



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES March 14, 2011

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectman
Tina Helm, Selectmen
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Dave Seastrand, New London Police Chief
Leigh Bosse, Owner *The Messenger*
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
David Zuger, Police Officer to be sworn in
Ed Andersen, Police Officer, New London
Tom Anderson, Police Officer, New London
Chris Currier, Detective, New London Police Department
Bob Lavoie, New London Resident
Pat Trader, Reporter for *Intertown Record*
Rich Anderson, New London Resident

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She said the first order of business was to elect the chair of the Board of Selectmen for the next year. IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to nominate Mark Kaplan as the chair of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Bianchi wondered which one of them should sit on the Budget Committee, as the remaining two members of the board have spouses on the same committee. Mr. Kaplan said that when some people see both spouses on the same board voting, they feel a bit uncomfortable. He added that he didn't have a problem remaining on the Budget Committee and serving Chair of the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Helm will sit on the Planning Board.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

New Police Officer: Chair Kaplan noted that the next item of business would be to appoint and swear in the new Police Officer, David Zuger. The Board of Selectmen signed the appointment of David Zuger as patrol officer, and Ms. Hardy administered the swearing-in before the Board of Selectmen and members of the Police Department.

Town Meeting Debrief: Chair Kaplan said that since it was approved at Town Meeting, they now have a very large sewer bond that will need shepherding after Ms. Levine leaves on April 15. The bond issue for the library has also been approved. Ms. Levine said the town will go out to bid fairly soon for the Library bond, headed up by Finance Officer Carolyn Fraley, who will bring the bids to the Board of Selectmen for review. She added that the library bond will be included in the July 1st budget, so they won't be drawing from it until then.

Chair Kaplan noted that the change of the fiscal year went through at Town Meeting. Ms. Levine said that they are planning to get the bills out by March 25 with a due-date of April 25, 2011. There will be a letter included with the bills to inform taxpayers of the change.

Ms. Helm said she thought Town Meeting went extremely well and has heard positive remarks from citizens. She was, however, uncomfortable with the discussion of the Elkins grant. She wondered if they needed another meeting with the Elkins residents to get input. She wanted to be sure they were all on board and knew what was happening. Ms. Levine agreed that another meeting should take place before the work begins, and that the subcommittee should continue to meet during the project design. Between now and when the money is available in October, the NH Department of Transportation will send along a municipal agreement. They have a lot of time before anything moves forward, as funds will not become available until October 1, 2011.

Mr. Bianchi said he took away from Town Meeting that safety issues were more important than beautification, with regards to the Elkins project. Ms. Levine agreed and noted that safety was the whole point of the grant, which was a Transportation Enhancement grant. Mr. Bianchi thought that the residents need to be more involved. Ms. Helm wondered if the majority of the people wanted to move forward with the project or if there was a lot of push-back from the residents. Mr. Bianchi said he wasn't sure. He wondered if they would have to take the rest of the grant money they had been awarded. Ms. Levine said that they did not. They are not committed beyond what Town Meeting has approved. Mr. Bianchi asked if they get the engineering done using the grant, could they turn around and do the work themselves. Ms. Levine said they could, but the estimates Richard Lee (Public Works Director) prepared, not including the engineering and the use of mobilization and traffic safety, totaled about \$350,000 for just the sidewalks portion. Ms. Levine questioned whether it made sense to bear that cost alone, because 80% of it would be covered by the grant.

Ms. Helm thought it would be most helpful if Ms. Levine could make a summary of the project facts before she leaves in April. Ms. Levine said she is planning to do that with every project she is working on. She added that Sue Clough, Richard Lee, Bob MacMichael and Maureen Prohl also have historical knowledge of this project, as they have been involved in the process with her.

Mr. Lavoie asked if there was a summary description of the design they agreed to. Ms. Levine said that there was. She added that she wished she had written to Elkins residents before Town Meeting to remind them of what the grant opportunity was all about. Chair Kaplan thought they should be invited to a Board of Selectmen's meeting to see if they are in favor of the project. Ms. Levine said that the project passed Town Meeting, which means the majority is in favor. The board decided to wait on doing this, as there was still a lot of time before anything would proceed with the project. Chair Kaplan said they didn't want to make it seem that they were forcing anything on Elkins.

Ms. Helm said she has heard a suggestion by some citizens about moving the May Town Meeting to a Friday night. It would make things easier for parents of smaller children because it was the end of the week and they would not have to get the kids up for school the next day. There could also be the possibility of using some sort of group childcare. She thought they might consider that idea for next year. Chair Kaplan said he understood, but didn't want the meeting to conflict with the college's graduation, which is usually on the weekend. Ms. Levine said that by statute, they have to open the Town Meeting on the second Tuesday of the month (for elections), but the legislative session itself can be recessed until some later date.

Mr. Bianchi said he was taken aback by the Conservation Commission votes. Ms. Levine thought it would have been better to write to the townspeople to explain the articles further. Mr. Bianchi said that

they all thought the first article would go through and the second article would have some discussion, but both ended up being voted down.

Mr. Bianchi felt W. Michael Todd did a good job as moderator. Everyone agreed.

Ms. Levine thanked the Board of Selectmen for the chair and the thank-you at Town Meeting.

Approval of minutes from March 7, 2011: IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to approve the minutes of March 7, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Town Beaches: Ms. Levine said she would try to wrap this up as much as possible before she leaves. She is planning to meet with Chief Seastrand, Chad Denning (Recreation Director) and Linda Hardy the following afternoon to discuss logistics. They will have a draft policy to review at the March 28 meeting. After that, it can go to public hearing. She thought it would be a combination of making some permit parking area on Dump Road and limiting the amount of guest passes by having something like a hanging tag for the cars. Ms. Helm added that they had talked about collecting some hard data on beach usage this year as well. Ms. Levine agreed that this was the plan.

Volunteer Appointments: Ms. Levine said it would make sense for Chair Kaplan to talk to the chairs of the Zoning Board of Adjustments, the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board about the volunteer appointment process. Mr. Bianchi felt they should get information from the chairs of the committees about attendance and service. Someone who is habitually absent is not doing any good for the committees they are on. There are other people who want to be on the boards and want to contribute. Ms. Levine said that Chair Kaplan should talk to the chairs about being reappointed and reappointing members of the committee, and they can also have the discussion of attendance and service.

Scenic Byway Committee: Ms. Levine indicated that she has been acting as the New London representative and would need to be replaced when she leaves. Ms. Helm asked about the commitment level to which Ms. Levine remarked that it was minimal. Ms. Helm agreed to do it.

Town Administrator Report: Ms. Levine said she had some things to talk about during non-public, but nothing more as she has been busy getting ready for Town Meeting and tonight's meeting.

Portsmouth Coalition: Chair Kaplan said Pat Remick sent notes from the meeting he attended where CACR 12 passed 14-2. The monies raised by the tax would stay in the locale where they were raised. He felt it was a good compromise. Ms. Remick's notes said a new administration and legislature could always go back and change this ruling if that law was still in effect. She thought they should all be cautious about it. The only way around this is to get a constitutional amendment.

Chair Kaplan explained that another meeting would be held on SB3, which is the retirement reform bill. Ms. Levine said it changes retirement age and how they calculate the pensions. It also eliminates police details and the makeup of the board. It is not part of the governor's budget, but includes changes to the retirement system itself. Ms. Levine said it is good to have other bodies in the room other than town managers. The hearing is Wednesday morning at 10 AM. Both Peter Bianchi and Mark Kaplan said they would try to make it and Ms. Levine said she would provide them with background material.

Joint Sewer Meeting with Sunapee – March 31, 2011: The Board of Selectmen planned to attend this meeting. Ms. Levine said they would start talking about design and how they would go forward.

Ms. Helm said she was surprised that there was little dialogue about the sewer project at Town Meeting.

Mr. Lavoie asked who would be in charge of the sewer in Sunapee. Ms. Levine said that on a day to day basis, it will be Sunapee. Both boards will meet regularly to make decisions together. Mr. Lavoie thought it should be clarified as to who the decision-maker is during the construction project. Ms. Levine said that there was talk of having a subcommittee put together and they may want to revisit the idea. Chair Kaplan thought it wise for the two towns to get together to put the two loans together.

Mr. Lavoie thought they should have a technical say on the final design. Chair Kaplan said that he agrees but Sunapee operates the plant. Mr. Lavoie thought if they were employing Mr. Rushbrook as their technical advisor, he should be able to give them advice. All agreed that New London needed to be involved in the decision-making and project oversight in some way.

Town Administrator Search: Mr. Bianchi said that he has come up with some suggestions after obtaining some information from LGC, which he also gave to Ms. Levine. He thought they should hire a consultant firm with a scope of service that Mr. Bianchi proposed. He said that they could work hand in hand with LGC who would do background and criminal checks and would be abreast of the legal guidelines in making this hire. He said that this was for discussion and was just an idea.

Ms. Helm added a further dimension of having an initial meeting with the Department Heads to brainstorm about their thoughts concerning their ideal candidate. She thought there would be some value of the Selectmen meeting with the Department Heads to show that they value their input. Chair Kaplan didn't disagree, but was thinking that there were other ways to bring the Department Heads into the mix. He thought the makeup of the subcommittee Mr. Bianchi had suggested was sufficient. Mr. Bianchi felt if the Department Heads could come up with a list of things they would like, they could. Ms. Helm was concerned that there was an amount of apprehension about the change and the meeting with Department Heads would show that the Selectmen want to work together with them to get someone who will work with them. They also want to make sure they know that the Selectmen want to hear what they have to say.

Mr. Lavoie thought they should first formulate the criteria. The second part would be to evaluate the candidates. He wondered which part the Department Heads should be involved in. Ms. Helm thought it an opportunity to show them they are working together on a common goal. Ms. Levine said it would be healthy to include Department Heads in the initial conversation as well as the later interviews. If the job is going to change, the Department Heads will be interested to know if the job will supervise them or not.

Mr. Bianchi said that his suggested procedures were meant to begin after the job description was created. He thought it a good idea to get Department Heads' input on the job description. Ms. Levine said that it would be good to have a neutral facilitator outside the town to help with the job description. She said a consultant could lead the conversation as far as the feeling going forward with the search.

Ms. Levine said she thinks it is great to include a citizens committee but felt 6-8 people would be easier to work with than the 10 that Mr. Bianchi suggested. She added that the Town Administrator does not work closely with the Planning Board chair and she thought that person could be left off the committee. Chair Kaplan thought five people on the committee would be sufficient. Ms. Helm asked if they should agree to pursue a professional consultant before they discuss the search process.

Ms. Levine asked if they wanted her to talk to LGC about a scope of work to get job description and get feedback from the Board of Selectmen, and bring it back the following Monday night. The Selectmen agreed. Ms. Helm was concerned about Ms. Levine's earlier comments about LGC. Ms. Levine said that

MRI is better at this process and has a better reach, but also felt that LGC was offering more for the money and could handle the “nuts and bolts” just fine.

Ms. Helm asked how they’d feel about having Mr. Hasenfuss facilitate a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Department Heads. Chair Kaplan said if they are in favor of using LGC, he would like to get started as soon as possible. Ms. Levine thought Mr. Hasenfuss would be better at the facilitating of the meeting between the Department Heads and the Board of Selectmen and LGC could do the rest. She added that she would see if Barry Cox would come in on Monday night with a proposal and they can talk it through.

Ms. Levine said the only other stakeholders are the office staff, who did interview her when she came on board. She thought they should have Department Heads, office staff and the Board of Selectmen interview the final candidates.

Ms. Levine handed out a memo of duties she felt an interim should and should not be responsible for. Mr. Bianchi asked if items 1-8 would be done by an outside person. Ms. Levine said it could be done either way. Ms. Helm said that each one of the bullets should report to one member of the Board of Selectmen to keep the flow of communication going. Ms. Levine pointed out that bullet #5 includes a written daily report to the entire Board of Selectmen, which encompasses the rest of the bullets.

Mr. Bianchi said it would be another burden to go out and find an interim Town Administrator. He didn’t think someone unfamiliar with the town could perform the tasks that needed to be done.

Ms. Helm and Chair Kaplan said they were both in favor of hiring an interim. They suggested going into non-public meeting. It was 7:17 PM.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a), to discuss the hiring of an interim administrator. Bianchi – yes; Helm – yes; Kaplan – yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Selectmen returned from non-public session at 8:00 PM.

Meeting Dates: The Selectmen agreed that they should meet weekly on Mondays at 6:00 PM until they decide otherwise (most likely at least until a permanent Town Administrator is hired). Because it is Yom Kippur, the Selectmen will not meet on April 18 and will determine an alternate date as that date draws closer. Ms. Helm will be away from April 1-21.

Application for Building Permit:

- David & Alison Hennig, 64 White Pine Lane (Map & Lot 105-009-000) expand living room add fireplace – Permit #11-007 – Approved.
- Extension – Gary Anderson & Cornelia Boyle, 750 Little Sunapee Road (Map & Lot 021-001-000) complete boathouse and pier – Permit #10-032 – Approved.
- Denied – 177 Poor Road Realty Trust (David Peeler & Katherine Kellogg) (Map & Lot 091-005-000) erosion control permit for septic in the shore land zone, needs variance for set back – Permit # 11-006 DENIED

Application for use of Whipple Memorial Town Hall:

- New London Garden Club – Plant Auction & club meeting – May 9th (1:00-3:00) & 10th (10:30-3:30), 2011 - Approved.

- New London Barn Playhouse – auditions – April 2, 10-4 & April 3, 12-4 – Approved.

Application for Raffle Permit:

- Colby Sawyer College, 541 Main St. fundraiser for club sports at CSC, Prize is \$1500. Gift certificate to a local travel agency – Approved.

Other items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher and payroll for week of 3/7/11 & 3/14/11
- Report of Appropriations Actually voted – approved.
- Wastewater Tax Abatement request – 62 Hilltop Place – in the amount of \$247.00 – Approved.
- Appointment card for Marion C. Hafner – Cemetery Commission
- Appointment card for David R. Zuger, full time patrolman

There being no further business, the Board of Selectmen adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London