

## **Council Minutes**

**September 15, 2025**

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, September 15, 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, Police Chief Travis Bingham, Jason Herman, Frank Cheney, Kari Schulze, members of the Press and Public.

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

### **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

None

### **Consent Agenda**

Minutes of 9/8/2025, AP Warrant of 9/12/2025

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

### **Consider Attorney Recommendation to Actuate Loan for Fire Truck (attached)**

Ms. Finegan moved that the council authorize the Mayor, acting on behalf of the City, to negotiate, enter into, execute, and deliver a lease purchase agreement, between the City and Municipal Leasing Consultants, its agents or assignee, along with a property schedule identifying the City's new fire truck and all other related documents necessary and incidental to the lease, on substantially the terms proposed via revised letter from MLC dated September 4, 2025, subject to the review of the City Attorney and approval of the Mayor, and that the council further authorize the City to perform its obligations thereunder. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

### **Wastewater Treatment Facility Discussion (attached)**

Treatment Plant Operator Jason Herman discussed the Odor problem with the council and public.

**Attestation for Newport Downtown Development (attached)**

Sarah Chadburn requested an attestation required by the state for downtown vibrancy funds.

Mr. Monette moved to approve the Municipal Letter of Attestation. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

**Recommendation from Newport Downtown Development Regarding Selecting a Real Estate Attorney for Potential TIF Related Projects (attached)**

Mr. Touchette moved to go ahead with the agreement to use MSK as our primary attorney for legal services regarding potential real estate negotiations for TIF. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

**Consider Candidate for Appointment to Development Review Board (attached)**

Mr. Charboneau moved to appoint David Kerr to the DRB to finish the term of Andrew Touchette. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

**Consider a Resolution to Recommit Newport city Resources as a Local Match for Construction of the Causeway Streetlight Project (attached)**

Mayor Ufford-Chase read the proposed resolution. Mr. Monette moved to approve the resolution as read. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

**Review Proposed Lease for Cameras for Police Vehicles**

Chief Bingham Discussed the lease of cameras for police vehicles from Axon Enterprise, Inc. Mr. Touchette moved to approve the signing of the contract with Axon Enterprise, Inc. Seconded by Mr. Charboneau, motion carried.

**Review of Finances: Balance Sheet, Actual to budget YTD**

Chip Stearns reviewed the budget status and balance sheets with the council.

**Action on Tax Rates Proposed by the Treasurer (attached)**

Mr. Johnson presented the FY 25-26 tax rates for approval. Mr. Monette moved to set the FY 25-26 tax rates as presented. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

The council did not waive the late filing fees.

**Task Force Reports**

Mr. Monette reported on the Water and Sewer Task force. Ms. Finegan reported on the Financial Reporting and fiscal Practices. Mr. Charboneau reported on Housing Insecurity, Public Encampments, and Community Safety. Mr. Touchette reported on the fire department Strategic planning.

**Public Comment**

None

**New Business**

Ms. Finegan commented on the Recreation Department Coin Drop.

**Old Business**

Mayor Ufford-Chase asked Ms. Finegan to bring spread sheets to the next meeting. Ms. Schulze is attending a conference on Municipal and State Governmental Finance at Jay Peak.

**Next Meeting Date**

Mr. Charboneau moved to set a Special Meeting for September 29, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Charboneau moved to adjourn at 8:15 pm. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Attested \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2025

 \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor



September 4, 2025 Revised

Rick Ufford-Chase  
Mayor  
City of Newport  
222 Main Street  
Newport, VT 05855

Dear Rick,

Municipal Leasing Consultants, an independent woman-owned business, is pleased to present the following proposal to lease certain capital equipment pursuant to the following terms and conditions:

**LESSOR:** Municipal Leasing Consultants, its Agents or Assignee

**LESSEE:** City of Newport, VT

**EQUIPMENT:** New Fire Truck

**EQUIPMENT COST:** \$875,000.00 approximate

**PAYMENT STRUCTURES:** Tax Exempt Lease Purchase  
Ten (10) Years – Annual/Arrears  
Ten (10) Annual Payments of \$107,788.76  
First payment of \$107,788.76 due 12/1/2025 and Annual thereafter  
(i.e.  $\$875,000.00 \times .123187 = \$107,788.76$ )

**RATE:** 4.77%

***If you decide to proceed with financing, please sign and date the proposal and return it within 7 days. This will allow for sufficient time for credit approval and to prepare documents for closing by October 3, 2025. Thereafter the rate will float.***

*As part of the proposal process, we encourage you to contact us to discuss the intricacies of our proposal and your specific goals. There are many variations available to our proposed financing structure, which can be "fine-tuned" as our dialog progresses.*

The preceding costs are estimates and thus, the payment amount would be changed in proportion to the actual cost. The Vendor(s) will be paid upon the Lessee's authorization and the execution of mutually acceptable documentation.

THE ABOVE QUOTES ARE FIXED FROM **SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 TO OCTOBER 3, 2025** IN ANTICIPATION OF **CLOSING / FUNDING** BY THIS DATE. THEREAFTER, THE RATE WILL FLOAT AND NOT BE LOCKED IN UNTIL DOCUMENTS ARE PREPARED FOR CLOSING AND WILL BE BASED ON THE LIKE TERM SWAP RATES.



Municipal  
Leasing  
Consultants



T: 802.372.8435 F: 802.372.4775  
powerofleasing.com  
powerofenergyfinancing.com

September 4, 2025

**Lease Application Form**

Lessee Legal Name: City of Newport, VT  
Contact: Rick Ufford-Chase Title: Mayor  
Address: 222 Main Street, Newport, VT 05855  
Phone: (802)334-5136 Fax: (802) Email: rick.ufford/chase@newportvermont.org

*NO HYPER*

- Person(s) authorized to sign documents and Title: *RICK UFFORD-CHASE, MAYOR*
- Phone: *845 608 4056* Fax: Email: *ABOVE*
- Person to attest signature on documents and Title: *JAMES JOHNSON, CLERK/TREASURER*
- Federal tax-exempt ID#: 03-6000595
- Have you issued, or do you intend to issue more than 10 million dollars (\$10,000,000.00) in tax-exempt debt in the current calendar year? *NO*
- Has the Municipality non-appropriated (ever defaulted on lease or loan)? *NO*
- When will Board meet to approve the financing? *9/15/25*

**Equipment / Vendor Information:**

Vendor Name: \*See attached vendor invoice  
Contact: Title:  
Address:  
Phone: Fax: Email:

- Equipment:
- Equipment location address:
- Age of current equipment:
- Is the new equipment a replacement, upgrade, or additional to the department?
- If replacement or upgrade, what is the age of the existing equipment?
- If upgrading existing equipment, is the equipment paid off?
- State whether the vehicles are replacing existing leases. If so, how many old leases will be left in the fleet and who is the Lessor?
- Equipment description: Fully explain the use of the equipment, including any specific department that may be its primary user:
- Projected funding date:
- Projected delivery date:
- Total equipment cost:
- Provide purchase order/invoice or details on equipment

- Down payment or Trade:
- Financing term selected:
- Payment mode:
- Advance or arrears: First Payment due
- From which fund will the financing payments be made?
- Will any loan or grant monies be used to make the payments?
- Have funds been appropriated for the payments due on the proposed financing during the current budgetary period?
- Credit rating:
- Fiscal Year End:

***Insurance Information (to provide insurance certificate for closing)***

Insurance company:

Insurance agency:

Agency contact:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

***Attorney Information (to review and prepare opinion of counsel)***

Legal Firm:

Attorney's name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

***Request for Documents:***

*Please provide legible copies of all requested documents so we may expedite the lease application and credit approval process. Our experienced staff will do everything possible to help you get the best terms and financing for your purchase. We appreciate your business!*

Submitted by:		Title:	
Signature:		Date:	



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Leasing  
Consultants



T: 802.372.8435  
F: 802.372.4775  
powerofleasing.com  
powerofenergyfinancing.com

## INVOICE

September 4, 2025

Rick Ufford-Chase  
Mayor  
City of Newport  
222 Main Street  
Newport, VT 05855

Dear Rick,

RE: Financing Fire Truck

Documentation / Commitment Fee: \$950.00  
Escrow Fee: \$650.00  
Total: \$1600.00

\*Payment due within 30 days of closing or a \$50.00 late fee will be assessed.

Please remit payment to:   Municipal Leasing Consultants  
7 Old Town Lane  
Grand Isle, VT 05458  
Attn: Renéé M. Piché

*Please mark envelope "Confidential"*

Thank you

# New England Fire Equipment & Apparatus Corporation

10 Stillman Road  
North Haven, CT 06473  
Tel: 203-239-5678

# INVOICE

DATE	INVOICE #
9/8/2025	29993

BILL TO
Newport City FD 222 Main Street Newport, VT 05855

SHIP TO
Newport City FD 222 Main Street Newport, VT 05855

P.O. NUMBER	TERMS	REP	VIA	JOB NUMBER
	Net 30	LMF	UPS	

QUANTITY	ITEM CODE	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	AMOUNT
1	SPARTAN	Pumper/Tanker on our Chassis	796,850.00	796,850.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #order entry	-11,180.00	-11,180.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #1	99,999.00	99,999.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #2	0.00	0.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #3	0.00	0.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #4	966.00	966.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #5	-7,208.00	-7,208.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #6	1,495.00	1,495.00
1	Change Order	Change Order #9	-10,063.00	-10,063.00
1	Change Order	Change Order # 10	-2,411.00	-2,411.00
1	Change Order	Change Order # 11	0.00	0.00

Thank You for Choosing New England Fire.

**Total**

**\$868,448.00**

## Wastewater facility odor concerns

I am aware of an ongoing odor issue at the wastewater facility. This is something that has been an issue since before I started as chief operator. The primary source of this odor is our sludge storage tank. The tank has a capacity of 700,000 gallons and is currently approximately holding 250-300,000 gallons of sludge. The odor is caused by the inability to digest our wastewater sludge.

Wastewater sludge is the residual byproduct of wastewater treatment. Sludge is typically wasted from the treatment system through settling and then pumped to digesters where it is then broken down and then dried via a sludge press before ultimately being disposed of at the landfill.

Our facility was designed for anaerobic digestion. Anaerobic digestion is a biological process where microorganisms in the absence of oxygen break down waste and produce biogas i.e. methane. The rate of this process increases by adding heat to the digester tanks. Unfortunately, we no longer have the ability to heat our digesters because we have no proper way of disposing of the methane that is created by doing so.

Originally there was a methane flare in place that would allow excess methane to be burned off into the atmosphere. This was removed several years ago from my understanding due to operational issues. Furthermore, the boilers and heat exchangers that would be used to heat the sludge are also no longer operational. What this means is we are essentially storing and processing raw material. Not only does this create an odor issue, but it also requires us to process more sludge as digestion reduces solids by as much as 50%. This means our current sludge press is operating 24/7 to try to keep up with the sludge being produced.

In order to try and mitigate this issue, we hired a private contractor in 2023 to come and process our sludge, so the storage tank would be empty, ridding ourselves of the source. Unfortunately, that is only a temporary solution and is quite expensive.

We have tried chemical addition to our storage tank to increase the p.h. which in theory would help inhibit the activity of odor causing bacteria, however we had no success. We have also installed a biofilter to help reduce the odor within the facility and have had some success, however, not enough to reduce the overall odor in the atmosphere around the facility.

I can assure you we are striving to operate our facility the best we can within the constraints of our current infrastructure. Ultimately there is no quick, inexpensive fix for this issue, and the overall condition of the facility should be considered as aging/inadequate equipment is the ultimate cause of this sort of problem.



September 9, 2025

**To:** Newport City Council

**From:** Brian Gray, Economic Development Coordinator, Newport Downtown Development

**Subject:** Acceptance of Proposal from MSK Attorneys for Real Estate Representation

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to formally recommend that the City of Newport accept the proposal submitted by MSK Attorneys to represent the City in all matters related to real estate transactions and property development.

MSK Attorneys bring a strong track record of municipal representation, particularly in complex real estate issues, and have demonstrated a clear understanding of Newport's development goals and legal landscape. Their proposal outlines a comprehensive approach to supporting the City's interests in property acquisition, disposition, permitting, and related negotiations.

Given the ongoing revitalization efforts downtown and the increasing complexity of real estate matters including those involving TIF districts, public-private partnerships, and stakeholder coordination, I believe MSK Attorneys are well-positioned to provide the legal guidance Newport requires.

I respectfully request that the Council approve MSK Attorneys as the City's legal representative for real estate matters and authorize Newport Downtown Development to proceed with finalizing the engagement.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Newport's development initiatives.

Sincerely,

Brian Gray

Economic Development Coordinator - NDD

# Memo

**To:** Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase and the Newport City Council  
**From:** Frank Cheney Zoning Administrator  
**Date:** September 12, 2025  
**RE:** Developmental Review Board Appointment

## **Newport City Developmental Review Board**

Agathe Coburn, Chair  
Jay Walsh, Vice Chair  
Patrick Hurley, Secretary  
Denis Chenette  
Melissa Pettersson  
Laurie Grimm  
Vacant seat

The Newport City Development Review Board and Frank Cheney, Zoning Administrator, are pleased to be able to recommend to the Newport City Council the appointment of David Kerr to fill the vacant seat currently existing on the board. If appointed Mr. Kerr would serve out the remainder of Andrew Touchette's term which was scheduled to end in 2026. David would be a wonderful addition to our group, and we look forward to working with him in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Frank Cheney

**RESOLUTION  
CITY OF NEWPORT, VERMONT  
NBRC19GVT10 – MAIN STREET/GARDNER PARK ROAD INTERSECTION AND STREETLIGHT  
IMPROVEMENTS**

*Whereas*, the City Council of Newport, Vermont intends to update traffic signals and streetlights on Main Street between Gardner Park Road and East Main Street.

*Whereas* the City has completed final design plans and commenced construction of this capital improvement project.

*Whereas* the estimated costs associated with these improvements have increased since original cost estimates were prepared.

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:***

That Rick Ufford Chase, Mayor, is hereby authorized to submit a Contract Amendment to the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) requesting approval of a revised Project Cost Estimate and Local Match Commitment for Grant Number NBRC19GVT10

That the City Council does hereby approve a Revised Project Cost Estimate of \$1,732,306.01 for the Main Street/Gardner Park Road traffic signal and streetlight improvements.

That the City Council does hereby commit Cash, Municipal Department of Public Works Labor and Equipment as a local match for construction of the traffic signal and streetlight improvements as follows:

Materials (Cash)	\$ 991,536.01
DPW Labor	\$ 185,566.00
DPW Equipment	<u>\$ 185,567.00</u>
Total Commitment	\$1,362,669.01

Signed at Newport, Vermont this 15 day of September 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Ufford-chase, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Charboneau, Council President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carter Finegan

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Monette

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew Touchette

To: Mayor  
 City Council  
 Finance and Office Administrator

September 12, 2025

From: City Treasurer

The 2025-26 Tax Rates are based on a Grand List of 3,283,443.00 a voter approved budget of \$5,487,700.20, voter approved Appropriations of \$219,305.00 and exemptions of \$37,115.25.

	2024-25		2025-26	
	Residential		Residential	
Municipal	1.5419	Municipal	1.6714	
Appropriations	.0525	Appropriations	.0668	
Exempt	.0225	Exempt	.0113	
Education	1.7677	Education	1.7753	
Total	3.3846	total	3.5248	.14
	Non-Residential		Non-Residential	
Municipal	1.5419	Municipal	1.6714	
Appropriations	.0525	Appropriations	.0668	
Exempt	.0225	Exempt	.0113	
Education	1.8276	Education	1.8706	
Total	3.4445	Total	3.6201	.175

The council may vote to waive all homestead late filling fees for FY 25-26 tax bills. This is handled by recalculating before printing bills. It does not alter amounts to be raised by the rates.