

**Town of Newport, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of November 7, 2016
6:30 pm, Municipal Building**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman; David Hoyt, William Wilmot, John Hooper II

STAFF PRESENT: Hunter Rieseberg, Interim Town Manager; Paul J. Brown, Finance Director; Julie Magnusson, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Larry Wiggins, Director of Public Works; James Burroughs, Police Chief; Officer Brian Lull, Police Department; Officer Alex Marvin, Police Department

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Virginia Irwin, Newport Opera House Association (NOHA) Board of Trustees; Mark Pitkin, Chris Martin, Larry Eaton, Senior Center; Shelley Hadfield, Newport Grant Administrator; Gerald E. Anderson, Northern Architectural Design Group, LLC; John Manning, Chief Executive Officer, Southwestern Community Services; Keith Thibault, Chief Development Planner, Southwestern Community Services

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

Chairman Kessler acknowledged Police Chief Burroughs. Police Chief Burroughs addressed the Board of Selectmen and introduced them and the viewing public to newly hired Officers Lull and Marvin to the Newport Police Department. The Board members congratulated the officers and welcomed them to Newport.

Chairman Kessler addressed the attending and viewing public and reminded them that November 8, 2016 was Voting Day. Newport Polls were in the Opera House and would be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. After explaining the process further, he concluded by reminding people that every vote counts.

Lastly, Chairman Kessler addressed the Board and stated that Interim Town Manager Rieseberg was used to attending meetings of a Selectboard but not among the sitting Board members. The Chair asked the Board members their opinion as to where Rieseberg should sit. The Board members unanimously concurred that Interim Town Manager Rieseberg should be seated with the Selectboard during BOS meetings. Rieseberg took a seat among the BOS.

AGENDA REVIEW: Add Non-Public Session (NPS) RSA 91-A:II(a) Personnel (by Fratzel).

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

Minutes from Non-Public Session (NPS) #1 of September 12, 2016:

Chairman Kessler tabled the minutes from NPS #1 of September 12, 2016 until the November 21, 2016 BOS meeting.

Minutes of October 17, 2016:

On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Hoyt; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of October 17, 2016 as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Hoyt, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda for November 7, 2016. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Selectman Wilmot addressed the Chair and asked if the Board members would be acquiring minutes from the joint School Board/BOS meeting. Chairman Kessler stated he thought the School had some and that the Board members would get a copy by the November 21, 2016 meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Maple Manor Senior Housing Energy Upgrades

The Chairman read aloud the Public Hearing Notice:

The Town of Newport will hold two public hearings this evening to advise citizens of the progress of two CDBG projects, Maple Manor Senior Housing Energy upgrades and the Newport Senior Center Feasibility Study. The projects are funded with Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from the NH Community Development Finance Authority. The Town is required to conduct at least one public hearing during the implementation phase of each of the CDBG projects.

Chairman Kessler opened the Public Hearing for the Maple Manor Senior Housing Project.

Ms. Shelley Hadfield, Newport's CDBG Administrator; Chris Martin, Management Agent for Maple Manor's Block Grant and Mark Pitkin, Board of Director Chairman for Maple Manor addressed the BOS.

Ms. Hadfield stated that this was the second CDBG Grant for Maple Manor. The first grant had allowed installation of a new roof, siding and windows to the apartments for warmth and energy efficiency.

This second phase CDBG Grant had allowed replacement of all old appliances and utilities as well as drainage and other outdoor issues. Solar panels had been mounted on the roof. Although the public hearing was noticed as a Mid-Grant Hearing for the CDBG Project, the work was almost done.

The BOS was invited to ask questions. Maple Manor thanked the Town for partnering with Maple Manor twice for the CDBG Grants. The Board members were invited to go up to the non-profit senior housing at Maple Manor to see the renovations and solar panels that had been installed.

Ms. Hadfield informed the BOS that the Manor had an Energy Efficient Loan; the energy savings from the work done have more than covered the payment of the loan.

Chairman Kessler acknowledged Ms. Magnuson. Ms. Magnuson stated that in the spirit of transparency she wanted the BOS to know that she sat on the Board of Directors for Maple Manor. Relevant paperwork passed through her office, but there wasn't any connection to her.

Chairman Kessler asked how many residents were in Maple Manor. Mr. Martin stated there were 40 subsidized units, two unsubsidized units. There were 47 residents, some apartments had double occupancy. Mr. Pitkin informed the BOS that they were proud that they did not have a waiting list of more than 40 people. He explained the reason for the cutoff number.

Chairman Kessler asked Board members if they had questions. There were none.

Chairman Kessler asked if any member of the public wished to comment. There was none.

Chairman Kessler closed the mid-grant Public Hearing on Maple Manor Senior Housing Energy Upgrades.

Newport Senior Center Feasibility Study

Chairman Kessler opened the Public Hearing for the Newport Senior Center Feasibility Study Presentation.

Ms. Shelley Hadfield, Mr. Larry Eaton and Mr. Gerald Anderson addressed the BOS. Ms. Hadfield stated that they had received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to do a feasibility study for renovations to the Newport Senior Center. She stated that the Senior Center has been crowded for space. The study was to look at the existing building, look at alternatives to increase the space. Northern

Architectural Design Group, LLC had been hired to go through the building and look for alternatives to the existing structure.

Mr. Anderson addressed the BOS and stated that the Housing Authority had contacted Northern Architectural Design and asked how they would address the future needs of the Center. Mr. Anderson stated that the basement is being used for storage only. He looked into using the basement area and did an assessment of activities and the current number of participants in the building.

Mr. Anderson read aloud the mission statement of The Newport Senior Center. He said that he looked at how the Senior Center could grow and improve upon its activities. A major point was to continue to use the existing space for the next 10-15 years.

Mr. Anderson explained the process in which he and his company went through to create the completed feasibility study that was before the BOS. He went through the feasibility study, explaining all points within the document (*copies of the feasibility study of the Newport Senior Center can be found at the Richards Free Library, the Newport Senior Center and the Town Office for the public to review*).

The estimated cost for the proposed renovations is \$400,000-\$500,000.

Chairman Kessler asked if any member of the public had a comment or question.

Mrs Irwin asked what Mr. Anderson had planned for the basement. He explained the prospective uses in the basement using a posted blueprint.

Mrs. Irwin again addressed Mr. Anderson and stated that there had been discussion on the Newport Senior Center becoming compliant to use as an emergency shelter. By doing the proposed renovations in the basement area would this still be possible. Mr. Eaton, of the Senior Center, stated that it already was an emergency shelter. Mr. Anderson indicated shower facilities in the basement designed for this purpose. The fact that there was a generator large enough to serve the whole building was also stated.

There was general discussion on the renovations of the Newport Senior Center between Mr. Anderson and the BOS.

Mr. Eaton said there had been discussion to give the building and land to the Town if they “folded”. Chairman Kessler respectfully declined the offer.

Chairman Kessler addressed Ms. Hadfield and asked if it would now be up to the Senior Center to decide whether to proceed with this plan or not. Ms. Hadfield stated that if they wanted to go for a CDBG grant they would have to come before the Town (BOS).

Chairman Kessler closed the mid-grant Public Hearing.

OPEN FORUM: none

COMMUNICATIONS:

Selectman Wilmot had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Hooper stated that the Business After Hours Chamber event on November 2, 2016 at the Pinnacle Sports store on Coitview Drive went very well. Approximately 100 community members attended to see the store and its facilities. The Rec Center fall sports programs were wrapping up. The Center’s staff and volunteers have done an excellent job again this season.

Selectman Hoyt asked if the Board had received any information on the Pine Street and Main Street manholes. He had received a few complaints on the manhole covers not being raised above the pavement

level. Selectman Hoyt questioned what was going to be done. Mr. Wiggins stated that he had reviewed the manholes in question. There were a few that were a little low. He explained the potential source of concern at one site. A work order for the site would be put in for spring 2017.

Selectman Fratzel had nothing to share at this time.

Chairman Kessler stated he was a member of the Welding and Construction Advisory Committee for the Sugar River Valley Technical Center (SRVRTC). He spoke highly of the Welding Program at the Vocational Technical Center and explained the educational opportunities that the SRVRTC was offering Newport students.

Rieseberg again expressed his thanks to the BOS for the opportunity to work as Interim Town Manager for the Town.

INFORMATIONAL:

Sullivan County Transportation Program – Keith Thibault

John Manning and Keith Thibault addressed the Board of Selectmen and gave an update of the Sullivan County Transportation Program which Southwestern Community Services took over for Community Alliance. They described their initial, current and future plans for the Transportation Service to the Board as well as proposed finances for the success of the Program.

Addressing the BOS, they stated that one of Southwestern Community Services goals was to achieve financial transparency. SCS had developed an annual budget, which was shared with the BOS. Mr. Thibault explained the line items in their budget to the BOS and explained each Town's crucial financial involvement for the success of the program.

There was a general discussion between the BOS and representatives from SCS about previous and future Town funding, financial reports, resident ridership and other aspects of the Transportation System program.

Chairman Kessler thanked Messrs. Manning and Thibault for taking on the Transportation Program and thanked them for attending the BOS meeting. Mr. Manning thanked the BOS for having them.

Main Street Drainage Update

Interim Town Manager stated there had been some flooding on Main Street near the river. The State DOT had responded and had cleared a piece they believed was the cause of the problem. The Town would monitor to see if the blockage that was removed alleviated the problem.

Drought/Water Restriction Update

Rieseberg stated that the recent rains had curtailed additional lowering of the water level at Gilman Pond. The Mandatory Water Restriction Ban is still in effect and the Town is hoping residents continue to conserve water.

Shooting Range Update

Interim Town Manager Rieseberg informed the Board that the Town had received information from the State DES. Town engineers were working on the concerns now. Rieseberg stated the Town would be able to open the firing range when the adjustments were made.

Finance Director Brown stated that when work on the concerns was complete, they would be refile with the state. Chairman Kessler asked if the Town's application would then be put at the bottom of the pile; Finance Director Brown stated it was his belief that the application would be an "open file" and would be addressed as soon as DES concerns were addressed (by Newport). Brown told them the following was of concern:

1. Signage

2. Barriers (concrete blocks with chains at the road level to form a physical barrier)
3. Parking area noted on plan
4. Best practices guidelines for the firing range

Recommended but not required was a baseline for lead in the soil. Currently there is water testing at the landfill, but not soil testing.

Oak Street Bridge Update

Interim Town Manager Rieseberg acknowledged Larry Wiggins. Mr. Wiggins stated the NHDOT has asked that the construction on the Oak Street Bridge be postponed one year to FY 2019. There was a general discussion between Mr. Wiggins and the BOS on the subject which included what the postponement would mean to Newport monetarily and with the schedules of other large projects. Mr. Wiggins was asked if structurally the bridge would be compromised with the postponement. Mr. Wiggins stated he had followed all the DOT recommendations to reduce the stress on the bridge.

Chairman Kessler addressed Mr. Wiggins and asked for clarification that the Corbin Covered Bridge would be closed during daylight hours November 13-20, 2016. There was a short discussion about the possibility of its being closed day and night. Signage would be posted stating the days and hours.

Update on Tax Deeded Properties

133 Sunapee Street- the deed would be processed for tax deeding on November 8, 2016. Finance Director Brown explained the process the Town would be go through with the property.

The Central Street property was closed by auction on August 24, 2016.

The Maple Street property was vacant.

The Sullivan Street property was closed.

City of Franklin, NH Forum on Stabilization Grants

Chairman Kessler stated there would be an open forum in Franklin, NH, Monday November 14, 2016 at the Franklin Opera House. He invited the BOS to attend.

Department Quarterly Reports

Interim Town Manager Rieseberg addressed the BOS and stated that the Town Manager's office received quarterly reports from Town departments. He would be sharing them with the Board. Rieseberg wanted to make sure that the BOS wanted to receive this financial information. The reports would be sent to the Board members electronically.

Gardner, Fulton, & Waugh Annual Municipal Law Update

The Town Counsel firm of Gardner, Fulton & Waugh had offered a free workshop for the Board of Selectmen and Town Board Chairmen on RSA 91-A. It would be free of charge to the Town (as their client). There would be more information forthcoming if the Selectboard was interested. Rieseberg stated he would like (with the Board's consent) to schedule a representative from the law firm to attend one of the BOS meetings. The Board gave their consent. Rieseberg suggested that Chairmen from some of the Town Boards also attend the BOS meeting.

Town Manager Search Committee Formation

On a motion by Selectman Hoyt, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board tabled discussion on the Town Manager Search Committee Formation until January 2017. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Kessler abstained).***

Responsibilities of Selectmen During Audits

Interim Town Manager Rieseberg addressed the Chair and stated that the letter before the Board was a boiler plate letter sent to Selectmen at the time of their Town's audit. He stated that the auditors suggested that the Town do some items differently.

Finance Director Brown stated there had been three findings:

1. The BOS adopt a fund balance policy (He explained the pros and cons of a fund balance).
2. Investment policy (Newport had had one since the 1990s in local banks. It could be developed if the Board desired).
3. Trust Funds. The Town of Newport now has the required double signatures for their monies.

There was a short discussion on the findings. Interim Town Manager Rieseberg stated that in previous employment his policy was to work with the Finance Director to resolve any findings and to keep the Board apprised of their work. He requested that the auditor meet annually with the Board with the findings instead of the BOS receiving a synopsis from the Finance Director.

ACTION ITEMS:

Newport Opera House Association – Virginia Irwin

Mrs. Virginia Irwin addressed the BOS and stated that she was representing the interests of the Newport Opera House Association (NOHA) Board. NOHA was asking the Board to reconsider their maintenance fee policy for the use of the Opera House by NOHA. The increased \$300 for a maintenance fee was out of their financial ability to pay. The potential cost for a three day play would be a cost of \$900. NOHA was requesting that they be charged the old fee of \$125.

Mrs. Irwin explained to the Board that they did a lot of their own maintenance at events; not when the Opera House is rented to the general public, but for the NOHA events. She continued by stating the practice of the Town with maintenance personnel assigned to the Opera House and gave stipulations as to what NOHA would expect if their request for the minimized fee were not granted.

Selectman Hoyt spoke in favor of completely waiving the maintenance fee for NOHA.

Selectman Wilmot asked how many events NOHA hosted a year. Mrs. Irwin stated six events. Plays were multiple nights (3 each).

Selectman Hoyt explained the standard operating procedure with NOHA events.

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board voted to waive the maintenance fee for NOHA's upcoming play "Harvey" and to hold a public hearing at a future date to discuss adjusting the maintenance fee for NOHA.***

After a short discussion of the NOHA 2016 calendar year events the motion was amended to:

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board voted to waive the maintenance fee for NOHA for all events in calendar year 2016 and to hold a public hearing at a future date to discuss a maintenance fee waiver for NOHA. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Hoyt abstained).***

A public hearing on the maintenance fee was scheduled for the seconded BOS meeting in December 2016.

Mrs. Irwin addressed the BOS and stated that the second item she would like to discuss was the scheduling of the Opera House's use. The BOS and Mrs. Irwin held a lengthy discussion on the most efficient way to do this. Communication, maintenance, payment and the management of "The Book", a liaison from the Town to the Opera House was brought up. After discussion on the topic, it was decided that the BOS, Town Administration and Opera House representatives would jointly discuss how to best resolve the issue.

Mrs. Irwin then encouraged the BOS and viewing public to attend:

- ❖ The play, "Harvey" to be held on November 18-20, 2016 at the Opera House

- ❖ The opening of the Library Arts Center “Gallery of Gifts” on Friday, November 11 from 5-7 p.m
- ❖ An opioid crisis “Speak Up” conference be conducted by Reverend Alice Roberts on November 15, 2016 at 6 p.m. at the South Congregational Church

Election Day Selectmen Pro Tem

Mr. Larry Cote had volunteered to be an Election Day Selectman pro tem. Town Clerk Liselle Dufort requested that the BOS officially appoint him as one for the November 8, 2016 general election. On a motion by Selectman Hoyt, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted to appoint Larry Cote as Selectman pro tem at the voting polls for the November 8, 2016 General Election Day. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

APPOINTMENTS:

Airport Advisory Board (AAB)-Russ Kelsea

On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Hoyt; *the Board appointed Mr. Russ Kelsea as a full member of the Airport Advisory Board with his term ending in June 2018. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hoyt; *the Board voted by roll call to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Real Estate; RSA 91-A:II (e) Litigation and RSA 91-A:3(a) Personnel at 8:27 pm. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hoyt; *the Board voted to come out of NPS at 9:17 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes of the NPS at 9:18 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

Approved on: November 21, 2016