

## **Council Minutes**

**October 5, 2020**

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City council was held remotely on Monday, October 5, 2020. Present were Mayor Paul Monette, Council Members John Wilson, Melissa Pettersson, Kevin Charboneau, City Manager Laura Dolgin, City Clerk/Treasurer James D. Johnson, PW Director Tom Bernier, Rec. Director Jessica Booth, Police Chief Travis Bingham, Fire Chief John Harlamert, City Landscaper Robert Gosselin, Becky Therrien and members of the Press and Public. Council President Dan Ross was absent.

Mayor Monette called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of September 21, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

### **Comments by the Public**

None

### **City Landscaper Presentation.**

Robert Gosselin updated the council on city landscaping.

### **Public Works Vehicle Purchases (attached)**

Mr. Wilson moved to purchase a 2020 Ford F-550 4WD. 6.7L, Diesel Cab & Chassis from Hayes Ford, Inc. for \$57,877. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Mr. Charboneau moved to purchase a new Freightliner M2 106 from Charlebois Freightliner for \$81,425. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried.

### **Recreation Rates & Fees for Prouty Beach and Waterfront (attached)**

Jessica Booth updated the council on the purchase of a new Washer and Dryer and the Internet at Prouty Beach. These problems had not been solved during summer as promised. Ms. Booth also updated the council on the weed problem at the City Dock.

Mr. Charboneau moved to keep the seasonal rates at Prouty Beach and The City Dock the same for the coming year. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried. Wilson, Charboneau, Monette in favor, Ms. Pettersson against.

### **Water Meters (summary of Sept. 21, 2020 meeting attached)**

Mr. Charboneau moved that the City of Newport mandate water meters for all users. Further, the motion authorizes water meters to be installed at city expense for all existing residential users. All property that has a current meter will be required to be billed from it effective with the February 1, 2021 billing. Any application for allocation for new residential/commercial/industrial construction will continue to be required to pay for their meter and be billed from it. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried.

### **Citizen Concern**

Joseph Silvestri voiced his concern about a sewer problem and the fact that the sewer main for his line is on the other side of the road. He felt that the city should be responsible for the lines under the road. Mr. Bernier noted the ordinance clearly states that the property owner is responsible for sewer lines from the building to the sewer main.

### **Vicious Dog Appeal.**

A formal hearing was held for a vicious dog owned by Leah Norway at 35 Bayview St., Apt.5. Ms. Norway and Chief Bingham each gave sworn testimony.

Mr. Wilson moved to close the hearing. Seconded by Ms. Pettersson, motion carried.

Ms. Pettersson moved to enter executive session to discuss the vicious dog complaint. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried.

In open session, Ms. Pettersson moved for Leah Norway the owner of the dog Odie to remove the dog from the City of Newport within 24 hours of the close of this meeting. She is to provide proof of licensing of the dog in the town in which the dog resides in within five business days. If the dog returns to the City of Newport it will be immediately impounded until the next scheduled council meeting at which time the council will deliberate to see if euthanasia is the appropriate next step. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

**New Business**

Ms. Dolgin noted that the City had received a grant for \$20,000 to digitalize land Records.

Polly Dagesse donated a golf cart to the city.

**Old Business**

None

**Next Meeting Date**

October 19, 2020

**Adjournment**

Mr. Charboneau moved to adjourn at 8:34 PM. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, motion carried.

Attested  This 19<sup>th</sup> Day of October 2020

 Mayor

Water Meter Presentation  
September 21, 2020  
City Council Presentation

Introductions: Wayne Elliotte from our engineering firm of Aldrich and Elliott, Director of Public Works Tom Bernier, Pedro Grondin who is the supervisor of the WWTF, and me.

Mandating Water Meters has been a topic of council discussion since at least 1994, and again in 2011. I came to the City in 2015 and it was a topic then, resulting in the last Ordinance change in 2016. The Team within the City of Newport have been working on this for several months in order to prepare tonight's discussion and recommendation. Tom will describe the history better than I.

**TOM:** history...

The last time the rates and fees ordinance was changed was in 2016 when usage costs were adopted. Meters have never been mandated in the city so instead, the City adopted a Free Water meter program in 2017. Since then, the city has limped along and has thus far installed an additional 225 plus or minus meters for a total of 300 meters which are being billed from. We also instituted an authorization form so that those people who volunteered for the original data meter program but not billed from the meter, or new construction, could continue to choose if they wanted to be billed from the meter. Some meters are installed but not authorized for use. This has resulted in confusion and a lack of equity. For example, 56 of the original data meters and new construction are not being billed from. Most of our businesses have meters with perhaps another 29 or so left to be metered. We have between 700 and 800 residential meters to install.

We treat every drop of water that goes through the Arsenic plant and there is a cost to that to keep the infrastructure going. Water is a precious commodity and we need to start thinking about water in this way. We are not eligible for grants for reducing our bonding as long as we remain unmetered. We have infrastructure that has failed and we are looking at financing for a new water tower to be located on the East Side of the City. The fact that the city has not mandated meters means we are not eligible for grants.

Metering will provide equity for all users; The City will be eligible to apply for critical infrastructure grants with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the USDA. Both of these entities are major infrastructure funders; People will eventually pay for what they use; Metering allows conservation of water; identification of leaks earlier and will use modern technology.

Ask **Wayne** to chime in here regarding the grants eligibility, equity, time frames for installation and acquiring measurable accurate data. Anything else that is relevant.

Refer back to **TOM** for the advantage of mandating meters in Newport.

There are a couple of issues for the council's consideration. Title 24 section 3311, and Title 24 section 3615 recognizes the municipal corporation (aka the council members) as the commissioners who establish the charges and the manner of those charges. Previously, in 1994

and 2011 the city chose to bring the question to the voters, but this is the commissioner's responsibility by statute to establish. The Commissioners have the right and the responsibility to establish and mandate meters. We ask the council to consider the benefits to the ratepayers as well as the advantages to the city of mandating meters. It is true that some people's bills will go down and some people's bills will go up depending upon usage, which equates to equity. We ask the Commissioners to consider mandating meters for all users.

Another issue for the commissioners to consider is the duration in which the meters get installed. Installing 7-800 water meters will take a couple of years to finish. For as long as we can afford to do this, these are expenses that will not have to be assumed in a bond vote. It could save us some funding in the long run. Once any grant is filed, the grant will cover the remaining meters. We recommend the commissioners continue with the free water meter program.

And yet another issue for the commissioners to consider is those properties that have a meter but are not being billed from it. We recommend that the commissioners authorize that any current meters are to be billed from if effective with the February 1, 2021 billing. This time frame will allow the city to send letters to everyone so they know to expect this.

And lastly, any new construction whether it be residential, commercial or industrial, will continue to be required to pay for the meter and we recommend the commissioners to require new construction be billed from it.

If the commissioners are inclined to move in this direction, a plausible motion might look like this:

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*I move that the City of Newport mandates water meters for all users. Further, the motion authorizes water meters to be installed at city expense for all existing residential users. All property that has a current meter will be required to be billed from it effective with the February 1, 2021 billing. Any application for allocation for new residential/commercial/industrial construction will continue to be required to pay for their meter and be billed from it.*

Open for questions.

# MEMO

To: Newport City Council  
Paul Monette, Mayor  
James Johnson, City Clerk/Treasurer; Laura Dolgin, City Manager

From: Jessica Booth, Parks & Recreation Director 

Date: September 30, 2020

Re: Campground & City Dock Update

In response to the valid questions raised by the Council at the August 17 meeting regarding the annual increase in rates and fees, I offer the following updates for the Council's consideration in setting rates for the Waterfront and Prouty Beach:

## PROUTY BEACH

**Washers/Dryers:** Order for two stackable washing machines was processed on 9/21. We expect to take delivery by the end of October. These machines have the same capacity as our old ones, and we have adjusted the drying time to be 0.25 per 5 min (instead of \$2.00 for a 45min cycle), which was requested by the campers. To make room for the new units, we will remove one of the old sets, but leave the other. This means that we will go from 2 sets to 3 sets of washing and drying machines.

**Internet:** We have switched wireless network vendors and will be working with Dan Brisson from MyRecNet out of Addison. Dan manages the wireless network for over 40 campgrounds including Tree Corners Campground in rasburg. He has credible experience and is familiar with the type of work we need done to improve connectivity for campers. He is scheduled to assess the campground on October 15th.

## NEWPORT CITY DOCK

**Weeds:** Our Newport City Harbormaster has been keeping me apprised of the significant weed problem at the marina since July. Traditionally the City contracts with Solitude Lake Management to hydro-rake the permitted area around the pier and finger docks each year in late July. I've heard mixed reviews about this strategy - some think it's effective and are pleased with the results, while others worry that it contributes to the spread of invasives, perpetuating the problem.

The City has historically received a grant (about \$8,500-\$9,000 annually) for hydro-raking, which is fully funded by an Aquatic Nuisance Control Program through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation over the last four years. This May, grant awards were announced and we were notified that we'd be receiving only 25% of the expected grant funds. This was due to a shortage in federal funding and the DEC's questions about the effectiveness of hydro-raking. After consulting with the Mayor and City Manager about the \$6,000 gap in funding, we made the difficult decision to cut the project for this year. We considered the following in making this decision: the timing of the grant award was near to the start of the season while we were addressing the COVID-19 protocols, we were anticipating less traffic at the dock this season due to circumstances beyond our control, we decided we did not have ability to fund this investment fully and did not have capacity (or funds) to research a plan B in time to remedy the problem for boaters this year.

Our Harbormaster, Erik Voegtlin, has been consulting with the State of Vermont and researching alternative options for weed control for next season. While hydro-raking is the most economical option, other more costly

City Manager ..... (802) 334-5136  
334-3891  
City Clerk/Treasurer ..... 334-2112  
334-3892  
Public Works ..... 334-2124  
Zoning Adm./Assessor ... 334-6992  
Recreation/Parks ..... 334-6345  
Fax ..... 334-5632



City of Newport  
222 Main Street  
Newport, Vermont 05855

TO: Laura Dolgin/City Manager  
FROM: Thomas L. Bernier/P.W. Director ~~778~~  
DATE: September 30, 2020  
RE: New Dump Truck Cab and Chassis

Laura,

I have budgeted equipment funds within public works capital budget to allow for the purchase of a new six-wheel dump truck. We had sent out four bid requests and only received two back. The bids we received are as follows:

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Clark's Truck Center: International 7400	\$78,277
Charlebois Freightliner: Freightliner M2 106	\$81,425

I have included a memo from Andrew Patenaude our city mechanic explaining all the reasons and problems we have with purchasing the International 7400.

I would like to recommend that the City purchase our new truck from Charlebois Freightliner for the bid price of \$81,425.

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City of Newport  
 222 Main Street  
 Newport, Vermont 05855

TO: Laura Dolgin/City Manager  
 FROM: Thomas L. Bernier/P.W. Director *TLB*  
 DATE: September 30, 2020  
 RE: New 2020 7,500 GAWR Cab & Chassis

The current budget allows us to replace a 2012 Ford F550 7,500 GAWR truck. I recently sent this cab and chassis bid specifications out to Ford, Chevy, Dodge and GMC dealers. I received one bid back that could meet the specifications. All three other dealers either currently do not make a 550-class truck or decided not to submit a bid. The one bid we received:

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<b><u>Hayes Ford, Inc.:</u></b> 2020 F550 4WD, 6.7L Diesel Regular Cab Chassis	\$52,592
7 year or 100,000 Mile Premium Care	<u>\$5,285.00</u>
	<b>\$57,877</b>

I would like to request authorization to purchase a new 2020 Ford F550 from Hayes Ford for the bid price of \$57,877.