



## Town Council Regular Session

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September 17, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Town Council Chambers

### MINUTES

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Conley convened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Councilor Ward led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call**

**Present:** Council Chair Katanna Conley, Council Vice-chair Brian Ward, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Joe LaMattina, Councilor Sonke Dornblut, Councilor, Justin Glazebrook, Councilor Chase Eagleson.

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

Chair Conley read the Proclamation for Direct Support Professionals Appreciation Week - September 7th–13th into the record.

**3. Public Forum**

Chair Conley opened the public forum at 7:02 PM.

USA 250/NEWMARKET 300 Committee members, Michael Provost, Linda Hopey, Judith Case, Ralph Case, (dressed in Colonial attire) Dave LeGault presented to the Town Council, a broadside of a copy done by Wentworth Cheswill, from the original that was signed by Lt. Governor John Wentworth, along with a plain text copy, that will be publicly displayed in town hall. Mr. Provost read into the record: *Newmarket is somewhat unique, unlike communities that were granted or chartered. The residents of the Lamprey and Swamscott villages petitioned the Governor and Executive Council of the Province of NH to be set aside from the parish of Exeter to form their own parish. They were required to secure a minister and provide a seating, construct a meetinghouse and hire a sexton. The first three selectmen were named: Edward Hall, Andrew Gildden, and William Perkins, to serve until March when parish elections were held, New parish to be known as Newmarket.*

Chair Conley closed the public forum at 7:06 PM.

**4. Town Council to Consider Acceptance of Minutes**

**a. September 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** Councilor Ward made a motion to approve the September 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes as written.

**Second:** Councilor Dornblut

**Vote:** **Unanimously Approved (6-0-1)** Councilor Glazebrook abstained because he was not present at the September 3, 2025 meeting.

**5. Town Council to Consider Nominations, Appointments, Elections, and Resignations**

- a. Julianna Tyson - Resignation from the Conservation Commission

**Motion:** **Councilor Ward** made a motion to accept, with regret, Julianna Tyson's resignation from the Conservation Commission.

**Second:** **Councilor LaMattina**

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

- b. Lucas Fromm - Resignation as Alternate to the Conservation Commission

**Motion:** **Councilor Ward** made a motion to accept Lucas Fromm's resignation as Alternate to the Conservation Commission.

**Second:** **Councilor LaMattina**

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

- c. Lucas Fromm - Appointment to the Conservation Commission - Term Expiration April 2027

**Motion:** **Councilor Ward** made a motion to appoint Lucas Fromm as a full member to the Conservation Commission with a term expiration of April 2027.

**Second:** **Councilor LaMattina**

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

**6. Report of the Town Manager**

- a. TM Report - September 17, 2025  
Town Manager Fournier presented the Town Meeting/Budget schedule.

Town Valuation: The Assessors have set the town valuation. The net taxable assessment has increased approximately \$11.7 million, or 0.70%.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): When July 1's state budget took effect, the trailer-bill provision also became law. The budget bill lists funding allocations for agencies and programs. The trailer bill contains policy changes needed to implement those allocations and sometimes includes controversial items that may not pass alone. One of those controversial laws is an amendment to RSA 21-I. It broadly prohibits state agencies and political subdivisions, including towns—from implementing, promoting, or engaging in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. That means anything classifying individuals by protected characteristics (per RSA 354-A:1) for demographic outcomes is off-limits.

The law also bans the use of state funds for DEI-related training (such as implicit bias or DEI assessments) and race-based hiring or contracting preferences. It

forbids entering into, renewing, or maintaining contracts with DEI-related provisions. State agencies must file compliance reports with the Department of Administrative Services by October 1, 2025, and the Department of Justice will develop a process for municipalities to follow suit.

On September 4, 2025, U.S. District Court issued a temporary restraining order blocking enforcement of the law—but only for public schools. The order, in effect until September 18, 2025, was granted after four school districts (Oyster River, Dover, Somersworth, and Grantham) challenged the law. The judge noted that districts faced penalties tied to unrealistic compliance deadlines.

Importantly, this does not apply to towns or other municipal governments.

Municipalities remain subject to the law's requirements.

What this means for Newmarket:

The Racial Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights Advisory Committee, along with any related initiatives, should be discontinued, restructured, or given a new purpose to ensure they are not categorized under DEI terminology. Staff will proceed with a review of current contracts to identify any embedded DEI provisions and will provide updates accordingly. The order does not apply to towns, so Newmarket will proceed with compliance as scheduled.

Town Manager Fournier will keep the Council updated as the Department of Justice provides local-level guidance, and as the federal courts consider whether to extend or expand the stay. He will also reach out to other town/city managers to see how they are handling proposed changes to their DEI programs/committees.

**Casella Waste Management:** The current solid waste collection contract will expire December 31st. The current agreement includes an extension clause that allows the term to be extended for an additional 3 years. Staff recommends pursuing this extension to provide service continuity while giving the Town time to explore future collection options. Staff will be looking into Automated Side Loader (ASL) collection systems.

**FY26 Expense and Revenue Update:** As of August 31, 2025, total revenues collected across all funds reached \$18.2 million (68% of budgeted revenues) compared to \$17.3 million (69%) at the same point last year. Expenditures total \$4.35 million (25% of the budget), consistent with last year's pace of 25%.

**b. Department Reports - August 2025**

Councilor Blackstone asked if we would go out to bid for the solid waste contract. Town Manager Fournier said that we will go out to bid at the end of the 3-year extension.

Councilor LaMattina commented on the missing Welfare Department monthly reports. He suggested that he would like to see more fiscal data and comparisons in the report going forward. Town Manager Fournier said he will look into it.

**7. Committee Reports**

Councilor Glazebrook reported on the September 9th Art, Culture & Tourism Commission Meeting:

- There will be a community sing-along on October 15th from 6:00 PM - 7:30PM at the Jr./Sr. High school Cafetorium.
- The Pocket Park mural flip will be done during the Halloween Haunt October 25th.
- They applied for a grant for the renovation of the Elm Street mural and was rejected. They plan to reapply next year.

The Capital Improvement Committee met twice last week:

- The school will do a better job putting monies aside for building maintenance.
- The Library will put money aside for projects that will come from the feasibility study they just did.
- The Recreation Dept. is preparing for a feasibility study and will be putting money aside each year for future projects.

Councilor Ward reported on the last 300th Celebration Committee Meeting:

- They discussed commemorative wares that will be on sale.
- Designs for the commemorative license plates.
- They finished the first draft of the book that will be completed and available for the 300th celebration.

Councilor Ward reported on the September 11th Conservation Commission Meeting:

- Colin Lawson was appointed Vice-chair.
- Two new bike racks were installed, one at sliding rock and one at Wiggin Farm.
- Money has been allocated to purchase new picnic tables for Schanda Park.
- They are looking for members for the 2026 Turtlefest Steering Committee.

Councilor LaMattina reported on the August 27th Energy & Environment Committee Meeting:

The proposed solar array garden on Wadleigh Falls road was thought to produce 400 to 500 kW. Town Engineer Lindsay Butler did a site review and because of the amount of wetlands it was determined that it's more likely that 100 to 150 kW would be produced at that site. He said that he, Councilors Dornblut and Blackstone will be attending a conference next week in Manchester regarding local energy solutions.

Councilor Dornblut reported on the September 10th Public Transportation Meeting:

There was a presentation on the parking study. Police Chief Greg Jordan participated in the discussion. He brought his department's research on parking enforcement and meters. The Committee hopes to have recommendations to the Town Council by the end of the year.

## 8. Old Business

## **9. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 1st Reading**

- a. Resolution #2025/2026-13 - Authorize Purchase of 11 Creighton Street with Recreation Revolving Fund  
Chair Conley read Resolution #2025/2026-13 into the record.
- b. Resolution #2025/2026-14 - Amend Personnel Policy Sec 4.05 Maternity Leave  
Chair Conley read Resolution #2025/2026-14 in title only into the record.
- c. Resolution # 2025/2026 - 15 - Lead Water Service Line Replacement  
Chair Conley read Resolution #2025/2026-15 into the record.

## **10. New Business/Correspondence**

- a. Correspondence to the Town Council  
There was no correspondence to the Town Council.
- b. Closing Comments by Town Councilors  
Councilor Ward made the following comments regarding proposed changes to the law for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI):  
"I understand the town has no say in this decision, because people above us decided that there's a finite space in our shared culture for everyone. That speaking Spanish means there's not enough oxygen for English. That celebrating Ramadan cuts hours from Christmas. That masculinity gets cramps if the bathroom has tampons in it.

I don't see the need for cutting something like this. I only see harm.

I know many of you won't be surprised that I'm speaking on this issue. I was born in the Seacoast, I'm black, I'm on the autism spectrum. I got here not through DEI, but because no one wanted this job. That's America, I guess.

I want to stress that the point of DEI was never to replace "normal" Americans or overlook qualified people. It's not to diminish you and your culture by giving others a chance to express themselves and their cultures.

It's to give space and acceptance to those who don't spring to mind when you think American, but are still American regardless of what some people believe.

As I've just said, I spent my whole life in this area, trying to fit in. You don't understand how important DEI is until you are the one always standing outside, or standing out, whether you want to or not. Or trying to make yourself accommodate what everyone else wants, needs and expects. All while, whatever you want or need is expected to be put on the back burner so you don't rock the boat.

DEI also gave people a chance to see people like themselves succeed. There was a time not too long ago when certain people were "allowed" to succeed in certain areas, but it never seemed to happen in real life.

Not talking about race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, language, or disabilities doesn't make those issues go away. Tonight we brought up a bill dealing with removing old lead pipes. If we didn't talk about lead, it would still be a problem.

If you think cutting diversity, equity, and inclusion will encourage people to listen to the better angels of their nature and be more accepting of fellow citizens, I can tell you from personal experience you are wrong. Thank you".

Councilor LaMattina said "I find it ironic that the night we receive a proclamation written 200 years ago by a Black man that created Newmarket that we even have to consider the idea of going through our policies and saying I'm afraid of inclusion and diversity; we have to take that out. It's absolutely ridiculous."

Councilor Dornblut commented that the bill passed only as a rider on the budget, and it's highly unlikely it would have passed on its own because it is a horribly written bill. The definition of DEI is not there. He opined that it is a mean-spirited bill and that we should pay more attention to what goes on in Concord and to the people creating such bills.

Chair Conley said, "Having a diverse community makes us better; treating people equitably is a good thing, and having an inclusive community, a community that strives to include everybody, not just a few, makes us better. To try to legislatively scrub the concepts of diversity and the concepts of inclusion from a community can only happen if we let it, so let's don't."

**c. Next Meeting**

i. October 1, 2025

**11. Adjournment**

Chair Conley adjourned the meeting at 7:52 PM without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy V. Chase  
Recording Secretary