

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
February 24, 2025

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, February 24, 2025, in the Council Room in the Newport City Municipal Building. Present were: Mayor Linda Sullivan, Council President Chris Vachon, Council Members Kevin Charboneau, Rick Ufford-Chase, and Clark Curtis, Police Chief Travis Bingham, Public Works Director Tom Bernier, Fire Chief Kevin Lacoss, Assistant City Clerk/Treasurer Robyn Churchill, members of the Fire Dept, and members of the press and public.

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

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Deletions: Item number 6

Change wording: Item number 21

From-Set next meeting: Regularly Scheduled Council Meeting: March 3, 2025

To-Set next meeting: Annual Public Informational Hearing followed by Council Meeting: March 3, 2025

Additions: Payroll Warrant for February 20, 2024, Accounts Payable Warrant for February 21, 2024, and two coin drop requests for American Legion Post 21 Auxiliary on October 4, 2025 and American Legion Post 21 for August 8, 2025.

Council President Chris Vachon presented a plaque to Mayor Sullivan in recognition of her time as Newport's Mayor.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Vachon moved to approve the consent agenda with additions. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, the motion carried unanimously.

Contract for Services City of Newport and New England Municipal Consultants Ltd-Ratification

Mr. Vachon moved to ratify the Mayor's signature on the contract for services City of Newport and New England Municipal Consultants Ltd. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

Grant Agreement Resolution – Single Grantee

Ms. Carter Finegan from NVDA spoke regarding the PM-1 form with updated contact information and the remaining course to settle the grant.

Mr. Vachon moved the Council approve the Grant Agreement Resolution- Single Grantee, Form PM-1. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Funding Strategy Developed by NDD with NCIC/NHCLF to help with costs of Contracts Related to the TIF District Application.

Mayor Sullivan spoke regarding progression to date including an approved contract with White & Burke and the MOU with NDD.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved the City Council approve the funding strategy developed by Newport Downtown Development with NCIC/New Hampshire Community Loan Fund to help with the costs of contracts related to the TIF District Application, which includes authorization for NDD to pursue a \$25,000 proposal to the

NCIC/NHCLF Small Business Professional Assistance Program, 70% of which would be paid by the grant with a 30% match of \$7,500 from the Walmart Funds. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ufford-Chase moved the City Council approve the funding strategy developed by Newport Downtown Development with NCIC/NHCLF to help with the costs of contracts related to the TIF District Application, which includes authorization for NDD to pursue a USDA RBDG proposal that Newport Downtown Development will prepare for submission by February 28, 2025 to pay for up to 74% of the remaining costs (estimated at \$200,000 to \$250,000) associated with the TIF application, 26% of which will be a match provided by the Walmart Funds. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, the motion carried unanimously.

Form PVR-4155 Certificate – No Appeal or Suit Pending

In Mr. Cheney's absence, the Mayor advised that this is a form which certifies there are no appeal or suit pending for actions to recover taxes and which will be attached to the final grand list.

Mr. Vachon moved to have the Council sign Form PVR-4155 Certificate - No Appeal or Suit Pending. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

Assistant Fire Chief Appointment- Executive Session 1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(F)

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session to discuss the appointment of the Assistant Fire Chief and invite the Fire Chief and members of the Fire Department into that executive session. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, the motion carried unanimously.

No action was taken.

Mr. Vachon moved to appoint Andrew Carbine as Second Assistant Fire Chief, effective immediately. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion was carried unanimously.

Grant Update

No discussion as Mr. Cheney was unavailable.

CSO Loan Signed Document and Supporting Information

Mayor Sullivan made the Council aware that this document goes back to Aldrich & Elliott and keeps getting renewed and that the current renewal was signed off by the Treasurer. Mr. Bernier said the initial one was to do the engineering for the Bluff Road pump station and this addition is to do the engineering so we can utilize the ARPA funds for CSO projects to do the siphon across the river and to line the pipe through Gardner Park soil.

White & Burke Decision Making – Team Leadership Picks/Conflicts of Interest

Mayor Sullivan spoke regarding the upcoming discussions, assignments from the City and through NDD, working with Brian Gray on the TIF, and the need for the established process to continue after the upcoming election.

Mr. Vachon moved that regarding White & Burke decision making, team leadership and picks and who is going to be working within the City, that it is the Mayor and the President of the Council who are the communicators and make those decisions. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

Renewal of Casella SWIP Agreement

Mr. Vachon moved to approve the renewal of the Casella SWIP Agreement. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, the motion carried unanimously.

Broken Meter and Other Meter Issues

Mayor Sullivan noted that currently there are no ramifications for broken meters which are not being allowed to be fixed. Discussion around a formal letter being created and available that identifies the ramifications if there is no response and the meter is not fixed were had. The Mayor will obtain several formats of such a letter, give them to the Treasurer and noted that this issue needs to be brought back for further consideration as it is a problem.

Memorandum of Understanding Between City of Newport, Vermont and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 93, Local 2413, AFL-CIO

Mr. Vachon moved to authorize the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding Between City of Newport, Vermont and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 93, Local 2413, AFL-CIO. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

Employee Evaluation – Executive Session (1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(E))

Removed from consideration.

Newport City Armory Potential Vote – Potential Executive Session (1 VSA § 313(a)(1)(F) and/or §313(a)(2))

Mr. Vachon moved to enter executive session regarding the Newport City Armory. Seconded by Mr. Ufford-Chase, the motion carried unanimously.

No action was taken.

Mr. Vachon made the motion to approve the Mayor to sign the Purchase of Sales-Right of First Refusal for the Armory property at 540 Union Street. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, the motion carried unanimously.

Comments by the Public

Anne Chiarello commented on no vote for the W/S budget and performance of current and future Mayor and Council.

Pam Ladds commented on Town Meeting.

Jennifer Bjurling commented on the memorandum of understanding with the union.

Laurie Grimm thanked members of the Council and Mayor for their hard work.

Jennifer Hopkins thanked the City Council Members for all they have done and commented on the need for continuation of work on W/S budget, personnel policy, and other items.

New Business

Mr. Curtis thanked the Mayor for her 18 months of service.

Mr. Curtis addressed a false allegation against him.

Old Business

Mayor Sullivan confirmed that the Annual Report and Financial Audit Report are available on the website.

Mayor Sullivan thanked everyone for their support and noted that the current group of people and those who will be stepping up to fill these seats are doing their best for the interest of the City.

Mayor Sullivan spoke regarding the audit and the criteria for an audit.

Next Meeting

Mr. Vachon moved to set the Annual Public Informational Hearing followed by a Council Meeting for March 3, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

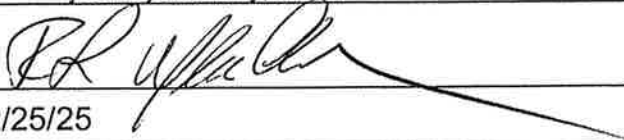
Mr. Carboneau moved to adjourn the regular Council meeting at 7:44pm. Seconded by Mr. Vachon, the motion carried unanimously.

Attested _____ **This** _____ **Day of** _____ **2025.**

Mayor

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AS REQUIRED BY THE VT CODE OF ETHICS
 TO BE FILED ONLY IF A PUBLIC SERVANT CHOOSES TO ACT

PUBLIC SERVANT INFORMATION	
Name and title/position of public servant:	Rick Ufford-Chase
Agency/Department:	Newport City Council
Office Phone:	845 608 4056
Office E-mail:	rick.uffordchase@newportvermont.org
<p>In my capacity as a public servant, I am expected to take certain action(s) in the performance of my official duties. Under present circumstances, a reasonable person could conclude that I am, or will be, confronted with a conflict of interest in the performance of these duties.</p> <p>A conflict of interest is defined as a direct or indirect interest in the outcome of a matter pending before me, or the public body in which I serve, that is greater than that of another person generally affected by the outcome of the matter. The interest can be my own, that of an immediate family or household member, or of a business associate.</p> <p>I am filing this disclosure form to disclose the facts surrounding this potential conflict of interest, and to explain why, despite the conflict, I choose to take official action.</p>	
CONFLICT OF INTEREST INFORMATION	
<p>Briefly state the nature of the conflict (including identities of all potentially affected parties or properties, whether the conflict is ongoing or a one-time event, potential or perceived benefits, and any other relevant information).</p>	<p>At the City Council meeting on Feb 24, 2025, There were two matters before the Council regarding the work that Newport Downtown Development, the nonprofit agency I direct, is doing on behalf of the City. The first regarded a funding strategies to seek funds through NCIC/NHCLF to support the the initiation of work for which the City has contracted with White and Burke to develop a TIF District Application, and the second is for NDD to pursue a USDA RBDG grant to fund a significant portion of the rest of the work that White and Burke and related entitites will need to do to complete that application over the coming year.</p> <p>At the Mayor's request, I explained the two strategies to the Council and made a separate motion regarding each of those strategies. I then participated in the unanimous vote to authorize NDD to pursue each of the strategies. There is no potential material benefit to me personally or to Newport Downtown Development. In fact, NDD is doing this work on behalf of the City and with no administrative fee beyond the annual support of \$30,000 that the organizations receives from the City.</p> <p>The second matter was simply to codify that the formal relationship between the City and White and Burke is to be handled by the Mayor, the President of Council, or by the Council's designee. Here as well, I chose not to recuse myself because there is no potential benefit to me personally or to Newport Downtown Devp.</p>
<p>Explain your relationship to the person or organization at issue.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Immediate family member</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business I am associated with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Business a family member is associated with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Business partner</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Property I own or co-own</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Property owned or co-owned by a family member</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other [Explain]:</p>

<p>State the action(s) you intend to take, and how your action(s) may affect the person or organization at issue.</p>	<p>I chose to vote in favor of both actions explained above.</p>
<p>Explain why, despite the relationship, you will act on the matter (Check at least one box)</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The conflict is de minimis in nature <input type="checkbox"/> My action on the matter is ministerial or clerical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> My action will not benefit me [or the person or organization at issue] any more than others who are generally affected by the outcome of the matter <input type="checkbox"/> The conflict is amorphous, intangible, or speculative <input type="checkbox"/> I cannot legally or practically delegate the matter to another person <input type="checkbox"/> I have received advice from the Ethics Commission that permits my action(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Explain]: </p>
<p>Confirmation and Signature</p>	
<p>Confirmation</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This disclosure fully discloses the nature of my conflict of interest. Taking into account the facts that I have disclosed above, I believe that I nonetheless can perform my official duties objectively and fairly, and in the best interest of the State.</p>
<p>Public servant signature:</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	<p>2/25/25</p>

Attach additional pages if necessary.

Form PVR-4155
CERTIFICATE - NO APPEAL OR SUIT PENDING

We hereby certify that on this date there are not any appeals pending from action of the Listers nor suits pending to recover taxes paid under protest relating to the April 1, 2024, grand list of City of Newport, Vermont.

Given under our hands at Newport_ in the County of Orleans, State of Vermont, this 17 day of February, 2025.

Listers

Francis Henry

Selectboard

Linda Sulcan, mayor

Chris Wood

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Attested this 24th day of February, 2025.

James Johnson, Town Clerk

Attach to final grand list lodged with the town clerk.

32 V.S.A. § 4155. Certificate and attestation - No appeal or suit pending

When no statutory appeal as provided by law from the appraisal of the listers and no suit to recover taxes paid under protest is pending on the first Tuesday of February following such lodgment, the selectboard and listers of a town or the mayor and assessors of a city shall endorse a certificate to that effect upon the grand list and the same shall be attested by the town or city clerk with the date of such attestation.

32 V.S.A. § 4156. After appeal and suit determined

When any such appeal or suit is then pending, such certificate shall be made as soon as such appeal or suit has been finally determined.

32 V.S.A. § 4157. Effect of such certificate

From the date of endorsing such certificate upon the grand list as aforesaid to the effect that no such appeal or suit is pending, when offered in evidence in any court in this state, such list shall be received as a legal grand list of such town or city and its validity shall not be put in issue by any party to any action in any hearing or trial in any court.