



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES May 5, 2014

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Dave Zuger, Sergeant
Josh Fisher, Police Officer
John Wilson, Budget Committee Chair
Doug Homan, Budget Committee Member
Gena Edmunds, New London Resident
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member
Bruce Hudson & Renate Kannler, New London Residents
W. Michael Todd, Town Moderator
Penny Murano, owner of *Unleashed New London*
Sean Carroll, *Intertown Record*
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

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

Presentation on the possibility of a K-9 Unit in the New London Police Department

Chief Andersen, Sergeant Zuger and Police Officer Fisher met with the Board to discuss the possibility of establishing a K-9 unit within the New London Police Department. Chief Andersen explained that the idea of a K-9 Unit has been bounced around the New London Police Department through the years and over the past 16 years he has worked for the Town. He noted that the New London Police Department has used other agencies' dogs in the past with success. There have been several instances where a K-9's tracking abilities would have been useful. Chief Andersen noted that Officer Joshua Fisher was interested in being a K-9 handler. He advised Officer Fisher that the first place to come would be the Board of Selectmen to see if they would be permitted to move forward with researching the idea and to see if they could fundraise for the program so it wouldn't cost anything to the taxpayers.

Chief Andersen remarked that New London is fortunate to have Sergeant Zuger on its force, as he started the K-9 Unit in the Lebanon Police Department. Sergeant Zuger understands all the details that go into setting up and having a K-9 unit. He added that Officer Fisher has already had some support from business owners with regards to a K-9 program. Chief Andersen said he would like about a year to gather information on the program and then come back to the Board sometime in October 2015, if they are able to fundraise and get things in place to get a dog.

Sergeant Zuger informed the Board that he is a huge supporter of K-9s. He offered that the dogs are not pets but are finely tuned animals. He noted that no technology exists in law enforcement that replicates what the dogs can do. Their sense of smell is much greater than humans, which is useful in tracking people or things, such as missing kids, hikers, Alzheimer's patients. He explained that in Lebanon his dog found two sets of missing children and a runaway. They aren't just for burglars and drug sniffing; dogs can help with building searches, which normally take hours with just officers working together. He added that the K-9 was the only tool that can be recalled; they can be called off of a suspect or criminal if needed. This isn't the same with a bullet or other means of apprehension. Having a K-9 Unit is also helpful with deterrence. In the past there were instances where suspects who had been evading officers gave up when confronted with an officer and a dog, as they knew he wouldn't win a race against a dog. Sergeant Zuger noted that they are not stressing the drug-sniffing aspect, but it is something they are very useful in assisting with. The K-9 can smell drugs that are inside a car, from outside of the car and he has had some successful busts with the use of a dog. Sergeant Zuger concluded by observing that New London is mostly isolated and the dogs are helpful in assisting the officers when they are alone or in times when resources from the State are delayed.

Officer Fisher said he has been doing research on other agencies' policies and procedures and has looked into the "Working Dog Company" in Portsmouth that trains the dogs. He also talked with some residents and business owners in the community to see how they felt about the possibility of having a K-9 Unit program in town. Officer Fisher said he has seen a great response. "Unleashed" would cover all the food for the dog. Penny, the owner of Unleashed, said she provided the food for the Town of Sunapee's K-9. Veterinary services would be provided at no cost by Pleasant Lake Veterinary Hospital. Officer Fisher found that insurance for the dog is free to the town with its current insurance provider; they just have to sign it up as a personnel member and it will be covered for some medical assistance if needed and \$7,500 if the dog is killed in action to help with dog replacement and training. Officer Fisher said he appreciated that the Chief was supporting the K-9 Unit idea and that Sergeant Zuger has the experience to help get them started.

The Board reviewed material prepared by Officer Fisher. Chair Helm asked about the \$15,000 fee in the proposal. Officer Fisher said it represents the cost for the dog, four weeks of training, and equipment. Since they are a small department, they can't afford to send an officer away to training for four months, so the program he chose was only four weeks in length and is located in Pennsylvania. The company picks the dog from overseas, trains the dog with the officer, and it is immediately certified to start working as soon as they get back to New London. There is also an annual fee for the upkeep training of the dog, which is \$250. Upkeep training can be done at the "Working Dog Company" in Portsmouth, NH.

Sergeant Zuger said the New Hampshire State Police also has a dog training program for upkeep training, but does not allow people to come to training if they have trained their dogs in other facilities. Therefore, the "Working Dog Company" will be the place they would go.

Sergeant Zuger said \$7,500 for a dog sounds expensive but they get what they pay for. Donated dogs don't always work. In the US they have over-bred the breeds they generally use, such as German Shepherds and Malamutes. The dogs are purchased from overseas as their bloodlines are better and the dogs are of higher quality.

Selectman Kidder asked what would happen when Officer Fisher was not on duty and an incident arises where they would need the assistance of the dog? Only he would be trained to use the dog; would he have to work a lot more than others in the department? Officer Fisher answered in the affirmative. Selectmen Kidder asked if they would reduce their workforce if they got the dog. Chief Andersen said they would not. Chief Andersen said Officer Fisher's hours would be managed through the department to make sure

there wasn't a lot of overtime. Selectman Kidder asked what type of fee they would charge other towns who may want to use their K-9 service. Chief Andersen said he thought they would charge the same as they would for a regular detail officer. Sergeant Zuger said being called out after hours doesn't happen that often and he can be selective as to which calls they go to.

Selectman Kidder asked if the State Police had a K-9 Unit. Chief Andersen said they have several K-9 Units and one of the handlers lives in Sutton. In the past they have had to wait as long as 45 minutes for a dog to come from the State because they aren't nearby. Sunapee had a dog and helped New London in the past. Having a dog would have eliminated the use of helicopters and many hours spent by officers when trying to find the missing kids in town last year.

Selectman Bianchi said he had no question regarding the qualifications the dogs have. He did have a problem with seeing this as a need in New London. He tried to correlate the presentation with the call list from the past years in New London. He said there were no armed robberies, school shootings, prowler calls, etc. The dogs are valuable tools but he didn't see the need for having one in New London. He asked if the Town of Sunapee still had a K-9 Unit. Sergeant Zuger said they did not because they didn't have a handler. Selectman Bianchi asked how many officers there were in Lebanon. Sergeant Zuger said there were 36, and they had two dogs.

Selectman Bianchi wondered if New London would pay Officer Fisher while he was at training for the four weeks. Chief Andersen answered in the affirmative. Selectman Bianchi noted that this would incur extra expenses because someone would need to cover his shifts.

Selectman Bianchi asked about a special K-9 cruiser; if it is the K-9 Unit's cruiser, was it only to be used for the dog handler? Chief Andersen said the cruiser would go with the handler and dog, but could be used by others in the event another cruiser went down. Chief Andersen said Officer Fisher was looking at getting a K-9 specific cruiser donated to the Town.

Selectman Bianchi said every time Officer Fisher has to go to a training that would incur additional costs to the Town as his shift would need to be covered. He added that it was likely that Officer Fisher would be paid overtime for his services. Chief Andersen said that would probably only be true if Officer Fisher had worked a full week and was called out on the weekend. Otherwise, they would manage the hours internally with the other officers to minimize the overtime worked.

Chief Andersen said he has felt that in the past, serious crimes occurred in New London but they weren't publicized. He felt there was a false sense of security in New London and he would be communicating better with the Selectmen and the public from now on to show that a dog is something that would be beneficial to the town. Selectman Bianchi didn't see how this type of expenditure and ongoing expense would be justified in a town their size. He respects the dogs and the need for them in other communities, however.

Chair Helm said the Police Department was asking for a year to put together more information about the program before coming forth with a proposal. Selectman Kidder asked what further information would they need to get over that time? Officer Fisher clarified that they would determine the need for the dog, would interview other communities that have these kinds of service dogs, and determine the cost to the town. He anticipated gathering harder facts and statistics. It was noted that the Town of Canaan has five officers on staff, as well as a K-9 unit with one dog.

Selectman Kidder felt more information would be useful as it sounded like having a K-9 Unit would surely increase the cost of the department. Chief Andersen said they simply wanted a year to research and

were not asking for a dog that night. Selectman Bianchi didn't see the value in spending town time researching this. He felt it was unnecessary. Chief Andersen noted that Officer Fisher had done all of his research so far on his own time. Ms. Hallquist didn't think it would be a good idea for Officer Fisher to continue with researching this project on his own time, as it was something they were considering for the Town and should be done on Town time.

Mr. Homan said the Budget Committee was told how strapped the Police Department was during budget time but now they are hearing that they have enough time to send an officer away for a month and to attend recurrent training? He didn't see how it jived. Sergeant Zuger said the officers are always participating in training and Officer Fisher's training would be focused in K-9 training. Training is a part of what they do already. Mr. Homan thought this program would take on a life of its own and wanted the Selectmen to prevent this first step.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to approve granting the Police Department one year (until October 2015) to examine the possibility of establishing K-9 Unit in New London.

Mr. Hudson asked how much time it would take over the next year. He thought that would be important to agree on before they make a decision. Officer Fisher said there are already policies and procedures in place, including prices. He couldn't set an actual amount of time he would spend researching, but it wouldn't be tremendous and would vary depending on the shifts he works. Chief Andersen said help with research would come from other departments that have dogs and he didn't foresee a lot of time being spent.

Selectman Kidder said she appreciated the time Officer Fisher spent on this but she was concerned that it would increase the Police Department budget; she didn't feel it was an insignificant addition to the department. Chief Andersen said they hoped to find avenues where things could be donated so it would cost the Town very little, if anything.

Penny Murano said she is not only the owner of "Unleashed" but is also a mom of a six-year old child. If her business was robbed, she would love it if a dog could be used to find the perpetrators. If someone took her child, she would love it if they could use a dog to go find him. She opined that business owners and parents will all be in favor of having a K-9 on the force. She said she is paying \$6,000 out of her business to feed the dog and knows other businesses would do the same. She thought the Selectmen should allow them to study the program for a year and felt it was a huge benefit to the Town; that is why she was happy to fund the food so the Town wouldn't have to absorb the cost. Chair Helm thanked Penny for the tremendous contributions she makes to the community.

Chair Helm called for a vote: **THE MOTION FAILED.** Peter Bianchi: No, Janet Kidder: No, Tina Helm: Yes

W. Michael Todd – Town Moderator

Town Moderator Michael met with the Board to discuss Town Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday May 14th. Mr. Todd suggested the Board should present the warrant as they have in prior years, notifying him as to who would be speaking to each article. He thought the presentation of both the Selectmen's budget and the Budget Committee's budget this year would increase debate and perhaps some amendments which may slow the process of Town Meeting a bit, which wasn't a bad thing. He noted that most of the articles were the same between the Selectmen and the Budget Committee, but those differing articles may create amendments.

Selectman Bianchi noted that there are three articles where a difference exists between the budgets. He thought potential confusion would arise on these articles. If a Selectman moves to approve the Budget Committee's figure and discussion is had, and someone from the audience asks about the difference in the line item, someone will have to explain. He said if someone from the floor wanted to amend the dollar amount by "x" amount, the amendment would be debated, voted on, and the will of the body would pass the amendment. They would then go back and vote on the amended article. He thought this procedure should be explained at Town Meeting. Mr. Todd said it was his job to make this process as clear as possible. Ms. Hallquist said they may want to give an explanation at the start of the meeting as to why there are two columns, one for the Budget Committee and one for the Selectmen, to avoid confusion.

Mr. Todd said to insure that the budget as recommended by the Budget Committee is not increased by the voters by more than 10%, Linda Hardy (Town Clerk/Tax Collector) will be keeping track of the increases and decreases (RSA 32:18 states that the total amount appropriated at town meeting cannot exceed the total recommended by the budget committee by more than 10%). He noted that generally he requires any substantive amendments from the floor need to be submitted in writing. There was discussion about possible requests that may come from the floor from individuals which may be pertaining to specific line items. Mr. Todd said amendments made from the floor would include a figure of how the total of the entire budget would change.

Chair Helm thought someone should be responsible for explaining the difference in the sewer lagoon budget (Article 9). She said she has heard Budget Committee Chair Wilson was planning to bring this one up at Town Meeting. Budget Chair Wilson noted that he would be prepared to speak on any budget committee recommendation at Town Meeting.

There was discussion of the petition warrant articles and how they would be presented.

Mr. Todd noted that this is the first year they will have two students who have participated in Town Meeting, for five years in a row, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the National Anthem. Ms. Densmore (music teacher at the Elementary School) thought it would be nice to present them with something to recognize their citizenship. The Selectmen agreed.

Before departing the meeting, Mr. Todd noted that he attended a workshop conducted by the State Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) on Planning & Zoning issues. He attended a session on housing in New Hampshire and found it to be very interesting. He provided a copy of the slide show to the Selectmen to consider for Planning Board use. He noted that it was an excellent conference and well worth the time to attend.

Articles Distribution for the Selectmen at Town Meeting

Peter Bianchi: 3, 6, 9, 15, 18

Tina Helm: 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19

Janet Kidder: 5, 8, 11, 17, 20

Poll Duty on Tuesday, May 13th

8:00am – 12:30pm – Tina Helm

12:30pm – 4:00pm – Peter Bianchi

4:00pm – 7:00pm – Janet Kidder

Memo from Jim Perkins – LCHIP Grant

The Board reviewed information from Jim Perkins of the Archives Committee, regarding the upcoming LCHIP grant round. Mr. Perkins informed the Board that if they would like to apply for grant monies for

Whipple Hall, an estimate of work to be completed would need to be assembled by the beginning of June. Chair Helm observed that Mr. Perkins had already attended the workshop needed in order to apply for a grant. The application deadline is June 27th. The Board felt that there isn't enough time to get the necessary estimates in time to apply for a grant during this grant round. Chair Helm felt it would be a good thing to plan for next year.

Elkins Fish & Game Club

Chair Helm noted that the Elkins Fish & Game Club would like to continue to use the town's property on Mountain Road for event parking as it did last year. It was noted that there were no problems reported from the Club's use of the area for overflow parking in the past. They are requesting to use the area four times in one year.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to continue to allow the Elkins Fish & Game Club to use the town's Mountain Road property for parking for one more year. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Construction Phase for Georges Mills Pump Station

The Board reviewed an estimate from Underwood Engineering to continue the upgrades of the Georges Mills Pump Station. Ms. Hallquist noted that the estimate came in at \$18,400. Chair Helm noted that the Board agreed to make these upgrades after the failure in May 2012, so there wouldn't be any further problems. Ms. Hallquist said the funds are available for this project.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to authorize Kim Hallquist, on behalf of the Town of New London, to approve the estimate from Underwood Engineering for the Georges Mills Pump Station. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Library Fence Request

Ms. Hallquist informed the Board that Bruce Parsons, Library Trustee, has suggested that a fence be installed between the town's public parking lot and the library to discourage people from crossing Pleasant Street outside of the designated crosswalk. Selectman Kidder didn't think a fence would look good and said a fence would need to be maintained. Chair Helm thought they should look into what it would cost to put bushes, such as Boxwood, in the area that would make a hedge to deter walkers. She didn't like the idea of a fence. The Selectmen were in favor of a vegetative type of barrier. Estimates on the cost will be gathered and brought back before the Board.

Accountant's Report

Chair Helm noted receipt of the Annual Financial Report as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013 as prepared by Plodzik & Sanderson, P.A., the town's auditors. She said the report noted no specific difficulties. Ms. Hallquist said the entire report was posted on the Town's website.

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist shared that Linda Nickols has been hired as the new Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector. She also reported that she and Richard Lee went to Brookside Drive to meet with residents and representative from PSNH to discuss the tree cutting done by PSNH. Residents are not happy with how the area looks now that the vegetation and trees have been removed from the power line area. PSNH will get back to the town with an estimate of how much they will give to have shrubs and plantings put in to improve the look of the area. Mr. Lee has agreed to have his crew plant the shrubs if purchased by PSNH.

Other Business

Springledge Farm Building Permit

Springledge Farm has requested a building permit to continue use of a temporary structure, a hoop house, for another year. They received a building permit for a temporary structure in 2013 but would now like to make this a reoccurring feature at the farm. The owner would like to bypass the Planning Board this year due to time constraints. Ms. St. John did not recommend that this permit be approved. Chair Helm noted that she is sensitive to the needs of businesses and felt that it was appropriate for the Board to allow the use this year, and to let the property owners know that they will need to seek Planning Board approval, if site plan review is required, before any future requests for building permits for the hoop house.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to grant a building permit for a temporary structure for Springledge Farm, with the understanding that the property owners must seek Planning Board input prior to requesting similar building permits in the future. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approval of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of April 14, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Finance Officer Report – Wendy Johnson

Ms. Johnson informed the Board that she learned late that afternoon that the Sunapee sewer upgrade will not reach substantial completion status by June 30th, which means no principal and interest payments will be due in FY 2015. Therefore, they can take off \$92,673 from the General Fund and \$185,344 from sewer. Ms. Johnson suggested that someone offer an amendment to Article 8 to reduce the appropriation by those amounts (\$278,017 total).

Ms. Kidder felt they should amend the articles as she thought people should know up front what was happening. They shouldn't be asking for the money if they didn't need it. The selectmen agreed with her.

Signatures

Application for Building Permit:

- Elizabeth Parish – 7 Prescott Lane, (073-018-000), Addition of 16' x 16' deck with a set of stairs and walkway. APPROVED
- Julianne Trust – 60 Conifer Lane, (058-013-008), Enclosing a screened porch on part of existing deck. APPROVED
- John & Susan Lavolpicielo – 104 Birch Acres, (074-037-000), Replacing Existing concrete structure with wood. APPROVED
- Don Hafner – 151 Main Street, (073-073-000), Installation of PV Solar System – APPROVED
- RaeAnn Gremel – 1540 Little Sunapee Rd, (030-025-000), Remove door and replace with a window – APPROVED
- Theodore Dascoli – 76 Lamson Lane, (049-030-000), Add screen room (14x17) to rear of home – APPROVED
- Brenda & Bob Montagna – 70 Westside Drive, (055-012-004), Enclose porch with windows and door - APPROVED
- Tod Schweizer – 115 Old Main Street, (107-003-000), Convert bedroom to office and add bed and bath – APPROVED
- Lois Watts – 223 Sutton Road, (123-008-000), Add 8x10 wooden manufactured shed – APPROVED
- Kevin & Jessica Hathaway – 929 Main Street, (109-003-000), Interior renovations – APPROVED

- Matt & Kristina Regan – 151 Quail Run, (108-003-000), Bathroom renovation – APPROVED
- Greg Berger – 37 Main Street, (073-053-000), Extension of 2013 Temporary Permit for hoop house - APPROVED

Other Items to be signed:

Veterans Exemption Applications (3)

Veterans Exemption Denial (1)

Elderly Exemption Applications (5)

Appointment card for Linda Nicklos, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector – new hire

Tax Abatement Form

Sign permit for Community Garden & Tracy Library – Sandwich Board at Info Booth

Raffle Permit – Elkins Fish & Game Club. Drawing to be done 11/5/2014

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Bianchi: Yes; Helm: Yes; Kidder: Yes

The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:30pm.

The Board reentered the public session at 8:45pm.

Reappointing of Individuals to Boards

The Board discussed the need to consider appointments to the various boards and committee to address expiring terms. This is generally done after town meeting. Ms. Hallquist said there had been a standard letter sent to volunteers for reappointment to boards. The Board asked that a notice be posted seeking volunteers for the various boards and committees.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London