting.

There was general discussion on other items happening in the county. The Commissioners thanked the BOS for their time.

Town Manager Rieseberg asked the Commissioners who to contact to ensure ADA accessibility to the Opera House by the elevator in the County Complex. He was given a contact person and was asked to give a timeframe for the needed accessibility.

Chairman Kessler asked Mr. Derek Ferland, County Manager to contact Town Manager Rieseberg to schedule a meeting on county leases.

Town FY 19-20 Budget and Calendar of BOS Budget Review Sessions: Chairman Kessler and Board members reviewed the proposed list of Budget hearings in February:

7th
11th
14th
21st

NCTV was asked to record the sessions. Selectman Hooper had a conflict the night of the February 21 budget hearing. It was noted by the Chair.

School Deliberative Session: Chairman Kessler stated he had invited the teachers to come and explain Warrant Article 4: the Newport Teacher's Association (NTA) 3 year contract.

Before they explained the teacher contract Mrs. Lisa Ferrigno stated that they supported the new Community Center. It will be a wonderful addition to the community for the children in Town.

Ms. Melissa Mitchler and Mrs. Lisa Ferrigno of the NTA addressed the BOS and viewing public and explained the three year contract, the "steps" in their contract, the annual loss of staff, staff moral and the measures that the NTA has taken to reduce their contract costs.

They also explained the Evergreen Law and how it affects Newport teachers.

Selectman Connell addressed the two teacher representatives and stated he was impressed with the testing scores they had listed at the Deliberative Session.

Mr. Tim Renner stated that this year's Warrant Article 4 is a critical juncture for the Newport teachers. It will put Newport in a more competitive posture with surrounding communities and schools in general.

Mr. John Lunn asked if they wanted to discuss Warrant Article 5 (backup to #4 if it doesn't pass).

Mr. Renner stated Warrant Article 5 was the contingency if Warrant Article 4 did not pass. It meant a special meeting could be called to address Article 4 only.

Chairman Kessler said that having an extra meeting (vote) cost more money and usually backfires. There was a general discussion on this between the teacher's representatives and Chairman Kessler.

Update on Community Center Project: Selectman Fratzel stated that Thursday, January 31, 2019 the Committee met with BreadLoaf and received their guaranteed maximum price for the project. The price is based on the 50% design the Committee asked them to do. The guaranteed maximum price given was 6.48 million dollars (in December 3, 2018 minutes reported \$6,600,000).

The price includes ownership costs and movement of the ambulance and buildings and grounds garages. There was discussion on the cost of the replacement garages. Selectman Fratzel stated that Town Manager Rieseberg would have hard numbers soon.

Continuing, Selectman Fratzel stated that the next step was to figure out the bond amount; how much would be raised through donations and whether the Warrant Article was contingent on a specific amount of money being raised through donations. He explained some of the ways the Warrant Article could be written and presented to the voters and taxpayers of Newport.

Chairman Kessler gave an example of a 3 million dollar bond contingent on raising 3.5 million through donations.

Selectman Fratzel agreed with his statement. He explained what it would mean if the bond passed but the donations did not equal 3.5 million dollars. He did not want to bond 5 million dollars and stop current fundraising.

There was further discussion on bond issues and money related to the proposed Community Center by the BOS members.

Mrs. Cote asked Selectman Fratzel how people who wanted to donate should go about it. Selectman Fratzel said they could go to Town Manager Rieseberg's office or they could go to see PJ Lovely, Recreation Department Director. Both offices have donor forms. He explained the monetary amounts for donations.

Mrs. Cote asked about the possibility of pledges from people. Selectman Fratzel stated they needed the donations "in hand" not as pledges.

Mr. Tim Renner asked Selectman Fratzel if there had been any business/corporate donations. Selectman Fratzel stated they had 1.3 million dollars donated now and were working on more. Chairman Kessler stated that Town Manager Rieseberg has been soliciting for donations.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the BOS could tell the public of the conditions of the \$1,000,000 donation. Chairman Kessler stated it was contingent on receiving a \$2,000,000 match. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if there was a time limit on it. Chairman Kessler stated he did not believe so. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the donation pledge was in contract form. Town Manager Rieseberg stated the Town was working on it and it would be a public document.

Mrs. Cote said the BOS really should consider pledges. She explained how pledges had assisted the historical society to raise money for the Pier Bridge.

The BOS and Mrs. Cote discussed further fundraising on the Community Center.

Selectman Hooper stated that there will never fiscally be a good time to raise money for a Rec Center. It has been a priority to redo the Rec Center for decades. He hated thinking of the tax impact. There was a general discussion on the present and future Rec Center.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. told Selectman Hooper that he disagreed with him; there probably could not be a worse time (to build a new Rec Center) than now. He reviewed the currently known tax rate.

ACTION ITEMS: Newport Farmer's Market – Waiver of Common Rental Fee: Mrs. Cote addressed the Board and stated that she was again at the BOS meeting to request a waiver of the Common Rental Fee for the Newport Farmer's Market. Because of all the money items in Town: School, Community Center, etc. the Farmers Market was not soliciting money from local businesses. They were therefore asking the Board to waive the fee.

Selectman Wilmot moved *to waive the rental fee for the Farmer's Market on Friday afternoons from May 17, 2019 to October 11, 2019.* Selectman Connell seconded it.

Mrs. Cote addressed the BOS and explained the collaboration between the Richards Free Library (free book booth and 4 pm story time), the Library Arts Center (craft projects) and the Farmers Market.

Chairman Kessler called for a vote. **The motion passed 5-0-0.**

APPOINTMENTS: none


NON-PUBLIC SESSION (NPS): On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted by roll call vote to enter into NPS pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation at 7:56 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted unanimously to exit the non-public session at 8:17 p.m.*

No action was taken.

On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board adjourned at 8:18 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for February 14, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: March 4, 2019