

Meeting Minutes Committee on General Government

March 6, 2023

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Meeting Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/VKPPip6TjqkHx6ET2zSjTaMO4ipo_Ad3XiF7IOJa6vPQ-Xz_85rr8_97wui3W4Ec.bmBIlbVz5dapNahl?startTime=1678141535000

Members

Heather Shand, Chair
Byron Lane, Councilor Ward 6
Bruce Vogel, Councilor at Large

Other Participants

Sharif Zeid, Councilor Ward 1
Jennie Donahue, Councilor Ward 2
Christine Wallace, Councilor Ward 4
Jim McCauley, Councilor Ward 5
Afroz Khan, Councilor-at-Large

Agenda

- [ORDR00423](#) Resolution in support of Changing the State Flag and Seal of Massachusetts
- [ORDR00429](#) Amended City Council Rules 2023 (COTW)
- [ORDR00415](#) Brown School Ad Hoc Update

Meeting called to order at 5:30.

ORDR00423 Resolution in support of Changing the State Flag and Seal of Massachusetts

Chair Shand describes the resolution in support of Changing the State Flag and Seal of Massachusetts.

Public Comment

Marianne Vesey, Linda Lu Burciaga, Carol Wagan, Deb Mously, John Burciaga, Mary Pellitier, Marty Chalmers, Owen Smith – all spoke in support of the resolution.

Councilor Vogel asked about the genesis of the historical narrative contained in the resolution. Chair Shand replied she had adopted language from the petitioner, Linda Lu Burciaga, when crafting the resolution.

Councilor McCauley indicated he supports modernizing our symbols. In the proposed resolution, he found some of the historical language problematic in terms of fact and context. He proposed revised language.

Councilor Shand reconciled language in both versions. The committee voted 3-0 to recommend the amended version to the full Council.

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ORDR00429 Amended City Council Rules 2023 (COTW)

Chair Shand provided background on the rules order. She opened dialogue with a review of Rule 28, Council Group Email. This rule establishes use of citycouncil@cityofnewburyport.com by citizens to communicate with the entire council using a single address.

Councilors Khan, Donahue, McCauley, Zeid and Vogel asked questions and shared thoughts. Each recognize it as a best practice and acknowledge many other cities use a similar convention. They questioned whether this needed to be included in the rules document because it is an operational matter. The general consensus was that if it was to be kept in the rules, the final sentence, "It is not to be used for any deliberation as defined in G.L. 30A et al." should be removed.

Committee agreed to keep Rule 28 with the final sentence removed.

Rule 29 was offered to specify requests for information related to an investigation by councilors to department heads must be made through the City Clerk and Council President.

Chair Shand explains this was added at the request of the Human Resources Director. The HR Director has received one or more complaints that some council requests are deemed "fishing trips" by the department heads. Shand indicated she does not want the Council contributing to a toxic work environment.

There was significant discussion among all the councilors present. Many noted the continual need for information regarding matters in committee (where requests are made through the respective chair), or by ward councilors on behalf of constituents, or during budget season. They asked whether all these requests would need to be made through the Clerk and Council President.

Many noted similarity between this rule and section 2.7 of the city charter, Access to Information. Councilor Zeid noted section 2.7 pertains to an investigation by the legislative branch that compels the executive branch to provide information. His recollection is that section 2.7 has only been invoked 2 or 3 times during his 8 year tenure on the council. He tried to underscore the difference between routine requests for information to process council business and the type of investigation covered by section 2.7.

Councilor Vogel drew a distinction between requesting information regarding a matter that is before the full council or a committee, versus requesting information independent of that context.

Councilor McCauley shared he is at the center of the HR complaint. He noted it came from a department under the purview of the Community Services Committee he chairs. McCauley stated that sometimes you do not know if there is the need to bring a matter before the council without asking exploratory questions. He cited the recent inquiry into the Parks Conservancy as an example.

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Councilor Wallace asked whether this was an appropriate topic for a public meeting and suggested it would be better to address personnel matters between the principals rather than in open meeting.

Chair Shand indicated she is comfortable removing Rule 29. She also noted that Council needs to respect people who work in the Administration.

Committee voted to remove Rule 29 from the document and voted 3-0 to recommend approval of the amended rules to the full council.

Public Comment

Jane Snow expressed deep concern about the process. She indicated this was the second time she has attended public meeting where a personnel matter was discussed. Ms. Snow believes matters like these should be discussed in executive session versus public meeting.

ORDR00415 Brown School Ad Hoc Update

Committee agreed to receive and file ORDR00415, 3-0

Chair Shand explained her intention with regard to an RFI (Request for Information):

- Keep the matter in committee for a few months.
- Bring it into the full council to discuss priorities.
- Highlight key considerations such as the benefit of selling versus leasing the property.
- Seek agreement on the gym, for that will direct dialogue on most of the other options.
- Solicit financial context from the Finance Director.
- Invite public comment.

Councilor McCauley indicated he had prepared a 3-page order to formally sever the 1925 and 1974 additions from the 1970 addition. The 1925 and 1974 buildings would be designated for development and the 1970 addition (the gym) would be retained by the city as community space.

He asked if he could submit this as an order. Chair Shand replied he could submit it as a communication.

Councilor Zeid agrees with the "reset". He advocates orienting discussions around the specific votes the council will need to take, such as declaring the building as surplus.

Councilor Vogel, who chaired the recently disbanded ad-hoc committee agrees on a practical approach.

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Public Comment

Stephanie Nikotek, Susan Brown, John Weston, Margo Casey, Julie Menin, Matt Coughlin and Mia Young all spoke in support of using the Brown School for affordable housing.

Committee adjourned at 7:00 pm

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Newburyport, hereby request that the City Council of Newburyport adopt the following resolution (printed on back) in favor of Changing the Flag and Seal of Massachusetts.

Name, printed clearly

Signature


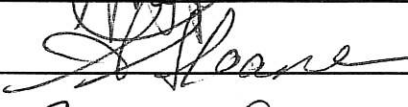
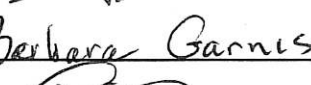

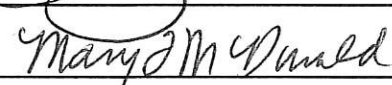

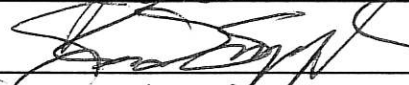
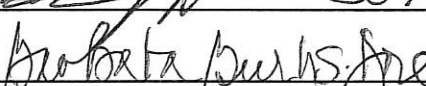


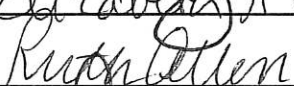

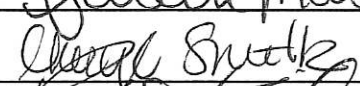

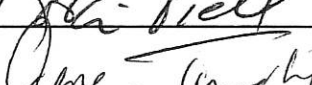
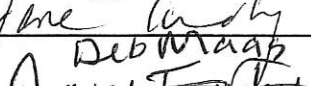

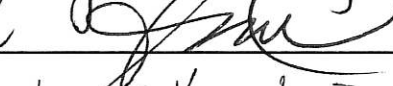
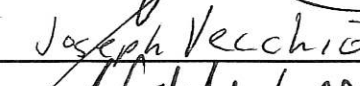
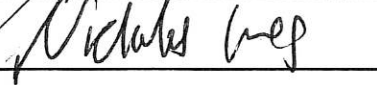
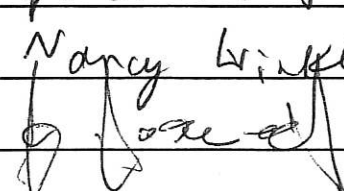
Street Address

William B. Clary	<i>William Clary</i>	14 Johnson St, Newburyport
Elizabeth Hazen	<i>Elizabeth Hazen</i>	30 Oakland St, ^{Unit 2} Nbpt
Sandra Thaxter	<i>Sandra Thaxter</i>	3 Oak St. Nbpt
Laurie Evans-Daly	<i>Laurie Evans-Daly</i>	85 Storey Ave, #315 Nbpt
Kathleen Desilets	<i>Kathleen Desilets</i>	196 High St. Nbpt.
Olivia Fleisch	<i>Olivia Fleisch</i>	7 Virginia Lane
Sandra Bilodeau	<i>Sandra Bilodeau</i>	16 Dove St
Jill Sheridan	<i>Jill Sheridan</i>	16 Beck St
Deborah Curtis	<i>Deborah Curtis</i>	27 Merrill St
Sarah Gammara	<i>Sarah Gammara</i>	72 Central St
Nanette Navarra	<i>Nanette Navarra</i>	43B Kent Street
ANNE FERGUSON	<i>Anne Ferguson</i>	11 UPLAND RD. NBPT
Peter Drench	<i>Peter Drench</i>	11 UPLAND RD, NBPT
Cindy Rodrigue	<i>Cindy Rodrigue</i>	21 Dorothy & Levey Drive, NBPT
LOUISE BARIBEAU	<i>Louise Baribeau</i>	2 Dalton St Newburyport
Andrew Griffith	<i>Andrew Griffith</i>	5 Collins St Newburyport
Mary Miller	<i>Mary Miller</i>	105 State St #14
Alexander White	<i>Alexander W. White</i>	19 Brown St Newbpt
Anne M. White	<i>Anne M. White</i>	19 Brown St. Newburyport. NB.
TINA BENIK	<i>Tina Benik</i>	15 WOODLAND ST Newburyport
SANDRA THAXTER	<i>Sandra Thaxter</i>	3 OAK ST, NEWBURYPORT ^{MA}

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RETURN TO UNITARIAN CHURCH

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Newburyport, hereby request that the City Council of Newburyport adopt the following resolution (printed on back) in favor of Changing the Flag and Seal of Massachusetts.

Name, printed clearly	Signature	Street Address
Nick Giranton		7 Cottage Court, Apt A, NBPT
Susan Searne		32 Kelleher Way NBPT
Barbara James Barbara Garnis		132 High Street Newburyport
Cindy Zabriskie		87 Lime St Newburyport
Mary McDonald		30 Madison St NBPT 01950
Joe Beauillet		132 High St #3 Newburyport, MA
Jim Supple		30 Madison St NBPT MA 01950
Barbara Burns-Dore		35 Virginia Ln NBPT, MA 01950
Sharon Kennedy		24 Munroe St.
Betsy Beach		41 Lime Street Nport
RUTH ALLEN		100 Boardman St. NBPT
Susan Mason		8 Farrell St NBPT
CHERYL Smith		8 Coffins Court NBPT
Robin Field		19 Woodman Way NBPT
Jane Trudy		12 Lafayette St, NBPT
Deb Magaz		15 A Ferry Rd: Salisbury, MA 01952
Sherrill Cordova		4 Kelleher Way 01950
Joseph Vecchione		4 Brissette Ave NBPT 01950
Mek Wes		6 Dalton St NBPT 01950
Nancy Winkler		7A Central Pl 01950
Esther Losence		40 MARLBORO ST NEWBURYPORT, MA 01950

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Newburyport, hereby request that the City Council of Newburyport adopt the following resolution (printed on back) in favor of Changing the Flag and Seal of Massachusetts.

Return to Unitarian Church

Name, printed clearly	Signature	Street Address
Kathleen Derrick	KA. Derrick	11 SUMNER ST.
Thomas Lochhead	Th. Lochhead	11 Sumner St
Marian Keighton Leary	Marian Keighton Leary	323 Merrimac St.
Elizabeth Hough	Elizabeth Hazen	30 oakland st UNITA
Amy Cameron	Amy	21 myrtle Ave.
Michelle Kimbell	M. Kimbell	344 Merrimac St.
Juan Cooper	Juan	9 Kent St
Beth Buschini	Beth Buschini	36 Winter St - Nbpt
Joe Buschini	Joe Buschini	36 WINTER NBPT.
Kathleen Course	Kathleen Course	400 Merrimac #1 Not
Thomas Gets	Th. Gets	36 Broad St NBPT
Lynda Pennell	Lynda Pennell	53 Temple St. newburyport
Donna Greenwood	Donna Greenwood	12 Riverview Dr., Newburyport, MA 01950
Barbara Riley	Barbara Riley	"
Diana Kerry	DIANA KERRY	33 Temple St, NBPT 01950
Ally	AINE ELLROTT	43 purchase, NBPT 01950
Jacqueline Hogan	Jacqueline Hogan	4 Storey Ave NBPT 01950
Judy Mouradian	Judy Mouradian	5 Beck St, Newburyport 01950
Daniam Turco	Daniam Turco	45 Spofford St, Newburyport.
Melina Munoz Turco	Melina	45 spofford St Newburyport MA 01950
Boyan Palomko	Boyan	9. Center Street

RETURN TO UNITARIAN CHURCH

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Name, printed clearly	Signature	Street Address
Priscilla B. Bellairs	<i>Priscilla B. Bellairs</i>	63 Purchase St., Newburypt
JOHN BURCIAGA	<i>John Burciaga</i>	18 HOYTS LANE
Tom Brown	<i>Tom Brown</i>	251 C HIGH STREET
Sarah Hall	<i>Sarah Hall</i>	8 Arthur Welch Dr.
Katherine Gendron	<i>Katherine Gendron</i>	8 Brooks St
Carolyn Johnson	<i>Carolyn Johnson</i>	46 Minnie St Newburyport
Joe Brouillet	<i>Joe Brouillet</i>	132 High St.
Barbara Garnis	<i>Barbara Garnis</i>	132 High ST
JOHN LEARY	<i>John Leary</i>	62 WASHINGTON ST.
Annie Maurer	<i>Annie Maurer</i>	17 Otis Pl. #4
Joan Leonard	<i>Joan Leonard</i>	5 Conlidge St
Mary Beth Pelletier	<i>Mary Beth Pelletier</i>	11 Olive Street NBPT
KATHLEEN PASQUINA	<i>Kathleen Pasquina</i>	4 Tyndal St. NBPT
Debbie Hart-Klen	<i>Debbie Hart-Klen</i>	2 Hamilton Way, NBPT
Amber Hewett	<i>Amber Hewett</i>	29 Charter St. Apt.

