

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Board of Selectmen Minutes of August 28, 2023

6:30 p.m. - Regular Business Meeting

Municipal Building, 15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

Meeting ID: 843 1734 2060

Passcode: 307576

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84317342060?pwd=by9tbjdXMVhyODVSM2FhUEc5a3A1QT09>

+1 (253) 215 8782 US (audio only, long-distance fees apply)

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Barry Connell, Chairman; James Burroughs, Vice Chairman; Jeffery Kessler, Keith Sayer, and Jeffery North

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Brown, Interim Town Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Bert Spaulding Sr., Steve Morris, Donna Magoon, Larry Schissel, Don Schagen, Kurt Minich, Jenna Darling, John Lavidas, Jack Franks, Christy Whipple

NCTV: NCTV

CALL TO ORDER: Barry Connell called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. (Full meeting can be found on www.nctv-nh.org)

AGENDA REVIEW: Interim Town Manager requests to reschedule the Donation Presentation under Informational as the doner could not be in attendance.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: *On a motion made by Selectman Kessler to table the minutes from the meeting of August 14, 2023, until next meeting as the times of the non-public session were not included, seconded by Selectman Sayer. The board voted 4-0-1, with Selectman Burroughs abstaining.*

CONSENT AGENDA: *Selectman Kessler made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, seconded by Selectman Burroughs, the board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.*

INFORMATIONAL: Water and Sewer Access Fees (Lavidas/Franks): John Lavidas mentions to the board there is a lawsuit between the company and the town because they want answers, and felt as though this was the only way they were going to get them. Lavidas acknowledges he wants to come up with a fee structure that will benefit both entities. Jack Franks, Avanru Development Group President/CEO (Spring Street Housing), adds he is frustrated with the board for not giving him more information regarding the sewer. Lavidas and Franks reiterated on many instances, they are investing in the town. Franks thanks Interim Town Manager Brown, for being receptive to having conversations with him. Franks expressed he wanted the increase in sewer fees to be disclosed; he attributes this to the reason for the lawsuit. Lavidas and Franks claim they were not informed of the fees prior to their closing. He brings up the many avenues the company's lawyers tried to communicate with the board, prior to reaching out to the newspaper. They were not informed of the fees prior to their closing. Chairman Connell responds by saying they are limited with what they can disclose because it is a legal matter. Connell asks Jack Franks the method they would use to solve the issue. Franks responds by saying they would not have invested in Newport had they had known the sewer fees. Lavidas and Franks feel as

though there are cost prohibited and the town is not valuing the \$1,000,000 that is being brought to the town.

Sunapee Street Water Leak Update: Mr. Brown informs the board water was turned off on Sunapee Street this afternoon. The leak stemmed from an old surface line to a demolished house. The water was turned off at the main.

Flooding Update: Mr. Brown informs the board Blueberry Ridge Road construction will begin on Wednesday and will be covered by FEMA, following completion, they will be working on Whicher Road. Fletcher Road and Camel Hump Road are currently out to bid. Other road repairs will be covered by the town staff and crews. Selectman Kessler asks Mr. Brown about the status of FEMA with the state. Brown relays the staff of the governor has recommended a disaster request. Newport has met the threshold of FEMA requirements and continues to document repairs for reimbursement.

Main Street Paving: Interim Town Manager Brown has been in communication with the state, and it is his understanding it will be pushed off until spring. The town plans on using the state's painting specs, at the town's expense. Kurt Minich expresses frustration with the town having to pay for line striping when it was proposed to the town as they would cover expenses. Selectman North informed Minich they revoked that, so the town will pay for the striping regardless. Selectman Kessler recommends the town use the state pushing paving off as leverage for paying for the cost to moving the fire hydrant.

Community Center Update: Status of Shop Drawings: The town currently does not have the stop drawings to the Community Center, but they are hoping to have them by the end of the week. Selectman Sayer suggests if shop drawings come, they have a separate meeting so construction can be started. Kurt Minich asks how much of the taxpayer's money has been used for the new Community Center. Mr. Brown informs Minich at a town meeting roughly three years ago, \$200,000 was appropriated for research for a new community center, and that has been expended. There has been no tax money expended. Minich feels as though the millions of dollars' worth of donations to a new community center would be more of a benefit to the school systems. It has been estimated the operating cost will increase about \$20,000 to \$25,000 than the current recreation center.

ACTION ITEMS: Approval of Newport School District Construction at the Public Works Garage: Mr. Brown states there has been a request by the school district to attach a 10 x 30 structure to the east side of the Public Works Garage. Interim Town Manager Brown states the MOU has not been constructed yet. The board has previously offered space outside of the building, which is currently being utilized by buses for parking. Superintendent, Donna Magoon, explains the approval is needed before they start to construct the structure. Chairman Burroughs suggests there be an MOU made prior to the approval of the request. Superintendent Magoon requests the MOU to be written for the September 14, 2023, School Board Meeting so they can approve to speed the process up. Interim Town Manager Brown advises the board to make an endorsement so the school can start their process. ***On a motion made by Selectman Sayer to endorse the Newport School District Construction at the Public Works Garage pending the formal MOU, seconded by Selectman Kessler. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.***

School/Town Land Swap Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Interim Town Manager Brown relays to the board as part of the CTE project, the land is recovered by Recreation Grant from the State of New Hampshire with the town, in the late 1970's to utilize the land for recreational use. The town leased the land to the school. When researching the CTE center moving to the north side of the property, they found a problem with the incumbrance. There has been a plan made to replace the land with a new field at the property on the corner of Route 10 and Corbin Road. The MOU discusses the replacement of land,

and the school can use the property for the CTE. The school will reimburse the town up to \$25,000 for the development of the property. Parking is proposed to be along Airport Road. ***On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to approve the School/Town Land Swap Memorandum of Understanding and authorize the Chairman or Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents, seconded by Selectman Sayer. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.***

North Newport Well: Accept \$948,000.00 ARPA Grant and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents: *On a motion made by Selectman Kessler to accept \$948,000.00 ARPA Grant and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents, seconded by Selectman Burroughs. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.*

NHDOT – TAP Grant Certificate of Authority: Reaffirm Support and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents: *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to Reaffirm Support for the State's TAP Sidewalks renovation Program Agreement and Authorize the Current and Active Town Manager to Sign All Related Documents, seconded by Selectman Kessler. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.*

Appointment of Planning Board: Scott Stanton, Full Member, 3-Year Term Ending June 2026: *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to Appoint Scott Stanton as a Full Member to the Planning Board for a 3-Year Term Ending in June 2026, seconded by Selectman Kessler. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.*

Appointment of Zoning Board of Adjustment: Nicholas J. Vertefeuille, Full Member, 2-Year Term Ending June 2025: *On a motion made by Selectman Burroughs to Appoint Nicholas J. Vertefeuille as a Full Member to the Zoning Board of Adjustments for a 2-Year Term Ending in June 2025, seconded by Selectman Kessler. The board voted unanimously, 5-0-0.*

OPEN FORUM: Larry Schissel starts by communicating to the board Avenru are investors. He states development is good and necessary, however he does not want to see Newport turn into a commercial town. Additionally, he adds his concern about the chain linked fence obstructing the new mural done by Heidi Lorenz, located the Sheriff's Station on Sunapee Street. Mr. Schissel explains Sunapee Street needs enhancement, as it is a gateway to Newport. He is asking the board to consider taking down the fence or look into an alternative that would comply with regulations, that would show the mural better. Interim Town Manager Brown responds by saying there are currently no funds for the fence to be replaced. The board and the Town Manager will do some investigating.

COMMUNICATIONS: Selectman Kessler mentioned the success of the Apple Pie Crafts Fair. He states the board members were in attendance, along with some other town staff. Additionally, Kessler adds people were very drawn to the trail maps and trail systems. He suggests that be promoted better as many people expressed interest. Kessler thanks everyone who attended for being there. **Selectman Burroughs** reiterates the success of the Apple Pie Crafts Fair. He thanked the Committee for putting on such a great event, and their phenomenal job organizing and cleaning after the event. He states the lack of parking was an issue, and many citizens raised that concern with him throughout the event. Burroughs adds there were also comments about the difficulty of navigating the town's website. He suggests the website be professionally maintained, especially with budget season approaching. Next, Burroughs suggests the reaffirmation of the combination of the Heritage Commission and Memorial & Monuments Committee be on the agenda for the next meeting. **Selectman North** started by admiring the beauty and importance of the Newport Common. He also mentioned the lack of parking limits events on the common. North adds the amazing things Aroua Bakery does for the community and asks

citizens to support them by having lunch or buying some baked goods. **Selectman Sayer** shouts out the football jamboree, held at the High School this past weekend. He states they had a great turnout. **Chairman Connell** reiterated everything said by the other Selectman. He thanks the staff and other board members for their help. **Town manager** gives an update on the Town Manager Search Committee. He states it is going well, and they have gone through job description, advertising, and the community profile, done by Mallory Starcher. The salary range needs to be voted on by the board; Mr. Brown suggests putting it at level 25, which ranges from \$102,244 – \$155,577. The former Town Manager's salary was \$150,430. There was an idea presented where there be a residency bonus, for example, they may make \$5,000 more if live in town. Alongside that, there is a relocation stipend if they move to the town. This is a way to encourage residents to apply for the position. Brown states the salary range is competitive, but he will do some more research on other like size towns.

On a motion made by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Burroughs, to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation The board voted unanimously via roll call vote, 5-0-0.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Litigation: On a motion by Selectman Kessler, seconded by Selectman Sayer, ***the Board voted unanimously to exit non-Public Session at 9:21 p.m.***

There was no action taken during Non-Public Session.

ADJOURNMENT: ***On a motion made by Selectman Sayer, seconded by Selectman Kessler, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:22 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,



Riely Skarin
Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectman is scheduled for **September 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**