

Council Minutes

May 19, 2025

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, May 19, 2025 in the council room in the Newport Municipal building. Present were Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council President Kevin Charboneau, council members Carter Finegan, John Monette, Andrew Touchette, City Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, Public Works director tom Bernier, Fire Chief Kevin LaCoss, City Attorney Beriah Smith, members of the Press and Public

Mayor Ufford-Chase called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Item number seven moved to number four

Add number executive session number five

Mr. Monette moved to add executive session, number five. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Consent Agenda, Minutes of 5/05/25, AP Warrants 5/09/25, 5/12/25, 5/16/25, PR Warrant 5/15/25, Liquor License, Vendor Permits.

Mr. Charboneau moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Consider Partial Settlement Proposal of Jennifer Bjurling Lawsuit and Related Confidential Attorney-client Communications 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(F)

Mr. Monette moved that the council find that premature general public knowledge about this proposed settlement with the City and related attorney-client communications would clearly place the council at a substantial disadvantage by disclosing negotiation strategy and privileged communications with the City Attorney related to ongoing litigation. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Mr. Monette moved that the council enter executive session to consider Jennifer Bjurling's settlement proposal and receive confidential advice from the City Attorney related thereto and invite the City Attorney and the City clerk to join the council in executive session. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Monette moved the council to find that: At the council meeting of September 11, 2023, after the City council came out of executive session, the Mayor asked, "May I have a motion to make an offer to

appoint a City Manager". Alderman Wilson moved "that we make the next city Manager Karen Geraghty". That motion was seconded by Chris Vachon and the motion carried.

At the City council meeting of September 18, 2023, Alderman Wilson moved to amend the motion passed on September 11, 2023, to appoint Karen Geraghty City manager so that it now reads that Mr. Wilson moved to extend Karen Geraghty an offer of appointment to the office of City Manager. That motion was seconded by Alderman Curtis and the motion carried. Next Mr. Wilson moved to amend the minutes of September 11, 2023, to reflect the amended motion. That motion was seconded by Alderman Curtis and the motion carried.

The motion to amend the minutes was improper because it caused the minutes to fail to provide a true indication of the business of the September 11, 2023 Council Meeting which in turn confuses the record of the subsequent amendment of the September 11, 2023 motion at the September 18, 2023 City council meeting.

Therefore, given these findings, so as to be in compliance with 1 V.S.A. 312(b)(1). I move that the council amend its approval of the September 11, 2023 Council meeting minutes to correct the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Council meeting to provide a true indication of the business of the September 11, 2023 City council meeting reference to the findings of this motion (to be stated in full in the minutes of this meeting), and authorize the City clerk to annotate the record Approved Minutes of the September 11, 2023 Council meeting with a marginal note next to the entry under " Interview and discussion Regarding Potential Candidates for City manager Position 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3)" with the following: " The minutes of this entry were corrected at the City Council' May 19, 2025 Council meeting so that this entry reads: Mr. Wilson moved that 'we make the next City Manager Karen Geraghty', seconded by Mr. Vachon and the motion carried', See the minutes of the Council's May 19, 2025 Council meeting for the corrected record of Council action.

Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried unanimously.

Approval for Four Seasonal Hires and One Requested Personnel Change to Fill a Vacant City Position V.S.A. 313(a)(3), Executive Session

Mr. Touchette moved to enter executive session and invite the Director of Public Works into executive session. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Touchette moved to moved forward with the request for seasonal hires and a personnel change by Mr. Bernier. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Tiny Arts Project Proposal from NDD Volunteer Robin Midi

Robin Midi gave a presentation on the Tiny Arts Project which is meant to help revitalize downtown. Ms. Finegan moved to affirm the proposal and approve the project. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Overview of Fire Department Operations with Chief LaCoss

Chief LaCoss gave an overview of the Fire Department operations.

Task Force Reports

Mr. Monette gave a report on the Water/Sewer Task force. Focusing on Phase two including meters, staffing issues, contract with the town of Derby, and the budget process.

Ms. Finegan gave a report from the Financial Reporting and Fiscal Practices Task force, including the hiring of NEMRC, Line of Credit, and moving cash accounts to the General fund.

Ms. Finegan moved to close the following funds and move the money to the General Fund. Reappraisal Fund, Bike Path Fund, Vactor Sinking Fund, Tennis Court Fund, Coventry St. Sinking Fund, GP Restoration MPG 2013, Water Tower Sinking Fund, WTF Replacement Fund, Reservoir Cover Fund, WWTF Sinking Fund. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Task Force on Housing Insecurity, Public Encampments and Community Safety. Mr. Touchette moved to name Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council President Kevin Charboneau, Police Chief Travis Bingham, NECKA-Casey Winters, NKHS-Amber Robbins, AHS Director Chris Mitchell, Journey to Recovery- Lilla Bennett, Pastor Larry Wall, Travis Gaines, and Gabriella Stacey to the Housing Task Force. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Personnel, Possible Executive Session, 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(4)

Ms. Finegan moved to enter executive session for Personnel, 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(4). Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Touchette moved to terminate employment of Rebecca Therrien due to her inability to return to work with terms worked out with Mayor Ufford-Chase and councilman Touchette. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Review Financial and Office Administrator Job Description

Mr. Charboneau moved to approve the financial and Office Administrator Job description as presented by Mayor Ufford-chase and councilman Touchette. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Mr. Touchette moved to authorize a salary range of \$50,000 to \$60,000 with full benefits based on experience. Seconded by Mr. Carboneau, motion carried.

Public Comment

None

New Business

Ms. Finegan is in contact with the 250th Anniversary Committee. Education town Hall with Ally Howell Wednesday at the Eastside 5:30 pm

Old Business

Mayor Ufford-Chase spoke about the Sculpture Project. There are 10 designs that will be put up around the city. They are metal sculptures and will be back lite.

Memorial Day, Monday May 26, 2025. Parade at 10:00 am followed by a ceremony at Gardner Park.

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Charboneau moved to set the next meeting date for June 2, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried

Adjournment

Mr. Charboneau moved to adjourn at 8:34 pm. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Attested _____ this _____ Day of _____ 2025

_____ Mayor