

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for Meeting of September 30, 2019 6:30 pm
Regular Business Meeting, Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Jeffrey Kessler, Chairman; Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman; Barry Connell, William Wilmot, Jr.; John Hooper II

SELECTMAN ABSENT: none

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

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding, Sr.

NCTV: John Lunn

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: Accepted as presented.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): September 16, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Connell; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2019 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1(Hooper abstained).*

NPS September 16, 2019: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board voted to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2019 BOS NPS meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-1(Hooper abstained).*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of September 30, 2019 as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. John Lunn, Executive Director of Newport Community Television (NCTV) addressed the Board members and gave an update on NCTV.

- 1) He was beginning a rotating eight week course for eighth graders (Fall 2019 through January 2020). He was hoping to begin a high school digital, video and broadcasting course in 2020-2021 if the rotating class is a success. It would be one more option the Newport high school students would have in the Career and Technology Education (CTE) curriculum. He explained the course outline and technology that the TV station has for the eighth grade rotation course (and the high school students in 2020). Mr. Lunn has found a grant in which he might be able to get funding to cover the costs of the program.
- 2) Mr. Lunn listed the various community events that he had videoed live for NCTV and streaming.
- 3) Mr. Lunn made a formal request that the Town budget continue to pay the videographer (for Town Board meetings) as has been done for 25 years. He asked for the BOS support to continue paying the videographer through the General Fund. When asked, he stated the Town did not pay for the School Board videographer.

Chairman Kessler asked that a budget request be made to the BOS during the Town Budget season. Selectman Fratzel asked if the Town had a contract with NCTV. Town Manager Rieseberg said yes, although it had expired.

Chairman Kessler requested that Town Manager Rieseberg and Mr. Lunn meet to discuss videographer payment. He stated that the NCTV Board should meet and Mr. Lunn could submit the budget to them. Mr. Lunn agreed.

Mr. Lunn thanked the BOS for their consideration of his request.

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

Selectman Fratzel had nothing to share at this time.

Selectman Hooper stated that:

- Homecoming is this weekend (October 5-October 6).
- The Corbin Covered Bridge Festival will be held on October 12, 2019 by the bridge at Parlin Field. He asked that people check it out.
- The Planning Board will have a public hearing on October 8, 2019 concerning a potential new Industrial District Zone in North Newport. Maps are available at the Zoning Office. If it is favorable, the question will potentially go to the voters at Town meeting 2020.

Selectman Wilnot said Saturday, September 28, 2019 the Trustees of the Richards Library presented this year's Hale Award to Jodi Picoult. There was an awesome turnout at both the dinner and the presentation at the Opera House. It was great to see the public out for the award.

Chairman Kessler stated:

- ❖ The School District has started their Search Committee for a new school Superintendent. Chairman Kessler is on it as a BOS representative. The committee hoped to have the selection of the new Superintendent by January 2020 before the school Deliberative Session.
- ❖ The State of New Hampshire has a budget for 2019-2021. Additional money was given to the education fund through the stabilization grant. Money that will be returned to the Town of Newport will go towards decreasing taxes this year. He explained the budget's financial information further.
- ❖ He wanted to thank all of Newport's legislative representatives and local citizens that worked hard to get this budget passed.

The Newport Community Center Committee will be meeting Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rec Center. They will finalize the survey data from this year and discuss plans for potentially revamping the current Rec Center instead of building a new Community Center.

Town Manager Rieseberg had nothing to share at this time.

INFORMATIONAL: New England Family Housing-Kevin Lacasse: Chairman Kessler thanked Mr. Kevin Lacasse for returning to the BOS again and for the additional information he had provided in response to specific questions by Board members.

Selectman Fratzel addressed Mr. Lacasse and also thanked him for coming back. He stated that at the September 16, 2019 meeting he had been vocal and stated he needed time to review the document the BOS had been given. He had spent a significant amount of time reviewing the information and appreciated Mr. Lacasse's thoroughness. It was not often the BOS got the amount of data that Mr.

Lacasse had compiled.

Mr. Kevin Lacasse thanked Selectman Fratzel.

Selectman Fratzel stated that the documentation and explanations Mr. Lacasse gave alleviated a lot of the concerns that he and others had had. Selectman Fratzel stated that he felt comfortable that the documents that people are required to submit for the housing here are consistent with what Mr. Lacasse had told the BOS.

Selectman Fratzel had also verified through Mr. Lacasse's documents that the requirements are in place for 99 years. He stated that Mr. Lacasse addressed all of Selectman Fratzel's and other people's concerns. Continuing, Selectman Fratzel stated he did not have any concerns about the project and whether the Board wanted to support Mr. Lacasse's efforts to ask the county for a CDBG grant. He did not know if there was any other grant that the Board would want him to apply for.

Mr. Kevin Lacasse thanked Selectman Fratzel and again stated he appreciated Selectman Fratzel going through it so thoroughly.

Mr. Lacasse stated the rule for the CDBG grant through the county. It had changed from two to three grants into the following categories: Housing, Public Facilities and Planning.

Mr. Lacasse stated that his proposal would not interfere with the Town of Newport being awarded grant funding for public facilities; they would not be in competition.

Chairman Kessler asked if there were further questions or comments. Selectman Wilmot stated he had spent time looking over the information. He was also very happy with what he saw.

Selectman Connell told Mr. Lacasse he was very thorough in his documentation. There were some things he didn't see:

- 1) Is there a plan for safety for children? Mr. Lacasse stated that they would be fencing across most of the abutting river area (access for fishing would remain available). He explained his proposed thoughts.
- 2) Information on designated play areas. Mr. Lacasse stated that was a standard requirement for the NH Finance Authority. When there are more than 50 apartment units the developer needed to provide a playground for children. In addition, the Mills was looking to add a dog park on the property.
- 3) What decision did Mr. Lacasse get from the Planning Board?

Mr. Lacasse stated that he had gone to the Planning Board to get:

- ❖ Permission to build housing units. The Planning Board was notified that the apartments were workforce housing units and not all market-rate.
- ❖ The lawyers needed to do a "title opinion". They wanted to see in the minutes that the community did understand that it is a workforce housing project.
- ❖ He had gone for transparency purposes.

Selectman Connell addressed Mr. Spaulding, Sr.; Planning Board member. He asked how the Planning Board felt about the project. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated that he had had to step down from the July 9, 2019

Case. His (Spaulding, Sr.) concern at the last meeting was that Selectman Fratzel had not read the documentation but he was being asked to vote in favor of it.

Continuing, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated that personally he was in support of the Newport Mill workforce housing project; it will do us (Newport) well.

Selectman Hooper asked about:

1. Maintaining the historic integrity of the building.
Mr. Lacasse stated that 20% of the funding is historic tax credits. They review everything aesthetic outside and inside the building. Mr. Lacasse listed several items that would be required to be preserved historically. Utilities on the roof and outside appearances have to be approved; nothing historic can be modified. Some aspects of the building were not considered historic: the silo (would be taken down) and a small part of the building (not original), those could be modified. Those that were considered historic would have to be renovated and maintained to a specified level. There will be central air conditioning and the windows will not be operable. The renovation would have to be in compliance with the National Park Service as well as all other partners.
2. Addressed Mr. Lacasse and asked him to again explain workforce housing versus subsidized housing. Selectman Hooper stated what he had read in the documents given to the BOS. He said that the income is work income. He asked Mr. Lacasse how it is verified work versus disability, etc. Mr. Lacasse stated the applicants had to make enough money in order to be able to afford the rent (see documents). There are caps on units that are restricted to area median income (AMI).

Mr. Lacasse stated they could not discriminate against an applicant's source of income (such as a pension or from disability). It is verified annually. Mr. Lacasse stated that typically people who receive welfare will not receive enough to get into the lowest level income bracket (7 units).

3. Selectman Hooper asked if unemployment counted as income. Mr. Lacasse stated he did not know the answer. Selectman Hooper thanked Mr. Lacasse.

Town Manager Rieseberg asked two follow up questions.

Improvements made to the property.

- a) He asked where the plans were, where they were memorialized. Mr. Lacasse said they were not memorialized yet. Once he got the credit application in November he would go into the design, development phase. The company has already selected a construction manager (CM) and architect. The developer will work with both CM and architect and develop that aspect.

Safety

- b) Because demographics will be changing and its proximity to the school and downtown, Town Manager Rieseberg was worried about access from the Mill location to the downtown and lack of safe sidewalks in the area. Mr. Lacasse stated that currently there were several multifamily dwellings on Cross Street. He would assume that children and adults living at the Newport Mill would use the same routes as those children and adults.

Town Manager Rieseberg stated that the Town was not prepared to support the population of the Newport Mills in the immediate future. Town Manager Rieseberg stated that a grant from the county to improve the sidewalks in the area might be in order. Mr. Lacasse stated he would definitely support it; stating it would definitely fall into the area of a public facilities grant.

Town Manager Rieseberg stated his concern on the BOS supporting the Mill Project, with the Town needing improved infrastructure. The Town will not know what the outcome of the CDBG grant will be.

Selectman Fratzel asked Mr. Lacasse to explain the division of the CDBG grants.

Mr. Lacasse again explained the CDBG grants have been divided up into three grant “buckets”: Facilities, Housing and Planning.

There was a discussion on the Mill Project, CDBG grant application and funding. The Board and Mr. Lacasse discussed how he could possibly also submit a second county CDBG application for an infrastructure grant (sidewalks) at the same time.

Mr. Paul Brown asked Mr. Lacasse if two unrelated adults could rent one of the units. He explained; asking if two workforce housing individuals who stayed under the cap of the AMI could stay in the same apartment. There was a short discussion on the question.

Town Manager Rieseberg asked Mr. Lacasse to explain the onsite management of the property. Mr. Lacasse explained it to the Board. Selectman Connell asked him to explain onsite. Mr. Lacasse explained the office hours and out-of-office hours for maintenance, etc. Mr. Lacasse answered all questions concerning onsite management and management working with tenants.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. told the BOS additional changes might require site plan review from the Planning Board. That would memorialize the changes that have been discussed at the meeting. There was discussion on the procedure of going before the Planning Board.

Chairman Kessler asked what Mr. Lacasse’s potential construction timeframe would be if the project went forward. Mr. Lacasse stated:

- ❖ Tax credit allocation October 2019
- ❖ Design/Development Phase
- ❖ CDGB application January 2020; CDBG announcement in April 2020
- ❖ Construction Loan Closing May/June 2020
- Construction would start in June 2020
- ❖ Construction would be a 15-month timeframe
- ❖ Leases would start in the fall of 2021

In discussion, Mr. Lacasse stated that amount of time would allow the Town several rounds to pursue a CDBG grant for sidewalk improvement.

Chairman Kessler asked for a motion from the Board. Selectman Wilmot asked Chairman Kessler how the BOS was showing support of the Mill project i.e. a letter.

Chairman Kessler stated he believed a letter would be a good option; the BOS could direct the Town Manager to provide a letter of support on their (Mr. Lacasse) effort through the County to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Selectman Connell asked if there were two points: the Selectboard was supporting it, and support it through the County.

Selectman Fratzel made a motion that ***the Board of Selectmen send a letter of support to the County supporting Mr. Kevin Lacasse's application for a CDBG grant for this project.*** It was seconded by Selectman Wilmot.

Town Manager Rieseberg asked for a clarification; was it support of one grant (housing) or two (housing and/or infrastructure associated with the housing).

Selectman Fratzel amended his motion to: ***that the Board of Selectmen send a letter of support to the County supporting Mr. Kevin Lacasse's application for CDBG grants for Facilities and Housing that will support this project.*** It was seconded by Selectman Wilmot. ***The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Mr. Lacasse thanked the Board members for their support. Addressing the Board, he stated that one of his passions is to expose CTE students to the building trades. He would be happy to work with (CTE) teachers who have students considering going into the building trades. Students could tour the live construction site at the Richards Mills.

Solar Project Update: Mr. Evan Weaver of Norwich Solar and the Board of Selectmen held a lengthy discussion and reviewed documentation and a new contract drawn up by Town counsel (see NCTV for full discussion).

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the citizens would be given a presentation (by Norwich Solar) explaining in clear language what the project was now going to provide. The Board and Mr. Weaver were talking in technical terms that the average person (taxpayer) would not understand. The BOS and Norwich Solar had made presentations before their proposal had gone to the voters at School voting and Town meeting. The citizens needed an explanation and education on what was now happening.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. was told that the Town would get the same results (as originally proposed). The project would be completed in phases and take longer than planned.

The Board and Mr. Weaver continued reviewing the new contract. It was stated the Generator Interconnection Agreement (GIA) was not originally signed because it hadn't been approved by counsel. Town counsel had reviewed the GIA and it was ready for signing.

After reviewing more of the documentation:

Selectman Fratzel addressed Town Manager Rieseberg and asked if he was comfortable with the New Power Purchase Agreement. He stated he was.

Selectman Wilmot asked if counsel had reviewed the Generator Interconnection Agreement (GIA). Town Manager Rieseberg stated yes; it had been read rewritten and approved.

After further review by the Board, Chairman Kessler asked if they needed to have the numbers (in the contract) checked and come back to the agenda item at a future meeting. There was a short discussion between the Board, Town Manager Rieseberg and Mr. Weaver.

Chairman Kessler asked the pleasure of the Board.

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hooper; ***the Board authorized Town Manager Hunter F. Rieseberg to sign the First Amendment to Power Purchase Agreement contingent on updated values that reflect the agreement and the starting value. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Mr. Weaver apologized for the confusion and stated he would verify the numbers with Norwich Solar. He stated that the next two items needing motions were the simplest: Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement (he explained) and the First Amendment to the Lease.

On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Fratzel; ***the Board authorized Chairman Jeffrey Kessler to sign the First Amendment Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Chairman Kessler stated the second item was the First Amendment to Lease. He explained the changes in the document.

On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Fratzel, ***the Board authorized Chairman Jeffrey Kessler to sign the First Amendment to Lease. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Chairman Kessler stated the next document was the Generator Interconnection Agreement that had not been signed originally. Town Manager Rieseberg and Mr. Weaver explained the document.

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board authorized Town Manager Hunter F. Rieseberg to sign the Generator Interconnection Agreement (GIA). The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Town Manager Rieseberg stated he wanted to make sure the charts and numbers were updated. Mr. Weaver concurred with Town Manager Rieseberg.

Groundbreaking for the solar arrays was discussed. Mr. Weaver stated that:

- Ordering material would begin October 1, 2019
- End of construction goal is January 31, 2020 (will try for earlier date)

Mr. Weaver and the Board discussed the project and subcontractors that will be on the Newport job site.

When the Board was asked, Selectman Hooper asked that as the phases of the project are completed and new ones started, that the Board and citizens in Newport be apprised of the work.

Chairman Kessler thanked Mr. Weaver for attending the meeting. Mr. Weaver thanked the Board for their time.

State Crosswalks: Town Manager Rieseberg explained that the Town had contracted services for the in-town crosswalks. Town staff had ended up painting them in-house. The State was approached about painting the state crosswalks at the four-way lights. The State told Newport that the Town could paint the crosswalks-at their expense. After a short discussion on public safety:

Selectman Wilmot made a motion *to direct Town Manager Rieseberg to have Town employees paint the crosswalks at the light (intersection of South Main Street and Maple Street/Elm Street) at the Town's expense and to send the bill to the State (DOT).* It was seconded by Selectman Connell.

In discussion Selectman Fratzel asked for the cost of the project. Town Manager Rieseberg stated approximately \$500. Chairman Kessler called for a vote. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Construction Updates: Town Manager Rieseberg told the Selectboard that the Oak Street Bridge will be open on October 4, 2019. A suggested name (Sibley) for the bridge as well as a dedication ceremony was briefly discussed. Finance Director Brown informed the Board that an interpretive panel was being installed by the bridge to comply with the historical guidelines. Selectman Fratzel requested that the decision of naming the bridge go to the Memorial and Monuments Committee. *Board members unanimously concurred.*

On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; *the Board adjourned at 8:37 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for October 7, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: October 21, 2019