

TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE

TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

November 3, 2021 7:00 PM

Town Council Chambers

Meeting Minutes

6:00PM Town Council/Planning Board Joint Meeting in the Town Hall Auditorium. The Regularly Scheduled Town Council Meeting will begin at 7:00 PM in the Town Council Chambers

Councilors Present: Council Chair Toni Weinstein, Council Vice-chair Helen Sanders, Councilor Jonathan Kiper, Councilor Megan Brabec, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Katanna Conley and Councilor Brian Ward.

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

Chair Weinstein convened the Meeting at 7:12 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

Minutes Approved November 17, 2021

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no one from the public in attendance.

Chair Weinstein closed the Public Forum at 7:11 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution #2021/2022-11 - Kingman Masonic Block Tax Incentive (RSA 79E)

Chair Weinstein opened the Public Hearing at 7:13 PM and noted for the record that there was no member of the public present.

Town Manager Fournier explained RSA 79-E allows applicants to apply for tax assessment relief for a period of time. There are certain criteria that have to be satisfied in order to qualify to "freeze" the assessed value of the building for a period of time. The applicant is requesting 11 years of tax assessment relief (maximum allowed if qualified); historically with these applications, the Council has granted 3 years relief. Town Manager Fournier is recommending 7 years. If the Council agrees then the Resolution will have to be amended.

Chair Weinstein closed the Public Hearing at 7:14 PM.

TOWN COUNCIL TO CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *the October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes*, which was seconded by Councilor Conley.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

October 23, 2021 FY2023 Town Budget Workshop

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *the October 23, 2021 Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes*, which was seconded by Councilor Conley.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Fournier reported on the following:

- **COVID-19 and Vaccination Update:** As of October 28th there are 5 active cases in the community and 716 cumulative cases. The Seacoast Health Region has seen a 3.7% increase over the past week (down 5.6% from the previous report). Boosters have now been approved for all vaccines that were administered. The FDA approved vaccination of children 5 to 11 years of age with the Pfizer vaccine. As soon as it is available the State has ordered 15,000 doses of the children's vaccine. Town Manager Fournier reached out to Superintendent Givens to offer the Town's assistance.
- **Veteran's Tax Credit:** We are currently reviewing our Veteran's Tax Credit. We currently offer a \$500 credit on an individual's property tax bill if they have served in certain war times. We are looking at a plan to widen the tax credit beginning with the next tax year and will also explore expanding the amount credited.
- **Agenda software:** We are exploring a new meeting software for the Town Council and other boards. The new software is made by the same company that hosts the town's website.
- Town Manager Fournier is requesting a suspension of the rules to act on Resolution #2021/2022-13 FY2023 Budget after the first reading. He also apologized for the lateness of Resolution #2021/2022-14 Authorizing the issuance of refunding bonds. He explained that we have to meet certain deadlines and needed to get this on the agenda for a first reading to meet those deadlines. The refinancing of the debt will save the town thousands of dollars.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Ward reported that the Budget Committee appointed Jason Sank as a new Alternate Member to the Committee.

Chair Weinstein reported that the Energy and Environment Committee had a scheduled meeting

last night but did not have a quorum so they could not meet. She said that there are two vacant seats on the Committee and encouraged anyone interested to apply.

OLD BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES IN THE 2ND READING

Resolution #2021/2022-10 - Capital Asset Policy

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *Resolution #2021/2022-10 - Capital Asset Policy*, which was seconded by Councilor Ward.

Town Manager Fournier explained that this is an accounting practice we need to adopt at the advice of the Auditors.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Resolution #2021/2022-11 - Kingman Masonic Block Tax Incentive (RSA 79E)

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *Resolution #2021/2022-11 - Kingman Masonic Block Tax Incentive*, which was seconded by Councilor Conley.

The Applicant is requesting tax assessment relief for the maximum amount of years allowed (11 years) if qualified per RSA 79-E.

Town Manager Fournier explained that typically these applications receive approvals for 3 years of tax assessment relief. He recommends the Council approve tax assessment relief for a period of 7 years and proposed the following amendment:

To grant tax assessment Relief for a period of 3 years, beginning with the completion of construction; 1 year of tax assessment relief because the project results in new residential units; and 3 years of tax assessment Relief for the substantial rehabilitation of a structure which is located within an historic district which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, totaling 7 years of tax assessment relief.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *Resolution #2021/2022-11 Kingman Masonic Block Tax Incentive as Amended*, which was seconded by Councilor Ward.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Resolutions/Ordinances in the 1st Reading

Resolution #2021/2022-12 - Newfields Dispatch Agreement

Chair Weinstein read Resolution #2021/2022-12 into the record.

Resolution #2021/2022-13 - Adopt FY2023 Budget

Councilor Conley made a motion to Approve *the Suspension of Rules to act on Resolution #2021/2022-13 this evening*, which was seconded by Councilor Ward.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Councilor Sanders made a motion to Approve *Resolution #2021/2022-13 - Adoption of the FY2023 Budget*, which was seconded by Councilor Conley.

The Council met on October 23rd and had a budget workshop and went through the entire budget. Many of the Department Heads were present.

Councilor Kiper asked if it were possible to cut the budget aside from cutting out a department. Town Manager Fournier said that it would take approximately \$200M of development to offset the tax rate by \$1.00.

Councilor Brabec said that a lot of the increases in the budget were due to adding some full-time positions and said it is important to be able to continue to provide services.

Chair Weinstein encouraged people to review the MRI study (available on the town's website). It shows how lean the town has been operating over the past years. She said that this budget starts to address those issues.

Motion was Passed by a vote of 7-0-0.

Resolution #2021/2022-14 - Authorizing the issuance of Refunding Bond

Chair Weinstein read Resolution #2021/2022-14 into the record in title only without objection. She said that the Resolution may be viewed on the town's website.

CORRESPONDENCE TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

There was no correspondence.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Kiper commented that he served on the ZBA in the past and while he was serving there was an application before the Board for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) which was denied because under the current Ordinance an ADU is not allowed in an accessory structure that is unattached to the main house. He said that when there is no system where people can address their grievances, it can be very frustrating. Most surrounding towns allow unattached ADUs.

Town Manager Fournier explained that we are a representative form of Government. If an individual has a grievance they should contact the Town Council. The Planning Board is an independent elected body so individuals may also contact the Planning Board to change the ADU regulations. If the Council decides to change any Ordinance, the best way is to draft a letter from the Council as a whole to the Planning Board requesting they address a proposed change to an Ordinance; If the Planning Board won't oblige the Council has it in their purview to amend an

Ordinance on their own. However, Town Manager Fournier does not recommend that route, he would rather see them come to an agreement before that happens.

Chair Weinstein said that it is a good idea that Ordinance changes go through the Planning Board so they can hold public hearings on the changes allowing the public to be involved.

By a show of hands, the Councilors authorized the Chair to write a letter to the Planning Board suggesting a change to the Ordinance pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units to allow ADU's in unattached accessory structures.

Councilor Kiper said that he met with State Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka who put him in contact with Sarah Wrightsman of the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast. She works with towns setting up housing commissions and offers free resources. She also works with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Councilor Kiper asked if they should invite her to come in and speak to the Council on what she can offer.

Town Manager Fournier said that this should fall under the Planning Board. The Council looks at the overall policy for the community. He suggested that Ms. Wrightsman meet with the Planning Board and if they establish a Housing Committee a council member can serve on it as a representative of the Council.

Councilor Conley asked the Town Manager if there was any progress on the Class A trail at Neal Mill Road. Town Manager Fournier said that they are still working on it.

Chair Weinstein reminded everyone of the Zoom meeting tomorrow evening from 4:30-6:00. A Coastal Resilience Presentation and how Newmarket will be impacted in the next few years. She said that it will be recorded and become accessible in a few days.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

November 17, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Weinstein adjourned the Meeting at 8:10 PM without objection.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Chase, Recording Secretary