

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Tuesday January 2nd, 2024

Present: Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, Selectman Chris Wayss, Police Chief Mike Bilodeau, Police Commission Chair Brenda Blonigen, Assistant Fire Chief Pat Moynihan, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Several Newington Residents, Town Administrator Martha Roy, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

C. Wayss moved to enter non-public session under NH RSA 91-A:3II (c)- Matters that would likely adversely affect the reputation of a person- at 5:30pm, seconded by B. Arsenault. B. Blonigen asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, C. Wayss-Yes. All were in favor.

C. Wayss moved to return to public session at 6:06pm and to seal the minutes indefinitely, seconded by B. Arsenault. B. Blonigen asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, C. Wayss-Yes. All were in favor.

Minutes Approval: Approval of the December 18th, 2023 minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Manifest Approval: B. Arsenault moved to approve the manifests for \$51,080.50 dated 12/21/2023 and \$28,671.21 dated 12/28/23. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Facility Use Request:

B. Arsenault moved to approve the following facility use request;
RAB (Restoration Advisory Board)-Town Hall Auditorium-2/13/24-4:40pm
C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Fox Point Dock Inspection Status:

The Board reviewed an email from Riverside & Pickering outlining the repairs that are needed on the dock.

The repairs that are needed are:

- 2 Batter Piles are rotted and need to be replace
- 4 male and 4 female corners need replacement
- 2 pile chains with hooplets need to be replaced

Riverside & Pickering will be sending an estimate for the repairs tomorrow.
M. Roy pointed out that these repairs would require a DES permit.

B. Blonigen said that no work could be done because there is no money to make the repairs. The dock may have to be closed due to safety issues.

B. Arsenault asked M. Roy to clarify the safety issues that Riverside & Pickering found.

2023 Encumbrances:

The Board reviewed the list of 2023 encumbrances for a total of \$37,044:

Bourassa-Fox Point Road-\$23,666

Bourassa-Nimble Hill Road-\$8,250

A&B Lock Access Control-\$2,772

RMON-\$1,480

GCAAA Fence-\$2,400

Gametime-\$876

M. Roy said that she had talked to Recreation Committee member Bill Wright and he said that the GCAAA Fence invoice will be paid next week so it can be taken off the list of encumbrances for a new total of \$34,644.

B. Arsenault moved to approve the 2023 encumbrances for a total of \$34,644. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Fox Point Town Meeting Vote-Re: Dogs:

M. Bilodeau explained the information that he had included in the January 2024 Town Newsletter. He said that his department has received several complaints of dogs unleashed, dogs prohibited, non-resident parking and parking permit required on or at town property and that the Newington Police would now be enforcing the Town ordinances. No fines have been issued so far.

C. Wayss pointed out that there are several different ordinances and a lot of conflicting information out there. There was the original dog ordinance in 1980, another one in 2016 and a petition warrant article to rescind the 2016 ordinance in 2019. The sign at Fox Point says that dogs need to be leashed or under control.

C. Wayss read the 2016 Dog Ordinance and the 2019 warrant article:

2016 Dog Ordinance:

Due to health and safety concerns being brought to the Town's attention the Selectmen have voted to not allow dogs on the following town properties: Old Town Hall, Grove Picnic Area, ball fields and playgrounds. Further, dogs shall be leashed on all town public rights of way. Fines are \$100 per violation.

Petition Article 26:

"On the petition of residents Jessica Morgan, DVM of 116 Fox Point Road and Joyce Ten Haagen of Beane Lane and at least 23 other registered voters in the Town of Newington, to vote to rescind the current "Dog Ordinance" effective 1 May 2019 and allow non-aggressive dogs on town properties and public right of ways, provided control is maintained and all dog waste is removed by the dog owner."

The minutes from the meeting go on to say that after some discussion on this article, Jessica Morgan made a motion to amend the article to add the word "leashed" after the word "non-aggressive" in the last sentence of the article. The motion to amend was seconded by John Klanchesser. After a vote showing the cards, the amendment passes.

B. Arsenault pointed out that the ordinances are the rule no matter what the sign at Fox Point says.

M. Bilodeau suggested putting together a committee to redo the ordinance and allow everyone to have a say in it. The committee can come together and come to an agreement. The Town has a concern about liability and it is important to protect the town.

Jack O'Reilly pointed out that the 2016 ordinance never mentions Fox Point. At that town meeting the discussion was that if you wanted your dog to run unleashed you could go to Fox Point. There is a group of dogs and owners who meet Saturday morning to let their dogs run and play. Wagon Hill in Durham has specific hours in the morning for unleashed dogs, all other times dogs have to be leashed.

Huddy Grandy asked that nothing be done until the Town meeting because the 2019 vote is ambiguous. It is important to know the intent of the voters. She said the 2019 warrant article doesn't include Fox Point. H. Grandy asked that the Selectmen to consider not enforcing the current ordinance for the next two months before Town meeting.

Jessica Morgan said that the intent was that if you wanted to run your dog off leash you could go to Fox Point.

The Board decided that B. Arsenault will head up the new committee with five residents plus the Police Chief. If you would like to be considered to be on the committee, please send an email to M. Roy by 4:00pm on Thursday. Huddy Grandy, Heather Belanger and Jim Vrotacoe expressed interest.

B. Arsenault said that he didn't think the way to proceed with this issue would be with a petition warrant article. We need to come together and put together a traditional warrant article that is complete and written by an attorney so that it is understood and

factual in front of the town residents. M. Roy said that it should be completed by February 10th to get on the warrant.

B. Blonigen pointed out that this committee will have to work fast to write a new ordinance, have legal look it over and get it to the Selectmen by February 10th. A. Hyland Hebert said it was important to get it done early so legal will have enough time to review it.

Discussion ensued about leased and unleashed dogs on Fox Point, the Town's liability if someone gets knocked down and injured by a dog, the need to have Fox Point open for all residents to enjoy, consider having hours in the morning for off-leash dogs on Fox Point, if dogs off leash are under voice control. C. Wayss thought it could be done over two meetings in the next month.

Discussion ensued about what the procedure will be for the next couple of months before the Town meeting. J. O'Reilly asked for specific hours that dogs could be unleashed on Fox Point, if the current dog ordinance should be followed, if there was a dog ordinance in place or not, putting your dog on a leash when there is someone approaching you on a trail.

B. Arsenault asked everyone to remain respectful to each other for the next couple of months.

South Newington Bulletin Board Vandalism:

B. Blonigen said that the South Newington bulletin board has been taken down due to vandalism, but will be back up as soon as possible. Any residents that get their information from that board can call the Town Hall and the information can be sent to you.

Public Comment:

J. O'Reilly said that the Presidential Primary is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23rd. It will also be the primary for the open seat of the Portsmouth-Newington NH House Representative.

B. Arsenault asked M. Roy to invite the two people running for this seat to come to a Selectmen's meeting.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 6:59pm. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Eleanor Boy, Recorder