

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 21, 2022
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773
Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 845 9542 5137 Passcode: 020120
+1 (253) 215-8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees may apply)

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

SELECTMEN ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: *BOS Room:* Hunter Rieseberg, Town Manager; Paul Brown, Finance Director; Jacob Pixley FF/EMT-career; Steven Dube, Jr. FF/AEMT-career; Zack Balfour FF/AEMT-career; Peter Censabella FF/AEMT-career; Copeland Miller Lt./ Paramedic-career

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: 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.

AGENDA REVIEW: accepted as presented

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S): March 7, 2022 - Selectman Connell made a motion *to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2022 BOS meeting as presented.* It was seconded by Selectman Tellor. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda of the March 21, 2022 BOS meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Mr. Peter Censabella, FF/AEMT-career; addressed the Board members and stated that career representatives were in attendance to speak to the BOS concerning Petition Article # 17 and to clarify anything for the Board. Chairman Kessler stated that warrant articles would be discussed later on the agenda; since there was no objection by the Board members they would discuss concerns with the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) members during Open Forum.

Mr. Censabella explained

Personnel-Newport has:

- 7 full-time staff (including Chief Yannuzzi)
- 6 career personnel; one sustained an injury in August 2021

There is a combination of full-time members, volunteers and per diem.

- There are 10 cross trained members,
- 9 firefighter certified only,
- 13 Per Diem (EMS).with certification ranging from EMT-Paramedic level.

Currently there are four shifts with 1 career person on each 24-hour rotation. There are two 12 hour shifts that range from Monday to Thursday; and Tuesday to Friday. The EMS/FF has had to change the scheduling due to “holes” in the scheduling. Five of the per diem members work 80% of the hours. Retention:

- ❖ One member is leaving in July 2022 (for different career)
- ❖ Two of the per diem members will be leaving to another fire department in the state.

- ❖ A couple staff will be in Newport for the short term.
- ❖ Three members are leaving for fire/EMS departments in surrounding communities that pay better

Mr. Censabella further explained the difficulties of scheduling; cross trained call and per diem personnel were not obligated to work shifts. They put in their availability and they are scheduled accordingly. If shifts are not covered, the department relies on personnel coming from home to staff ambulances and trucks. The proposal in Article 17 consisted of changing the current scheduling: 24 hours on/72 hours off to reworking it to 48 hours on/96 hours off (2 days on 4 days off). The department would achieve it without adding staff. Mr. Censabella explained the reworking in more detail to the Board members. With the proposed schedule there would always be two career firefighters per shift. It would also fill in the blanks in the schedule; currently there is no one to go on an ambulance run on Sundays. Golden Cross, Washington or New London Hospital end up covering for Newport EMS. Mr. Censabella stated that the FF/EMS personnel view it as a safety concern for the employees and Town of Newport. He reminded the BOS that they had a contractual arrangement with the Town of Goshen. Mr. Steven Dube, Jr. FF/AEMT-career and the President of the Newport Professional Firefighters Association addressed the Board. He explained the \$85,000 pay increase they have proposed in Article 17. He said that Finance Director Brown would be able to explain the financial aspects fully to the BOS. Mr. Zach Balfour FF/AEMT-career stated his two-year position in Newport was his first as a firefighter/EMS. He had been told when hired of the staffing and scheduling concerns. He gave testimony of working alone and a mass-casualty incident (MCI) came in to the dispatch. He was fortunate, there were no major injuries. He is pushing for the rescheduling of shifts. He explained the reasons to Chairman Kessler. He stated that the present way is not fair to the Town or personnel.

Chairman Kessler asked if any other departments had rotations of 48 on/96 off. He was told not in the area, it is common out in the western states. Chairman Kessler asked if the proposal had been submitted to Chief Yannuzzi. He was told yes. Mr. Censabella stated that Chief Yannuzzi was in favor of the proposed scheduling and supported the staff 100%. It did reflect on his (budget) submission to Town Manager Rieseberg. There was a discussion between Chairman Kessler and Mr. Censabella on the lack of staffing, commitment and required hours by the call, volunteers and per diem staff. Chairman Kessler asked about hiring additional personnel instead of revamping the scheduling. Mr. Copeland Miller, Paramedic and 14 year veteran on the department, addressed Chairman Kessler and spoke to the call personnel. He explained the change in culture, volunteer, call and per diem personnel he has witnessed over his years. He then stated how the proposed scheduling would eliminate the personnel problems they have been having right now. There was a discussion on the scheduling staffing and reduced number of applicants to the department. Selectman Connell asked about commitment by career people to follow through with the proposed scheduling.

Mr. Don Joe Attenhofer FF/EMT tried to zoom in and was unable to.

There was a discussion between Chairman Kessler and the EMS present on all aspects of the department and proposed scheduling. Chairman Kessler asked if they believed \$85,000 would cover the cost of paying personnel with the new scheduling. Selectman Tellor asked for paperwork showing the figures for the proposed rescheduling. He was told the figuring had been done by Chief Yannuzzi, they had not seen it.

Selectman Hooper said that the Fire/EMS provide a great service. He has not heard any complaints from (Town) personnel or townspeople. Mr. Miller addressed Selectman Hooper and stated they have worked on the proposed rescheduling for over two years. Chief Yannuzzi had put it in his budget twice; twice it had been removed by Town Manager Rieseberg. Mr. Censabella, Mr. Miller and the BOS members continued discussing the department, staff; call staff, pay, and scheduling. There was a conversation of "farm" EMTs from the SRVTC. All students in the CTE program do their "ride time" on the Newport ambulances. They have one new EMT from the 2021 graduating class.

The FF/EMS personnel thanked the Board members for their time. In discussion between the Board members, Chairman Kessler stated he wished it had been brought to the Board earlier so they could get facts, figures and input from the fire department logs. Selectman Connell stated he wanted to know how the \$20,000 that was

added to the call personnel line item affected staffing. Selectman Hooper gave a list of things he believes are negative in the department.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. addressed the Board and spoke on the school board and the rankings of the Newport schools versus of the state ranking. Richards Schools ranks 211/211; Middle School ranks 123/125 and the High School ranks 66/84. He spoke at length on the school board and Newport schools.

Mr. John Lunn informed the Board that there were technical difficulties with his NCTV feed. The first 30 minutes of the meeting had not been recorded.

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Tellor had nothing to share at this time. Selectman Connell had nothing to share at this time. Selectman Hooper had nothing to share at this time. Selectman Sayer had nothing to share at this time. Chairman Kessler informed the viewing public:

1. This is mud season. The highway crews have been out working. He asked everyone to be patient. There were 24 miles of dirt roads in Newport.
2. The second edition of Newport Times is out. The LaValley Family and Rec Center are featured in it.

Town Manager Rieseberg requested a 15-minute nonpublic session pertaining to NH RSA 91-A: 3 II(c) Matters which may affect the reputation of another. Chairman Kessler asked for a motion to go into non-public session.

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board voted by roll call vote to go into NPS pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which may affect the reputation of another at 8:08 p.m.. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

The Board exited non-public session at 9:14 p.m.

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Tellor; *the Board adjourned non-public session at 9:14 p.m. The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Chairman Kessler resumed the public meeting at 9:20 p.m.

INFORMATIONAL: Community Center Update - Chairman Kessler stated the Committee had received an updated quote of building costs from BreadLoaf Co. The new estimate is: \$8,651,000 (new estimate to revamp the old Rec. Center is \$3.9 million). Previously the Community Center was \$6,975,000. Chairman Kessler stated that BreadLoaf Co. stated that if built next year the town should expect an additional \$1.5 million. The warrant article as it reads now gives a figure of \$7,000,000 for estimated design, construction and building of a proposed new community center. Chairman Kessler proposed rewording Article 6 so it did not state the amount of grant donations needed; the bond would state a maximum of \$4,000,000. He asked for comments from the Board. Selectman Hooper gave his insight to the commercial building costs. The Board members discussed the Rec Center, increasing the amount of the bond (to \$5,000,000), the amount of the new estimate as well as rewording Warrant Article 6. After discussion among Board members, Chairman Kessler addressed Finance Director Brown and asked him if: 1. They could reword Article #6; 2. If they needed a public hearing; 3. If there was time to post and have a public hearing before the April 5, 2022 Deliberative Session; 4. If the monetary values could be amended by a vote at Deliberative Session. Finance Director Brown stated he would look into it with Town Counsel on Tuesday, March 22, 2022. He believed if the bond was to be increased (to \$5,000,000) it would need to be amended by a citizen at the April 5, 2022 Deliberative Session. The Board discussed with Town Manager Rieseberg the ability to raise over \$3,000,000 in donations for the proposed Community Center. The Board and Finance Director Brown checked dates-there was not time for another public hearing. Mr. Lunn addressed the Board and asked if they could reduce the scope of work to what the Town could afford. Selectman Hooper explained the expenses incurred if they were to change the size and limit the amenities. There was further discussion on all aspects of Article 6 including a positive Bond vote at Town meeting.

Status of Grants- the agenda item was passed over

APPOINTMENT(S): Conservation Commission-Dr. Lawrence A. Schissel, 3 Year Term to expire in June 2025. Selectman Tellor made a motion *to appoint Dr. Lawrence A. Schissel to a 3 Year Term as a full member of the Conservation Commission. His term will expire in June 2025.* It was seconded by Selectman Connell. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

ACTION ITEMS: Review and Approval of Warrant Articles and Budget for Posting - The Selectboard members and Finance Director Brown reviewed the Warrant Articles for typographical errors and to recommend or not recommend the petition articles. Correction:

- 1) Selectman Tellor corrected an error on the signature page. Vice Chairman of the BOS should state John Hooper II, not Barry Connell.

Warrant Articles:

#6:

- A. REMOVE sentence: "This article is contingent upon the receipt, by the Town, of at least Three Million (\$3,000,000) Dollars from non-tax sources as described above, and no bonds or notes shall be issued for this purpose until and unless such funds are obtained."
- B. Change the maximum \$7,000,000 amount. A public hearing will be necessary on April 4, 2022 concerning it.
- C. REWRITE Article: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate four million dollars (\$4,000,000) to be used in conjunction with public and private donations, grants and other sources aside from municipal taxation....."

#8 Discussion was held on the default budget. Finance Director Brown explained the numbers. The Board agreed to keep Article 8 the way it is written.

#14 Chairman Kessler made a motion *to recommend the Article 14.* It died for lack of a second. The Warrant will state: "Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen".

#15 On a motion by Chairman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Sayer; *the Board recommended Article 15. The motion passed 3-2-0 (Tellor and Hooper voted no).*

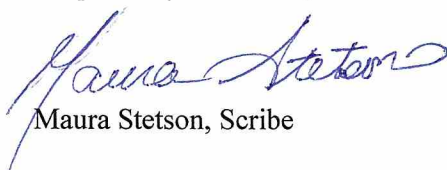
#16 Chairman Kessler made a motion *to recommend the Article 16.* It died for lack of a second. The Warrant will state: "Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen".

#17 Selectman Connell made a motion *to not support Article 17.* It was seconded by Selectman Hooper. *The motion passed 5-0-0.* The Warrant will state: "Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen".

Golf Course Discretionary Easement - After a discussion among Board members, action on the agenda item was tabled to the April 4, 2022 meeting.

On a motion by Selectman Connell, seconded by Selectman Hooper; *the Board voted to adjourn at 9:56 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 April 4, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Approved on: April 4, 2022