



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 12, 2009

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Bob Lavoie, New London Resident
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record

Application for Building Permit:

- Robert & Mary Bourbonniere, 12 Hilltop Place, (Map & Lot 144-001-012) remodel kitchen – Permit #09-001 – Approved.

Application for use of Sydney Crook Room:

- United States Census Bureau, Concord NH, use room for recruiting & testing: 1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/12, 3/26 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Approved.

Other:

- Disbursement voucher week of 1-12-09 : Approved.
- Wastewater tax abatement request for David & Polly Henderson, 144 Everett Park (Map & Lot 073-012-000) – DPW does not recommend for approval – DENIED by Selectmen
- Septage Agreement between Winnepesaukee River Basin Program and Town of New London for the period between 1/1/09 and 12/31/14. – Approved
- Elderly Tax Deferral Application (Confidential) -- Approved.

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

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the January 5, 2009 meeting were amended as follows: page 7, fifth paragraph, the spelling of the word “poling” was corrected to polling. With this correction, the Minutes were accepted as amended.

NEW BUSINESS:

2009 Planning Priorities: Ms. Levine presented a copy of the Selectmen’s Goals for 2004. She noted that it has been 5 years since this document was written and that many things had been accomplished. She noted that she has not included items that either have not been done or are on-going. A discussion then followed regarding each goal.

1. General Government:
 - a. Vision Statement & Mission Statement- Although this discussion has been initiated, more discussion and public input should be obtained.
 - b. Budget Presentation: The Comprehensive Budget Packet has been put together. Ms. Levine would like to include more of a narrative along with the budget to the Budget Committee. Chair Kaplan noted that he likes the comments that Ms. Levine includes with the budget to the Budget Committee which he believes gives them an administrative point of view.
 - c. Noise Ordinance: Nothing has been done since there does not seem to be a need. Ms. Levine noted that the difficulty in establishing such an ordinance would be in measuring noise level. Mr. Lavoie wondered if the police respond to a noise complaint. He was told they did, but that the resident was just told that a complaint had been made and were asked to keep the noise level down. Ms. Levine said that usually this works. Occasionally there are complaints regarding barking dogs and these are discussed with the pet owner. He asked about noise from loud mufflers. Ms. Levine said that police have authority to address this under state law. Ms. Helm suggested that this be removed from the task list and all agreed.
 - d. GASB compliance- (Government Accounting Standard Board) #34. This required towns to report fixed assets. Carol Fraley is working on this, but as yet the Town is not in compliance. The second GASB that has been initiated is # 45 which requires that the Town report outstanding liability for retirement-related liability. The State pays 125% of retirees' pay but there are employees who through over time, vacation, or sick leave acquire over 125%. This additional amount then becomes the responsibility of the Town. Ms. Levine said that she has not yet calculated this for New London, but believes it will be very small. Regarding GASB 34, Chair Kaplan said that this regulation required that everything the Town owned had to be valued. He said that the reason that this has not been done is that it is extremely difficult to assess the value of everything in the Town, including roads, common areas, bridges, etc. He said that buildings are fairly standard, but that most other things were not. Ms. Helm asked if there were consequences if we were not in compliance. Ms. Levine responded that if we were a town that had a credit rating, it would impact their rating. It does not impact us in any other way. Mr. Lavoie wondered if this assessment could be done incrementally, say 20% per year. Ms. Levine said this could be done and that the Town could also set a lower limit, say, don't include anything below \$10,000, if it so decided. All agreed that this assessment should be done.
2. Personnel Administration: Ms. Levine noted that a new personnel policy was adopted in January 2007 which incorporated a number of changes to vacation time, who was to be paid hourly, and created job classifications and salary schedules.
3. Assessing/Revaluation: This has been accomplished.
4. Communication:
 - a. Link schedule: Ms. Levine said has dropped off on the Links this year, but asked for input on topics that can go into more regular newsletters. She also noted the increased use of the e-mail notices.
 - b. Link topics- See above.
 - c. New resident – “Welcome Wagon” of information: Amy Rankins, Land Use and Assessing Coordinator, has been doing this. Every time property changes hands, Ms. Rankins prepares a packet confirming the sale, enclosing the Town Report, the Emergency Management Wheel and some of the past Newsletters. This is then sent to the new resident.

Chair Kaplan suggested that two other items be added to this category. One regarded communication during an ice storm, and the other was regarding an update on fiber optics. Mr. Lavoie suggested that an evacuation procedure be included as well. Ms. Levine said that the Town is working on this, but thought that perhaps an Emergency Category should be created.

5. Roads/Sidewalks/Traffic

a. Main Street:

- Intersection of Main/Pleasant- Ms. Levine had applied for a grant for this, but did not get it. She would like to apply again the next time this becomes available.
- Crockett's Corner and Main Street- It was suggested by Mr. Ballin that these should remain on the Goals list. In the event that money becomes available, these are already noted as Town projects and goals. Mr. Lavoie asked if there was a potential for Federal grants. Ms. Levine replied that there would not be for the Town, but perhaps for the State. Ms. Levine noted that while the Town has been working on the sidewalks, they have also been working with the State regarding the drainage project along Main Street. Ideally, this funding may come back up with the new stimulus package which Congress will consider.

6. Highway Department:

- a. Establish Road Acceptance Policy- Ms. Levine said that this still needed to be rewritten. The policy that exists is about 20 years old and needs to be streamlined. It will impact only new roads.
- b. Gravel Roads- Ms. Levine noted the goal of completing a road paving schedule had been completed, but the schedule has been postponed due to budget constraints.
- c. Sidewalks- This was moving along until this initiative was removed from the CIP. Ms. Levine said she would like to reconvene the sidewalk committee to prioritize additional needs.
 - Adopt sidewalk program (i.e., add a sidewalk a year?)
- d. Transfer Station
 - Investigate Pay-Per-Bag- Ms. Levine noted that this was still on the table. Mr. Ballin asked if the Selectmen could have a conversation with the Budget Committee regarding what their thoughts would be on this type of program. Ms. Levine said that Newbury was attempting to get a sense of their town regarding this at the upcoming Town Meeting. She said the idea is that the purchase of the bags, (usually about \$1-2 per bag) which would be required to dispose of garbage by residents, would offset the Transfer Station operations. Mr. Kaplan noted that residents have told him that this is seen as a hidden tax. Ms. Levine said that usually the sale of the bags replaces a large portion of the tax rate, so the fee offsets the taxes. The idea is that once residents were paying for the bags they would recycle more in order to use less bags, which would then reduce the load on the Transfer Station and the overall cost of trash disposal. She said that this is a user fee and not a hidden tax.
 - Revise Transfer Station regulations- Ms. Levine noted that these were over 20 years old and although they would probably not change much, they need to reflect the changes in State regulations.

7. Police Department:

- a. Building Improvements in 2005 & beyond- Ms. Levine noted that the Whipple Project was in the budget for this year and had been in the plan since 2004.

8. Recreation Department:

- a. Community Center – What is Town’s/Recreation Department’s involvement in this Center?
Ms. Levine said that this Department is moving at full speed without Town financial involvement this year. Ms. Helm said she was concerned with the possible duplication of recreational activities in NL. She wondered if the Selectmen should sponsor a dialogue between the Recreation Department and the other recreational, cultural and social agencies of the Town to make sure the taxpayers are getting the “most bang for their buck” with the services that are being provided. Ms. Levine agreed they should have this discussion but did not think there was any duplication. She further noted that each entity is very territorial making the coordination of recreational efforts very difficult.
9. Zoning Department
 - a. Increase zoning administrator hours- Ms. Levine commented that this had been included in the 2009 Budget.
 10. Tracy Library: Community Garden- Ms. Levine said she still needed to do the MOU. Mr. Kaplan noted that the Garden Committee has been awarded 501(c)3 status which will enable them to raise money for the garden rather than asking the Town for some support.
 11. Information Booth:
 - a. Revisit sign regulations- The lease agreement has been revised.
 12. Committees/Volunteers:
 - a. Volunteer Recruitment/Interview Process- Ms. Levine noted that this is in place and ongoing. The EM Director position has been filled.
 - b. Main Street Committee- Ms. Levine said this committee has not met recently.
 - c. Ethics Committee- Ms. Levine said that nothing has been done with forming this committee. State law is clear about ethics standards but she said that the Town should have a conflict of interest policy which can be referred to should the need arise, since this would be more accessible to the Town.
 - d. Recycling Education Committee- Ms. Levine said that this is ongoing.
 - e. Building Committee (primarily Town Hall)- Ms. Levine said that this is a consideration for a future committee.
 13. Town facilities

Should we start a capital reserve fund now to rebuild the Elkins PO in 2010? The Selectmen agreed to leave this on the list, but recognized that there was no money for this project.

The Selectmen adjourned to Non-Public Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 9:10 A.M, and invited Karen Ebel, Planning Board chair, and Tom Cottrill, Vice-Chair, as well as Jessie Levine, to join them.

The Selectmen reconvened their public meeting at 10:12 AM.

Report on Federal Stimulus Package for wastewater project- Ms. Levine said she had recently attended a meeting in Concord with Richard Lee and Todd Cartier of the Water Precinct (as well as a number of engineers, including people from Underwood and Wright-Pierce). She said the State is preparing to administer these funds to the Towns. It would not only be only limited to projects that would be “shovel in the ground” in the next 90-120 days. The State is expecting \$118 million dollars worth of funding in NH alone which compares to only about \$10 million in past years. They said they are expecting the bill to include a ramp-up which means that 25% of the money would be earmarked for shovel in the ground projects in 90 days, 50% would have to be spent within one year and the remainder would have to be spent over two years. Ms. Levine said this bodes well for the Sunapee project. But, they have not

changed the requirements for any of the projects. They are not entirely sure these will be in the form of grants, they may still be loans. Ms. Levine said that one of the things she had to do today was to talk to either the DRA or Bart Mayer about how we craft a warrant article that is contingent on the funding that might be available. If we don't appropriate it at Town Meeting this year, even if money does become available, we might not be eligible to receive it. She also was pleased to learn that storm water management was made part of this plan which may mean that Mr. Lee might want to move up some drainage projects. Their next meeting on this subject is February 6, 2009.

OLB BUSINESS:

2008 Ice Storm: Ms. Levine and Mr. Lee will be going down to the State Office of Emergency Management on January 16th to start the process of the FEMA application. February 2nd is the application deadline. This is only for public assistance to cities and towns at this point. She has not heard any word on assistance to private individuals but thought that it did not sound promising. She noted that they did open up assistance to non-profits so the Hospital and the college may receive assistance.

Ms. Levine said that she and Peter Berthiaume had thought of doing some sort of party for the volunteers who helped throughout the storm and discussed doing it at the Ware Center. February 16 is a tentative date since the college is closed that day. The Town would support this financially. Mr. Kaplan supported the idea.

Regarding the ice storm, Mr. Ballin said that the debriefing occurred last Monday afternoon and that it went very well. There were over 20 people there and the facilitator did a terrific job. Ms. Levine said there was a Thank You ad running but noted that she had forgotten to include Woodcrest Village and asked Ms. Cross to include that in the Intertown Record.

COMMITTEE MEETING AND REPORTS:

1. Planning Board Public Hearing: Tuesday, January 6 at 7:00PM. Mr. Ballin attended this meeting. He said the proposed amendments passed with only minor grammatical changes.
2. Budget Committee: Tuesday, January 8 at 7:00PM. Ms. Levine noted that the Household Hazard Waste drive was cut from the 2009 budget. Any raises have not yet been settled on for 2009. Regarding the salaries, Mr. Kaplan wanted it clarified that the Budget Committee decides the dollar amount for salaries, but these dollars are distributed by the Selectmen to the employees. Ms. Levine said that if the Selectmen differed with what the Budget Committee decided they could direct Town Meeting to reflect that difference on the floor for a vote by the Town. Mr. Ballin said he is hopeful that before Town Meeting the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen will be in agreement and he said he got a sense that will be the case.
3. KRSD Deliberative Session: Saturday, January 10 at 9:00 A.M. Ms. Levine, who was not at the meeting, said she heard that there was a lot of discussion about the difference between the school board budget and the MBC budget and that both will remain on the ballot. She said that the floor did vote to include the school resource officer on the Warrant. She spoke to the SAU about what the Town's new tax rate would be as a result of this budget. She was told it would be about a 10% increase.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS/MEETING:

Sunapee Sewer Commission: Tuesday, January 13 at 5:30P.M. at Sunapee Treatment Plant. Ms. Levine said she is going to try to get there early for the tour of the facility at 4:00 PM but will be coming from a meeting in Concord.

Franchise Negotiations: Ms. Levine referred to an e-mail from Town Counsel Kate Miller regarding the remaining items to be decided upon regarding the Comcast franchise agreement. Mr. Kaplan commented

that as far as he was concerned, seven years was appropriate. Mr. Ballin agreed. Ms. Levine noted that would mean we would not get any money from Comcast for a public access channel station, which would be included in the 10-year option but not in the seven –year option. The Selectmen understood but were unanimous that a shorter agreement would be better for the Town.

There will not be a meeting next week due to the Martin Luther King Holiday

Maple Lane: Ms. Levine said she spoke with Bart Mayer and will write a letter to Doug Homan shortly. This regarded a Warrant Article passed three years ago to discontinue a portion of Maple Lane.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted,