

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of December 21, 2020 6:30 pm
Regular Business Meeting
Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773
Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 816 3539 1902 Passcode: 041268
+1 (253) 215-8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees may apply)

SELECTMEN PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman; Herbert Tellor, Jr; John Hooper, II *Via Zoom:* Barry Connell

SELECTMAN ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Steven Yannuzzi, Fire Chief and Health Officer

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Dick Wentzell, Ed Karr, Glen West, Jenna Darling, and Bert Spaulding, Sr.; *Via Zoom:* Virginia Irwin

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.

Due to the fact that a Selectman was attending virtually, all votes were done by roll call.

AGENDA REVIEW: table INFORMATIONAL Proposed Solar Array Development for the Town of Newport by Sunny Acres, LLC of property on South Main Street known as Map 259 Lot 006 (Rieseberg)

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): November 16, 2020 - On a motion by Selectman Tellor, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted by roll call to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Hooper abstained).*

NPS November 2, 2020 - On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted by roll call to approve the minutes of the non-public session of the November 16, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Hooper abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted by roll call to approve the Consent Agenda of the December 21, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Glen West addressed the Board of Selectmen and listed concerns he had about things in the Town municipality. In addition to low moral he has observed, he questioned work done by outside contractors, concerns and safety issues at the cemeteries in Newport, the number of veteran employees that Newport has been losing; and asked for Covid-19 policies and procedures for the municipal buildings and employees.

Chairman Kessler asked Town Manager Rieseberg to respond to Mr. West's concerns. Town Manager Rieseberg stated that the items listed were all under the purview of the Buildings and Grounds

Department. He responded to the concerns on the North Newport cemetery and drainage on Maple Street. Town Manager Rieseberg offered to discuss the other concerns with Mr. West and his supervisor during business hours.

Mr. West addressed Chairman Kessler and stated that the email he had sent to Selectman Fratzel with his concerns has also been sent to the news (it was noted in the email). Addressing the Board, he stated he would leave the response to the public.

After stating additional concerns, Mr. West answered questions from the Board members.

Chairman Kessler thanked Mr. West and stated that he might hear from Selectboard members after they had read his email. Chairman Kessler stated they will talk to Town Manager Rieseberg about his concerns.

Mr. Wentzell addressed two items with the Board members: his complaints concerning the Town assessor, and an easement for a water line on his property. Town Manager Rieseberg explained the Town's action to each and Mr. Wentzell's refusal to agree to them. He also informed them that the state paperwork that Mr. Wentzell was showing the BOS was a copy of an annual state labor inspection for the Town of Newport. It had nothing to do with Mr. Hildum (assessor).

Mr. Karr asked about the planned Public Hearing and the solar array development. He was told that the Public Hearing has been postponed to the January 4, 2021 and January 18, 2021 meetings. The solar array agenda item has also been postponed to a future date. Mr. Karr asked about the progress on the removal of the telephone poles on Sunapee Street going out to Guild. The Board members and Mr. Karr agreed their removal was overdue, an eyesore and in some cases a safety hazard. When asked, Chairman Kessler explained the proposed Warrant Article that had gone before the voters concerning the proposed Knoll Street Project.

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

Selectman Hooper had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Fratzel recommended to the public that with the rain forecasted, individuals with low or flat roofs should remove the snow if they can do it safely.

Selectman Connell had nothing to share at this time.

Chairman Kessler informed the public that many sidewalks had not been plowed until Monday, December 21, 2020. Both of the Town sidewalk tractors broke. Loaners were not available. The Town contracted with an outside vendor to plow the remaining sidewalks. He asked that homeowners who are able, to pitch in and safely clear their sidewalks if the Town is overwhelmed. Chairman Kessler complimented the Town crew for the herculean effort in plowing the roads of Newport.

Addressing Chairman Kessler, Mr. Karr agreed. He stated that many people do not remember a storm like the one we had. He believed it was admirable how the highway crew opened up the roads; the Fire Chief could get to the station and the roads were passable for the first responders. They did a great job.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: Health Officer COVID-19 Update-Fire Chief Steven Yannuzzi - Fire Chief Yannuzzi stated that as of Sunday, December 20, 2020 Newport has had nineteen (19) new cases in

Newport over the last fourteen days, cumulative number of cases is 107. Newport is in the mid-range of cases in the State of NH. Fire Chief Yannuzzi's involvement includes:

- Gets daily Situation Report updates from the state.
- He is actively involved in the weekly zoom meetings on the state's response.

The vaccine:

- 1 Two vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) have been given emergency approval
- 2 NH will receive 33,000 additional doses of the vaccine. Healthcare workers will be the first targeted group (1A).
- 3 People will begin to receive the vaccine on December 29, 2020.
- 4 First responders (Fire, EMS) have enrolled in the vaccine administration program through the state. The Police Department is in the process of enrolling. Process:
 - a. First responders will receive an email. They can opt in or out
 - b. They will be given an appointment for their vaccination time to "fixed location" (Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center) in Claremont.
 - c. The state's recommendation is to send first responders in staggered appointments due to the symptoms recipients get that mimic the virus.

Equipment:

- 1) Have received an electrostatic sprayer from the state which kills the coronavirus.
- 2) Have received weekly, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) free from state

COVID Cases:

1. Woodlawn down to two cases
2. One case in Town Office; affected six employees

There was a discussion on the timeline for vaccines of the first responders. There was also a discussion on whether a policy to have a vaccination be mandatory is made. Town Manager Rieseberg addressed Chairman Kessler and stated that the Town has contacted counsel concerning the statewide response to Covid19 vaccinations (mandatory or voluntary). Town Manager Rieseberg will be contacted with guidance from Town counsel. Before the vaccine arrives for Newport, there will be a policy in place.

Chairman Kessler asked where teachers were on the list of recipients. He was told Phase Two.

Consideration of Revised Ambulance Rates-Fire Chief Steven Yannuzzi - Fire Chief Yannuzzi stated that the BOS had received an informational chart showing the difference in ambulance rates in area towns. There was a long discussion on the rates and caps by insurance companies (Medicare was established) between Fire Chief Yannuzzi and the Board members as well as the increased nonpayment by too high a rate in Newport. Chairman Kessler asked that Fire Chief Yannuzzi meet with Town Manager Rieseberg and Finance Director Brown concerning increased rates and return to the Board with recommendations. The Board members concurred with his suggestion. Mr. Karr asked if the Town was proposing new rates to catch up to other towns or because they were losing money? Chairman Kessler explained.

Mrs. Maura Stetson addressed Chairman Kessler and stated that insurance companies did have caps (limits) on the amount they would pay for an ambulance run. She believed different insurances have different caps. When asked questions, she stated Ms. Joanne Dufour should be consulted; she does the billing for the ambulance (EMS).

Newport Senior Center Update-Brenda Burns - Ms. Brenda Burns was not able to attend the December 21, 2020 BOS meeting.

Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Policy and Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Procedures - Ms. Darling stated that she had met with Mrs. Irwin and Ms. Wadensten and revised the policy and procedures for the BAC. She explained she had added the changes from the school board made in March 2020. She

then sent them to Mrs. Irwin. It was her understanding that the policy and procedures would be sent to the BOS members for their approval. Then the school board would vote on the policy and procedures to make it complete. Ms. Darling asked Mrs. Irwin if she was correct. Mrs. Irwin agreed.

Chairman Kessler addressed Ms. Darling and stated the BOS had a policy and procedures (with markups) in their packets. He asked if she wanted them to approve the ones in their packet. Ms. Darling stated yes and explained there were items the school board wanted to be included in the policy and procedures. If they were agreeable to the BOS then the school board and BOS would both finalize the policy.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the BOS was being asked to accept the policy and procedures. He asked if one document will be governed by both the BOS and school board. There was a discussion on the policy and procedures by the school board representative, BOS and Bert Spaulding, Sr.

Ms. Darling said that before the school board adopted the policy and procedures they wanted to ensure the two boards were on the same page.

Selectman Fratzel stated he had no immediate issues with the rewrites. He stated that if necessary tweaks could be made in 2021. He would like a solid policy in place as soon as possible. Selectman Tellor made a motion ***that the Board accepts the Budget Advisory Committee Policy and Procedures as presented.*** It was seconded by Selectman Hooper. In discussion, Selectman Fratzel asked that the documents be “cleaned up” and dated. Chairman Kessler asked for a roll call vote. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Ms. Darling said she would put it on the next school board agenda for acceptance. When asked, she told the Board that Mr. Russell Medbery and Mrs. Rhonda Callum-King were the BAC representatives. School Deliberations will be on Saturday, February 6, 2021.

Budget Calendar Review - Finance Director Brown gave the following proposed timeline:

- ❖ Sunday, January 31, 2021 the proposed Budget would be presented to the Selectboard
- ❖ February 4; February 8; February 11 and February 18: BOS Budget Review
- ❖ Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Due date for petition articles
- ❖ Monday, March 15, 2021: BOS Meeting with Budget and Bond Public Hearings
- ❖ Monday, March 29, 2021: Warrant Article Posting
- ❖ Tuesday, April 5, 2021: Deliberative Session
- ❖ Tuesday, May 11, 2021: Town Voting

The Selectboard members concurred that they would be able to meet Mondays and Thursdays in February to review the budget.

Chairman Kessler addressed Town Manager Rieseberg and asked if there was any direction for the Board of Selectmen. Town Manager Rieseberg stated that the goal of the Town was to keep the budget in line with inflation. He explained to the Board the challenges Newport is facing to continue to keep services alive.

When asked, Town Manager Rieseberg said that Newport has received a \$430,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG grant) to address access to the Opera House (rebuilding the rear entrances to the Opera House). Tentative plans are for work to be done in the summer or fall of 2021. Newport will pay \$10,000 in matching funding. Other grants are being investigated for Newport.

ACTION ITEMS: none

There being no further business before the Board during the BOS public meeting, on a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Tellor; ***the Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to enter into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Pending Litigation at 8:34 pm. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

The Selectboard exited nonpublic session at 9:02 p.m.

No action was taken.

The Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for January 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: January 4, 2021