



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **Budget Committee Meeting Meeting Minutes April 2, 2012**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jim Wheeler (Chair), John Wilson, Ben Cushing, Doug Homan, Kathy Bianchi, Bill Green, Doug Homan, Joe Cardillo, Ann Bedard, Connie Appel, Mark Kaplan (Board of Selectmen's Representative)

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

Peter Bianchi and Tina Helm, Board of Selectmen members

Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

Dave Seastrand, Police Chief

Richard Lee, Public Works Director

Sandra Licks, Library Director

Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Joan Pankhurst, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Linda Jackman, Administrator's Assistant

Chad Denning, Recreation Director

Steve Ensign, Board of Fire Wards

Peter Stanley, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Terry LeBlanc, New London Hospital

Nancy Friese, COA

Merry Armentrout, the *InterTown Record*

Members of the public: Bruce Hudson, Sean Cushing, Sandra Brisse, Pete Lauridsen, Celeste Cook, Phyllis Piotrow, Bill Helm, Doug MacMichael, Thelma Kaplan, David Cook, Tracey MacKenna, Terri Bingham, Randy Foose, Keith Pomkoski, Susie Burmann, Joe DiClerico, Peter Lewis, Karen Hoglund, Colin Bellavance, Matt McCoy, Blair Mellay, Sam Cahan, James MacKenna, Geoff Daley, Tom Scully, Francis Beebe, J. Pepper, Ron Koron, Gen Izutsu, Janet Kidder, Peter Fenton, Laura James

Chair Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

### Review of Minutes from March 26, 2012

Due to the fact that the minutes were not received by the Budget Committee until Monday, it was decided to defer approving them until the next budget meeting.

### Changes in the Budget

Ms. Johnson reported that since the last budget meeting they have realized a net decrease of \$3,814.00.

### CIP Funding & Expenditures Line Items

Chair Wheeler said that the CIP program is a Planning Board function and they would only discuss the inflows and outflows for FY 2013 and not the process, itself.

*Fire Department – Replacement of the Ladder Truck*

Chair Wheeler noted that the amount of \$860,000 is being proposed to be spent, as listed in the CIP to replace the ladder truck and commented that this was one of the largest expenditures the Town ever sees. He thought it was good to have so many people in the room to be involved in the discussion. Chief Lyon took the floor and gave a presentation regarding the Ladder Truck replacement.

Chief Lyon, pointing to the pictures in his PowerPoint presentation, explained the terminology used to describe the various pieces of fire apparatus, including “rescue engine,” “tanker,” and “ladder truck.” He said the ladder truck is also referred to as a “Quint” because it is a combination apparatus consisting of apparatus used to assist with rescue, ventilation and fire control (roof access via the ladder). He noted that the ladder truck is generally the first apparatus on the scene and the town’s current ladder truck has been out of service over six months in the last six years, which is a significant amount of time to be without it. Additionally, they have had to spend \$60,000 in unanticipated repair costs to the truck. If they don’t have the ladder truck in New London, it will take 10-15 minutes to get other apparatus (mutual aid) to the scene of a fire.

Chief Lyon said that they have well-trained and aggressive fire fighters in the New London Fire Department. The aerial (ladder) provides safety with respect to rescue, provides a secondary means of egress, and reduces the number of personnel needed on the scene. The new ladder would have pre-plumbed waterway which would allow them to attack fire from a distance and with the use of fewer personnel.

Chief Lyon said that he has heard people question whether or not they should wait to make this purchase to save money. He reported that the cost of this apparatus increases by about 5% each year. If the current ladder is kept, it would surely require additional repairs and maintenance, to the tune of at least \$10,000 per year. Additionally, new federal emissions standards will make trucks (purchased after this planned purchase) cost about \$20,000 more. In summary, Chief Lyon felt that buying the truck now will save the Town money.

Chief Lyon remarked that dependability is the most important thing with regard to the apparatus. With the current ladder, they have already experienced a catastrophic pump failure during a fire event in the midst of Tropical Storm Irene. Thankfully, there were no people inside the building at the time.

Mr. Homan observed that if Chief Lyon’s guesstimate was accurate with regard to future purchases for a fire truck, that it would cost about \$3 million dollars the next time they need to replace a truck of this magnitude. If it is going to cost that much, he thought they should think about purchasing one to share with another town, such as Sutton, and keeping it in-between the towns.

Chief Lyon said his guess was that the new truck would cost less than \$860,000 and they are being as frugal as possible to make sure they are getting a truck that will be beneficial to the Town over the next 20 years.

Mr. Kaplan noted that it would cost about \$65,000 to wait a year. This amount represents the additional cost of the truck one year later plus additional repair costs of the town’s current truck. He said he wouldn’t want to spend \$65,000 more and keep the old ladder truck. He’d like to spend the \$860,000 that has been saved, purchase a new truck and save the \$65,000.

Ms. Bedard asked if any of the equipment from the current ladder truck would be moved to the new truck. Chief Lyon said that all the equipment would move to the new truck except for the ladders. This would include all the tools, axes, hoses, nozzles, fans, etc.

Mr. Fellerman said that based on the age of the truck (20 years) that sometime between today and 2017 they will have to buy a new truck. He felt that everyone seemed to agree on this point. He opined that if they have the money now, it would make sense to do it today rather than to wait. The \$50,000 they spent in repairs over the last five years will become more and more in the future. He noted that the economy wasn't that great now and since they have the money, they may be able to get a good deal on the new truck.

Mr. Cardillo wondered who New London relies on when they are down a ladder truck. Chief Lyon said that Sunapee and Newport have a ladder, as does Claremont. The other smaller surrounding towns have engines, tankers, rescues and forestry apparatus.

John Peffer said they needed help from New London Fire Department late last August. He called 911 and as he and his wife were walking away from their home, the Fire Department arrived. They will always be thankful for the efforts of the Fire Department and thought that they must have the fastest response time in the state of New Hampshire.

Ms. Wendy Gulker asked Chief Lyon what would have happened to her home if the Town didn't have a ladder and they had to wait for Newport to arrive with theirs. Chief Lyon explained that Ms. Gulker was the victim of a partition fire recently. He said his concern was that newer homes are made of light-weight truss construction that collapse very quickly. It would have taken longer for a truck to arrive at her home, had New London not had its own ladder truck.

Mr. Homan wondered why Chief Lyon came to the meeting without a firm proposal for the truck. He believed that there could be a potential savings if they waited a year and raised the roof of the Fire Station to then be able to open up the bids, more competitively, to more truck manufacturers. Chief Lyon said that he has a master plan to address the issue of a ladder truck that could not fit in the current garage. He observed that the engineering it would take to lift the roof with the systems currently in the building would be costly. Additionally, the location of the building in the heart of New London makes the aesthetics of the building particularly important. These issues lead him to conclude that the best solution is to have the ladder truck housed within the spare garage that was built by the Firefighter's Association in 2000. They would continue the roof-line up and add another bay.

With respect to a more competitive bid, Chief Lyon said that they are involved in a bidding process and felt the price would be significantly under the \$860,000. He commented that this wasn't an arbitrary thing but has been looked at since 2008 and is now coming to fruition. Many towns don't come to the budget committee at this point; they get a bid from the manufacturer and the town appropriates the money. Chief Lyon said that in 2008 the reason they started putting in more money was because they thought they were going to get a 100' ladder with a platform. This could be utilized in the Town, but the purpose is to be able to get to houses and get into small driveways to access the roof. The smaller (75' ladder) is sufficient to meet the needs of the Town and be maneuverable to fit into smaller spaces.

Mr. Cardillo wondered if they would be able to maintain this apparatus to last longer than 20 years. Mr. Ensign said that 15 years is the normal cycle of trading trucks. They will often times run the equipment another five years as a reserve after the new piece has been acquired. Their CIP funds have been established on a 20-year cycle. They are facing the opportunity to acquire a piece of equipment and replace the ladder. The ladder is the most important apparatus to arrive on the scene. There are only a few companies they can work with due to the height of the garage. He thought it would be a competitive bid even so. Mr. Ensign noted that the Fire Wards were supportive of this opportunity and felt it an appropriate use of the funds. Each successive year they will have to increase the contribution to the CIP if

they don't purchase it now. There would actually be a net increase in addition to \$10,000 more per year for maintenance.

Chief Lyon said the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that trucks are traded every 20 years. Newbury goes 30 because they have a lot more apparatus to use as back-up. They have two fire stations and a full house.

Mr. Homan said that they are talking about reliability for the truck. They are already in a maintenance cycle for the truck and felt the cost of a new truck was a moving target. He noted that he actually went under the truck to see the condition and saw no rust and felt it was clean. Chief Lyon displayed some photos he had taken that day of the underside of the ladder truck, showing quite a bit of rust.

Mr. Green felt that the gist of the conversation was that the Town needed a ladder truck and no one is disputing that. The question is when do they replace it? According to the plan it is 20 years. He felt the plan was to help the Town plan for large capital purchases. He has trouble because little has been discussed about the condition of the truck, which should dictate when it should be replaced; he didn't feel they should just go by the plan without consideration of the actual condition of the truck. Mr. Green asked Chief Lyon to rate the condition of the truck on a scale of 1-10. Chief Lyon said he would give it a 6-7. He opined that it was in decent shape and added that the issue wasn't the rust aspect, as there has been some preventative maintenance that has had to be done, the main issue is dependability. In 1988 one of their trucks was refurbished and it cost more to do that than it did to purchase the truck initially. They are not replacing the ladder because they have the money or because of rust. It is a dependability issue; it isn't dependable and has been out of service a considerable amount of time. He doesn't want to have to cross his fingers and hope a fire doesn't happen if/when the ladder is out for repairs. They will keep doing their job at the Fire Department if they don't get the new truck, but said that this truck assists with the safety of others and the preservation of property in Town.

Ms. Bianchi asked if NFPA had criteria in terms of what they base the truck replacement recommendation on. For instance, do they assume that within that 20-year time, any given piece will have so many hours or miles on it? Chief Lyon said that they do not. He added that this issue wouldn't be concerning to him if they had more equipment. They have just three pieces and have tried to combine apparatus to save money. Mr. Ensign said that the Fire Department individuals have a great deal of pride in serving the Town and the Town's stewardship is needed to provide the Fire Department with the equipment they need. This is a request to spend up to, but not willfully spend from the Town's checkbook. He hoped the Budget Committee would agree that it is time to move forward with this purchase.

Tom Scully, Lieutenant with the Fire Department explained that they are talking about an emergency vehicle that must not only protect citizens, but also the firefighters who use it. When they have a pump failure or a problem, he doesn't want to be inside a burning building or trying to rescue someone when it breaks. They can't look at an emergency vehicle as "let's see if we can get more out of it." He noted that Sunapee's ladder doesn't fit in most driveways in New London because it is so large. New London uses the Quint because they can get a ladder and water in the driveway all at once.

Mr. Cook said that the Chief has referred to the plan several times and suggested that if the plan is good, it should be followed so that so that the budgets don't get doubled or tripled every 10 years or so. He felt that if this is the year they say the commitment is to be fulfilled, then the Town should do it. He felt it was not appropriate to veer away from the plan. The Budget Committee's job is to come up with an annual budget but in his opinion, they should not do it at the expense of a well-thought out 10-year capital plan. Mr. Cook felt it was reasonable to replace the ladder truck now and didn't think the Budget Committee

should change the line of events now so that things will keep fitting in with how the plan is supposed to work.

Chair Wheeler wondered if Chief Lyon had any degree of confidence in a figure that the new ladder truck would cost. If it was a lot less than they had planned, they could potentially reduce the contribution to that apparatus account to meet what the plan calls for. Chief Lyon said that his hope would be that it would be just under \$800,000. He said they can negotiate with the two companies they are seeking bids from. He couldn't give a firm number.

Chair Wheeler asked about selling the current ladder truck outright. Chief Lyon said they have tried that but found that after selling it to one company, they let it sit for five years and then turned it into a snow blower. He thought that another town would eventually get this ladder. Chair said if they can get it for \$50,000 less than they had been saving for, and if they can get between \$30,000 and \$35,000 back for the trade-in, that was potentially a savings of \$85,000.

Mr. Green said a problem he has is that they have had 20 years to plan this and they are being asked to approve something when they only have a ballpark figure and have no idea of what it includes. He said he would like to know the cost and what features the truck comes with. Ms. Appel said it is not up to the Budget Committee to micro-manage the fire department apparatus. The CIP program has worked to great effect to the town and they are being asked to make the expenditure of money that has been saved. They all believe that the Town needs a new ladder truck and statistics show that the current one is unreliable.

Mr. Kaplan said many times the Board of Selectmen will pass a project with the words "not to exceed" or "up to x\$". He felt they could do the same with this. The Chief can spend up to a certain amount. He felt this would keep them from micro-managing and the Chief won't go over-budget.

Randy Foose said he was around at the beginning of the CIP program and spent 10 years sitting as Chair of the Budget Committee. As he watched the CIP plan develop with bumps in the road, he became convinced that the presence of the plan and the Fire Wards, gave him comfort as a Budget Committee member that he didn't have to be the only one in town who had to ask the tough questions. He became convinced that they were spreading the responsibility for managing the Town in an appropriate way to responsible people. They started the CIP plan by getting the Town, on an annual basis, to get the dollars put aside to do what they believed was appropriate. He opined that this is a town that has the money in the bank to do what is necessary and it has a Budget Committee that is asking all of the tough questions. As he listens to the answers, he hears this is a town that is ready to buy the piece of equipment that was included in the plan 20 years ago. This plan doesn't put them in a position that at the last minute they have to come up with a lot of money to pay for this sort of thing. He thought the Budget Committee was doing what they were supposed to do, but hoped they were taking it in context with the plan, the money that has been set aside, and that they would go through with the purchase. He added that 90 seconds after he and his wife escaped their home that was on fire, the main floor would not have been accessible. The ladder truck was essential in saving their home. He supported the Budget Committee's effort as they move forward and hoped they would make the CIP plan work as he thought it was to work when they set it up.

Mr. Stanley said that they managed down all the residuals of the CIP and if the acquisition becomes less, next year's CIP effort will manage down that amount so that nothing will be left in the account. He has purchased a few fire trucks in the past and has found one experience that is universal: spending the money is never "a good year" for some people. He believed they would always have the same discussion as it is a lot of money. The ladder truck they have now replaced a truck that was less than 20 years old and falling apart on the road. At the time it was the most expensive piece of apparatus in the State. Putting it off

another year will just add to the problems. The price of oil is going up and will drive the price of steel up. They are in a down economy and it is a good time to make a deal. If the economy turns significantly in the next year or two, they will be in trouble because costs will be up everywhere. This is the plan and is a reasonable thing to acquire. Mr. Stanley said they spend \$160,000 per year on equipment costs and spend more than that for the two people they have working at the fire station. If they found the need for more man-power, the cost would be higher than purchasing new equipment. Buying this now saves lives and property.

Mr. Stanley added that when the apparatus rolls, it is always at its maximum capacity and fully loaded and experiences significant wear and tear. Even though the hours/miles logged into the truck may seem low, the truck has been through a lot of hard wear and tear.

Chair Wheeler said this is a special warrant article and the Board of Selectmen will put this forth. The following Monday night they will vote on whether they (the Budget Committee) will approve of it or not. Mr. Coogan asked if they take a sense of the Board on the issue. Mr. Homan thought this would be good to do as many people had attended the meeting to hear what would be said on this particular topic. He didn't want to make them come out again to see the results.

Chair Wheeler asked for a show of hands for those who would support the warrant article for the purchase of a new ladder truck. Chair Wheeler, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Cushing, Ms. Bedard, Ms. Bianchi, Mr. Cardillo, Ms. Appel and Mr. Kaplan indicated they would support the purchase and Mr. Homan and Mr. Green abstained.

Chief Lyon noted that the apparatus would take nine months to get it once ordered. He said he appreciated the Budget Committee and the audience for taking the time to review this topic. He added that he would be happy to answer any questions now or at another time.

#### *Public Works Department*

##### **One-Ton Truck Replacement**

Mr. Lee said that truck body manufacturing companies will not give a firm price unless they sign within 30 days. They will need a new body, snow plow and hydraulic system. The State bid only includes the cab and chassis. He had a rough estimate of \$75,000. Mr. Kaplan said that this should be another "not to exceed" item. Mr. Lee said that last year they were very close in their estimate and had about \$7,000 left over.

Mr. Green asked if the One-Ton was seven years old and had about 65,000 miles on it. Mr. Lee answered in the affirmative. He added that this vehicle will be moved over to the transfer station and will replace an 11-year old truck that probably won't pass inspection this year. They have five full-sized trucks and one will be a spare as he only has four operators now to plow roads. Mr. Lee said when the trucks get to be 8-10 years old they look at the plan and see if they can get another year out of them without a substantial amount of maintenance. He opined that plow equipment was not lasting as long as it did 20 years ago. Mr. Homan said he appreciated Mr. Lee's open mind on this topic and his willingness to look into other options, i.e. other truck manufacturers. Mr. Lee noted that he tries to keep an open mind on all potential ways to save money.

Mr. Cook observed that the questions being asked by Mr. Homan and Mr. Green are legitimate but it said to him that in their minds, the CIP committee hasn't asked these questions and that they don't have a feeling of confidence that these things have been addressed. He would suggest that they ask what they can do to make sure the CIP committee has been diligent in doing the research. Chair Wheeler observed that this could be done by having the CIP prepared by the Budget Committee instead of the Planning Board.

Mr. Cook said that the CIP is there to plan for the good of the Town not just one particular year, but for the years to come.

### **Town Building Maintenance**

Chair Wheeler identified \$10,000 in capital outlay and questioned whether this was the Town Administration building portion of the garage they are proposing to construct at the Sewer Department. Mr. Stanley said there was a provision for a joint expenditure by Sewer, Highway, and Recreation for use by those departments. It was going to be \$10,000 from each of these departments if the three-bay garage was constructed. Chair Wheeler said that Administration was one of the participants in this, but not Highway. One bay was to be used for Town records. The Board of Selectmen/Budget Committee were supposed to work this out but never did. Chair Wheeler suggested that in FY2013 they should sort this out to see what was needed and if it was determined to be a need, they could plan it for FY2014.

### *Recreation Capital Outlay*

Mr. Denning said that Department Heads are charged with doing all they can to reduce risk and liability. In 2008 the Recreation Department completed a Master Plan, which included the rehabilitation of the beach facilities as the number one goal. Nonetheless, none of the beach facilities have had any upgrades in the last 10 years even though every other department has had upgrades.

In Elkins they have addressed some drainage issues with the help of Mr. Lee and the Public Works Department. Together they have solved about 90% of the problems. At Bucklin Beach, which was built in 1952, nothing has been done to upgrade the facility. At this beach the Master Plan identified six different priorities:

1. Repair failing septic system. Mr. Denning said there have been no blooms at Bucklin Beach since the septic system has been updated and made into a closed system.
2. Increase storage on site.
3. Make the building ADA compliant.
4. Install low-flow fixtures to accommodate the closed system.
5. Remove lead-based paints on existing windows.
6. Replace shingles on the roof.

Mr. Denning said that the proposed three-bay garage would have a bay for the Recreation Department to use for storage. For the remaining items on their list, Mr. Denning was prepared with a proposal. It was his intention to request that no more than \$80,000 be spent on these upgrades and that this amount be presented in a warrant article to address all of these things in a bid process.

Mr. Cardillo asked what items were stored and where they were. Mr. Denning said that everything for the ice rink, a lawn mower, snowmobile, 12 Gatorade containers and other things for the day camp and other event supplies are all being kept in a bay in the Sewer Department garage. The Sunfish boats are at the Sewer Department as well, but are kept under cover on a trailer. Mr. Denning noted that it is harder for his staff to transport everything to/from the Sewer Department and that it would be easier to have the storage at the beach, but he understood the current economic climate and said that storage could remain off-site.

Mr. Homan opined that the building at Bucklin Beach was in good shape. He didn't think that structurally, the building needed anything. He thought the low-flow toilets were a good idea but didn't think they had to make it ADA compliant. Mr. Denning asked why they wouldn't want to make it ADA compliant. Mr. Homan said they should do it at some point but maybe this was not the year to do it. Mr. Denning felt that this was actually a great time to make the building ADA compliant because some people with disabilities can't go to their beach because they can't get in and out of the bathroom. As part of their

plans, they want to have a third bathroom (not an added toilet, just one that has been moved) that is ADA compliant, outside of the beach house, and open 24/7.

Ms. Bianchi thought if the handicapped bathroom was open 24 hours per day, they should consider the risk of vandalism. Mr. Denning said that the ADA compliant bathroom was made of “bomb-proof” materials.

Mr. Denning said that when the members of the Budget Committee went to visit the building at Bucklin Beach, it was the one week in the past six months that he chose to go on vacation. He hadn’t heard any remarks or been asked any questions from those who visited the building and felt this was disingenuous. It was noted that they did not realize Mr. Denning was away on vacation when some of the Committee decided to look at the building.

Mr. Green asked if many people in wheelchairs were really using the beach and wouldn’t they have trouble maneuvering through the sand. Mr. Denning said that there are more and more people in wheelchairs involved in recreation. He added that there are wheelchairs designed to go through the sand, which have larger wheels.

Mr. Denning said that the Budget Committee had asked for proposals for the beach house upgrade, and so he has provided one. He said that they would like to go out to bid. Mr. Green asked what the cost breakdown was for the \$79,000 that was being requested. Mr. Denning said that the contractor had not broken things down in that much detail, but that he could get that information. Mr. Homan felt the external bathroom could be a more economical solution than re-doing a bathroom inside the bath house.

Chair Wheeler asked why Mr. Denning was still bringing up the issue of vandalism at the beaches. To his knowledge, the decision to have the police lock things up at 9:30pm seemed to work beautifully. He felt the scope of the proposal was too broad and he had a problem spending taxpayer money on this when there were other things needing to be done down the road. He felt the building was in good shape.

Ms. Bedard suggested that Mr. Denning come back the following week with what things cost individually. Chair Wheeler said that at the next meeting the warrant would be written and they need a number. Mr. Cardillo wondered if whatever they want to do to make things ADA compliant would meet the standards necessary. Mr. Homan said that once a bathroom is changed in any way they must make it ADA compliant.

Mr. Kaplan suggested that if they were to change the wording as “not to exceed \$79,000,” the Recreation Department can find out what costs what and what they will actually be able to do. Then the Budget Committee will know that the Recreation Department will come in under \$79,000. Chair Wheeler said he cannot justify spending taxpayer money to put clapboard siding on the building. Mr. Green didn’t think that the purpose of the Budget Committee was to give “not to exceed” directions. Mr. Homan felt they should have a more concrete number to plan on and not have it be a moving target.

Ms. Hallquist offered that the building at Bucklin Beach is a public building and as such should be made ADA compliant as soon as possible. All of the town’s buildings are to be available to people with disabilities. She urged them that no matter what else they do to the building, to make it ADA compliant as soon as possible. She suggested that the Town could be in danger of a lawsuit for not being in compliance.

Mr. Cardillo didn’t think that siding was needed on the building. He thought they should get a figure for making it ADA compliant, for adding low-flow fixtures, and for replacing the shingles on the roof. He

asked Mr. Denning for a best guess of what these things would cost. Mr. Denning said he had no idea; he is a Recreation Director, not a builder. Mr. Coogan didn't think setting the limit to \$79,000 would be a bad thing. He felt that between Peter Stanley and the Board of Selectmen that they could get the work done for under \$79,000.

Phyllis Piotrow asked Mr. Denning how many people used the beach last summer. Mr. Denning said that it was between 5,000 and 6,000 people. Ms. Piotrow noted that Bucklin Beach was a donation to the Town and felt that it was their obligation to make it ADA compliant. She added that the toilets should be upgraded. Overall, she felt they should see that the facilities that support the beach are in good shape.

Mr. Cardillo asked what the time constraints were to come up with a number for these upgrades. Chair Wheeler said when the Board of Selectmen writes the warrant, they will recommend a number. He thought the Budget Committee should give the Board of Selectmen some guidance on this. Chair Wheeler said he would recommend having \$79,000 in the budget for these upgrades and having the Board of Selectmen monitor the project.

**IT WAS MOVED (Ann Bedard) AND SECONDED (Doug Homan) to table this discussion for the night and charge Mr. Denning with getting a number to the Board of Selectmen for possible inclusion in the warrant. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### *Sidewalk*

Chair Wheeler said the Elkins sidewalk will probably be put off for a year or so while they deal with the Pleasant Lake Dam. Mr. Lee noted that he was unaware that a final decision had been made in this regard.

**IT WAS MOVED (Doug Homan) AND SECONDED (Bill Green) to remove \$20,000 CRF for the sidewalks project line item. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### *Gravel Roads Program*

Ms. Bingham asked if there was still a plan to pave gravel roads. Mr. Lee said that initially there was a plan but that there have been budgetary cuts to prohibit roads from being paved as soon as they would like. Mr. Lee said that roads don't get put on the list of roads to pave unless most of the people on the road want it done. Mr. Coogan said he lives on Quarry Road and everyone there wanted it paved. He said that one day this year it was icy and raining and there was an accident. The road has been in bad shape and has had to be graded a couple times each year to maintain it. He was in favor of it being paved.

Mr. Lee asked if there was money being put into the gravel road paving account? It was noted that it would be funded with \$25,000.

#### *Conservation Land Purchase*

Chair Wheeler said that the Conservation Commission is willing to forego a deposit into their Land Acquisition Fund this year and he wanted to commend them for volunteering this. He said that the Commission recognized the expenditure as a want and not a need. He said that the Conservation Commission will be asking for permission to contribute funds for the acquisition of properties the Town will not actual own any interest in.

Mr. Stanley said that currently, the fund they have can only be used for land acquisition. When the Town acquires land, it comes off the tax rolls, they become the stewards of the land and have to maintain it. The Conservation Commission would prefer to be able to make contributions to conservation projects that are

in support of goals and objectives they have identified in the Master Plan. They are interested in preserving targeted pieces of property within the Town's borders. They can't contribute conservation funds for this purpose currently, but by adopting this change as allowed by statute, it allows them to make contributions to 501(c)(3) non-profits (such as Ausbon-Sargent, Lake Associations, etc.). Their donation to these projects will insure that they have no long-term fiduciary responsibility but can accomplish a conservation objective. They are still able to buy land when opportunity presents itself, but it just gives them more opportunity to conserve land. Mr. Stanley explained that there is a statute that dictates how they can use the funds they have. They have to change the definition of the capital reserve to allow for what the law allows in RSA 36-A:4, which they hope to adopt. An added advantage would be that if they had a lake in town that became infested with milfoil, they could use the money in the fund to help deal with it, with the approval of the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Bianchi said that this article was on the warrant last year and got intermingled with another article regarding easements outside of town and in the confusion both articles were turned down. The Conservation Commission said that they would not ask for money this year if the Board of Selectmen supported this article on the warrant.

**IT WAS MOVED (Kathy Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Ben Cushing) to support the initiative for the land acquisition fund change of definition. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

Bill Green and Doug Homan abstained from voting.

Mr. Homan felt an inventory of easements should be done and a dollar amount put beside the easements and what it is costing the town in taxes to take property off the tax rolls. He felt this was long overdue. Mr. Stanley said if they do that they will also need to show what they are saving on not spending to pay taxes to educate the children in the town. Mr. Stanley said with easements, the land stays on the tax rolls and is in current use. The amount of tax they generate doesn't change. The one thing that changes is that nothing is built on the land so there is no expense associated with it (plowing, paving, fire protection, schools). He didn't think anyone from the Budget Committee had been to any of the Conservation Commission meetings except for Mark Kaplan. A non-profit analysis has already been done for non-residential, building lot and no-building lots to show how each affects the tax rate.

#### *GIS Expenditure*

Mr. Homan proposed delaying the GIS expenditure and the sewer lagoon clean-up as these two items were close in amounts to off-set the two unforeseen expenses that have come up (\$30,000 for potential increases in insurance coverage for six months, and \$25,000 into the Pleasant Lake Dam CRF).

Mr. Lee said that he and Mr. Stanley have been working on the lagoon clean-up for years and noted that it gets more expensive each year. The State hasn't said to the Town to clean them up but it is bound to do so soon. The lagoons are next to Lyon Brook and if they leach out, contaminants will travel down the brook and into Kezar Lake. They gave a best estimate for the cost of cleanup, but it is only getting more expensive each year.

Chair Wheeler said they spent a lot of time talking about this topic at the CIP committee meetings. They came to the conclusion that it was a serious issue that had to be addressed sooner than later. Mr. Stanley said the lagoons are deteriorating and that some trees are growing larger along the embankments. There was danger of the lagoons being breached due to a downed tree. The Town was sued over a similar issue years ago from the people around Kezar Lake. If the lagoons opened up and they contribute contaminants to Kezar Lake, they will be sued again.

Mr. Stanley said they can no longer keep their heads in the sand regarding the lagoons and they need to take care of the problem. They can't turn their back on it any longer. Every year they put it off.

**IT WAS MOVED (John Wilson) AND SECONDED (Connie Appel) to keep the \$20,000 for the sewer lagoons. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED. Doug Homan voted "No."**

*GIS*

Mr. Stanley said that the tax maps they use now were developed in the 70's by a mapping company that did not accommodate for the curvature of the earth in their images. They forced lines where they shouldn't be which causes quite a bit of inconsistencies. They now have ortho-rectified photos to show where the true property lines lie. Their tax maps are 30-40 feet off in some parts, and some are close to being accurate. The tax maps are a tool they use for assessors, realtors, and the Zoning Administrator to look for property bounds. Last year they decided to start a capital reserve for the GIS work to be upgraded to make the maps coincide with the aerial photographs. Mr. Stanley said that if they don't want to fund the entire \$25,000 they should at least put something in the line item to keep it moving forward.

**IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Kathy Bianchi) to fund the GIS line item for \$10,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was noted that the next Budget Committee meeting will be held in Whipple Memorial Hall the following week, Monday April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bill Green) AND SECONDED (Ben Cushing) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London