



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES November 26, 2012

### **PRESENT:**

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

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Carol Monroe, New Hampshire FastRoads  
John Wilson, Budget Committee member  
Jim Wheeler, Budget Committee Chair  
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*  
Minette Sweeney, *Intertown Record*  
Chad Denning, Recreation Director  
Richard Lee, Public Works Director  
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

Chair Bianchi called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

### Carol Monroe – New Hampshire FastRoads

Ms. Monroe said that the mission of the FastRoads organization is to bring high speed broadband to rural, predominately western, New Hampshire. A federal grant enables them to install fiber optic to municipalities, hospitals, and schools throughout 19 towns. By having the fiber optic available in these towns, it will allow the chance for competition among providers. New Hampshire Fast Roads is an open network provider so that all towns will have providers that can offer competitive pricing and quality no matter the size of the town. Ms. Monroe said that she had a connection agreement for the town buildings that she would like the Board to sign, as well as an agreement stating that the town would make some space available within an equipment closet to house the switch to keep the network connected between the neighboring towns and New London. There is no obligation on the part of the Town to maintain the switch, only to allow it to be installed in a secure town building. Ms. Monroe noted that they are nearing the end of the engineering phase of the project and they are required by the grant to have all connections completed by June 2013. Their engineers have already been to the hospital and the college to explain the program. Both entities are on board with the concept.

Ms. Kidder asked if there would be any cost to the Town for the hookup. Ms. Monroe said that at this time there was no cost. They are using a federal grant to do this work.

Ms. Helm wondered what the possible fees might be in the future. Ms. Monroe said that the fees would be up to whatever service providers come into town. New Hampshire Fast Roads is not a service provider but a facilitator of an open access network. She noted that they keep their wholesale rate as low as possible to keep future rates, charged by the various service providers, as low as possible.

Ms. Helm asked where the switch would go. Ms. Hallquist said one option is to locate it in the old court area in Whipple Hall where Mr. Denning is currently located. This area is near the P.D. which is manned 24/7 and there is more room available than at the Town Office. Ms. Monroe said that they need a small closet area and would need 24/7 access for maintenance of the switch. She stressed that FastRoads would incur all costs of installation and maintenance of the equipment. The only cost to the Town would be the very small expense of electricity.

Chair Bianchi noted that New London has fiber optic installed already in town and wondered why they would need FastRoads. He hasn't seen a big push to use the service in town currently and wasn't sure what the advantage of using FastRoads would be.

Ms. Monroe said that in conversations with Colby-Sawyer College and the hospital, they are looking for increased fiber optic capabilities to give them redundant access. These users are not unhappy with their current fiber connection except for the cost, but this will enable them to have a failover system. Also, this would open competition in the area to drive down prices and increase quality. In other towns this is also true; some parts of Keene and Hanover have fiber already but not throughout the entire town.

Chair Bianchi asked if the college had been approached to supply the space for the switch. Ms. Monroe said they have not asked the college to do this. If the college was the only entity in town that wanted the service, she would see how it would be appropriate to ask them to provide the space, but noted that it is more common to locate the equipment in municipal buildings. Chair Bianchi wondered why they have targeted the Town's infrastructure to house the switch. Ms. Monroe said they ask the Town because the service is for the good of the whole community and the anchor institutions within the town.

Ms. Helm said she has been contacted by people who have wanted more fiber optic in town. She understood that this would be an added service for those whom it is necessary and important. Ms. Monroe said their mission is to build out from these 19 towns into rural New Hampshire. Profits made from this program go towards building out.

Chair Bianchi asked if another wholesale provider came into town in another two years, what would happen. Ms. Monroe said there was nothing in the agreements preventing the Town from working with more than one wholesaler. The Town of New London would be funding the program that is being able to provide internet to rural New Hampshire where it is not currently available.

Ms. Helm asked Ms. Hallquist how the town government would benefit from having fiber optic through Fast Roads. Ms. Hallquist said that if they decide to offer cable TV over the internet and need a more sophisticated provider, it would be helpful to have options of service providers. The only area of concern she had was the potential of more groups like FastRoads coming into the town that might expect the Town to provide space in public buildings for their equipment as well. Ms. Monroe said that there are not really any other competitors out there and this project is possible only because of the Federal grant. This project should be thought of as aiding economic development. It will be especially helpful for big users like the hospital and the college. Although the town does not have an issue with their current service providers, perhaps the price could come down if Fast Roads is able to provide a way for competition to come in.

Ms. Monroe said that generally the agreement calls for a five-year commitment to allow the equipment in the town building, however adjustments to the agreement could be made to suit the needs of the town.

Ms. Monroe explained that the funds became available to do this work in July of 2010. At that time, past Town Administrator, Jessie Levine was part of the initiative. Since that time she hasn't been aware of any other entity that has come up with a similar program. There are three small towns that are not providing space for FastRoad equipment. These three towns are located near larger towns that are participating so it is not a problem keeping them connected without locating a switch in the town.

Chief Lyon asked that if the Town was to host the site for the switch, would it be possible for the Town buildings to receive a discount or trade-off for access to the service. Ms. Monroe said the trade-off is that they are not being charged for the connection. She explained that FastRoads is not a service provider so it would be up to the provider they choose to offer a discount. FastRoads cannot contractually work with a service provider and she cannot treat any service provider differently than another, by federal law. It is an open access network.

The Board of Selectmen agreed to take this information and discuss it. They will contact her when they have either signed the agreement or if they have further questions.

#### Recreation Department Budget – Chad Denning

The Board reviewed the FY2014 budget recommendation as submitted by Chad Denning, recreation Director. Pointing to "waterfront staff wages," Mr. Denning said that this past summer was an anomaly because there were no rain days. Generally, he factors in about seven rain days per summer and adjusts his budget to anticipate not having to pay lifeguard staff for that time. Because last summer had only two rain days, he spent more in lifeguards than he expected, leaving only about \$50 in the budget for lifeguard salaries to start next season (the budget ends on June 30). Mr. Denning explained that it costs about \$750/day to have lifeguards at the beaches. He would now like to add \$3,000 to his budget to factor in only 3 rain days for the season, instead of seven. He noted that he has decreased the computer line item by \$1,000 as it was for the purchase of a new computer, which he has received. Overall, his budget recommendation is up \$2,000 which is a 3% increase.

Chair Bianchi asked Mr. Denning about the number of days he anticipated having lifeguards at the beach. He found conflicting time spans when doing the math. Mr. Denning explained that there is a huge fluctuation of what the lifeguards are paid and so \$750/day is the average of what it costs to staff the beaches.

Chair Bianchi asked about the meals and travel line item. Mr. Denning said that he uses his own vehicle and submits bi-annual reimbursement requests. Meals are for when he is attending conferences or his lifeguards are attending trainings and are away from New London. Jamie Messer, a Town employee, bills the Town for the hours associated with the training of the lifeguards.

Chair Bianchi asked if they could be provided with a listing of the fees charged to the revolving account, as well as income paid to it. Mr. Denning said this was easy information to come up with and was happy to provide it. He said he also has a breakdown for all the programming they offered and how much money they brought in from each program. The programming has increased, as has the revenue coming into the revolving account. The expenses remain somewhat flat. He observed that if not for the revolving account, they would need to have a programming line item in the Recreation Department budget.

Mr. Denning noted that the winter farmer's market was a huge success with 16 vendors at Whipple Hall. The vendors have asked if they could do it once/month throughout the winter season.

Public Works Department Budget – Richard Lee

It was noted that the Public Works Department includes Highway Administration, Streets and Roads, Sewer, Sewer Collection and Disposal, Cemetery, and Transfer Station line items.

Chair Bianchi noted that they were working from the CIP from last year as the Planning Board was still working on the new one.

Ms. Kidder noted that “top coat for sidewalks” was listed in the budget and opined that many of the sidewalks are narrow. She wondered if they would be widening them. Mr. Lee said most of the sidewalks are wide enough but some have sunk and are uneven. There is money being put away in the capital reserve fund (CRF) to fix these in the future. This top coat is a maintenance issue to keep people from tripping on the sidewalks. There were several maintenance issues with sidewalks along Main Street that they will be taking care of. ADA requirements keep them to having less than half an inch between cracks which is almost impossible due to frost.

Chair Bianchi asked how the sidewalk line item compared with the amount in the CRF that has over \$85,000 in it. Mr. Lee said that that is a sidewalk reconstruction program to reconstruct existing sidewalks in town that need major work. He thought the \$85,000 was to go towards the Elkins project. The \$3,000 in his budget is just to maintain the sidewalks they have now; not for new sidewalks or reconstruction of sidewalks.

Chair Bianchi asked about upgrading gravel roads. They have \$59,000 in the line item and have spent under \$10,000. He noted that they have been getting some concerns and questions from people about paving gravel roads. Mr. Lee said that this money is meant for putting drainage in the gravel roads and putting stone on them. He has a \$9,500 bill coming from United for hammering some ledge this past summer. This fund is to help improve the gravel roads and has nothing to do with paving.

Chair Bianchi asked about Equipment Maintenance and Repair. He wondered about the split rail fence at Elkins. Mr. Lee said that the fence is being paid for out of “General Supplies.” This line item pays for paper towels, hand cleaners, the \$3,400 for the fence in Elkins, portable toilets, new trash cans at the beaches (\$300 each).

Chair Bianchi wondered about salt as he heard a statement that they came close to using it all last year. Mr. Lee said if they had a normal winter they would have come close to using it all. He noted that the price of salt has gone up so he recommends an increase in that line item. Chair Bianchi said it seems like they are over-budgeting sand and salt. He noted previous years that the funds had not been used at more than 65%. Mr. Lee said he uses a five-year average to make his budget. The last winter was atypical and he did not think it appropriate to budget the same of what they used last year because that kind of winter probably would not occur again. Mr. Lee said that the fiscal year change has made him have to view his budget differently. For example, he cannot use the summer paving budget to supplement the expenditures needed for salt and sand during the winter because with the July 1 – June 30 fiscal year budgeting he uses the summer road paving budget before the winter road maintenance budget, not after as the former Jan to Dec budget allowed.

Mr. Lee said he would like to put an ad out that lets people know that some roads will be snow-covered and slippery because they are trying to save money and cannot plow for every little storm. If they warn people about their new winter policy, it might help with the number of calls they get. They have to try and make up for that fifth person and keep costs down. Chair Bianchi noted that the State of Vermont issued a statement to let people know that they should drive with common sense in snow-covered roads as it is impossible to plow for every small snow-fall. Mr. Lee suggested that the other road agents get together to

put an ad in the shopper to urge people to check their tires as worn tires do not work well in the snow. Tires that may have passed inspection in June may need replacing in January.

Ms. Kidder asked about a truck that is to be replaced at the Transfer Station under "Highway Equipment." Mr. Lee said that they are due to replace the tractor they use to haul the trash trailers to Meredith. The tractor also has to drive to Claremont for service and inspections of the trailers. The tractor has a 12-year lifecycle and has close to half a million miles on it. It had 400,000 miles on it when they purchased it. Mr. Lee has been told that for \$85,000 he could get a used truck with 200,000 - 300,000 miles on it.

Chair Bianchi asked Mr. Lee if he had compared the man hours needed to have the truck driven back and forth, fuel and wear and tear on the truck with having someone else haul with their own tractor. Mr. Lee said he has not done a detailed comparison. He did do a comparison like this when they bought the original tractor and it was found that they would pay about half as much to do it on their own than to have Gobin haul their trash. Mr. Lee also pointed out that having the truck available on-site is beneficial because containers can be moved quickly, which, in the event of a fire, could save the building since the container could be moved out immediately. Chair Bianchi said he would like to see a comparison between what it would cost the Town to do the haul and someone else to do it. He was concerned with the wear and tear on the vehicle.

Chair Bianchi said paving/shimming/grinding was something Mr. Lee had some new ideas about and he invited him to elaborate. Mr. Lee explained that \$185,000 is what he requests to grind, pave and shim each year. His department's efforts at shimming is not keeping up with what they should be maintaining so he would like to go into a maintenance mode. Some drainage work is needed on paved roads and the worst roads have been ground up and paved. There are a lot of roads that have wheel ruts on them that need to be repaired. By combining the shimming and paving lines, he could reduce the appropriation to \$229,000. This will allow them to shim about 3.5 miles of road each year. He estimates the town has about 15 miles of road that could stand to be shimmed. Mr. Lee would like to maintain what they have instead of paving new roads. They will still do the grinding and paving of the section in Elkins they are going to do as part of the Elkins Transportation project. Chair Bianchi agreed they should do more shimming. Mr. Bianchi asked if there was a priority list of roads that needed shimming. Mr. Lee said he did not have a written list but could come up with one easily. He said he could also take some pictures of the roads to show their condition.

Mr. Wheeler wondered if a more elaborate shimming program would enable them to price shop better or if they would go with Continental still. Mr. Lee said they would go out to bid. He is leery about companies that give a low bid and then subcontract everything out to multiple contractors and things do not work as seamlessly as they should.

With regards to trash, Mr. Lee does not anticipate the tipping fees increasing.

Chair Bianchi noted that the increases in the Public Works Department were minimal.

Chair Bianchi noted that next year is the scheduled lake draw-down and that they would need to address the boat launch. Mr. Lee said they are trying to figure this out and hoped to speak with someone who has worked with other towns on designs and permitting. He thought he might be able to come up with \$3,000 - \$5,000 out of his budget to address this. Chair Bianchi said that he would feel comfortable adding a line item to the budget so Mr. Lee would not have to come up with the money from his current budget. Chief Lyon noted that a water supply in the boat launch area would be extremely helpful. In the winter months, water supply for fighting fires is a big issue in Elkins when they need to draft water from the lake.

Ms. Helm said she recalled talking about hiring a building maintenance person for the Town and thought they would talk to Mr. Lee about it. It was suggested that Mr. Lee could come back in to discuss this when they talk about town buildings in the budget process.

Mr. Lee requested direction from the Board on how the Town should handle brush given that it appears that the disposal site used in the past few years may not be as dependable as he had hoped. He explained that burning brush is not an easy solution. Burning will require state and local permits, a pit big enough to contain the brush, and a water supply to put the fire out before leaving for the day as well as restrictions on how many days the town can burn. He also reminded the Board that in the past there have been complaints from neighbors regarding the smoke from the burning. Chair Bianchi asked Mr. Lee if he had looked at someone coming in with a chipper instead of burning. Mr. Lee noted that he did not, but will look into it. Mr. Lee suggested that as they think of how the town will handle brush, they should also include a discussion of whether to continue to take commercial brush or just accept brush from residents.

Ms. Helm asked if Mr. Lee knew of anyone else who would take the brush. Mr. Lee said there was not any place that was close. The power plant in Springfield was convenient but they have had to stop taking chips (from the brush) because they became inundated.

Mr. Lee said he would put some numbers together to analyze the options for brush disposal.

#### Review of Minutes

**IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of November 13, 2012 as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of November 19, 2012 as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### Committee Reports

Planning Board Meeting - November 13, 2012. Ms. Helm noted that Lucy St. John is doing a fabulous job in her role as the Planning & Zoning Administrator. She reviewed some of the issues discussed at the last Planning Board meeting including a continuance of a tree-cutting request on Lamson Lane,; the there was a lengthy discussion on the Messer minor subdivision and boundary line adjustment; Crosspoint Associates came to discuss a building permit to change the front of the liquor store at the New London Shopping Center; and Colby-Sawyer College came to talk about the installation of a wind turbine on campus. The company slated to install the turbine said they would put up a balloon test so people could have a visual of about how high it would be. Ms. Helm, Ms. Hallquist and Ms. St. John went to observe the balloon test.

#### Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

November 26, 4pm - Kearsarge Learning Center

The Board of Selectmen and the 1941 Building Committee will present the Town's proposal to acquire the 1941 building to the school board.

November 28 at 6pm - Employee Personnel Policy Committee Meeting

The committee will report on its review of the town's personnel policy.

December 1 at 7:30am – CAC Meeting

December 10 – Board of Selectmen's Meeting – Police and Fire Department budgets will be reviewed.

#### Other Business

Chair Bianchi said that while he is on the Budget Committee as a voting member, he intends to cast his vote in the way the majority of the Board votes, even if he did not vote in the majority. He will not

indicate how the vote went during the selectmen's deliberations unless asked, but will instead advocate for the position as voted by the Board.

Holiday Employee Bonuses

Ms. Johnson noted that it has been a tradition to give employees a holiday bonus check and asked if the Board would authorize the checks this year. They budget for it and it is part of the Board of Selectmen's Discretionary Fund. Full-time employees receive \$100 and part-time receive \$50. The total is \$7,058.

**IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to allocate \$7,058 out of the discretionary fund, as proposed by Wendy Johnson, to be given to employees for holiday bonuses. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Application for Building Permit:

- Connor & Courtney Theroux, 33 Burpee Hill Road (082-014-000) remove three-season porch & rebuild into enclosed living area – Permit #12-119 – Approved.

Application for sign permits:

- Wilmot Community Center – sign at information booth – Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 Holiday fair – Approved.

Application to use town commons:

- Center for the Arts & Kearsarge Community Band – winter sing a long – 12/7/12 5:00- 7:00 PM – approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:06am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, recording Secretary  
Town of New London