

Council Minutes

April 20, 2026

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, April 20, 2026 in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council President Carter Finegan, council members Sharon Pare', John Monette, Andrew Touchette, Financial and Office Administrator Kari Schulze, City Clerk/Treasurer James D. Johnson, PW Director Tom Bernier, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer Stacey Therrien, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer Robyn Churchill, Chip Stearns from NEMRC, members of the Press and Public

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

Additions/Deletions

Ms. Finegan would like to add the NEMRC contract with Chip Stearns after the financial review.

Consent Agenda – Minutes of 4/9/26, AP Warrants 4/10/26,4/17/26, PR Warrants 4/14/26, Liquor licenses and Vendor Permits

Ms. Chiarello would like to change the minutes of April 9, 2026 to reflect the exact language in the motion on the City Manager's job description

Ms. Pare' moved to remove the minutes of April 9, 2026 until the next meeting. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

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

Appreciation for Stacey Therrien.

City Clerk/Treasurer James Johnson expressed his appreciation to Stacey for her 20+ years of serve in the City clerk's Office. Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase expressed his and the council appreciation for her years of service to the City of Newport. Stacey was presented a picture of the City signed by members of the City staff.

Public Comment

Ann Chiarello would like to know early about things that are going on in the city and at the state before executive session.

Laurie Grimm commented on Act 250 and Act 181

Review of Finances

Chip Stearns reviewed with the council the following reports, General Ledger due to/ due from report , current year Balance Sheets, and the current year Budget Status Report.

Mr. Monette moved to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign a new contract with NEMRC for 96 hours at \$110 dollars per hour. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Determine Process for Review of Newport Downton Development Memorandum of Understanding – to be facilitated by Council President Carter Finegan.

Mr. Monette moved to have Ms. Pare' and Mr. Touchette meet with members of NDD to discuss changes if any to the MOU and come back to the council. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Recognition of Council Determination that bonds are Unnecessary for Council Members

On March 1, 2024 the council required that each member of the city council bond for \$100,000 and the Mayor bond for \$500,000. Mr. Monette moved that the requirement that the council and mayor obtain bonds be rescinded. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Reviewing Stanstead's Resolution 25-11-116

Ms. Finegan is working on a resolution to send to the state regarding Lake Memphremagog Water Quality due to releasing leachate into the lake. This resolution would be in support of Stanstead's resolution 25-11-116. The council should have meetings with Cascella, ANR, and the Canadian group respectively. Mr. Touchette moved to have Ms. Finegan work on a plan to continue a deep dive into the issue. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Task Force Reports

Water/Sewer, Mr. Monette noted a change replacing the connection fee with a quarterly water base rate and a quarterly usage rate. A sewer quarterly base rate and a quarterly usage rate.

Mr. Monette moved to amend the language on the bills to reflect this change. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried. They are working on an ordinance to regulate meters.

FRFP,

Ms. Finegan noted that they are planning the first budget conversation and will get the word out on a flyer in the water bills.

Rick Special Town Meeting June 1, 2026. The Manager Search committee's goal is to have application out by May 1st. and hire a manager by the end of July, beginning of August

Fire,

Presentation to the council on May 18, 2026.

New Business

Ms. Finegan announced the Bike Rodeo will be on June 6, 2026 at Prouty Beach.

Old Business

Kate Stallman noted the Forage fest on May 16, 2026.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Bernier for facilitating the Merit ^{Pare} Grant.

The Mayor Mr. Touchette and Chief Bingham are working with John Klesh on the Police contract.

Next Meeting Date

Ms. Finegan moved to set the next meeting for May 4, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Monette, motion carried.

Adjournment

Ms. Finegan moved to adjourn at 8:20PM. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Attested _____ this _____ Day _____ of May, 2026

 _____ Mayor

PROTECTION OF LAKE MEMPHREMAGOG FROM LEACHATE ORIGINATING FROM THE COVENTRY, VERMONT LANDFILL

Resolution to prohibit the discharge of landfill leachate, treated or not, anywhere in the Memphremagog Watershed

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, Lake Memphremagog is a natural and cultural jewel of the NEK, shared between the United States and Canada, and plays a fundamental environmental, cultural, economic, and social role for the surrounding communities;

WHEREAS, any discharge of contaminants within the Lake Memphremagog watershed poses a potential threat to the City of Newport's drinking water Source Protection Area (SPA), including waters that flow into the Black River, a tributary that runs directly through the City's designated Source Protection Area, the City's primary drinking water source;

WHEREAS, the lake is a shared international water body and an essential drinking water source for over 185,000 neighbors in Quebec, requiring responsible stewardship and protection;

WHEREAS, this landfill generates significant amounts of leachate, containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS or "forever chemicals"); and other toxic and hazardous pollutants;

WHEREAS, the discharge of this leachate into the Lake Memphremagog watershed has been prohibited by an Act 250 moratorium since November 1, 2019;

WHEREAS, upon the expiration of the current moratorium, leachate could once again be discharged into the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

WHEREAS, numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that landfill leachate contains high concentrations of heavy metals, PFAS, volatile organic compounds, and other emerging contaminants that are not fully removed by PFAS filtration systems or conventional wastewater treatment processes;

WHEREAS, the discharge of leachate, treated or not, into the Lake Memphremagog watershed poses a serious risk to public health, notably due to the persistent presence of toxic and hazardous pollutants such as arsenic, cadmium, volatile organic compounds, and PFAS, a large family of thousands of chemical substances recognized as being harmful to human health including cancer, immune system disruption, and numerous chronic disorders;

WHEREAS, treating leachate within the Lake Memphremagog watershed raises serious environmental, health, and ethical concerns, particularly as it could facilitate a new expansion of

facility or at any other existing or future location within the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

WHEREAS, elected officials on both sides of the border share a duty of mutual respect and shared responsibility in preserving the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Newport City Council expresses its support for and urges the Vermont Legislature and the Governor to enact legislation in the 2027 session to provide permanent protection for the waters of the Lake Memphremagog watershed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Newport affirms its commitment to protecting the health of its residents, the integrity of the local environment, and the long-term sustainability of the lake that defines our community.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Signed: _____

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE TABLE DE CONCERTATION DES ÉLUS DU LAC MEMPHRÉMAGOG ON THE COVENTRY FILE

The Table de concertation des élus du lac Memphrémagog is made up of political representatives from the City of Sherbrooke, the MRC of Memphrémagog, the provincial ridings of Orford and Sherbrooke, as well as the federal ridings of Compton-Stanstead, Sherbrooke and Brome-Missisquoi. The objectives of this committee are to develop a regional force for the protection of the lake, as well as synergy between the different levels of government for concerted interventions.

WHEREAS Lake Memphremagog is a key part of the cultural identity of the Eastern Townships and a natural gem, shared between Canada and the United States which plays a fundamental environmental, cultural, economic and social role for the riverside communities and the region as a whole;

WHEREAS the municipalities of Sherbrooke, Magog, Potton and Saint-Benoît-du-Lac obtain their public drinking water from Lake Memphremagog which represents more than 200,000 people, and that the municipalities of Austin, the Township of Stanstead and Ogden are located in its immediate vicinity;

WHEREAS the only landfill site in the State of Vermont is located at the head of Lake Memphremagog in the city of Coventry, and the lake flows from south to north from the United States to Canada;

WHEREAS Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 states: *"It is further agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other."*

WHEREAS this landfill generates significant quantities of leachate, containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds (PFAS or eternal pollutants) and other toxic pollutants;

WHEREAS the MRC of Memphrémagog and the cities of Magog and Sherbrooke formally opposed, as early as 2004, the treatment of leachate from the Coventry landfill at the Newport municipal wastewater treatment plant;

WHEREAS this objection led to a prohibition relating to the treatment of leachate at the Newport Wastewater Treatment Plant for the period 2004 to 2009;

WHEREAS the discharge of leachate, treated or not, into the Lake Memphremagog watershed has been prohibited again since July 23, 2019, after the sustained involvement of a group of stakeholders, which includes municipal and government agencies, but also interest groups, including Memphremagog Conservation (MCI) and Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity (DUMP);

WHEREAS in 2020, a committee integrating regionally elected officials from the 3 levels of government was created to share expertise and coordinate the political pathways to be taken on this file as well as to speak with one voice to increase the reach of the positions adopted;

- To the Chair of the Environment Committee, Amy Sheldon;
- to Meaghan Sunderland, Consul – Head of Public Affairs, Political and Economic Relations for the Consulate General of Canada in Boston;
- Julie Morre, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)
- Municipalities bordering Lake Memphremagog and neighboring MRC's;
- To the Quebec Ministry of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks;
- To the organizations DUMP and MCI.



Mr. Gilles Bélanger
Member of Parliament for Orford

Mr. Louis Villeneuve, Member of Parliament for Brome Missisquoi
The Honorable Élisabeth Brière, Member of Parliament for Sherbrooke
Mariane Dandurand, députée fédérale de Compton Stanstead
Christine Labrie, Member of Provincial Parliament for Sherbrooke
Marie-Claude Bibeau, Mayor of Sherbrooke
Nathalie Pelletier, Mayor of Magog
Mrs. Lisette Maillé, Mayor of Austin
Mr. Jacques Demers, Prefect of the MRC Memphremagog

February 24, 2026

TO: Newport City Council
FROM: Water-Sewer Task Force
DATE: April 16, 2026
RE: Terminology used on water-sewer bills

The Task Force has discussed the questions that have arisen concerning confusion over use of the word "connection" on the water-sewer bills issued with regard to metered accounts.

Rather than using the descriptions of "sewer connection fee" and "water connection fee", the Task Force recommends that the Council approve the following:

1. Regarding water, as Article 8 of the existing water ordinance uses the terms "Quarterly Water Base Rate" and "Quarterly Water Use Rate", use of those terms on the bill form is recommended for consistency with the ordinance and elimination of use of the word "connection."
2. Regarding sewer, the existing ordinance refers to all charges pertaining to sewer in total as "sewer rent." Within that category, the ordinance allows creation of separate charges for categories of fixed and variable costs. Thus, the recommendation is that the terms "Quarterly Sewer Base Rate" and "Quarterly Sewer Use Rate" be utilized. Elimination of use of the word "connection" is also appropriate because the term "Connection Fee" is specifically defined and used in the sewer ordinance with regard to initial hookups to the system.

Please let the Task Force know if there are any questions concerning these recommendations.

Thank you.