



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES March 2, 2009

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Tina Helm, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

OTHER:

Cotton Cleveland, Town Moderator
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk
D.J. Lavoie, Resident
Bob Lavoie, Resident
Lauren Gifford, Valley News

Application for Building Permit:

- Lisa Higgins, 39 Wilmot Center Road, Elkins (Map & Lot 077-019-000) renovate basement and replace bathroom fixtures – Permit #09-077 – Approved.
- Jeff & Barbara Troxell, 357 Forest Acres Road (Map & Lot 118-020-000) renovate kitchen, laundry room, bath, bar, replace sliding door – Permit #09-008 – Approved.

Other:

- Disbursement & payroll voucher week of 3-02-09 - Approved.
- Warranty Deed for Christopher & Maria Lynch (Map & Lot 100-002-000), relative to lot line adjustment approved by 2007 Town Meeting – Approved.
- Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – State of NH DOT for Park & Ride – Approved.
- Elderly Tax Deferral Application – Approved.

Chair Kaplan opened the meeting at 3:04 PM.

MEETING MINUTES:

The review of the minutes from the 2/19/2009 meeting was postponed until the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Town Meeting Preparation- Ms. Levine conducted a review of the Town Meeting agenda. After the Pledge of Allegiance and the Star Spangled Banner, Ms. Cleveland will read the election results. A discussion followed regarding the thank you to volunteers/committees. Ms. Cleveland suggested that in an effort to move the meeting along, perhaps with a fanfare by the piano, Chair Kaplan can ask that all those who have served as a volunteer or served on a committee please stand up to be recognized. Mr. Kaplan will then recognize the specific volunteers and employees for 2009.

The Selectmen will then provide a brief review of the Town Meeting to the audience and then Ms. Cleveland will officially open the meeting. She will read the moderator rules and announce the voter card. She will then explain the rules and procedures that are to be in place and begin by reading Article 2.

Ms. Cleveland asked to review the warrant articles individually so that she could be made aware of any that may become controversial. Article 3 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. It was noted that during the discussion of this article it would be the most appropriate time to have a brief summary of what is actually known at this time regarding the federal stimulus package and how it will impact both New Hampshire, and in turn, New London. This is an article requiring a two-thirds vote by ballot. In reviewing the voting process with Linda Hardy, it was decided to have 500 yes/no ballots available should they be needed during the meeting. The voting for Article 3 will be open for an hour but once people have voted, Ms. Cleveland will move the meeting along by going to Article 4.

Mr. Lavoie asked if a motion from the floor to have a paper ballot vote on this be entertained. It was discussed that attendees might feel uncomfortable voting for personnel salaries or positions in an open format. Ms. Cleveland said that she would check to make sure this was following appropriate procedure, but had no problem with doing this, assuming it was accepted protocol. Mr. Ballin said he would like to have a sense of the meeting with a hand vote, then if it was close, a paper ballot would be appropriate. He noted that a paper ballot can be requested from the floor. A discussion then followed regarding the "touch points" of this article to educate Ms. Cleveland, who will then make a decision, as the discussion at the meeting unfolds, as to how to move forward regarding a vote.

Article 5 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Article 6 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. Ms. Levine noted that there could be some debate on this article as a result of it being the focus of a letter in the Intertown Record. She said that the Selectmen will provide answers to any questions which may arise relative to this article. Article 7 will be presented by Mr. Ballin. Ms. Helm will present Article 8. Mr. Ballin will present Article 9 noting that there is likely to be a discussion on this article. Article 10 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. Ms. Levine thought that there would likely be a discussion of the capital reserve fund at this time. Article 11 will be presented by Ms. Helm and will require a 2/3 vote, which can be taken by hand. Article 12 will also be presented by Ms. Helm.

Article 13 will be presented by Chair Kaplan and will likely generate a discussion regarding the purchasing of equipment. It was suggested that Mr. Lee have the mileage and repair data regarding the vehicles to be replaced in order to respond to possible questions. Article 14 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Ms. Levine said that a discussion of this article came up at the public hearing, noting the cost of the work that was spent last year. Article 15 will be presented by Mr. Ballin. It was thought that this article will generate discussion. Ms. Levine noted that the FEMA request was for \$85,000 and thought these funds would more than cover the cost for this renovation. Article 16 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. Article 17 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Article 18 will be presented by Mr. Ballin. This article regards the Master Plan and may bring some comments. Article 19 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. Article 20 will be presented by Mr. Ballin.

Article 21 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Ms. Levine said that an amendment might be necessary to clarify the effective date so that the Board of Selectmen can impose the fee in the event that the Governor's proposal to increase to \$10 does not go through. Ms. Cleveland had some concerns regarding the wording of the proposed amendment. She thought it was not clear enough and encouraged the Selectmen to work on rewording the amendment and the explanation. Ms. Levine said she would work on this and bring it back to the Selectmen at their next meeting. This article will require a ballot vote.

Article 22 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Article 23 and 24 will be presented by Chair Kaplan.

Article 25, which will be presented by Mr. Ballin, was discussed at length. Ms. Cleveland suggested that a list be prepared as to what would be cut to reach the 5% goal. Ms. Levine said that this was something that she had discussed with the Selectmen and they had decided that they would not prepare a list. Ms. Levine said that it would now be difficult to agree on what that list would look like given that there is only one more meeting before Town Meeting. Mr. Ballin said that he thought the Selectmen should “stick to their guns” with this article as written and not pull it apart. He felt strongly that the Budget Committee and the Selectmen have come up with a strong budget and they should present it as a whole, and hold tight to the revenue the Town believes is owed by the State. He thought that this article was essentially a preemptive strike by the Town to prevent tax increases caused by the Governor’s budget crisis. Ms. Cleveland asked if more detail could be provided to the residents regarding the process that would be used to make the determination for the 5% reduction. Ms. Levine cautioned that DRA has not yet agreed that this article is valid. The town attorney believes that this is a valid article, but we are waiting for a ruling from the DRA. She also noted that by the time the Town Meeting gets to this article, budget cutting might have already occurred in previous articles so the need for this article might become moot.

Article 26 and 27 will be presented by Ms. Helm. Article 28 will be presented by Chair Kaplan. Article 29 will be presented by Mr. Ballin. Article 30 will have to be eliminated this year due to a printing problem. Ms. Levine said that we could lease Whipple Hall for up to a year without Town Meeting approval. We could then go back to the Town for permission for a longer lease if warranted. Article 31 will be presented by Mr. Ballin.

In concluding the review of the Town Meeting, Ms. Cleveland assured the Selectmen that despite the fact that this is a bad economy year she was confident that things would go well, but that it would probably be a long meeting. She said she would do everything in her power to move things along, noting that “this is Town Meeting, not a therapy session, so we will do the best we can.” She concluded by summarizing those articles on which there would be a vote: Article 3 is the bond and will be a stand up ballot needing a 2/3 vote, ballot box open for one hour; Article 11 is a 2/3 vote by hand; and Article 21 is a paper ballot using the shoebox going around and that this is a simple majority vote. She said she has taken under advisement the question of ballots for amendments if it seems like there are sensitive personnel issues present. She then thanked the Selectmen for the opportunity to go through the Town Meeting agenda prior to the meeting. She said that although she does not comment on any items being discussed at Town Meeting, in her role as Moderator the review helps her to understand the anticipated flow of the meeting.

Ms. Cleveland said that she will not be available on voting day but that Bob Bowers will be the moderator pro temp. She noted that there will be enough Ballot Clerks available and that it may be prudent to send some home during the day. She also noted that on Town Meeting day, Mr. Ballin will be at Whipple Hall from 8 AM - noon, Chair Kaplan from noon to 4:00 PM and Ms. Helm will cover from 4:00 - 7:00 PM.

Ms. Levine said there will be displays in the lobby provided by the Energy Committee, the Girl Scouts, and a canned food collection for the food pantry.

Board Appointment Process- Ms. Levine reported on the open board seats. Celeste Cook and Dale Conly will be leaving the Planning Board and Les Norman and Dale Conly will be leaving the Conservation Commission. She said that Mr. Conly served on the Planning Board through his seat on the Conservation Commission. Dan Allen and Vicki Koron have asked to be reappointed to the Conservation Commission. She said that she would share the list of interested candidates with the Selectmen once Town Meeting was over. Mr. Ballin asked if the Town was looking for appointments for the Archive Committee. Ms. Levine said that Ms. Moreland resigned as Archivist but was still a member of the committee. She also said that there is not really a set number of members of that committee. Mr. Ballin said he had the name of an individual who he thought would like to be invited to serve.

Lynch/Town Property Transfer- Ms. Levine said that one of the warrant articles a few years ago had to do with the land exchange on the Lynch property and the Low Plain where the Davis Path went through private property. That land was exchanged. She presented the Selectmen with a deed to be signed to conclude this transfer. She noted the Town had already received its documentation for this land exchange.

OLD BUSINESS:

2009 Planning Board: Mr. Ballin reported that this Board had met but he did not get the packet of information provided so he was reporting on the Board's activities from memory. He reported that there was a hearing on the expansion of the cat boarding business to include dogs. The Community Center made a presentation regarding the proposal to ZBA which was mainly about parking. Camp Wallulla presented the changes that they were proposing, but none of them was substantial and all remained within their scope. The power company came in with their plan for substation behind the highway garage at South Pleasant Street.

CAC: February 24, 2009: Ms. Levine noted that the ad for the Whipple Town Hall Tours had been published. Mr. Ballin said that it was suggested to him after this meeting that even though there were many contentious statements during the meeting, people had told him that they were impressed with the hard work that went into this renovation proposal. He also got a phone call from a person who was at the meeting but did not want to speak in public regarding suggestions as to how the Town could save money. These included cutting salaries by 10% across the board and eliminating the third shift of the Police Department, letting the State Police cover that time period. Mr. Ballin said that he thought most of the people in the Town would not accept this level of reduced service.

Mr. Ballin also reported that \$24 was collected for refreshments which cost \$60.00 plus a \$5.00 tip. It was therefore, decided just to provide regular and decaf coffee at future meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS:

Scenic By-Way Meeting, March 25: This meeting will take place at 6:30 P.M. at the Town Offices.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There will be a retirement party for Ray Heath, custodian of Tracy Library, on March 31 from 4:00 -7:00 PM at Tracy Library.

Review of Ice Storm by State: March 13 at 6:00 PM at Whipple Hall. This is a meeting scheduled in response to an invitation to the State EOC to discuss the State's response to the area towns during the ice storm.

Joint Senate - House Finance Committee- March 12 6:00 PM in Claremont. This is budget hearing.

Mr. Ballin suggested that Lisa Levine, a representative from Congressman Paul Hodes's staff, be invited to meet with the Selectmen. Jessie Levine will contact her with this invitation.

Public Hearing on the Rowing Club- No date has been set for this yet.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Ballin, this was seconded by Ms. Helm. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary