



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES December 29, 2011

PRESENT:

Tina Helm, Selectman
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Rick Anderson, New London Resident and representative of Pleasant Lake Protective Association
Merry Armentrout, Reporter for the Intertown Record
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
Peter Stanley, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Mr. Bianchi and Ms. Helm called the meeting to order at 8:00am in the absence of Chair Kaplan who had suffered a fall and elbow fracture the previous day.

Ventilators grant request: Ms. Hallquist noted that New London Hospital would like to accept two portable ventilators from a State grant that comes through a Homeland Security grant, which requires approval from the municipality. It was confirmed that there was no liability put upon the Town for the receipt of these items. Ms. Hallquist read from the grant: "Resolved: That the municipality agrees that portable ventilators, provided by the State of New Hampshire, acting through its Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services for the benefit of the municipality in emergency situations, be granted to the New London Hospital to be stored, maintained and deployed as necessary."

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to accept the two ventilators from a Homeland Security grant. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Bianchi explained that he has gone through what they have agreed upon so far on every category in the budget printout. He has noted what has come in above and below the budget. So far, his rough calculations indicate that if everything is accepted as presented they will be spending \$100,000 more than last season, and would be saving \$20,000. The net increase requests were about \$80,000. This does not include health insurance or any of the salaries which have not been discussed. The biggest increase is the health agencies which they will review that day. The hospital alone has a \$27,000 increase. General Government Buildings were about \$13,000 above last year.

Ms. Helm said that because Chair Kaplan wasn't present and that it was a crucial presentation, she felt it important for him to be there for the conversation. She would also appreciate having some time to review the materials and numbers before their next meeting on Wednesday, January 4th at 6pm. She wondered if they could contact Mr. Wheeler to see if they could put off their presentation to the Budget Committee until the 17th of January due to the present situation with the board and Chair Kaplan. Mr. Bianchi thought they were close to making their decisions and didn't feel it necessary to push their presentation deadline out any further. Ms. Helm noted that she asked Chair Kaplan prior to the meeting how he would feel if the budget was presented a week later, from the date they had tentatively decided upon. Chair Kaplan

indicated that he would applaud that action. Ms. Helm said that Chair Kaplan would be finding out very soon, perhaps that day, as to when he would be back to attending meetings. She did not want to take any votes that day as Chair Kaplan was their leader and should be involved. Mr. Bianchi observed that if what they discuss that day would need to be re-discussed with Chair Kaplan, then perhaps they should adjourn the meeting. It was decided to continue with the meeting to discuss the non-profit requests as those organizations were invited to attend the meeting.

Non-Profit Requests for Fiscal Year 2013

Pleasant Lake Protective Association (PLPA)

Rick Anderson was there representing PLPA and said they were requesting the same amount (\$6,500) that they had the previous year. He wasn't sure what the other associations were doing. Mr. Bianchi felt that level funding this year from last would be acceptable. Last year there had been extensive discussion regarding the milfoil program as the fund that had been used in the past was diminishing and needed to be re-funded.

Mr. Anderson said they had requested \$6,500 for May of 2011 and \$6,500 for May of 2012, which occurred in the same 18-month budget. This request would be for May of 2013 and would be for \$6,500.

Ms. Hallquist indicated that the only other milfoil funding request that had been sent in so far was from Messer Pond Protective Association. Mr. Bianchi noted that the Messer Pond request is 20% below last year's request.

Mr. Anderson said that each association runs their programs differently regarding how often and at what expense (paid or volunteer) their boat ramps are monitored. The LSPA monitors their ramp every day from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Ms. Helm said that The Messer Pond Protective Association is requesting \$3,225 which is reduced from last year. She suggest that this is probably due to increased volunteer hours or because they have now become a 501(3)(c) (a non-profit organization) and anticipate realizing more donations.

Ms. Helm wondered if the other protective associations should be sent another letter as they have not sent in their requests. Ms. Hallquist said that she will call them and follow-up. Ms. Helm suggested she note that Messer Pond had decreased their request by 20% and that Pleasant Lake has stayed flat. Mr. Bianchi said that he felt if organizations don't submit a request, then the Town should not fund the programs. If there is no response or request, it would appear to him that they do not need any money.

Mr. Stanley indicated that even though the Lake Sunapee Protective Association has not sent in a request in writing, he knows that they are expecting and are dependent upon the same contribution they received last year. He said he would contact the association to make sure they send in a written request.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (RPC)

Mr. Stanley said that instead of hiring someone as a planner, a planner at the RPC is hired at the applicant's expense. They are hired to work for the town. The RPC bills the town for membership dues, which is \$5,492. The town gets 15% of the dues back as a direct application towards any projects they do with them. The line item in the budget for the RPC is for work that could/would be done with them. This year, there will be a change in the Telecommunications Act, which is something the fund has been used for. Mr. Stanley said that the Planning Board reviewed the budget and has been whittling it down each year. Mr. Bianchi had no problem with the amount being requested.

American Red Cross

Mr. Bianchi and Ms. Helm recalled that they had not given the Red Cross any funding in the past. There have been articles on the floor at Town Meeting but no funding has been given. Ms. Helm recalled the argument being that the town has a good emergency management system and didn't feel it necessary to fund the Red Cross. Chief Lyon agreed. He said that in the past the Red Cross had the request for funding as a petition warrant article as opposed to having the selectmen make the decision.

COA Chapin Senior Center

It was agreed that this would be funded as it is each year.

Court Appointed Special Advocates of NH

Ms. Johnson said nothing had been appropriated since 2009. There was a note in the budget sheet that their request had come in late last year and was denied. Ms. Helm said that there are some committed volunteers of this program in New London and felt they do some really great work. Mr. Bianchi agreed. They were asking for \$500. Ms. Helm wondered how much this particular service is used by people in the town. It was noted that Joyce Dempsey is a New London resident who is a very passionate volunteer for the program. Ms. Hallquist said she would speak with Celeste Cook regarding how much work the program does for families in New London.

New Hampshire Municipal Association Membership

Ms. Hallquist said they have increased their request by 2%. They are asking for \$6,000. Membership allows the Town to use their legal services, attend local officials workshops, receive publications on various municipal issues, and to allow the Town to purchase insurance. This is part of Local Government Center (LGC). The board had no problem with funding this request.

Community Action Program – Belknap – Merrimack Counties, Inc.

The request is \$3,809. The board was in favor of funding this request.

New London Hospital

Mr. Bianchi said that the request, which is for the ambulance service shortfall, was up (29.4%). Ms. Helm said she felt the community wants a quality ambulance service and until they get a better reading on what MRI says and where the service is going, they should probably budget for what they are asking. She commented that she could not vote on this issue as she has an association with the hospital.

Mr. Bianchi thought that by this time this year, they anticipated having some models from MRI with regards to how the ambulance service could be run. This has not happened. Chief Lyon said he felt it was difficult for MRI to come up with a reasonable proposal when all the information they should have had was either held back or wasn't transparent. He felt that the New London Board of Selectmen was the catalyst to getting a report from MRI. Since then, there has been a brief overview over the phone which occurred in December. He was hopeful to get an executive summary from them soon. The idea was to have all of this decided prior to the budget season to be able to budget accordingly for any changes. Should the service remain as-is, a contract would need to be put in place to set the parameters. Should there be no service available out of New London, the next service would be from Newport. Should this service not be available, ambulances would be called from towns as far away as Franklin, Marlow, Lebanon and Hanover. This will impact the timeliness of getting an ambulance to a 911 call.

Chief Lyon explained that the level of care is important. He explained that the higher the care, the more expensive it is. Mr. Bianchi said that the Newport ambulance costs much less but he hasn't heard complaints about the service. He felt they had no choice but to pay this bill. Perhaps they will have better direction to go on the following year.

Chief Lyon asked about money set aside for a new ambulance purchase. Mr. Bianchi said that \$5,000 is part of the funding provided to the hospital each year by the town, but to his knowledge it has not been used. Chief Lyon understood that Newport had loaned the New London Hospital one of their ambulances recently and he did not know if the hospital has purchased a new one yet.

Chamber of Commerce

The request is for \$9,600. Jen Tockman is the new director there and will be in to meet with them at some point.

Mr. Bianchi did not feel that Chair Kaplan would have any problems with what they had decided in his absence. He hoped that they could vote on these quickly at the next meeting. Ms. Helm believed this would be the case.

Mr. Bianchi said he would like to have another potential meeting at the end of the following week. He asked if they could change the January 4th meeting time from 6pm to 8am, and could they adjourn and meet later in the day or that evening. Ms. Hallquist said this was fine to do, however the 6PM meeting has already been posted, the Board need only post a meeting for 8AM. She noted that the Board had planned to discuss salaries at the 6PM meeting, and she encouraged them to keep this schedule as it is likely that several members of the public have planned to attend as there is an interest in hearing about the salary information. They could work throughout the day but should still meet in the evening when working people could attend.

CIP

Mr. Bianchi said that he recalled no deposits were made into the capital reserve for the 6-month budget, which was 2011. There was some discussion about deposits made and discrepancies he found between what was appropriations and budget sheets. It was difficult to be able to compare numbers because of the 18-month budget.

Mr. Bianchi was concerned about the health insurance costs in the middle of the next fiscal year, as the rates change in December. Had they not had the option of changing the deduction this year, they would have had to pay the increase of 11%. The following December if the percentage goes up again, they won't have money in the budget to pay for that increase for six months. He suggested setting up a new capital reserve amount of perhaps anticipating a 10% increase, to be appropriated only for potential increases in insurance premiums. The funds could be put under the Selectmen's Discretionary Account or a capital reserve account to limit the ability of what it can be used for. Ms. Helm agreed that this was a good idea. She thought it should be a capital reserve line item.

Chief Lyon asked if there was anything he needed to prepare for with the acquisition of the ladder truck in 2012. Mr. Bianchi said the money has been put into the capital reserves for several years and they are anticipating the purchase. Chief Lyon said that he anticipated being able to trade in the old ladder truck for more than they could sell it for, resulting in needing less than what has been put into the capital reserve fund. He was still working on getting more details. He commented that getting something larger (a 10-wheeler vs. a 6-wheeler) would be less maneuverable as the first apparatus to the scene of an emergency, and would not fit in the fire station as they are generally too high. An apparatus comparable to the size they currently have would also be less expensive. Mutual aid resources are available to help with emergencies requiring a longer ladder or other apparatus that New London does not have.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to post an 8am meeting on January 4th , and a 7pm meeting on January 9th. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Bianchi suggested posting the January 9th 7PM meeting as a joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee and that the members of the Board of Selectmen should come ready to answer questions. Chief Lyon said he was happy to come to the meetings and answer any questions people may have about his budget. (Note: the above meetings are in addition to meetings of the Board already posted for those days).

Application for Building Permit:

Presbytery of Northern New England, 82 King Hill Road, (Map & Lot 122-019-000) install shed – Permit #11-124 – Approved

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 9:50am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London