

Town of New London
Budget Committee Meeting
November 16, 2009

Present: John Wilson (Chair), Bob Meck, Jim Wheeler, Celeste Cook, Kathy Bianchi, Doug Baxter, Connie Appel, Ann Bedard, Mark Kaplan (Selectman), Larry Ballin (Selectman), Tina Helm (Selectman)

Absent: Jack Sheehan

Staff Present: Jessie Levine (Town Administrator), Carol Fraley (Finance Officer), Jay Lyon (Fire Chief), Sandra Licks (Library Director), Chad Denning (Recreation Director), Dave Seastrand (Police Chief), Richard Lee (Public Works Director), Tom Anderson, Donna Davis, Linda Jackman, Thomas Scully, Greg Barthol, Kelsie Lee, Jodi Bailey, Heather Wood, Edward Anderson, Rob Thorp, Joe McCarthy, Susie Burmann

Public Present: Shelby Blunt (Library Trustee), Andy Deegan & Terrance Dancy (Conservation Commission), Keith Pomkoski (Recreation Commission), Bob and DJ Lavoie, Doug MacMichael, Sue Clough, John Clough, Scott Fabry (VNA), Terry LeBlanc, Tina Naimie, & Kent Wheeler (New London Hospital); Nancy Friese, Erle Blanchard, Hugh Chapin, & Hardy Hasenfuss (Council on Aging); Rob Bryant (Chamber of Commerce), Peter Bianchi, Joe Cardillo, William Fellerman, Ben Cushing, Steve Ensign (Board of Firewards), Gail Goddard

Chairman John Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and noted a few rules to be followed: 1) a discussion of a subject would be limited to those sitting at the table, appropriate department heads and concerned citizens; 2) all citizens would be limited to two minutes per subject unless permitted otherwise; and 3) once a motion was made and seconded, any further comments would be limited to the Budget Committee or the Town Administrator.

New London Hospital: Chair Wilson noted that hospital representatives, Terry LeBlanc, Tina Naimie and Kent Wheeler were at the meeting to discuss the New London Ambulance's budget proposal. Committee member Celeste Cook, who is on the Hospital Board of Directors, recused herself from any subsequent vote and discussion.

Terry LeBlanc referred to the handout the Hospital had submitted to the Budget Committee and summarized that the New London Hospital ambulance provided service to seven surrounding towns and that the Town of New London was the biggest user of the service. On average they have three to four ambulance runs per day. Ms. LeBlanc noted that this figure hasn't changed over the years. Of all the runs, they can only bill the patient or insurance if they actually get transported to a facility (hospital). If the patient does not need to be transported, the Hospital cannot charge them. She estimated that about 30% of the visits are done without charge. Ms. LeBlanc explained that a term they use is a "loaded" mile, which is when there are people taken to the Hospital in the ambulance.

Ms. LeBlanc indicated that they approached the surrounding towns to help share the loss for those trips where they cannot bill the patient or insurance. When they did the analysis for this coming year, New London had a total of 470 calls, which accounted for 42.8% of the total calls. She said that they try hard to keep costs level or with minimum increase each year. This year several things occurred to cause an 11% increase since last year. Ms. LeBlanc explained that employee salaries and benefits have increased. They had to increase the salaries to keep their staff as the market in the area has become competitive. After a study, they found that the salaries offered by New London Hospital were low. Also, fuel costs

have gone up and their truck is no longer under warranty. All repairs to the vehicle are having to be paid out-of-pocket and are no longer covered.

Ms. Bedard asked what services the ambulance provided. Kent Wheeler said that they stabilize patients to get them ready to transport to facilities, they supply their ambulances for community events, and they are on stand-by at fire calls to assist if necessary. They also staff an ambulance for special events at Colby-Sawyer College.

Ms. LeBlanc noted that last year they had to make adjustments in the salaries mid-year and they did not pass that on to the Town. She indicated that their employees are eligible for a 2% raise on top of what they are already getting. Kent Wheeler added that they compete with Dartmouth and Newport, and explained that it is an expensive market to be in and that their staffs' skills are being recognized and are now being paid accordingly. They had to increase their benchmark.

Chair Wilson asked what the percentage of calls were handled by New London Hospital. Kent Wheeler said that this number has increased. There was an average of 1500 calls per year. This year, there was mutual aid that came from other towns in 8-10 of the calls. Chair Wilson said that in the past there was concern about the New London Ambulance not being available for calls, so he wondered whether those were the calls that were tended to by other ambulances services in the area.

Regarding the 11-12% increase in the budget, Jim Wheeler commented that it looked as though it was merely due to salary increases. He pointed out that revenue was up 5% from last year. Mr. Meck asked if utilities and maintenance costs were up. Kent Wheeler said that the warranty was up on some of their vehicles, accruing more maintenance costs. Mr. Meck asked how many vehicles this impacted. Kent Wheeler said that there were three vehicles no longer under warranty, although they don't run all three vehicles at the same time. Due to the bad weather this summer, not a lot of people were out and so the 911 calls dropped.

Ms. Naimie remarked about the Hospital's critical access status. The Hospital is paid by Medicare on a fee per service basis. Medicare pays about 0.30 on the dollar for the runs. She noted that they are very appreciative of the Town's assistance in working together to make sure they are able to continue running the ambulance service.

Chair Wilson asked if this year was an unexpected "blip" in their budget or would they be seeing a 10-11% increase each year. Ms. LeBlanc said that right now, given what they know, the salaries are in line with others. She couldn't say if nine months from now something would change, but right now they felt it would stay close to what it is now. Mr. Wilson asked if anyone from the audience had any questions. There were none. Chair Wilson thanked the three representatives from the Hospital for coming to the meeting.

Minutes: The next item on the agenda was to make additions or corrections to the minutes from the last meeting held on October 26, 2009. Ms. Appel said that on page 1, she had a correction of her previous correction. It should say "...Newport Court *could* be closing" and not "would be closing." Ms. Bedard noted that Jim Wheeler was not at the meeting and his name should be removed from the list of attendees. Chair Wilson said on page 2 it should say "drop off" brush, not "drop of." On page 3 he said to remove the word "it" before the text "to make it work." In line 3 of the same page, replace "and" with "in." On page 5 it should say "a" instead of "the" generator.

Chair Wilson made the following additional changes:

- Page 5, paragraph 5, add "Chair Wilson reminded all that when the request for \$20,000 was first made, the Budget Committee was told that this figure would not increase. Mr. Curtis, speaking for COA said it would not."
- Page 7, paragraph 4, line 5, should read "Mr. Kaplan said that the Governor explained that small towns needed to get together with each other and their representatives to persuade their representatives to vote against the donor town program." This would replace "Mr. Kaplan said that the Governor explained that small towns needed to get together with each other and their representatives to persuade them to vote against donor towns."

IT WAS MOVED (Doug Baxter) AND SECONDED (Bob Meck) to approve the Budget Committee meeting minutes from October 26, 2009, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

2010 Budget Review: The next item on the agenda was to have a line item review of the budget.

Jack Sheehan, who was unable to attend the meeting, provided Chair Wilson and Ms. Levine with questions regarding the budget. In the appropriate places, Chair Wilson asked that Ms. Levine point out what Mr. Sheehan's questions were and they would discuss.

Budget Page 1 - Executive

Mr. Baxter asked Ms. Levine to explain the increase in the recording secretary salaries. Ms. Levine said that there were a lot more meetings going on that need to be recorded. They have already over-expanded the budget for this year even though she was doing the minutes for the daytime Board of Selectmen meetings. Mr. Baxter felt that it didn't seem that they would need to be doubling the expense because there didn't seem to be double the meetings. Ms. Levine noted that she is currently taking minutes for half of the Selectmen's meetings. She noted that when someone who is a member of the different committees are assigned to record the meetings, they often do not get the minutes completed and available for the public to see within the six days required by law. Ms. Bedard asked if a secretary was at every meeting. Ms. Levine said that they are making an effort for this to happen. Ms. Fraley added that they are already at \$1,000 over the budget and that there were still two more months to go. Ms. Appel opined that it was inappropriate for the Town Administrator to be taking minutes for meetings that she is trying to participate in. She said that recording secretaries are a needed function in the meetings. It was the general feeling of the committee to leave this line item as-is.

Resident Sue Clough said she would like to second Ms. Appel's comments. She said it was critical to have Ms. Levine's input at the meetings. She also opined that it was good to have the minutes done at an appropriate and timely manner. She felt that the minutes being on the website were important and thought that they should fully cover the expense.

Budget Page 2 - Executive/Elections

Chair Wilson asked if there was potential for reducing the selectmen's discretionary fund. He said that the budgeted amount was \$7,500 for them to use for discretionary reasons. So far this year they have used about \$1,200 of it. Ms. Levine noted that the Board of Selectmen had recently approved holiday bonuses which would use the remainder of the funds. Mr. Ballin said that the fund was already down from 2007 and 2008 and that he would respectfully ask to keep it the way it is.

Jack Sheehan, in his memo, questioned the executive printing line and what it included. Ms. Levine said it was for the Town Report and some minor printing, such as the Quicklink newsletters and the back side of tax bills, which contains material required by law. Mr. Sheehan had asked if the Town Report could it be shortened and to not have color on the cover. Ms. Levine indicated that they were planning to print fewer copies of the Town Report this year, as there were about 300 left from last year due to the fact that they weren't mailed out to everyone but made available for those who wanted one to pick up at the Town Office. She felt this reflected the notion that people weren't all that interested in receiving the annual report. Ms. Levine added that she has investigated what other towns pay for their reports and found that New London does pay a higher amount to print them locally. She believed that they could negotiate the printing price. Ms. Levine explained that they can't really eliminate anything from the Town Report to shorten it. The most expensive part of the report is to printing the warrant articles and zoning amendments, which was changed from color to tabs last year to reduce costs. Ms. Levine added that the color cover is only about \$400. She also shared that they won third place for their Town Report this year.

Kathy Bianchi noticed that the Town Clerk's salary seemed to have gone up by about 11%. Ms. Levine said that the Board of Selectmen approved a grade adjustment for this position, which was not at the same grade as other department head positions. This was done for the Sewer Department position as well. They reviewed the salaries and the position was adjusted.

Budget Page 3 –Elections

Ms. Appel asked about the change in software for the Town Clerk's Office. Ms. Levine said that the Town Clerk office supplies line item included a request to upgrade to the auto registration software. She noted that Linda Hardy was out sick and was not present at the meeting, but that in talking about this expense in the budget meetings, this really was becoming a need from an efficiency standpoint. They could serve people a lot better without having to do double entries into the State's auto registration system and without having to manually prepare the reminder letters. Mr. Baxter noted that if they have to start serving all the people in person to renew auto registrations, it would definitely increase the traffic flow in the office. Ms. Levine said that a lot of people complain when they don't get their renewal letters. She added that this upgrade would also allow for credit card payments for the auto registration. They currently have the ability to pay with one check for State and town registration. Mr. Kaplan interjected noting that when citizens use the credit card to pay for such things, there would be a convenience fee involved that each person would be responsible for.

Ms. Bianchi asked why the ballot machine expenses had gone up. Ms. Levine said that it was because there are three elections in 2010 at which the machine has to be used so there is more machine maintenance and testing needed.

Budget Page 4 - Finance

Ms. Levine shared that under Finance - Computer License Fees the original amount was \$27,000. They were asking to increase it to \$28,450, for a net increase of \$1,450. She plans to eliminate the Vision online assessing database and replace it with the SMS online database that includes GIS mapping. Vision only allows for searches by property owner, street name, and map/lot and it does not link to mapping. Ms. Levine said that SMS has provided the GIS maps at no cost this year, and that it is preferable to Vision. Newbury and Sunapee would be using this same database next year, and Ms. Levine noted that the Assessing line item was reduced by \$3,000 because this line item was originally going to be in the Assessing budget but that would require Sunapee to pay more than its share of the cost. Jim Wheeler asked if the GIS website linked to the Vision website. Ms. Levine said no, they would be replacing the Vision website with the GIS website. The only thing that would not be available on SMS that is available in Vision on-line was the "sketch," as that was proprietary to them. Mr. Wheeler asked if someone

wanted to compare their tax assessment for accuracy, would they have to come into the town office? Ms. Levine said that this was true, but that there was an added service included with the new database because people could see all of the zoning map features, including overlays, streams and wetlands. She said that it was a trade-off for the sketch and the overlay maps. Mr. Wheeler said he felt taxpayers were more interested in the sketch versus a wetlands mapping. Ms. Levine explained that if it didn't work out over the next year they could reevaluate it. She felt this was a better service than what they currently have. Mr. Wheeler respectfully disagreed.

Mr. Baxter asked about the increase in Dues & Subscriptions. Ms. Levine said the increase is in large part due to her membership in the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which dues are based on salary. She said that in the past, New Hampshire had negotiated a discounted membership rate for managers of communities under 5000 residents, but that had expired in July. They budgeted for the increase for next year. Ms. Fraley said they may have to go up again next year because this year they were already over budget. Ms. Levine said that the other increase was the Budget Committee's subscription to Town and City magazine at \$22 per subscription. Ms. Cook said that they should get one copy and leave it in the office for people to come and read. She also suggested members pay for their own subscription.

Peter Bianchi asked that the board be more specific about the expenses they were talking about so that the public who came to the meeting could have a better idea of what they were discussing.

Mr. Meck asked about the line item concerning computer supplies and its increase as it relates to the need for replacing a server that will approach its fifth year in operation. He asked if they had sought out the advice from an information specialist to say that it was recommended at this time. Ms. Levine said she had done this and has an email from the Town's consultant, who reiterated all that she said at the previous meeting about the need and the risk they would be taking in prolonging the replacement of the server. She said it was actually entering into its sixth year of operation. Ms. Levine explained that she could not stress how much it would impact the Town if the current server failed. She added that the vendor she spoke to regarding the recommendation was not the person selling the computer, so he was not giving her false information. Mr. Meck asked if the cost would include the operating system. Ms. Levine answered in the affirmative. Mr. Baxter shared that he asked his company's Information Technology (IT) manager and the IT manager from his parent company and both said that five years was an appropriate time for these things to be replaced.

Budget Page 6 - Finance

Ms. Levine noted an update on the change sheet. Newbury got a better worker's compensation rate and, with the reduction of staff training, the Assessing budget has gone down.

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question about reimbursement for tuition. The tuition reimbursement fund has had \$10,000 budgeted for the last two years. So far this year, of the \$10,000 only \$5,247 has been expended. He wanted to know if this was something they want to continue. Ms. Levine said that it was in the Town's Personnel Policy to reimburse for a degree that is job-related. The program was primarily in place to encourage employees to advance their education. She said that it could potentially be reduced to \$7,000. If they should end up with requests to use more in the account, she would ask the Board of Selectmen to overspend the account. She added that as long as that benefit is in the personnel policy, they have to comply. Ms. Bianchi asked if they had paid all they expected for this year. Ms. Fraley said that she thought there were still some bills to come due to people taking fall classes. Ms. Levine said she actually felt they were all in. She also explained that it depended on the year, but there were usually about six employees taking classes per year. Ms. Levine said that there was a \$2,000 per year cap per

student. Mr. Wheeler suggested keeping it at \$7,000 and if it went over, Ms. Levine would ask the Board of Selectmen to do an override.

IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to change the line item for employee tuition reimbursement from \$10,000/year to \$7,000/year. THE MOTION PASSED. Mark Kaplan OPPOSED the MOTION.

Mr. Kaplan explained that he has always been in favor of education and felt it was important to have employees who are committed to their jobs. He wanted to encourage them and the fact that they just moved the budget from \$10,000 to \$7,000 sends a signal that he didn't approve. Ms. Appel said that she was in agreement with him that it was an important benefit to offer as a Town, but the last two years they spent under \$7,000. It seemed that the \$7,000 appropriation would be reasonable and should more employees want to take advantage of it and expend the fund, she would ask for an override from the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Cook asked where the money would come from if the Board of Selectmen had to override. Ms. Levine said it would come from other places in the budget that may be underspent.

Peter Bianchi asked Chair Wilson about New London's share of the \$77,000 Assessing budget. He wanted to know what they got for this amount. He felt like this was a lot for one town to pay and was curious of the breakdown. Ms. Levine said she could give everyone a breakdown. The budget was set up similar to the other departments. The total budget was \$232,000 and is allocated across three towns depending on the number of parcels they have (Sunapee pays the most, then New London, then Newbury). The gross budget is in Newbury's budget and New London's share of \$77,000 is paid to Newbury. New London is billed quarterly based on actual costs. Ms. Levine shared that they may not even spend the budgeted amount for this year. The budget was set by the Joint Board for the three towns, and if the amount isn't approved at Town Meeting, the money for the joint department must be found in other areas of the budget. She said that either the assessor was in one of the three towns Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of every week and floats on Thursday and Friday. Ms. Levine explained that the assistant assessor has the same schedule and that they are always available by phone. She said that when the joint department was created, the expectation was that legal fees and appeals to court would be reduced by having this position. This has, indeed, happened and she felt that they were getting a good service.

Mr. Bianchi commented that there was a lot of money being spent for three small towns every year to do something that is only required every ten years. Ms. Levine said they are no longer permitted to assess only every ten years and that they have to do a market review every year and certify to the State every five years. The quality of the assessing they were getting in the three towns was not as good as what they are getting now. She had a cost benefit analysis done in 2005 when they entered into the municipal agreement. They also used to put \$30,000 into a capital reserve fund for reevaluation. That is now gone and they can do their own internal evaluations. Ms. Bedard asked if they are doing this ongoing assessment every year, they don't have to do a total town assessment every five years. Ms. Levine said that because they are doing it along the way, the fifth year they won't have to make a big adjustment. She mentioned that Enfield had to make a big adjustment this year because they hadn't been assessing along the way. She noted that 2010 is the next certification year.

Mr. Wheeler asked if 4/5 of the town had been inspected yet. Ms. Levine said that it had not. She added that there was not a requirement to inspect every five years, but only to assess market value. She said that the requirement is to be fair and equitable and if they cannot get into the property every five years, the assessment may not be fair.

Ms. Bianchi asked about Personnel Administration. She wondered what "Other Health and Dental" was referring to. Ms. Fraley explained that all of the "other" charges listed there were benefits paid by the Town and reimbursed by the Library budget, and so it was a total wash.

Mr. Wheeler asked about the line item for Legal Expenses and that it was underspent this year. Ms. Levine shared that the Board of Selectmen had recently voted to send \$5,500 out of this fund to the Portsmouth Coalition. She also explained that this fund had been decreased in the past but didn't feel comfortable having it decreased any further this year as the lawyer's hourly rates had just gone up.

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question about the Town Planner. Chair Wilson noted that the Planning Board wanted to increase the budget line from \$20,600 in 2009 to \$22,500 in 2010. This was an increase of \$1,900 based on the projection of 2009's actual expenditures through July. Ms. Bianchi said that when they went to having a full-time Zoning Administrator they said it would reduce the work of the Planner. She wondered that since that full-time position was in place, why was the Planner budget going up. Ms. Levine said that this figure represents the request from the Planning Board. Ms. Cook asked if there was a rationale for the increase. Ms. Helm said that she is the only member of the Planning Board present tonight and as the Board of Selectmen's representative to the Planning Board, she had recommended that they not make a request for the increase, but she was not successful.

Mr. Wilson said that he'd like to see the Planner budget stay the same as last year.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Meck) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to keep the Planner budget the same as it was for 2009.

Mr. Wheeler asked how the Zoning Administrator assisted the Town Planner. Ms. Bedard asked if when the Planner came to meeting was there a flat rate. Ms. Levine said that it was an hourly rate. She said that she thought there was room to reduce the budget. Mr. Ballin said he was perfectly comfortable to decrease the budget. He felt the Zoning Administrator had picked up a lot of the work and that there was capacity in-house to do more of the work that the Planner performs. Mr. Ballin added that there could be competitive bids for this position and noted that our current planner was not the only vendor who supplied this service. He said that they really should have this discussion with the Planning Board present. He was comfortable, however, reducing this salary from the amount that was covered last year.

Mr. Kaplan said that the Planner's hours had already been reduced substantially, and referred to the budget history: in 2007, \$36,884 was spent; in 2008 there was \$26,197 spent; and in 2009 there was \$16,487 spent as of October with two months left to the year. He felt that they should drop it to \$20,000, and the net difference was over \$16,000 over the past two years. He concluded that it made sense to do what they did by hiring the Zoning Administrator and decrease the Planner's hours. Ms. Levine said that if they returned to the using the Regional Planning Commission they would pay a lower hourly rate and pay for fewer services. She said that using the same number of hours as in this year's budget and going to an hourly rate of \$45 per hour would be about \$18,500. She added that there was no one from the Planning Board at the meeting and that they may want to postpone the discussion until they had someone there to represent. Mr. Ballin said that they could come to a later meeting to defend it.

A second motion came before the committee: IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Kathy Bianchi) to reduce the 2010 budget for the Town Planner from \$22,500 to \$15,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Wilson asked the committee to vote on the line item of \$15,000 as amended. All members were in favor of the new line item of \$15,000 for the Town Planner's salary.

Celeste Cook asked about the engineering reviews on page 6, which were going up \$5,000. Ms. Levine said that her recommendation for a \$5000 non-lapsing fund for engineer reviews arose out of the fact that for the last couple years \$2,500 was put into the fund in case the Planning Board had to hire an engineer for independent reviews. She was now suggesting the creation of a non-lapsing fund of \$5,000 instead of

appropriating \$2,500 each year. She said that it was a higher short-term appropriation but over the next five years, that line would be zero unless the money was spent. If the money gets used it would have to be re-appropriated.

Mr. Wheeler asked if it made a big difference if they kept it at \$2,500 per year. He asked if they could make a non-lapsing fund of \$2,500 instead of \$5,000. Ms. Levine said that would be legal.

IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SEONDED (John Wilson) to decrease the Planning Board engineering reviews fund from \$5,000 to \$2,500 and to place it to a non-lapsing fund funded by year-end surplus. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Budget Page 7 – Planning Board/Government Buildings

Ms. Cook asked if the Planning Board Advertising budget had previously gone up for Master Plan advertising. Some on the committee agreed that this was the case. Ms. Levine said that they may be able to go down. She also added that advertising is paid back by the applicants if it is a public hearing.

IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SEONDED (John Wilson) to reduce the Planning Board advertising budget from \$1,000 to \$800. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Baxter asked about Town Hall Water and Sewer. He thought they were supposed to be equal. Ms. Levine said that both were based on the same number of gallons but not at the same rate. Chair Wilson asked why, if they had repaired plumbing leaks, did the cost go up. Ms. Levine said that most of the cost is from leaking toilets. She commented that there were a number of leaking toilets in the building. They keep fixing one and then they find problems with more. She also mentioned that the Garden Club uses water from Whipple Hall to water the plantings on the Common and around the building.

Budget Page 8 – Government Buildings

Mr. Baxter asked if there was information available yet on the elevator repair costs. Ms. Levine said that she didn't have that information yet.

Ms. Bianchi asked about building supplies. She wanted to know what that included. Ms. Levine said it was for toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc.

Chair Wilson asked if the replacement of windows at the Fire Station was a necessity this year. Chief Lyon said they hoped to piecemeal the project by replacing a few of the single pane windows each year. They would cost about \$500 each and either he or Carl would be doing the work so they would not hire it out. He noted that if they sat in the communication office, they would probably see it as a necessity to replace those windows as there is a slight breeze going through. Ms. Levine added that a member of the Energy Committee is doing an audit of town buildings and they had been discussing this. The plan was to do all the windows and it would be three or four years before they were done.

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question regarding the Highway Garage Maintenance. The project was for two door openers and trim board around the door. Mr. Lee explained that the doors lock up. They are 12' x 12' insulated doors and take two people to open them up. The door openers are about 22 years old now. The cost would be \$1,200 each if they install them themselves. Mr. Lee said that there was an entrance door that needed to be replaced and they could also do the installation for this project themselves. The rest of the funding would be for painting inside the office. He noted that the biggest item was the doors. He wasn't sure they could even buy the 12' wide boards that are needed to be replaced for this project, and they may have to do a work-around to fix it properly.

Budget Page 9 – Government Buildings

Mr. Meck asked if there were additional bids on the Bucklin Beach pumping for the septic system in the summertime. Ms. Levine said that earlier that day, the Board of Selectmen approved a bid of \$225 per pumping from Byron's Septic from Andover. This is all pending a positive review from their references. She added that the Sunapee Sewer Department had approved the pumping of the septic directly into the system. Ms. Levine felt that this line item could be reduced.

IT WAS MOVED (John Wilson) AND SECONDED (Jim Wheeler) to reduce Bucklin Beach Maintenance and Repair from \$5,000 to \$3,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Bianchi asked about the possibility of connecting Bucklin Beach to the sewer line from Hilltop Place. Mr. Ballin said they could look into the cost but thought it would be a few hundred thousand dollars. Ms. Bianchi said that at some point it would be nice not to have to pay this money each year.

Chair Wilson asked to clarify the fencing from Old Main Street Cemetery. He wanted to know if it was a zero item. Ms. Levine said that it was.

Chair Wilson asked Ms. Levine if the ramp and walkway repairs at the Elkins Post Office was a good estimate. Ms. Levine said that it was a materials estimate only and that the Public Works Department would be doing the work to replace it. She noted that there had been complaints from postmistress and those who use the Post Office regarding the condition of the walkway.

Budget Page 10 – Area Organizations & Police Department

Ms. Levine said that the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission dues went up \$89. She noted that Ms. Fraley had distributed their budget request earlier tonight.

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question about the Chamber of Commerce, asking if that line could be cut to \$8,000 next year on the basis that the Chamber should understand these difficult times. Ms. Appel said that because it was a tough year, they really need to make that expense. She said that the Chamber has become an increasingly important advocate for the Town's businesses, and this was the year NOT to make a cut in that fund. Ms. Bedard asked where they got their funding from. Chamber Executive Director Rob Bryant said that their funding comes from membership dues and grants. He indicated that dues were down 89% this year. He indicated that the Information Booth will be open year-round thanks to a volunteer who is there three days per week. Mr. Bryant explained that they used to get \$6,000-\$10,000 per year from the State, which has been cut down. He added that they have cut out \$10,000 of promotional materials that they usually send out. Ms. Cook asked who their members were. Mr. Bryant said that 62% of their members were businesses of fewer than five people.

Ms. Bianchi asked about if the increase in Police Department overtime wages was due to the move of the court from New London to Newport. Ms. Levine said that it was. Chief Seastrand said that he took the numbers from 2008 for an average amount of trips to court, per year, and added some additional money for travel expenses. Chair Wilson asked if the officers going to court had to be paid overtime. Chief Seastrand said that they usually end up going to court when they are on their days off. It is at the discretion of the court when they must appear. Mr. Ballin said that even if the court appearance is during their on-duty time, they would still have to hire someone else to backfill for the officer. Mr. Baxter asked if only the arresting officer was required to appear in court. Chief Seastrand said that this was true. Generally it is only one officer needed, but it can be more if the cases go further into the process. Chief

Seastrand explained that this figure was only an estimate and if it comes in less, they plan to cut it to where it needs to be. He said that it was a best-guess estimate.

Chair Wilson asked if Chief Seastrand could comment on other professional service fees, such as the attorney fees that have gone from \$6,000 to \$9,000. Chief Seastrand said that expense was for the Merrimack County attorney, and to get a professional attorney to defend all of their cases for \$9,000 per year was a “big bang for their buck.” He added that next year they have been told that their fees would be going up another \$1,000.

Budget Page 12 – Police Department

Carolyn Fraley noted that there was an addition to the New Employee Expense line in the Police Department budget. Ms. Levine said that two years ago, the Town had created a non-lapsing fund rather than to appropriate each year for new officer equipment. They had a new officer join the Police Department this year and had to outfit him for a cost of \$2,042. Ms. Levine explained that in order to keep the New Employee Expense fund at \$3,000, they would need to add \$2,042 to the fund.

Budget Page 13 – Fire Department

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question about the Small Tools & Equipment line item. Chair Wilson said that he also had a question. He asked about the stabilization jacks and the upgrade of the infrared camera used by the Fire Department. Chair Wilson wanted to know which item they would want first, as both items might not be possible in one year. Chief Lyon said that their request last year was \$6,500 and that it would be dropped down \$1,700 this year. This year they planned to purchase a floatable collar/basket for use in water saves, which has been delayed due to the ladder truck repairs. Ms. Appel asked if they were removing the stabilizer from their original request. Chief Lyon said that if he had to choose, that would make the most sense for this year. The thermal imaging tool camera currently have has been beneficial to finding the seat of the fire as well as the capability of helping to find people and animals within a burning building. Chief Lyon said that they would prefer to have the upgrade to the thermal imaging equipment, which costs \$3,000. In response to a question, he said that they would be willing to share this technology with the Police Department, although they have their own thermal imaging camera that is used each night with their night shift officer. Chief Lyon said that their current thermal imaging camera is more durable than the Police Department’s due to the nature of how the tool is to be used.

Ms. Appel asked if the stabilization equipment was a safety item. She opined that she would like to keep both line items as they are and purchase both pieces of equipment. Chief Lyon said that when responding to a rollover, sometimes they use trees to wedge a vehicle if it is on its side. Mr. Wheeler asked if this equipment was something new they needed, as they had gone this long without it. Chief Lyon said that there are more and more motor vehicle accidents and this equipment can not only stabilize a vehicle, but can be used to cut off a roof or lift a vehicle off of a subject. Currently they cannot do that with the equipment they have. Chief Lyon said that this was one piece of equipment that they could definitely utilize. Mr. Baxter asked if any of the neighboring town had this sort of equipment. Chief Lyon said Newport and Sunapee have one and that Newbury may be looking into getting one. Mr. Wheeler said that it would be nice to have, but felt it would be best to put it off for a year. Ms. Cook asked if they would share it with other towns if they needed it. Chief Lyon said that they would, and that they rely on mutual aid between the towns. He noted that if there was duplication of tools available, like the thermal imaging camera, they are willing to share.

Ms. Bianchi said that it sounded as though the stabilizer represented a method of safety for the firefighters and for the victim. The thermal imaging was wonderful too. She felt that the camera may help to prevent damage (by showing where walls would need to come down) but she wouldn’t want to put that capability

up against any of the firefighters going out to assist victims. Rather than thinking about cutting the stabilizer, she would consider postponing the thermal imaging camera upgrade and going with the stabilizer for the safety aspect.

Chair Wilson asked if the current camera was working. Chief Lyon said that it was. He also noted that he would like to see one on every piece of equipment. The State of New Jersey spent \$6 million to give each fire department a camera. This equipment is very important, not only for the benefit of finding fire in the walls, but finding occupants in a burning building. Thankfully, Chief Lyon said, they haven't had any situations where there have been subjects in the buildings. He added that this isn't just a tool that they use periodically. They really need it and from his standpoint, they would rather keep the camera upgrade over the stabilization equipment.

IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to buy the thermal imaging camera upgrade but not the stabilization equipment this year.

Ms. Appel asked if they could separate the two items and vote on each separately.

The motion was amended to say: **IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to purchase the thermal imaging camera upgrade and to reduce the Small Tools and Equipment line item by \$4,000 to \$2,650.**

Ms. Levine said that the item was \$4,950. The net difference in the budget was \$4,000.

The motion was amended again to say: **IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to change the Small Tools and Equipment line item to \$1700.**

In response to a raised hand, Chair Wilson noted that there could be no comment from the audience after a motion had been made and seconded. Ms. Sue Clough asked that the committee ask the audience if they want to speak before they ask for a motion. She said there were others who wanted to speak before the motion had been made but they were not given the opportunity. Chair Wilson agreed that Ms. Clough and two others could speak.

Ms. Clough said she was seeing compelling reasons for having both of the pieces of equipment. If she was in a circumstance to need either piece of equipment, she would want it to be available. She said that she could not see any real way to pick one and not the other. Ms. Clough felt that the Fire Department would be glad if they had both items and she urged the committee to fund both.

Tom Scully, who introduced himself as a lieutenant with the Fire Department, said that as far as the rescue jacks were concerned, it was fairly new technology on the market and has only been out for a few years. He said that it would make their job that much easier and that a safety factor was involved. They have cut down branches off of trees to stabilize a vehicle. It is not always the victim or the subject, but the firefighter who is risking their own lives or limbs to help others. In regards to the thermal imaging camera, it works now using the old technology, but by upgrading the entire software, it was doing more than to just give a color upgrade from their current black and white images. He said that he wouldn't want to be in a burning building and have the camera stop working because it was too old. He reinforced that when it comes to emergency services, it comes down to the fact that hopefully you have it when you need it and it works properly.

William Fellerman, New London resident, said he has total confidence in New London's staff, and if Chief Lyon thinks they need these two pieces of equipment to save lives and property, it shouldn't be a choice – they should just get it. Whether they are going to use it now or not is irrelevant. Mr. Fellerman felt that if Chief Lyon said they need the items, he thought they should get both.

IT WAS MOVED (Jim Wheeler) AND SECONDED (Doug Baxter) to make the line item \$1,700 instead of \$6,650.

Ms. Bedard asked how the jacks would be transported to the scene. Chief Lyon said that they have a spot on the apparatus that was designed for this equipment. They would be installed in a space located in the front compartment with their other rescue equipment. Mr. Wheeler said that having heard the comments from the audience, he felt that they should have whatever is necessary to do their jobs.

The Budget Committee voted on the motion before them and the motion was unanimously defeated.

Budget Page 14 – Emergency Management

Ms. Levine said that Mr. Sheehan had submitted two questions about the Emergency Management Director position, asking why the stipend for the position had increased by \$500. Ms. Levine said that there is no net change to the budget. In the past, the Town has budgeted \$1000 for the Emergency Management Director and \$500 for the deputy director. As deputy director, Ms. Levine does not take the \$500 because she believes that the role is already part of her job. Last year the Board of Selectmen used the funds to give a bonus to the Health Officer. She recommends increasing the Emergency Management Director's pay because he has done a lot on his own time and has been a great leader to the Emergency Management Committee. Ms. Levine opined that they should keep his position, increase the pay, and eliminate the deputy stipend. Mr. Ballin seconded what Ms. Levine said and added that with the amount of time and effort this person has given the Town, the stipend seems to be little more than a thank-you. Mr. Ballin said that he didn't think this change should come under any question at all.

Mr. Sheehan's second question referred to the drop in the Emergency Management Repair and Maintenance line item. Ms. Levine said that there were some repairs needed for the generator this year that would not have to be done next year.

Budget Page 15 – Highway Administration

Chair Wilson said that he and Mr. Sheehan had the same question having to do with the Highway Department Part-Time Wages line item. The comment was that the line item was going from \$3,000 to \$5,000, and this increase was requested to enable the cemetery worker to also be able to work with at the Brush and Metal Disposal area so the Town would not have to pay overtime wages, yet the Overtime Wages line item is also increasing. Ms. Levine said that the increase is because the salaries in the Highway Department increased, so the line item must go up to cover the same number of overtime hours. The overtime for the Stump Dump is shared by the Highway Department and the Transfer Station employees.

Ms. Fraley indicated that there were three changes in dispatch on the change sheet. Ms. Levine said that they would be reducing Part-Time Dispatch Wages, as they have not hit their budget in the past several years. Ms. Levine added that they added the Code Red Reverse Notification System to the 2010 budget; it was purchased this year out of encumbered funds and had purchased it jointly with other towns.

Budget Page 16 – Highways & Streets

Mr. Meck asked about the shimming of roads for \$55,000, which went up from \$40,000. Mr. Lee said that they need to catch up on roads that need to be shimmed. Mr. Meck asked if it could be held at \$40,000 again next year or if it was really important to spend the additional \$15,000 to shim additional roads. Mr. Lee said that it was getting to the point where they were going to have to start spending that amount of money to keep up with the roads and what was happening to them. The roads are all reaching the 12, 13 & 14 year period of time since they had been shimmed, and there were already some severe

wheel ruts in some of them. Mr. Lee believed that the roads were going to crack before too long and then they'd have to be ground and paved at a higher cost. He said that they could cut back now, but it would cost more in the long run. He said he was trying to stay ahead of the curve and that the Town had not increased the shimming line in 15 years, but due to price increases that amount of money does not go as far. Mr. Lee said that after another five to six years, the grinding and paving may be able to come down a bit as they will only have another five to six years of grinding and paving left.

Chair Wilson noted that the current draft of the budget contains an 8% projected increase in the tax rate. He still sees the Town in tough financial shape, and he asked Mr. Lee if he could help them reduce the 8% increase. He knew that everyone had an item that was very important to them at the moment but that they had to look out for the taxpayers, too. He asked if there were any places where they could cut back. He opined that 8% was a high increase and noted that the School Board was looking at just a 1.9% increase and that other towns in the School District were level-funding their budget next year.

Ms. Levine said that the other towns have not finished their budgets and they may end up with a budget increase as well. She noted that none of the other towns had a 5% decrease this year, like New London did. New London has already undergone a year of postponing projects and taking nips and tucks. Ms. Levine said that it was not appropriate to compare the two budgets, as New London is trying to make up for what was cut last year and others towns did not go through that process. Ms. Levine suggested that if they net out the 8% increase in 2010 and the 5% decrease in 2009, they were a lot closer to the other towns.

Chair Wilson asked Mr. Lee if there was any give and take on the paving budget. Mr. Lee said that if they cut it, their grinding and paving may go another 5-10 years because they would have to grind and pave more roads if they don't keep up with the wear now. He said that they were starting to go backwards already because they haven't been able to do all that they need to do.

Budget Page 17 – Highways & Streets

Mr. Wheeler asked about the salt and calcium chloride budgets. Mr. Lee said that they haven't bought any salt this year. They will start mixing their backup pile this week. He couldn't tell what the price would be when they need to buy it. They are over on sand and a little under on salt at the moment. He said that it was a shot in the dark. He said he'd love to say it was going to be an average winter but he cannot know.

Mr. Sheehan had submitted in a question about sidewalk maintenance. Mr. Baxter asked if the \$8,000 would cover the entire stretch of sidewalk on Main Street that needed repairing. Mr. Lee said that it would not cover everything and it was just a start. He said that they would like to make a 4' wide or better sidewalk and have it above the grass. Right now water and ice sits on it all the time and when they snowblow in the winter, they hit a lot of sod. Mr. Baxter said that he had walked the sidewalks in front of Colby-Sawyer College and agreed that they needed attention.

Ms. Bianchi had a question about sand and salt. She asked if Mr. Lee anticipated spending a lot more for the remainder of the year. Mr. Lee said that they can only fit two storms worth of sand and salt in the shed, so they have created a backup pile. They paid \$1,000 for 5,000 yards of sand and salt. He reiterated that it was really a shot in the dark on what they would need before the end of the year. He admitted that these were the two most difficult items to budget because he can't foresee what will happen with the weather. Ms. Bedard noted that in 2008 they overspent the sand by \$10,000. She wondered where the money came from. He said he wasn't entirely sure but thought that the money came from another department to cover the overspent amount.

Budget Page 18

Jack Sheehan had submitted a comment on the Waste Incinerator line item, noting that we no longer send our trash to an incinerator. Ms. Fraley said she would take off the word “incinerator” from the title of the line item.

Budget Page 19

Ms. Levine said that the State had increased the fees on Pleasant Lake Dam because the State had upgraded the dam classification. The State Department of Environmental Services sent the Town a letter about the dam, notifying them that they had upgraded the classification. They would be increasing the fee to permit the dam and the Town would be required to take other steps over the next few years. Ms. Levine said that in order to contest their new certification they would need to hire an engineer to attest that the dam was built to certification. She said they were going to ask for an extension so they don't have to budget for any engineering work next year.

Jim Wheeler asked if the Landfill Monitor budget was necessary. Ms. Levine said that a Nobis engineer was needed to monitor the landfill on Old Mountain Road to comply with the Department of Environmental Services's annual and semi-annual sampling and reporting requirements. It has been a pretty consistent price for an increasing amount of work.

Ms. Appel asked if the disease prevention line would remain at zero in light of the H1N1 virus. She wondered if it would have an impact on the Town. Ms. Levine said that the response has been coordinated so far under the regional Public Health Network at no cost to the Town. She added that they were not anticipating a fiscal impact as the federal government has been paying for the vaccine and the VNA has been distributing the vaccinations at no cost.

Budget Page 20

Jack Sheehan had submitted a question regarding Community Action Program (CAP). Ms. Levine said that there is a person who comes into the Town Office a couple times per month to assist people in applying for food assistance and other worthwhile programs. Ms. Cook added that they never ask for any more money and they do a tremendous service.

Budget Page 21 – Recreation Department

Mr. Sheehan had submitted a question about the increase in the Travels & Meals line item. Ms. Levine noted that Mr. Denning (Recreation Director) uses his own vehicle for most travel both in and out of town and that reimbursement is required. Mr. Denning submits reports for her to sign and be reimbursed. Ms. Bianchi said that this year's budget is underspent. Ms. Fraley said Mr. Denning submits for mileage twice per year. Mr. Wheeler asked if there was an IRS increase in the per mile rate. Ms. Levine said that there was not.

Ms. Levine said that Mr. Sheehan asked about the expense of the summer recreation department brochure – she said the brochure was entirely paid for by the advertising so it did not impact the advertising budget. She said that this line item included ads in the Kearsarge Shopper to let the public know what was going on in the department. She also noted that the boats that had been requested by the Recreation Department was removed at the last meeting and was reflected on the change sheet.

Budget Page 22 - Conservation

Mr. Sheehan had submitted a comment regarding the Conservation Commission's appropriation being up 16%. Andy Deegan, Chair of the Conservation Commission, said that they have issues at the Low Plain with an invasive species (Japanese Knot Weed) that they plan to take care of it next year. Mr. Deegan said that they are looking to engage someone to do a Forest Management plan for some of the Town's land parcels so they can do some timber management and use this as a source of income in the future. Mr. Deegan said that there were several volunteers who have adopted trails throughout the Town. More and more, trails are in need of maintenance which means lumber and materials. He remarked that the boardwalks near the Cricenti Bog were also in need of repair. Mr. Deegan reported that the Conservation Commission was looking into permanently protecting some lands through easements through the local land trust and New Hampshire Fish and Game. They've chosen properties this year and would have to go to Town Meeting to get the purchases approved. The parcels of land would include development rights. They would have to remain as open space for trails and observation. These are properties that are already owned by the Town and they want to permanently protect them. Some of the properties include a Messer Pond parcel and a portion of the Low Plain that is not protected.

Mr. Deegan said that they are making many efforts to save money. For example, Robert Brown has purchased lumber in very large pieces, at a lower rate, that they can cut into smaller pieces to use for boardwalks and the like.

Budget Page 23: No comments from the Budget Committee.

Budget Page 24 -- Capital Reserve Funds

Chair Wilson asked Mr. Lee if he was planning to buy a new 6-wheeler this year. Mr. Lee said that he would like to buy one this year and next which would keep them in a 10-year rotation for the vehicles. Mr. Lee said that the one that needed replacing would soon need brakes, springs and a new transmission.

Mr. Baxter asked what a highway trailer was. Mr. Lee said it was a medium-sized trailer that would sufficiently fit the small excavator or other medium-sized equipment. They could use it with a pickup instead of a larger vehicle. Mr. Lee said they have a very small lawnmower trailer and a large trailer but nothing in the middle to move medium-sized items.

Mr. Sheehan had submitted a question about the Town's Milfoil Fund. The account will be down to \$25,000 by December 2009. Mr. Sheehan asked if they should reduce the amount being spent and save more money for the control of milfoil. His suggestion was to have the lake associations increase volunteers and/or dues to help pay for this program.

Mr. Baxter asked about the library computer replacements: \$15,000 was coming out of capital reserves for computer replacement, yet \$12,000 was requested to replenish the fund. He asked if they need to put in the full \$12,000. Sandra Licks, Library Director, said that next year they plan to replace the software that they are using currently as it has been giving them many problems and is not being supported by the provider after this year. She said she was planning to get new software and upgraded hardware required to run it. Ms. Levine referred to Table 18 – the Library computer schedule -- in the Capital Improvements Program, which shows that they need to put the \$15,000 in so that there is \$12,000 to spend. She explained that they were not replenishing, but “pre-plenishing.”

Budget Page 25 – Capital Reserves

Ms. Levine said they removed \$69,000 for the new Town Office parking lot, as it is not a priority in 2010.

Mr. Sheehan had submitted a question asking if the \$20,000 into the Sidewalk Fund could be deferred. Ms. Levine commented that it looked like they are getting the Elkins grant so they will need to put the \$20,000 into the fund to match the grant, as well as put in another \$35,000 next year.

A question was asked about the Bridge Repair Fund. Mr. Lee said that the bridge at the Wilmot town line needs to be redone. They will have to come up with 20% of the cost if they want 80% of a grant to do so.

Mr. Meck asked about the Milfoil program and the money being transferred into the account. He noted that the last deposit of \$28,000 into the fund was made in 2007, and now the \$18,500 outlay in the next calendar year would be the last and there wouldn't be any more funding available. Mr. Ballin said that there would be \$10,000 for the following year but after that it would be gone. Chair Wilson said he didn't think it was wise to do this. They looked at it as a way to cut the tax rate, but that fund was to be restored when times were better. Mr. Meck said it seemed to him that the three lakes and two ponds that surround the Town or are totally within New London's jurisdiction ought to be properly protected. He asked if the lake associations were being looked at to support the programs. Chair Wilson said there has been support from the State of New Hampshire Lakes Association in the past, but they have had to cut their support. The only remaining support is from the local lakes associations.

Mr. Kaplan asked if the lake associations' requests were taken out of this fund. Ms. Levine answered in the affirmative. She said that LSPA had already requested funds for next year and that this would be the last full year they'd be able to help them unless something changed. This past year the Board of Selectmen did not fund the full extent of the requests. Sue Clough said that given how important the lakes are she would urge the committee to think about putting some money into this fund.

Mr. Bianchi had a comment about the Capital Reserves Fund. He said that every year they put money into capital reserves at a rate of as much as \$485,000 in \$10,000 increments or less. They put money in and out and he felt it would be a good idea to look at what they put into the funds and what the actual balance was. He said that each year they hear the argument that having the fund keeps the taxes from being volatile. He'd like to see them take a look at appropriating for things instead of putting it into capital reserve funds. He felt it was like a black hole and that it was affecting the taxes. Chair Wilson said that they have tried to reduce the number of funds. He said that funds, like the milfoil fund, may be up for grabs for an appropriation. He said their idea for flattening the tax rate by using capital reserves has seemed to work. Mr. Bianchi said historically that the money put in and taken out were awfully close – over the last ten years, about the same amount of money was deposited as spent. He understands that they help the tax rates stay the same when large items are needed. Chair Wilson noted that Mr. Bianchi's comments were well-taken.

Budget Page 26 – Capital Reserves

Ms. Levine noted that "Intersection Improvements" was a reserve fund used for the roundabout and in anticipation of work on other intersections, such as Main and Pleasant streets. She explained that some of the fund would be used for the Elkins project as well. Ms. Levine said it was needed in order to be able to match the grant for Elkins.

A question was asked about whether the Recreation Department Facilities Fund should be funded this year. Recreation Director Chad Denning shared that over the last few years, they have spent \$76,000 on improvements including those done to the Bucklin Beach septic system, the warming hut, etc. He said that with master planning they seem to be appropriating well. Last year nothing went into the fund but they do not want to have it un-funded for another year. They could have some large things happen that they would need to use that fund for. Chair Wilson said that he didn't see any hot items here and didn't see them needing \$25,000. Mr. Denning argued that the building at Bucklin Beach was falling apart and

they have tried to do some new designs for the future. He said it was going to cost about \$100,000 to repair or replace this building. He remarked that capital improvements are funding for the future. In the coming years they may need this money to make those improvements. In response to a question, he agreed that it could come down but asked that it not go to zero. Ms. Appel asked if \$15,000 would be sufficient. Mr. Denning said that it would.

IT WAS MOVED (Connie Appel) AND SECONDED (Celeste Cook) to reduce the Recreation Department Facilities Capital Reserve Fund from \$25,000 to \$15,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Bianchi thought that they should be looking at the whole section of capital reserves at the next meeting. Ms. Levine pointed out that the Planning Board put \$25,000 back into the CIP for the Conservation Land Fund, so the Budget Committee needs to review that request. Mr. Deegan said that one of the concerns with the Planning Board was that they were putting money in and would they keep doing it every year. The Conservation Commission decided on a cap of \$500,000 and would not ask for more unless they used the money to purchase land and needed more. Mr. Meck asked how much was in the fund currently. Ms. Levine said it was at \$380,000 and referenced Table 20 in the CIP.

Their plan was for \$25,000 to be funded for 2010. \$50,000 would be funded in succeeding years until they reach the \$500,000 cap, explained Mr. Meck. Ms. Bedard asked if there were any properties that the Conservation Commission already had in mind. Mr. Deegan said that they have a few in mind on the Low Plain and on Otter Pond. He explained that the money would be set aside as seed money to obtain the properties. He wanted to involve more parties to cost the Town less. Mr. Meck asked if the money could be used only for land acquisition. Ms. Levine confirmed that it was only for the acquisition of land, including surveying and legal fees and the land itself. She also noted that this money could only be spent with Town Meeting approval. Mr. Wheeler asked how the \$500,000 cap evolved. Mr. Deegan said that this amount would give them the ability to hold a property until the rest of the money could be raised. Ms. Bedard asked if they anticipate being able to partner with anyone to obtain or protect land. Mr. Deegan said they were going to evaluate the area to see who they could work with to protect land.

Mr. Kaplan said that there was \$380,000 in the fund and he couldn't think of any piece of property in New London that this amount wouldn't hold. If it was a \$5 million piece of property they could come to the Town to bond it. He didn't see the necessity of building up this account. He said that it was there and was a sufficient amount to do what they need. Ms. Clough said that they are looking at the fact that the cost of land goes up constantly, and what \$380,000 may have held five years ago may not hold something of great importance today. Mr. Kaplan said he felt that property owners would wait in good faith with a \$380,000 down-payment. Ms. Clough disagreed, and they agreed to disagree.

Future Meetings: Chair Wilson asked the Budget Committee members to review the CIP and make note of any other comments for a future meeting. He asked if anyone had any other comments. Ms. Levine asked if personnel expenses and benefits could be included in the next meeting agenda. Mr. Wilson agreed.

Selectmen's Update: Mr. Kaplan said that they got good news on the Elkins grant. The presentation was made to the Regional Planning Commission and their proposal rated #1. Since they were chosen as #1, in all probability, the State will fund the grant. He said that it was not a guarantee, but it looked good.

Mr. Kaplan noted that they had a meeting with Pat Remick of the Portsmouth Coalition. Guests from Newbury and Sunapee were in attendance. There was talk that the donor town tax would come again and the Town of New London would be responsible for a lot of money. He said it would start at \$900,000

and could go up to \$2 million. Mr. Kaplan told Ms. Remick that they would remain part of the Coalition and would work with her and would work with their representatives.

Mr. Kaplan reported that a joint Selectmen's meeting was held in Newbury and that 90% of the meeting was devoted to the school budget. They have kept their budget to a 1.9% increase and seem to be doing a very good job. The man who spoke to them was Joe Conway and seemed to have a handle on things.

IT WAS MOVED (Doug Baxter) AND SECONDED (Jim Wheeler) to adjourn the meeting of November 16, 2009. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London