

Council Minutes

July 21, 2025

A duly warned meeting of the Newport city council was held on Monday, July 21, 2025 in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council President Kevin Charboneau, council members John Monette, Andrew Touchette, Carter Finegan, City Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, David Laforce, and Stephanie Clark, Brian Gray, Denis Chenette, Paul Monette, Kari Schulze, members of the Press and Public.

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

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Mr. Touchette moved to add Liquor License applications from Eden Ice and Memphremagog Arts Collaborative. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Ms. Finegan moved to delete Item number 13 (Recommendation from the Planning Commission to appoint Paul Monette as a member of the commission) and invite comments to the Mayor in writing. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried. Mr. Monette abstained.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Monette moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Presentation by Stephanie Clark – White and Burke.

Stephanie Clark from White and Burke gave a presentation on the TIF exploration progress.

Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. sec 313(a)(2) for the Purpose of Receiving General Guidance from White and Burke Regarding potential Re3al Estate Considerations Related to Downtown Development Master Plan with Stephanie Clark from white & Burke, David Laforce NDD,EDTF, and Brian Gray NDD, EDC

Mr. Touchette moved to enter into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Monette moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with VHB in the amount of \$15,000 obtained from the WalMart Funds for planning and design services for downtown redevelopment

opportunities including site plans and identification of potential construction needs. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(2) for the Purpose of Considering Responses to Requests for proposals to support NDD and the city of Newport in Real Estate Negotiations Related to downtown Development.

Mr. Monette moved to enter into executive session and invite David LaForce and Brian Gray into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Touchette moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with Century 21 Farm and Forest to represent the City in real estate transactions for the development project. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Review finances with Chip Stearns from NEMRC

Chip Stearns reviewed the current balance sheet with the council.

Update from the Mayor and Treasurer on Preparations for the FY24/25 Audit

Mayor Ufford-Chase and City Treasurer Johnson reviewed with the council preparations and materials being provided to the auditors in preparation for the FY24/25 audit.

Task force Reports

Mr. Monette reviewed progress of the Water/Sewer Task force regarding the installation of Meters, and updating the Water/Sewer rates.

Ms. Finegan reviewed the progress of the Financial reporting and Fiscal Practices Task force regarding preparation of the August 12th Special Meeting. Including deficits in the General fund and Water and Sewer funds

Mr. Charboneau reviewed the progress of the Housing insecurity Task force including work on an ordinance for Housing Insecurity, Public Encampment and safety.

Mr. Touchette reported on the Fire Department Strategic Planning. Research being do in many areas.

Community Testimony: Personnel Policy

Members of the public gave comments and concerns on the Personnel Policy.

Executive session per 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) for the Purpose of Considering an offer to a Candidate for the Position of financial and Office Administrator

Mr. Touchette moved to enter into executive session and invite the candidate into executive session. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

No action

Mr. Touchette moved to authorize the Mayor to work with the City Attorney to draw up a contract for the position of Financial and Office Administrator and offer that to Kari Schulze with terms discussed by the council. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

Ms. Schulze offered a brief resume for the public.

Possible Review of proposed Language for Vendor Permit

Tabled

Formal Council Approval for the Revolving Loan Funding RFI-384-1.0 discussed at 2/17/25 Council meeting

Mr. Charboneau moved to approve and sign documents for RFI-384-1.0 in the amount of \$22,200. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Public Comments

Dave Laforce thanked the Mayor, council, Task Forces and employees for their hard work

New Business

Ms. Finegan commented on public forums for the use of public waters and the Bike Path (Beebe Spur)

Old Business

Public Forum Monday, July 28th on the August 12th special meeting.

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Touchette moved to set the next meeting for August 4, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Adjournment

Mr. Charboneau moved to adjourn at 9:07 pm. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Attested James Johnson This 4th Day of August 2025

R. P. [Signature] Mayor