

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 25, 2007

PRESENT:

Ruth I. Clough, Chairman Board of Selectmen
Mark Kaplan, Selectman
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Debbie Cross, *InterTown Record*
Philip Stake, *Argus Champion*

Sue Clough called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. The Selectmen addressed ten areas of business during this meeting.

1. Selectmen Minutes – June 11 and CAC Minutes – June 16—Larry Ballin moved to accept the minutes of June 11 as drafted. Sue Clough seconded. No further discussion. Motion approved with Mark Kaplan abstaining. Mark Kaplan moved to accept the minutes of June 16 as drafted. Larry Ballin seconded. No further discussion. Motion approved with Sue Clough abstaining.

2. Budget Committee Recap—Larry Ballin reported that the Personnel Subcommittee of the Budget Committee did not meet as scheduled, so did not submit a report at the June 13th Budget Committee meeting. At that meeting, Budget Committee members agreed that the Subcommittee should have for guidance in its discussion of wages and benefits two, rather than one, matrixes. Those will be (a) a survey of salaries and benefits at the micro-local level (that is, towns in the immediate area), and (b) a similar survey using towns suggested by each department. For the latter, so far only the Library and Fire Department have submitted names, and there are some questions regarding the latter's list. They may go back to the drawing board and return with some names of towns more comparable to New London.

Sue Clough expressed concern that issues are rising so early in the budget process. She reported that one of the recommendations made at the LGC's Selectmen's Institute that she attended on Saturday, was that the Town schedule a meeting to include all participants—staff, department heads, Selectmen, Budget Committee, Fire Wards and other support persons. There was even a suggestion that a(n outside) facilitator be brought in to moderate the meeting.

Mark Kaplan agreed that there are issues that must be addressed. He observed that at one point in time, the Town did no comparison, but rather did guess work in determining how to set compensation levels. He said this was particularly unsatisfactory when trying to hire someone new to fill a position. As a solution, the Selectmen developed the matrix of pay and benefit data from seven or eight towns similar in size to New London. He said that if people are not satisfied with that method, the Selectmen need to hear that.

Sue Clough said the objective of such a meeting would be to have everyone know where everyone else is (in their thinking on salary and benefits). Right now, she feels there are too many negative rumors circulating. Jessie Levine suggested that if this is to be a meeting for the purpose of discussing a philosophy of wages and benefits, it should not include staff. Possibly department heads would attend, but, she said, it is really the Board of Selectmen that sets the compensation policy, and it is the Budget Committee that decides what it wants to fund (recommend to voters to fund). If those two do not agree, it

is quite possible to go to Town Meeting with two budgets. Sue Clough said she is not comfortable with the idea of going to Town Meeting with two budgets. The idea of an “all-parties meeting” would at least let people know that there is this diversity of thinking on the issue. Jessie Levine said that it is the department heads’ job to communicate what is going on to the employees, and the employees’ job to communicate questions and concerns to department heads.

Larry Ballin was not sure if a meeting including all parties would be practicable, or would tend to confuse more. Jessie Levine agreed, pointing out that while employees wish for the highest salaries and benefits they can get, the Budget Committee’s objective is to recommend a reasonable town budget, and the Selectmen must find a middle ground to both control the budget and assure the Town’s ability to attract and retain good employees. Sue Clough said she feels the best way to communicate that is to put everyone in the same room, on the same level. The Selectmen have an obligation to listen to everyone. She said that perhaps that could be accomplished by meeting with one department at a time, rather than all at once. Jessie Levine said she does meet bi-weekly with department heads, and Selectmen are welcome to attend those meetings.

She added that it is her sense that, with the exception of some concerns raised by members of the Police Department, employees are happy with the current wage and salary scale that is being used. She agreed that there is some insecurity as employees understand that that scale is now under review by the Personnel Subcommittee, but, she pointed out, at this point in time, there is really nothing to tell them other than it is being reviewed. She reiterated that it is the role of department heads to communicate that to employees.

She referred to the last couple of Budget Committee meetings, and pointed out that it is not just employee compensation that is being reviewed. There has been discussion regarding controlling increases across the board—either by setting a percentage cap or other means. Mark Kaplan said the employees should be told that. Jessie Levine will underscore that point to department heads when she meets with them this week. Larry Ballin said it should be made clear that there is no sense among Budget Committee members that any draconian changes are being considered. And Sue Clough asked that Jessie assure department heads (who in turn should convey to employees) that there are means of communication open, and those will continue to be enhanced as time goes on.

3. New Committees—Jessie Levine has scheduled the kick-off meeting for the Solid Waste Committee for 5 p.m. on July 9 and for the Energy Committee for 7 p.m. on July 9. She has forwarded a memo to the eight prospective members of the Energy Committee, and Sue Clough added that John Clough and Hardy Hasenfuss attended the Carbon Coalition’s seminar in Concord last week, and Mark Vernon plans to attend the same in Keene later this month.

Jessie Levine said she heard from fewer people interested serving on the Solid Waste Committee, and she will put out more information regarding this. Sue Clough suggested that she state that Committee will focus on, among other things, increasing recycling possibilities and redesigning the transfer station. Mark Kaplan asked if Richard Lee will be part of this. Jessie Levine said he will, but will be unable to attend the kick off meeting. John Early will attend that meeting.

Larry Ballin referred to some discussion regarding Solid Waste that took place at Saturday’s CAC meeting. Jessie Levine said staffing is the reason that the Transfer Station and stump dump are open on two different days. Larry Ballin and Mark Kaplan said suggestions made at the CAC meeting included putting a box for small metal items at the transfer station.

4. Meetings—The Sunapee-New London Joint Sewer Commissioners Meeting is scheduled for June 28 at 5:30 p.m. Selectmen will attend; Jessie Levine has a conflict at that time. The Sunapee-Newbury-New London Joint Assessors meeting has been scheduled for 9 a.m. the same day, and as agreed at the April 2 Selectmen's meeting, Larry Ballin will attend as the second Selectmen on this joint board. (Per amendment to the inter-municipal agreement as approved by NL Selectmen at the April 2 meeting, one rotating selectmen and one rotating resident was added to this board to allow the three town managers to discuss assessment issues informally, without being a quorum. The same amendment increased terms to two years.)

The regular Selectmen's meeting of July 2 was cancelled and rescheduled for July 9 at 8 a.m. Non-resident taxpayer meetings have been scheduled for July 16 at 7 p.m., and for August 13 at 8 a.m. (Mark Kaplan asked Jesse Levine to notify Sheldon Boege of the Homeowners' Association at *The Seasons*.)

5. Gravel Roads—Jessie Levine reported receipt of a letter in May from John Furlong requesting that Laurel Lane be paved this year. Also, residents of Pine Hill Road have made the same request, and have asked to be put on the Selectmen's meeting agenda, and she has indicated that she will do so for a Selectmen's meeting at the end of August. In addition, she suggested that it be a meeting devoted to a discussion of the status of all gravel roads in Town—about 16 miles' worth, but the Pine Hill residents wish to reserve that time for a discussion of Pine Hill Road specifically. Sue Clough asked if the Wilmot sections of those roads are paved. No.

Residents do understand that they can submit a petition for Town meeting. She reminded Selectmen that that was what Stony Brook Road residents did, and ultimately the Town

negotiated with them to withdraw the petition and allow the Town to do that paving work over two years. She noted that some of the gravel roads will need upgrading and widening before they can be paved, and Pine Hill Road has the additional complication of having utilities buried underneath it. If it is paved, any time work needs to be done on the utilities, it will have to be dug back up (unless the utilities are moved).

She referred to Richard Lee's memo of two years ago that prioritizes the Town's gravel roads into three groups, but does not designate a time frame. Since then, costs for paving have increased 25% to 30%. She said she and Richard Lee will be reviewing gravel roads before the August meeting, and noting such factors as current condition, number of houses, etc.

The question is, should all taxpayers pay for what some people wish?

Larry Ballin asked if there would be a change in valuation for properties once their gravel roads are paved. Jessie Levine said she has asked that, but received no conclusive answer. There is nothing to link sales to gravel roads.

6. Flow Study—Jessie Levine has sent an informational bulletin to all residents and businesses on the sewer system regarding the evaluation that will begin on July 9 with smoke testing and dye water testing. The second phase that will begin later in the month will be the door to door inspections. All sewer users (homes and businesses) will be inspected. The memo notes that during both the first and second phases, as inflow connections are found, owners will be required to disconnect those within a reasonable period of time. There will be no penalty for connections found during this study, at this time.

At this meeting, she advised Selectmen that the Town does have the legal authority to conduct the study and inspections, and there was some discussion regarding options—including fees, penalties,

disconnection from the system, installation of an outflow meter, etc., that can be imposed for non-compliance.

Selectmen agreed that the biggest motivator may be the potential to reduce costs to sewer users if the inflow points can be identified and corrected. Jessie Levine pointed out that on a normal day when college is in session, the Town sends about 350,000 gallons of wastewater to the Sunapee plant. After a storm event during which 1" of rain falls, the Town sends over a million gallons to Sunapee. The Town pays Sunapee by the gallon, and there are the additional energy costs as well as wear and tear on the pumps and other equipment.

7. Round-about—Jessie Levine has drafted a letter to NH DOT summarizing the bid process, and Selectmen's decision of June 4 to put the project out to bid again in August. At this meeting, she updated Selectmen on most recent discussions with engineers and staff regarding optimal timing for soliciting bids for next year's work, and she pointed out that the letter goes on to state that the current plan is to put the bids out on October 1 with a return date of October 24. Staff and

engineers will review the bids and make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen at that Board's meeting of October 29 at 7 p.m.

8. Selectmen signed the following items:

Building Permits:

- o Susan Rowett, 683 Seamans Road (Map 098, Lot 008-000), permit to construct a bump out and pergola on the north end of a pre-existing barn. – Approved (Permit 07-052)
- o Susan Rowett, 683 Seamans Road (Map 098, Lot 008-000), permit to replace a shed with an addition to the pre-existing barn. – Denied (Permit 07-053)
- o Jean Pierce and Kelly Paquette, 324 Forest Acres Road (Map 118, Lot 007-000), permit to convert basement into a family room with an entry area and a ½ bathroom and to also convert the second floor loft into two additional bedrooms. – Approved (Permit 07-056)
- o New London Hospital Association Inc., 273 County Road (Map 082, Lot 016-000), permit to install one temporary construction trailer. – Approved (Permit 07-058)
- o Richard and Anne MacDonough, 195 Job Seamans Acres (Map 060, Lot 017-000), to build a screen porch and new deck as well as creating a new master bedroom off of living room, eliminating existing bedroom by expanding existing bathroom and replacing carpet with wood flooring. – Approved (Permit 07-059)
- o KJAM Realty Trust, 812 Route 103A (Map 103, Lot 021-000), permit to construct a two-story Carriage House with the first floor being storage and the second floor being guest sleeping quarters. – Approved (Permit 07-060)
- o Janet Hutchens, 15 Morgan Hill Road (Map 046, Lot 001-000), permit to convert porch into living space and add a new portico. – Approved (Permit 07-061)

Sign Permits:

- o Temporary Sign Permit Application for the New London Bandstand Committee for a 6' square sandwich board sign to be placed at the Information Booth indicating, "Free Concert, Ausbon Common, Haddad Bandstand, Friday 6:30 PM" – Approved
- o Temporary Sign Permit Application for the First Baptist Church for a 6' square sandwich board sign to be placed on the corner of the church driveway and the road and an additional sign to be placed at the Information Booth indicating, "Summer Fair, Saturday, July 7, 8:30 – 1:30" – Approved

- o Temporary Sign Permit Application for the New London Hospital for a 6' square sandwich board sign to be placed at the Information Booth indicating, "New London Book Sale, July 27, 10am-5pm, July 28, 9am-3pm, KRMS New London, All other Hospital Days 2007 activities held August 2-5" – Approved

Other Items for Signature:

- o Disbursement & Payroll Vouchers for the week of June 18, and 25, 2007 – Approved
- o Warrant Yield Tax Levy for the State of New Hampshire – Approved
- o Appointment Card for Deidre Sheerr – Gross for Alternate Planning Board – Approved

- o Application for Use of the Town Office Conference Room by New London Hospital – Approved
- o Application for Use of Whipple Memorial Town Hall by the New London Garden Club - Approved
- o Application for Use of Whipple Memorial Town Hall by the New London Barn Playhouse – Approved

9. In accordance with NH RSA 91:A:3 II (a,b,e), the Selectmen entered non-public session at 8:50 p.m., for the purpose of discussing personnel and legal matters.

10. At 9:30 a.m., Selectmen reentered public session and went on to discuss briefly the Landfill Reconstruction project. (At the June 11 Selectmen's meeting the two Selectmen present—Sue Clough and Larry Ballin, approved the change order to address the problem of the drain being found to be twice as deep as originally anticipated. The additional cost will be \$9,768.) At this meeting, Mark Kaplan asked to confirm that the total cost will be within the \$250,000 bonded for this project. Jessie Levine said the contract is for \$140,000 and the engineering contract is just over \$50,000, so they are still within the allocated amount. Mark Kaplan asked to confirm that this bond is from Lake Sunapee bank, and one of its conditions is that the Town will not pay interest on any amount that it does not use. Jessie Levine confirmed that.

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Having no further business to address, Selectmen adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah A. Denz
Recording Secretary