



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES April 9, 2013

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Peter Messer
Doug MacMichael
Bruce Hudson & Renate Kanler
Park & Kathy Adams

Chair Bianchi called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He announced the purpose of the meeting was to accept any petitioned warrant articles that may have been submitted to the Selectmen. April 9th is the last day for such submissions. Any petitions could then be turned over to the Budget Committee for their consideration at their public hearing to be held that evening at 7:00pm.

The Board noted receipt of a petitioned warrant article to raise \$25,000 to be placed in the Conservation Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund. There were 79 signatures on the warrant and the signatures have all been verified. Chair Bianchi said that the Selectmen were charged with adding their approval or disapproval of the article, as would the Budget Committee later on that evening.

Ms. Helm said she is a supporter of conservation and believes the Conservation Commission is doing a wonderful job in responding to the Master Plan. However, given all the variables of the budget, the fact that the fund has quite a bit of money in it already, and that the Conservation Commission would need to come before Town Meeting to vote on any specific purchase, she felt that \$12,500 was a more reasonable amount to add to the budget. Chair Bianchi agreed with Ms. Helm's remarks. He said they have been in favor of \$12,500 although they understood the Conservation Commission wanted \$25,000.

**IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to not recommend the article to place \$25,000 in the Conservation Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was noted that as a petitioned warrant article, the article will appear on the warrant even though the Selectmen are not recommending it.

Ms. Adams asked if the Selectmen would be discussing what was happening with the Police Department. Chair Bianchi said it was not on their agenda. Ms. Adams said she was concerned about what is happening. She opined that New London has a small Police Department and that perhaps others in the department knew about what was happening and that they were covering for each other. She thought new blood should come into the department instead of promoting from within. Ms. Helm noted that they have

had some meetings on this issue and will have more in the future. She noted that this is still an investigation; what people know is what they have heard in the media. She reminded those at the meeting that their judicial system states that people are innocent until proven guilty. Ms. Helm said that they have not had a full documentation of all sides of the situation. She added that they have appointed Ed Andersen (former Sergeant) as Acting Chief, which is an interim position. When they are ready to move forward with hiring a permanent Chief, they would welcome input from concerned citizens like her.

When asked for the turn of events, Ms. Hallquist explained that they became aware of this matter when former Chief Seastrand informed her on March 13th of the investigation being conducted by the Attorney General's Office. At this time, Ms. Hallquist called the Attorney General's Office and the investigation was confirmed. The Attorney General's office was not at liberty to share the details of the investigation with the Town except to say that there was an investigation going on. The Town did not learn of the nature of the investigation from the Attorney General's Office until Thursday (April 4th) after the Chief resigned.

Ms. Helm said that before they make judgments, they should try to remain open to the best of their abilities. She hoped they could have enough trust in the Selectmen that once they have enough information they could move forward with a search for a new chief. Chair Bianchi added that it was the Selectmen's job to hire a new chief. They will put out the ads, collect resumes, and conduct interviews. Ms. Helm reminded the meeting attendees that they are governed by laws and at times may need to go into non-public session when discussing certain personnel issues.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London