



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 26, 2009

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Tina Helm, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Marylee Verdi, Lake Sunapee Rowing Club
Brenda Balenger, Lake Sunapee Rowing Club
Chad Denning, Recreation Director
John Clough, New London Resident
Bob Lavoie, New London Resident
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record
Lauren Gifford, Valley News

Application for Building Permit:

- Woodcrest Village, 356 Main St. (Map & Lot 084-008-000) second floor addition on one wing, w/shallow pitch roof, enlarge an existing apartment, add community room all w/in existing footprint – Permit # 09-002 – Approved.
- Robert & Victoria Meck Trusts, 43 Turkey Hill Run (Map & Lot 051-024-000) convert screen porch to unheated three season room – Permit #09-003 – Approved.

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

- Kearsarge Community Band, March 6th, 6-9PM – Sunday, March 8th, 1-4PM for concert – approved.

Application for Temporary Sign Permit:

- Weight Watchers, King Hill Road @ Presbyterian Church (Map 122 Lot 019-000) sandwich board style sign to be put out every Wednesday evening – **DENIED**

Application for Permanent Sign Permit:

- Zero Celsius Wealth Studio, Risk & Reward Owner, 228 Main St. (Map & Lot 084-062-000) sign post on Main St. – Approved.
- R. W. Pressprich, Big Leap, LLC Owner, 370 Main St. (Map & Lot 084-004-000) replace existing sign – Approved.

Warrant Land Use Change Tax – Current Use Penalty in the amount of \$12,500 for:

- Carey, Danielle Trust, Burpee Hill Road (Map & Lot 056-007-000)

Other:

- Disbursement & payroll voucher week of 1-26-09 - Approved.

- Ellen Chandler, 63 Goose Hole Road (042-015-000) Wastewater Tax Abatement - \$261.00 – Approved
- Application for Annual Installment of State Grant for sewage treatment (RSA 486) – calendar year 2009 – Approved.
- Joint Loss Management Policy revisions– Approved.
- Tax Abatement for Jacob Vinton, Trustee (Map & Lot 044-004-000) – \$65.50 – Approved.

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 8:03A.M.

MEETING MINUTES:

The January 12 minutes were unavailable for review and will be circulated to the Selectmen via e-mail to be considered at the next Selectmen's meeting.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

Les Norman, Chair, Conservation Commission, Proposed Easement for Clark Pond Property: Mr. Norman reported that although the Clark Pond property has been bought by the Town, it has not yet been conserved. If the intent is to conserve it in perpetuity, then it has to have an easement placed on it. The Conservation Commission proposes that the easement would be drawn up by Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust and there will be a one time charge of \$2500. This money will come out of the Conservation Commission's funds and will have no impact on the Town budget. The decision to create this easement would have to be placed on the Town Warrant and voted on at Town Meeting. Mr. Ballin proposed a motion stating that the proposed easement for the Clark Pond Property be placed on the Town Warrant and that the one-time fee of \$2500 come out of existing funds held by the Conservation Commission. Ms. Helm questioned whether she should recuse herself due to her husband's position on Ausbon Sargent Board. It was decided that since she did not benefit personally from this vote, she could participate, although her disclosure of the potential conflict was appropriate. The proposed motion was seconded by Ms. Helm. The Selectmen voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Brenda Balenger and Marilee Verdi, Lake Sunapee Rowing Club: Ms. Verdi reported that the LSRC started last fall and that 25 interested people came to the initial meeting. She said that the mission of the LSRC is to provide opportunities for physical fitness across the continuum of the community. This community is inclusive of: adolescents through junior rowing, the physically handicapped through adaptive rowing, and adults and seniors through masters rowing programs. These programs will not only provide an opportunity for physical fitness, but also the opportunity for all members of the community to work together towards a common goal. This goal is to develop a fellowship of understanding, respect and appreciation for one another through rowing.

In their first year, Ms. Verdi said that they registered for 501(c)(3) status, solicited donations to cover the cost of equipment and insurance, accepted gifts/loans from Hanover High crew and St. Paul's School, ran summer Learn to Row: and "Get Out and Row" programs with volunteer coaches, and continued programming into the fall including Master's, Junior Boys and Junior Girl's teams. The Adaptive Rowing Program is partnered with the New England Handicapped Sports Association. They have received adaptive rowing boats and equipment from the Philadelphia Disabled Rowing Club, and were able to provide coaching to six adaptive athletes along with sculling opportunities for adaptive volunteers throughout the summer and fall. The 2008 member list totaled approximately 70 people and they have a current e-mail distribution list of more than 170 addresses.

Ms. Verdi said the club has been meeting at Lake Sunapee at the State Park Beach, but this is not ideally suited for their needs. They are requesting that the Selectmen consider their request to locate their club at Bucklin Beach on Little Sunapee. They would need to put in a temporary removable dock and have boat

storage in the form of racks on a protected body of water. They are further suggesting that they partner with the New London Recreation Department and use Bucklin Beach as a more permanent home. In a meeting with Ms. Levine, they discussed what steps would need to be taken following approval by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Levine said that a lease would need to be developed that indicated, among other things, that the LSRC would provide the dock, its own equipment and its own boat rack and carry its own liability for its members. The Town would provide the beach and partner in doing some programming especially for children and new users. The Town would place some limitation on hours in which the LSRC could use the beach. She proposed no fee for the lease but the Town would ask for the right to use the dock for its own programs. Ms. Levine said that the two obstacles that she saw are 1) getting Selectmen approval and 2) involvement of the dock and the land and whether or not some type of more permanent structure would be needed to accommodate the adaptive rowers. She thought other issues such as parking could all be worked out, but they wanted the Selectmen's approval before they moved to the next step.

Mr. Kaplan asked how the rowing program would impact the Recreation Department, and Mr. Denning replied that this program would be beneficial to the Town's recreation program. He said that there would not be many expenses and those that did arise would be related to programming, which is covered out of the Recreation Department's revolving fund. He thought that the local Boy Scout troop could possibly get involved in building the dock, and the dock would be a real benefit to the beach area. He commented that his concern would be regarding the placement of the boat storage rack and the dock itself and that the neighbors would need to be contacted to get their input before moving forward.

Ms. Levine said that she would prefer that the rowing program take place outside of lifeguard hours so that there is not confusion about these responsibilities. She noted that she will speak with Town Counsel to review this issue. Ms. Levine suggested that the first year there would be no permanent structure in order to give everyone an opportunity to see how this works. Ms. Helm wondered about relations with the neighbors. Mr. Denning said that he intended to speak to all the abutters to let them know what is being considered. There was a concern about noise on the lake during the early morning and in the early evening. Ms. Balenger said that the boats are equipped with speakers under every seat, and the coaches, who use the megaphone while on the water, would keep their coaching to areas where there are no homes nearby, and not use "wasted speech" while on the water. It was said that there will be two 8 foot boats, and possibly two 4 foot boats and enough double and singles for nine people for adaptive singles. Not all of these boats would be on the water at the same time.

Ms. Levine asked about boat storage during the winter. Ms. Balenger said that they are looking for a long-term solution for boat storage, as the big boats are being stored at St. Paul's School this year. Mr. Kaplan asked if they envisioned any competitive races on the lake. Ms. Verdi said that down the road, five years or so, if there were competitions involving the big boats, these would take place on Lake Sunapee and possibly the smaller singles would race on Little Sunapee.

Mr. Ballin wondered if there was anything that would interfere with the Bucklin Family deed, asking that this be researched further. Chad Denning said he had already reviewed the deed and found no conflict. Larry Ballin said that the biggest competition for the use of the lake will be fishing competitions. He also said that the key issues are parking, DES approval, and informing the neighbors who abut the beach. Mr. Denning said that he will notify abutters immediately about the potential for this use, and the members of the LSRC will stay in close communication to determine when the activity level is getting too big for the lake. Ms. Levine said that the Little Lake Sunapee Lake Association needed to be brought into this discussion, and said she will contact them.

The Board approved the LSRC moving forward with this planning, but asked that Mr. Denning contact the neighbors as soon as possible. Ms. Levine will begin preparing a draft lease and will talk to Town Counsel.

NEW BUSINESS:

Municipal Advocacy Committee special meeting on January 30, 2009: Mr. Ballin reported that this committee met on January 16, 2009, and that both he and Jessie Levine attended the meeting. The major discussion focused on the gas tax and the potential for an increase in gambling in the State to include adding slot machines at the race track. At this meeting, State Representative David Campbell asked for MAC support of the increased gas tax, but the committee members did not feel comfortable advocating on this topic without feedback from their communities, so they agreed to call a special meeting on Friday January 30, 2009, which will allow all municipalities to participate more fully. He said that the purpose of this meeting will be to come up with some direction for these issues. The real issue is the lack of revenue for the State of NH and how this is going to be addressed.

Ms. Levine added that with the State projected shortfall there are certain shared revenues that the State passes on to the towns, which are significant for the towns. For example, the State Highway Block Grant is distributed to the towns as an off-set for highway maintenance. New London receives about \$116,000 per year through this source. The rooms and meals tax is the other significant revenue source with the Town getting about \$180,000. She said that the State has not come right out and taken those shared revenues off the table but her concern is that they may, given the State's revenue shortfall. She also said that Representative Campbell has proposed that the gas tax be increased 5 cents per year for the next three years, and implied that this would protect the Highway Block Grant, although this has not been promised. This representative is looking for municipal support for this proposal. The town managers were reluctant to decide until they had had an opportunity to go back to their respective elected officials and gather their consensus.

Ms. Levine said that she believes that the increase in these taxes will not mean an increase in State revenue to the Town, although Larry Ballin disagreed with this interpretation. The additional monies will increase the State's revenue, and likely the Town will get the same amount as they have in the past, unless this is changed by legislation. In theory, Ms. Levine said we should get an increased amount of revenue each year that the tax goes up, with the towns still getting 12% of the "pot" based on the miles of roads that each has. Her understanding is that the Town would continue to receive what they have gotten each year, regardless of the increase in the State tax, but she said she will verify this to avoid any confusion.

Mr. Kaplan asked if the Highway Block Grant that the Town receives comes out of the general fund or the gas tax. Ms. Levine replied that it came out of the gas tax revenue, but she said the State's use of these funds is governed by legislation and is aimed towards a variety of programs, including highway patrol and highway maintenance, and the State cannot spend outside of that unless new legislation is passed.

Mr. Ballin is going to Representative Paul Hodes' meeting in Concord this afternoon. He was asked to send a message that we would like any federal stimulus funds related to highway come directly to the towns, rather than going directly to the DOT. Ms. Levine added that right now, there is no indication that this money will be shared with the towns at all. Mr. Ballin said that the towns of NH had a wish list of over \$2 billion in stimulus money from the new administration. Mr. Lavoie asked if New London had a wish list that was included. Ms. Levine said that they did and it included the High Pine Pump Station and various road projects. She noted that Sunapee had not listed the wastewater treatment plant project, but she asked that that be added. She said that she intends to add to this list now that there is an understanding of what they are looking for, taking our time to put in a qualified application for funding.

Ms. Helm asked how Mr. Ballin will respond on behalf of the Town to the gas tax and gambling issues. He said that regarding the gas tax, New London understands the need and would support it, but we would like our fair share to be stronger than the 12% that is already there. Regarding gambling, he said as much as he does not like the idea he does understand that since they would be setting this up at existing race

tracks and gambling venues and since there is already gambling there, he does not have a problem with it. The Board reached the consensus that since the people are coming to the race track to gamble anyway, they would not be opposed to this being set up there, although there were real concerns about gambling in general. Mr. Kaplan said that regarding the gas tax increase he feels strongly that the towns should receive their fair share of this increased revenue. Ms. Levine reminded the Selectmen that there is no guarantee that if this bill gets passed that the State will not write the 12% distribution to the towns out of the new legislation.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wild Goose Boat Launch: Ms. Levine put this on the agenda to educate the new members of the Board before a letter writing campaign is launched. Mr. Ballin said that this issue was raised by some advocates of boaters who do not have property on the lake and wanted to have more access to it. Ms. Levine said that Fish & Game has a mandate to create boat access on the State's public waters. With respect to Wild Goose in Newbury, Ms. Levine said past Board of Selectmen's position has been that it supports more public access but that it does not think this is a good site due to the traffic off of Rt. 103. Ms. Levine shared that she thought Fish and Game had always intended to develop this site, although it has been quiet for the past few years.

Ms. Helm asked if there was an alternative site to offer the State. Ms. Levine said that they had considered the State Beach, but there would need to be dredging and other work done in order to make that happen. Furthermore, the State Beach is operated by the Department of Resources and Economic Development, not Fish & Game, and the two agencies have not been able to agree to solve this problem together. Existing town launches in Sunapee Harbor, Georges Mills and Newbury were also considered and rejected for various reasons.

Ms. Levine asked how the Selectmen would like to move ahead. With the Selectmen's approval, Ms. Levine said she will send a letter on behalf of the Town to state departments and representatives indicating the Town's opposition to developing Wild Goose. The Lake Sunapee Protective Association will let the Town know when there are public hearings. She said that the mandate is from Fish and Game to make this possible. Ms. Helm thought that perhaps a letter campaign might be a good first step, and also attend public hearing and State meetings. Mr. Kaplan said there is a lot to consider with this initiative, especially regarding possible milfoil infestation of the lake.

Reverse 911 Update: Ms. Levine said that she had encumbered funds for reverse emergency notification two years ago. However, the project is being held up due to the fact that the State took over the 911 database and is unwilling to release them. She said that Verizon has never been cooperative in releasing this information, and it appears that TDS and Fairpoint will be cooperative. She has been speaking with a company named Code Red, which has a presence in NH and has been recently engaged by Grafton County. Code Red offers a web-based reverse notification system but it is not 100% accurate, since they have purchased their phone data from credit card companies. She said that she is hesitant to enter into an agreement with them if we do not have access to the real phone data. She said there was a package available to the Town for \$5000 which would be adequate. We have \$6000 set aside for this so the funding is there. She said that they might be willing to give us a multi-town package for \$7500 in which case she would try to make it part of our dispatch service. This could be a cost sharing approach. She said that we would probably have to pay Fairpoint for any records that we get, but TDS has never charged. She said that this last ice storm pointed to the fact that we need to have some sort of communication system in place that does not rely on television or internet. This Code Red system is linked to GIS so that in some emergencies, only those households that would be impacted could be called

rather than the whole town. Ms. Levine says she has a meeting with Fairpoint on February 6. She does not want to move forward until she is sure she can get the phone numbers from Fairpoint.

Acceptance of \$4000 WellDollars Grant Award from LGC- The NH Local Government Center Health Trust, LLC has awarded the Town's Joint Loss and Wellness Committee the sum of \$4000 as part of the LGC-Health Trust's 2008 Risk and Health project aimed at Town employees. Ms. Levine requested a motion from the Board to accept this grant and authorize it to be spent for the purpose of improving employee wellness. Mr. Ballin moved that the \$4000 WellDollars grant be accepted from LG C to be administered by Amy Rankins, as chair of the Joint Loss/Wellness Committee. There being no further discussion the motion was seconded by Ms. Helm and unanimously approved.

COLA/Salary Adjustment for 2009 Budget: Ms. Levine said that the Budget Committee will meet tonight, and one of the remaining subjects is the budget for employee raises. The current budget includes 4%, but it appears that this will not be supported by the Budget Committee. Ms. Levine said that she thinks the Budget Committee would like a consensus from the Board of Selectmen as to its position. She said that the CPI came in at 0.7% from December 2007-December 2008.

Mr. Kaplan said that he will not be at the Budget Committee meeting but he supports a 4% increase. Mr. Ballin said that in view of the current economic situation he thought this needed to be revisited. He said he thought that the Town had wonderful employees and are well worth it, but this is not a good year to give a 4% raise. He thought that perhaps 2% would be fair and equitable. Ms. Helm said that it was her understanding that most towns were giving 2-3%. Ms. Levine said that she was not objecting to the Selectmen's proposals, but that her research showed that most towns were between 3 and 5%. Sunapee is giving 6.5%, made up of a 4% cost-of-living adjustment and 2.5% step increases.

Ms. Levine reminded the Selectmen that while the Budget Committee will make the final decision as to what to include in the budget, the Selectmen will actually distribute the raises among the employees. Mr. Ballin said that he was concerned that the future is unknown but that it could be as problematic. He thought that it would be wise to be prudent in the allocation of our resources. Ms. Helm said she was more comfortable with a range of 2.5 to 3%, but would prefer the 2.5%. Mr. Kaplan said he was more comfortable with 3%. Mr. Ballin recommended a 2.5% increase. Ms. Levine said she though the Board should be of one voice on this, and encouraged them to reach agreement. Mr. Ballin moved that the Selectmen recommend a percentage increase of 2.5%. Ms. Helm seconded the motion. It was reiterated that the Selectmen will allocate the dollars that are eventually agreed to. There was a 2-1 vote on this motion, with Mr. Kaplan not in favor of the motion because he supported a higher increase.

2008 Ice Storm

- FEMA- Ms. Levine met with department heads to get information for the application to FEMA for reimbursement related to the December 2008 ice storm. She would like to target those funds that the Town receives from FEMA for the Whipple Basement Project, and cover the costs of overtime for police, fire and the highway department during the ice storm. Mr. Kaplan asked if there was a public hearing scheduled with PSNH to address the problems that the Town residents experienced. Ms. Levine said that she had invited PSNH to come for such a meeting, but she has not heard back. Ms. Helm asked if there was any summary of the debriefing meeting. Ms. Levine said that she could do a summary memo summarizing the discussion.
- Recognizing Volunteers- Ms. Levine shared that in view of the current economic climate it was decided not to hold a volunteer recognition party but rather to send a letter of appreciation to all those who volunteered.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND REPORTS:

Sunapee Sewer Commission: Tuesday, January 13, 2009: This meeting was attended by Chair Kaplan and Ms. Levine. Ms. Helm asked for confirmation that the cost to New London was up to \$385,000. Ms. Levine confirmed this and said that this is the amount that will be on the warrant for a bond. Chair Kaplan asked Ms. Levine if she could find out what the percentage is regarding the total \$7.6 million for each town that is participating in this project. She said that at the time this was set up, it was based on user fees and that New London owns 65% of the capacity of the plant. She said that she would look further into this question, but was not sure there was a clear answer.

Citizen's Advisory Committee: Saturday, January 24, 2009: Mr. Ballin reported that there was a long discussion concerning the intersection of Pleasant Street, Gould Road and Cougar Court. This is considered by many as a dangerous intersection. It was requested that the Town look at this issues and perhaps that signage needs to be improved at this intersection.

It was also decided that the participants of these sessions would "pass the hat" to help cover the cost of the refreshments that are served. Approximately half of the cost of refreshments was collected on Saturday.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Budget Committee: Monday, January 26 at 7:00PM at Town Office

CORRESPONDENCE:

Ms. Levine said that she will be adding this item to the agenda to highlight more important correspondence. For example, she mentioned the correspondence from Comcast notifying the Town of a change in their broadcast; and a letter from Dan Allen on behalf of the Conservation Commission requesting approval of snowmobile access to the Clark Trail.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Levine said that she will be taking a vacation the week of February 23. Therefore, the Selectmen will reschedule the meeting for the week of February 16 and will not meet on February 23.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary