



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES July 21, 2009

### PRESENT:

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

### ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Hardy, Tax Collector/Town Clerk  
Norm Bernaiche, Assessor  
Kris McAllister, Assistant Assessor  
David Seastrand, Police Chief  
Richard Lee, Director of Public Works  
Sandra Licks, Library Director  
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief  
Peter Stanley, Zoning Administrator  
Chad Denning, Recreation Director  
Mark and Marilyn Wendling, New London property owners  
Betty Lawson Taylor, New London property owner  
Norman and Cynthia Berg, New London property owners  
Jeff Milne, Springfield resident & New London business owner  
Peter Gunn, New London property owner  
John White, New London property owner

Chair Ballin called the **MEETING TO ORDER** at 6:04 PM. He introduced himself and the other members of the board to the meeting attendees, as this was a Non-Resident Taxpayer meeting. Several Department Heads were in attendance and they introduced themselves.

Chair Ballin said that the two main things the board had been involved with so far this year were the economy and the budget. He said that the Budget Committee had been working to find places to cut money, although the budget was very prudent and was 5% less than the previous year. He said that they have been working with the state, the school and the county on their budgets. Chair Ballin informed the meeting attendees that the Town had lost the New London District Court through a decision of the governor. This loss will result in a loss of revenue for the town. He mentioned the roundabout and said that the accident rates have dropped and that it looks nice within the town. There is a sidewalk grant being used this year and the town would be applying for another grant for next year to do some work with the sidewalks in Elkins. Chair Ballin mentioned that the state roads are currently being worked on but that the State will not attempt to create a construction project on Main Street for fear of the cost.

Chair Ballin also noted the special Town Meeting that was held to pass the new beach ordinance, stimulated by a rowing club's request to use the beach. This request uncovered many rules that were outdated and the board saw the need to create a new ordinance. It was passed at the special Town Meeting.

Chair Ballin announced that there is now an Economic Development Committee, which should be a great addition to the town to help enhance the town's attributes. He mentioned the New London Farmer's Market and that it has been a success so far. Chair Ballin explained that the Master Plan is still being worked on to update the 1998 version. He was pleased to share that the Whipple Town Hall project came in on time and under budget. He attributed this success to the work of volunteers and the help of the Police Department. Chair Ballin noted that the Gravel Roads Program is ongoing and that they are trying to pave what they can in a timely and prudent fashion. He also shared that Colby Sawyer College is very successful right now and does not seem affected by the economy. They are currently working on expanding the housing for students. They will also be renting the Fairway Motel for students to reside in during the school year. Chair Ballin noted that the Hospital's construction was a success. He also mentioned that the old Middle School is still vacant but that there are plans for things to go in there at some point.

At this time, Chair Ballin opened the floor to comments and questions from the audience.

Cynthia Berg asked if the old Middle School building would eventually become an arts building or facility. Chair Ballin responded that last year at this time the Board of Selectmen had agreed to cooperate with the Kearsarge Community Center group to try to energize some funding to use the building as a community center. Private money dried up quickly in the economic climate and the project had to be abandoned. The group known as "The Kearsarge Center for the Arts" is alive in the town and does plan to offer art classes and the like within various spaces and locations throughout the area. Mrs. Berg asked if there would be a community center in general. Chair Ballin said that there are thoughts for it but would not be as big a project as the Kearsarge Community Center group had planned. Tina Helm added that in the foreseeable future, a community center wouldn't be going in to the old Middle School.

Mark Kaplan shared that the agreement between the Kearsarge Community Center and the Town was that if the KCC raised \$2 million, the board would go to Town Meeting and ask for a bond of \$1.5 million to finish the project. It was decided that the project was too large for our current time, and so the town was released from the agreement.

Mark Wendling asked if there was a plan with the State to fix Main Street. Chair Ballin said that it had been included in the State's 10-year plan but it was eradicated when the State fell short of funding, and they have no idea when the road would be repaired. Mr. Kaplan opined that the longer it takes for the repair to be done, the more expensive the project will be. He said that he feels as though their hands are tied and it is up to the State Representatives to get the project going.

Mr. Wendling also asked about the new beach ordinance. He said that this year at Bucklin Beach, there hasn't been a problem getting a space in the lot that is reserved for residents and their guests. However, the street parking seems crowded. Mr. Wendling felt that there are a lot of non-New London residents who are using the beach and he wondered how it can that be enforced for town resident use only. Chair Ballin said that they have had this discussion before and that it is difficult to determine who is a non-resident and who is a guest because many people have friends from New London and they could say that they are the guests of their friends. He said that if the beaches become full and overcrowded, they would have to do something to try and enforce the resident/guest rule.

Mr. Wendling also asked about the boats at Bucklin Beach. He noted that it seems that there are a variety of boats in disrepair and wondered if there was a budget to get these repaired or to get new equipment. Chad Denning responded that many of the boats definitely need repair, as they are very old. He said that at this point, instead of asking for more donations of boats, they are looking into replacing 2-3 boats in the next few years. There are three working boats right now. Mr. Denning noted that it was discussed in the

Capital Improvement Plan meeting this year, so it is in the works. Chair Ballin said that donations are still going to be accepted if the boats are in good working order. Peter Gunn asked how word gets out that the beach needed new boats. He said that he is aware of some equipment that could possibly be donated from the Lake Association. Ms. Helm suggested that perhaps people could see a request for donations if it were posted on the town's website.

Mr. Wendling asked if there was any opportunity for putting boats at Elkins Beach. Mr. Denning said that there are two kayaks available there now but that there were no sailboats. He indicated that at Pleasant Lake there are a lot of rocks that would be a detriment to sailing.

Mr. Gunn asked where New London was with the demographic issue and the cost of living. He wanted to know if it was a subject of concern. As an observer he thought it would seem very challenging to be able to offer housing within the town to the people who work here. Chair Ballin said that that info would be part of the Master Plan. He also indicated that the Economic Development Committee would be looking into that quite a bit. Chair Ballin shared that they had successfully passed a workforce housing overlay district in the town, but to find a suitable piece of land and a willing and able developer is very difficult. He felt that it would be nice to have the people who work in New London be able to live in the town and walk to work. It is an issue and is something the town is working on. He said that what they really need is a developer who was willing to put their capital at risk. Mr. Gunn asked if the community was fine with having workforce families living in the town or whether they would rather have them come in from other towns. Chair Ballin said that these feelings would be addressed in the new Master Plan but that he would love to see it happen. Until the time comes when federal funds are available, he isn't sure it will happen. Jessie Levine added that as far as public perception goes, the Planning Board proposed an amendment to the zoning ordinance to allow the workforce housing overlay, and the amendment was overwhelmingly approved by the voters. Chair Ballin said that he was proud of the fact that the town is one of the few communities that actually went forth with the workforce housing overlay district in response to a new state law.

Ms. Helm shared that at a joint Board of Selectmen's meeting with other towns on Sept 10, a subject will be covered on how the Town of New London got to where it is and how the town became in favor of the workforce housing overlay district.

John White asked if an area had been set aside for the housing if people could come and develop it. Mr. Ballin said that there are parts of town that have been identified. Peter Stanley said that half of the zone districts where town water and sewer exist are available for such projects. The problem is that property values are high in the town, especially on those parcels that are developable. He said that unless someone donates the land, it isn't likely to happen. He opined that the workforce housing would need to be done as part of a larger project with high-end housing included.

Cynthia Berg asked the board what, in general, were the most important issues facing the town. Mark Kaplan said that one of the most important issues is the budget. He said that normally, in a modest year, the Selectmen ask themselves how they can improve and work more efficiently as a town. He noted that people look at appearances and the town tries to gear itself to that sort of thing and see what it can do to be better. He noted that everyone is concerned with costs and because of that, they are not being as forward-looking as they normally are. He said they keep feeling that their long-term plan is to survive the short-term crunch. He shared that the department heads last year and this year have gone to extreme lengths to hold budgets and hold down projects that were extremely expensive. He said that as an individual, he appreciates this.

Ms. Levine said that despite the department head's work, their expenses make up only 30% of the taxes in the town. In addition, the Town will have to make up the costs pushed down as a result of the State's

budget. Even though the Town had projected a .30 tax decrease, it may end up as only .20 because of the town having to absorb the State's budget shortfalls. Mr. Kaplan wondered if the attendees really understand what happens when the state shifts costs. He shared that when the state's budget is more than their revenue, they turn to the towns to come up with the missing dollars. This is done automatically and the towns do not have a choice.

Ms. Levine noted that when the State formed a retirement system 80 years ago for state employees, they wanted to entice the towns to join the retirement system and offered to pay 35% of the retirement costs for teachers, police and firefighters. This year, the State reduced its share and the balance of that has to be made up by the towns. The school district will have to come up with between \$85,000–120,000 and the town of New London, as the largest payer in the district, has to pay 30% of this. The town's payments on behalf of police and fire department employees will cost about \$15,000 over the next two years. Mr. Kaplan said that the only means the town has to raise the money is to raise the tax rate.

Ms. Helm added that her goal in these times is to have open lines of communication with every town resident. Since October 2008 when she became a member of the Board of Selectmen, she has really learned what it takes to put together a budget. She said that they need to encourage input from the people in the town so they understand the process and the challenges of putting a budget together. She said that there is a lot that the town has no control over. Being a part of a regional school district is a challenge. Last year the school budget was 52% of the entire budget, which is something the town has no control over. Her other priority is to maintain this town as an intergenerational community. She doesn't want it to just become a place for the older generation but to continue to make the town affordable for all generations.

Chair Ballin said that they need to continue to work with the state and school system to keep costs down. He said that the town is heavily reliant on property tax for revenue and that they are the main revenue source for the state and the town. He opined that if not careful, high property taxes are what will drive people out of town. He admitted that is very difficult for working families to live in the town. Chair Ballin agreed with Ms. Helm's sentiments when she said that she wants young families to come in to town and to stay.

Jeff Milne asked if the board looks ahead and contemplates the loss of state funds, would that change their policy for funding things in the town. He asked if the town would build a budget based on not having the funds. Chair Ballin answered in the affirmative. He said that if the revenue changes and the town does not have the money, they can't spend it. He opined that the lack of funds makes the town look at how they staff their departments. He shared that they are happy that they were not making any layoffs this year. He said that they have to keep in mind their savings plans, Capital Improvement Plans, and keep having to put things off for now.

Ms. Levine noted that last year the Board of Selectmen approved a reduction in employee health benefits that saved town about \$40,000. State statutes set the matching payment required for retirement funds, so the Town does not have the option of reducing the retirement benefit unless it cuts positions.

Ms. Helm said that they keep catching themselves saying "for the short term we have to give up XYZ" but she truly feels that they should be ready to be thinking that it will be a long time before they will be back the way they used to be and be able to spend money on more projects.

Norman Berg said that they moved as part-time residents in 1992 and they have seen an increase of almost 40% over that period. He confessed that they didn't know a lot about the town when they came to New London, but when they see what has happened over the time, they still see the character of the town and feel that it hasn't changed. They feel that the Board of Selectmen and other town leaders have been

very successful in the management of a rapidly growing town. Many in attendance agreed with Mr. Berg's comments, which were followed by a round of applause.

Mark Wendling followed those comments by noting that he appreciated the work that the town offices and department heads do. He said that he has been in the town since 2000 and is very happy with the communication between residents and the town employees.

Chair Ballin asked if there were any further comments. There were none, and so he thanked them for coming to the meeting. He announced that the regular Board of Selectmen meeting would begin and they were free to stay if they were so inclined. Once the room had cleared of attendees from the Non-Resident Taxpayers, the regular meeting ensued.

#### **A. MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 14, 2009**

Chair Ballin noted that the minutes from the July 14, 2009 meeting were ready for approval.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Kaplan) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2009 meeting as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **B. REQUESTS TO SERVE ALCOHOL ON TOWN PROPERTY**

Chair Ballin noted that the New London Hospital, the Garden Club and the New London Rotary Club were asking for requests to serve alcohol on town property and asked for comments.

Ms. Levine explained that the Hospital was going to have a Bring Your Own Bottle (BYOB) option for big band night. The Garden Club was planning a holiday cocktail party at the library. The New London Rotary Club was planning a wine tasting on the common on September 17. She indicated that Chief Seastrand would most likely require a police detail on that which the Rotary Club would pay for.

Ms. Levine said that she and Chief Seastrand had spoken about the recent sobriety checkpoint. He told her that Highland Ridge had asked the Police Department to attend a community meeting about sobriety and DUI. The police even brought a breathalyzer to the meeting and many in attendance tried it out before leaving. Ms. Levine said that she and Chief Seastrand discussed the idea that for large fundraisers, perhaps such a meeting with the Police Department and the volunteers responsible for the event should be held prior to the event. She said that perhaps they could review the alcohol and beverage ordinances and amend it to include this requirement. Mr. Kaplan asked if this should be made mandatory or to merely suggest it. Chair Ballin said that this topic may require a larger discussion between non-profits, Board of Selectmen, and the Police Department to discuss the idea further. Ms. Levine said that she didn't want to make it a bigger deal than it seems, but that this was an attempt to address the Selectmen's concerns that the Town should do more education when fundraisers involve alcohol. Mr. Kaplan believed that education is vital and that other groups that could help with the education (church, scouts...etc.) could help it become a town-wide program. Ms. Helm said that it seemed to be a logical segue after the sobriety checkpoint was conducted.

Chair Ballin asked if there were any further comments on the issue. There being none, he asked for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Kaplan) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to approve the three requests to serve alcohol on town property subject to the Town's alcohol ordinance adopted in 2003. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **C. FIBER PROJECT UPDATE**

Ms. Levine has learned that the best chance to get fiber optic capabilities in the region was to attach the region's grant application to the State grant, which they are seeking to do. There is an inter-municipal agreement for a non-profit with eight surrounding towns, which was approved by Town Meeting and is being presented to the Selectmen for signature today. Six of the eight towns have met to go over the articles. She said that they would start formalizing their non-profit group. Ms. Helm said that the minutes from the July 14 meeting indicated that a grant seemed to be more favorable towards those underserved areas and wondered if New London should maybe pull out of the running. Ms. Levine said that the grant at this point would provide money to install the backbone of the fiber optic system from Orford to Newbury. She said that neither Sunapee nor New London meet the requirements for the underserved threshold. Since she is the chair of the organization she will remain involved even if New London doesn't get to benefit from the grant.

Ms. Levine went on to explain how the non-profit they form would attempt to win the grant money. She said that at town meeting, it was approved to let the selectmen organize a municipal agreement to create a non-profit organization. The name of the non-profit is WCNH.net, which is an abbreviation for the original name, West Central NH Regional Health and Security Communications Consortium. The non-profit would be applying for the grant, not the towns. The idea is to have a non-town entity which can spend money that it gets without having to go through a town meeting. Ms. Levine said she believes that small telephone companies such as TDS and Fairpoint would also be applying for the grant. The money is available and she feels that they want to take a shot at it getting it.

Chair Ballin said that the one key thing that came from the meeting was that any group or organization who is applying for the funding has to have the support of the governor of the state in which they are applying. The only project the governor is going to support is the one that the state is putting together, which is why they are going to piggy-back on the state's project.

### **D. PLANNING BOARD MEETING FROM JULY 14, 2009**

Chair Ballin attended this meeting, as Ms. Helm was unable to do so. He reported that there were several third drafts of chapters from the Master Plan. He noted a lot of discussion of the Conservation and Open Space chapter. He noted that it is a cumbersome process. Chair Ballin shared that the Transportation chapter was also covered without a lot of changes. The Economic chapter was discussed and some good discussions came about. There was also an addition of a new chapter to the Master Plan focusing on Energy.

### **E. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

1. Joint Sunapee Meeting – July 30, 2009 at 5:30pm – Ms. Levine won't be there but she met with David Bailey and Holly Leonard from Sunapee, and Richard Lee and Heather Weinstein from our Public Works Department. She said that at that meeting, staff agreed to propose reducing New London's share based on flows from 70% to 66%. Over the past 12 months, the flows for New London have actually been 68% and they recommend 66% because the other 2% reduction offsets Sunapee's contribution to the Georges Mills Pump Station. If, at the meeting, there is resistance to this request, Ms. Levine has suggested that the towns return to the original agreement of billing for quarterly flows instead of a percentage. The entire New London Board of Selectmen is planning to attend this meeting and Chair Ballin has asked Ms. Levine to supply them with a memo to bring with them to help them articulate her wishes with regards to the matter.

- F. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Chair Ballin shared that that Pomkoski family has recently lost their son, Ryan. Mr. Pomkoski has proposed that the family would like to put a bench in Ryan's memory at the skating rink or at Elkins Beach. Chair Ballin asked for a motion to work with the family on this project.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Kaplan) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) that the Board of Selectmen would work with the Pomkoski family to find out what their wishes are and allow them to go ahead with their proposed project. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Ballin asked if there were any other comments from the board. There being none, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Kaplan) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to adjourn the meeting.  
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Application for Building Permits:

- KRSD – SAU 65, 114 Cougar Court (Map & Lot 073-076-000) install fire sprinkler system and upgrade LAN in old KRMS - Permit # 09-066 – Approved.
- Richard Leigh & Sally Morse, 13 Sawyer Lane (Map & Lot 073-065-000) replace deck, steps & add hand rail – Permit #09-067 – Approved.
- Harry Snow, 49 Newport Road (Map & Lot 072-041-000) re-roof cedar to slate – Permit #09-068 – Approved.
- Brian Sullivan & Margaret Devine-Sullivan, 51 Otterville Road (Map & Lot 042-033-000) add 20'9" x 10'8" deck to home – Permit #09-069 – Approved.
- Steven & Jessy LaValley, Little Sunapee Road (Map & Lot 046-002-001) build NEW 2 story home w/attached garage – Permit #09-070 – Approved.
- Melvin Scovell, Scovell Family Pleasant Lake Trust, 463 Bunker Road (Map & Lot 063-003-000) install new roof – Permit #09-071 – Approved.
- Estate of Anna Conklin, 521 Burpee Hill Road (Map & Lot 070-013-000) replace vent into crawlspace with window – Permit #09-072 – Approved.
- Gary Anderson & Cornelia Boyle, 750 Little Sunapee Road (Map & Lot 021-001-000) demolish old building and rebuild new 2-car, 2-story garage – Permit #09-073 – Approved.
- Richard & Nancy Cohn, 506 Forest Acres Road (Map & Lot 119-009-000) replace back door steps with new deck & stairs – Permit #09-074 – Approved.

Application for Sign Permit:

- Olivia Powers, 71 Pleasant Street – Gavin Campbell Holdings (Map & Lot 084-078-000) Temporary sign NEW LONDON CHIROPRACTIC CENTER – Approved.

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

- Lifeline Screening, 4645 Fulton Drive. NW Canton, OH request to use Whipple Hall for one day to provide early detection of stroke risk, vascular disease & osteoporosis. DENIED

Other:

- Disbursement voucher week of 7-20-09 - Approved.
- Contract for High Pine Pump Station Improvements construction phase assistance – Approved
- Conservation Easement Deed, Real Estate Transfer Tax Form & Conservation Easement Baseline Documentation Report. Grantor: Town of New London, Grantee: ASLPT for Clark Pond property.- Approved

- Notice of Intent to Cut – James Raeuchle – 599 Hall Farm Road (Map & Lot 087-012-000)  
Approved.
- DES – State Aid Grant C-756 – Georges Mills Pump Station Improvements – Approved.
- Code Red Services Agreement, amended to include the Town of Sunapee, Newbury, Wilmot, Sutton and Springfield, in the amount of \$8,500 (costs above \$5,000 to be shared by the other towns).
- Intermunicipal Agreement and Articles of Incorporation of WCNH.net to create a not-for-profit organization to create a broadband communications network

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
New London Planning Board