



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 6, 2014

PRESENT:

Tina Helm, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Steve Ensign, Board of Fire Wards
Doug Homan, Budget Committee
Sandra Licks, Library Director
Bruce Parsons, Shelby Blunt, Charlene Baxter and Kristina Regan, Library Trustees
Heather Wood, Dispatch
Donna Larrow, Police Administrative Assistant
Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief
Sean Carroll, *Intertown Record*

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

Budget Presentation – Sandra Licks, Library Director

Also presenting with Ms. Licks was Library Trustees Bruce Parsons, Shelby Blunt, Charlene Baxter, Kristina Regan.

Ms. Licks reviewed the budget that she is recommending to support the library in FY2015 which represents a .3% increase over last year's appropriation. She noted the her budget request does not include salary adjustments, so the FY2014 figures are included as place holders, until the Selectmen act on the issue of whether employee wages will change.

Selectman Kidder inquired if the library alarm system includes fire, burglary and water. Ms. Licks confirmed that it does. Selectman Bianchi observed that the library budget includes the extra pay period from FY2014, so when this is taken out, the library's increase will be even lower than the projected .3%.

Budget Presentation – Fire Department, Chief Lyon

Chief Lyon was given the floor to present the Fire Department budget. Also presenting with Chief Lyon was Steve Ensign, Chief Fireward.

Chair Helm began by commending the Fire Department and Police Department for their quick and professional response to a medical emergency she witnessed recently.

Chief Lyon noted that the operating budget portion of his budget is up approximately \$5,000, with vehicle repairs and maintenance accounting for most of the increase. Pointing to the materials submitted by Chief

Lyon, Selectman Bianchi wondered why the figures in the Fire Department budget were rounded up to the next \$50. Chief Lyon said it was because he does a zero-based budget and this practice helps him pay for shipping charges and other things that are not anticipated when he has to purchase something. Selectman Bianchi said he hadn't seen this done in other budgets. Chief Lyon said there were very few areas that had been rounded up. He said he was open to suggestions on how Selectman Bianchi would rather see him manage his budget. Mr. Ensign said they have budgeted this way for a long time and things tend to cost more each year so this helps compensate for these increases. Selectman Bianchi said he didn't have any suggestions; he was just making a comment.

Selectman Bianchi wondered why the health and dental went up by \$8,000 since last year. Ms. Johnson said it was because one employee was anticipating going from the buy-out to being insured with the Town.

Chief Lyon said the salaries in the Fire Department are determined by the certifications that are held by the employees. Trainees get paid less than someone who has been voted on and is an active member. Firefighters are classified as level 18, which starts at \$18,000 and goes up to \$24,000. Their firefighters who join the department are reimbursed at \$10.50/hour. There have been no adjustments to this since 2006 due to the economic downturn in 2008. He was requesting an increase for these new firefighters to \$10.75/hour. This would change the budget by \$1,058. The part-time budget is at \$40,000 and volunteers have been compensated in the department since 1957. In order to retain their fighters and insure they are professional and well-trained, he felt it was important to offer a competitive salary.

Chief Lyon noted that "on-call" fire pay is currently at \$25/night and \$40/weekend. There are nine officers and a couple of individuals who are able to provide less-emergent care where the entire department is not needed. Requiring the entire department to go to every call tends to deter the volunteers from participating. They would like to pay these on-call employees \$2.50/hour for nights, which comes out to \$30/day and \$60/weekend. He thought this was a reasonable compensation for the service they are providing.

Chief Lyon said they had almost 700 calls last year and around 200 of them were general alarms, requiring the entire department. Selectman Bianchi wondered how many of the employees were EMTs. Chief Lyon said there were 11 that ranged from basic EMT's to paramedic status. Selectman Bianchi wondered how someone trained as an EMT or Paramedic could administer oxygen to an individual on-site without the department having an ambulance. Chief Lyon said that just about every piece of their apparatus has a bag on it to enable them to administer oxygen, take blood pressure and perform other first-responder services. They also have some AEDs and a machine that helps determine if someone has been exposed to carbon monoxide.

Selectman Kidder wondered if the hospital's ambulance could be used for emergencies. Chief Lyon said that often-times the ambulances are not available or they are not staffed. When the hospital does transfers with their ambulances, which make them a lot of money, New London and the surrounding towns cannot use them in an emergency.

Mr. Ensign asked about major or emergency repairs. The fund in the CIP has been eliminated and they will spend down the balance on the truck this year. Several years ago the CIP fund for emergency repairs was put into place because of some costly repairs that needed to be done on an emergent time-frame. He questioned what would happen if they had an unanticipated repair that was costly, which could be as much as \$20,000. He wondered if they had these funds available elsewhere in the budget and how these things would be covered. He remarked that it is difficult to budget for these repairs when they don't know what the costs will be. Selectman Bianchi said it was his guess that they would go to another part of the

budget and transfer funds in the event of an emergency. Ms. Hallquist said that payments could still be made into a capital reserve fund even if it isn't in the CIP. The CIP is a planning tool which is different than the capital reserve funds. There is already an existing repair fund in the capital reserve for the Fire Department. Selectman Bianchi said routine repairs should not be paid for from a capital reserve fund, but rather within their operating budget. For emergencies, the capital reserve fund would be expendable through the Selectmen and could be used as needed.

Chief Lyon was grateful for the Public Works Department for helping them get out of a slippery situation recently.

Budget – Acting Chief Ed Andersen, Donna Larrow

Chief Andersen said he tried to get a total overview of the entire department this year, as some things had been overlooked in years past. One increase being requested was \$100 for software maintenance increases. Chief Andersen said he'd like to see the Uniform Cleaning Services line item increase by \$250 to bring it to \$500. They have not been getting the officers' winter/summer coats dry cleaned and would like to do for at least the winter coats. The winter coats cost \$350 to purchase and the summer coats cost \$150; they would like to take good care of them. He added that the blankets and pillows in the cells are also dry cleaned after each use and this line item pays for this service as well.

Chief Andersen said they would like to keep the cruiser that is due to go out of service for one more year. He said it would be nice to have an extra car to use for details like hospital days. He has had to use Goshen's cruiser several times because New London needed more coverage. Selectman Bianchi clarified that Chief Andersen would like to have the SUV, the detective's car and three cruisers available. Chief Andersen confirmed this. Selectman Bianchi didn't think this was necessary. He said an extra cruiser meant extra repairs. Chief Andersen said they run into a lot of situations where they have to use their personal cars, such as when they have to go to court in Newport and Concord. Having an extra car would be good to help with this shortfall. They would not be using the car every day but it would be useful during times when all the cars are being used. If they could hold it for a year and get the same amount of money in a trade-in, he thought it would be good to keep it in the rotation. Selectman Bianchi thought three cruisers was a luxury they didn't need.

Chief Andersen noted he would like a 60% increase in conferences and training, which would increase the line item from \$5,000 – \$8,000. It is felt that they should go to the firing range twice/year instead of once. Ammo is very expensive now, and each bullet ranges from \$.50 to \$1.00 depending on the firearm. They also need a tactical instructor and will need to send someone to be trained for the department. Chief Andersen said he would like to do more trainings like the one that was done in the hospital.

Selectman Bianchi asked about the increase in the firearm line item by \$7,500. Chief Andersen said this would replace all the current firearms. He said the guns are out on their belts daily and are in the elements, causing wear. They are used for dispatching animals, frequently, but are not fired daily. Selectman Bianchi asked what kind of firearm they used and how much they cost. Chief Andersen said anticipating a trade-in, he is looking for 15 guns at \$500/each. It depends on the manufacturer they go with and the condition of the guns they have to trade in. 13 of the 15 guns were added at the same time.

Chief Andersen said the sites have a 5-6 year life expectancy and cost \$250 to replace. The life expectancy depends on how often they shoot the guns. They have been having problems with springs malfunctioning. Selectman Bianchi said adding another shooting day at the range might make these kinds of repairs needed sooner over time. Chief Andersen said the repairs for sites and springs would be about \$300, and a new gun at \$500 would last about 10 years.

Chief Andersen said they plan to purchase .45's but currently have .40's. The cost is the same for ammo. Mr. Homan didn't think the springs should be blowing in the guns they have now. Chief Andersen said 10 years ago they used to shoot at the range twice/year. Selectman Bianchi asked if they had any other guns. Chief Andersen said they have a couple shot guns and AR-15's.

Chair Helm asked about the shooting range repair that was noted in the budget. Chief Andersen said they put a fence up last year and are trying to keep the public out of the area. The range is near the glass bottle drop-off area for the Town and people often go in and shoot bottles leaving broken glass everywhere. They'd like to make it so people could not do this any longer by removing the targets when not in use. The amount he'd like to add for this to be done is \$500.

Selectman Bianchi said he had no idea what to make of some of the details that were mentioned in the back-up information for the Police Department. Chief Andersen said he could explain each item. Firstly, they had run into a problem with a lock-system in the Police Department starting to smoke. He tried to get it repaired and found that it is a proprietary system through Hirsh. It was discovered that their electric strikes do not match the system through voltage. Chief Andersen called Tasco, who reviewed their total security within the Police Department and said they could not work on it because of the voltage issues. He asked for a cost for them to re-do their entire system, which was \$70,000. Tasco told them that they have a state-of-the-art system and that it was almost over-kill. He got in touch with Royale Technologies out of Rutland, VT who said they would come to look at the system for \$500. (Did they have them come??) It was determined (by?) that the door buzzers were sticking on and starting to smoke. The lock mechanism does not match the "brains" downstairs. The person who installed the system has gone out of business. To replace just the strikes is \$13,470.

Chief Andersen said they would like to replace the screens on the exterior scramble pads. The sun has weathered the push-button screen and has turned the clear plastic into a chalky-white color making it hard to see. They could change out the keypads for \$363.

Chief Andersen said they recommended upgrading the controllers on the boards as they had not been upgraded since 2001. The cost to do this would be \$1,395. Their current system is on the dispatch computer that manages the whole door-locking security system. They are recommending that it be put on the server and removed from dispatch's computer. The cost to do this is \$946.

Chief Andersen said the replacement of batteries is in regards to the control panels. The batteries are dead and should be taken out and replaced. He added that they have taken the strikers from two security doors to put elsewhere where security was of utmost importance.

Chief Andersen added that the following two items were not necessary but were things that should be replaced at some point in the future. The first item was the "exit motion" indicator, which is malfunctioning and needs repair. It is something that is triggered each time someone leaves a room and is sending too many messages, which need to be deleted frequently.

The second item Chief Andersen said he would like considered at some point in time was with regards to the scramble pads and prox readers downstairs. They currently have to punch in a code when people are brought in and out of certain areas. It would be easier if they could swipe a card instead of using a code.

Chair Helm said it was good that Chief Andersen included those two "wish list" items as their charge was to ask the department heads to include needs and wants or needs for down the road. Chief Andersen said he wanted to address everything that would make the Police Department "perfect" and they could then chip away at what they have asked for this year and maybe address the remainder in the years ahead.

Chief Andersen said they have been having issues with the monitor outside front door, and the monitor that shows those coming into the rear of the Police Department. They'd like to replace the floor camera at Whipple Hall and install a new dome camera in Conference Room 2. The small conference room has already had the cameras upgraded. They would like to put microphones in the front lobby area and the waiting area. They deal with the public a lot in those rooms and occasionally, confrontations arise. It would be helpful to have these things recorded.

Chair Helm wondered if any of these things could be paid for through grants. Chief Andersen said maybe, under Homeland Security, but he wasn't sure. He knew dispatch had received some grant money in the past but wasn't sure about the Police Department.

Selectman Bianchi asked about the cost for a copy machine and furniture. Chief Andersen said they looked into leasing a copier versus purchasing one. The copier has been there at least eight years. To lease a new copier would be \$190/month for 36 months (\$6840) and to purchase a copier would be \$6150. He thought it would cost them less in the long run to purchase, especially since the copier would hopefully last at least eight years. They are having a lot of problems with the current copier. Mr. Homan asked Ms. Larrow to get a buyout on the lease to see if it might be worth going that route.

Chief Andersen noted that there hadn't been any furniture purchased in a very long time. Chairs are falling apart and their arms are tattered. File cabinets are also falling apart and the ones they are using came from downstairs and were moved upstairs. They have been doing a lot of work on their own to improve the appearance of the Police Department, including painting the rooms, cleaning, and renting a carpet cleaner to clean the carpets. They plan to do more on their own to save the Town money while improving the appearance of the Police Department.

Chief Andersen added that the digital cameras and cards that are kept in the cruisers are old and they would like to upgrade them. These cameras are used to take photos of crime scenes, etc.

Chief Andersen commented that if these things were all done this year, the department would be set for several years. When asked, he said some of the items could be done piecemeal.

Selectman Bianchi asked where they stand with staffing. Chief Andersen said they are currently down one officer. If they hire a permanent chief outside of the department, they will have a full-staff. If he is given the position of chief, they would be down one full-time position. Chief Andersen said he is looking at the possibility that the town funds the 8th position but is thinking about going down to a 32 hour/week position and having a retired person fill it. He hoped the position would be funded just the same in the event that his plan with a retired officer did not work. Chief Andersen said he had someone in mind who thought would work well in the position. They currently have five part-time employees, but only two of them are active. Three are part-timers who ask that they be called only when the department is in a real bind or for things like Hospital Days.

With regards to the new employee expense line item, Chief Andersen didn't think \$3,000 was enough. A bullet-proof vest alone is \$1,000, is custom fit to an officer, and lasts five years. The rest of the uniform, including jackets and boots is costly and so he was asking for an increase.

Chair Helm thought this was a good process so there could be full disclosure of what are needs and wants. She asked him to think about where they could stagger the expenses or how he could spread them out over a couple of years. She appreciated his input. Selectman Bianchi said the Police Department's general

fund budget was the highest of all the departments. He appreciated the preparation and work Chief Andersen put into his budget.

Mr. Homan asked if Chief Andersen were to choose, would he pick to keep the cruiser or the minivan. Chief explained that both vehicles are specialized for certain things and it was hard to choose. It wasn't an equal comparison. Mr. Homan thought the cost to keep the cruiser would be more than \$500 per year and Chair Helm suggested Chief Andersen look into the details of the cruiser's expenses and insurance to keep it another year.

Budget – Planning & Zoning, Lucy St. John

Ms. St. John said there were minimal increases in her budget. She proposed an increase in the conferences and training line item to get it to \$1,250. She believes it is important for staff and Planning Board members to attend training sessions. NHMA and NHOEP offer training sessions to municipal boards that could be taken advantage of. Another increase was for printing, which will be needed due to zoning amendments that will come forward at Town Meeting. She would also like to increase the Zoning Administrator's Reference Materials line item. The largest increase is for some CIP software. Ms. St. John explained that the CIP is a planning document comprised of input from town, school district and water precinct. She has been in touch with the software vendor and has talked with other municipalities that use the software who had positive experiences with it.

Chair Helm asked about the training Ms. St. John mentioned and wondered if it would include training for the Planning Board members. Ms. St. John answered in the affirmative; it is for both the board and staff. Chair Helm thought it was important to be vigilant with regards to making sure too many copies were not being made if it wasn't absolutely necessary. Ms. St. John said she scans most of the things she gets and not everything is printed.

Selectman Kidder asked about the Assessor's Office and the GIS Mapping issue. Ms. St. John said when she arrived in New London, she wasn't aware of the details and didn't get involved in the decision not to fund the initiative. Since then, and after having been present for a presentation by Mr. Bernaiche and the gentleman from the company that would do the work, she thought it would be a very valuable upgrade. At public meetings and in their daily work, citizens, realtors and assessors can see the reality. The further behind they get in technology, the harder it is to get up to speed. She thought it was worth the money.

Chair Helm commended Ms. St. John on the work she had done the past year with getting up to speed with things and being so professional. They were glad to have her working for the Town.

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist noted that on Thursday the citizens group would interview three candidates for the Police Chief position. She added that later that day she would meet with Chief Lyon, Heather Wood and Chief Andersen about the dispatch report they agreed to put together.

Review of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to approve the minutes of December 9, 2013, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of December 30, 2013, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings

January 7, 2014 at 5:00pm – Recreation Commission at Whipple Hall

January 11, 2014 at 7:30am – Citizens Advisory Commission
January 11, 2014 at 9:00am – Deliberative Session at KRHS
January 13, 2014 at 6:00pm – Board of Selectmen
January 14, 2014 at 7:00pm – Planning Board

Other Business

At the last meeting they agreed to come up with a charge for the citizen's group interviewing for the Police Chief. Chair Helm said the committee members could rank the candidates if the Selectmen thought it appropriate. Selectman Bianchi said the bottom line with hiring will lie with the Board of Selectmen and their comments would be helpful. He didn't know if they should rank the candidates or just provide comments. Ms. Kidder felt if they were going to ask people to do this, they should have them rank the candidates. Selectman Bianchi said it should be stated to the committee that their recommendations may not be the same as what the Selectman make. It was noted that each member of the committee would rank the candidates privately; they will not rank them as a whole. Remarks should be returned to Ms. Hallquist no later than Monday, January 13, 2014.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA: Tina Helm – Yes, Peter Bianchi – Yes, Janet Kidder - Yes

Ms. Hallquist exited the meeting at this point in time.

The Selectmen returned to public session at 11:06am.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 11:08am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London