



Town Council Regular Session

July 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Town Council Chambers

MINUTES

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Conley convened the meeting at 7:08 PM. Councilor White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion: Councilor White made a motion to seal the July 19, 2023 non-public meeting minutes.

Second: Councilor Blackstone

Vote: Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Katanna Conley, Vice-chair Brian Ward, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Joe LaMattina, Councilor Colin White, Councilor Sonke Dornblut, Councilor Justin Glazebrook

Staff Present: Town Manager Stephen Fournier and Wendy Chase, Recording Secretary

3. Public Forum

Chair Conley opened the public forum at 7:10 PM.

There was no one from the public in attendance.

Chair Conley closed the public forum at 7:10: PM.

4. Town Council to Consider Acceptance of Minutes

a. June 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Councilor Dornblut made a motion to approve the June 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Second: Councilor Glazebrook

Discussion: Councilor Ward noted that the unanimously approved vote of Resolution #2022/2023-48 Cable Franchise Agreement was incorrect. Councilor White voted against the motion to approve it.

Vote: Unanimously Approved as amended (7-0-0)

5. Report of the Town Manager

a. Town Manager Report July 19, 2023

Sewer Main Break off of Bay Road under the Lamprey Riverbed: The forcemain break was repaired on Saturday, July 15. It is uncertain how long it will

last, but it gives time to figure out a more permanent solution. Town Manager Fournier commended the Environmental Services Department for working tirelessly to get the main fixed.

FY23 Financials: June is the end of the fiscal year. 89% of the budget has been expended. That number will change because there is one payroll not reflected in the number and some year-end invoices that need to be paid. Revenues are healthy. Motor vehicle registrations continue to be below anticipated figures, but building permits are 401% above what was anticipated.

Citizen Survey: The online citizen survey has been completed. There were 451 responses. There will be a presentation at the August meeting.

Suspension of Rules on Resolution #2023/2024-03: The Municipal Budget Committee added \$50,000 to the operating budget to be added to the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund last year. It was explained at that time that the Council could transfer those funds to other departments; a recommendation was made to implement the salary survey and to correct salaries that were not in alignment and to put that amount into the merit pool in order to correct salaries. Councilor LaMattina commented that the intent of the Budget Committee adding the \$50,000 had to do with leasing fire vehicles. Town Manager Fournier said that it was explained to the Budget Committee and at the Deliberative Session that the money for leasing vehicles is already in the operating budget, so there is enough money to pay off the leases on fire equipment. The Council didn't recommend the added funds being implemented, so this is a good way to implement the changes to the budget.

Chair Conley asked if there were conversations about a more permanent solution to repair the forcemain off of Bay Road. Town Manager Fournier said that one scenario is to obtain easements through the Bryant Rock area to put the main through over the foot-bridge instead of in the river, then go through the Nemarket Mills properly. They did discover issues with the bridge that will have to be addressed first. It will most likely take place in a year or two.

b. Department Reports - June 2023

Chair Conley commented on the Police Chief's report and appreciates the emphasis on community policing and the mental health work they do. She appreciates the stance they are taking on mental health issues. Town Manager Fournier said a lot of our departments have extremely professional and educated staff.

6. Committee Reports

Councilor Ward reported on the July 13th Conservation Commission meeting:

The Commission was supposed to hear a presentation from Casella Waste Management but they were unable to attend. They discussed briefly the Lamprey River Advisory Committee's (LRAC) letter to NH DES and the NH DES response letter to LRAC regarding the water quality issues in the Lamprey River.

Councilor Blackstone reported on the July 11th Planning Board meeting:

The Planning Board received an application for a 55+ Community building proposed to be built on South Main Street. There will be a site walk at the location on July 29th at 8:30am to demonstrate the location of the building and landscaping. There will be a balloon displayed depicting the height of the proposed building. The Depot at Rockingham Junction is owned by a Newfields resident. He has submitted an application to move the building because the foundation is on some kind of hydraulic pressure. The building will be used for office space. The Planning Board granted approval. Town Manager Fournier pointed out that the town boundary marker is in the basement of the building. Councilor Blackstone confirmed that the Planning Board was aware of that fact.

Councilor Glazebrook reported on the July 11th Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission meeting:

The Commission has applied for a grant to put a pocket park in front of the Willey House on Main Street with murals and tables to sit at. There is interest from the commission to meet with the Town Council at a workshop to discuss community engagement.

Councilor Ward said that he met with Town Manager Fournier and Multi-media Director Tim Cremen and they are trying to schedule interviews with Town Councilors to discuss different topics and air those interviews on Channel 13..

7. Old Business

8. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 2nd Reading

a. Resolution #2022/2023-50 - Town Hall Cabling Work

Motion: **Councilor Ward** made a motion to approve Resolution #2022/2023-50 - Town Hall Cabling Work

Second: **Councilor LaMattina**

Discussion: Town Manager Fournier explained that there are significant issues with the network cabling in town hall. The proposed resolution, if approved, allows an upgrade to the network system that will increase speed. It is very important for financial software for security reasons.

Vote: **Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)**

9. Town Council to Consider Nominations, Appointments, and Elections

a. Joshua Skovlund - Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission - transferring from full member to alternate member- Term Expiration - April 2026

Motion: **Councilor Dornblut** made a motion to Appoint Joshua Skovlund to the Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission as an Alternate Member with a term expiration of April 2026.

Second: **Councilor LaMattina**

Discussion: Joshua Skovlund is a full Commission Member and is requesting to step down and become an alternate member.

Vote: **Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)**

- b. Jamie Knauer - Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission - Term Expiration April 2024

Motion: **Councilor Glazebrook** made a motion to Appoint Jamie Knauer to the Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission with a term expiration of April 2024.

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

Vote: **Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)**

10. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 1st Reading

- a. Resolution #2023/2024-01 Annual Lease Payment for Two International Dump Trucks with Plow Equipment

Chair Conley read Resolution #2023/2024-01 into the record.

- b. Resolution #2023/2024-02 Paving Improvements

Chair Conley read Resolution #2023/2024-02 into the record.

- c. Resolution #2023/2024-03 Transferring \$50,000 from Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Contribution to Merit Pool (*Town Manager Requests Suspension of the Rules*)

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to Suspend the Rules to allow Resolution #2023/2024-03 to be voted on without a Second Reading.

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

Vote: **Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)**

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to Approve Resolution #2023/2024-03 Transferring \$50,000 from Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Contribution to Merit Pool

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

Discussion: Councilor Ward commented that the Budget Committee was clear on what they wanted the money to be used for. Town Manager explained that vehicles have been getting more expensive, so the town has been leasing vehicles and leased items should be included in the operating budget. He understands the Budget Committee didn't think there would be enough money in the capital reserve fund for fire equipment, so they added \$50,000 to the budget. Town Manager Fournier said there is more than enough money in the capital reserve fund to pay for any leases that we have. At the time, the Town Manager suggested adding \$50,000 to the merit pool to help increase the salaries for non-union personnel. The Charter states the Town Manager sets the salaries.

Vote: **Unanimously Approved (7-0-0)**

11. New Business/Correspondence

- a. Correspondence to the Town Council

- i. Email from Maria & Jose Ramos - Flags

Town Manager Fournier read the letter, via email from Maria and Jose Ramos addressing concerns they have about flying a flag other than the American flag on town flag poles. They request "moving forward, the town displays only the American flag, the one we pledge allegiance to, as well as state, town and military flags exclusively, not the flavor of the month".

Councilor Ward said it shouldn't be divisive or political to be inclusive. He disagrees that inclusion is a "flavor of the month". He said as a Councilor and citizen, flying the Pride flag demonstrates this town's politics. To each their own and to all people created equal.

Councilor LaMattina agreed with Councilor Ward. He commented that there is no flag flying policy for the town and asked that the Town Manager create one and hoped that the policy would include all people.

Councilor Dornblut appreciated Councilor Ward's comments. He commented on the Pride flag and said it's a good message the town sends that we are an inclusive community and we're proud of it.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the flag at Arbor Park has a floodlight so it may be flown 24 hours per day. When taking down the arbor at Arbor Park, the floodlight came down; the flag was removed until the lighting was fixed. The Pride flag was flying solo for that period of time.

Chair Conley appreciates that the flag flies under the rules and is being respected. She is proud that Newmarket has agreed to become an inclusive community. She also agrees a policy should be put in place to guide making decisions as to what goes on the flagpole.

b. Closing Comments by Town Councilors

Councilor Dornblut said that he, the Chair and Town Manager received communication from COAST transit inviting the town to a community meeting to find out how COAST can better serve the community. The meeting has not been scheduled yet. He suggested the Councilors have a conversation about transportation, especially since Wildcat Transit discontinued Route 5 to Durham.

Councilor LaMattina would like to know when the meeting is because the Energy & Environment Committee have been discussing how to improve transportation.

Councilor LaMattina suggested reserving a table at the Backyard Bash advertising the Board/Committee vacancies. Councilor Ward said he would participate. Town Manager Fournier will check with the Recreation Director to find out how to reserve a spot.

Town Manager Fournier said that he should be receiving the preliminary program and space needs for the facilities study on August 7th and the final report and draft cost estimates by the end of August. He also said that the North Gateway is currently being worked on, by way of making zoning changes. The consultants are no longer active.

Councilor Glazebrook inquired about a work session with the Arts, Culture and Tourism Commission regarding community involvement. Discussion ensued on creating a subcommittee with members from each board/committe/commission to help formulate some kind of community engagement approach.

Town Manager Fournier stated that the Charter states that the Town Council shall meet with the chairs of the board/committee/commission annually and that he will schedule a meeting. It was agreed upon that that was the best way to address the matter of community engagement.

c. Next Meeting

- i. August 16, 2023

12. Adjournment

Chair Conley adjourned the meeting at 8:13 PM without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy V. Chase
Recording Secretary