



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES December 27, 2011

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Tina Helm, Selectman
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Chad Denning, Recreation Director
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Mark Wendling, New London Resident
Sean Carroll, Reporter for the *Intertown Record*

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

Minutes of December 19, 2011

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to approve the minutes of December 19, 2011, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

On page 2, Mr. Bianchi noted that the “Dig Save” permit is free. He is unsure if the Town permit is free, or if there is a cost, what that cost is.

On page 5, Mr. Bianchi understood there was only one employee from wastewater and sewer, not several, as the minutes suggested.

On page 6, “new” trucks should be changed to “newer.”

Old/Pending Business

Dam Classification

Mr. Bianchi said that in a meeting a while ago they were going to hear from the State by December 20th regarding lowering the classification of the dam. He wondered if anything had come in. Ms. Hallquist said that she believed that Mr. Lee had received preliminary information from the town’s engineers saying the State would probably not lower the classification unless some expensive work was done. Chief Lyon said that he had heard from an individual that the classification would only be lowered if the Town purchased the two properties that would be in danger should the dam breach.

Perambulation

Ms. Hallquist said that the Springfield/New London town lines are due for perambulation. In the past, the Conservation Commission has been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to perform the duty of perambulating the town lines on behalf of the Board. She noted that Conservation Commission Chair Bob Brown has indicated that his Board is willing to perform the task as they have in the past.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to appoint the Conservation Commission to complete the perambulation of the Springfield/New London town line for this year. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Helm remarked about the vast and wonderful work the Conservation Commission has completed over the year and said that there were many photographs on the Conservation Commission's website.

Upcoming Meetings

The Board of Selectmen would meet on December 29th to work on the budget. Non-profits who have requested funds have been notified of the meeting and are welcome to attend. Should the Board have time, they can also talk about some of the outstanding budget items such as legal, and planning and zoning.

Mr. Bianchi suggested that they, as a board, take their recommendations for each department so far, to give Ms. Johnson and Ms. Hallquist a chance to get the tables done. January 9th would be the last meeting before the budget was presented to the Budget Committee and he felt it would be good to be prepared as soon as possible. Ms. Helm agreed.

Ms. Helm said that on January 4th at 6pm they would discuss compensation. Mr. Bianchi added that at some point they need to discuss the CIP. Chair Kaplan said they could begin that discussion on the 29th or they could do it on the 4th of January, should they run out of time.

Budget Discussion

Fire Department

Chief Lyon distributed his budget sheet as well as a table of information showing comparable towns and what fire apparatus each had, to the Board of Selectmen.

Chief Lyon said that at some point he understood that the Board of Selectmen wanted to look at positions that could or could not be filled in the future, so he began with a general overview of the Fire Department's employees. The reason the department has career employees is because of the number of calls they get per year; with the high numbers, it can be difficult to get enough volunteers to come to each call. A group was put together locally to study the declining numbers of volunteers. This subject was also studied nationally.

When Chief Lyon was hired in 1999, Peter Stanley came back as a part-time Chief and Chief Lyon was hired as the Training Officer. They have over 78 buildings they inspect each year, (twice a year if their occupancy is over 100 people). In 2007 Mr. Stanley retired and his position was absorbed by Chief Lyon. One firefighter position was added. The Training Officer position was not filled at that point.

Chief Lyon said that they have a zero-based budget and he has gone item by item to explain their needs. Mr. Bianchi said the items listed for 2011 totaled \$71,250 but that the numbers on his budget sheet did not add up to that number. Chief Lyon said that the numbers he passed out were from last year's budget process and was what the budget committee and Town Meeting approved. It was understood that the two tables differed to some degree.

Medical Services – this covers the TB shots, Hepatitis shots, and physicals.

Vehicle Repair & Maintenance – Chief Lyon did not foresee any significant repairs. They did have a catastrophic pump failure last year but they have a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) meant for these kinds of things, which they can use. He figured 80% of the money in this account is for maintenance. Mr. Bianchi

wondered if there was something major coming up, as they were half way through the year and had only spent about \$150. Chief Lyon said that a gasket repair was just done which will use up another \$965. He said that twice/year they have their trucks serviced which is \$1,000 each. They also have to have their ladders serviced, which is \$1,200 each. He has estimated needing winter tires, and a Knox-box that secures a key on the outside of a building to allow emergency entry. There is a code for each employee to be able to open the box to use the key, and records the time it was taken and replaced from the box.

Radio Repairs – they have about 28 portable radios. The Department replaces 10 batteries per year totaling \$110. They have to replace pager batteries at \$8.50 each. There are five pagers that are in need of repair or replacement of batteries

Equipment Repair & Maintenance – they have fit testing to make sure the masks fit the firefighter's faces adequately, float testing on the packs (25 packs at \$25 each), maintenance of portable pumps, vent saws, chain saws, air compressors, replacement of batteries, and oil changes.

Conference & Trainings - this covers all members whether they are career or call-members, both new and old. The Level 1 class is \$900 per person and is offered in Hanover, NH. This cost is up from \$600 last year. The fund also helps with continuing education and boater safety courses. EMT classes are partially paid for as well.

Mr. Bianchi said that some personnel are trained by the town and then move away. He wondered if there was any way to prevent this or if they track it. Chief Lyon said his biggest concern was with Colby-Sawyer students who may move on after they have graduated. Their feeling is that they would like to have them stay with the department for a couple of years before they leave. They only pay the registration fees up to Level 1, which is a 216 hour class and takes about six months. They don't pay for their time to go to the classes. Their primary goal is to get the foundation of the firefighters down. They do some training in-house, such as a Level 2 class that they held last year, inviting surrounding towns to participate. They also offer trainings on Sunday mornings and Monday nights. Chief Lyon said a local contractor who has a large family went through a portion of the Level 1 training, which the fire department paid for, and decided it was too much of a time commitment. He reimbursed the town for the class.

Ms. Helm said their town personnel policy says that if the town has paid for any education toward a degree and the employee stops working for the town, there has to be some reimbursement to the town depending on how long it has been since the degree or class had been attained/taken.

Dues & Subscriptions – this pays for several publications and dues, including the NFPA Fire Codes & Association. They are affiliated with a C-5 Mutual Aid Pact, the Kearsarge Mutual Aid Group, and have to pay for the Firehouse software. They use this special software to report to the State of New Hampshire monthly to help keep accurate statistics and become eligible for grants.

Misc. Supplies – this covers shipping costs for equipment, labels, any issues they have with the boat and for any other unforeseen expenses that come up. For example, they used this fund to pay for the installation of electric hook-ups needed for the new fire suit drying rack.

Small Tools & Equipment – In the past they purchased the gear dryer, pails of foam (\$155/pail), and dry hydrant supplies. Mr. Bianchi found a discrepancy on this line item. There was some discussion about anticipated costs versus what was actually spent. Chief Lyon said it is a zero-based budget and he doesn't spend the money as soon as he gets it. He also said that his budget has gone down 8.2% from what was allocated from last year's Town Meeting. That is a decrease of over \$5,000.

Ms. Helm said they have an excellent core of Department Heads and there needs to be an element of trust that they will handle their budgets responsibly. She doesn't feel that it is the Selectmen's responsibility to nit-pick over every line item. She felt they should be looking at the whole instead of every piece. Mr. Denning commented that while they have shifted the time period of the budgeting, they have not changed the process. Their previous process was straight through the year in January and they all went to a March Town Meeting. This new process is happening too early and many departments haven't been able to use their funds yet. Chief Lyon said that next year will be easier because there will be an equitable comparison between budgetary years, but this year is tricky because of the fiscal year changeover.

Radios/Replacement – Chief Lyon said that the radios are \$490 each. They have included money for re-programming as well as replacing. All officers have radios in their personal vehicles to help them with planning on who will be at each call.

Equipment Replacement – They intend to purchase about 15 lengths of different hose, at \$120 each, totaling \$1,850.

Office Supplies – Chief Lyon noted that there was an increase in this for the 2013 budget. Last year, for the 18-month budget they asked for \$2,200 and would do the same for the 12-month budget. They have acquired the old photocopier from the Town Office and need to cover the expense of paper and other printing supplies. They also need to replace a 2004 laptop utilized by the clerk who takes minutes and works on financial reports.

Gasoline – this is not something that can be controlled. The Finance Officer has notified them of the rate for the 2013 fiscal year.

Uniforms and Safety – This covers protective clothing for the firefighters. Their gear (pants and jackets) is \$1,950 each. A helmet is \$239, boots are \$299, gloves are \$65, and hoods are \$39. The interior firefighters' gear is reallocated to new firefighters who are not likely to be going into a building. This fireproof clothing is used until they no longer meet safety specifications. Additionally, for the two full-time officers, this fund covers the purchase of shirts, three pairs of pants per year, two short-sleeved shirts, work shoes and dress jackets and shirts, name tags, and badges.

Educational Material – The department invites about 540 kids to the fire house for fire prevention week. The Firefighters Association matches or exceeds a match for them each year. This fund also helps pay for the open house they have every year, pamphlets, and information made available to the public.

Mr. Bianchi asked about how much on-call firefighters make per hour. Chief Lyon said that on-call firefighters can be either new members or within their probationary timeframe and make \$9.50/hour. If they have in-house training they receive \$10.50/hour. A firefighter with Level 1 training is paid \$13.50/hour, with Level 2 training is paid \$16.75/hour. Part-time employees are paid for the hours they serve. On-call employees (over-night and weekend hours) are paid \$25 per night or \$40 for the weekend. On-call officers are paid out of the so-named line item. Part-time employees are call members or volunteers, the "On-call" budget is for officers who respond alone to calls, and includes his own salary. Mr. Bianchi wondered if part-time and on-call could be lumped together. Chief Lyon said they could.

Chief Lyon said that about 32 are Level 1 certified, out of those there are 16 who are at least Level 2 certified. There are an additional 4 or 5 who are C2F2 or career level certified.

Buildings – The big jump was heating this year, which was not something they can control.

Chief Lyon said that they replaced two windows in the station this year. They do everything themselves to maintain the building, including fixing faucets, replacing toilet seats, painting, etc. He felt that this reduces the overall wear and tear on the building and keeps it looking sharp.

CIP – they did not have to put much away for the SCBA since receiving the grant last year. The ladder truck replacement was coming up. They have been working to get quotes from various manufacturers who can build a truck that will fit in their station. The height of many apparatus is being raised to be able to accommodate the new emissions equipment that is becoming a requirement. The last fire station expansion was done in 2004 and Chief Lyon commented that it blended well into the community.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Ms. Hardy met with the Board to discuss her budget requests.

Misc. Food & Supplies – Under this line item, she said that it included the voting booths. She said they need to start replacing some of the booths. Some just don't go together any more. They bought a set of five of them about seven years ago. Some others are quite old and need to be replaced. They are required to have a certain number of booths per voting members in the town. They will be fine for voting in January, but would like this to be ready for the November 2012 Federal election.

Ms. Hardy said that for the school elections in March, they need to talk about what to charge for the moderator and ballot clerks. The school pays for the printing and programming of the ballot machine. She said if they charged \$500 for the moderator, ballot clerks and for her time that day, it would be enough. She suggested putting \$2,025 in for the new booths, and another \$825 for the "misc." part of the fund, which includes money for coffee at the elections.

Office Supplies – Ms. Hardy said she put in for a new computer for herself and it would be implemented towards the end of fiscal year 2013. Ms. Pankhurst got a new computer in 2011 and came just in time. Her own computer is 5 or 6 years old.

Finance – Tax Collector Bills – Ms. Hardy had \$2,200 in the fund for fiscal year 2011/2012. She has put the same amount in again for fiscal year 2013. She noted that Concord paid substantially for development of custom bills to be printed up. It is a one page bill and includes information about the property, and has two vouchers at the bottom. She was in favor of distributing a bill like this instead of two separate bills that look almost exactly alike. They will have to get permission from Concord (because they paid to develop the software) and will have to pay a sum of money to have the software changed to accommodate New London, to be able to print similar bills. The bills would be printed somewhere else, but in return for that cost, they will not using the in-house paper, the copier or man-power. Mr. Bianchi said that if people vote to go back to paying just two bills per year they may not need to go through with this at all. Ms. Hardy agreed with this sentiment.

Invoice Cloud – Ms. Hardy explained that it is electronic bill presentment and payment program. They can create an invoice file and upload it to "The Cloud" and people can then download their bill and pay it, if they wish. She knows there is a cost to get it set up, but it is something that is offered through the software company they already have. She has received requests from people who want to find and or pay their bills online. Mr. Bianchi asked if this all went online if it would decrease the need for having two people in the office. Ms. Hardy said it would. Additionally they no longer do passport applications, and more and more streamlining could be done over time. Mr. Bianchi said that he thought it would be good to find out the costs associated with online payments as it may reduce costs for the town in the long run.

Recreation Department

Mr. Denning said there was a 0% increase from last year but there was some moving around of funds to enable him to get a new desktop computer.

The line items Mr. Bianchi had questioned prior to the meeting have not yet been spent as they have to do with maintenance of the beaches that will not be opened until the summer.

Travel and meals – Mr. Denning said that he drives about 2,200 miles per year in his personal car. Every six months he is reimbursed for his mileage from July to present. He also attends two conferences per year which are held in January and September.

Emergency Management Director – The salary is decreasing for this position and the duties are being added to his regular position. This was the decision of the Town Administrator.

Recreation Department CIP – They have requested \$7,500/year and have a projected timeline of events for the next 15 years. They would like to rehabilitate the Bucklin Beach bathhouse. The funding of \$7,500 will bring their total to the appropriate amount to cover either design option #1 or #2, which will ultimately be decided by the Recreation Department, the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

Ms. Helm noted that they have \$107,000 in the fund currently and wondered how much they would spend on the upgrade. Mr. Denning said it would depend on which design was chosen. It would be either \$108,500 or \$123,500.

Mr. Bianchi said he was 100% against putting a second story on the building. Mr. Denning said he doesn't want to put a second story on it; he wants to be able to use the attic as storage space. The intention of the rehabilitation is to keep the building from falling in, and replacing the bathroom fixtures to low-flow as it is a closed septic system. The roof is rotting and needs to be replaced anyway. Chair Kaplan said that he would like Mr. Denning to go over the options with Ms. Hallquist and Ms. Johnson and come back with a presentation.

Mr. Denning said the blueprint of the building would be the same as it is now. One option has dormers and one has skylights. It is merely a decision and depends on how the townspeople want to see the building. The dormers will give it more of a colonial look. Mr. Denning noted that the deed from Mr. Bucklin says that he wanted the building to maintain a colonial look.

Mr. Denning said that currently, eight kayaks, the rescue boards, sails and masts are lying on the floor of the building at Bucklin Beach. The second floor is not usable space at the moment. It is just an attic that is not accessible for storage. There is currently a trailer parked at Frothingham that was donated by Read Clarke that holds the sail boats, which are covered in tarps for winter. Mr. Denning would like to be able to have all the water sports equipment at the beach instead of off-site. Mr. Bianchi thought a better option would be to build a LaValley garage at the stump dump. Mr. Denning said that the boathouse still needs to be upgraded. Mr. Bianchi felt some new toilets and some paint and minimal updates to the roof would be sufficient. Mr. Denning said that one thing they want to do is have one of the bathrooms moved to be outside the house and open 24 hours and would also serve as the handicap-accessible restroom. The bathrooms were the main intent for changing anything at all in the building. They have decided that if they switch the men's and women's bathrooms, they can put a wall urinal in the "new" men's bathroom that doesn't need any water. They can then accomplish another bathroom which will be located outside of the bathhouse and will be available for use even when the building is closed.

Chair Kaplan said that they either need to fix the building or tear it down; it is 50 years old and needs work. Mr. Bucklin asked them to keep it up and keep it looking colonial. He felt nothing was wrong with what they are proposing and liked that they were looking to the future. Mr. Denning said they anticipate construction to begin in the fall of 2012. Chair Kaplan saw nothing wrong with doing this and felt if there was a way to fix the building to make it more useful and to have an extra bathroom, they should do it. They have been given a terrific piece of property and they need to keep it up.

Mr. Bianchi asked if the toilets in the bath house were already low flow. Mr. Denning said they were not low flow at either beach. Low flow toilets were \$800 each.

Mr. Denning said he presented this plan to the LSPA who were excited about the upkeep of the building. There was talk about how they wanted it to look. Judge DiClerico preferred the second option and he sees the building every day. Mr. Denning said he has always included the DiClericos in these discussions due to their proximity to the beach.

With no other business, a motion was made to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London