

SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020 AT 7:30AM
AT TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE (VIA ZOOM)
AGENDA

JOIN ZOOM MATTING WITH THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82763250506?pwd=SHZuZHJFZDc3YnB0cVB1c2EzUU00QT09>

or by calling 1-929-205-6099 meeting ID: 82763250506 passcode: 142063

| TIME | BOARD ACTION |
|--------|---|
| 7:30AM | Call the meeting to order-introduce those present |
| 7:35AM | Alleged open meeting law violation – see attached complaint DISCUSS/ VOTE |
| 7:45AM | Unfinished/new business DISCUSS/ VOTE |
| 7:55AM | Executive session (if necessary) DISCUSS/ VOTE |
| 8:05AM | Adjourn VOTE |

COMPLAINT OF ALLEGED
OPEN MEETING LAW VIOLATION

Date of complaint filing - December 10th 2020

Date and location of alleged violation

Dec 3rd , 2020 Newport Center VT via Zoom Meeting

Complaint against the public body of Newport Center,,Vermont for alleged violation of Vermont's Open Meeting Laws. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 314 any person aggrieved by a violation of that law must provide the public body with written notice that alleges specific violations and requests a specific cure of such violations.

Complainant's Name:

Barry Sahagian
46 Vance Hill Road
Newport Center, VT 05857

Public body that is alleged to have violated the law:

Newport Center VT Select Board:
Steve Barrup, Gerry Waterman, Richard Gosselin

Alleged, specific violation of (1 VSA 312) (h)

(h) At an open meeting, the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters.

Details and Cure:

Details

While I have been allowed to speak at these meetings, during this meeting as well as many subsequent meetings as I engage in public comment on business of the town, attendees of the meeting will laugh, ridicule with gestures and vocal insults. The select board chair not only allows this by not bringing the meeting to order, he encourages it as well by inviting the attendees to address me and make comments after I speak. As example "Do you have anything to say to Barry, Steve Edgerly?" He said this after I spoke at a subsequent meeting. At this meeting Steve Edgerly laughed and

made gestures while I was speaking. The insurance man Jaques Rober who was on the meeting agenda to discuss policy updates called me an idiot after I spoke. Once again Steve Barrup allowed this. They both got the message from Steve Barrup (Select-board Chair) from subsequent meetings that he approved of ridicule and insult directed towards me by not bringing the meeting to order (part of his job).

I reacted to this behavior by asking what was so funny and what are you laughing at to both these individuals. Steve Barrup reacted to this by muting me on Zoom and stating I was "attacking" the attendees of the meeting

This I believe to be a subterfuge in Steve Barrups many efforts to not allow comment by residents that he personally does not approve. In my case at this meeting in particular was a discussion of the open meeting laws of which he and the other two selectmen refuse to comply to. This is most evident by the many complaints I have filed resulting in a unanimous vote of no wrong doing by the select-board every time.

Cure

Steve Barrup to address and discuss this issue and announce at a special meeting that he does not condone ridicule and insults directed toward residents while they make public comment at meetings.

This is not an isolated incident and has been going on for years. I have been attending these meetings every month for 5 years. My initial inspiration to attend these meetings and get involved occurred at my first meeting, November 2015. A resident raised his hand respectfully to be heard, Steve Barrup told him in an angry loud tone, SHUT UP Ernest just Shut up repeatedly!

Ernest Choquette was not allowed to speak. Ernest is a respected member of this community who owns multiple rental units in Newport Center and pays a considerable amount of taxes.

This also my very first time I ever filed an OML complaint on this very issue years ago The Select-board denied this ever happened. Unanimous vote of no wrong doing was voted. Since the complaint I never heard Steve Barrup tell anyone to shut up. He now does this in more subtle ways by using refined subterfuge tactics as aforementioned.

Closing this complaint, I would like to quote adage I have seen in past. "Democracy is Freedom, but Democracy is not Free. The principals have to be maintained which means you have to challenge the individuals who chose violate our constitutional rights. This I chose to do.

Barry Sahagian