



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 7, 2013

### PRESENT:

Selectmen  
Peter Bianchi, Chair  
Tina Helm, Selectman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

### ALSO PRESENT:

Jim Wheeler, Budget Committee Chair  
Doug Homan, Budget Committee  
John Wilson, Budget Committee  
Richard Lee, Public Works Director  
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief  
Sandra Licks, Library Director  
Bob Bowers, Library Trustee  
Nancy Friese, COA  
Hardy Hasenfuss, COA  
Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair  
Lee Bosse, *The Messenger*  
Merry Armentrout, *the InterTown Record*  
June Fichter, Lake Sunapee Protective Association

Chair Bianchi called the meeting to order at 8:30am. He said there would be several presentations made by various groups that day in preparation for budget discussions.

### Jim Wheeler – Budget Committee Chair

Mr. Wheeler met with the Board to present a study that he and Budget Committee member John Wilson prepared entitled: “3 Year Projection of Probable Non-Discretionary Unbudgeted Town Expenses.” He noted that he consulted with Wendy Johnson (Finance Officer) who offered suggestions for a few adjustments which he noted were helpful. The purpose of conducting the study was educational in nature, to get an idea of budgeting issues that the town will be facing in the coming years. Based on expenditures and appropriations the Town is committed to already, he predicted that the Town will see their overall tax rate (including the school and county) going up 20% over the next three years. This is before adding any additional dollars to the operating budget and it assumes that the Grand List stays level. Mr. Wheeler noted that submission of the study to the Board is meant to add perspective to their current budgeting season. Mr. Wilson pointed out that this study did not take into account the 1941 building.

Mr. Wheeler said he would like to go into more detail about the study with the Board of Selectmen when time allows. Ms. Helm thanked Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Wilson for their hard work on the study and noted that she has two pages of notes on the study and she looks forward to discussing the information with them further.

Council on Aging – Nancy Friese

Ms. Friese met with the Board to discuss her organization's request for funding in the next budget.

In support of the request, Ms. Friese offered a presentation to the Board that explained the scope of what they do at the Council on Aging (COA). Among other things, they offer information to seniors about finances, senior housing, and other topics of interest, they have a "fix-it" program where volunteers go into seniors' homes to help make small repairs and help out with other odd jobs. COA has specialists who come in to distribute information on such things as long-term care. They provide mobility equipment to seniors at no charge. They are the official warming and cooling center for the area and have put a generator in at their location for this purpose. Ms. Friese said she is a member of the Emergency Management Committee. COA offers a luncheon at the Bittersweet senior housing facility once per month. They have a book and yard sale each year, a foot-care clinic three times/month, a blood-pressure clinic, and a Parkinson's Support Group. They also offer wellness and socialization activities. They have had a good response from the local business sponsors this year, which helps with their budgeting and payroll.

Ms. Friese said it has been five years since there has been a change in their last request. Recently, they have had to do more background checking for those requesting and offering rides. The coordination of some of the rides is difficult as some destinations are unique and the drivers need to be aware of sensitive situations and must be able to assist riders to their destinations.

Ms. Friese said that COA is like an insurance policy for the town. They manage volunteers to help its older residents be able to get to things such as dialysis and other medical appointments. People know that COA is respectful and confidential and seniors can trust them.

In 2011 participation was over 25,000. New London makes up about half of the participation. Given the demographics of the Town of New London, they can predict a dramatic increase in the need for services in the coming years. The total mileage driven was 52,000 last year. A majority of this mileage is due to those needing rides to dialysis. Between 2010 and 2011, New London increased their ride needs by 200 rides.

While the ride program is made up of volunteers, it does cost COA to run it. The Community Transportation Association values volunteer rides at \$2.54/mile. Volunteers are not paid to drive and those needing rides are not charged any fees. Ms. Helm said that she is a volunteer driver and some of those she has driven have sent donations in to COA because they are so appreciative. Ms. Friese said they do not charge riders because if they start charging a fee for a service, the seniors view that as paying into the organization and will be unlikely to donate when more funds are needed. Instead, COA asks people to voluntarily donate to help meet the organization's financial needs and people are more willing to send money in. Since their last increase, they have seen a 66% increase in rides through 2011.

Ms. Friese explained that the use of volunteers is the only way they can keep providing the services they do with the budget they have. In 2011 they had 10,000 volunteer hours, which is an estimated value of \$200,000. She noted that participation at COA has increased over 100% from 2006 to 2011.

Ms. Friese said that COA owns their building, which helps keep costs low. They limit their staff to two paid employees and they spend conservatively. It was a request from the Budget Committee in years past that COA increase their fundraising, which they have done. The requested town contribution is up 33% this year and their budgeted expenses are up 89%. They have increased personnel and fundraising costs, and they have added a Capital Improvement Program since their last increase. They have had to do some major work on rot and window problems in their building. Overall, they are doing a huge amount of work for just \$199,000 per year.

Ms. Helm asked if there were other revenue sources available to COA, such as The United Way. Ms. Friese said that they do not receive money from United Way. She explained that they have never set themselves up that way to accept funding from United Way as once they do, they lose control over who they can provide their services to. There is also a lot of record-keeping necessary to keep track of the outside funding, which could perhaps cause the need to hire more staff.

Chair Bianchi noted that for the past five years, the request from COA has been \$20,000. This year they are requesting \$35,000.

Ms. Helm asked if COA works with other mental health agencies in the area. Ms. Friese said that these agencies call them directly and ask for their help to transport people. She has had an increase in these requests in the area and in the Concord area as well. The right driver has to be matched with the rider, and this takes time and planning.

Mr. Homan wondered what COA's position was on the 1941 building. Mr. Hasenfuss said they could not commit to a specific level of use or financial contribution, but as they increase their services they will be interested in available space at the 1941 building. He noted the importance for seniors to have regular interaction with others and by sharing a meal, this can be accomplished, so the 1941 project is of great interest to them. He said that some Senior Centers offer lunch every day. Mr. Hasenfuss said they would like additional space for meetings and the activities they have going on. They are very supportive of the town looking at the building and supporting their effort in attaining it.

Mr. Wheeler asked what population figures for New London they were basing the usage on. They are not using the population of the town, but instead the percentage of total membership and participation. Mr. Wheeler said it looked like their fundraising was \$24,000 but the cost to fundraise was \$19,000. Ms. Friese said she did not think that was accurate information and could get better numbers to him.

Chair Bianchi said people should think about what would happen if COA were to close the next day. What would happen to the services they provide, and how much would the town have to pay to serve the population?

Ms. Friese felt that the volunteers help aid to the sense of community in the town.

Tracy Memorial Library – Sandra Licks and Bob Bowers

Mr. Bowers said they were present to answer some questions the Selectmen had. There was some question about the numbers of computers at the library. Half of the computers are reserved for public-access. Five are related to the circulation desk. Three are dedicated to staff. They do not feel that these are computers that can be removed. Mr. Bowers observed that there does not appear to be any savings in getting rid of a computer except for minimal electricity and future replacement costs. However, they intend to keep an eye out for ways they can save in this regard.

Mr. Bowers said the Board of Selectmen had a question about the clearing of snow. The Library used to employ Ray Heath to mow and shovel and take care of various things in the library. When Mr. Heath retired, they decided to join the Town's mowing and cleaning efforts. When Mr. Heath retired, they realized a reduction of \$50,000. Snow shoveling is difficult because while the Public Works Department takes care of plowing, they still need someone to shovel the walkways and the emergency exits. They have had to hire out for this work.

Mr. Bowers said that there is money requested for professional fees and meetings and mileage associated with it. They are hesitant to cut that from the budget; they would like their professional staff have professional training. Mileage is tied to these trainings. Additionally, Kathy Tracy is being paid mileage for her to attend meetings for her professional affiliation, which is a benefit to the library so they feel it is appropriate to pay.

\$2,000 is the portion of the cleaning contract devoted to snow removal. This equates to 30 visits per season. Ms. Kidder felt this was high. She wondered if they had explored other avenues or people who could do this work. Ms. Licks said that this is through the Town's cleaning contract.

Ms. Helm wondered if it was possible to use the computer to update professional affiliations. Ms. Licks said that there were some webinars available.

Conservation Commission – Bob Brown

Mr. Brown said he would like to discuss the operating budget and the Land Acquisition Fund. Chair Bianchi said that it looked like the budget was up about \$200. He asked about Stewardship for Conservation Easements. Mr. Brown said that is the contribution made to the organization that is going to own the easement. It is a stewardship contribution and there is one easement on the back burner right now. The acquisitions seem to take a long time but they need to be prepared for these expenses.

Mr. Brown said that with regard to the rest of the budget, things are pretty level. The biggest expense is trail maintenance items and lumber. They buy the lumber ahead of time and let it dry so it is lighter to carry to its destination.

Mr. Brown said that all of their volunteer work is strictly volunteer and is not paid. They have hired a summer person for the last two years to help with trail maintenance. They pay the intern \$10/hour for 240 hours of work. He identified that volunteer labor is a problem. Most of those who can help are 70 years old or older and this is very physical work. They have worked with the Merrimack County Department of Corrections several times in the summer and fall and there is no cost to the town for this work. The only person they pay is the intern in the summer.

Mr. Wheeler asked if they foresee making an acquisition in the next three years. Mr. Brown said that he did. He said that when they look at the mission of the Conservation Commission, they are charged with seven key points in an effort to conserve land in New London. It is recommended that a municipality conserve or set aside 25% of their land mass in conservation or some type of conservation. They are at 17-18% in New London. Surrounding towns have more conserved land than New London does. Some of the other towns have a State park, which increases their conserved land totals; New London does not. The Conservation Commission has a list of 40 parcels that are of major interest for preservation and are outlined in the 2011 master plan. With regards to the Land Acquisition fund that started in 2003, Mr. Brown explained its history. The fund was funded for two years at \$75,000 per year. Then it was decided that \$75,000 was not enough and it was increased to \$150,000 for both 2005 and 2006. In 2007, 2008, the number went down to \$50,000. Over that period of six years, the average contribution averaged \$91,000 per year to conserve important lands. In 2009 because of the downturn in the economy, it was suggested to the Conservation Commission that they not ask for a contribution with the understanding that this was a one-year suggestion. In 2010 they were again told that they should ask for \$0, which the Conservation Commission felt was unfair. After failed negotiations, a petition was brought forth at Town Meeting asking for \$25,000 which was approved by about 75% of the voters. In 2011 the contribution was back to zero. In 2012 they negotiated a \$10,000 contribution and for FY2013 there was no contribution. The last five years they have funded an average of just \$7,000 per year which does not seem like a very serious commitment to conserving land. This year the Conservation Commission felt it important to get back on track. After discussion between the Commission members, they agreed to request \$25,000 and not the \$12,500 recommended in the CIP. They feel that this is an appropriate number considering they have over 40 properties on their desirable list. There are a few properties that they hope to acquire in the next year. They would try to acquire properties in conjunction with other agencies in an effort to keep the cost low.

Ms. Kidder asked how much money they had in the account currently. Chair Bianchi said it is approximately \$429,000. Ms. Kidder asked if land that is conserved is removed from the tax roll. Mr. Brown said that if a private individual owns the conserved land it remains taxable, however at a lower taxable value. If the conserved land is owned by the town, it is not taxable even before the conservation easement.

Mr. Brown said they have a desirable list of parcels. Some of them will probably never come to fruition. Others are more likely to happen at some point. They have to be prepared to be able to purchase a property as it is hard to determine when something will become available. He noted that their goal was to reach \$500,000 in the Land Acquisition Fund. They decided on this number by looking at the assessed value of the properties on their list of desirable properties, which came to over \$16 million dollars. Properties are very expensive and they plan to partner with other protective associations and private citizens to make purchases. One property that is near the top of their desirable land list may become available soon. It was noted that the Land Acquisition Fund was only expendable through a vote at Town Meeting.

Mr. Wheeler agreed that Mr. Brown's numbers were accurate. They had a discussion at the CIP meeting about the amount the Conservation Commission would ask for, which was \$12,500. Since taxpayers have to look at a purchase and judge if it is worth spending money on or not, it is a positive for the Conservation Commission if they already have the money in an account, rather than having to raise more money through taxes. The CIP level decision was that they kept it at \$12,500. Mr. Wheeler said he understood that the Commission must have decided that they did not feel \$12,500 was enough. Mr. Brown agreed that this was the case.

#### Public Works Department – Richard Lee

Chair Bianchi asked Mr. Lee about the cemetery account. There was a question about the type of mowers he wanted to purchase and whether or not a zero turn mower would be more cost effective. Mr. Lee said that he had gotten a price for the zero turn mowers with a maximum of a 42" deck to be able to get around the stones in the cemetery. They used to try to get more than two years out of the mowers and would end up with dead mowers in the middle of the summer. They now replace them every two years and prefer to get John Deere mowers at \$1,500 each. He thought that it would cost about the same per year if they purchase the zero turn mowers that should last longer but cost more, versus buying the John Deere mowers they currently do.

Mr. Homan said the savings would be in labor and fuel by using the zero turn mowers. The purchase price of the mowers is similar considering the life span of them. Chair Bianchi wondered if Mr. Lee thought it would be a good idea to purchase one zero turn mower and one John Deere mower to see if they can realize a savings from fuel and labor. Mr. Lee said he did not have a problem trying this.

Mr. Homan asked if it was part-time labor using the mowers. Mr. Lee said that it is part and full-time labor. They may save labor on mowing but there is always something else the employees can work on.

Mr. Wheeler asked how Mr. Lee saw his summer labor source and if less mowing hours would free up an employee. Mr. Lee said he was not looking to hire another part-time employee and did not think the mowing time would be decreased by more than 10% with zero turn mowers.

Chair Bianchi asked for the cost comparison to haul their transfer station trailers to Meredith. He said that this discussion is not aimed at ways to eliminate an employee. He said that he spoke with Shawn Carroll of Carroll Concrete about how they decide whether to invest in owning

equipment and Mr. Carroll indicated that if they can't justify a minimum of 30 hours per week for a piece of equipment, it is not economically feasible for them to own it. New London uses their truck for about 11 hours per week, traveling from New London to Meredith. If the town subs the work out, it would free up someone 11 hours per week, when they are not on the road delivering the trailer. Chair Bianchi observed that there was a good point made about the ability to move a trailer in and out of the station should a fire occur so he suggested keeping the truck they have and have it available to move trailers around the yard as needed. He thought they should try subbing out the hauling of trash to Meredith for a year.

Mr. Lee said that doing this would add \$27,500 to the transfer station budget. He did not think this was the best solution after doing the math. He respectfully disagreed with this idea but would go along with it if that is what the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee wanted to do.

Chair Bianchi said that they are going to hire an additional person to be a facilities manager for the buildings in town. He came up with some scenarios on hours and wages ranging from 10-15 hours per week and up to \$25 per hour. He asked if Mr. Lee had any input on this position. Mr. Lee said that they might look at having this person also handle the snow shoveling at the library and other town buildings. Ms. Helm thought the person could do touch-up painting and other tasks as such. She wondered how he thought about having this person help monitor the transfer station on Sundays. Mr. Lee said that this was something they could try but another person would need to be there as one person should not be there alone, for safety reasons. Chair Bianchi suggested they keep the same amount of hours at the transfer station but perhaps close on Thursday afternoons and use those hours to be open on Sundays.

Mr. Homan said they have had two light winters of late, and wondered if there was time for people who work in the Public Works Department to do some handy-man type work because of the lack of snow. Mr. Lee said that his workers are catching up with other projects when they are not plowing snow or sanding, but they do other projects if they are given enough lead-time. The flagpole installation is an example of this. Mr. Lee agreed that they needed to hire someone who needed to be responsible for overall maintenance of the three town buildings on Main Street. He noted that he did not object to having the person under his department but noted that if this was the case, he would need to have the ability to direct the work as he does with all of his department's personnel. Mr. Lee also suggested that the Board consider putting out to bid a contractor for all the furnaces. The same can be done for a plumber and an electrician. This way there is a yearly contract and most likely will result in some financial savings. Right now, people do not know who to call when they need help. Chair Bianchi appreciated Mr. Lee's point of view and said they are just trying to come up with a number to put in the budget for this help.

Ms. Kidder asked Mr. Lee how many lawn maintenance companies were using the stump dump. Mr. Lee said he did not know but guessed between 12 and 20. Ms. Kidder wondered if it would be possible to permit only town residents to use the stump dump. Mr. Lee said companies that cut large trees should be required to take care of the disposal of them and not bring it to the stump dump. He was trying to figure out how to keep the stump dump open for the homeowner who has ten limbs to get rid of. There is no guarantee that the disposal site (Crowell's) that

currently takes the town's brush will not shut down again. He found that getting a chipper in to chip brush is very expensive. Mr. Lee asked for advance notice from the disposal site if it has to stop accepting the town's brush again so there is time to alert the public and/or find an alternative place to dispose of the brush.

Mr. Homan wondered why they do not consider burning brush when they get in a situation like this and are stuck. Chair Bianchi said that Mr. Lee had showed the cost analysis of burning the brush. Mr. Lee said it is more complex than just burning the pile as the town would need to construct a pit, per State regulations. Additionally, the town would have to have a commercial permit from the State Forestry Department, a local permit, and an adequate water supply. They cannot burn more than two consecutive days in a week. There is also a cost to test and dispose of the ash. There is talk that soon municipalities will not be able to burn clean lumber (processed wood) as of 2015 but only brush.

Mr. Wheeler asked what the surrounding towns do to get rid of brush. Mr. Lee said that Sunapee brings theirs to the same place New London does. Wilmot does not take any at all, and Andover burns their brush. Springfield takes their brush to Sunapee, and he was not sure about Sutton and Newbury. Mr. Wheeler wondered if a significant amount of brush was coming to the stump dump from other towns. Mr. Lee did not think this was the case.

Mr. Lee said another option would be to grind three times per year and their estimate was they could grind enough brush to equate to the size of an average home in a day and it would cost \$4,000/day. The company will take the chips away or leave some or all of them if the town wanted them for another purpose. They would grind anything up to the size of 1' in diameter.

Chair Bianchi said that since Crowell's is back open they can continue, but they should consider alternatives to be prepared should the disposal site stop accepting brush again. He wondered if it would be appropriate to put \$4,000 into the budget in the event that they would need someone to come and grind one day due to Crowell closing again. Chair Bianchi thought that this was an important service to provide for the town.

Ms. Kidder asked about the Hazardous Waste collection days and asked if \$9,000 is an accurate cost estimate. Mr. Lee said the Town participates every-other-year and what helps them keep it going is because the Town is able to participate in four different Hazardous Waste collection days throughout the year. Mr. Lee said they are billed depending on participation of households coming from New London so we will not know for sure until after the event. He noted that Vicki from the RPC does a great job coordinating the program and volunteers to work at each waste day.

#### Chamber of Commerce – Jen Tockman

Ms. Tockman said that for the past few years they have been asking for \$9,600 in funding. This year they are asking for \$12,100 which is an increase of \$2,500. This is to pay a part-time weekend person to be in the booth. She noted that the New London businesses have asked for more coverage on the weekends to assist the summer visitors. Ms. Kidder asked if there is a

bathroom in the Information Booth that is open to the public. Ms. Tockman confirmed that there is.

Ms. Tockman noted that the money they get from New London is strictly for the booth; not the mailings or other things they do. The towns of Sunapee and Newport pay for their own booth expenses.

Milfoil

Chair Bianchi said that the protective associations for local bodies of water have requested level funding for the upcoming budget year: Pleasant Lake: \$6,500; Little Lake Sunapee:\$5,700; Messer Pond: \$3,225; and Lake Sunapee: \$5,000.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission: \$5,590

Ms. Helm noted that the Planning Board would like to keep their membership with the Regional Planning Commission for at least another year.

Lake Sunapee VNA:\$12,276

Chair Bianchi noted that this request was the same as it was last year.

New London Hospital

They had not sent in a request as of yet. It was believed that they are waiting until they get the ambulance contract resolved.

Other FY2014 Budget items reviewed (not finally approved):

Non-profits:

New Hampshire Municipal Association: \$5,000

Community Action Program(CAP):\$3,809

New non-profit requests:

CASA: \$500

Red Cross: \$2,000

Pathways: \$2,211

Other Town Departments/Boards: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor Services: \$81,600

Tax Map Update: \$1,300

Legal: \$22,500

Animal Rescue Fees: \$200

Emergency Management: \$7,350

Welfare Admin: \$2,693

Welfare Direct Assistance: \$16,000

Patriotic Purposes: \$300

History/Archives: \$1,000

Energy Committee: \$989

Care of Trees: \$5,300

Application for sign permits:

- Market on the Green Committee, sign at information booth, weeks of: 1/19, 2/16, 3/16, 4/20 – approved.

Application for use of Whipple Memorial Hall:

- Market on the Green (@ Whipple) 4 Saturday's, 1/26, 2/23, 3/23, 4/27 – Approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- Intent to cut – Burpee Hill Road – 070-044-001 – approved.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London