TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 4, 2006

PRESENT: Cindy Adie, Peter Bianchi, Barbara Brown, Bill Clough, Sue Clough (Selectman), Celeste Cook, Paul Gorman, Mark Kaplan (Selectman), Karen Hoglund, Doug Lyon (Selectman), Bob Lavoie, D.J. Lavoie, Peggy Holliday, Marilyn Kidder, Steve Landrigan, Jessie Levine (Town Administrator), Harmon Lewis, Sue Little, Joe McCarthy, Bob MacMichael, Lois Marshall, Peter Messer, Noel Weinstein, Stephanie Wheeler.

Mark Kaplan opened the meeting at 7:30 a.m. Copies of the 2006 Town Warrant were distributed, and that was the topic of discussion for this meeting. He reminded members that the annual Town meeting and polls will open at 8 a.m. on March 14, 2006, at Whipple Memorial Town Hall for consideration of Articles 1A and 1B, and will recess at 12 noon. Polls will remain open that day until 7 p.m. The meeting will reconvene at the Kearsarge Regional Middle School Gymnasium on March 15, 2006 at 7 p.m., to act upon Articles 2 through 29. He pointed out that Article 1A addresses election of Town Officers, and Article 1B addresses proposed amendments to the New London Zoning Ordinance. Karen Ebel will attend the latter half of this morning's meeting to review those proposed amendments with the Citizens' Advisory Committee. In the meantime, he turned the floor over to Doug Lyon for discussion of Articles 2 through 29.

Doug Lyon opened discussion of Article 3 which asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed $275,000 for the purpose of engineering evaluation and upgrade construction to the Georges Mills Pump Station to meet federal and state regulations. This is a bond article, and will require a 67% majority to pass. The requirement for this upgrade was brought to the attention of Sewer Commissioners subsequent to the spill at that station in April of 2004.

Article 4 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed $250,000 for the purpose of engineering and constructing the repair of the Mountain Road landfill, which was damaged in the October 2005 rains. He reminded the Committee that this landfill has been capped in the past, but not properly. When a section of it slipped, insurance reimbursement at that time allowed the Town to properly cap only part of the landfill, but not the entire landfill. Now another section has slipped, and this bond would cover the cost of properly capping that. He added that this will complete the permanent capping to the Mountain Road landfill. This, too, is a bond article, and will require a 67% majority to pass.

He pointed out that if either of the articles does not pass, the Town will be required to pay to have this work done anyway.

Noel Weinstein asked about offsetting funds. Sue Clough said the first—the upgrade to the Georges Mills Pump Station—will be totally offset by an increase in sewer users' fees. Jessie Levine added that through the New London Sewer Commission's joint agreement with Sunapee, that Town (Sunapee) may pay for part of this. Part of Georges Mills does use that station.

As far as the landfill capping goes, Mark Kaplan said the Town is trying to obtain FEMA funds for that, but it is not certain how successful efforts will be. Sue Clough added that there is a difference of opinion between FEMA and New London regarding the cost and nature of the work. It has been proven in the past that patch work capping (as FEMA recommends) does not hold.

Bob Lavoie asked what would happen if the Town went along with FEMA's recommendation. Wouldn't FEMA have to be responsible for that work? Doug Lyon said no, FEMA may cover the cost of the work it recommends, but would not take the liability. The bottom line is the Town wants to do it right this time.

D.J. Lavoie asked if it's a given that sewer user fees will cover the cost of upgrades to the Georges Mills Pump Station. Jessie Levine said yes, that is built into the wording of the article: "The Board of Sewer Commissioners or

Board of Selectmen are hereby directed to establish fees sufficient to pay 100% of the principal and interest due on the bonds or notes issued hereunder to be paid by those served or receiving benefit from this Pump Station in accordance with RSA 149-1:7."

Doug Lyon went on to open discussion of Article 5 which asks the Town to vote to raise and appropriate $1,182,044 for General Government Operations. He pointed out that the budget is still pushed by growth related issues, as increases in highway maintenance requirements, and increases in calls to the Fire and Police Departments, though they hope to see some moderation of growth and its related costs in the near future.

He pointed out that budgets driven by growth do not necessarily increase in a smooth motion; rather the increases may be incremental. For example, the Highway Department may be able to address the requirements to maintain the increased miles of roads in Town with a level budget, up to a certain point. At that point, however, it needs to add staff and/or equipment.

He said that 35% of the budget is personnel related. It is not easy to hire municipal employees, and that is particularly true for the 24/7 operations as dispatch, police, and highway maintenance (plowing). Positions which remain vacant for part or all of a year, are one reason the Town ends up with a surplus at the end of the year. Bill Clough asked if that difficulty lies in the number or the quality of applicants. Doug Lyon said both. Right now, New London is having a wage and salary classification study done. That will formalize the structure within Town, assure that New London is competitive with other similar towns, and reduce turn over. He pointed out that turn over in positions that require training, is very expensive including the overtime pay to someone who must cover the vacant position, and cover the training time.

Peter Messer pointed out that New London's benefits package is excellent, and exceeds other Towns'.

Jessie Levine agreed that it is a good benefits package, but it does not exceed other Towns' as they are all members of the same association. Doug Lyon said the biggest benefit cost is family health insurance which is substantially higher than a single plan.

Noel Weinstein asked about the proposed allocation for Reassessment of Property--$77,500 up from last year's $22,500. Jessie Levine said that actually, last year they also used $30,000 from the capital reserve for property reassessment. Yes, the $77,500 will be constant, but they will not be putting money into a reserve every year as they have in the past. Doug Lyon said that assessments will be done annually, and ultimately will be cheaper. The cost of the last revaluation pushed $300,000, not counting the legal costs. He added that the Town is getting positive feedback from residents regarding the new assessor and system.

Jessie Levine said the increase in the property liability insurance line is because it now includes that cost for the Police Department as well.

Noel Weinstein suggested that these explanations be made clear at Town Meeting, and Harmon Lewis suggested that any increase over 8% or 10% should be explained on the floor at Town Meeting.

D.J. Lavoie asked what is included in Executive ($267,815 proposed for 2006, up from 2005's $236,418). Jessie Levine said that is the Selectmen's Office. This year, they would like to increase the new part time office assistant to full time.

In response to Sue Clough's question, she said the health insurance is up 8½% this year, a total increase of $80,000 for the town.

Peter Messer asked if salary raises are automatic each year. Jessie Levine said that is part of what the classification study will determine. Right now, after six months of service, an employee is reviewed for salary increase.

Peter Bianchi raised the problem of finding total budget amounts in the Town report. One must flip back and forth quite a bit, and coordinate numbers. Jessie Levine said they will try to address that.

Bob Lavoie asked what percent salaries will increase this year. Jessie Levine said they have not identified that yet, but they have done some calculations and are estimating 6% in order to have enough to cover increases. Harmon Lewis pointed out that is higher than the rate of inflation. Jessie Levine agreed, the rate of inflation is 4%. She added that some merit increases are built into the proposed number. Also, they wish to be prepared should the study find that the Town is behind in salaries and wages. Doug Lyon said it is not the Town's goal to limit wage and salary increases to cost of living.

D.J. Lavoie asked about the Selectmen's Discretionary Fund. Jessie Levine said they have budgeted that at $10,000 under Executive.

Doug Lyon went on to open discussion about Article 7 asking if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $1,228,402 for Public Safety, up from last year's $1,120,738, and said the increases are mainly due to the increase in number of calls—Police calls are up 15% to 20%. Also, they wish to make some one-time purchases including a covert camera, safety vests, another computer terminal for SPOTS. The Fire Department has budgeted $20,000 for repairs to the ladder truck. In response to question about the increase in Emergency Management from 2005's $6,494 to the proposed $14,394, Jessie Levine said they would like to redo the wiring in the elementary school so that the generator can be used there. Noel Weinstein asked to clarify that the items shown in Article 7 are both labor and some equipment, but the Police Cruiser is separate, shown with capital expenses (though it is not purchased with a reserve).

Peter Messer pointed out that most of the calls to the Fire Department are not for fires but for traffic accidents. Joe McCarthy said they have to call that Department before they know whether there has been a roll-over, or chemical (including gas or oil) spill. He clarified that they call only the officers first. The officers make the determination of how many more to call out.

Peter Bianchi asked what the wage is for on call firemen. Jessie Levine said the hourly rate depends on the level the individual has reached. Peter Bianchi clarified that some of the calls do not require people over and above the full time officer. He is on duty anyway, and would not be paid extra for that.

Jessie Levine went on to Article 8 which asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $1,228,991 for Highways and Streets, up from last year's $1,071,759. She said one increase is the addition of a part time secretary for the road agent. In response to Peter Messer's question, the Selectmen said that Richard Lee has asked for the secretary. Currently, either he or Karen Welch who is a Level II Equipment Operator, must spend hours doing paperwork including keeping maintenance schedules, recycling figures, grant applications, supply ordering and responding to calls and letters from residents. Doug Lyon pointed out that once again, this increase in volume of paperwork relates to growth. The question townspeople must decide is, what do you want your professional personnel to be doing. Harmon Lewis expressed support for a Highway Department secretary.

Noel Weinstein asked if Street Lighting budgeted at $66,000 includes the switch-over. Yes, and the pay back will depend on people's final choice between metal halide or high pressure sodium. They estimate about a four year payback period, but the savings in electricity will go on forever. Jessie Levine said she has not had many respondents to her straw poll for type of light. High pressure sodium is slightly ahead, but the figure put into the budget could cover either. Marilyn Kidder suggested they expand the sample testing. The light with the orange glow may not really be most people's first choice. Sue Little asked if there is a difference in visibility between the two. No, there is no difference. Some people have said they feel that the orange light cuts through fog better; others have disagreed with that.

Harmon Lewis asked if this budget includes some shifting of street lights. Yes, the Street Light Committee is considering all recommendations for shifting locations, removing, adding, etc, and have run all their own

recommendations by the Town's safety services. There is some discussion now about adding lights at crucial intersections.

Bill Clough cautioned against getting locked into a definite pay back period, as rates are only going to increase. Doug Lyon agreed, and said this could really become a cost avoidance rather than a cost savings issue. Jessie Levine added that the Town does qualify for the lower rates.

Article 9 asks if the town will vote to raise and appropriate $1,199,440 for Sanitation. Doug Lyon said that Richard Lee has provided a national figure indicating that each new house generates one ton of trash a year, not including the recyclables. Using that figure and doing some calculations of their own, they estimate that each household produces two 20-pound bags of trash per week. Jessie Levine said that they budgeted $270,000 for waste disposal in 2005, but spent $289,000, and Mark Kaplan added that New London does much better than other towns in recycling.

Peter Bianchi asked about the tipping fee. Jessie Levine said it is $91/ton, and they are making three or four trips to Claremont a week—the number of trips has remained level. Peter Bianchi clarified that the increase in this budget relates to the volume then, and that they have not yet had to increase the number of runs. If they have to increase the number of trips over, that cost would go up.

Karen Hoglund raised the question of stickers on vehicles. (Apparently this has been a sticky-wicket for some time.) Doug Lyon said the Town is initiating a campaign on this now, and they are going to insist that people stick stickers on their cars. Marilyn Kidder suggested the Town use the peel-off type, rather than the sticky ones.

Sue Little asked about the large amounts of construction trash being dumped at the transfer station. Jessie Levine said that should not be happening. The Town only allows construction trash which can be cut up into a size that will fit into the 37-pound barrels.

Peter Bianchi asked if the large trash haulers such as Naughton are on the honor system, and he suggested the possibility of a little selective enforcing. Selectmen said that Richard Lee does keep updated lists of their customers. Bob MacMichael pointed out that if enforcement of these issues must be increased, so, too, will the cost of operating the station.

Article 10 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $123,913 for the Health and Welfare Departments, up from last year's $111,919. Selectmen explained that the jump here—in New London Ambulance ($85,260—up from last year's $75,146) is based on the number of calls.

Article 11 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $514,379 for Recreation and Culture. The largest increase in this section is in Tracy Memorial Library's budget ($397,950 up from last year's $353,375) and that covers salaries. Sue Little asked about the decrease in budget for Other Culture, History and Archives ($1000 down from last year's $4000). Jessie Levine explained that last year Archives requested additional funds to preserve some maps from Jane Phillips' house. They have encumbered that money, so do not need to repeat the request.

Note made that the Recreation Department budget will decrease from 2005's $122,955 to a proposed $115,129 for 2006, as a result of the revolving fund being established. Fees for trips and programs are now turned back to pay for those trips and programs, and to add new ones. Harmon Lewis said that he does not object to programs and trips paying for themselves, but feels that the description of the fund is too broad, and there is a possibility that fees generated by trips and programs could be used for any recreational purpose. He suggested presenting a gross figure less the incoming revenues to give a net new appropriation. Jessie Levine agreed that the incoming and outgoing funds relative to the revolving fund could be provided.

Article 12 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $17,420 for Conservation. That is down from last year's $31,370, as the Phillips Preserve timbering and field clearing, including stumping, has been done. Doug Lyon reminded everyone that the income from the timbering paid for the field clearing and stumping.

Article 13 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $202,937 for payment of principal and interest of long term debt. That is down from last year's $246,923, as they have retired some debt, but it will increase with the two bonds proposed in Article 1 of this warrant.

Article 14 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $741,000 to place into previously established capital and non-capital reserve funds. In response to Marilyn Kidder's question, Doug Lyon said that the Conservation Fund now has $350,000 in it. They are requesting a deposit of $150,000 again this year, to bring that up to a half million and give the Town some negotiating power. The expectation is that purchase of conservation land would require a bond. The current thinking of the CIP Committee is that the deposit can drop back down to $50,000 after this year, in order to maintain the fund's negotiating power.

Harmon Lewis asked to clarify that the Town must approve a land purchase before that money can be spent, and that it cannot be spent without a particular project (parcel) being named. He suggested the possibility of a desired parcel coming on the market, and the necessity to act more quickly than full town approval can be obtained. He proposed that the Selectmen or Conservation Commission be authorized to at least purchase an option or right-of-first-refusal without having to wait until a full Town meeting. Doug Lyon said they have always presented this reserve to voters with the assurance that nothing would be purchased without their (voters') approval, and he was not sure how they would feel about that (Harmon's suggestion).

Sue Clough reminded everyone that there is also the option of scheduling a special Town meeting for the purpose of approving a land purchase. Marilyn Kidder pointed out that even special Town meetings take time and money. If something comes on the market the Town would have to be nimble in responding, and she thinks Harmon Lewis's idea is a good one.

The consensus of the Citizen's Advisory Committee is that it would be advisable to authorize the Selectmen to purchase an option on, or right-of-first-refusal on a parcel of conservation land, upon recommendation from the Conservation Commission, without waiting for a special or regular Town meeting. Jessie Levine said such authorization would have to be approved by the Town as a warrant article, and it is too late to add that this year, but it can be considered for next year.

Noel Weinstein pointed out that some of the deposits into capital reserves are very small, and one—for Town Office Copier Replacement has nothing scheduled for deposit this year. Jessie Levine explained that with last year's deposit, the balance in that fund is adequate to purchase the replacement copier, and they are requesting (in Article 15) that voters approve use of $9000 of that balance to do so. They do not anticipate needing to start replenishing that fund again for a number of years.

Doug Lyon responded to Noel's remark about the small size of some deposits, by saying that the objective of the Capital Improvements Program is to spread capital expenses out over a number of years' budgets. The CIP Committee has had discussion about what items to reserve for and which not to (that is, which should be covered in the operating budgets). The questions debated at CIP Committee meetings are: Should the CIP Committee be thinking about broadening the CIP's purpose and include more, or should the CIP exclude the lower-cost items? What should be the minimum cost for inclusion in the CIP?

Bob Lavoie raised a question about the Master Plan Update. Jessie Levine said that Article 20 asks if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate $15,000 for that purpose.

Barbara Brown asked if there are caps on the reserve funds. Selectmen Mark Kaplan said no, usually deposits are made into a reserve for an item until the year that item is purchased. Doug Lyon said New London's CIP goes out fifteen years. Each year, the CIP Committee meets and looks at each item in the program to decide if the annual deposit is adequate to purchase that item in the year it will be needed. Sometimes they reduce the annual deposit. For example, this year, they are recommending a deposit of $155,000 into Highway Equipment Replacement reserve, down from $162,500, as Richard Lee has indicated that the new Highway garage will extend the life expectancy of some of the equipment.

Noel Weinstein asked to clarify that before the reserve can be spent, voters must approve that expenditure. Yes, unless agents-to-expend have been appointed.

Bob Lavoie opened discussion on paragraph two in Article 16, asking voters to approve spending $30,000 for Whipple Memorial Town Hall Basement—specifically for demolition of the interior, and for determination of the best use for that space. He suggested that this would really be a non-refundable down payment on something, when they have no idea what the ultimate cost of that work will be. Jessie Levine reminded everyone that renovation and utilization of this basement space was included among the recommendations in the Bennett Yarger Study done in 2004. A rough estimate of the basement renovation is $150,000. They still do not know all the issues, including electrical, plumbing etc. The work being proposed this year is just to get a start on that, and they anticipate much volunteer assistance as with the Fire Station. Brian Carey has already volunteered time to work on this project. Bob Lavoie suggested that the warrant article could include wording to indicate that the ultimate cost of the project will not exceed a certain total. He expressed concern that once the Town begins this, it will be stuck with finishing it.

Peter Bianchi asked for some specifics about the projected work. Jessie Levine said the renovation will replace the old kitchen with a new one, the old bathrooms with new ones, move the telephone and electrical panel closer to the utility room, but keep the evidence storage where it is. The central space in the basement will be renovated to be used for training and meeting purposes (not just for police, but for any Town organization), and for a small exercise room. Also, since the building will have a kitchen, it can be used as an emergency shelter.

At this point in the meeting, Mark Kaplan asked Planning Board Chair Karen Ebel to brief the CAC on the Planning Board's recommended amendments to the New London zoning ordinance.

Karen Ebel explained that as a matter of law, they are required to show on the warrant both the stricken wording and the proposed new wording. Also, they have been asked to provide a rationale for each amendment recommended—thus, there seem to be pages and pages of proposed amendments, though many are "housekeeping" changes.

The most significant amendments would:

- Establish consistency among those sections pertaining to the Wetlands Overlay, Shore land Buffer, steep slopes and the Stream Buffer, by placing the same Erosion and Sediment Control provisions in each of those sections. To date, the wetlands overlay and steep slopes sections do not include any provision for erosion and sediment control..

- Place consistent provisions for cutting in the sections affecting both the 50-foot and 100-foot buffers.

- Slightly reduce the amount of wetlands and steep slopes (25% and over) that can count toward the minimum lot size and density.

Mark Kaplan pointed out that that last will have the effect of reducing the amount of buildable land in Town. He asked if they have calculated by how much. Karen Ebel agreed that that would be the effect, but said it would not be a great amount. Mark Kaplan said that nevertheless, voters should know that before making a choice on this proposed amendment. Karen Ebel said that is explained in their rationale, and they have a chart which explicitly lays all this out. The Planning Board's motivation in proposing this amendment is not related to development or growth issues, but to protection of wetlands, lakes and watersheds. She added that initially, they were proposing an amendment that would prohibit all slopes 15% and up from being counted toward the lot size, but their public hearing on this proposal was attended mainly by developers and realtors who objected to that, and so they changed the proposal to 25%. They continue to require at least ¾-acre of buildalbe (that is, exclusive of wetlands, buffers, 25% slopes, etc) land on a building lot (that's not the same as the required total lot size).

Peter Bianchi said that every time they amend the ordinance, it seems they make fewer house lots available. He pointed out that with that, zoning will take care of any growth issues. He said he hasn't seen an outpouring of

problems on lakes and streams to necessitate all these restrictions. He asked if these amendments might be a knee-jerk reaction to particular subdivisions which have been proposed recently.

Jessie Levine said that as the Town has grown and become developed over the years, the less desirable land is all that remains available. That is the more environmentally and difficult to develop land, which requires more restrictions.

Karen Ebel added that the Planning Board has had a great deal of input from the Lakes Associations, and from the Watershed Coalition. The bottom line is that an increase in impervious surfaces near water results in a decrease in water quality. It is a benefit to have larger lots around the lake. Also, she said that they are discovering that developments approved in the past, have had over the years a cumulative negative effect. Now the Town is at a point where it has to try to compensate for some of those past mistakes.

Doug Lyon said that his sense is that there is overwhelming sentiment in New London for limiting growth. Celeste Cook said that people live in New London for the beautiful environment, and that is what these amendments are meant to protect.

Peter Messer pointed out that the ordinance treats land off the lake the same as that on the lake. Karen Ebel said the ordinance addresses wetlands that lead into streams and lakes. It is really more of a watershed approach.

Sue Clough said she feels this is a reasonable compromise between opposing views expressed at the public hearing. She agreed that the proposed amendments are driven by watershed considerations, not growth limitation.

Mark Kaplan said that nevertheless, the unintended effect of the amendments will be to reduce the number of buildable lots in Town. He suggested that they should figure out how many exactly, and provide that information to voters. Karen Ebel said the Planning Board did labor over the rationales provided with the proposed amendments.

Bob Lavoie suggested the Planning Board investigate some alternatives to mitigate the reduction in number of house lots, including landscaping and retention pond recommendations. Cindy Adie supported the idea of conducting some educational workshops on issues including recycling, composting and environmentally sound landscaping. Sue Clough added that the Master Plan work will include discussions on cluster housing. Meetings of the master plan committee are open, and she hopes many will attend. Also, questionnaires will be mailed to every household. Karen Ebel agreed to return to the CAC for periodic updates on the progress.

Harmon Lewis opened some discussion on the idea of limiting how long into the future grand-fathered structures should be allowed. He suggested that the Town should not be stuck with those forever, and should be giving some thought to how to end those. He added that eminent domain, that is, the Town condemning and/or purchasing those properties (with 30 or 50 years warning) would have to be a state program.

Several CAC members expressed some concern about that idea, particularly considering that those property owners will have been paying full property taxes on their property for years.

As the time was approaching 9:30, Doug Lyon quickly briefed the CAC on Article 19 which asks the Town to vote to raise and appropriate $33,200 for a mosquito control program. He said the State has come out with some recommendations on how to deal with EEE. Health Officer Don Bent feels very strongly that New London should take this action, but the Conservation Commission feels that risk in New London is still low. No town immediately adjacent to New London has found presence of EEE (though a crow found in Andover tested positive last summer, as did a horse in Salisbury). Altogether, there have been seven cases in humans in New Hampshire.

The program would not include spraying, but larvaciding, specifically identifying those habitats—mostly red maple swamps—where the particular species which carries EEE is likely to breed. They program claims a 90 to 95% reduction in numbers of those mosquitoes. Several CAC members noted that the etymologist presenting these figures at the Selectmen's meeting, is the vendor for the program. Noel Weinstein asked to clarify that the program

would cover both the species that carries EEE and the species that carries West Nile virus. He suggested that a study be done first. He asked about the terminology "non-lapsing fund" in the article. Jessie Levine said that means that if the money is raised, but not spent, it can remain available for this purpose for five years.

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The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S.A. Denz
Recording Secretary