

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of March 8, 2021
6:30 pm, Municipal Building

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Jeff Kessler, Chairman, Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman, Herb Tellor, Barry Connell and John Hooper remotely.

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager, Paul Brown, Finance Director

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kessler called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA REVIEW

The Town Manager asked if the Selectboard would consider authorizing Chairman Kessler to sign a letter of support for the proposed replacement of sidewalks along Sunapee Street (Rte 11). This item was added to the Boards "Action Items" section of the agenda.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): NA

CONSENT AGENDA: NA

OPEN FORUM

COMMUNICATIONS

INFORMATIONAL: NA

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review of Budget & Warrant Articles

The Board reviewed the budget and related warrant articles. The Finance Director responded to and offered information as to the relative impacts of various cost items being included in the budget vs. as warrant articles, etc., the budget, tax rate, default budgets, etc.

It was noted that including reoccurring types of expenses in the budget vs. warrant articles would help to level the budget and therefore future tax rates in much the same way that funding a Capital Improvement Program would do.

Selectmen Fratzel moved to include the funding for the lease/purchase of the Town's next DPW truck and the Fire Departments next piece of fire apparatus into the budget vs. presenting them as warrant articles. The motion was seconded by Selectmen Connell. The Chair took a roll call vote – all Board members voted in support of the motion. The motion passed.

There was brief conversation over the additional funding and newly revised engineers estimate of costs associate with the replacement of the Sand Hill bridge – revised from \$700,000 to \$932,000. Under the State's bridge replacement program, this would change the State share of the bridge replacement to \$746,000 leaving the Town to fund \$186,500. The proposed warrant article would draw the Town's portion of the project from the Town's unassigned fund balance. Selectboard member Fratzel moved to approve of the proposed funding change and to leave this item as a warrant article. The motion was seconded by Selectmen Tellor. The Chair called for a roll call vote. All members of the Board voted in favor.

The Board had a brief discussion about the proposed funding for the remediation of the Ambargis Mills. The Town has applied for a \$500,000 grant to assist in the clean up or renovation of this site. If approved, the Town's share would be \$100,000. The Selectboard approved leaving this item/question and the Town's match in the form of a warrant article.

2. Ratification of Public Works Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Town Manager presented the Selectboard with an outline of the new and tentatively agreed (TA) upon terms of a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Union representing the Town's public works employees. The Town Manager outlined that among other things, that the contract allowed for a 1.5% increase in wages over the 3-year life of the Agreement, and participation in a new health insurance program with a cost sharing arrangement (Town 95%, Employee 5%). The overall cost of the program is significantly lower than our current coverage and should save the Town and the employees money. It was noted that there were also a number of other minor conditions and language changes proposed for the contract.

Selectmen Fratzel moved to accept the proposed CBA for the DPW as presented conditioned upon the completion of mutually acceptable contract language. The motion was seconded by Selectmen Hooper. The Chairman called for a roll call vote. All members of the Board voted in favor of the motion.

3. Letter of Support – Support Letter, TAP Funding

The Town Manager asked if the Selectboard would consider authorizing Chairman Kessler to sign a letter of support for the proposed replacement of sidewalks along Sunapee Street (Rte 11). The Town Manager reported that the Town was preparing an application for a Transportation Alternatives Program funding to assist with the replacement of 2800' linear feet of sidewalk between Main Street and the so call Newport Mill building. The projected cost of the project is \$718,000 of which the Town would be required to contribute 20% of \$143,600. The project is intended to replace existing sidewalk that is in poor repair and frequently used by residents, school aged children and businesses. If funded, it is expected that the project will not receive authorization to move forward for 2-3 more years.

A motion was made by Todd Fratzel to authorize the Chairman, Mr. Kessler to sign the proposed letter of support to accompany the Town's application for TAP funding. The motion was seconded by Selectmen Tellor. The Chairman conducted a roll call vote. All members of the Board voted in favor.

Finally, in light of the changes approved by the Selectboard, the Board reiterated that the resulting General Fund operating budget to be put before the voters would be \$8,662,264 (up and offset by revenues) vs. last year's budget of \$8,230,978. If approved, the resulting tax rate would be \$11.79/\$1000 or .14 cents below last year's rate of \$11.93/\$1000.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectmen Fratzel moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectmen Connell seconded the motion. The Chairman conducted a roll call vote. All members of the Board voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Hunter F. Rieseberg
Town Manager