



Town Council Regular Session

May 20, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Town Council Chambers

MINUTES

1. **6:00 PM Non-public Session Pursuant to RSA 91-A,II(a) Personnel. 6:45PM Non-public Session Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3,II (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
Chair Ward convened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Councilor LaMattina led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Roll Call**
Present: Council Chair Brian Ward, Council Vice-chair Joe LaMattina, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Katanna Conley, Councilor Sonke Dornblut, Councilor Justin Glazebrook, Councilor Stella McShera.
Staff Present: Town Manager Stephen Fournier, Recording Secretary Wendy Chase.
4. **Public Forum**
Chair Ward opened the public forum at 7:01PM.

Chair Ward closed the public forum at 7:02 PM without public comment.
5. **Public Hearing**
 - a.
Pursuant to RSA 231:133-a, the Town of Newmarket, NH Town Council will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at the Newmarket Town Hall, Town Council Chambers, 186 Main Street, Newmarket, NH at 7:00 PM to discuss the proposed action by the Town Council to officially rename Beech Street Extension as Cheswill Street, effective July 1, 2026.

Chair Ward opened the Public Hearing at 7:04 PM.

Richard Alperin, 183 Main Street once lived in the house on South Main Street situated on Wentworth Cheswill's mansion foundation. The family cemetery abuts it. Wentworth Cheswill devoted his life to public service to the Town of Newmarket and is so deserving of having a street named after him. He was the grandson of a black slave and accomplished much in his life. Mr. Alperin is in support of passing the resolution to change Beech Street Ext. to Cheswill Street.

Pam Myers-Morgan, Beech Street Ext., said she and her husband live on the street, and they think it's a great idea to change the name to Cheswill Street. It will improve mail deliveries, ambulance and fire calls.

Chair Ward closed the Public Hearing at 7:10 PM.

6. Town Council to Consider Acceptance of Minutes

a. May 6, 2026

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve the May 6, 2026, meeting minutes as written.

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

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

7. Town Council to Consider Nominations, Appointments, Elections, and Resignations

a. John Bellerose - Reappointment as Cemetery Trustee - Term Expiration April 2029

Motion: **Councilor Conley** made a motion to reappoint John Bellerose as Cemetery Trustee with a Term Expiration of April 2029.

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

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

8. Report of the Town Manager

a. TM Report 05/20/2026

1. Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- Goal setting session scheduled for June 23 at 6PM in the auditorium.
- State Primary Elections will be held on September 8, 2026. A new law moves future primaries to June starting in 2028.
- Summer council meetings proposed for July 15 and August 19.

2. Tax and Financial Updates:

- Tax bills have been mailed and are due July 1.
- A new FY2026 Taxpayer Guide is available online, offering residents an interactive tool to understand their property tax bills. The guide clarifies that only about 25% of each property tax dollar is controlled by the Town, with the rest allocated to education and county government.

3. Civic Engagement Initiatives:

- A draft plan for a Newmarket Citizens' Academy has been prepared. This free program aims to educate residents about local government operations, encourage volunteerism, and build public trust. The academy would include presentati

ons from all major departments and accommodate up to 25 residents per session.

4. Town Manager Absence:

- The Town Manager will be out of the office June 2–5 for conferences. The town engineer, Lyndsay Butler, will serve as Acting Town Manager during this period and provide updates on the Stormwater Asset Management Program.

5. Budget and Inflation Considerations:

- Inflation remains high, impacting both residents and the town's operating accounts. The report recommends using multiple Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures for budget planning:
 - National CPI-U (April 2026): 3.8%
 - Northeast CPI-U (March 2026): 3.6%
 - Boston Metro CPI-U (March 2026): 2.0%
- Energy costs are a major inflation driver, with a 13.5% year-over-year increase in the Northeast. Recommended budget escalators for FY28:
 - Energy/Utilities: +10–13%
 - Personnel/Wages: +3.5–4.0%
 - Vendor Contracts/Goods: +3.5–4.0%
 - General Overhead/Supplies: +3.0–3.5%

Councilor Blackstone asked for an update on the town-owned Creighton Street property. Town Manager Fournier explained that the proposal is still being worked on, and he will forward the draft proposal to the Council when complete.

b. April 2026 Department Reports

Councilor Ward congratulated Justin Fillion from the Fire Department on his recent graduation from paramedic school.

9. Committee Reports

Councilor Blackstone reported on the May 14th Conservation Commission Meeting:

- Turtlefest was a success. They earned enough money to donate \$275 to a SELT Camp and \$500 to a turtle rescue facility.
- They are selling rain barrels and have recently sold 23 barrels.
- The Rosa property conveyance was finalized.
- They are promoting Cares Day for High School honor students to volunteer to help clean up various town-owned areas.

Councilor LaMattina said that the Energy & Environment Committee launched their plastic bag recycling program at TurtleFetst and collected 35 pounds of plastic bags.

Councilor Conley reported on the May 18th Budget Committee Meeting:

The Committee reappointed Brian Rowley as Chair and Kevin Blackstone as Vice-chair. The Town Manager Fournier and School Superintendent Allen presented an

overview of the town and school budgets. The Budget Committee set their meeting schedule.

Councilor Dornblut reported on the May 13th Public Transportation Committee Meeting:

The Committee welcomed two new members. Parking issues was the Committee's main topic of discussion, and it was a consensus of the committee to hold off on implementing paid parking in the downtown. They have different strategies to try during peak parking times on the weekend. The Committee members will finalize their draft report at their next meeting. The report will be submitted to the Town Council for the June 17th meeting.

Councilor Ward reported on the Newmarket300 Committee Meeting:

The Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission will have a reveal of the mosaic tree at the Library on June 14th. There will be an icecream social and sing-along on Main Street following the mosaic reveal. Councilors are invited to pass out icecream at the event. There is a tall ship event on July 15th. All the event information is on their website Newmarket300.com.

10. Old Business

11. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 2nd Reading

- a. Resolution #2025/2026-44 Using the Compensated Absences Trust Funds to Reimburse the Town for Employee Compensated Absences Paid

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026-44 Using the Compensated Absences Trust Funds to Reimburse the Town for Employee Compensated Absences Paid

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

Discussion: Town Manager Fournier explained that Compensated Absence Capital Reserve Fund was created for the purpose of paying departing employees compensated absences. There is a balance of \$60,100.62 in the Fund.

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

- b. Resolution #2025/2026-45 2026 Roadway Paving & Reclamation

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026-45 2026 Roadway Paving & Reclamation Plan

Second: **Councilor Glazebrook**

Discussion: Town Manager Fournier explained that the Director of Public Works and Town Engineer requested bids for paving and road reclamation and awarded it to Bell & Flynn.

Councilor Dornblut asked if the Council could receive the

yearly paving schedule in advance to review. Town Manager Fournier will provide that information in the future.

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

c. Resolution #2025/2026-46 2026 Sidewalk Improvements

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026-46 2026 Sidewalk Improvements Plan

Second: **Councilor Dornblut**

Discussion: Town Manager Fournier explained that the sidewalk at Durrell Drive needs to be replaced. The sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund will have \$203,172 available as of July 1st. The expenditure of up to \$200,000 will be needed to replace the sidewalk.

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

d. Resolution #2025/2026-47 - Using the Town Technology Capital Reserve Fund to Purchase a new Vote Counting Machine

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026-47 - Using the Town Technology Capital Reserve Fund to Purchase a new Vote Counting Machine.

Second: **Councilor McShera**

Discussion: Town Manager Fournier explained that the new voting machine is slower than the old version and it is recommended to purchase a second machine to prevent voter congestion and to handle increased volume.

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

12. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 3rd Reading

a. Resolution #2025/2026-39 - Renaming Beech St. Ext. as Cheswill Street

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026-39 - Renaming Beech St. Ext. as Cheswill Street.

Second: **Councilor McShera**

Discussion: Councilor Dornblut said it was a good idea to name a street for Wentworth Cheswill and the Cheswill family, considering the contributions he made in Newmarket that are still lasting. He further added that it is an honor to sponsor this resolution.

Councilor Ward commented that it is a strange feeling to be a black-elected official in a town that elected the first black official in America. He said that he recognizes the importance of that and is glad that they are honoring Wentworth Cheswill.

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

b. Resolution #2025/2026 - 40 - Adopting Municipal Debt Policy

Motion: **Councilor LaMattina** made a motion to approve Resolution #2025/2026 - 40 - Adopting Municipal Debt Policy

Second: **Councilor Conley**

Discussion: Councilor Dornblut and Councilor Conley pointed out grammatical errors in the document. The Resolution was tabled for a fourth reading. Town Manager Fournier asked those who had edits to please forward them to him, and he would forward them to Finance Director William Tappan.

Action: Resolution #2025/2026-40 is tabled for a fourth reading on June 3, 2026.

13. Resolutions/Ordinances in the 1st Reading

- a. Resolution # 2025/2026 - 48 Water Rate Increase
Councilor LaMattina read Resolution #2025/2026-48 into the record.
- b. Resolution #2025/2026-49 - Transferring Schanda Park Responsibilities from Cons Comm to Public Works and Riverfront Advisory Committee
Councilor LaMattina read Resolution #2025/2026-49 into the record.

14. New Business/Correspondence

- a. Correspondence to the Town Council
There was no correspondence to the Town Council.
- b. Closing Comments by Town Councilors
Councilor Blackstone said that the Energy & Environment Committee meets Wednesday, May 27th. Freedom Energy will be making a presentation. The Company is 20 years old and performs similar functions to Community Power.

Councilor LaMattina said that Freedom Energy is the first company to present; there will be several others that will make presentations at future Energy & Environment meetings.

Councilor Ward thanked all the volunteers that helped cleanup the Burley Cemetery on Cemetery cleanup day, Sunday, May 17th.

- c. Next Meeting

- i. June 3, 2026

15. Adjournment

Chair Ward adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy V. Chase
Recording Secretary