

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen - Minutes for Meeting of April 5, 2021 6:30 pm
Regular Business Meeting
Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773
Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 844 4681 6423 Passcode: 994569
+1 (253) 215-8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees may apply)

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

SELECTMAN ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director *Via Zoom:* Christine Benner, Economic Development Coordinator

GUEST PRESENT: Todd Fahey, AARP; Brenda Burns, Newport Senior Center

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Kurt Minick, Bert Spaulding, Sr.

NCTV: John Lunn, Executive Director NCTV

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kessler called the meeting of the BOS to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman Hooper joined the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

AGENDA REVIEW: TABLE: Informational: Pinnacle Sports, LLC Shooting League License Agreement (Rieseberg), informed Selectboard there would be non-meeting after adjournment (Rieseberg)

PUBLIC HEARINGS: I. The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Newport, New Hampshire will hold two public hearings on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. at the Newport Town Offices at 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, New Hampshire to hear public comment on acceptance, by the Town, from Sunny Acres LLC of property on South Main Street known as Map 259 Lot 006.

Chairman Kessler read aloud the Public Notice into the record. He asked if the Town Manager's Office had received comments. He was told no.

Town Manager Rieseberg addressed the Board members and gave the history of the "net zero" solar energy goal in Newport. The Town of Newport has been pursuing an organizational "net zero" goal for several years now. In short, it is Newport's goal to generate sufficient renewal solar energy from its own property to offset consumption of electrical power. This was initially going to be fully achieved on Town owned property located behind Newport's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) until permitting and line capacity made developing a large enough array at this location impossible. The site behind the WWTP is now complete and operating at its full design/permitted capacity providing/replacing about 1/3 of the Town's electricity consumption. In an effort to help facilitate our overall goal of becoming a "net zero" town, Norwich Solar Technologies (NST) acquired land on Turkey Hill and has constructed additional solar array capacity on the lot, allowing us to supplement our current production. Once completed, the Town will roughly generate the same amount of electrical power from renewable solar as it consumes. NST proposes to donate this land to the Town of Newport.

RSA 41:14-a requires that the proposed donation be reviewed and that comments be received from the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. Two Public Hearings are also required prior to the Selectboard's official acceptance of the donation/property. This is the first of the two public hearings. Included in the Board packets is a copy of the property card and statute for their review.

Chairman Kessler asked if the Board members or public had any questions. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated it was a good idea. There being no additional comments, Chairman Kessler closed Public Hearing I. Chairman Kessler asked what the process going forward will be. Town Manager Rieseberg stated that the BOS needed to vote on the acceptance or denial within fourteen days. It will be scheduled for the next BOS meeting on April 19, 2021.

II. The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Newport, New Hampshire will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Newport Town Offices at 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, New Hampshire to hear public comment on the progress of the Town's Transportation Corridor Market Study.

Chairman Kessler read aloud the Public Notice into the record. He asked if the Town Manager's Office had received comments. He was told no. Chairman Kessler asked Ms. Christine Benner to present information on the Study.

Ms. Benner gave a synopsis of the initial phase of the 2020 Market Study to the Selectmen and public (copies were in the Board members packets).

- There was support in principal to the study
- Further investigation was necessary
- Transportation, the housing market and childcare were all related

She stated that moving forward important things were:

- ❖ To continue with the sidewalk renovations (in Newport)
- ❖ Continuing with discussions with Southwest Community Services (SCS) for the Lebanon/Upper Valley route
- ❖ Secure funding for a park and ride, to be located across from the high school

There being no questions from the Board or public, Chairman Kessler asked Ms. Benner what the next steps were in the process. She told him:

- Continue discussions with Southwest Community Services (data from the feasibility study provides SCS information it needs)
- Working with Town Manager Rieseberg on the Newport aspect of the Transportation Corridor Project.

Chairman Kessler closed Public Hearing II.

III. The Town of Newport, New Hampshire will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Newport Town Offices at 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, New Hampshire to address the following issues coming before the Town at the Annual Town Meeting: 1. The 2021-2022 Budget in Accordance with NH RSA 32.

Chairman Kessler read aloud the Public Notice into the record and acknowledged Finance Director Brown.

Finance Director Brown stated the Public Hearing was concerning an omission to the Warrant Articles; that of the Ambargis Mill site cleanup. The BOS had talked about it in the public meeting but not the public hearing. All cost items are required to be discussed during a public hearing. State law allows a follow-up Public Hearing. Public Hearing III. at the April 5, 2021 BOS meeting was the follow-up Public

Hearing. Finance Director Brown stated that the proposed Town operating budget is \$11,050,697.00. He then read off the Warrant Articles and their monetary amounts adding Warrant Article 10. The Ambargis Mill site cleanup for \$500,000 (that had been omitted during the initial Public Hearing). Finance Director Brown also noted the two petition articles that the BOS had recommended for the ballot.

There was a general discussion by the Board and Finance Director Brown concerning Warrant Article 10, (Ambargis Mill cleanup) and the grants and funding that will go towards the Warrant article (\$400,000). Town Manager Rieseberg stated there would be no immediate tax impact. If the Town was not awarded the grants, the work would not be done. The Board and Town Manager Rieseberg briefly discussed the total amount of the Warrant Articles.

Chairman Kessler asked for questions from the Board and public. Mr. Minick addressed the Board and asked how Warrant Article (5) for the road project would be worded. Chairman Kessler addressed Mr. Minick and stated that would be discussed after the Public Hearing. Mr. Minick stated the Warrant Article did not state the roads. Finance Director Brown addressed Chairman Kessler and stated the Warrant article did not list specific streets in case the Town, in its construction, was unable to finish them all. There was a brief discussion between Mr. Minick, Mr. Spaulding, Sr.; Chairman Kessler and Town Manager Rieseberg on Warrant Article 5. and the construction it involved.

There being no further questions or comments, Chairman Kessler closed Public Hearing III.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): March 1, 2021 - On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2020 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

March 15, 2021 - On a motion by Selectman Tellor, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

NPS March 1, 2021 - On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to approve the nonpublic session minutes of the March 1, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted by roll call to approve the Consent Agenda of the April 5, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. addressed the Board and spoke of an involuntary merger by the Town to three of his properties. Chairman Kessler addressed Mr. Spaulding, Sr. and said the Town was now notified.

Chairman Kessler welcomed Mr. Steven Smith, Selectman in Goshen. In discussion, Mr. Smith stated that Goshen had voted to bring high speed internet to all the homes in Goshen.

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Fratzel stated he had served as Selectman for nine years. He was stepping down in May 2021, at the end of his term. He said it has been a privilege and honor to sit on the Board and serve the people of Newport. He thanked the Board.

Selectman Connell said that on Chronicle (find it on www.wmur.com) Fritz Weatherbee had informed his viewers that Newport had three Revere Bells in Town. It put Newport in a good light. There was a short discussion on the bells and their locations.

Selectman Hooper had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Tellor thanked Selectman Fratzel for his tutelage when he was a new Board member. Selectman Connell concurred with Selectman Tellor and thanked Selectman Fratzel for assisting and informing him as he needed.

When acknowledged, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. praised Selectman Fratzel on his accomplishments and leadership throughout his tenure as a Selectman. He thanked Selectman Fratzel for his years of service to the people of Newport.

Chairman Kessler informed the public that Deliberative Session will be April 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Towle gym. It will be live (in person) and on NCTV. The Warrant is now posted on the website. When asked if there will be Covid 19 requirements at the Deliberative Session, Chairman Kessler said yes and listed them.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: Revision of Child Care Feasibility Study-Christine Benner - Ms. Benner stated there had been a child care feasibility study in 2019. The Town had been awarded \$12,000 from the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA). The goal was to determine the need and feasibility of offering off hour child care. Newport also was granted \$5,000 in matching funds through the Capital Region Development Corporation to go with the CDFA grant. Total grant amount was \$17,000. Ms. Benner gave an overview of the process the feasibility study has gone through since 2019, informing the Board they had had a surplus of CDFA grant funds of \$7,500 after the completion of the study. In order to use the money, Newport has had to write and submit a revision of scope to inform them what Newport wants to use the remaining money for. Ms. Benner discussed proposals for the use of the money and a revision of scope which was in the Board packets. Some money would go towards looking into the possibility of using a barn on Sunapee Street (owned by ECON). The end goal was to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to fund the construction. Cinnamon Street Daycare would run the facility when it was completed. Ms. Benner said that she needed approval of the Board at the April 5, 2021 meeting to submit the revision of scope and file it with the Community Development Finance Authority for their approval in order to spend the \$7,250.

Selectman Fratzel stated he believed the Town, by doing this, will be circumventing private industry (daycare facilities). The Town would be getting into daycare and other things not in its purview. It was the first he has heard of it.

Ms. Benner stated she had already spoken with daycare facilities.

- ❖ It would not be competing, as Cinnamon Street Daycare is already a provider.
- ❖ The project would increase the number of families that could be served in Newport.
- ❖ Cinnamon Street would be renting the building from ECON.
- ❖ Currently, it is not known if it will be viable to renovate the building. A feasibility study will show that.

Selectman Fratzel asked why Cinnamon Street Daycare (and not another in the area). Ms. Benner was not proposing an open process. It seemed like a conflict of interest for the Town. Selectman Connell stated he did not know if it was a conflict of interest, but he agreed with Selectman Fratzel's question of why Cinnamon Street was chosen. Ms. Benner said she could not answer the question, the grant was written before her employment with the Town. A study in the 1990s also included (only) Cinnamon Street. She did not know why they were chosen. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said there should be no chosen one, no discussion about a chosen business. The Town is using taxpayer dollars to create an environment for a

specific business and a particular tenant. He questioned if it was lawful. He addressed the Board, stated his feelings on the subject and listed alternative ways it could be done. Reiterating, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said it was wrong.

Town Manager Rieseberg addressed Chairman Kessler and after a short discourse, asked that the Board consider the revision of the grant money purpose so it could be spent. The proposal could be revised to state “daycare center” without any names and submit it to the state for approval. The operator would be selected in an open and competitive process. The funds Ms. Benner is talking about are not explicitly for Cinnamon Street, they are to determine the cost to renovate the barn into a childcare center.

There was a general discussion concerning the barn, its potential use and its lease or sale. Selectman Fratzel stated that ECON was not mentioned in the proposed revision of scope. ECON was the beneficiary. It was the same idea as with the Eagle Block CDBG project ECON had gotten. Selectman Fratzel stated the process had to be very clear about what will happen. He asked if ECON would apply for this CDBG grant funding. It was unknown (if they would). Ms. Benner stated if the Town did not apply for the revision of scope, they would lose the money (due to the way the grant had been written in 2019). Ms. Benner addressed Selectman Fratzel and said she agreed with his concerns. She would be happy to remove the component stating Cinnamon Street Daycare. The fact was that if the Town did not apply now, they would lose the money and potentially would need to reapply in future years for new funding with no guarantee of acquiring it.

After more discussion a request was made for Ms. Benner to rewrite the proposed revision of scope. On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; ***the Board voted to table the agenda item for two weeks. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Pinnacle Sports, LLC Shooting League License Agreement-Tabled to the April 19, 2021 meeting.

ACTION ITEMS: Request to Waive Ordinance Regarding Alcohol on Town Property-Steven Smith, Newport Area Chamber of Commerce Brewfest June 19, 2021 - Steven Smith addressed the Board members and stated the Brewfest would be the first Chamber activity in getting back to normal. There would not be a Chamber Day in 2021. They were proposing a Brewfest event with 200 people maximum on June 19, 2021. He listed all the Covid 19 regulations that would be followed as a part of its operations. Mr. Smith then requested that the Ordinance Regarding Alcohol on Town Property be waived.

After a short discussion on the Chamber Brewfest, on a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; ***the Board voted to waive the Town Ordinance regarding alcohol on Town Property on Saturday June 19, 2021 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; ***the Board voted to waive the rental fees for the Brewfest and Concerts on the Common (2021).*** Concerts on the Common are sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Smith and Selectmen had a brief discussion on the abbreviated summer concert season in 2021. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Consideration/Commitment to Become an AARP Age Friendly Community - Ms. Benner addressed the Selectboard and asked them to consider applying to become a member of the AARP Age-Friendly Community network (for full discussion and presentation go to: www.nctv-nh.org). She reviewed the merits of becoming a member to the Board and then introduced Mr. Todd Fahey, NH Director of the AARP Age Friendly Community Network. Mr. Fahey addressed the Board and elaborated on Ms. Benner’s statements concerning the Age-Friendly Network. Ms. Brenda Burns, Executive Director of SCNS, joined them on zoom and informed the Selectboard of the activities and services that the Senior

Center was already participating in. She stated that the Newport Senior Center Feasibility Study shows exactly what is being proposed with the network. Chairman Kessler asked Ms. Burns to send a copy of their study to Ms. Benner or Town Manager Rieseberg.

Chairman Kessler asked the pleasure of the Board. Selectman Fratzel made a motion *to authorize Chairman Kessler to sign a letter joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities*. It was seconded by Selectman Connell. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Chairman Kessler informed Mr. Fahey that he would be getting a letter of application soon. He thanked Mr. Fahey for attending the meeting.

Assignment of Warrant Articles to Selectboard Members - Chairman Kessler and Selectmen divided the responsibility of reading the Warrant Articles at the Deliberative Session. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. pointed out some typographical errors on Warrant Article 4 to be corrected. There was discussion by the Board and Mr. Spaulding, Sr. Chairman Kessler requested that Town Manager Rieseberg and Finance Director Brown research the appropriate wording.

Warrant Article 1. No one
Warrant Article 2. No one
Warrant Article 3. No one
Warrant Article 4. Selectman Hooper
Warrant Article 5. Selectman Fratzel
Warrant Article 6. Selectman Fratzel
Warrant Article 7. Selectman Kessler
Warrant Article 8. Selectman Tellor
Warrant Article 9. Selectman Connell
Warrant Article 10. Selectman Kessler
Warrant Article 11. Selectman Hooper
Warrant Article 12. Selectman Connell
Warrant Article 13. Selectman Tellor
Warrant Article 14. Selectman Hooper
Warrant Article 15. Petitioner
Warrant Article 16. Petitioner
Warrant Article 17. Petitioner

There being no further business before the Board during the BOS public meeting, on a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 8:23 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,


Maura Stetson, Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for April 19, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: April 19, 2021