

Ryan Knapp, Chair  
Phil Carroll, Vice Chair  
Neil Chaudhary  
Joe Girgasky  
Mary Ann Jacob  
Eva Bermudez



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## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### Draft Minutes of the Legislative Ordinance Committee Meeting

The Ordinance Committee met on Wednesday July 8th, 2015 in Meeting Room 1 of the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Lane, Newtown. Committee Chairman Ryan Knapp called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Present: Ms Jacob, Mr. Chaudhary, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Girgasky and Mr. Knapp. Ms. Bermudez arrived at 7:45

Also in attendance: None.

MINUTES: Mr. Chaudhary motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting of 5/27//2015. Mr. Carroll seconded. All in favor (5-0) Mr. Girgasky abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

### Old Business

#### Review and recommendation regarding a possible new alarm ordinance per the charge set forth by the Legislative Council on February 18, 2015.

Mr. Knapp opened discussion by summarizing the meeting he had with Chief Kehoe the previous Wednesday. The Chief answered questions and shared information related two three OC charges. The Chief also shared a model ordinance that Mr. Knapp provided. The Chief said that each year his department receives approximately 1,400 false alarms and between 2-4 real alarms. The PD sends two officers and it takes between 20-30min at a minimum. He provided contact information of former Chiefs who would be willing to talk to the Committee. The Chief suggested an updated contact list, and annual renewal citing awareness issues.

The model ordinance provided had fees for renewals and an increased fine schedule. Mr. Knapp created a draft with that information incorporated into our existing format for discussion which he shared with the group.

Mr. Girgasky felt that \$25 for a renewal was too high. He questioned the need for a data base.

Ms. Jacob also questioned the need for a data base, which would raise awareness but did not see how it would change the responses of the PD to alarm calls.

After discussion, the group felt the data base was needed to track false alarms.

Mr. Chaudhary felt the cost of renewals felt high.

Mr. Knapp spoke to the intent being curtailing false alarms and not generating revenue. The fees and fines need to be enough to motivate people to be aware of proper operation of an alarm system and to correct malfunctioning system issues.

Mr. Chaudhary would like to see language added where the Council has the right to change fines and fees without modifying the ordinance as with senior tax abatement.

There was support for a fine on the 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm.

Mr. Knapp suggested moving the schedule into a table. He will call the town attorney about the fines.

Ms. Jacob shared information on replacing the appeals language and referring to another ordinance.

Mr. Chaudhary spoke about removing fire alarms and not wanting to discourage people from those systems.

Review and recommendation regarding a possible modification of the existing firearms ordinance per the charge set forth by the Legislative Council on February 18, 2015.

Mr. Knapp summarized his conversations with the Chief on the item. The Chief did not recall any incidents in town. He spoke to how different situations, such as a person suspected of having a firearm would be addressed and the limitations of what officers can do. If the person did not have a permit to carry, they already have steps in place to take action. If the person does have a permit to carry right now they can do so provided they are in compliance with state laws. Because this is not universally accepted across the state, he would expect challenges from those who have permits to carry.

Ms. Jacob spoke with a fish and game club members and they did not seem to mind.

Mr. Carroll felt we have a good ordinance that addresses safety issues after a lot of work and compromises.

Mr. Girgasky recognized there has not been a problem to date.

Mr. Chaudhary felt the past ordinance solved a lot of problems related to firearms. This feels like fishing for a problem.

Mr. Knapp does not see a present issue and had concerns because there maybe merit to challenges. This topic has not been settled in the courts (per town attorney comments.) State approved permit holders feeling they are approved to carry in public.

Ms. Bermudez feels there is an expectation of safety and does not support no action.

Mr. Chaudhary made a motion to recommend the Legislative Council not pursue modification of the existing firearms ordinance. Mr. Girgasky seconded. Motion Passes 5-1 (Ms. Bermudez voting against.)

Review and recommendation regarding a possible unsolicited mail ordinance per the charge set forth by the Legislative Council on February 18, 2015.

Mr. Knapp spoke to the Chief about this issue and possibly using the litter ordinance to deter it. This ordinance is driven by Statute 22a-250 and has a \$219 fine. The PD sees more dumping issues than litter. He does not know of past issues with unsolicited mail. His concerns with using the litter ordinance are that he felt it was a broad interpretation of the definition.

After discussion, the group will reach out to legal to determine if the definition can be modified.

An amendment enabling the municipal option of Public Act No. 13-224, providing a tax exemption for One Hundred Percent Disabled Veterans as referred to the Ordinance Committee by the Legislative Council during the regular meeting of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Mr. Knapp informed the group that he is waiting for conformation if during the state legislative session, any change to the Public Act has happened that will impact the Ordinance.

Ms. Bermudez looked it up and said it appears to have died in the Senate. (CCM has since confirmed.)

Mr. Knapp will run the draft by legal again and bring it to the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Mr. Chaudhary motioned to adjourn at 9:30pm. Mr Carroll seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan W. Knapp  
Ordinance Committee Chairman