



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
October 16, 2013

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*
Gayle Hedrington, WNTK
Merry Armentrout, *Intertown Record*
Joe Cardillo, Budget Committee
Doug Homan, Budget Committee
John Wilson, Budget Committee Chair
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

2013 Tax Rate

The Board reviewed information as prepared by Finance Officer Wendy Johnson. The information detailed possible town tax rates using various amounts of unreserved fund balance (surplus). Chair Helm observed that last year the Board approved the use of \$400,000 and left slightly under a million in the reserves. She wondered what the optimum amount to leave in reserves was. Ms. Johnson noted that the Department of Revenue recommends 8-17% of regular general fund operating expenditures. This is the budget without debt service and capital improvements.

Selectman Bianchi said the expenditures sheet (debt service) had been given out. For fiscal year 2015, it looked as though they will have to come up with \$641,000. Ms. Johnson said she didn't think they would have to come up with 100% of that amount as there will likely be only two sewer bond payments to be made in FY2015, and part of the payments will be made by the sewer users. Selectman Bianchi wondered if they should spread out the surplus balance over time instead of using \$400,000 right now to be able to alleviate the upcoming debt service expenses.

Mr. Cardillo thought four of the last five years there has been about a million dollars in the surplus reserve. It looked to him that the surplus would be similar in the next year. Selectman Bianchi said the average over the last eight years was a little over \$303,000 that had been applied to the tax rate.

Selectman Bianchi did not think they should put the full \$400,000 towards surplus because felt that using less, and having enough for future years, would better enable them to level off the tax rate over the next two or three years. He thought \$300,000 would be a better amount to use. Mr. Homan said if the Budget Committee is doing their job, they should be accurate in all budget areas and there should be no surplus at

the end of the year. He noted that the Town should not be using surplus to balance their budget; they should have a balanced budget. Selectman Bianchi said there are so many unknowns that happen with personnel and things in the town. They can't foresee these kinds of things happening. They can't just take money out of the surplus after the fiscal year has started to pay for things they didn't budget for. Dr. Wilson observed that having a special town meeting or going to court, the surplus money could be used by the Town. Ms. Hallquist said if the Town had to spend more than was appropriated in the budget they would have to either have a special town meeting to raise funds, or potentially they could request permission from the DRA. Having to do this likely means that there was an error in budgeting as not enough was appropriated. She agreed it was important to budget as close as possible, but it can be a problem if unusual circumstances arise like extreme weather that result in extra expenses in the highway department with roads washing out, lots of snowplowing expenses, as well as the responding police and fire departments. Some unspent budgeted monies were the result of employees leaving: wages and benefits not being paid until replacements are found. Mr. Cardillo said some things can be anticipated and he thought they should continue to budget as close as possible, as they have done the last several years.

Chair Helm thought they should stay with using \$400,000 of the surplus. This would result in a town tax rate of \$4.03, which is an increase of 2.6% over the 2012 rate (\$3.93). She thought Selectman Bianchi had a good point, however. Selectman Kidder agreed with Chair Helm. Selectman Bianchi said he could see the argument both ways.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to use \$400,000 from surplus to make the Town tax rate approximately \$4.03 for 2013. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approval of Certificate: Kurt Thomas

Chair Helm explained that Kurt Thomas is being recognized for his achievement of becoming an Eagle Scout. The Board of Selectmen would send along a certificate to congratulate him.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the certificate for Kurt Thomas recognizing his achievement of attaining Eagle Scout status. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Request for Proclamation

Chair Helm noted that the Board has received a request from Ann Holmes, Chairman of the Board of the New London Hospital to recognize Dr. Stephen Jordan for his service on the Board. Dr. Jordan will be stepping down from the board after nine years. He would continue to see patients.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to issue a proclamation honoring Dr. Jordan for his many years of service to the New London Hospital Board and to the community. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Review of Minutes

September 16, 2013

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of September 16, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Chair Helm abstained from voting as she was not present at the meeting on September 16, 2013

September 30, 2013

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

Old Business

The date for the November Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was set for November 2, 2013. There would be a continued discussion of the master plan. The CAC will not meet in December.

Selectmen's meetings in November were scheduled for:

Monday, November 4th at 8am
Wednesday, November 13th at 8am at the Fire Station
Monday, November 18th at 6pm
Monday, November 25th at 8am

Selectmen's meetings in December were scheduled for:

Monday, December 2nd at 8am
Monday, December 9th at 8am
Monday, December 16th at 6pm
Monday, December 30th at 6pm

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist heard back from Peter Bragdon from what was formerly LGC. He was willing to come into a meeting to address comments the Selectmen had for him. It was determined that he should be invited to come in on Wednesday, November 13th.

Ms. Hallquist said the Pleasant Lake Dam is now closed (it was closed on Friday, October 11th). She reported that the work on the dam went very well although the repairs required were more extensive than expected. Chair Helm wanted to express thanks to Mr. Lee for the work he did on the dam. Ms. Hallquist said Mr. Lee plans to do some work on the gate house with his crew, as well as the culvert in Elkins. She added that work on Lamson Lane was proceeding.

Ms. Hallquist said they are close to hiring a part-time employee for the Transfer Station and will be internally posting the full-time position soon. As of yet, they are not ready to be open on Sundays.

Ricia McMahon and Walter Baker, Selectmen from the Town of Sutton

Ms. McMahon and Mr. Baker met with the Board to request its support to request that the School Board include funding for the resource officer position in the operating budget. The resource officer will be assigned to the middle and high school in Sutton. Ms. McMahon noted that they are asking all seven boards in the district for this support and have already received letters of support.

Mr. Baker noted that they (Sutton Select Board) feel the position is badly needed. John Corbett, their Police Chief, said that there are weapons and drug issues in the schools, as well as bullying. If there is a police presence there, these things would be alleviated and the school environment would change for the better. The officer would be primarily based in the middle and high school but would go to the elementary schools to introduce themselves and make the children familiar with them.

Mr. Baker explained that the resource officer would be an officer hired by the school district but he/she would need to be sworn in by the Town of Sutton to be able to interact appropriately with the Sutton Police Department. He said Sutton does not want a fourth officer. They now have three full-time officers and part-timers that fill in their 21 shifts. This is strictly a school district resource officer. Ms. Kidder

asked if the person would be furloughed during the summer. Ms. McMahon said it is difficult to hire a full-time officer because they want a pension and benefits. The cruiser, uniform and gun would be made available from the Sutton Police Department at no cost to the district. In the summer the Town of Sutton would pick up the cost for two months that are not needed in the schools. This will only happen if they get the support from the other communities to have this position. Ms. McMahon noted that \$90,000 is the total amount being asked for the position.

Ms. McMahon observed that budget increases of \$32,000 to place monitors on the school busses, \$7,000 for parking lot monitors, and \$6,000 for after school classes might be avoided in the future with an officer on site to offer guidance and supervision of the students. She stressed that it is important to get this position as part of the operating budget, like all other positions, because people are less likely to vote yes on a warrant if they are not clear about the position.

Chair Helm wondered if the Sutton Police Department would have governance over the resource officer. Mr. Baker said they would only be sworn in with the Sutton Police Department so they could share information with them. Ms. McMahon said that a previous suggestion to use someone from the Sherriff's Department would not work because the district spans different counties. She said that several years ago, Chief Corbett was asked to serve as the Truant Officer and be the "face of the school." He has the responsibility to check out problems with children and families and figure out why kids are not attending school. The resource officer will need a supervisor to provide reports after actions or incidents, and to have support from a department if equipment is faulty or they need back-up. The school cannot be the governance over this law enforcement position.

Mr. Bianchi said he has gone to all the deliberative sessions. For five years (2009- 2013) the people in the district have voted this position down. If this was part of the operating budget, they would not be there now discussing it because the amount they are asking for is a drop in the bucket. Five years in a row people have voted against it and now they are trying to get it into the operating budget to get past the voice of the people. He had no doubt of the validity of the position, but as an elected official he felt he should not go against what the townspeople in his town had voted on. Ms. McMahon claimed that last year the warrant was confusing and people did not know which budget to vote for.

Ms. McMahon said they have applied for a grant for up to \$150,000 to go towards the Resource Officer position.

Mr. Bianchi thought it presumptuous to assume that people did not vote for the position for the past five years because they did not understand the warrant. He said it looks like since the voters voted it down five years in a row they were now trying to embed it into the budget so it would be harder to vote down.

Ms. McMahon hoped the leadership in the seven towns in the district will promote this position within their towns in an effort to get people on board with what they are trying to do.

Selectman Kidder thought it would be helpful if they could give them a plan of what the Resource Officer would be responsible for and what amounts towns would be responsible to pay. She would feel more comfortable supporting this effort if they had numbers to work with. Mr. Baker said the following night that information would be presented at the school board meeting. He felt they had to do what is necessary to get this position into the schools. He observed that he understood that information needs to get out so all voters know about the position and the importance of it, noting that last year it only passed in their town by one vote.

Ms. Hallquist noted that if the Board wanted to make a decision within the time period requested by Sutton, they could adjourn the current meeting and continue it after the school board meeting to be held the next evening, after hearing the details, and then make a decision afterwards. This would satisfy the notice requirements of RSA 91-A. Selectman Kidder didn't feel she could make a decision so quickly. Mr. Bianchi agreed. They would wait to make their decision on whether or not to support the Resource Officer position.

The Board continued the meeting in another meeting room, to allow the scheduled Conservation Commission to be held.

Committee Reports:

Selectman Kidder reported that a Recreation Commission meeting was held. Scott Blewitt has disposed of seven sunfish sailboats that are unusable, keeping the hardware that can be used on other boats. She noted that all is going well, and all programs are full.

Mr. Bianchi noted that at the most recent Planning Board meeting, there was a conceptual discussion for the Four Corners Brew Pub for an addition that they hope to get site plan approval for. That matter will be coming back before the Board for a public hearing for site plan approval.

Chair Helm asked that the interviews for the Police Chief candidates be started as soon as possible. Mr. Bianchi questioned when the new police cruiser would be marked. Ms. Hallquist noted that Chief Andersen has indicated that there was a delay due to some work needed on the cruiser, but she would follow-up to get a date for completion.

Application for Building Permit:

- Polly Wright, 227 Maple Lane (Map & Lot 139-004-000) build 30 x 30 storage barn – Permit #13-111 – approved.
- Peter & Deborah Stanley, 638 Burpee Hill Road (Map & Lot 056-006-000) convert garage attic window to access door – Permit #13-112 – Approved.
- John & Christa Hill, 10 Old Village Road (Map & Lot 059-039-000) build addition to existing garage – Permit #13-113 – Approved.
- Ruth Littlefield, 373 Pleasant St. (Map & Lot 061-005-000) demolish back deck – Permit #13-114 – Approved.

Application for sign permit:

- New London Outing Club, 2 signs at information booth – Monster Mash & Ski & Skate – Approved.
- First Baptist Church, 1 sign at church – Rummage Sale – approved
- Our Lady of Fatima – 2 signs, 1 at church, 1 at information booth – holiday fair – approved.
- St. Andrews Church – 1 sign at information booth – holiday fair – approved.

Application to use Town Commons:

- Allioop's Flowers & Gifts – Gathering of the Pumpkins – 10/31 3:30 – 8PM – approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- Eagle Scout Certificate
- Authorization for TCTC to be boat agent

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London