



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 27, 2014

PRESENT:

Tina Helm, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Donna Larrow, Administrative Assistant, New London Police Department
Bruce Hudson & Renate Kannler, New London residents
Vahan Sarkisian, New London resident
Frank Anzalone, Jim Wheeler, Bruce Parsons; Buildings Committee members
Sean Carroll, *Intertown Record*
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Peter Ruth, New London resident
Bill Granger, Facilities Manager

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Buildings Committee: Frank Anzalone, Bruce Parsons, Jim Wheeler; Bill Granger, Facilities Manager

Mr. Parsons informed the Board that the Committee feels that an evaluation of the HVAC systems in Whipple Hall should be conducted. He explained that their goal is to get heat where it needs to be and to be able to provide hot water in the showers for the Police Department. Currently, the hot water in the showers is water that runs through the boiler. Upon approval of the evaluation, contractors will come in to make the systems operational. Mr. Anzalone said there are rooms at Whipple Hall that can't get up to 55 degrees, the boiler is always running, and there is electric heat in some places. Mr. Parsons said the furnace, itself, is probably OK but the system is not. There are attic HVAC units and duct work that need to be evaluated. It has been pieced together bit by bit and is not working.

The committee secured a proposal from Doug Wait, who has also worked with the Town on evaluating and updating the Library. The cost for the study and oversight of the project is \$2,800. The evaluation will give a comprehensive report with action plans on what needs to be done going forward. Mr. Wait would be in charge of bringing in contractors and working with them.

Mr. Parsons said he wouldn't be shocked to see this HVAC project cost the Town as much as \$100,000.

It was noted that the building still leaks when it rains and there are other problems with the building. Perhaps a phase two of this project could be to address these other issues. It was confirmed that when the report from Mr. Wait is complete, they would be ready to go to bid. Chair Helm said she thought the buildings committee's focus was taking inventory of the Town's building and preparing a priority list of everything that needed to be done, and would not focus on one project at a time. She anticipated a list to prioritize. Mr. Wheeler said they agreed to evaluate all the buildings the Town owns in terms of their ongoing maintenance and current status but they are doing it in a triage format. The gazebo came first because it was in very bad shape. They looked at the Academy Building next, to study the roof with the architect. The third building they are looking at is Whipple Hall, and they were all quite surprised as to its state of disrepair. Mr. Wheeler advised that it will likely be a significant amount of money to fix all the problems they have found. Beyond Whipple Hall they haven't identified anything further that looks to be in a state of total disrepair. Chair Helm noted the rot outside of the Academy Building is of significant concern to her. Mr. Anzalone said this rot has been identified by the committee.

Chair Helm asked if money for the HVAC repair was available in the Capital Improvement Fund. Ms. Johnson said they have \$88,000 in that fund this year. With regards to the other problems within the building, it was noted that a similar study would need to be done with an architect and/or engineer to study the entire building and create a plan for upgrade and repair. Selectman Kidder said that this concerned her. They thought the library was being done correctly in 1990; that wasn't the case. They thought the addition to the Town Hall was done correctly; that wasn't the case either.

Chair Helm thought they should approve the \$2,800 for the initial analysis of the HVAC systems with the full disclosure that they will have to take the next step. Perhaps the next step will need to be staggered. Mr. Parsons agreed but said he didn't know how many phases they could include with the HVAC portion as it will mostly need to be done at once. The other things that need repair may be able to be done in phases.

Selectman Bianchi wondered how long it would take to get the report from Mr. Wait. Mr. Parsons estimated it will take 6-8 weeks. Selectman Bianchi said he is thinking that budget-wise, they may be able to bump up the funding in the capital reserves. He would like to see this done as soon as possible and wanted to get a range of the price to help them with budgeting and to be able to explain the expenses at Town Meeting. Mr. Wheeler said they gave Ms. Hallquist the proposal a few weeks ago and it has been in the Selectmen's hands. He noted that they were at the meeting that night to get the project moving.

Chair Helm asked for remarks from the audience. Mr. Sarkisian said if they are having the mechanical systems looked at why don't they do an analysis of the whole building at the same time. He noted that they do everything piecemeal in New London and after a while, the systems

don't work. Mr. Parsons said they could certainly move forward with a proposal from an engineer/architect to see what they'll charge to do a study.

Mr. Wheeler asked if they did an envelope study (minus the mechanical study) would they need to go through a bidding process or could the Selectmen appoint someone? Chair Helm was not sure but thought it made sense to consider the whole picture and not just the HVAC systems. Mr. Parsons offered that Ms. Hallquist approved Mr. Wait coming to look through Whipple Hall as long as it didn't cost the Town anything. They could do the same with engineers/architects who could come in and do a detailed study. Chair Helm said she would be in favor of this.

Ms. Kannler thought it would be good to bring the whole cost to the Town before moving on to another project so they could support or approve it moving forward. Selectman Bianchi said it was a timing issue with budgeting, but they wanted to get the ball rolling. He guessed that it wouldn't be a project that would be budgeted for and completed this year.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve \$2,800 for Doug Wait to conduct a study of Whipple Hall as detailed in his proposal to the Board.

It was noted that Facilities Manager, Bill Granger, would turn over the bids and schedule the contractors.

Mr. Anzalone asked if they could move forward sooner than later on getting hot water for the police department as they are currently showering in boiler water. The Selectmen were all in favor of this.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Helm said she would like the Selectmen to direct the building committee to move forward with finding an architect to proceed with the evaluation of the structural needs of Whipple Hall. Chair Helm's colleagues agreed with this notion.

Mr. Wheeler said they had hoped to have numbers to them sooner, but projects have been taking longer than anticipated. He observed that considering the state of the Town's buildings, it is likely that repairs will translate into quite a lot of money; he estimated it to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix what they already own. Mr. Parsons thought it would be good to review the assessed value for the buildings. Industry standard says 2-4% should be saved each year for maintenance of buildings. He thought they'd be shocked at the amount they should be putting away.

Chair Helm wondered whose responsibility it was to make sure the measuring device had been put in the attic of the Academy Building per suggestion of the engineer that studied the roof issues. Mr. Wheeler said before winter and snow fell, they were supposed to get it in the attic. He thought perhaps it was the responsibility of the Town Administrator to make sure this was done. It was noted that the engineer had not seen any alarming signs with the roof at the Academy

Building and even if there was some work that needed to be done, it wouldn't be at a substantial cost.

Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector – Budget Request

Ms. Hardy said she wasn't requesting anything additional and the only increase requested is due to it being an election year. The budget for elections is higher every even year and lower every odd year. They will have four elections this year and her budget is probably going to be over, due to the unexpected primary (to fill the seat held by Ray Burton) they had in January. They'll also have to pay for programming the machine for the state portion for the school election in March. Ms. Hardy noted that she had lowered her budget quite a bit by replacing her retired full-time deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector with a part-time employee.

Chair Helm noted that elections food and supplies went up. Ms. Hardy said 2013 was the last election year cycle and they spent \$1,289 but had budgeted for just \$825. This fund pays for food for those who work at the election. Some of the \$1,289 is reimbursed by the school and goes into the general fund. She doesn't want unhappy ballot clerks/workers but food costs a lot. Most of them get paid \$20 for their time.

Chair Helm asked about the "Cloud" software. Ms. Hardy said there is now a button on the Town's website that says people can pay their bills online. She installed the button and linked it to the site herself. They are randomly selecting parcels to make sure they are coming up correctly. Ms. Hardy said she plans to do some marketing to promote this option in a couple of weeks, once the bugs are identified and taken care of. Users can create an account and see property tax history, open bills, sign up for reminder emails (as many as three per quarter), set up reoccurring payments, and pay motor-vehicle registrations for the current month. There is a fee to pay online, which is 2.95%. To use a credit card at the office, it costs 3.25%. To pay by e-check online it is just an extra \$.40. Of course, dropping it off in person at the office is free.

Chair Helm wondered how this information would be spread to the citizens. Ms. Hardy said the Invoice Cloud company has a marketing package that they can personalize to send to local papers, it will go on the website, and the next set of bills that go out will also have a note on them. She hoped miscellaneous bills (dog licenses for example) could soon be paid online as well.

Richard Lee, Public Works Director – Budget Request

Mr. Lee said uniform companies have pitted against each other and the Town has benefited by getting considerably reduced fees. He has added \$600 to the highways and streets line item for shimming and paving. Equipment repair has dropped by \$5,000 as it is costing less to repair things. General equipment and supplies was reduced because they won't need to purchase garbage bins at Bucklin beach this summer. The Grader expense has gone down by \$2,000. All in all, the highways and streets fund is up \$300 total.

Under the Transfer Station budget, Mr. Lee said the fee for grinding brush would be going up to \$20,000 which is an increase of \$16,000. They anticipate five days of grinding at \$4,000/day. Several companies he has researched charge this amount per day. Mr. Lee clarified that the

reason they have to grind their own brush is due to the quarantine put in place by the State for Merrimack County to ensure that the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle, an invasive species, does not spread outside of the County. The town used to bring brush to a facility in Sullivan County, which is no longer possible. Until further notice, the Town will need to dispose of its brush by engaging brush grinding services.

Sewer

Mr. Lee said General supplies had dropped a bit and sewage collection/disposal was up \$200. Testing of effluent is done twice/month and is costing more because they have had to find a new testing lab and it is more expensive than the previous facility (in Franklin). Equipment Maintenance is up a bit for repairs that need to be done to the generator.

In total, the sewage budget is up \$5,200.

Cemeteries

Mr. Lee said equipment maintenance was down \$6,800 as the lawnmowers had been purchased the year before.

Solid Waste Day Expense

Mr. Lee said this expense was down \$3,000 as this is an event the town participates in every-other-year. The money budgeted this year will allow the town to participate in a waste day arranged by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region Planning Commission.

Emergency Management

Mr. Lee said the generators at the Fire Station, Police Department, and the Town Office need radiator work as they are leaking two quarts of water every three months. If the water gets low enough, sensors go off and the generators will shut down. The estimate to fix the generators is \$8,000. Two to three years down the road he believed this repair would need to be done again. Mr. Lee noted that Caterpillar comes in once per year to service all the generators in town.

Capital Outlay

Highway Equipment

Mr. Lee said they need a new trash trailer, which they planned on being aluminum. They have had to patch the steel one once and it still needs more work. This replacement is coming two years before they had planned but they are not replacing a dump truck this year. The new trailer will be larger than the current one, which means they anticipate cutting down the loads driven to Meredith by 5-6 loads/year.

Mr. Lee said it would cost \$31,000 to repair their fifth spare truck they are not replacing. This was a vehicle that was not needed, as it was meant for a position that wasn't being filled. The body of the spare truck is combination sander/dump truck and is in bad shape.

Mr. Lee said it would be \$85,000 to do some work on the garage. They want to tear some walls out, get rid of the formaldehyde foam insulation (which is no longer legal to use and is also not efficient), to put new windows in, do some re-wiring, and repair the floor in the bays that have

cracks and have hollow spots in parts. They have been putting money away for these anticipated repairs.

Wastewater

Mr. Lee said money was put away to replace the controls at the Job Seamans Road pump station. The controls are still in good shape and a company has come in to verify this. He would like to take \$25,000 and put a small building over the High Pine pumping station. This station is in the ground and the controls are down one floor. They should have two people there to do readings because it is a confined space. It is damp and they have a dehumidifier going there. He recommended that the control units be moved up into the ground-level building to avoid this moisture problem which is causing damage to controls. Overall, the budget for this project is estimated at \$15,000 total.

Chair Helm asked about the Sunday dump hours. Mr. Lee said it is quiet during the winter (25 cars were there the past Sunday) but he thought it would be much busier during the summer months.

Mr. Lee said they have spent almost the same amount for salt and sand this year so far, as was spent for the entire winter season last year. They are getting close to their limits for funding on sand and salt. They are locked into a contract through the State and so the prices will not go up if they need more.

Selectman Kidder asked if the Highway Department cleaned out the culverts on every street. Mr. Lee said they monitor them and make sure to clean out turn-outs and culverts that are common problems. He explained that they check on the culverts all the time as it is easier to monitor and maintain them than to blast ice or dig them out when flooded.

Mr. Lee noted that the work on Lamson Lane is complete.

Selectman Kidder asked if Mr. Lee thought enough money was being put away to take care of the lagoons. Mr. Lee said this has been a discussion for a long time. They have been given two options by the State to close the lagoons but they are not after the Town to close them right away. He thought there might be enough money in the fund now to do the job but wasn't positive. It was something they should get done before the State comes and demands that it be done. If they have a very dry summer that would be a good time to come in and have someone with a vacuum truck clean out the lagoons and dispose of the liquid. They could then fill in the lagoons and cover them. State permission is needed to do this. It was noted that \$41,489 was in the account for this project at the moment.

Minutes of the previous Selectmen's meeting will be reviewed the following week.

Other Business

Peter Ruth, a resident of New London, informed the Board that he read the minutes of the January 22nd meeting and thought the community center project could be expensive using an old school building. He thought it could be a dark financial hole. Mr. Ruth opined that the Selectmen

should exercise some caution especially considering the buildings New London already has to take care of. He thought it would be good for the community center to be a regional or state facility that would spread out the liabilities.

Chair Helm thanked Mr. Ruth for his input and said they valued citizen input.

Upcoming Meetings

Planning Board: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7:00pm (Work session on zoning amendments)

Selectmen's Meeting: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 at 8:00am

Community Advisory Committee: Saturday, February 1, 2014 at 7:30am

Selectmen's Meeting: Thursday, February 6 at 6pm OR Friday, February 7 at 8:00am (TBD)

Other Business

Selectman Bianchi noted that it is his understanding that there are two sewer pumping stations that are owned by the Town, however they are not maintained by the Town, but instead by the Homan family. If owned by the Town, they must be included on the town's insurance. He noted that this issue will be investigated further.

Chair Helm thought there should be Selectmen representation at the meetings regarding the 1941 building lease.

Application for Building Permit:

- Paul Feinberg (059-008-000) Colonial Plaza – Nonni's Restaurant Space – Interior Renovations – Approved.

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

- Center for the Arts – Friday, September 5, 2014, 3-8pm

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn the meeting.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

