



**CITY OF NEWPORT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NEWPORT CITY HALL
March 17, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Elliott called the City Council Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on March 17, 2022

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present (4): Mayor Laurie Elliott, Council Member Kevin Chapdelaine, Council Member Tom Ingemann, and Council Member Marvin Taylor.

Not Present (1): Council Member Rozlyn Johnson

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Member Ingemann motioned to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Member Chapdelaine. Approved 4-0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Sumner, residing at 737 21st Street, addressed the Council. Mr. Sumner stated the Red Cross is still in need of blood donations from the public. Mr. Sumner stated seven tree trimmers, including five colleagues from Newport, met at the Lake Elmo Park to trim trees.

6. ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes- March 3, 2022 Regular Council
- B. Minutes- March 14, 2022 Special Council
- C. Open the Books (LBAE) Meeting Dates
- D. Gambling Application Date Change- Pheasants Forever
- E. List of Bills- \$467,954.31
- F. Financial Statement- February 2022

Member Chapdelaine motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Member Ingemann. Approved 4-0.

7. WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT

None.

8. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

None.

9. ENGINEER'S REPORT

A. 10th Avenue Stormwater Pond

1. Pay Request Fitzgerald Excavating- \$9,753.65

City Engineer Jon Herdegen stated we have Pay Application No. 3 for the 10th Avenue stormwater pond project. The project has already been closed out, but through the audit process, it was determined that Payment No. 3 was never paid out. We had sent the payment to the contractor for review and asked them to return a signed copy, but they never did. This payment is for Fitzgerald Excavating in the amount of \$9,753.65.

Member Chapdelaine motioned to approve Pay Application No. 3 in the amount of \$9,753.65 to Fitzgerald Excavating. Seconded by Member Taylor. Approved 4-0.

Mayor Elliott inquired if there are any update on the sewer lining project that is coming this summer. Engineer Herdegen stated he has no formal update, but they are in the process of gathering public outreach information and hope to have something for Council to review in April.

10. SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

A. Pay Request H&U- \$275,607.29

Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Matt Yokiell stated they have one pay request for Council to review. This is Pay Request No. 14 for H+U for the new City Hall / Public Safety building in the amount of \$275,607.29. Member Chapdelaine inquired what is included with this payment. Assistant Yokiell stated most of this payment is for materials and a large portion is for the garage doors.

Member Ingemann motioned to approve Pay Request No. 14 in the amount of \$275,607.29 for H+U. Seconded by Member Chapdelaine. Approved 4-0.

Mayor Elliott stated she was able to get inside the new City Hall / Public Safety building last week. The garage doors are in, and they are framing in rooms and the Council chambers. Mayor Elliott stated she is excited for Newport to have a modern facility.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Resolution No. 2022-14- Opposing the Closure of Newport Elementary School

City Administrator Deb Hill stated a few years ago the Council approved a resolution opposing the closure of Newport Elementary. South Washington School District 833 has proposed a 10-year facility plan which includes closing Newport Elementary. Administrator Hill stated Member Taylor created a resolution to again oppose the closure of Newport Elementary. Member Taylor read Resolution No. 2022-14 aloud for the record.

Mayor Elliott opened the meeting for public comments. Mayor Elliott reminded the audience that Council does not have authority over the school board.

Pauline Schottmuller, residing at 97 10th Street, addressed the Council. Ms. Schottmuller stated she would like to frame this discussion so everyone in Newport knows what is at stake and the school district and school board can hear our views. Newport Elementary is a Title One school. A title one school is the largest federally funded educational program. It provides funds for school districts to assist schools with a high concentration of low-income students to meet their educational goals. The funds are used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, and increased staff and program improvements. One of the teachers at Newport Elementary explained to Ms. Schottmuller that the staff takes extra classes to understand how to deal with transient, low-income population. Schools must make yearly progress in order to continue receiving funds and Newport has done that year after year. Ms. Schottmuller explained that sending Newport kids to three different schools, which are not title one schools, would mean that our kids would lose the educational support they are currently getting and will be in classrooms with teachers who are not trained in title one educational strategies. School staff have expressed their fear that Newport kids will fall behind. Newport would be the only city without an elementary school. Under this proposal, 90% of Newport Elementary students would go to Cottage Grove Elementary and Oltman Middle School, and then be sent to Woodbury High School, where they may not be welcomed. Ms. Schottmuller suggested the school district utilize the extra space within Cottage Grove Elementary for Early Childhood education and in turn keep Newport Elementary open. Ms. Schottmuller thanked the Council for their effort but stated the proposed resolution is not worded strongly enough for the impact this will have on our community. Ms. Schottmuller encouraged Council to reach out to neighboring Councils and community representatives to get their support to help keep Newport Elementary open.

Andrea Wade, residing at 1595 11th Avenue, addressed the Council. Ms. Wade stated she is a mother of four children. She stated her children thrived at Newport elementary and is worried Newport students will fall through the cracks if they get moved to these larger non-title-one schools.

Sara Bonine, who is a teacher at Newport Elementary and resides in St. Paul, addressed the Council. Ms. Bonine stated she has been in the district for 17 years and has been at Newport Elementary for 16 of those years. She respects the district and knows they work hard to fight for equity for all students. Ms. Bonine stated she is proud of her students and thanked the Council for their commitment to this community.

Mayor Elliott inquired if the Council would like stronger wording in the proposed resolution. Member Chapdelaine stated Ms. Schottmuller could suggest additional points and staff could help revise. Ms. Schottmuller stated the population demographics that the district is using is out-of-date and inaccurate. The district does not want in-depth conversations. Council discussed and agreed it is important to approve this resolution as a starting point while they continue to work for this cause.

Member Taylor motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2022-14 – Opposing the Closure of Newport Elementary School. Seconded by Member Ingemann. Approved 4-0.

Mayor Elliott directed staff to send this resolution to the principal, superintendent, school district staff, school board, Representative Frankie, Senator Bigham, and the Mayors or Administrators of Woodbury, Cottage Grove, and St. Paul Park.

12. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Elliott encouraged residents to consider our adopt-a-park program where you can weed flower beds or pick up litter in our parks. Mayor Elliott stated there is one vacancy on the Park Board. They meet once a month for about an hour. Mayor Elliott wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Member Chapdelaine motioned to adjourn the City Council Meeting. Seconded by Member Ingemann. Approved 4-0.

The City Council Meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m. on March 17, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted:
Jill Thiesfeld,
Administrative Assistant II

Signed: _____
Laurie Elliott, Mayor