

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday October 4th, 2021

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Mike Marconi, Selectman Bob Blonigen, Mark and Rose Phillips, Cemetery Trustee Chair Alan Wilson, Cemetery Trustee Peggy Lamson, Sewer Commissioners Rick Stern and Skip Cole, Sewer Plant Manager Denis Messier, Library Director Lara Berry, Library Trustee Jack O'Reilly, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 4:30pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes Approval: M. Marconi moved to approve minutes of September 20th, 2021 and September 23rd, 2021. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Manifest Approval: M. Marconi moved to approve the manifests for \$21,251.15 dated 9/23/2021 and \$240,293.19 dated 9/30/21. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Facility Use Requests:

B. Blonigen moved to approve the following request;
SatNarayan & Juventina Khalsa-Old Town Hall & Grove-10/10/21-Baptism Reception
M. Marconi seconded the motion with all in favor.

Mark Phillips-Zip Code and Road Naming Issues:

Mark and Rose Phillips reviewed the big problem the City of Portsmouth has created by naming one of their roads a very similar name to Newington's Hodgdon Farm Lane in Newington. The new Hodgdon Lane in Portsmouth is for a complex of 250 apartments. The Phillips', from Hodgdon Farm Lane in Newington, have been receiving a lot of mail, furniture deliveries and Amazon deliveries for these apartments. M. Phillips has placed a sign on his mailbox to direct the postal carrier about delivering the mail to the correct address. The mail and deliveries are still pouring in. The Selectmen are sending a letter to all City Councilors about the problem.

M. Phillips attended a Portsmouth City Council meeting on 8/1/21 and asked them to change the name of their road, but got no results. M. Phillips would like Newington to get their own zip code to fix this problem.

The Board of Selectmen have reached out to Senator Shaheen's office to try and get a zip code for Newington. The Board will send a letter to officially complain. Newington has been dealing with this problem for 20 years.

Halloween Trick or Treat Date:

M. Marconi moved to schedule Trick or Treat for Newington for Saturday October 30th from 5pm-7pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion with all in favor.

Health Officer Appointment:

M. Roy asked the Board to delay this appointment to a later date.

Proposed Water Monitoring Wells:

-Welsh Cove Circle

-Carters Rock Park

M. Marconi moved to allow the Air Force to install two new monitoring wells in town. B. Blonigen seconded the motion with all in favor.

B. Blonigen asked M. Roy to notify the residents in these areas before the work starts.

Juneteenth Holiday:

Departments are looking for some guidance on the new federal holiday for budgeting purposes in 2022. **B. Blonigen moved that the employees can celebrate the holiday but will need to swap out another holiday. M. Marconi seconded the motion with all in favor.**

Video Recording Survey Results:

M. Roy reported that 48 residents replied to the survey. 42 were in favor of recording meetings with 6 opposed. The Board of Selectmen are asking each committee/board to record their meetings. B. Blonigen thought it is important that all meetings are recorded and would like to see the Town to develop a standard operating procedure for recording the meetings and decide where the Town is going to store the recordings. M. Roy said that she has reached out to town council and was told that the recordings are fine to delete once the minutes are published. **M. Marconi moved that all meetings be recorded and direct M. Roy to produce a standard operating procedure for the recording. B. Blonigen seconded the motion with all in favor.** M. Roy said that there isn't a lot of storage space on the Town's current IPADs and will check with RMON about added storage.

Old Parsonage HVAC-NH Division of Historic Resources Approval:

M. Roy explained that the NH Division of Historical Resources approved the use of the \$20,000 grant to install an HVAC system in the Old Parsonage. B. Blonigen would like to get an opinion from the Town's plumbing inspector, Bob Hart, about how the HVAC system would affect the horsehair plaster. M. Roy will investigate and report back.

M. Roy mentioned that the Budget Committee had inquired about the Fox Point lease. The first year was a 1-year lease and then it went on to a month-to-month lease. T. Connors said that the current tenant mows the area for the Town and helped mow for Septemberfest when the Town Kubota tractor broke down.

Cemetery Budget Review:

P. Lamson thanked Selectman Blonigen for donating flags for the graves.

The Cemetery budget is the same as last year except that \$200 was added to the care of trees expense line.

The Cemetery Trustees have proposed a warrant article for 2022. It would change the Cemetery Trust fund to a Capital Reserve fund. If that happened then the Cemetery Trustees could take some of their expenses out of that fund instead of increasing their budget. P. Lamson commented the Trustee of the Trust Fund Chair, Jennifer Mulstay, has done outstanding work on this issue.

Sewer Budget Review:

The Sewer budget has increased by \$246,146. This increase is due to the higher operations contract, increased fees for testing and permits for PFOAs testing twice a year and nitrogen testing. The testing expense line went from \$30,000 in 2021 to \$50,000 in 2022. The cost of chemicals increased by 6%. M. Marconi asked how this increase would affect users. D. Messier said that fees won't be going down. More flow lowers rates. D. Messier is hopeful that the Tyco expansion and future plans for the mall will increase the flow. The current operating contract is through 2025. T. Connors would like to get the sewer costs for Portsmouth and Dover and compare them to Newington. D. Messier said that it is not a good comparison because Portsmouth has 7,000 users and Newington has 700 users. R. Stern said that Newington did the required upgrades to their plant before other Towns did theirs and believes that rates in these other towns will increase after the upgrades are completed. Newington's nitrogen output was only 1.2 lbs. last week compared to the allowed amount of 15 lbs. per week.

Overall Budget Review as of 9/22/21:

S. Bagley explained that the overall budget has 38% remaining for 2021. The Executive Office has 22% remaining. There are overages in the salary line due to the overlap of Finance Directors and representation for the Donor Town issue and the writing of the Covid grants. M. Marconi asked if the Town would be receiving any additional money from the covid grants. M. Roy said that there is a \$12,000 FEMA grant revenue still to come. B. Blonigen would like to see that money be used for air ionizers for town buildings.

T. Connors called for a meeting recess at 5:28pm.

T. Connors called the meeting back to order at 5:36.

Library Budget Review:

L. Berry explained that in 2020 the Newington's Langdon Library continued to have the second most physical and digital per capita checkouts. Newington also had more digital checkouts than anyone. T. Connors asked how much the extra work for the summer camp program cost the library. L. Berry said that they decided to split up the campers into 2 groups, which worked out well. The programs didn't cost more, but buying the supplies for the program did cost more. It did take twice as long to plan because of the two programs. Normally they start planning the summer program in March, but this year everything was last minute. J. O'Reilly said that their 2022 budget is \$3,283 more than their 2021 budget. The director's salary increased by 6% because they are trying to get her salary more in line with other directors in the area.

M. Marconi thanked the Fire Department for their quick action during the fire in town. E. Hoyt has reached out to the family and they are doing good.

Adjournment: M. Marconi moved to adjourn at 5:53pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy
Recorder