

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of January 6, 2020 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, William Wilmot, Jr.

SELECTMAN ABSENT: John Hooper II

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding, Sr.

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: Accepted as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Kessler opened the Public Hearing and read aloud the Public Hearing Notice into the record:

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Newport, New Hampshire will hold two Public Hearings on Monday, January 6, 2020 and Thursday, January 16, 2020 to discuss the following:

The Town's purchase of properties located on the corner of Route 10 and Corbin Road, identified as Map 218 Lot 010 and on Corbin Road identified as Map 218 Lot 007, pursuant to RSA 41:14-a.

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

Chairman Kessler acknowledged Town Manager Rieseberg. Town Manager Rieseberg explained to Board members and the viewing public that the Town now had an opportunity to purchase two parcels of land from the estate of Mr. William Ruger, Jr. One parcel of land was located on the Corner of Corbin Road and Route 10 North. It is 6 acres and part of it is in the protective zone area for a future Town well located on an adjacent lot. The Town weighed the cost of acquiring an easement on the lot as opposed to the Town purchasing the lot and decided the best alternative would be to purchase the land. The Town had acquired a Purchase and Sales Agreement with the executor of Mr. Ruger, Jr's. estate.

The second parcel of land is the .6 acre triangle shaped piece of land on Corbin Road that is surrounded by airport property. It was too small to build on and had no value except to the municipal airport. The cost of the two parcels is \$35,000.

State law (RSA 41:14-a) requires that the Town have two public hearings for community input. It also requires that both the Planning Board and Conservation Commission are asked for their review and recommendations of the acquisition (minutes of the meetings and the Boards recommendations were in the BOS packets). Both Boards recommended the acquisition.

Town Manager Rieseberg and Chairman Kessler talked about the excellent quality of water that had been pumped from the test well.

Selectman Wilmot asked if the six acre parcel of land had been tested for contamination. He was told yes, a Level One Environmental Test was done (soil samples and data on history of lot). Selectman Wilmot asked when the Town would receive the test results. He was told by January 19, 2020.

Town Manager Rieseberg stated that the sale was conditional on the test results of the Level One Environmental Test. If the Town did not like them, they had no obligation to purchase the land.

Chairman Kessler opened the Public Hearing to the public.

Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. stated that the School Budget public hearing would be held on January 16, 2020; the same day as the second public hearing. Chairman Kessler concurred, stating due to scheduling of all Town meetings the conflict could not be avoided.

There being no further input, Chairman Kessler closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): December 2, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board of Selectmen minutes of December 2, 2019 were tabled to a future meeting. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Connell abstained).*

NPS December 2, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board of Selectmen voted to approve the NPS minutes of December 2, 2019 meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Connell abstained).*

December 16, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Fratzel abstained).*

NPS December 16, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the NPS minutes of the December 16, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Fratzel abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: January 6, 2020: On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of January 6, 2020 as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. John Lunn, NCTV Director; addressed the Board and public and stated there was a new TV system going out over the air tonight (January 6, 2020). He has had people contact him letting him know that audio and video is working well.

He apologized for the months of frustration in having inconsistent sound and video quality and not having live broadcasts for BOS and land use board meetings. The recordings (replays) have been good quality. He has found out that the problems lay not in Newport but in the service system. NCTV was therefore being reimbursed for: licensing fee and five years of extended warranty on all NCTV hardware (\$10,000+).

Continuing, he stated that the FCC ruling has come through. There is potential that they could start charging the NCTV station for the channels from Comcast. If they charge retail rates, NCTV would not be able to afford it. The NCTV contract is through 2025, so Mr. Lunn stated he had time to negotiate the pricing. He thanked the Board for their time.

Chairman Kessler asked about the new franchise fees stating it affects every community access channel in the state. He suggested that Mr. Lunn contact some peers in the state to collaborate instead of individual towns and cities.

Mr. Lunn agreed with Chairman Kessler. He stated there was a statewide group and he was planning on contacting them for this specific reason. He explained how other states have collectively bargained for their local access stations. After further discussion, the Board thanked Mr. Lunn.

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

Selectman Connell stated that now he understands more of the building of a government budget and the workings of the BAC and BOS for the Town budget. He thanked Chairman Kessler for his hard work on the BAC and for keeping the BOS members apprised of the budget process.

Selectman Fratzel had nothing to share at this time. He concurred with Selectman Connell's comments.

Chairman Kessler had nothing to share at this time.

Town Manager Rieseberg informed the Board and public that the solar array frames were going up now. The energy produced by the arrays on Rte. 10 will go directly to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). The project will be done by the end of the month. Selectman Wilmot asked why Norwich Solar had drilled under the Sugar River at the site. It was explained that the wires carrying the electrical power went under the river and to the WWTP.

Phase II of the solar array installation will begin in spring 2020. It will be a larger array.

INFORMATIONAL: UNH Road Scholar Program-Mr. Robert Ostertag, Truck Driver: The BOS was informed that Town employee, Mr. Robert Ostertag, has finished the Roads Scholars Program Level One. Chairman Kessler read aloud a letter from the UNH program (sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and New Hampshire Department of Transportation) which stated Mr. Ostertag had achieved status of Roads Scholar One.

Chairman Kessler congratulated him on his accomplishment and thanked him for the work he does for the Town. Chairman Kessler stated the Road Scholar Program was an ongoing program (with six levels) which taught employees leading edge road maintenance and construction practices to better serve their communities. Mr. Ostertag would continue in the educational program.

School Budget Progress/State Education Funding Update: School Board Officials had been invited to the BOS meeting but were not in attendance. There was a lengthy discussion concerning the Newport School District not having a final draft of their 2020-2021 fiscal year budget, the school board not receiving a final budget and the business problems the SAU 43 is again facing in 2019-2020.

The current tax rate the school is asking for is \$2.88. Chairman Kessler read aloud from an email he sent to the BAC members.

Chairman Kessler stated that the Town Tax Collectors get the brunt of complaints for increased taxes.

Residents do not understand it is the school portion of the tax bill that is the major reason for any tax increase. He recommended that the public go to meetings or listen to (via NCTV) the school board or BAC meetings.

The important meetings left are:

- January 9, 2020 final budget and review
- January 13, 2020 and January 14, 2020 BAC meets in Lou Thompson Room at 6 p.m.
- January 16, 2020 Public Hearing on the budget (Thursday, 6:30 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room).
- February 1, 2020 Deliberative Session on school budget warrant articles (Saturday at 9 a.m. in the high school gym).
- March 10, 2020 school voting

Chairman Kessler asked the public to pay attention to the process. Although the culture in the high school is better this year with the new administration and personnel, the Town is still concerned with the ongoing school finance problems.

Mr. John Lunn agreed with Chairman Kessler and stated that the public will learn firsthand what is happening if they listened to the meetings on NCTV. Important information was given at the meetings.

Selectman Connell wanted:

1. A clear understanding of where the 1.9 million dollars that the school is receiving from the State of NH is going (toward).
2. To pursue with the school board and their administration a development of a combined CIP process for both the Town and the school that comes together.
3. Selectman Connell has not heard of a CIP from the school (wants to hear it).

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked Chairman Kessler to reiterate some numbers and dates for the public. Among his questions were:

- 1) How much did the school district get in new dollars from the state for the proposed 2020-2021 fiscal year? He was told 1.9 million dollars.
- 2) Was there a consensus of the BAC that the proposed school budget was okay? Chairman Kessler stated he believed members of the BAC in attendance believed the \$2.88 tax impact by the school was a “non-starter”.
- 3) Dates for important meetings:
 - January 9, 2020 final budget and review
 - January 13, 2020 and January 14, 2020 BAC meets in Lou Thompson Room at 6 p.m.
 - January 16, 2020 Public Hearing on the budget presented to the public (Thursday, 6:30 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room).
 - February 1, 2020 Deliberative Session on school budget and Warrant Articles (Saturday at 9 a.m. in the high school gym).
 - March 10, 2020 school voting

There was further discussion on the school budget, school finance administrators, money given to the Town by the State of New Hampshire, the Newport school population and meetings of the school board.

Selectman Wilmot asked if on the school ballot, it will state that the BAC does not approve the (school) budget. He was told it will state it does or does not recommend. To clarify, Selectman Wilmot stated that if the BAC does not recommend the school budget, it will be stated. He was told yes.

Selectman Connell said that the BAC meetings are very important; a lot of good information is given at the BAC meetings.

There was a short discussion on the passed warrant article which states the tax impact and BAC recommendation on the ballot.

In conclusion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. thanked Chairman Kessler for all his work and expressed again his dissatisfaction of the proposed school budget.

ACTION ITEMS: Newport Farmers Market Rental Fee Waiver Request (for use of Common): After a short discussion, Selectman Wilmot made a motion *to waive the \$100/day rental fee for the use of the Newport Common by the Newport Farmers Market and the security deposit fee as well (Fridays 3-6 pm from May 22, 2020 to September 25, 2020).* It was seconded by Selectman Fratzel. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

APPOINTMENTS: Fire Chief Steve Yannuzzi Forest Fire Warden: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board appointed Fire Chief Steve Yannuzzi Forest Fire Warden. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

David McCrillis Deputy Forest Fire Warden: On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; *the Board appointed Mr. David McCrillis Deputy Forest Fire Warden. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Chairman Kessler added a second NPS: RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel.

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 of Other and RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel at 7:52 p.m. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Present at the NPS were Selectboard members Jeffrey Kessler, Todd Fratzel, William Wilmot, and Barry Connell. Also in attendance was Town Manager Hunter Rieseberg.

The Board exited the non-public session at 8:30 p.m.

No action was taken.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for January 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for January 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: January 23, 2020