



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES December 8, 2008

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectman
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Tina Helm, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator
Lauren Gifford, Valley News
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record

Applications for Building Permits:

- Thomas & Nancy Donnelly, 31 Sawyer Lane (Map & Lot 073-067-000) addition of unheated porch – Permit #08-147 – Approved.
- Kevin Johnson, 11 Jenny Lane (Map & Lot 074-022-000) 8 x 14 shed. Permit #08-148 – Approved.
- Robert & Emily Foehl, 13 Highland Ridge (Map & Lot 145-001-013) renovation of bathroom, new tub and shower, no wall to be moved Permit #08-149 – Approved.

Application for Sydney Crook Room:

- United States Government, Census Bureau – use of conference room to recruit and train census takers – January 6th & 13th, 2009 10:00AM – 1:00 PM – approved.

Application for use of Bandstand:

- Chamber of Commerce, set up tree Dec. 3rd, 2008 @ 2:30 &, Santa Claus visit/xmas tree lighting Dec. 5th, 2008 @ 5:30-6:30 – Approved. (after the fact)

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

- Town of NL Rec. Department – Yoga Classes – Wednesdays Jan 7th, - Feb. 25th, 5:15-6:45 – Approved.

Application for use of Town Common

- KRHS Student to Student program to sell Christmas trees on December 7, 13-14, & 20-21, 2008 10:AM-3:PM – Approved.

Application for Temporary Sign:

- Ladies Benevolent Soc. of Elkins, 2x2 sign at information booth, Holiday Fair Dec. 6th – Approved. (after the fact)
- NL Historical Society, Holiday Open House sign @ Info booth – 12/3-8/08 – Approved. (after the fact)

Application for Permanent Sign:

- Ledyard National Bank, 178 County Road (Map & Lot 059-017-000) new sign to replace old one – Approved.

- Russell McDonough, Peter Christians Tavern, 195 Main St. (Map & Lot 073-077-000) Maison de Revoire, on porch and on pole – Approved.

Other:

- Disbursement & payroll voucher week of 12-08-08 - Approved.
- Holiday letter to employees
- Reduced Winter Maintenance Route 103A document – Approved.

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 8:12 AM.

A. MEETING MINUTES: The Minutes of the December 1, 2008 meeting were approved as presented.

B. NEW BUSINESS:

Certificate of Appreciation from Chamber of Commerce: Ms. Levine reported that at the annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber Board voted to recognize the Town of New London by awarding the Lake Sunapee Region Appreciation Certificate in recognition of the Town's on-going community support. The framed certificate will hang in the Town Offices in the front hallway. Ms. Levine noted that our partnership with the Chamber has been improving especially with Rob Bryant as Executive Director and she sees a strengthening relationship between the Town and the businesses.

Ms. Helm noted that Nonni's, the new restaurant in Colonial Plaza, has opened. Ms. Levine said that they do not yet have a Certificate of Occupancy. She noted that when a new business opens, the Planning Board often waives a site plan review when there is no change of use for a new business location. However, the business still needs to be inspected by all Department Heads and still needs to be approved to be open to the public. She will look into this matter. Mr. Ballin suggested that the Planning Board should perhaps revisit the issue of the waiving of the site plan reviews.

2009 CAC Schedule and Request from COA: The CAC meeting dates for 2009 were approved as follows: January 24, February 28, March 28, May 2, June 27, August 22, September 26, October 24, and December 5.

Ms. Levine shared that she had received a letter from Hugh Chapin of the Chapin Senior Center, nominating Hardy Hasenfuss for membership to the CAC. Ms. Levine reported that COA has asked that they have a permanent position on the CAC. Mr. Chapin has been on the CAC for several years and is now nominating Ms. Hasenfuss for that position. She responded to Mr. Chapin by indicating that the Board of Selectmen conducts committee membership review in March after Town Meeting. Mr. Ballin suggested that the Town stay on schedule with regard to committee appointments and that Mr. Hasenfuss's appointment be considered in March. However, any resident is invited to attend these meetings and the Selectmen would encourage Mr. Hasenfuss to do so.

Ms. Helm requested a quick review from Ms. Levine as to how a resident gets appointed to the Advisory Committee. Ms. Levine shared that usually the interested individuals submit a Volunteer Request which she holds on to throughout the year. Then in March, after Town Meeting and elections, the Selectmen review all the committee appointments, filling vacancies as required. That is usually when these requests are reviewed and appointments made. The membership on the CAC, which is appointed by the Selectmen, is generally held at 30, largely due to space in the room. Mr. Kaplan said that usually 22-24 individuals attend the meeting. Ms. Levine stated that having a CAC committee is not required by or

governed by State statute. She thought this committee originally started 20-25 years ago as a business advisory committee.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

Whipple Basement Project: Ms. Levine reported that on Wednesday, December 3, two bids were received by the Town for this project. One was from Bruss Construction of Bradford and the other from Engelwood in Manchester. She noted that Engelwood did not attend the mandatory walk through and that their bid was incomplete at submission but has since been completed. She said, however, that there are still significant questions regarding the numbers. She met with Chris Lizotte on Thursday, December 4, 2008 to discuss the two bids and reported that they both thought the Engelwood bid should not be considered since it did not conform to the mandatory walk through. She reported that the Bruss bid came in at \$297,000 although there were some items in the base bid that should not have been included (about \$4000), plus a sprinkler system for about \$20,000. Basically the bid was for \$320,000. She noted that there is about \$140,000 in the Capitol Reserve Fund, meaning that the remaining cost would be about \$180,000. Bruss is willing to revisit any of the costs and we already know that the Police Department is willing to do whatever they can on their own to reduce the cost.

Ms. Levine indicated that she was looking for some guidance from the Selectmen. The Budget Committee had already directed the department heads and asked that they cut another 3% +/- from the budget. Mr. Kaplan shared that he did not think the Town could afford to move forward with this renovation project this year, given the current economic situation. He suggested that perhaps the renovations could be confined to the evidence room and the fitness center in order to fulfill the Town's promise to the department, assuming the cost would not be too great. Ms. Levine said that the whole renovation project had been promised, but she said that if we just did the police space there are additional items that could be cut, for example, the bathrooms, and finished flooring, noting that the concrete will have to be poured in any case. She suggested that one way to address the additional dollars that would need to be raised, would be to fund this project through a bond, the first payment of which would not affect the tax rate until 2010.

Mr. Ballin said that as much as he believes parts of this project are worthy, he would rather work hard to preserve those items in the budget now that the department heads believe to be necessary, as opposed to spending new money on this project. Ms. Levine clarified that this project is in the budget now so that the bottom line that the Town is looking at now includes this project. Mr. Ballin stated that he did not see a sense of urgency to get this project done and would like to hear more about the possible contribution of the internal labor force in order to contribute to this project. Ms. Levine asked if there was a way to allocate what was already in the Capital Reserves, plus employee labor, and then maybe appropriate less than the \$180,000 if it is needed? Mr. Ballin said that he would like to look at what the money already set aside in capital reserve would cover in this project. He said he understood the consideration of a fitness center in this renovation, but with the proximity of Hogan Center, perhaps by supplementing membership fees with them, we could reduce our costs. Ms. Levine noted that the departments already have their own equipment which they paid for themselves, and the Town already receives a discount to Hogan.

Ms. Helm indicated two concerns. First, the gym situation, and the other is delaying payment for something. She said that if it is not mandatory or required for the safety of the Town's people, we should just use what is in the capital reserve to fund this project.

Mr. Kaplan asked Ms. Levine, who was meeting with the department heads later this morning, to see what they can do using the money set aside in the capital reserve and contributed labor. He noted that these are tough times in our economy and it was wise to be prudent. Ms. Levine commented that it was a shame that there was only one legitimate bid submitted. She was disappointed that more of the local

contractors, who often express frustration at not being considered for Town projects, did not submit bids. Ms. Helm stated that if this project goes ahead that it be clear the money being used is money that has already been set aside, it is not new money.

Comcast Negotiations: Ms. Levine reported that she talked with Kate Miller on Friday, December 5, having e-mailed her the latest letter from Comcast. She noted that it is possible that some programs may change tiers and this may affect pricing so it may be difficult to grandfather in existing pricing for the new service. Kate Miller indicated that she thinks Lisa Birmingham spent quite a bit on the seven-year capital improvement idea. Ms. Levine thought that this could be wrapped up this week and that she would report the status to the Selectmen at their next meeting.

Route 103A Low Salt Letter: There will be public hearing on this, overlapping with a Selectmen's meeting at the request of the DOT, on December 22 at 8:00 A.M.

D. COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND REPORTS:

Regional Dispatch Meeting (December 4): Ms. Levine shared a December 4 letter from Donna Nashawaty, Town Manager of Sunapee, to the New London Board of Selectmen. The letter states that "on behalf of the Sunapee Board of Selectmen, she wished to compliment New London for the service they provide to Sunapee's police and fire departments; adding that "as bordering communities, the local knowledge our two communities share is immeasurable and Sunapee appreciates the connection we have." The letter was hand delivered at a meeting held on December 4 with New London dispatch customers to discuss the Merrimack County regionalization proposal. Every other agency that was at the meeting raved about the service they get from the New London dispatch, The Merrimack County members -- Newbury, Wilmot and Sutton -- do not have any interest in going to a county-wide police dispatch service. They indicated that they liked the service provided by New London and hoped it did not change.

Ms. Levine felt that there was strong political support against going with a county wide dispatch service. The towns that New London serves in Sullivan County would only be affected if the New London dispatch was closed. Ms. Levine indicated that it was important to continue to be part of this discussion. If Merrimack County decides to regionalize this service, even if New London stays open, the Town would still be responsible for 7% of the monthly dispatch fee.

Ms. Levine reported that Donna Nashawaty wondered if it was appropriate for towns that do not receive a service should pay for it. She wondered if the law should be changed to reflect this. Mr. Kaplan asked Ms. Levine whether or not Dave Kidder was aware of these dispatch discussions. Ms. Levine said that he is not currently on the executive committee and she has briefed him on this situation. Mr. Ballin said that New London needed to make sure that if this moves forward, the Town is not assessed for any capital costs associated with it. The Selectmen directed Ms. Levine to continue to be part of this conversation but as it stands now, they are not in favor of this regionalization.

Budget Committee Meeting (December 4): Mr. Ballin and Mr. Kaplan attended this meeting. Mr. Ballin reported that the Conservation Commission requested that their items in the CIP be reinstated. This was not approved. A basic discussion regarding budget reduction followed, focusing on saving that could be accrued in the budget. He reported that there are ongoing discussions about the proposed sewer improvements and what that might cost, and that this is a necessary cost, but perhaps not immediate for this year. All the department heads were requested to again look at their budgets to see where they might be able to identify additional cost savings.

Ms. Levine said she had asked Howard Hoke if he could cut the cost of printing the Town Report down. Currently it cost the Town about \$10,000 for printing, and about \$1000 for mailing, including the cost for these to be returned if undeliverable. Ideas were explored ranging from having the printing go out to bid, just having the report available on-line, to having the report available to be picked up at the Town Hall. The Selectmen thought that having a printed report was preferable but thought that perhaps the number of copies printed could be reduced. Ms. Levine will discuss this with the department heads and bring back their input to the Selectmen.

Mr. Ballin reported that the one line item that did come up in the Budget Committee meeting was the Selectmen's \$10,000 Discretionary Fund. Ms. Levine said that this fund is used for bonuses (\$5700), and employee retirement parties. Neither one of these did she think were crucial.

Joint Sewer Project: Thursday, December 18 at 5:30 P.M. Mr. Kaplan said that this topic was mentioned at both the recent Budget Committee meeting and the CAC meeting. He said that in terms of paying for this project, the costs will either fall on the sewer users or the whole Town. This is the real issue and why he wants people to start to think about this because there is a huge difference between the two options. He wondered if there was a way to have the hospital and other businesses pay their fair share. Ms. Levine commented that the VNA, COA, the schools, and churches all use the sewer system but do not pay any taxes; the Hospital is not the only non-profit on sewer.

Mr. Ballin questioned whether or not it would be possible to delay the decision on this issue for a year. Ms. Levine will look into this. Ms. Levine thought that perhaps if we demonstrate to DES and EPA that we have a plan in place, we could delay implementation of the plan for a period of time. This would also allow time for the new presidential administration's approach for replacing infrastructure to be put in place.

Mr. Kaplan said that at the recent CAC meeting several citizens, namely Peter Bianchi and Bob MacMichael were able to provide valuable historical perspective on the evolution of the sewer system.

E. UP-COMING SPECIAL EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Fire Department Pay Night Dinner: Monday December 8 at 6:00P.M. The Selectmen were reminded to bring a canned good to be collected for the food pantry. Ms. Levine also reminded them about the Employee lunch at the Fire Station on December 9.

Thursday December 11: Ms. Levine reminded the Selectmen that the Thursday's Child dinner at the New London Inn will benefit the Police, Fire, and EMS Benevolent Association.

Thursday December 18 at 5:30: Joint Sewer meeting.

Thursday December 18: Joint Assessing Board.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary