



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES February 18, 2014

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Donna Larrow, Police Department Administrative Assistant
Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Leigh Bosse, Owner of The Messenger
Fred Downey, New London Resident

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

Superior Court Decision: Gilman vs. Town of New London

Chair Helm started the meeting off by noting the receipt of the Superior Court decision on the Gilman vs. Town of New London case. Ms. Hallquist said Mr. Bernaiche (Tri-Town Assessor) was disappointed that the Town did not prevail entirely. The land owner did not get all that they wanted but would be getting about \$30,000 back from the Town. It was determined that this case would not go on to Supreme Court.

Potential Warrant Articles

Chair Helm said they had a list of potential warrant articles to be discussed for Town Meeting. Ms. Hallquist said they needed to determine if they want to put the article on the warrants and if so, decide where the money should come from.

1. Elkins Sidewalk Project: The grant was \$536,152 and the Town's portion that must be paid is \$134,038. The funds for this have been planned to be taken from the Intersection Capital Reserve Fund and the Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund. Selectman Bianchi said they would still have the accounts open after they are used from this project so they can be funded in the future for other projects. Ms. Johnson said they would take \$60,000 out of the Intersection Fund, and the balance of what they need would come from the Sidewalk Fund. Selectman Bianchi said he would defer to Ms. Johnson on the actual figures but he was in favor of funding the Elkins project in the described manner. This was a planned expense and has no impact on the tax rate.
2. Dispatching Simulcast System: The total cost for the project is \$75,125. The grant (50%) is for \$37,562. The Town would need to come up with \$37,563. Ms. Hallquist said there used to be a Police Capital Reserve for radios but there isn't any longer. Chief Lyon said long ago, money was encumbered for repeaters but the funds eventually went into the General Fund. There was a question as to whether the price included installation. Ms. Hallquist said Heather Wood

confirmed that the price was for the equipment and installation. Selectman Bianchi said he had no problem with this as long as the total amount was for the equipment and installation.

3. Dispatching Consoles: The price for this is \$97,000. Selectman Bianchi said the Selectmen had voted to not put this item on the warrant article this year. They could change their mind if they wanted to. Selectman Kidder said they never took a vote on this and it could still be a warrant article. Ms. Hallquist said if they get a 100% funded grant, they would only need to have a public hearing to accept the funds. If they put the consoles on the warrant, they could still purchase the console if they didn't win the grant and they needed it. She noted that the police department still needed a console if they didn't keep dispatch in New London. If they want to buy the consoles regardless of winning the grant, they should put it on the warrant article.

Chief Lyon thought they could consider asking for half the amount of the consoles in the warrant, as there are 50% grants and they could get multiple grants to pay for the equipment. They could use the appropriated money to pay for one console at a time and phase in the new equipment. Or they could pay for the two consoles with a 50/50 match and they'd have 50% of the money already appropriated.

Selectman Bianchi said the Selectmen need to make a decision on where they want to go with dispatch. He felt it was premature to try for any grants or ask for funds through a warrant article before they had decided what they wanted to do.

Chief Andersen said the \$75,000 for the repeaters covers the installation for the Fire Department only. It does not cover when the Police Department wants to put up their tower. Ms. Hallquist said they have been clear all along that the repeaters were for the Fire Department only. Chief Lyon said that by changing frequencies, both departments could make use of them. It would make sense to have a warrant article for one console at this point as it would be beneficial for both the Fire and Police Departments.

Chair Helm said they would put this discussion on hold for now.

4. Police Special Detail Revolving Fund: Selectman Bianchi read that "such funds would be expended for only the purpose of what the fund was created for." He said money billed from special duties of the police department would be used to cover areas not covered under normal funding. Chief Andersen said it would be for things like safety equipment and radios. Ms. Hallquist said it was a guess that it wouldn't go higher than \$5,000 but that detail didn't need to go into the article. Generally, towns use this for whatever police needs they have.

Dr. Wilson wondered why they needed to have this fund. Chair Helm said this is to use Police Department funds that come in from doing extra duties; they would like to be able to use these funds for things not allocated in their budget. Ms. Hallquist said this is money coming from another source that towns are allowed to save up in this purpose to purchase things. She said a majority of towns have this kind of fund.

Dr. Wilson said the Revolving Fund in the Recreation Department has been a problem for the Budget Committee because it is controlled by just a few people. He thought money raised by the Town (for example, the Conservation Commission through tree-cutting, and the Police Department through special duties), should go back to the Town because those groups are all part of the town. Ms. Hallquist disagreed that the revolving accounts were controlled by just a few people. The Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen know how much money is in the

fund and it is transparent. This kind of fund is allowed in towns to try and lessen the blow of budget increases.

Dr. Wilson said the money would be going back to the Town and spent by the Town, no matter what. He felt this kind of money goes “off budget” and is controlled by just a few people. Ms. Hallquist said the accounting books and information is available to anyone who wishes to see it. If there is an expenditure out of the blue that comes up, this money could be used so there is no spike in the operating budget or the need to take money from other departments. It is to take away some uncertainty in budgeting. Anyone can get the information regarding these accounts; they only need ask.

Chair Helm asked if the Board of Selectmen had to approve expenditures from this revolving fund for the Police Department. Ms. Hallquist said they would. Chair Helm asked if the Budget Committee would need to approve any expenditures. Ms. Hallquist said the Budget Committee wouldn't need to approve any expenditures and never do. Selectman Bianchi asked if this fund could be used to repair a fire apparatus if it needed to be done. Ms. Hallquist answered in the negative. Selectman Bianchi thought the funds that came into the Town should be available for everyone and not kept for just one department. He wasn't for the revolving fund in the Police Department. Chair Helm thought they should let the Town decide on this. Selectman Bianchi thought they should make this decision and not leave it up to the voters to decide as the Board of Selectmen knew more about this than the public did.

5. Contingency Fund RSA for unanticipated circumstances that may arise. Ms. Hallquist said they have the ability to have a contingency fund and it would need to be voted on each year. It could be used for anything and would enable them to avoid taking funds from various other Town departments for emergency situations. Ms. Hallquist said the school has this kind of fund in place. Selectman Kidder said the school uses their contingency fund to keep funds set aside for special needs students who may move into the district after the school year has begun.

Chair Helm said if this wasn't something that Ms. Hallquist was pushing and it had to be voted on each year, she didn't know that they should put it on the warrant. Selectman Bianchi said he couldn't think of a time when such a fund was needed in the past.

6. Conservation Commission – Selectman Bianchi said the Conservation Commission is asking that their unexpended appropriation be transferred to their Conservation account rather than the General Fund per RSA 36:A which is tailored for this situation. Selectman Bianchi thought this was different than the Police Department's request. This fund will be determined by the Conservation Commission and not the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Bianchi didn't understand why this RSA came about for Conservation Commissions. He didn't see a need of it. Chair Helm was said she was in favor of this and thought it was worth a try. It has to be voted on each year. Selectman Kidder said the Conservation Commission wasn't requesting any additional money this year and because it isn't a large amount of money, she thought it was a good idea to support them in this.

Mr. Cardillo offered that another article to be placed on the warrant could be to change Town Meeting back to March. The Town is losing voters in the school meetings, which is the most expensive portion of their tax bills. A combination of Town Meeting and the school meeting yields more voters. Attendance has not increased at the May meeting and now even fewer are voting at the school meetings in March.

Mr. Cardillo said many people who go away for the winter don't even come back before May. Younger families are active in May with spring sports, etc. and don't attend the meeting. He opined that March seemed to be a better month to have the meeting. After they see what happens at this year's Town Meeting, they could either table a warrant article to move the meeting back to March, or keep it as-is if they get an overwhelming attendance.

Selectman Kidder said the Municipal Budget Committee's budget and the School Board's budget were identical last year. Not many people would come out to vote for that. Mr. Cardillo said he didn't see that they gained anything by moving the meeting to May. He thought to run things more efficiently, they should combine the meetings again. Chair Helm said they would have some discussion on this issue at a later date when discussing the rest of the articles. She was not in favor of the meeting back to March, but was willing to consider it.

Mr. Downey asked what the Town does to review the School Board budget to make recommendations on it. Chair Helm said a few of them do go to the meetings and the Selectmen encourages people to attend the meetings as well, which are all public. Mr. Downey wondered if the Town's Budget Committee could ever meet in non-public session to review the school budget to try and audit or challenge the numbers and insure the quality of the education in the town. Selectman Bianchi said New London has two members on the school board and perhaps the Selectman could lobby these members to keep the Selectmen in the loop of what is going on and to serve as a liaison between the town and the school board. He has been to a couple Municipal Budget Committee meetings in the last few years. This is where the budget is formulated and he thought the townspeople and the Board of Selectmen need to take a more active part in this process.

Chief Andersen asked about the cruiser he wanted to keep and whether it needed to go in a warrant article. Selectman Bianchi said the Selectmen hadn't come up with a firm recommendation on this issue. They could either put the cost for a cruiser in a capital reserve and spend the same amount each year or put the expense into the operating budget. The cruiser is in the warrant for this year.

Mr. Downey thought the New Kearsarge Community Center (NKCC) and the New London Community Center (NLCC) should get together to work with the United Way. The United Way is currently funding a community center in Plymouth, NH where they raise about \$1 million dollars per year for that community. Per capita, if done here, it would be about the same amount. The United Way has no presence in this community and wants to partner with the NKCC. The only way it could happen is if both the NKCC and the NLCC could get together. Jim Hearst from the NKCC and Granite United Way were to meet with the NLCC next week and he thought someone from the Selectmen or Budget Committee should attend the meeting to see if they could get the groups to work together.

Selectman Bianchi said the NKCC and the NLCC are two separate private entities. If they want to get together to work that is great. He didn't understand why the Town of New London should be the moderator between the groups. Mr. Downey thought the project was in serious trouble right now and they should do what they could to bring the parties together. Selectman Kidder thought if they wanted to get the groups together, they should but they don't need a mediator to do it. Mr. Downey asked if the Board was rejecting his request for a meeting with Granite United Way, Kim Hallquist and Chair Helm. Selectman Bianchi said they welcomed any group to come before them if they have a positive suggestion for the Town. The private groups should get together and he wasn't against a private meeting. But in his opinion this was a discussion that should be between the two private groups and the United Way. Mr. Downey didn't think the Town should be involved in this project; the plan of the NKCC would take the responsibility from the town having to lease the building. Chair Helm said she didn't want to go to a meeting for the sake of going to a meeting; she wanted to know her role and the agenda. She didn't want

to be put on the spot as a representative of the Town as they had not made a decision as a Town at that point in time.

Committee Reports

Selectman Bianchi said the Planning Board meeting last week was a work session where they discussed possible zoning amendments. These amendments are clarifications of some things and help clean other things up. Some examples were amendments about signs and boat houses.

Selectman Kidder asked if the Marshall Garage issue had been resolved. Selectman Bianchi said some issues that needed to be resolved were and no site plan review was needed.

Approval of Minutes

February 3, 2014

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of February 3, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

February 10, 2014

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of February 10, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings

February 19 – Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00pm

The Selectmen's meeting scheduled for February 24, 2014 was cancelled.

February 25 – Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm

March 3 – Board of Selectmen at 6:00pm

March 10 – Board of Selectmen at 8:00am

March 24 – Board of Selectmen at 6:00pm

Other Business

Dedication for Annual Report

Selectman Kidder thought the Town Report should be dedicated to the Town Employees. This was agreed upon by the Selectmen.

Dispatch Discussion

Chair Helm thought they needed to move forward with a timeline on how they will discuss dispatch. It wouldn't affect the 2015 budget that much but it needed their attention. Selectman Bianchi thought they should go over the report from Heather Wood, Chief Lyon and Chief Andersen to see if there were any issues. He had some concerns for more information and they needed to figure out how to get the information they need. He thought some questions brought up at the Budget Committee were unanswered. The Board of Selectmen, after coming up with their decision, should open it up to discussion from others afterwards. He thought the report could be reviewed within one meeting.

Selectman Bianchi thought the calls for service for New London was askew. New London had 12,000 calls and the other towns, collectively, only had 8,000.

Chair Helm thought they should begin discussing the report on March 3rd. Selectman Bianchi thought additional information that they need could be the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen and Ms. Hallquist so as not to ask the three who did the report to do it over again. They should have their resolution by March 24th. Selectman Bianchi said they have many months to solve or study the bigger

topic of dispatch staying in New London. They are not under the gun and have time to do this. He didn't think it was fair of those of the Budget Committee to imply the issue was being ignored.

Selectman Kidder asked if Belltronics was moving forward with seeing if the Town could use the towers on King Ridge and Mount Sunapee. Ms. Hallquist said they were.

Selectman Bianchi wondered if they had agreed as a board to keep the third cruiser in the Police Department's fleet. He didn't think that it was needed and was concerned that the oldest cruiser was not put out for bid. It was assumed that it would be kept. He wondered if they should make a decision. Ms. Hallquist noted that Chief Andersen had said it was handy to keep it on as they were using it while one cruiser was being repaired after being in an accident. They don't generally get very much for the cruiser when they sell them. Selectman Bianchi wondered if they wanted to, as a board, agree that they should have three cruisers. He wasn't aware prior to this discussion that two cruisers were out on the roads at all times.

Ms. Hallquist said that Chief Andersen feels it handy to keep the cruiser and it doesn't cost much to keep it. It is good to have in instances where they are down one cruiser. Next year, this spare cruiser would be sold and the one they were supposed to get rid of would stay as a spare. They would be pushing the car out one more year. Ms. Hallquist said they could also use this cruiser for people to go to training or to court instead of having to use their own vehicles. Chair Helm said older vehicles need more attention. Ms. Hallquist said if something costly were to happen to this spare cruiser, they would choose not to repair it.

Dr. Wilson saw this as "creeping vehicle-ism." This may cause them to become dependent on that extra vehicle and down the road may be asked to replace it with a new vehicle. The Budget Committee has always asked if these vehicles could be kept for more than 100,000 miles and were told no. Now they were told it is OK to keep it for another year.

Ms. Hallquist said in the past, all old vehicles were sold. There is a different Chief now and he kept it. Circumstances are different. There could be an understanding that if major repairs were needed, they wouldn't pay for them to be done. The Selectmen would vote on this on March 3rd.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:50am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London