

Council Minutes

November 4, 2024

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, November 4, 2024 in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Linda Sullivan, Council President Chris Vachon, council members Kevin Charboneau, Clark Curtis, Rick Ufford-Chase, City Manager Jonathan DeLaBruere, City Clerk/Treasurer James D. Johnson, Chief Travis Bingham, Interim Fire Chief Kevin LaCoss, PW Director Tom Bernier, Zoning Admins Francis Cheney, Recreation Director Mike Brown, members of the Press and Public.

Mayor Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

None

Consent Agenda

Minutes of October 21 and October 28, Accts Payable warrant October 25, Payroll Warrant October 31, and Liquor licenses and Vendor permits. Mr. Vachon moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Extra Mile Heroes Proclamation

Mr. Vachon moved to approve the Proclamation. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Award Certificates were presented to The Military Funeral with Honors Team from American Legion Post 23, Sarah Chadburn Newport Downtown Development, Amy Gillespie Overdose Awareness Project, and John Aldridge Dir, Memphremagog Science and Education Center.

Floating Classroom Presentation

Douglas Coutts gave an update on the Memphremagog Science and Education Center in collaboration with Memphremagog Community Maritime.

Ratification of Water and Sewer Rates

Mr. Vachon moved to approve council ratification of the Sewer and Water Rate increases approved on October 28, 2024. Metered Sewer 8%, non-metered sewer 26%, metered water 6%, and non-metered water 6%, effective November 1, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Open Meeting Law Violation Allegation

Mayor Sullivan moved that the council admit that the agenda item "Financial discussion and tax rate" as was listed on the addenda for the October 28 Special meeting was not sufficiently specific to put the public on notice that the city's water and sewer rates were to be considered under that agenda item and that the council action on the water/sewer rates during that meeting violated the open meeting law and that the council hereby states it has now cured that violation at this meeting. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

City Council Policy on Water and Sewer Agenda Items

Mayor Sullivan moved that whenever the council intends to consider issues that fall under its jurisdiction over the water/sewer system the agenda item shall include the phrase Water and Sewer. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

IT Contract with Beloin Computing

Mr. Vachon moved to the contract with Beloin Computing. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Gardner Park VCDP Grant Financial Commitment

Carter Finnegan updated the council on the Gardner Park Project. A letter of support from the city is needed for the awarding of the grant.

Mr. Vachon moved that the finding of the commitment of the financial resources letter dated November 4, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, motion carried.

Gardner Park Playground Equipment

Mr. Cheney updated the council on the playground equipment project. Some permits are needed Mr. Cheney recommended the work stop until permits are acquired.

City Financials, Medical Reimbursement Policy, Fire Department Budget update, Recreation Dept. Budget Update

Mayor Sullivan, Mr. Vachon and Mr. Johnson will be reviewing the Medical Reimbursement Policy. Andrew Carbine updated the council on the Fire Dept. budget status. Recreation Director Mike Brown updated the council on the Recreation Dept. budget status

Employee Evaluations of City Official- Executive Session 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3)

Mr. Vachon moved to find that general public knowledge of the confidential attorney-client communications for providing legal services to the City Council would place the city in substantial disadvantage because disclosure of the otherwise confidential advice/communication by waiving the cities attorney-client privilege 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3). Seconded by Mr. Curtis, motion carried.

Mr. Curtis moved to enter into executive session for employee evaluations of city official and invite the City Attorney and City Manager if needed. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

No action.

Comments by the Public

Jennifer Hopkins commented on the Personnel Policy, the Sewer/Water vote, and suggested a link to the city council meetings.

Anne Chiarello thanked the council for their hard work.

New Business

Mayor Sullivan read the Proclamation supporting North Country Hospital.

Mr. Ufford-Chase would like to discuss the process for budgeting water/sewer at the next meeting.

Old Business

None

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Curtis moved to set November 18, 2024 as the next meeting date. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, motion carried.

Adjournment

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved to adjourn at 8:48 pm. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Attested _____ This _____ Day of November 2024

_____ Mayor