

Special Council Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2026

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, March 9, 2026 in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council members Sharon Pare, John Monette, Andrew Touchette, Carter Finegan, City Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, Financial and Office Administrator Kari Schulze, City Attorney David Rugh, Chip Stearns from NEMRC, members of the Press and Public.

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

The Mayor noted that public comment has been moved nearer to the beginning of the agenda, and persons wishing to speak should come to the microphone.

Additions/Deletions

None

Consent Agenda, Minutes of 3/2/26, 3/3/26, AP Warrant 3/6/26

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

Public Comment on Items not listed on the Agenda

Ann Chiarello commented on cash funds and city obligations.

Elect New Council President

Mr. Touchette moved to elect Carter Finegan, Council President. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

All other appointment will be made in April.

Approval of Bond Bank Resolution and Authorization to Sign Documents

City Attorney Dave Rugh reviewed the Vermont Bond Bank East Side Water Project Loan Documents for the \$2,603,000 with the council.

Mr. Touchette moved to approve the Resolution and Certificate for the \$2,603,000 East Side Water Project bond issuance and to authorize the Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase and Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, to sign any documents necessary or advisable for that purpose. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Ms. Finegan moved to authorize Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase and Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson, to sign documents on the City's behalf that are necessary or advisable to complete the Vermont bond Bank loan for the \$2,603,000 East Side Water Project and to submit forms to requisition loan funds as needed. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Discussion Regarding Attorney Advice on Crime Insurance Coverage

The council discussed with Attorney Rugh crime insurance thru VLCT and individual bonding. Attorney Rugh stated that the VLCT crime insurance policy is more than sufficient and that the city did not have to purchase individual insurance.

Ms. Finegan moved not to purchase individual bonds and to move forward with the VLCT Crime Policy for elected and appointed city employees who handle funds. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Discussion Regarding New Credit Card

The council discussed the new credit card status with Bank of America.

Review of Finances with Chip Stearns

Chip Stearns from NEMRC reviewed with the council, the General Ledger Due/to Due /from Report, General Ledger Balance Sheet, and Budget Status Report.

Task Force Reports

Water/Sewer, Mr. Monette reported they are looking at Revenue and Expenses, updating the water ordinance, water meters, and connection fee language.

Financial Reporting and Fiscal Practices, Ms. Finegan reported the RFP for the audit is nearly ready and they are looking at next year's budget process and priority based budgeting.

Fire Department Strategic Planning, Mr. Touchette, no report.

Replace Housing Insecurity with the City Manager search committee starting next council meeting.

New Business

Ms. Finegan, Gardner Park Grant is nearing completion.

Old Business

Mr. Johnson, noted the school is looking at April 14th for the budget re-vote.
Mayor Ufford-Chase stated they have decided to let the Charter set for now.

Set Next Meeting Date

Ms. Finegan moved to set the next meeting for March 16, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Adjournment

Mr. Monette moved to adjourn at 8:20 pm. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Attested James D. Johnson this 16th day of March 2026

PLU Mayor