



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES April 15, 2013

PRESENT:

Selectmen

Peter Bianchi, Chair

Tina Helm, Selectman

Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Ben Cushing, Budget Committee member

Doug Homan, Budget Committee member

Minette Sweeney, *The Intertown Record*

Phyllis Piotrow, New London Resident

Bruce Hudson, New London Resident

Erno Pongratz, New London Resident

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

Non-Public Meeting Minutes

The first order of business was to address a request from the *Union Leader* for the release of nonpublic session meeting minutes concerning former Police Chief David Seastrand's resignation and the Attorney General's investigation. The Minutes in question are from March 18, 2013 and April 4, 2013.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to release the nonpublic session meeting minutes of March 18, 2013 and April 4, 2013 because the circumstances that led to the withholding of those minutes no longer applies.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Acceptance of XTS 2500 Radio

Ms. Hallquist indicated that the Town had been awarded, at no cost to the Town, an XTS 2500 Radio for use by the Emergency Management Director.

Mark Vernon's Subdivision Observations

Mr. Vernon submitted a letter to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen highlighting issues related to gaining subdivision approval regarding the length of time required and the expense. Chair Bianchi said that Mr. Vernon seemed to be frustrated by the whole process. He felt that Mr. Vernon had some good points and hoped the Planning Board would review the issues addressed. Ms. Helm agreed and hoped the Planning Board would remember his remarks when considering changes in the ordinance. Ms. Helm added that Mr. Vernon and his family were gracious and met every request asked of them.

Harvest Report from Leo Maslan, Phillips Memorial Preserve

Chair Bianchi recalled that Mr. Brown (Chair of the Conservation Commission) believed Mr. Maslan had done a good job in his planning with the logger, and kept the area neat. The revenue generated from the

cut was \$7,288.25. It was noted that this revenue would go into the General Fund. Ms. Hallquist said that it is considered a sale of Town property, similar to a fire truck sale. Ms. Piotrow wondered if this money could be used to put more trails on the property that are clearly marked. Chair Bianchi said that the Conservation Commission puts money aside in their budget to create new trails and maintain current ones. Ms. Piotrow said when they went on a walk there last, there was a lot of trash around and a cut that had been done there about two years prior, didn't seem to be have been completed. Ms. Helm said she understood that there had been a lot of clean-up to the property since Ms. Piotrow had last visited.

Police Chief Replacement

Chair Bianchi said they are going to hold a search and advertise for the Chief of Police position. He did not feel they should use a recruiter to do the job, as he preferred to keep it in-house and seek help from law enforcement officials on the type of ad and wording to consider. Ms. Helm thought this was an important next step and felt it important to have the full Board of Selectmen chime in, noting that Selectman Kidder was not present and her input was valued. She felt that things were on-hold; the Town was safe, and that they should hold off on the discussion for now. Chair Bianchi said he and Ms. Hallquist have discussed the need to go through the Police Department and review procedures to get a better idea of how things are done. Then they could determine the best way to close gaps in procedures to ensure that proper procedures are followed at all times. Ms. Helm said that she would like to discuss this and Chair Bianchi's suggestions when Ms. Kidder returned. She preferred to have an orderly approach to this search, and to get input from the Town and the employees. She thought they should be sensitive to the valued employees and the taxpayers.

Ms. Piotrow wondered if they would consider having representation from Colby-Sawyer College in the selection process. Ms. Helm felt this would be a valuable addition to any discussion about hiring a new chief. Chair Bianchi said they would discuss this at a later time.

Mr. Homan wondered if this scenario happened because of lack of leadership on the part of the Selectmen and administration for allowing department heads to run their departments with little or no oversight. Chair Bianchi said that if this has been a problem in the past, they will try to not let it happen again. He was not sure the direction they would go in. Mr. Homan felt this was a disaster and wondered how they could make sure that this all stopped at the Chief and that other people in the department were not aware of what was going on. He wondered what the Selectmen had been doing to find this out. He thought the department would want a clean slate as this could hang over their heads for a long time. The honest, hardworking men of the department would welcome someone coming in to make sure there was not anyone else who knew or suspected the Chief of these things. He was disgusted that this might have gone on.

Ms. Helm said they were talking about the procedure to replace the Chief. Their judicial system calls for individuals to be innocent until proven guilty and it behooved all of them to make sure all facts are considered before judgments and conclusions are made. They are still gathering information and trying to move forward in an orderly fashion. Mr. Homan said they may never get any more information if this doesn't go to trial. His conclusion is that if there is any chance that this went on, they need to make sure that the current department gets a 100% chance to move forward. He felt an investigation was the only way to do this. Chair Bianchi said they want to make sure that the Town of New London is comfortable with their Police Department. They have four younger officers and they want to make sure they are fully protected.

Ms. Hallquist said part of discussion of finding a new Chief could incorporate an internal investigation about policies, etc. Mr. Homan noted that that is not what he is referring to, he would rather have an investigation of current personnel. Ms. Hallquist said that the Attorney General's office has indicated, as

has the press, that more people have come forward and the Attorney General's Office continues to investigate this matter. The Town has no more additional information on the subject.

Ms. Helm said that this has been a very large load on the backs of the Board of Selectmen and she felt they needed to let it play out a bit and have confidence that what is right by the Town and employees will be done. Mr. Homan felt the taxpayers and people living in the Town should be considered first. He felt that employees are employees, he is thinking about the taxpayers. Ms. Helm added that they were still human beings.

Chair Bianchi said that the Board of Selectmen were committed to this and would do all they could to alleviate everyone's concerns. They will do the best they can to get the best result for the Town of New London. This will take some time. Ms. Helm reiterated that they do have an Acting Chief, the Board of Selectmen is on top of things, and the Town is being protected.

Chair Bianchi commended Ms. Hallquist for the work she has been doing answering phone calls and dealing with the numerous questions from the public. They are lucky to have someone with some background in law to advise the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Helm agreed with Chair Bianchi's words of thanks for Ms. Hallquist.

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist noted that now that the budget has been finalized by the Budget Committee, the Warrant will be ready for signing on Wednesday at 11:00am. Ms. Hallquist observed that the Selectmen could add any nonmonetary issues they felt appropriate.

Ms. Hallquist informed the Board that William Rose from the State DOT has authorized the Town to enter into a contract with Pathways for the Elkins project. Ms. Hallquist is awaiting word back from Pathways on a schedule of work. The Pathways proposal amount is under the estimated amount for the first section of the project.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Helm said she had not had a chance to review the minutes but would be ready to approve them at their meeting Wednesday.

Mr. Hudson said there seemed to be some disconnect expressed in the last Budget Meeting between meeting minutes that were posted and approved that had incorrect information in them. Ms. Hallquist said once Minutes are posted they are the "official" minutes and cannot be changed. The Board may amend them during the approval process, at some point after posting, but the first draft remain as the official minutes with the amended minutes added. Chair Bianchi said they approve minutes reflecting what is actually said at a meeting, not what people meant to say. Ms. Piotrow asked if a remark by a citizen could be changed. Ms. Hallquist said that if a citizen disagrees with how their comments are represented in the minutes, the person should come to the next meeting and ask them to make a note of the change in that meeting's minutes, but the first set would have to stay as-is.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Reports

Ms. Kidder had forwarded a memo to the Selectmen about the last Recreation meeting she attended. The CAC meeting on April 6th went well. The 1941 building met on April 4th.

Upcoming Meetings

Board of Selectmen would meet on April 17 at 11:00am to sign the warrant

Board of Selectmen will meet on April 29 at 8:30am.

The 1941 Building Committee will meet on Thursday at 9:00am.

The Planning Board will meet on April 23 at 7:00pm.

Candidate's Night will be April 30 at 7pm at Tracy Memorial Library

Other Business

Ms. Helm said she and Ms. Jackman would be working on organizing the potluck supper that is traditionally held before Town Meeting. She would check on the location with Ms. Jackman when she returns from vacation.

Mr. Erno Pongratz, a property owner on Elkins Road, met with the Board regarding a demolition permit. He and his wife experienced a fire at their home last year and they are in the process of rebuilding. He and his wife have spoken to Ms. St. John and filed the appropriate paperwork. He was trying to understand the process. Ms. Hallquist noted that the demolition permit application has been included in the permits to be signed by the Selectmen, and would be available the next day.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to enter into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) to discuss compensation. Roll call vote: Bianchi: yes, Helm: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upon returning from nonpublic session, the Selectmen signed applications for the following:

Application for Building Permit:

- Jean-Pierre & Kelly Paquette, 324 Forest Acres Road (Map 118, Lot 007), erect accessory structure (28'x32') with driveway – Permit #13-021
- Erno & Katherine Pongratz, 17 Elkins Road (Map 087, Lot 004), demolition of existing building, garage, and shed – Permit #13-022
- Kathleen Cook Trust, 58 Checkerberry Lane (Map 044, Lot 031), erect a 24'x24' garage, with 2 bedrooms and bath, attached by a 13' breezeway, remodel kitchen, replace some windows, remove one bath – Permit #13-023
- Stephen & Elizabeth Foy, 45 Job Seamans Acres (Map 073, Lot 085), make a mudroom in existing garage, 8'x12', remove 16' garage door into a 9' door, new entry door and remove door, install windows – Permit #13-024
- Patrick & Lenore Noble, 315 Wilder Lane (Map 112, Lot 002), build a 14'x14' screened-in porch attached to deck – Permit #13-025
- Ann Beardsley Bedard Trust, 810 Bunker Road (Map 077, Lot 003), demolish existing cabin, build new 26'x42' 2-story house with attached 2-car garage.

Application for Town Common

- Colby-Sawyer College Psych Club-April 19, 2013 4-7 p.m. with rain date of April 26, 2013, 4-7 p.m.

Application for sign permit:

- Northern New England Repertory Theater Co. – sign at information booth – 5/16 – 6/9 – approved.
- Kearsarge Community Presbyterian Church – sign in front of church and at information booth – 5/19-26

Tax Abatement:

- Map & Lot 045-009-000 – in the amount of \$1.80 – sewer usage
- Multiple adjustments – totaling \$12.70

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- 5 Veteran's credit applications – approved
- Elderly exemption – approved

It was noted that the application for use of public buildings should be reviewed and updated. There was also a request that Adventures in Learning (AIL) and the Bridge Club should be asked for more information. Fees for these organizations to use the Syd Crook Conference Room for their activities should be collected to keep consistent with their policy for use of public buildings/property. The application for AIL was to be double-checked, as it appeared as though they were only asking for two dates.

With no other business, Chair Bianchi called for a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London