



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES January 16, 2015 New London Fire Station

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Bob and Emma Crane, Sue Little, Hardy Hasenfuss, Jack Sheehan, Maureen Prohl, Joe Cardillo, Peter Hogle, Phyllis Piotrow, Don Klingler, Bud Dick, Steve Ensign, Will Kidder, Bruce Hudson, Celeste Cook, Kate Turcotte, Fire Chief Jay Lyon and members of the New London Fire Department.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Janet Kidder at 7:45 AM, after the Selectboard, town staff and community members had enjoyed a bountiful breakfast buffet provided by members of the New London Fire Department.

Chair Kidder began the meeting by recognizing New London Police Officers Eben Lamson and David Keith, who were recently honored, along with Sunapee Police Officer Timothy Therrien, by the Sunapee Police Department. The officers received an award for their actions during a late-night fire at Jake's Market in Georges Mills. While evacuating houses in the area of the fire, Officer Therrien was unable to rouse a resident in a surrounding home by pounding on the windows and door, so Officers Lamson and Keith aided him in breaking a window to gain access. The officers then woke the woman and assisted her in leaving the building. Sunapee Police Chief David Cahill and the woman both believe the officers' actions saved her life.

The New London Skating Rink is up and running and the warming hut is now insulated, making it much more comfortable. Chair Kidder reminded everyone that there is no refrigeration at the skating rink, so if the weather warms up, it must be closed.

With regard to the Winter Carnival currently taking place in New London, Chair Kidder reported that 270 people attended the Jack Frost Dinner, held last night on the Town Green, and noted that there were close to 300 requests for tickets. The food served by various restaurants at the dinner was scrumptious and enjoyed by all who attended. The "First Annual Undie Run, *Freezin' for a Reason*," a new event at the carnival this year, was very popular. There were 40 participants, some actually wearing just underwear, and \$500 was raised, which will benefit the Chad Denning Memorial Fund.

Next, Chair Kidder asked Selectman Peter Bianchi to give the group an overview of what has been taking place at Planning Board meetings lately. Mr. Bianchi related two key topics being discussed are signs and site planning. He noted the Planning Board has been working diligently on revising sign regulations, and are attempting to tighten up or modify the site plan requirements for businesses in town. There are many opinions about the type and size of signs, and how many per business, should be permitted.

Selectman Bianchi told the audience that the Planning Board would appreciate citizen input into the discussion. It has been extremely difficult for the board to come up with an ordinance that pleases everyone, and they can use as much feedback as possible. He observed that the issue of something so simple as how many balloons should be allowed and how big they can be has been a hot topic. Site planning usually concerns non-residential uses. Selectman Bianchi encouraged people to get involved in the discussion.

A gentleman asked if there was an agenda item for "Solarize Kearsarge." There was not, so he told the audience that almost 30 solar contracts have been drawn up so far. The group hopes to locate a solar farm somewhere in the area. The assistant manager of Hannaford has agreed to work with the group and he will be joining them at the stump dump.

Selectman Nancy Rollins reported that the Budget Committee met three times in December and heard subcommittee reports about various aspects of the town budget. Capital budget items are currently being studied. Ms. Rollins noted that the Town of New London has some significant issues facing it, and the Board must figure out how to address them.

Chair Kidder mentioned that Sandra Licks, Librarian at Tracy Library, was forced to close the library a week ago due to two separate water damage events - two pipes burst in the basement. Because of these water leaks, the air quality of the building has been impacted, and the library is closed to the public pending the outcome of testing that is still taking place. Ms. Licks is hoping the library will be ready to re-open next Tuesday, January 27, and will post the date on the town's website, as soon as she knows it. An audience member requested that the recorded announcement on the library's voice mail be redone so that it contains a little more information about why the library is closed. Town Administrator Kim Hallquist noted that ServPro had been called in to do the clean-up.

Chair Kidder announced that Jim Perkins will be giving a talk about the history of Whipple Hall at the next Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, but she is not yet sure of the date. The next Selectman's meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 26, and also on that date is a Listening Session at 5 PM with local representatives David Kidder and Karen Ebel in attendance, to be held at the Town Hall.

Fire Chief Jay Lyon thanked Sally Morse and Jenna Edmunds for their assistance with the breakfast buffet, along with John Cannon, C. J. Brim, Ben Cushing, Sam Cahan, and Steve Ensign, who serves as Chief Fireward. Chief Lyon proceeded with a video presentation regarding the New London Fire Department. He noted that he had been a member of the department since 1991 and Chief since 2007. Chief Lyon explained that the station was expanded in 2004. The town paid for the "bricks and mortar" and everything else in the new building was donated privately - Shaker Hill Cabinets and Burpee Hill Cabinets provided the kitchen cabinets; MESA donated dishware; the furniture was built at the state prison. The bunk room furniture came from a company in Littleton, NH, that builds military bunks, and the exhaust system was paid for by the NH Firefighters Association. Jay will conduct a tour of the station at the conclusion of his presentation.

During the presentation, Chief Lyon emphasized that the fire department focuses on three things - preparedness, public education, and training. When calls come in, the trucks have to be fueled and ready. Staff at the fire department regularly go out into the community and talk with various groups. They perform code compliance inspections and check any businesses where a change in use has occurred to make sure emergency lights are working and there is a proper means of egress.

Chief Lyon noted that having a mutual aid agreement with contiguous towns is very important. Two recent fires, one at Jake's Market and one at New London Wood Products, were quickly knocked out because of assistance from other towns.

The fire department responds to fires, accidents, floods, and snow emergencies. Chimney fires used to account for a significant amount - 48% - of building fires, but that has decreased in recent years. Firefighters handle vehicle fires and forest fires. The department also performs dive team and water rescues. The dive team was established a couple of years ago and the divers are required to keep up their proficiency. They made two recoveries for law enforcement last year.

Members of the fire department are comprised of two full-time employees, who cover the station Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 7 PM. The station can be staffed at night, if necessary. There are 43 part-time employees – on-call firefighters. Some of these are Colby-Sawyer College students. Chief Lyon displayed a picture of the department's employees at the annual barbecue, mentioning that their families were also considered part of the team. Jay said the department averages about 650 calls a year. When the two full-time employees are not on duty, the department has nine others on call. "On call" was established in 1999 to respond to calls which do not warrant having the entire department present.

Training was discussed. Chief Lyon said that products today burn hotter and faster. People only have 2 or 3 minutes to get out of a building. The smoke produced is super toxic. Statistics show that 48% of firefighter fatalities are due to heart attacks. Studies indicate the constant exposure to cyanide and carbon monoxide causes cumulative damage to one's heart, which is a big concern, especially for older firefighters. One of the benefits of the new construction at the station was adding showers, so the firefighters do not bring these carcinogens home.

Level 1 firefighter classes last for six months and require 216 hours of study. Level 2 classes require 140 hours of state certified classes. EMT courses entail 200 hours. Classes are available for specific aspects of firefighting wall breeches or roof operations.

Fire prevention is encouraged. The fire department gives talks to about 500 children annually, ranging from pre-school to fifth grade. They speak to folks in elderly health care facilities and assisted living homes. People, including kids, learn how to use a fire extinguisher, and how to get out of a room safely.

Chief Lyon briefly outlined the fire department's equipment. A new ladder truck was purchased in 2013 and is a multi-purpose vehicle. Engine 2 was purchased in 2001, and was refurbished in October, 2014. This one goes to all motor vehicle accidents. The tanker was obtained in 1998, and is due to be replaced with an engine tanker.

Jay finished up the presentation by stating that the fire department is always willing to help in a number of ways. They honor Armed Service members. They collect Toys for Tots. A crew went to the top of Mt. Kearsarge to assist with radio equipment installation, because the spot enhances communication. He noted they are always looking for good members. Chief Lyon gave the fire department website address, Facebook address, and e-mail address. He urged anyone with questions to give him a call at the station and then opened the floor for questions.

There was a question from a gentleman who works with elderly people. He wondered whether the fire department has a data base of widows/widowers trying to "age in place." He asked if there was a way to do an app for a smart phone to alert the fire department. Chief Lyon answered that New London does not have anything like that here. They do have a "care track" for people with dementia and autistic children,

which has been very successful. LifeAlert is also offered in other areas. Jay thought it might be possible to establish some type of personal "check" system for at-risk folks.

Another question was asked about how the fire department logistically structures who is on call. The gentleman asked if the department had a rotating schedule. Jay responded that would be difficult for a small department. Some of the 43 firefighters on call are at work. The department also has tremendous turnover. They recently installed a new system called "Active 911" to manage personnel. They have iPads with "Active 911" on alert. Firefighters carry a pager. Chief Lyon went on to discuss the app and how it works. He can see which firefighters have responded and where they are currently located.

The issue of dispatch in New London possibly being outsourced was addressed. Chief Lyon stated the fire department would look at the other four dispatch centers in the state if dispatch is outsourced. He feels the town would probably go with Lakes Region Dispatch. He noted that the beneficial thing in New London having its own dispatch center is that it can set its own policies.

Hardy Hasenfuss asked how the firefighters know who to send to a call? Jay said they rely on the caller for information. If the persons says there is a fire, everyone will come. Same thing for carbon monoxide.

Peter Bianchi asked Chief Lyon what he thought the lifespan was for this facility. Jay responded that he thought it would serve them for awhile. He does not foresee any further expansion. He said New London firefighters take more calls with fewer pieces of equipment than any other town. When the tanker is replaced, it will be kept as a reserve piece. The station is really down to bare bones.

Chief Lyon asked everyone to break up into four groups in order to take a tour of the building and fire facilities.

Chair Kidder noted that the date of next month's meeting is not yet known, but she will get in touch with Jim Perkins about his availability and then will contact everyone.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Work, Recording Secretary
Town of New London