



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES May 16, 2011

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Tina Helm, Selectmen
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Linda Hardy, Interim Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Dave Seastrand, Police Chief
Jim Wheeler, Budget Committee Chair
Rich Anderson, New London Resident
Joe Cardillo, New London Resident
Renate Kannler, New London Resident
Bruce Hudson, New London Resident
Pat Trader, Intertown Record Reporter

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 6pm. The first item on the agenda was Chief Dave Seastrand, who was there to talk about part-time police officers.

Chief Seastrand said that Geoff Daley is now gone. Jeff Downey left and is working for the Federal Government. Rick Kelley may need to get done for personal reasons. Dave Croft doesn't know if he will be able to continue, as he is retired and may be limited to the number of hours he will be allowed to work. They are in a dilemma where they need to start hiring some part-time officers. He knew of some newly-retired state police officers who live in the area who may be able to work up to about 25 hours/month. Chief Seastrand said that they would generally like to have five part-time officers on staff. They generally work two shifts per month (16 hours). He added that part-timers could be limited to about 1,300 hours per year by law if a bill is passed in Concord.

Chief Seastrand said that officers have 30 days to gain employment after retiring or changing jobs before having to be recertified. There are two state police officers who are looking to retire who are local. He would like to be able to hire these individuals before their 30 days has passed. No minimum number of hours is required to be given to these officers, but they do need to be guaranteed a minimum number of training and firearms hours so they may keep their certification. The hours they are in training will count as their duty shift. Chair Kaplan said he was fine with these new hires, as they would not be getting paid any more than the officers who are leaving, or have already left.

Chief Seastrand asked what the current procedure is for hiring. In the past he had gone through the background check. If they passed this check, a letter was provided by Ms. Levine offering the position and the pay rate. The Board of Selectmen offered that the process would be the same but that Ms. Hardy would be the one to write the letter and work with him on it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept the public minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting that was held at 3pm, as circulated.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept the non-public minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting that was held at 3pm, as circulated.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept the minutes of the May 5, 2011 Joint Boards of Selectmen's meeting, as amended.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Hardy said she was not at the meeting, but was listed as an attendee in the minutes.

Ms. Helm noted that the fourth sentence on page 2, enrollment was spelled incorrectly.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept the public minutes of the May 9, 2011 meeting, as amended.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Helm said that on page 2, 6th paragraph starting "Ms. Helm said she wanted..." it should say and plan on "having" discussion, and insert "facilities manager for the town."

Mr. Bianchi said page 4 the movement from SAU grounds by Garden Club. The town was accepting the gift from the school property, and to allow the Garden Club to maintain the shrubs on the grounds of Whipple Hall.

Mr. Bianchi said on page 6, it noted that there had been a public hearing to accept funds for the engineering for the Lamson Lane project. He couldn't find a date of such a hearing. Chair Kaplan said it happened at a Board of Selectman's meeting, in public, but that it was not really a public hearing.

Mr. Bianchi asked about the reference to "sewer connection." It should be written as "Sewer Connection – Ruedig Property."

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept the non-public minutes of the May 9, 2011 meeting, as circulated.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

It was noted that within the non-public session, the minutes were voted to be sealed and would not be filed with the other minutes.

OLD/PENDING BUSINESS

Town Administrator Search Committee Update – Mr. Bianchi said that they are now down to nine candidates. They met with the search committee and Barry Cox from LGC the previous Friday regarding what people can and cannot ask during an interview. There was discussion regarding interview times and locations. Ms. Helm said that she saw some of the members of the committee recently and they expressed their enthusiasm for being able to participate in this way.

Ms. Helm thought it would be helpful for the committee members be provided with Ms. Levine's list of ongoing projects, which may help them view the candidates for specific skill sets.

Mr. Bianchi asked if name tags would be provided for each member of the committee. Ms. Hardy would check with Mr. Cox.

Set dates for Selectmen's meetings after 6/27/11 – It was determined that no meeting would be held on Monday, July 4. Ms. Helm asked for a meeting to be added for Monday, July 11 at 6pm. As that date draws near, the Board of Selectmen will re-assess what their meeting needs/frequency is, as the new Administrator should be in place.

NEW BUSINESS

Schedule Non-resident Taxpayer summer meeting – It was determined that this meeting should be put off until the new Town Administrator was hired.

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Ms. Hardy reported that she was given a letter of resignation that day from Bill Helm resigning from the Budget Committee of the Town of New London effective at 5pm on Thursday, May 19, 2011. The Budget Committee will need to appoint a replacement. Mr. Wheeler said he was aware of this and would get communication out the following day and ask members to bring names of people they would suggest to fill the spot to the scheduled meeting that Thursday (May 19). Chair Kaplan said that in the last instance, they went back to the election results to see which candidate had earned the next highest votes. Mr. Wheeler agreed but said that the time previously this was not the way it was done. No precedence had been set by going back to the elections.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Sewer Meeting – Ms. Hardy agreed to contact Holly in Sunapee to inquire about any upcoming meetings for May.

Planning Board, Tuesday, May 10 – Ms. Helm said they discussed the first iteration of the Land Use chapter. She said the draft was much too wordy, but was impressed at the job Mr. McCrory from the Regional Planning Commission was doing. The next meeting will be on May 24, 2011. They also approved one tree-cutting request.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

TC / TC Office Closed Wednesday, May 18 – Ms. Hardy said they would be attending a spring workshop in Grantham for the day. They will have messages on both phones, the door will be locked and there will be signs outside. It was noticed in the Kearsarge Shopper as well.

Budget Committee May 19 at 7:00 PM (Whipple Hall)

Public Discussion of Elkins project – May 23 at 6:00 PM at Selectmen’s Meeting – Mr. Bianchi noted that this meeting was noticed at the CAC meeting the previous Saturday. He said that the two charettes that were online are no longer there and wondered if Ms. Hardy could locate them for the meeting. She believed she could. Ms. Helm thought they should discuss their goal for the meeting and what they’d like to accomplish. Ms. Hardy said the members of the Elkins subcommittee have been contacted to spread the word. Ms. Hardy was asked to notify the recipients of the regular town news emails about the meeting as well. She agreed to do so. Chair Kaplan felt they should hear remarks from both sides of the issue, including those in favor of the project, and those not. Ms. Helm envisioned this meeting not to discuss design, but to make sure everyone was on the same page. Mr. Bianchi said that some of the comments heard at Town Meeting he was not surprised to hear. He added that the comments came because of the design that had been presented. He thought they should explain the origin of the project, how the grant works, what things are included in the project and what kinds of changes could be made to the Elkins area.

Mr. Wheeler said the engineering phase was approved at Town Meeting, but was curious as to what that included. Chair Kaplan said he didn’t know. Mr. Cardillo said that the vote at Town Meeting was for the engineering design. Ms. Helm said that through the conversation, they will find out what kind of design the people of Elkins are looking for. There was some thought that most people had safety improvements in mind.

Mr. Cardillo said they approved \$149,000 for design and review. He wondered where they would go on the other end of the project and asked if they had set a limit on the total cost. Chair Kaplan said they could only expend 20% of the \$800,000.00. There would be another \$650,000.00 available. Mr. Bianchi said from the original application, things have changed. For instance, the Mesa building is no longer there and the Mill Pond is not part of it either.

NO Selectmen’s meeting Monday, May 30, Memorial Day.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cardillo brought up the fact that the town would be moving Town Meeting to May from March. The Town voted on this last year, as part of going to the new fiscal year. The vote was supported unanimously at Town Meeting, with hopes of attracting more people to the meeting. He explained that a comment at the CAC was interesting and could impact this decision. It has to do with the passing of the school budget. He felt they needed to review whether they’ve done the right thing with moving the meeting to May. Mr. Cardillo thought they needed to have a decision made in March for the school budget. This should be done by ballot, but the only thing on the ballot would be the school budget. Ms. Hardy said that the school district would be running the elections. Previously they have passed this job off onto the Towns, but now that the ballots are only for the school budget, they will have to handle the process themselves. Mr. Cardillo thought the school district would have no problem with this responsibility.

Mr. Cardillo said that they can talk about the cost of running an election, but whatever the cost, it was insignificant. New London shoulders the lion’s share of the school district budget, and he fears they will go from where they have the largest impact on a vote in the district, to where they

will have diminished the impact of the New London voters. This year they had about 1,150 people vote, mostly because there were elections that piggy-backed on that vote. If they only have a vote for a school budget, he estimated there would be many less voters taking part. That would lessen New London's influence in the budget process.

Mr. Bianchi said that Ms. Levine knew about this and had noted another meeting would need to be held in March for the school budget. Ms. Hardy said that this year they will have to have a meeting in March and one in May, as it was voted on at Town Meeting. Mr. Cardillo asked the Board of Selectmen and the Interim Town Administrator to do some research on this. He said that there needed to be some open discussions of the benefits or problems faced by moving Town Meeting to May. He thought perhaps they could go to Bart Mayer (Town Counsel) or LGC (Local Government Center) to see if they can reverse the decision. Ms. Hardy said they'd have to go through the DRA. They would be the one to allow the Town Meeting, and they are the ones who certify the minutes and the warrants, etc. Mr. Bianchi said they could have a special Town Meeting to reconsider moving the Town Meeting from May to March. Mr. Cardillo said this never came up as a discussion point at Town Meeting but felt it was an important issue. Chair Kaplan said in all the years he has looked at it, New London has never been out-voted on anything, even with the 1,100 votes. Mr. Cardillo disagreed. He felt they needed a good representation of their voters to make decisions. Next year they could be faced with a bigger difference between the school board and the Municipal Budget Committee's budgets.

Ms. Hardy said it is the townspeople's own choice not to vote at an election in March. Ms. Helm said that this could be looked at in a different way. If people have just one thing to vote for, they may do their research and more people may turn out.

Mr. Anderson said that he went home after the CAC meeting, where this issue was raised, and realized they had a problem with the Town Meeting moving. By splitting the elections, there could be a lower level of participation for a March meeting. He said higher turn-outs are evident when more things are combined into one election. Mr. Wheeler said they are in a unique situation, as there are no other towns that have moved to the fiscal year that are part of a school district. Ms. Helm said they agreed to try this for a year to see if it worked.

Mr. Cardillo wondered if there could be another mechanism for opening up the issue, other than the CAC meeting. Ms. Hardy offered that citizens would also reading about the issue in the newspaper, as there was a reporter there at the meeting. Mr. Wheeler said they've cast their stone for this year and should let it go. If there are huge discrepancies in the school budgets (school board vs. MBC), people will get out and vote.

Mr. Anderson said they have a fairly significant impact as far as the overall direction of the school district. As the largest town, they should have a substantial say in this. In some votes, New London has gone in a direction contrary to where the other six towns were going. Ms. Hardy suggested the schools work harder to get people to come out to vote.

Mr. Wheeler believed there would be a lower turn-out when having two elections, rather than just one. Mr. Cardillo thought they should discuss the decision of moving Town Meeting during

the next month and the potential of reduced input of the Town into the overall budget of the district. He wasn't sure how it should be approached. Ms. Hardy confirmed that the school district charter proclaims that the vote for the budget must happen in March.

Ms. Helm said there was so much going on right now, she could not conceive of introducing the issue within the next month. She would like to see it through with what the voters voted on and then reexamine it after the May vote. They should give the model a chance.

Mr. Wheeler recalled that Bow had changed back to a March Town Meeting from the May meeting, after changing to the fiscal year. It was noted that Bow didn't have the large population that New London does. Ms. Hardy added that Bow did not adopt quarterly billing.

Mr. Anderson said that New London voted overwhelmingly that the old SAU building should be demolished. The other six towns did not vote this way. He had some concerns that fewer votes would be thrown into the mix in the future and they would not have the same influence on decisions made.

Mr. Cardillo said he wasn't asking for a decision, but was raising a point of discussion. Ms. Helm opined that separate elections could draw additional focus to school issues. Mr. Cardillo suggested they keep the issue in mind, have some discussions and get feedback from the MBC and the school board. They could perhaps revisit the issue when the new Town Administrator is in place. The Board of Selectmen thanked Mr. Cardillo for bringing this issue to them.

Mr. Bianchi shared that the Town received a letter from Jerry Frew noting that their school payment is up \$667,000 from last year. The difference was assumed to be due to a decrease in contribution from the State. Mr. Anderson agreed to ask Mr. Frew for an explanation for the increase at a meeting they would have together the following day.

Application for Building Permit:

- Gregory & Linda Potter, 25 Aspen Lane (Map & Lot 074-042-000) screen porch addition – Permit # 11-036 – Approved.

Application for sign permits:

- Temporary: Wilmot Learning Place, sign at information booth – WLP annual sale – June 11th 7AM-11AM – Approved.
- Temporary – ASD Parents Connect, sign at information booth – Taco night, May 27th, Hogan Sport center – Approved.
- Temporary – The Fells, sign at information booth – annual plant sale, June 25th – Approved.
- Permanent – Ellen's Interiors, 12 Lovering Lane (Map & Lot 084-059-000) replace existing sign on pole – Approved.
- Permanent – Kidder building, 149 S. Pleasant St. Smart Physical Therapy sign added to side of building – Approved.

Application for use of Sydney Crook room:

- Adventures in Learning Tuesdays 1-4 Sept. 20 – Oct. 15
Approved Thursdays 9-12 Sept. 22 – Oct. 13
 Thursdays 1-4 Sept. 22- Oct. 13
 Fridays 9-12 Sept. 23 – Oct. 28

Other items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher for week of 5/16/2011

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to adjourn the meeting of May 16, 2011. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London