

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

July 10, 2006

PRESENT:

Douglas W. Lyon, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Mark Kaplan, Selectman
Ruth I. Clough, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sgt. Ed Andersen, New London Police Department
Ann Bedard, Sewer Department
Donald F. Bent, Health Officer
Norm Bernaiche, Assessor
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record
Chad Denning, Recreation Director
Carolyn Dube, Argus Champion
Bruce King, President/CEO, New London Hospital
Richard Lee, Road Agent
Michael Morrison, New England Pest Management, Inc.
Michael Todd, Attorney for James & Laura Alexander
Peter Stanley, Zoning Administrator & Fire Chief

Chair Lyon call meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Capital Improvements Plan: Mr. Kaplan will represent the Board of Selectmen on the Capital Improvements Plan subcommittee this year. Ms. Levine said that the Budget Committee will send three representatives this year, one from each of the three subcommittees. Mr. Kaplan briefly updated the Selectmen on Budget Committee discussions to date. Chair Lyon suggested that the Budget Committee should review the fiscal impact of the veteran's credits, which added 12 cents to the tax rate.

Fiber Project: Ms. Levine reported that on Tuesday, July 11, the eight towns involved in the regional fiber project would receive a verbal feasibility report from Packetfront, to be followed by a written report by August 4. Chair Lyon referred to a recent article in the Union Leader about the project.

Regional Pandemic Preparedness: Ms. Levine said that she, Don Bent, and Emergency Management Director Michael Warning would attend Wednesday's regional pandemic preparedness meeting hosted by the Sullivan County Manager in Newport.

Trustees of the Trust Funds/Cemetery Funds: Ms. Levine said that Finance Officer Carol Fraley will pursue the questions raised at the recent meeting between the Selectmen, Trustees of the Trust Funds, and Cemetery Trustees. One of the first orders of business is to meet with Terry Knowles, Director of the Charitable Trusts division of the Attorney General's Office.

Website Status: Ms. Levine said the new website has gone live via GovOffice, but the GovOffice designers are working on the banner and other design features.

Academy Building Photo Display: Ms. Levine said that when Colby-Sawyer College gave the Town the Old Academy Building for the town offices, the College and Town had agreed to prepare a historical photo display for the upstairs hallway of the Academy building. She said that Kelsie Lee is working on the project this summer, with the assistance of New London Archives and Colby-Sawyer archives. She showed the Selectmen sample layouts that Kelsie Lee has proposed for the display. This led to a discussion about selling the Town history book written by Ann Page Stecker. Debbie Cross suggested selling the books at the New London Inn gift shop.

Alexander Zoning Violation: Chair Lyon recognized Michael Todd, who was present to report to the Board of Selectmen on his clients' progress to meet the requirements of the notice of violation issued last month. He filed the appropriate building permit applications on June 14 and is scheduled to be on the agenda of the Planning Board's July 25th meeting. Ms. Levine noted that the Planning Board would consider whether a referral to the Zoning Board was in order. The Board of Selectmen thanked Mr. Todd for his report and his efforts to comply. Mr. Todd departed at 8:50 AM.

The Board of Selectmen signed the documents listed at the end of these minutes.

Non-Resident Taxpayers' Meeting: At 9:00 AM, Chair Lyon opened the first of the two 2006 non-resident taxpayer meetings, and introduced the department heads present and special guest Bruce King, President/CEO of New London Hospital.

Chair Lyon turned the floor over to Mr. King, who updated the approximately 30 taxpayers on New London Hospital's financial turnaround and strategy going forward. Mr. King said he came to NLH from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in April 2003 under a time-limited management contract to see the hospital through its down-financial years. Technically, Mr. King is a DHMC employee who has been assigned the task of running NLH. He shared that the last two complete fiscal years, 2004 and 2005, showed small operating margins that NLH has reinvested back into capital and infrastructural needs. The turnaround happened quicker than predicted – in one year vs. three years. Before his arrival at NLH, the hospital had lost \$19 million over five years. While there was some strength in the balance sheet, the hospital was a year away from a zero balance. Since then, the hospital has not had to touch the corpus of its savings and has received \$800,000-\$1 million in donations that have been used to improve the facility.

Mr. King said that the Board of Directors has now started to plan for the hospital's future. There are six elements to their strategy:

1. Focus on clinical needs of the communities served by the hospital: the Hospital wants to meet the primary and secondary care needs of the 15 towns with 31,000 residents in its service area. Surprisingly, 65% of Newport residents use New London Hospital medical providers for primary care, while only 50% of New London residents do. The Hospital has successfully recruited and stabilized its cadre of primary care providers.
2. Relationship with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center: In October 2005, NLH became one of 12 corporate members of the DHMC Alliance, which includes Mary Hitchcock, Valley Regional, Mt. Ascutney, and Barre hospitals, plus mental health and VNA services. Each member institution operates independently but combines resources for purchasing, insurance, third-party contracts, strategic planning, etc. There is no financial assistance from DHMC, but there are significant clinical relationships, such as cardiology and oncology. Also, effective October 2006, NLH will have a relationship with DHMC for obstetric care.
3. Continue financial growth: The past two years have ended with position operating margins, and this year NLH is tracking well through May to meet the budgeted 1% operating margin. They will aim for a 2% margin in 2006-2007.

4. Establish clinical information system: one year ago, NLH decided to replace its information systems with a \$3 million information system, a Paragon product that allows for electronic medical record keeping. The result will be easier registration, digitized laboratory results, x-rays, etc. This was a two-year commitment and so far is on-time and on-budget. It was a proud moment for NLH when it received a \$2.9M loan from the US Department of Agriculture to bring technology to rural communities. NLH was the only northeast hospital selected.
5. Review facilities needs: NLH is working on a master facility plan, looking at the bricks and mortar. The hospital itself, while tired, is not in bad shape. NLH will make a \$3-5 million investment, including \$800,000 this year, to bring the facility up to modern standards. NLH has also analyzed the medical office building. The front half of 10,000 SF is 35 years old, while the back portion is 17 years old. The front half is functionally obsolete, which means it makes more sense to tear it down. NLH is working on a plan to build a two-story addition to the hospital that would house ambulatory care facility, rehabilitative services, and pediatrics. They would like all services to be in one building, and are looking at moving administration to the rear of the medical office building to use the entire hospital for clinical care. He added that the medical and surgical rooms were built in 1958 and also need to be brought to today's standards, including private facilities and family sleeping accommodations. The total project has an \$18 million price tag, and NLH is investigating financing options.
6. Review master plan: NLH has 60 acres of property spread across commercial, hospital, and residential zones. The Board is exploring a life care facility similar to Harvest Hill, Rivermead in Peterborough, or Kendal at Hanover. No decisions have been made.

Mr. King updated the audience on the hospital's clinical services, and then took questions before turning the floor back to the Selectmen.

Ms. Clough gave an update on the Planning Board's activities, and thanked Town Planner Ken McWilliams, Zoning Administrator Peter Stanley, and Land Use Coordinator Amy Rankins for their support of the Town's boards. Ms. Clough said that the Planning Board has started the process of updating the Master Plan, as well as updating the Site Plan Regulations and Subdivision Regulations. She said the Planning Board meets twice per month and the meetings are open. Currently, the Planning Board is hearing about a subdivision in Sutton that has regional impact and would pass over a New London road.

Ms. Clough then gave an update on the Recreation Department, reintroducing Chad Denning as the Town's new recreation director. Ms. Clough quoted Mr. Denning as saying "recreation has no boundaries," and she is encouraged by his regional approach to recreation.

Mr. Kaplan gave an update on the Transfer Station and solid waste removal. He reiterated the need for vehicles to display stickers in order to use the Transfer Station, saying that each household creates approximately one-ton of trash per year. Over the course of two months, employees at the Transfer Station identified over 100 users of the Transfer Station who did not have proper permits. At \$91 per ton to dispose of trash, this would add one cent to the tax rate, which is why the Selectmen have insisted on permits. Mr. Kaplan also informed the group that the Town's contract with the Wheelabrator incinerator in Claremont would expire in July 2007, so he is working with a small group of towns to find another incinerator or landfill to haul trash starting next summer.

Edward Prince asked the Selectmen to consider re-opening the Transfer Station on Sundays, as the current schedule is not convenient for part-time residents. Mr. Kaplan thanked him for his comments and explained that it is difficult for the Town to hire employees if they have to work both days of a weekend and not have time to spend with family. He said that the Selectmen will look at it again.

Chair Lyon updated the group on the proposed roundabout at Newport & County Road, which will reduce accidents, slow traffic, improve traffic control, and provide safer crossing for pedestrians. The Selectmen will look at the construction schedule to minimize its impact on summer traffic, but it will be difficult to avoid summer traffic altogether.

Finally, Chair Lyon gave a brief update on the Board of Selectmen's involvement with the Sewer Department, and explained that Richard Lee is now managing operations of that department. The costs of running the sewer system will be paid by sewer users and not by residents who do not use the public sewer. This led to a discussion about possible expansion of the sewer system to Lake Sunapee.

Chair Lyon invited residents to stay and hear an update to the Board of Selectmen on the mosquito control program, beginning at 10:30 AM.

Mosquito Control: At 10:30 AM, the Selectmen were joined by Health Officer Don Bent and Michael Morrison, owner of Municipal Pest Management, Inc. Mr. Morrison said that when the mosquito control started earlier this spring, New Hampshire had actually been in drought conditions, believe it or not. His crew started looking for breeding sites in April, and documented habitats around town. New London does not have as many melanura habitats as he has found in other towns. When the rainy weather came in May, it not only interfered with his work, but there was so much water that it killed the larvae and washed out breeding areas. He had expected an epidemic of breeding, but instead the habitat was washed away.

Now, his crew is looking for the summer mosquitoes, the vectors that carry diseases from birds to humans. They are working in pools, roadside ditches, and flooded fields/pastures. They have found the Japonicus mosquito, which was unexpected, which is a vector for both EEE and West Nile Virus. They are still mapping catch basins. They have sent mosquitoes to Concord for testing on a weekly basis, and there have been no positive tests in the state yet.

He said that requests he received to have particular properties checked was a big help. His staff identified some breeding sites through this contact. They have done very little control work with BTI due to the spring rains. He said the state has passed a new law to allocate funds for mosquito control, and he will keep track and apply on behalf of New London if possible.

Ms. Clough said that Mr. Morrison had alluded to some control work with BTI, and asked where in town he had applied treatment. Mr. Morrison said that they have treated all over town, mostly on sites that are much smaller than an acre. He said he was surprised to find habitat at the Cricenti Bog, but there were no larvae present. Some properties had puddles as small as 10' x 10' that were treated. At the end of the year, he will give the Selectmen a map identifying sites.

Peter Stanley raised a question about the State Fish & Game's dispute with state public health officials about treating Fish & Game property. Mr. Morrison said that it appears a compromise will be reached to treat with BTI rather than spraying pesticide. Ms. Levine said she has also followed the discussion, and it seems that Fish & Game does not have evidence to support its anti-treatment position.

Chair Lyon said that the Selectmen committed to following Mr. Morrison's progress this summer and reporting back to voters. This treatment would have to be approved by voters on an annual basis. He thanked Mr. Morrison and Dr. Bent for the report.

Beaver Activity: Dr. Bent said that the beaver dam on top of Red Brook, behind the schools, has been removed and he is testing the water in the brook and in Pleasant Lake for bacteria resulting from beaver activity.

Building Permits:

- Bicknor-Wilmot, Inc., 207 Main Street (Map 073, Lot 080), permit for removal of existing building in residential zone and new building in commercial zone – Approved (Permit 06-079)
- Christopher and Sarah Caron, 240 Bunker Road (Map 062, Lot 036), permit to build 24' x 24' garage on floating slab – Approved (Permit 06-080)
- Douglas and Charlene Baxter, 575 Hall Farm Road (Map 076, Lot 014), permit to add extension on back of garage for a garden shed – Approved (Permit 06-081)
- Barry and Gretchen Fougere, 1835 Little Sunapee Road (Map 043, Lot 023), permit to install stairway down slope to shore and deck – Approved (Permit 06-082)
- Scott Brown, 515 Wilmot Center Road (Map 052, Lot 013), permit to build overhang for boat – Approved (Permit 06-083)
- Raymond and Patricia Deragon, 184 Parkside Road (Map 072, Lot 021), permit to raise roof over kitchen, garage and screen porch for storage – Approved (Permit 06-084)
- Mere Bluff, LLC, 37 Boulder Point Road (Map 115, Lot 003), permit for various kitchen and bath renovations – Approved (Permit 06-085)

Sign Permit Applications:

- Temporary Sign Permit Application for KAT Company for a 24" x 36" sandwich board sign to be placed at the Information Booth indicating a "Christmas in July" at the Kearsarge Regional High School in North Sutton for July 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15, 2006 at 7:00 PM – Approved
- Temporary Sign Permit Application for Our Lady of Fatima Church for a 2' x 2' sandwich board sign to be placed at the church indicating a "Attic Treasure Sale Here on Saturday , July 22, 2006 from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM – Approved
- Application for Temporary Sign Permit Application for First Baptist Church, Women's Fellowship for Sandwich Board Sign to be placed at the Church and Information Booth indicating Summer Fair for Saturday, July 8, 2006 from 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM – Approved
- Temporary Sign Permit Application for Susie Burman, 83 Squires Lane, for self-standing sign to be placed at the Information Booth indicating "Garage Sale on Saturday, July 15, 2006 from 7:00 AM – 2:00 PM" across from Colby-Sawyer College to raise funds for women in college – Approved
- Permanent Sign Permit Application for the First Horizon Home Loan Corporation for a two foot square sign to be placed on post at 228 Main Street indicating "First Horizon Home Loans" - Approved

Other Items for Signature:

- Disbursement and Payroll Voucher for the week of July 10, 2006 – Approved
- Application for Use of the Sydney L. Crook Conference Room by the New London Garden Club on July 22, 2006 from 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM - Approved

Applications for Current Use:

Charles M. Bucklin Grandchildren's Trust, Morgan Hill Road (Map 011, Lot 003) – Approved
Charles M. Bucklin Grandchildren's Trust, Springfield/Wilmot Line (Map 001, Lot 001) – Approved
Charles M. Bucklin Grandchildren's Trust, Morgan Hill Road (Map 010, Lot 001) – Approved
Charles M. Bucklin Family Trust, 163 Morgan Hill Road (Map 033, Lot 027) – Approved
Robert S. Messer, 258 Little Sunapee Road (Map 046, Lot 004) – Approved
Dennis Reynolds, 84 Forty Acres Road (Map 039, Lot 004) – Approved
David and Celeste Cook, 79 Whitney Brook Road (Map 052, Lot 005) – Approved
David and Celeste Cook, Whitney Brook Road (Map 052, Lot 008) - Approved
Iris Clark, 1205 King Hill Road (Map 130, Lot 006) – Approved
Marilyn R. Kidder and James C. Cleveland, Baker Road (Map 114, Lot 001) – Approved
Lloyd Littlefield, 260 Pleasant Street (Map 074, Lot 011) – Approved

Chair Lyon moved to go into non-public pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) personnel and (f) real estate negotiation. Second Mr. Kaplan. Roll call vote: Lyon – yes; Kaplan – yes; Clough – yes.

Upon returning to public session, the Board of Selectmen adjourned the meeting at 11:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie W. Levine
Town Administrator