

Council Minutes

May 4, 2026

A duly warned meeting of the Newport City Council was held on Monday, May 4, 2026 in the council room in the Newport Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Rick Ufford-Chase, Council President Carter Finegan, council members John Monette, Sharon Pare', Andrew Touchette, City Clerk/Treasurer James D. Johnson, Financial and Office Administrator Kari Schulze, PW Director Tom Bernier, Chip Stearns, David LaForce, Stephanie Clark, Brian Gray, and Police Chief Travis Bingham by phone, members of the Press and Public.

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

Addition/Deletions

None

Consent Agenda

Minutes of 4/9/26 and 4/20/26

AP Warrants of 4/24/26, 4/30/26, 5/1/26

PR Warrant of 4/29/26

Liquor Licenses for Memphremagog Maritime, Eagles, Cumberland Farms, Le Belvedere, Eastside Restaurant, Tavern on the Hill.

Vendor Permits for Mexivican, Buggy's Breakfast

Mr. Touchette approved the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Public comment on Items not on the Agenda

Teresa Gerade commented on the Leachate Resolution and Water quality info from Kelley Grayson

Report from Joshua House: Request for Letter of Support for State Funding Application

Victoria LaGaurdia gave an update on Joshua House and requested a letter of support for state funding.

Mr. Monette move to authorize the Mayor on behalf of the council, to sign a letter of support for the Joshua House project. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. sec 313(a) (2) for the Purpose of Receiving Sensitive Information from NDD and White and Burke Real Estate Matters Related to Potential Development in Downtown Newport

Ms. Finegan moved to enter into executive session per 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a) (2). Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Mr. Monette moved to come out of executive session. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

No action.

Stephanie White from White and Burke, David LaForce and Brian Gray from NDD gave an update on Newport's Economic Development, the TIF process and funding thru grant applications from NBRC (3,000,000) and the Federal government (9,000,000) and the possibility of a public gathering in late June or early July.

Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory

Mr. Touchette moved to approve the certification. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Discussion Regarding Opportunity to Purchase a Vector Truck

Discussion on the purchase of the truck continues. Chip Stearns felt it probably would not be possible due to the fact the city will be short funds from July 1, 2026 until taxes are collected on September 15, 2026.

Update on Process of Negotiating a New Memorandum of Understanding with Newport Downtown Development.

Ms. Pare' noted the original MOU was dated December 16, 2024. Working on Updating and revising the MOU. It will be ready to present to the council on May 18, 2026. Ahead of the end of June deadline.

Council Action to Approve June 1, 2026 to Include a Special Budget Meeting: Newport Fiscal Vision'28

Ms. Finegan moved to hold a Special Newport City Town Meeting on June 1, 2026 at the Gateway starting at 5:30 PM. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Task Force Reports

Mr. Monette noted that the Clerk's office has received the memo relating to the billing language (connection fee). They are still working on the ordinance.

Ms. Finegan stated that the FRFP task Force will meet on Wednesday.

Mr. Touchette stated the City Manager job description has been and posted

Mr. Touchette stated that Fire Department Strategic Planning will have a report tom present at the May 18, 2026 meeting

Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a) (3) Regarding Benefit Adjustment for a PD Employee

Mr. Touchette moved to enter executive session regarding benefit adjustment for a PD employee and invite Chief Bingham and possible Officer Morin into the session. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Mr. Monette moved to come out of executive session. Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

No Action.

Mr. Monette moved that the agreement between the city and employee that was formulated by the City Attorney concerning the VEMERS issue be approved. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Executive Session per 1 V.S. A. sec. 313(a) (3) Regarding Review of Employee Salary

Mr. Monette moved to enter executive session per 1 V.S.A. sec. 313(a) (3). Seconded by Mr. Touchette, motion carried.

Mr. Touchette moved to come out of executive session. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

No action.

Mr. Monette moved that the Clerk/Treasurers recommendation regarding employee salaries be approved. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

New Business

None

Old Business

Ms. Finegan still researching and looking for educational material on leachate before signing the Leachate Resolution. Ms. Pare' felt that there is no need to wait. We should sign the resolution to show support and still continue to gather info.

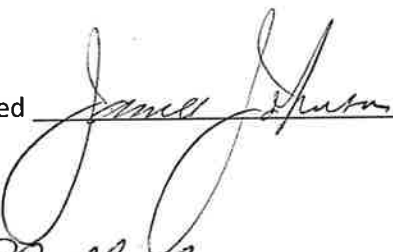
Ms. Pare' moved that the Newport City Council support the resolution to prohibit the discharge of landfill leachate treated or not within the boundaries of the City of Newport. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Set Next Meeting Date

Mr. Monette moved to set the next meeting for May 18, 2026. Seconded by Ms. Finegan, motion carried.

Adjournment

Ms. Finegan moved to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Seconded by Ms. Pare', motion carried.

Attested  this 18th 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 portion of the Memphremagog Watershed within the boundaries of the City of Newport.

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 4th day of MAY, 2026.

Signed: _____

Ryford Chase

MAYOR