

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen - Minutes for Meeting of July 19, 2021 6:30 pm
Regular Business Meeting
Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773
Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 839 8071 2732 Passcode: 529318
+1 (253) 215-8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees may apply)

SELECTMEN PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; John Hooper II, Vice Chairman; Barry Connell, Keith Sayer, Herbert Tellor, Jr.

SELECTMEN ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Hunter F. Rieseberg, Town Manager; Christine Benner, Economic Development Coordinator; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director; Todd Cartier, Director of Public Works

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Dick Wentzell, Bert Spaulding, Sr.; Kate Luppold Executive Director LAC; Jenna Darling, Chairman of Newport School Board; Roseanne Gentes, Treasurer, Edgewood Park Cooperative

NCTV: John Lunn, Executive Director NCTV

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

AGENDA REVIEW: Move School District-Jenna Darling to After Public Hearing (Tellor and Kessler)

PUBLIC HEARING(S): 2021 CDBG Public Facilities Grant – Riverbend Wastewater Pump Station - Chairman Kessler read aloud the public notice: The Town of Newport will hold two consecutive public hearings on Monday, July 19, 2021 at 6:30 PM at the Newport Town Offices at 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, New Hampshire to hear public comment on a proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA). Up to \$500,000 annually is available to municipalities or counties on a competitive basis for economic development projects, housing and public facility projects, and emergency activities. Up to \$25,000 is available for feasibility study grants. All projects must directly benefit a majority of low- and moderate-income persons. The proposal to be heard includes:

1. A proposed CDBG application for up to \$500,000 to replace the Riverbend Wastewater Pump Station.
2. Adoption of the Town of Newport Anti-displacement and Relocation Plan for the project. Interested persons are invited to attend and comment on the proposed application and planning documents. Please contact the Town of Newport, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773 at (603) 863-1877 five (5) days in advance if you need assistance to attend or participate in the hearing. Anyone wishing to submit written comments should address them to the Town Manager, Town of Newport, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773.

A handout is available.

Chairman Kessler opened Public Hearing #1. He addressed Town Manager Rieseberg and asked if the Town had received any written comments. Town Manager Rieseberg replied not to his knowledge. Ms. Christine Benner, Newport Economic Coordinator, addressed the BOS and stated that the purpose of

these public hearings required for CDBG funding is to solicit the view of citizens on community development; furnish the citizens with information concerning the amount of funds available and the range of community development activities which may be undertaken under the Community Development Act. The proposal to be considered by the Board of Selectmen is a CDBG grant application for up to \$500,000 in CDBG funds for the replacement of the Riverbend Wastewater Pump Station. Ms. Benner explained there was an emergency grant two years ago which funded the replacement of the generator at the pump station. The proposed CDBG grant will fund replacement of the whole pump station.

Chairman Kessler asked Ms. Benner to explain the significance of the pump station to the Town. She explained it took in and cleaned all the waste water from the east side of Town including a large majority of low to middle income households and all major businesses in Newport. If it stopped working, all the waste would flow into the Sugar River and there would be a catastrophic public health and safety impact.

Mr. Todd Cartier, Director of Public Works, stated that the pump station has been in operation since the 1980's. It has reached the end of its useful service and design life and its replacement is long overdue. An assessment was done with an engineering firm when the Town replaced the generator two years ago. Mr. Cartier explained the layout of the station and the difficulty of maintaining it when there were issues. When the pump station is replaced the layout of the system will be changed to make it user friendly for workers and the environment. Chairman Kessler asked if it would be replacing one part. He was told it would be a total reconfiguration of the pump station.

Town Manager Rieseberg addressed Chairman Kessler and said that all the existing pumps will be replaced with a different configuration of the pump station equipment. Engineers have said they cannot guarantee replacement parts if anything broke. Continuing, he stated if the pump failed, the Town would shut down the industrial part of Town and residential areas west of the industrial location. He agreed with Ms. Benner that it would be a substantial environmental, social, and economic issue (within hours). Ms. Benner said that in speaking with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) they consider it a public health danger for the entire region (if the pump failed).

Chairman Kessler asked if there was a matching grant for the CDBG grant. Ms. Benner replied that she will also be applying for an American Rescue Plan Act grant for a portion of the matching funds. Chairman Kessler asked how much was needed for the matching grant. The total project will cost \$800,000. With a CDBG grant a Town could be awarded up to \$500,000. The Newport match would be \$300,000. Chairman Kessler asked, for clarification, that Newport will be looking for additional funding for the \$300,000. Ms. Benner agreed with his statement.

Chairman Kessler asked if the Riverbend Wastewater Pump Station will have to be down for the work. Mr. Cartier said it will remain in operation; the contractor will set up temporary bypass pumps.

Chairman Kessler invited comment from the public in the BOS Room or on zoom. There was no public comment from either platform.

There being no additional information, Chairman Kessler closed Public Hearing #1.

Selectman Connell proposed the following motion: ***to support submission of a CDBG application for up to \$500,000 to replace the Riverbend Wastewater Pump Station; and to authorize Town Manager Hunter F. Rieseberg to sign, submit and execute any documents that may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG application and contract.*** It was seconded by Selectman Hooper. ***The motion passed by roll call vote 5-0-0.***

Chairman Kessler opened Public Hearing #2 on the adoption of the Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan for this project.

Ms. Christine Benner addressed the Board members and explained the Adoption of the Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan for this project: If any displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any displaced household or business in a project using any federal funds must find comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. There will be no displacement as a result of this project. Under the certification section of the application, the Town will certify that the Residential Anti-displacement & Relocation (RARA) plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does displace persons or households, the displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

A handout is available for any interested individual.

Chairman Kessler invited comment from the public in the BOS Room or on zoom. There was no public comment from either platform.

There being no additional information, Chairman Kessler closed Public Hearing #2.

Selectman Connell proposed the following motion *to adopt the Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan for this project*. It was seconded by Selectman Tellor. *The motion passed by roll call vote 5-0-0.*

School District-Jenna Darling, NSB Chair - Ms. Jenna Darling thanked the BOS for putting her on the agenda. Chairman Kessler stated she was welcome any time. She gave the BOS and public a synopsis of what is and will be happening in the Newport School System.

❖ Summer Camps are finished.

❖ Summer School: 150 students are currently in summer school. Ms. Darling explained the mitigation being provided to the 35 high school students taking credit recovery and basics classes. She said that summer school is important for some students, to ensure they have earned the credits necessary to go on to the next grade.

There are 9 openings in the school system:

1. Elementary teacher
2. Library media specialist
3. Elementary school counselor
4. Middle school computer specialist
5. High school math teacher
6. High school health teacher
- 7/8/9 Special education case managers

There has been construction work going on in the district. Ms. Darling informed the Board that:

- The roof on the old section of the Richard's School has been replaced.
- The field hockey field has been moved to the Newport campus and rebuilt. New irrigation has been put in to divert the runoff from the mountain. New sod has been put down.
- The Lovely Family was very generous and donated \$25,000 in honor of the late Peter Lovely, Sr. Ms. Darling listed the projects that will be done with the money from the Lovely's and the Lions Club (in memory of Mr. Lovely).
- The middle school soccer field is now in the location of the old tennis courts. It has new sod and irrigation and hopefully will be ready by fall.

- Locker rooms in the high school have been renovated. Eight bathrooms in the middle school are being updated. They will all be handicap accessible (ADA).

Ms. Darling told the BOS members potential plans for students returning to Newport schools in the fall. Depending upon the severity from Covid variants masks will be optional for students and staff. There will be more information and decisions at the August meeting(s).

End of year financials (School) - Last year the NSB anticipated returning \$500,000 to the Town for tax relief. Currently the revenue surplus is \$288,000. There is a budget surplus of \$404,996. Business Administrator Ed Emond has worked diligently to exceed the \$500,000 promise. Due to Covid and grant money coming into the district we were able to do it this year. Business Administrator Emond wanted the Board members to remember that the school is coming up on the voting year for a new CTE. Monies available will be a 75/25 state match for the total project. The state will pay up to 75%; 25% will need to come from the community. Mrs. Opalinski (Director of CTE) and Business Administrator Emond are working to cut down the total cost of the project.

Ms. Darling informed the Board and public that there was a Newport School Board (NSB) meeting on Thursday, July 22, 2021. It will start at 4:30 p.m. and go directly into NPS. She asked for questions from the Board. Chairman Kessler asked if the NSB had discussed moving their starting time to 6 p.m. Ms. Darling said there had been discussion; it might be moved back after the summer.

Chairman Kessler asked whether the new sod covered fields would be ready to play on in the fall 2021. Ms. Darling believed the plan was to fast track the fields to have them usable for the fall 2021 and explained some contingencies. Chairman Kessler stated he was on the Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) for the CTE. He understood the proposals were going out to bid. Ms. Darling agreed and explained the level of involvement of the NSB. Selectman Connell stated, for clarification, that Newport was part of a four-district group that submitted an application for money for IT and computers. She agreed, confirmed that the grant was for \$1,000,000 (to be split four ways) and stated what the money would be used for in Newport.

Selectman Hooper asked if there was a written “wish list” or list of projects held by the Superintendent or NSB in the event that the district receives Covid money. Ms. Darling said there was; it was not on the school website. Selectman Hooper explained the way that the list was used by the Town municipality.

Selectman Connell informed Ms. Darling that they would be starting up the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He said that they wanted to get the school involved so that the CIP encompassed the whole town. It goes back to the “wish list”. The Town will know when and where everyone (Town and School) needs to make large expenditures. We can balance the expenditures to keep a level tax rate. Selectman Connell will contact Ms. Darling concerning participation. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked Ms. Darling questions about the financial information. She answered all his questions. There was a discussion on the financial situation between the Board members and Ms. Darling.

Mrs. Kate Luppold addressed Ms. Darling and thanked her for her service on the Newport School Board. She said it was a thankless job; that was why so many people will not serve on the school board. Mrs. Luppold said that the school was the center and the heart of the community and something that should be supported. Newport is not wealthy but we will not get wealthier if we do not support you and we do not support the school. Ms. Darling thanked Mrs. Luppold.

Chairman Kessler thanked Ms. Darling for attending the meeting.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): June 21, 2021 - On a motion by Selectman Tellor, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1(Hooper abstained).*

NPS June 21, 2021 - On a motion by Selectman Tellor, seconded by Selectman Sayer; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the NPS June 21, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1(Hooper abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of the July 19, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Wentzell spoke to the Board members about concerns he had about the BOS names and contact information not being on the website. Town Manager Rieseberg said it should be there and would look into it. Mr. Wentzell was also concerned with legal costs, assessing and tax abatement in the Town. Selectman Connell told Mr. Wentzell that he had looked into the fire code that had been brought to the Board. Mr. Wentzell thanked him.

Mrs. Maryann Gentes, Treasurer of Edgewood Park Coop addressed the Board. Town Manager Rieseberg stated there would be discussion on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money that would be coming to Newport. She did not know if her Coop would be eligible or considered for some of the money. Chairman Kessler said that it will be brought up during Informational. Mrs. Gentes thanked Chairman Kessler.

Mr. Bert Spaulding, Sr. addressed the Board members concerning the complexities of and vacancies on the Planning and Zoning Boards. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. publicly apologized to Mr. Howard Dunn, past Chairman of the Planning Board, for his past bad behavior. He acknowledged the good work Mr. Dunn did for the Planning Board and the Town of Newport. Selectman Hooper asked if Mr. Spaulding, Sr. had any ideas (to recruit people). He said that staff and volunteers are needed everywhere; on Town Boards, volunteer organizations and businesses.

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

Selectman Sayer had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Tellor had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Hooper repeated that volunteers are needed everywhere; on Town Boards, community organizations. He asked for an explanation on an expenditure listed on a manifest for approximately \$16,000.

Chairman Kessler addressed the proposed Community Center. After an explanation, he asked if they should keep the project alive. He felt that it would be an economical benefit to the community. Selectman Hooper voiced his opinion on the needs of the community. He weighed the community need of repairing and replacing infrastructure such as water and sewer to the need of the community through a new Community Center. He stated that if there were grants available, they should be able to find a way to fund a Community Center. Mrs. Gentes asked if his opinion was that only one project could be done; Newport's water/sewer infrastructure or a new Community Center?

Chairman Kessler said that the water mains were old and in need of replacement. Some dated to the 1890's. The Town is also looking into a second well in North Newport near the airport. The next step for

the well is to go through the permitting process which will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Mrs. Gentes and Chairman Kessler had a discussion on the water mains. Mr. Todd Cartier explained the Asset Management Plan that had been conducted to evaluate the condition of the pipes in Town. Mrs. Gentes was told that the water and sewer affects everyone in Town; but the upkeep is paid by the water and sewer users. Mrs. Gentes said that the water and sewer was used by all the children that attend the schools. Selectmen wanted it available to all the children. It was explained that when a Bond goes before the Town (for water/sewer) it is voted on by everyone. Mrs. Gentes said that the proposed Community Center will be paid by everyone, even if they are not a user. There was further discussion concerning the proposed Community Center, the buildings in Town and their usage.

Selectman Tellor asked for clarification; was the Chair and Board reestablishing the Community Center Committee to review everything? Chairman Kessler proposed that some of the same people will be asked to work on the committee. They will adjust the proposal as needed before it is brought to the voters. Selectman Hooper suggested appointing Selectman Tellor as the BOS representative to the Community Center Committee. Town Manager Rieseberg asked for clarification; was the Board revitalizing the Community Center Committee. Chairman Kessler stated yes.

INFORMATIONAL: Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program-Potential Projects - Town Manager Rieseberg addressed Chairman Kessler and gave a brief history of six potential projects and the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program. He stated that many of his projects have been moved to the CIP list of projects with dates for long term planning and implementation.

He said that the Town has been watching the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. There is no single source of the money. The next funding being distributed is \$660,000 over two fiscal years (330,000/330,000). Funds are based on population and come from the: House, US Senate as well as the federal government to the states. Eligible uses are in the following categories:

- 1) Water, sewer and broadband infrastructure
- 2) Replace lost public sector revenues
- 3) Public Health Expenditures

The Town of Newport has solicited the assistance of various politicians on twelve projects. The Town is waiting for replies on two million dollars of requests. Town Manager Rieseberg gave additional information to the Board members. He gave the list of six projects to the BOS. Town has to decide on by August 18, 2021. Chairman Kessler read aloud the final six projects proposed by the Town:

1	North Newport Well Development (engineering and permitting of well)	\$1,900,000
2	Riverbend Pump Station	\$ 800,000
3	PRV Upgrade	\$ 400,000
4	Unity Road Water Line Replacement	\$1,300,000
5	Knoll Street Project	\$ 850,000
6	Unity Road Water Crossover Valves	\$ 600,000

Town Manager Rieseberg said that they were recommending applying the \$660,000 to the Riverbend Pump Station as a part of the matching funds for the CDBG. The remaining funds would be used for completion of the engineering and permitting of the well (North Newport Well Development). He explained the use of the funds and future readiness of the well development as well as the cost for future work. Reiterating, Town Manager Rieseberg requested that the Selectboard allocate the \$660,000 for the Riverbend Pump Station to be joined by whatever grants and funds the Town acquires (CDBG). Town Manager Rieseberg said there were two entities that were in attendance hoping to get money from the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program. Mrs. Maryann Gentes, Treasurer of Edgewood Park Coop addressed the Board. She explained the age and condition that their septic systems were in at the park and that the mobile park was on Town water. They were trying to find funding to be able to connect to the Town sewer. The Coop had had an engineer come in and the Selectmen had his report. In discussion,

Mrs. Gentes said that they had a private road with a maintenance agreement. The Town did not plow it in the winter. After a lengthy discussion and brainstorming the situation, it was explained to Mrs. Gentes that the Town could not pay to have the (private) mobile homes hooked up to the Newport sewer system. All private individuals have to pay for themselves. Mrs. Gentes stated they wanted to make sure that the Board members were aware of their situation and that the Coop was trying to find funding to do the (hook up) work. Ms. Christine Benner gave Mrs. Gentes her card and asked her to contact her. Ms. Benner would assist her in looking for a grant to help the Park.

Mrs. Kate Luppold addressed Chairman Kessler and stating she was in attendance asking for \$6,000 for LAC programming for children and families. The programming would be free to the participants, thus the reason for the request. Experiences are Building Community through the Arts. After a lengthy discussion, with the BOS permission, Town Manager Rieseberg asked Mrs. Luppold to contact his office; they would find the \$6,000 for the LAC projects.

Ms. Benner addressed the Board and stated that she and Financial Director Brown had attended all the webinars on the Grant Funding. They were very specific as to what would be accepted as a project for funding. She stressed the rigorous work that needed to be done to ensure the Town was following the rules. After further discussion on the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program Selectman Connell made a motion ***to follow the guidelines for funding opportunities dealing with the Riverbend Wastewater Treatment Pumping Station and that we move to spend the money for those actions and that any money left over from the project be used for further development of the engineering and permitting of the North Newport Well.*** It was seconded by Selectman Sayer. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

It was requested that Ms. Benner contact AARP for the Edgewood Park Coop. Ms. Benner agreed, she informed the Board that the Town of Newport had been accepted into the AARP Network.

RSA 674:39-aa Title LXIV Planning and Zoning Regulations-Restoration of Involuntary Merged Lots - Selectman Tellor explained RSA 674:39-aa and its repercussions to the BOS. The ability to unmerge lots ends on December 31, 2021. He requested that Town Manager Rieseberg ask for a legal opinion as to how the RSA will affect Newport. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. addressed the Board and gave additional explanations on how the Town might be potentially impacted. He also made a request that Town Manager Rieseberg get a legal opinion on the RSA. Chairman Kessler addressed Mr. Spaulding, Sr. and stated that the BOS would wait until one was needed and if necessary, the BOS would hear the restoration of lots on a case-by-case basis.

ACTION ITEMS: none

APPOINTMENTS: Zoning Board of Adjustment: Christopher Whalen, Full Member, 3-year term to expire June 2024 - On a motion by Selectman Tellor, seconded by Selectman Hooper; ***the Board appointed Mr. Christopher Whalen as a full member to the Zoning Board for three years with a term to expire June 30, 2024.*** Chairman Kessler called for a vote. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; ***the Board reappointed Mr. David Burnham as a full member to the Planning Board for three years with a term to expire June 30, 2024.*** Chairman Kessler called for a roll call vote. ***The motion passed 4-0-1 (Hooper abstained).***

On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Connell; ***the Board appointed Mr. Jesse Johnson as a full member to the Conservation Commission for three years with a term to expire June 30, 2024.*** Chairman Kessler called for a vote. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:39 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for August 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: August 16, 2021