

Amended
Council Minutes
September 11, 2023

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Linda Joy Sullivan, Council President John Wilson, council members Kevin Charboneau by phone, Chris Vachon, and Clark Curtis, Interim City Manager Karen Geraghty, City Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, Program Director Rebecca Therrien, Zoning Administrator Frank Cheney, David Rugh and Beriah Smith from Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, members of the Press and Public.

Mayor Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Mayor Sullivan asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11

Additions, Changes, Deletions to the Agenda

Mr. Vachon moved to add setting the 2023-24 Tax Rate to the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Vachon moved to put new business #14 and old business #15 after the purchase of Sidewalk Tractors #11. Seconded by Mr. Wilson motion carried unanimously.

Comments by the Public

Claire McIntyre read a letter (attached)

Jennifer Bjurling stated that the downstairs door was locked when she arrived. She reminded the council that public comment should be before any vote.

Jennifer Hopkins stated that instead of a Forensic Audit the council should justify expenditures in sewer/water funds.

Response to Notice of Open Meeting Law Violation received on 9/6/2023.

Received advice from legal counsel concerning the open meeting law violation. Mr. Vachon moved that premature general public knowledge of the confidential attorney client communications made for providing legal services to the city council would place the city at a substantial disadvantage because disclosure of the otherwise confidential advice and communication could harm the city. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session to discuss confidential attorney client communications for the purpose of rendering professional legal services to the city council pursuant to 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a)(1)(F) and to invite the City Attorney David Rugh, Beriah Smith and Interim City Manager Karen Geraghty into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

No action.

Response to Notice of Open Meeting Law Violation received on 09/06/2023.

Mr. Vachon moved to deny the public meeting law violation on 09/06/2023 and that the 09/06/2023 meeting was warned adequately. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of August 7, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Vachon moved to approve the minutes of August 15, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Curtis moved to approve the minutes of September 7, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

Consider Extending the deadline for the Submission of Application for the Position of City Manager

Died for lack of a motion.

Discussion Regarding Retirement of Employee, Executive Session 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a)(3)

Mr. Vachon moved that premature public knowledge of the evaluation of a public officer or employee, would place the city or employee at a substantial disadvantage because disclosure of the otherwise confidential information might be disadvantageous to the employee and /or city. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a)(3) and to invite Interim City Manager Karen Geraghty into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

In open session Mr. Vachon moved to accept the retirement of Fire Chief John Harlamert. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

Interview and Discussion Regarding Interim Employee Executive Session 1 V.S.A. sec 313(a)(3)

Mr. Vachon moved to find that premature general public knowledge of the evaluation of a public officer or employee, would place the employee or the city at a substantial disadvantage because disclosure of the otherwise confidential information might be disadvantageous to the employee and /or city. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Curtis moved to enter executive session to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(as) (3) and to invite Interim City Manager Karen Geraghty and Assistant Fire chief Kevin Lacoss into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

In open session, Mr. Vachon moved to appoint Kevin Lacoss interim Fire Chief. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

Request to Purchase Public Works Equipment: Dump Truck Cab and Chassis (attached)

Mr. Wilson moved to purchase a 2025 Freightliner M2 106 Cab & chassis from Charlebois Inc. in the amount of \$115,715. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

Request to Purchase Public Works Equipment: Sidewalk Tractors and Attachments (attached)

Mr. Wilson moved to purchase two John Deere 3039R Tractors including attachments from United AG & Turf in the amount of \$87,708.64. seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

Set 2023-24 Tax Rate (attached)

Mr. Wilson moved to approve the 2023-24 Tax Rates. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Wilson asked if the sidewalk on the corner of Union St and Maple St. had been fixed. Ms. Geraghty will check into it.

Consider Ratifying Public Works Contract, Executive Session 1 V.S.A. 313(as)(1)(B)

Mr. Vachon moved to table until the next meeting. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

Interview and Discussion Regarding Potential Candidates for City Manager Position 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a)(3)

Mr. Vachon moved to find that premature general public knowledge of the employee places the city and /or the candidates at a substantial disadvantage because disclosure of the otherwise confidential advice and communication could harm the city and or employee. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Vachon moved to enter into executive session for the interview and discussion of the potential candidate for the City Manager position pursuant to 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a)(3) and to invite individual candidates into the executive session. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried unanimously.

In open session. Mayor Sullivan asked for a motion to offer to appoint a City Manager. Wilson moved to extend Karen Geraghty an offer of appointment to the office of City Manager. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, Wilson and Cutris in favor, Vachon and Charboneau against, motion carried. (This motion was amended by the City Council at the September 18, 2023, meeting)

Next Meeting Date

September 18, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment

Mr. Charboneau moved to adjourn at 10:25 PM. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried unanimously.

Attested _____ this _____ day of September 2023

_____ Mayor