



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES August 5, 2013

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief
Lucy St. John, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Joe McCarthy, Citizen
Deb Langner, Health Officer
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk & Tax Collector
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member
Norm Bernaiche, Chief Assessor
Kris McAllister, Assessor
Merry Armentrout, *Intertown Record*

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:30am. She announced that the nonresident taxpayer portion of the meeting would be held first, with other business being conducted afterwards. **IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to open the meeting.**

Chair Helm began by introducing staff members present at the meeting who would be available to answer any questions attendees might like to ask. She was happy to report that the previous weekend (New London Hospital Days) was a wonderful weekend to be in New London and thanked the Police, Fire and Recreation Departments for their efforts. She noted that the Chamber of Commerce was responsible for bringing back the midway and she was happy to see so many people walking around the town and enjoying themselves. General agreement was expressed by those in attendance.

Chair Helm began by offering a brief recap of the year, noting that they were moving forward on many fronts and in general felt the town was in good shape. Ms. Kidder reviewed the 2013 Town Meeting, and said there were two items of note at the meeting: the Conservation Commission's Land Acquisition Fund and the 1941 Building. She explained that with regard to the Conservation Fund, which was not approved by Town Meeting, it was felt that the current

fund balance of over \$449,000 was adequate for current needs. She stressed that should the Conservation Commission find a piece of land to purchase, additional funding, if needed, could be brought to Town Meeting.

Ms. Kidder noted that the 1941 Building vote to appropriate \$10,000 was to purchase an option on the 1941 Building, the former New London Central School. This article was approved by Town Meeting. She explained that there are people in town who are working to see if the building could be used as a community center and if the building is in good shape. An engineering firm is working to determine if the building could be saved and sustained without asking for money from the taxpayers.

Ms. Kidder said that the budget, which was not up much from the previous year, passed as presented. The tax rate will be set in the fall, and will depend on the budget as voted, revenues and property valuations.

Ms. Kidder reported that a new full-time Recreation Director, Scott Blewitt, has been hired, filling the position vacated in December with the resignation of the former Director. This position was included in the budget. Ms. Kidder reported that the summer Recreation programs have been full and the participation is wonderful. The Highway Department has helped the Recreation Department by building new picnic tables. The Bucklin Beach bath house was renovated and handicapped bathrooms were added. It was felt that Mr. Blewitt had done a remarkable job and Ms. Kidder thanked the other department heads for working together.

Chair Helm added that the goal is to have the 1941 building be a public/private partnership. The committee doing the building research is no longer an assigned committee of the Selectmen, but is working independently and will come to the Selectmen with their report when they are done.

Terry Broadhead said she once lived in a town where a school that had closed was turned over to the town until there was a population boom and they ended up having to give the school back. She wondered if they were taking this possibility into consideration. Ms. Kidder said they are looking at a long-term lease and that currently, all of their elementary schools are under-enrolled.

Mr. Bianchi reported that the Elkins Project, which will include sidewalks in Elkins, with a total project cost of about \$800,000, is on-going. New London's share is \$160,000, the remainder to come from Federal Transportation Enhancement grants. Anticipated construction time is Spring 2014.

Mr. Bianchi noted that the Pleasant Lake Dam is in need of work. Cracks in the face wall will be repaired when the lake is drawn-down. The draw-down will begin on September 16th and the work will begin as soon as the lake is low enough, expected to be by the end of September. Additionally, the Town has applied for a permit to make repairs to the boat launch during the lake lowering. Lastly, work will be done on Lamson Lane as part of a Hazardous Mitigation Grant. This will include work on nine culverts, the removal of some trees and rocks and some ditching. The total cost of the work is \$348,000; \$271,650 will come from a federal grant and the remaining \$87,000 from town funds. Work will begin soon.

Chair Helm reported that the Town made a commitment to upgrade the Sunapee Wastewater Treatment Plant, the facility that New London uses as its septic disposal facility. New London's responsibility is 64%, which is approximately \$5.5 million dollars of the \$8 million dollar project. A bond was voted in at Town Meeting in 2011. Construction began in July, 2012 and is a little over 50% complete. The Selectmen attend regular meetings and so far they are hoping the project is completed by March 2014. The Board reported that New London taxpayers will pay 1/3 of the bond and users of the system will pay 2/3.

Chair Helm noted that to have a more organized plan for the upkeep and renovation of town buildings, the Board is moving toward establishing a position of facilities manager position. This will be a part-time position within the Public Works Department. The Selectmen have appointed a three-member volunteer committee to inspect the town's buildings to see what needs to be done. Mr. Bianchi observed that the Town has a fund that is added to every year to pay for capital improvements and ongoing maintenance of buildings.

Chair Helm announced that the Board has heard the many comments of citizens regarding Sunday Transfer Station hours. She noted that the Board is working with Richard Lee, Department of Public Works Director, to hire a part-time employee to allow the transfer station to be open on Sundays. They have advertised for the position and are working to try and make it happen although there is no set date when the new hours will begin.

Chair Helm observed that the Town has had some significant personnel changes over the year. In April, Dave Seastrand resigned as Police Chief. The Board appointed Sergeant Ed Andersen to serve as the Acting Chief. The Town never was behind in safety and they thank Chief Andersen for the job he is doing. They will be moving towards hiring a permanent Police Chief in the near future. The Board has worked hard to be sensitive to all those who have been involved in this situation.

Lorraine Sonnabend, Lamson Lane, asked about possibly expanding the recyclables that the transfer station accepts and also noted that she misses seeing the information about recyclable savings. Mr. Lee noted there are challenges to accepting more recyclable materials in that lack of storage is an issue, but noted that single-stream recycling has been discussed in the past.

Mr. Bianchi said that they are aware of the single-stream method of recycling and did consider it. They weren't comfortable with the company from Concord who approached the Town in the past but may consider it again if other companies approach them. He referenced page 26 of the Town Report, which shows how much they have saved and how much they recycled in the year.

John Manaras inquired about the pension situation and wondered if there were any liabilities that were fully or partially funded. Ms. Johnson said they are part of the State retirement system, and the State has taken steps to address the unfunded liability issue, including raising rates. They are paying higher rates now to pay this off in about 20-30 years. New London has no separate pension plan.

Mr. Lee reported that the former town landfill on Mountain Road has been lined and sealed according to state requirements. No precipitation can get down into the trash any more. The area is monitored consistently and all reports are good.

Mr. Manaras thanked the Selectmen and Mr. Lee for considering Sunday dump hours. Chair Helm noted that they have heard from full-time residents that they would also appreciate Sunday hours at the transfer station.

Ann Wustrow, a resident of Forest Acres Road, noted that bluestone was added to the road and she wondered if the Town would continue with blue stone or the paving of roads in the future. Mr. Lee said that last year they had some funds left from not using as much salt and sand on the roads because of the mild winter. He approached the Selectmen to see if he could put blue stone on Forest Acres Road as it needed some work and that material does not migrate as easily as crushed stone does. He did not think the road was on the immediate list to be paved. They have a 60-year plan to pave about half the gravel roads in town.

Laurel Simon from Forest Acres opined that the cars seem to go faster now that the blue stone is there, and noted that she would prefer that the road not be paved as it would only increase the speed of the cars.

Anne Cushman from Knights Hill said part of her road was paved and she tries to slow people down who are driving too fast but they just wave back to her as if she is saying hello. She noted that she prefers a gravel road to a paved road for this reason, cars go too fast on paved roads. Chair Helm said that they have received positive feedback on the maintenance of the roads in town.

Ms. Sonnabend said she lives on Lamson Lane, which is unpaved, and bought her home there partly because it was unpaved. The only problem they have with the road is that it is a little dusty, but noted that she still prefers it to a paved road.

Jane Smedley said the speed on 4th of July weekend was awful in Elkins and didn't know how the Selectmen or Police Department would have felt if she had put a "Slow" sign in the road. She didn't know if the Elkins project would promote slower speeds. She understands that the police can't be in Elkins all the time. Chief Andersen recommended not putting something in the middle of the road as it could create a hazardous situation. He noted that they have two officers going through the police academy this summer so they don't have as much directed patrols with radar, etc. as they normally would.

Chief Lyon reported that the Fire Department had several hundred people come through the fire station during Hospital Days. He noted that they are always looking for people who want to join the department. The new ladder truck was acquired this year. The old one was a 1992 and had been out of service six months over the last year due to needed repairs. Compared with other towns, New London has fewer pieces of apparatus so it is important that they are in good

working order. The new truck has a compressed air foam system that is three to five times more effective than water and works quicker than water alone.

Ms. Hardy said she hoped everyone liked the new style of the tax bills. They are trying to improve things with their software.

Chair Helm hoped people feel that this was a very well-managed town. She was impressed at how people work as a team.

The 2013 Nonresident Taxpayer Meeting concluded and the Selectmen began their regular meeting.

Dogs in Elkins

Jane Smedley addressed the Board, noting that she lives directly across from the boat launch in Elkins and, regardless of the comments made at the last Selectmen's meeting, said they do not have a dog problem there. She walks around the lake routinely and has not seen one pit bull. Ms. Smedley pointed out that dogs should not have to swim on a leash because it is not good for them. Julia Brisbane from Sherman Street, who said she was also speaking for two households she lives near, said that they go to the boat launch with their dogs and they police themselves. If a dog comes and it seems they will not get along, they take their dogs away.

Chair Helm said that they have received other feedback from citizens who felt that there was not a problem with dogs.

Ms. Lee said she has been at the Elkins boat launch for 11 years at all times of the day. They have never had a dog issue or a dogfight. She did not see that there were dogs wandering around there or that there were pit bulls around the area. Ms. Kidder said that another resident came to them with an issue they felt was important and they have to take her concerns and consider them.

Chief Andersen said the Police Department has investigated a lot of dog bites in the area of the intersection of Wilmot Center Road and Elkins Road. The people on the dam with dogs have not been a problem. Chair Helm said it sounded like it was under control at the moment and that the discussion could be tabled.

True Ricker, of Wilmot Center Road, informed the Board that she was concerned when she read the article in the newspaper but is happy to see the more measured response being taken by the Selectmen currently. Ms. Kidder noted that another concern about the area in question was people who are on top of the dam and jumping into the water, which is not safe. The Board will continue looking into this issue, as it was separate from the dogs.

Appointments/Reappointments to Boards/Commissions

Chair Helm said they had to finalize board appointments and reappointments.

Conservation

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to reappoint Bob Brown and Ruth White to the Conservation Commission. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Planning Board

It was noted that both Paul Gorman and John Tilley were up for reappointment. Deirdre Sheerr-Gross said she was willing and able to be reappointed although she is not able to attend all of meetings. Ms. Hallquist suggested appointing another individual as an alternate to the Planning Board and said that Bill Helm had filled out an application to join.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to reappoint John Tilley and Paul Gorman to the Planning Board. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to reappoint Deirdre Sheerr-Gross as alternate to the Planning Board. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Helm wondered if they wanted to add another alternate to the Planning Board. It was thought that this was a good idea.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to appoint Bill Helm as an alternate to the Planning Board. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Ms. Hallquist said that Courtland Cross did not wish to be reappointed as regular member but wanted to be an alternate. Doug Lyon requested reappointment. Sue Andrews did not indicate whether she wanted reappointment or not, and Jeff Horten indicated he did not want to be reappointed. Both Ann Bedard and Nancy Rollins are new members who have already been appointed.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to appoint Courtland Cross as alternate, and to reappoint Doug Lyon, to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Chair Helm thought they should hold off on appointing more new members to the CAC (recently appointed members include Marie Rossachacj and Hank Otto). She noted that Rich Anderson was to get back to them with some names of younger individuals who may want to join.

Noise Concern – Whipple Court

Chair Helm observed that the Board has received several complaints concerning excessive late-night noise from neighbors of the Barn Players' residential property house on Whipple Court. Ms. Hallquist noted that she and Corporal Zuger met with representatives of the Barn Playhouse

and the neighbors in July to discuss the problem. Given the continuing complaints of neighbors, the situation is not resolved.

The Board noted that it would be helpful to have an objective review of this issue, and asked that the Police Department be asked to increase patrols in this area late at night to report on the level of disturbance. Ms. Kidder thought if they could be proactive and have a cruiser waiting there at that time, the information can then be used to determine whether additional steps are necessary.

Chief Lyon wondered if they should review the number of people living in the house. The Barn's view is that it is grandfathered because they've always housed people there. Contingent upon the number of individuals with the state fire code, they would need to deal with those issues for fire safety. He added that more people make more noise, so perhaps there are too many people living in the house.

Retiring Deputy Tax Collector/Town Clerk, Joan Pankhurst

The Board noted receipt of a letter informing them that Joan Pankhurst, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector, is retiring at the end of the month. Chair Helm recognized the years of service to New London provided by Ms. Pankhurst and noted that she is sad to see her leave.

Ms. Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, informed the Board that she didn't want to ask for a full-time replacement but someone who would work part-time, possibly 20 hours/week. She thought looking at the way the office was run and how it was automated, she could run it fairly efficiently with a part-time employee. There will be some changes in the hours because it will be a while before any person they hire can work alone. She will most likely have to close at lunch maybe through the end of the calendar year. She had a help-wanted ad that was distributed to the Selectmen and was hoping to have someone in by October 1st. The new employee will have to do some State training to do registrations and vital records. It would be at least three months before they can be fully staffed. The applicant has to be a resident of New London.

Ms. Hardy said that the ad will go out to the general public next week. She and Ms. Hallquist would interview the candidates.

Ms. Hardy discussed possible weekly hours that could be offered for this position. Ms. Kidder said that the person being hired should know that they would have to work full-time when Ms. Hardy goes on a vacation.

Chair Helm wondered if it was an opportunity to look at both job descriptions. Ms. Hardy said that it is a statutory requirement that they have a deputy to step in for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to perform her duties if she cannot.

Ms. Hardy said they are working with the vendor to get the Cloud software going and they hope to be up and running in October. It is a slow process getting the software programs integrated. This is for tax information and bills only, not registrations.

Ms. Hardy said she hoped the Budget Committee would appreciate the down-sizing of her office and her not asking for a full-time replacement. She hoped they were appreciative of this effort to follow through with her thoughts that she could downsize. Ms. Kidder thanked Ms. Hardy for doing this.

Town Administrator's Report

Hospital Days

Ms. Hallquist reported that Hospital Days seemed to go very well from Thursday through the triathlon on Sunday. All of the people she saw were very complimentary on all aspects of the special events. Chief Lyon agreed, noting that it was a successful weekend as was evident by the traffic in town.

Mr. Blewitt, Recreation Director, said this was his first time being at Hospital Days. His department offered face-painting, tie dying, and other activities. The triathlon had 90 teams of three and 100 individuals racing. These were record numbers. Ms. Kidder appreciated the efforts of Mr. Blewitt and his staff.

Building Repairs Needed

Ms. Hallquist noted that the building committee continues to inspect town buildings. Jim Wheeler, for the committee, reported some electrical issues present at Whipple Hall and the Police Department. The committee will continue inspections. Proposals for the roof of the gazebo are still on-going – a request for pricing of synthetic roofing has been requested.

Committee Reports

Chair Helm said she was pleased with their joint meeting with the Planning Board.

Mr. Bianchi reported the last regular Planning Board meeting included discussion of the Messer subdivision.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to go into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A: THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.
Tina Helm: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes, Peter Bianchi: Yes.**

The Board entered nonpublic session at 10:25 AM.

The Board re-entered the public session at 11:20 AM.

Other Business

Bench Dedication

Ms. Hallquist reported that a citizen has inquired about donating money to allow a memorial plaque to be placed on a town park bench in honor of a loved one. The Board noted that before any such donations could be accepted, a policy should be adopted by the Board.

Upcoming Meetings

August 19 – Board of Selectmen's Meeting, 6:00pm

August 27 – Planning Board Meeting, 7:00pm
September 7 – CAC Meeting, 7:30am

Application for Building Permit:

- Beaconwood 2012 Realty Trust, 231 Poor Road (Map & Lot 091-006-000) build new single family home – Permit #13-072 – Approved.
- Thomas McKee, 518 Burpee Hill Road (Map & Lot 070-016-000) build front & back decks – Permit #13-073 – Approved.
- Ruth Littlefield/Robert Pugliese, 373 Pleasant St. (Map & Lot 061-005-000) close in porch – Permit #13-074 – Approved.
- Sharon Sheehan Trust, 47 Checkerberry Lane (Map & Lot 044-026-000) new garden shed – Permit #13-075- Approved
- Richard Hadley, 30 Checkerberry Lane (Map & Lot 044-034-000) new garden shed – Permit #13-076 – Approved.
- Cahill, McDonald, Miller, 52 Elkins Road (Map & Lot 077-011-000) build new 5 bedroom house w/3 car garage – Permit #13-077 – Approved.
- Herman & Sally Thompson, 173 Squires Lane (Map & Lot 096-025-000) build addition to back of garage & front porch – Permit #13-078 – Approved.

Application for temporary sign permits:

- New London Historical Soc. Yard sale – sign at information booth – 8/10/ 2013 – approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- Warrant Yield Tax Levy – (Map & Lot 089-007) \$1369.57 – approved.

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

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London