

**TOWN OF NEW LONDON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2005**

**Present:** Connie Appel, Doug Baxter, Pat Blanchard, Carol Fraley (Finance Officer), Jessie Levine (Town Administrator), Doug Lyon (Selectman ex officio), Bob Meck, Clayton Shedd, Barry Wright (Chairman).

**Absent:** John Wilson, Jim Wheeler, Jack Diemar

Barry Wright called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. The Budget Committee met with three department heads during this meeting.

**Highway Department**

Prior to the meeting, Budget Committee members had received the updated expenditures to date and the 2006 requests for:

Highway Administration: \$599,027 requested for 2006, up from \$565,259,

Highways and Streets: \$524,800 requested for 2006, up from \$484,400;

Transfer Station: \$425,825 requested for 2006, up from \$412,654;

Solid Waste Clean up: \$25,550 requested for 2006, up from \$16,550;

Cemeteries: \$29,583 requested for 2006, up from \$29,603;

...as well as supplemental information on Biodiesel and memos re: Hazardous Waste Day, recycling and electronics recycling, a break down of the cost estimate to continue the sidewalk from the Library to Hayes Road, and a proposed job description for the requested part-time secretary.

Richard Lee reviewed the reason he is increasing his request in part-time wages in Highway Administration from \$5000 to \$15,000. He would like to hire a secretary to work in the office 20 hours a week. He noted that paperwork relevant to the department's activities has increased including maintenance reports, reports on recyclables, annual reports, applications for grant funds, setting up and maintaining a file for every road—thus providing a really good inventory of all work done on that road. In addition, he finds he must spend a great deal of time on the office phone. Karen helps out, but she is more valuable out in the field. Barry Wright asked if it is routine to add gravel every time they grade a road. Richard Lee said yes, saying that that information would be added to the above mentioned road file, thus providing a good background of information should people request that a road be paved in the future (or request that it not be paved). Doug Lyon agreed, the Selectmen must look at paving the roads on a case-by-case basis, and the more information they have on a given road, the better. He asked if 20 hours will be enough for the new office assistant. Richard Lee said he'll start the new position out lightly, and see how it goes, perhaps adding hours later. Barry Wright asked if the position would start after Town Meeting. Jessie Levine said yes, but it appears that the allocation shown on the print-out is for the full year.

Richard Lee said he has requested a small increase in Telephone: \$3000 up from \$2800. He is *finally* switching from dial-up internet to DSL. As Adelphia is going to be changing in the near future, he will stay with TDS. DSL will increase the speed, and can be run on the fax line.

He has reduced the request for Conferences & Training to \$500 down from \$1000. He noted that four of the employees will be re-certified to work at the Transfer Station this year, at a cost of \$50 each. One of the re-certifications (his own) can be done at the Road Agent's show, at no expense.

Turning to Highways and Streets, he opened discussion of the sidewalk work, reminding everyone that in 2004 they built the sidewalk from the Library to C.B. Coburn; in 2005, they plan to build the sidewalk from the Gulf Station to Seamans Road; and next year, they will do from the Library to Hayes Road. In 3 or 4 years, they will get to Homan's Corner. The request is for \$28,180, including curbing all of Graham McSwiney, and double curbing in front of TDS. This is best-case scenario, as we do not expect 100% property owner approval or participation. He anticipates some reimbursement for the curbing in the amount of \$13,080. In response to Barry Wright's question about the curbs all the way across McSwiney's, he said he has talked to them and to the owner of Lemon Twist, and hopes that both will agree to some modification that will get rid of the back-out (onto Main Street) parking. Doug

Lyon said Lemon Twist has enough land for parking behind the building, and Barry Wright said it would be nice if the business parking behind Main Street could all be tied together to avoid another driveway. Connie Appel said it is better to create more parking, rather than less. Barry Wright said the recent study indicated that parking in Town isn't a real problem. People backing out onto Main Street is more of a problem.

Bob Meck noted that he is level funding Paving Services this year, at \$184,000. Richard Lee said yes, although it is his understanding that paving will go up \$3.50/ton this year. Vendors are charging an extra fuel surcharge. He reviewed the proposed gravel upgrades for 2006 on Page Road (including drainage), Tracy Road (including drainage), Bunker Road, Elkins area.

He went on to discuss his request for Gasoline and Diesel--\$35,000 up from \$28,000 and the additional request for \$11,000 to switch to Biodiesel fuels. Switching may at first necessitate replacing of filters, but benefits include health and environmental. Also, the equipment will run cleaner, and as a result, may extend their life spans. He added that the Fire Department would also use this.

He has reduced the request for Street Paint from \$12,500 to \$6500, because the sidewalk painting was completed this year. In the future, he feels they can get a good price on the sidewalk paint, and do it themselves. The remainder of the budget is for routine street painting.

He turned to discussion of Transfer Station expenses. He and Jessie Levine pointed out that the Equipment Repair and Maintenance will be a non-lapsing fund for five years. This year they are putting \$10,000 into it, up from \$5000. Richard Lee said the concern is about the age of the department's equipment.

He is requesting \$400 for Conferences and Training this year, down from \$600. As mentioned, three people must be re-certified this year, at \$50 per person. He can be re-certified at the Road Agent's Show, at no additional cost. Doug Baxter asked what if they lose one of the certified personnel. Richard Lee said they can operate the Transfer Station on his, Bob's and Karen's license, adding that right now it is not necessary that a certified employee be on the premises all the time, but within two years, that will be the requirement. To become certified, an individual needs at least one year's experience. Doug Baxter asked if certification means additional pay. Richard Lee said it has not in the past.

He is requesting \$9000 for a Hazardous Waste Day, noting that it works better for New London residents if it is held right in New London. The new office assistant will be helpful here in doing the grant work, and advertising. He also would like to try an electronics recycling day, to get some of that stuff out of the waste stream. Doug Lyon asked for a definition of hazardous waste, and he asked about plastic containers. Richard Lee said they are not quite as fussy about those now. Plastic containers can go in with soap bottles now; only clear and shaded milk bottles are separate. He said so far this year, they have shipped out 44 bales of plastic, 6 bales of aluminum cans every eight weeks, and 6 to 9 tons of newspaper every 7 days. They have added a second box for mixed paper for use by the college and hospital. That second box is located at the garage so the college and hospital can access it every day, but he noted that it may be handy as a back up should the box at the transfer station become full (Transfer Station employees could bring paper to the Highway Department; the back-up box is not open to the public). Each box holds an average of five tons and the Town receives \$40 per ton, which covers the cost of shipping, and saves \$91/ton cost for trucking out the regular waste stream.

From Capital Reserves:

He is requesting \$62,000 for a one-ton Dump Truck & Sander, noting that these have an anticipated life span of five years, then it will go to the Transfer Station for another 3 years, where it is used for trash runs and to haul glass. He said that the dealer quoted him \$59,000 last February, and he assumes it will be up in 2006.

He is requesting \$47,000 for a Highway Tractor with a cab heater and air conditioner, bucket loader and snow blower. It will see year round use. The snow blower will be handy for around the Police Station sally port, in front of the Fire Station and Library, and would free up the one-ton to be out on the roads. That may reduce the need for an additional large truck in the near future. He added that the \$47,000 does not take into consideration the trade in.

He is requesting that \$5000 be put into the reserve for Bridge Maintenance, noting that eight of the nine bridges in Town need work. They anticipate that the cosmetic work including rail on the Elkins bridge will cost \$90,000 alone. 80% of that will be covered by federal bridge aid, in their next round of grants in 2008-2009.

He is requesting that \$155,000 be put into the reserve for Highway Equipment Replacement, noting that they now anticipate a 12-year life span for each dump truck as opposed to the previous ten-year life span. He said they would like to purchase a ten-wheeler dump truck in 2007, pointing out the benefits in fuel and personnel time savings. Doug Lyon said that the labor savings alone will repay that cost. Doug Baxter asked to clarify that the ten-wheeler would not be used for plowing. Richard Lee said no, that it is too large for most plow routes but maybe in the future they will put a sander on it. Right now, they have four designated plow routes. None can be plowed with a ten-wheeler. The fifth truck does the main line and jumps in if one of the other four breaks down. He is requesting that \$5000 be put into Transfer Station Improvements, saying the Town is growing, and he knows that in the future, they will have to do something there.

### **Conservation Commission**

Conservation Commission members Les Norman, Ruth White, and Dan Allen presented the Conservation Commission's proposed operating budget of \$6,550, and \$9,000 for completion of the work at Phillips Preserve. There was brief discussion of the request for \$2500 to print new trail maps. The new maps will be tri-color and include GPS coordinates. Note made that sale of the maps generates income, and Carol Fraley said that revenue falls under Town Clerk Sales which last year (2004) had a total income of \$1,338, (\$286 to date in 2005), though some of that was for sale of the Town History books. Connie Appel asked why that revenue does not go directly to the Commission. Jessie Levine explained that unless designated otherwise at Town Meeting, all revenues go to the Town's general fund. Note made that the Town does support the Commission's budget. Les Norman noted that they are only requesting \$9000 this year for the Phillips Preserve work, as they had previously promised to spend on that only what they took in as revenue from the timber harvest there. Also, they are requesting that the 2004 allocation for Land Management (Surveys) be encumbered, and that an additional \$1000 be allocated for that purpose in 2006. They are beginning a management plan for Low Plain now, and would like to do that for all the Conservation properties in Town.

He went on to remind the Committee that last year, voters agreed to put \$150,000 into a capital reserve for Conservation land. The intent is to bring that balance up to a half-million dollars, then simply keep it topped off annually, keeping inflation in mind. They concede that that would not go far toward purchase of a parcel, but it could be used as a down payment, with a purchase agreement.

### **Recreation**

Bob Andrews presented the 2006 operating budget request of \$117,960, a decrease from 2005's allocation of \$122,955, pointing out that the establishment of a revolving fund has allowed them to zero out the following lines: Programs/Special Events, Recreational Trips, Program Instructors, and the Boating line. Those pay for themselves now, plus the revolving account is growing. The aim is to have all programs run on a break-even basis, or making a very small profit. In addition, they are looking at replacing two of the Bucklin Beach docks, with docks that would be topped with synthetic, more durable materials.

In response to Doug Lyon's question, he said some of their most successful trips are to the Red Sox. Also, the Adventure Day Camp, which they have just started for middle school aged kids, is a success. He noted that the day camp held at the school was filled to capacity this summer. The fee for that is \$90 per week. Doug Baxter asked if fees are the same for out-of-town kids. Yes, with the exception of swimming lessons. New London has always deemed swimming lessons to be an important service to provide. The cost for those are \$10 for 15 30-minute classes for New London residents, and a little more for out of town people. The reason for that is that the Town pays the lifeguards at the beaches and in that way subsidizes the swimming lesson to some extent. He added that they do have the ability to assist kids whose families cannot afford the program fees.

He went on to open discussion of the CIP Committee's recommendation that the deposit into the capital reserve for Recreation Land Purchase be doubled this year from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Doug Lyon reiterated the brief discussion

of last night. From the Selectmen's perspective there would be some advantage to tying together the projects of the Outing Club, the Community Center and the Town's Recreation Department. The idea is not to turn the Community Center (or the Outing Club) into a public supported enterprise, but to maintain private fund raising efforts, with the potential for some contribution from the Town. Right now, it is all still in the conceptual stage. Bob Andrews added that centralizing those services would make delivery of recreation services easier. It would be easier for people to use, and easier for coaches and coordinators of the various activities in the area. It would be a sort of central clearinghouse. Jessie Levine added "and an information center." Bob Andrews said the Town would not be looking into taking over anything. The decisions would have to be made together. Doug Lyon agreed with that. They are not looking to reinvent the wheel here, and Jessie Levine said they would like to see a matrix of the services and activities of the three entities: Community Center, Outing Club, and Recreation Department, to see where there may be duplication of services, where those could be combined. Doug Lyon pointed out that a few years ago, Bob Andrews was given the charge of coordinating all recreation activities in Town. That has been a resounding success, and this would be an extension of that charge. Jessie Levine clarified that right now, the Selectmen are not ready to endorse, but are simply encouraging the dialogue.

Barry Wright asked if the money being requested to be set aside in the reserve would be all they are asking for. Jessie Levine said that money is what they are talking about now – that reserve would be used to assist in purchase of the back land to the Kidder-Cleveland parcel on which the Community Center is proposed to be sited. It would not be used to help the Community Center purchase the land under the Community Center. Doug Lyon said that in the past, putting money aside for purchase of either Conservation or Recreation land has received overwhelming support from the Town. He reminded everyone that this is a savings account. No purchase can be made with this money, unless that purchase is approved by the Town Meeting first. Pat Blanchard suggested that the Community Center needs to become more visible before there is discussion of purchasing the land behind it. Bob Andrews said that as yet, there is no price set for that back land. He pointed out, however, that it would have to be delineated in terms of zoning, if that back portion were to become part of the Community Center project. Doug Lyon said that before the Selectmen would endorse this, they would look for a proposal from the three players – a matrix as was mentioned earlier, which would include information regarding fundraising processes. They would have to wrap this together in such a way that the Town's role in this is contingent upon the other parts falling into place. They will have to find a way to lay that out for people.

Clayton Shedd asked if residents would then be required to pay to use the playing fields, after they have paid for the fields themselves. Doug Lyon said they are not talking about the Town supporting this entirely. Jessie Levine pointed out that residents already pay fees for swimming lessons, etc. There is some discussion, if this were to come about, of the Town doing some plowing, etc., and she acknowledged that there has been some concern expressed about excluding people from outside New London. Though the Community Center is called Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee Community Center, New London would receive some greater benefit simply by virtue of the fact that it will be located in New London. Clayton Shedd reiterated concern regarding sending tax money to a private group. Bob Andrews pointed out that, in providing these kinds of services, it is often less expensive for taxpayers to work with non-profit groups. He mentioned a community center in Hanover which is 80% supported by user fees, and 20% supported by an endowment—kind of what we see as a help group in New London. New London already has a public/private relationship with the outing club. They would want to have the Town involvement to protect the interests of New London. Jessie Levine said the outing club is already planning to build playing fields and by working together there could be a much more comprehensive project.

Barry Wright asked about the on-going expenses. Would there be opportunity to make changes every year? Right now, they are looking only at the \$100,000 for a land purchase. Clayton Shedd agreed, and said that is his point—that this is not the only expense the Town will be looking at. Connie Appel said she would promote the idea of the Town taking a role in this. She feels the Town should embrace and support the Community Center. Jessie Levine pointed out other areas where the Town gives money to private organizations: ambulance, Chamber, VNA, COA. Clayton Shedd asked what if a non-profit group suddenly can't pay its bills, to whom will it go? Or what if it wants to expand in the future? He sees this as a much greater than \$100,000 proposal, over the years. Would they end up taking money away from our programs? Bob Andrews said the Town is not looking to make money from its programs. Program revenue goes back into the programs, and offsets their costs.

Doug Baxter asked if there would be any advantage in the Town owning the property and leasing it to the Community Center. Doug Lyon said that would just be another way of financing the deal. There would be no advantage to either party. Doug Baxter suggested the possibility that if the Town owns it, that would allay some of the fears. There was agreement that saving this back land from development would protect the Pleasant Lake watershed, and allow for larger buffers around the Community Center.

Pat Blanchard said it will be important to know the rules ahead of time. Doug Baxter agreed the Town needs to know what the project is, and what the support will be. Jessie Levine said they have assurance from the Community Center that it will be a private organization, and will raise the capital and the annual costs privately. Doug Lyon said part of this is fleshing the project out, and getting some idea of what the fund raising potential is.

**Other**

Jessie Levine distributed a packet of information regarding the costs of the new joint assessor including the 2006 projected budget, job description, a break down of salary, benefits, other as office, phone, memberships, etc; cost of using the current system for comparison; costs with 7% inflation; and graph showing estimated savings using the regional assessor.

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Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting will be at on October 5 at 7 p.m., at the Fire Station. At that time, the Budget Committee will determine in which areas it needs more information, and will establish the relevant subcommittees.

Respectfully submitted,

S.A. Denz  
Recording Secretary