

Council Minutes

June 17, 2024

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, June 17, 2024, in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Linda Sullivan, Council President Chris Vachon, Council Members Rick Ufford-Chase, Kevin Charboneau, Clark Curtis, City Manager Jonathan DeLaBruere, City Clerk/Treasurer James D. Johnson, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer Stacey Therrien, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer Robyn Churchill, Public works director Ton Bernier, Recreation director Mike Brown, Patrick Finn, Zoning Administrator Frank Cheney, members of the Press and Public.

Mayor Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to add the Memphremagog Science Center letter of support to the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to add the Declaration of Inclusion to the Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to add discussion of the Personnel Policy to the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to add discussion of Mr. Charbonneau's request for an investigation of Mr. Curtis. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Mr. Curtis moved to table the Video/Visual Recording Policy discussion until the July 15, 2024, meeting. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to ratify the letter of support for the Memphremagog Science Center. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Mr. Vachon moved to adopt the Declaration of Inclusion with changes (Town to City & Select Board to City Council). Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Consent of Agenda

Mr. Curtis requested that on June 3, 2024, minutes under new business read Mr. Curtis made a statement instead of reading a statement.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to approve the Consent Agenda with changes. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Personnel Policy Discussion

Mr. Vachon to discuss the Personnel Policy. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Stacey Therrien read a statement regarding the concerns of the non-union employees. The policy approved February 26, 2024, removes the grievance process and overtime after 8 hours. The non-union employees would like those two items added back into the policy. Mayor Sullivan stated the city Attorney is looking into adding addendums. Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to hold a special meeting if the policy is not ready by July 15, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Bluff Road Pump Station Advertisement for Bids

Mr. Curtis moved to put the Bluff Road Pump Station project out to bid. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Mr. Charboneau's investigation of Mr. Curtis

Mr. Ufford-Chase stated he had not heard anything about the investigation and would like to have known about it in advance and wondered if Mr. Charboneau had filed the complaint on behalf of the city. Mr. Charboneau stated that any citizen sees a violation they should report it to the authorities. Doing it on behalf of the city is false.

Gardner Park Soil Remediation Loan

Mr. Vachon moved to approve a five-year loan for the Gardner Park Soil Remediation from Passumpsic Bank in the amount of \$200,000 at a rate of 5.09% with monthly principal and interest payments of \$3,782.50. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Laramie Water Resources Agreement

Mayor Sullivan noted this is the first draft of the agreement. If the council has any questions get them to the City Manager, he will forward them to the City Attorney. Mr. Bernier read a statement from Mr. Laramie.

City Timeline on Projects

Mr. DeLaBruere updated the council on the progress of city projects which were included in his report.

Police Department Vest Payment from Reserve Fund

Chief Bingham requested payment for the full cost of the vest. Half of the cost will be reimbursed when the grant is received. Mr. Vachon moved to approve payment of the vests from the reserve fund. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Newport Downtown Development (attached)

Mr. Ufford-Chase discussed four ideas NCDD has for Downtown Newport.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to support the idea of Peddlers Carts as presented. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to work with Public Works to rotate six benches on Main Street 180 degrees to face the store fronts. Mr. Ufford-Chase will check with merchants that have benches in front of their stores to get their ok. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Personnel Matters

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session for a personnel matter and invite the City Manager and the employee into executive session 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(B). Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

No action.

Fire Department Personnel Matters

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session for personnel matters and invite the fire Chief and Captain into executive session 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(B). Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase. Motion carried.

No action.

Comments by the Public

Pam Ladds commented on the Charboneau/Curtis investigation.

Laurie commented on the Charboneau/Curtis investigation.

Anne Chiarello commented on the Charboneau/Curtis investigation.

Jen Bjurling comment on the Personnel Policy, trees on Main St. and the Script read by Mr. Curtis at the June 3, 2024, meeting.

Jay Walsh Commented on the Charboneau/Curtis investigation.

Mayor Sullivan commented on discussing the law with the Attorney, the many public records requests that have taken a lot of time, request for Sewer/water bills dating back to 2021, and the email regarding the alleged script in response to the public records request response.

New Business

Mr. Vachon stated the Carnival had a good turnout despite the weather. He attended the Flag Retirement service at St. Mary’s and mentioned the Fire Dept. Banquet.

Mr. Cutris noted the script on June 3, 2024, was read from notes and the video itself is a record.

Mayor mentioned the Pride Parade on June 23, 2024, the council is invited to participate in the parade.

Old Business

Mr. Curtis asked that the approved minutes be put on the website replacing the draft minutes.

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Vachon moved to set the next meeting on July 1, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Adjournment

Mr. Vachon moved to adjourn at 8:45pm. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-chase, motion carried.

Attested _____ This _____ Day of July 2024

_____ Mayor