

TOWN OF NEWLAND

TOWN COUNCIL

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AGENDA

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

6:00 PM

TOWN HALL

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. WELCOME
3. INVOCATION
4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
5. ETHICS AWARENESS
6. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA
7. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
9. REPORTS OR PRESENTATIONS
10. PUBLIC COMMENTS
11. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION  
PANHANDLING POLICY
12. FINANCE OFFICERS REPORT
13. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT
14. POLICE REPORT
15. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT
16. COUNCIL COMMENTS
17. ADJOURNMENT

TOWN OF NEWLAND  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 4, 2021

6:00 PM

PRESENT:

MAYOR: Derek Roberts

ATTORNEY: Joe Seegers(absent)

ALDERMAN: Kenny Caraway, James C. Johnson, Lauren Turbyfill, Christie Hughes, Gail Haller

GUESTS: Dean Grindstaff, Samantha Grindstaff, Sandy Lewis

STAFF: Chief Byron Clawson, Colby Benfield, Tammy Gardner

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The mayor then led the audience in the pledge to the American flag.

Christie made a motion to go into closed session. Kenny seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

Upon returning from closed session the Mayor announced no decision was made.

Christie made a motion to remove Joe Seegers as the town attorney. Kenny seconded the motion. James and Gail voted yes. Lauren voted no. Motion carried.

Christie made a motion to appoint Dean Grindstaff as the town attorney. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I. Motion carried.

James made a motion to accept the December minutes. Christie second the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

No public Comments.

Ben Hansel was absent, but Christie stated he wanted to talk about the guy at Ingles. James asked Chief Clawson if the board needed to pass an ordinance about panhandling. The Chief stated that would be awesome. Christie stated it was already in the ordinance. James asked Jeremy to get the policy book so they could let the attorney see what it says.

Chief Byron Clawson gave the police report. The chief went over notable calls. The chief asked the board about selling two magazines that came out of a display case. James stated to sell them and put the money in the drug fund. James asked the Chief about his department, if he was shorthanded. The Mayor asked when that could be addressed. The Mayor stated he wanted to add another officer and not have a working Chief. James stated it would be up to the board to decide and to amend the budget for

it. The Mayor asked when they could do a budget amendment. James stated he felt it would be better to do it at budget time. The Mayor asked if there was something they could do to speed it up. James stated they would have to check the budget. Jeremy stated he would get the numbers together by the next meeting. Kenny stated to not make a snap decision that they need to be informed before deciding. James stated the chief needed to check on the grant that helps pay for a new officer. James stated that right now the tag office needs someone, the maintenance needs someone and a finance officer is needed first, then add another officer at budget time. The mayor stated for the board to be on notice that he would continue with this. Christie stated that was fine, but he was not the one that could bring a motion and decide. The Mayor stated he wanted to get the officers pay up also and wondered how Land Harbor made more than the county seat. James asked the Mayor and chief if he wanted more bullets or butter. The mayor asked if James was saying they cannot have both. James stated he's just saying you have to look at the entire picture. The Mayor stated he was just trying to move forward and bring the police department up to where it needs to be. He stated we have a very professional group of guys now. Lauren asked about the grant and asked the chief to get the information and get it to Jeremy.

Colby Benfield gave the public works report. Colby stated they replaced the valve at the hardware. Colby stated for the first time since he has been here, there were no known leaks at this time. Colby stated the building was complete as far as insulation. Colby stated he sold the truck for \$10,300.00. Lauren made a motion to use the \$10,300.00 towards the building for the flooring. Gail seconded the motion. Christie agreed. James and Kenny opposed. Motion carried. Colby stated the applicants he interviewed stated they needed more money for that position. Christie stated she would come here for \$20.00 an hour. Colby asked the board how they wanted to move forward. Jeremy stated he talked with three of the applicants and they stated what Colby said. Kenny stated they want to come here making what Colby makes plus the benefit package. Colby stated he understood but needs the help even a part time if that's what they wanted. Kenny stated that about four or five years ago bids were brought up, but it was going to cost too more than a full-time employee. James stated it would need to be closed bids brought before the board. Christie made a motion to get bids for snow removal. Kenny seconded the motion. Lauren and Gail agreed. James disagreed. Motion carried.

Colby asked about taking the truck home when they are on call. The board stated they would have to check with the insurance company. Colby stated it was stopped about three years ago by the previous administrator. Colby stated it was in the policy book. James asked if it was voted on. Colby stated no and he did not know why it changed. James stated it would need a correct mileage log from the house to work. Coby stated it delayed their response coming from home then changing the vehicle first before they went to the call. The Mayor stated to let Jeremy check with the insurance company. James asked what was the deal with the Christmas lights. Colby stated they were old, and they have worked on them, but it takes a lot of money to replace the lights. Christie stated they have money in the events. Christie stated there was about \$3000.00. James asked about the streetlights. Colby stated the only way to get them to work is if they hire a professional electrician to come in and work on them. Christie stated they could start applying for grants and start there. Christie stated to start doing away with the ones on main street. Lauren stated to get rid of them. Kenny stated they would discuss what needed to be done in a workshop.

Jeremy Gerrish gave the finance and administrator report. Lauren asked about getting a contract with Jayco for the fourth fireworks. Lauren stated they have us penciled in for July second. Jeremy stated he had contracted Sandra Lewis contracting her from December 28<sup>th</sup> till 1<sup>st</sup> of March to work in the finance

department. Jeremy stated he was still trying to play catch up. Jeremy stated we are keeping everything current. Jeremy stated Joe was coming on the 12<sup>th</sup> to talk about moving the Southern software over. Jeremy stated he has asked him to give them an additional quote on what it would cost to bring everything over. Christie and James stated they thought it was already in the contract. Jeremy stated he and Sandy had enough to start on the audit and would be meeting with the auditor and getting that done in January.

In old business, James asked Colby about the quotes on the building if it was a turnkey project. Colby stated no, they broke it down in two years phases for the budget.

In new business, the board discussed the rock wall Dave asked the board to take a look at and about fixing it. Christie stated it was not our wall and not the towns responsibility.

Christie brought up the application for NCDOT bicycle safety event that Jeremy presented to her. Christie made a motion to give Jeremy permission to apply for the bicycle helmet grant. Lauren seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

The Mayor stated he wanted to give the previous Mayor a plaque and stated he personally did it himself and paid for it himself. The Mayor felt regardless how things came to an end, its impressive to serve 16 years as mayor. The Mayor presented the plaque to Lauren since Valerie couldn't be there. Lauren thanked the Mayor. James asked Jeremy if he got a cell phone through the Town since the previous administrator had one. Jeremy stated he did not need one and was happy with his phone.

Lauren stated she was contacted by the band that did the fourth of July last year and they were able to save that date if the town was ok with that. Christie stated she did not like them. Kenny stated it needed to be looked at. The Mayor stated he agreed but if Lauren was willing to put forth the effort and time, she should be able to go ahead. The Mayor asked if there was anybody on the board willing to deal with the band. No one spoke. The Mayor stated that was a no. The Mayor stated she just asking if she can use the previous band. Lauren stated we have the lowest event budget of the county and that she may have spent \$8000.00 on four events. Kenny stated he was just looking at the cost of things. He stated that was a lot to spend on one person. Kenny stated a little town of Cranberry can out do us on fireworks show. Lauren stated they probably do a big show of fireworks that was around \$7000.00, Newland just does a medium size show which is \$3000.00. Lauren stated she did not want it to come back on her that she spent to much money. She did not want to be put in that situation. Lauren asked if someone would make a motion that she was in charge of events and have freewill to spend the budget funds as needed. Gail made a motion to allow Lauren to be in charge and to use the budgeted event money where needed. Christie stated she would be more comfortable if everyone made the decision instead of her and Lauren and that she wanted to keep everyone in the loop. James stated \$2000.00 was a lot for a guy. The Mayor asked James who he thought would be good. James stated he did not know right off. The Mayor stated he wanted to move on. James stated it was not the Mayors decision. The Mayor stated he knew but she was willing to do the events and he did not understand why the hold up. The Mayor stated it was in the budget. The board, Jeremy and Mayor discussed the budget. Motion failed for lack of a second. Lauren stated that was a real pat on the back for her. Lauren stated she had given hours of her time and effort. Lauren got upset and left the meeting. The Mayor stated he agreed. The Mayor stated she puts a lot of time into it. The mayor asked if they did not want to have fireworks and events. Kenny stated they needed to look at what it was going to cost. Kenny stated it was a lot of money to put out, and maybe they could get fireworks cheaper and a band cheaper. James stated he did

not know that a band costed \$2000.00. James stated he did not know they had to pay for all the security. Christie stated that right now they don't know what was spent on what, we don't know if \$2000.00 was spent or \$5000.00 was spent on the band. James stated there has been no accountability around this place. The Mayor stated that they were holding to the past and Lauren was only asking to move forward with what's coming up in July and the Mayor stated going by this meeting he sees why government gets nothing done. The Mayor stated the board run her off and she is the only one putting any effort into it. Kenny stated he only wanted accountability. The Mayor stated there would be accountability and he knew Jeremy would get that accountability. The Mayor stated he felt everyone should be in the loop. Gail asked if we could move forward and let Lauren move forward with accountability. James stated the motion was made to I can spend this money. Gail stated she did not know there had been no accountability when she made the motion she was just learning. The Town attorney stated that they need discuss that in a workshop. Christie stated she did the fall festival. The Mayor asked if she got this much flack over it. Christie stated she did not spend any money. James stated to go back to what they've heard. He stated it was said we need a new policeman, we have heard we've got to put a new floor in the building, we have a contract that was not like it was presented to them, we have all this stuff where we are going to have to spend money. James stated who says we are going to have enough money to put \$15000.00 in 2022. James stated we don't know what's coming in, to the Mayor. James stated they have to keep a certain amount in contingency. The Mayor stated that every meeting they talk about that, but this is something that was last years. James stated that the budget started at July 1, and Lauren stated there was \$3000.00 left in the budget. Christie stated she didn't think she said \$3000.00 was left and thought there was \$2000.00 for the band, \$3000.00 for the fireworks and not sure what else was spent. Christie stated this should move to a workshop till they figure what's been spent. The Mayor stated its on halt til July. Christie stated no just till the audit gets done and they can look at financials. The Mayor stated it makes no sense to phase things out and not move forward. The Mayor stated she was just asking to move forward, and he understood because what happened with the carpet deal. Christie stated there was \$10,400.00 out there Colby. Gail stated Lauren just wanted to cover herself and do it the right way. Gail stated she would call Lauren to tell her things would be resolved.

The Mayor told the chief that if the board so desired to bring criminal charges over the carpet it would need to bring a vote. The Mayor stated Kenny, Christie and James had been going back and forth and he had also, to see what was going on. The Mayor asked is someone wanted to make a motion to ask the chief to collude with the district attorney on this. Kenny stated it should be put to rest one way or another. Kenny stated the carpet was purchased for \$10,000.00 illegally without it going through the board and voted on and them learning after the fact. Kenny stated it should not be left up to the local police department to look into it. The town attorney and the board discussed the situation.

Kenny made a motion to have an investigation into the carpet buying. Christie seconded the motion. Gail agreed. James disagreed. James stated it was done and that's his opinion. Motion carried.

James made a motion to table the panhandling ordinance till the next meeting. Kenny seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I. Motion carried.

James made a motion to adjourn. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

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Mayor, Derek Roberts

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Clerk, Tammy Gardner