



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES January 9, 2016, 7:30 AM Academy Building Sydney Crook Conference Room

PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Dave Payne, Jack Sheehan, Katherine Fischer, Marie Rossachacj, Robert Prohl, Mark & Phyllis Piotrow, Tim McMurrich, Pete Hoglund, David Royle, Bob Crane, Emma Crane, Celeste Cook

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Rollins at 7:34 AM.

Kim Halquist gave an update of projects going on in the town. Work on the Academy Building (Town Offices) has finished for the season, painting will resume and be finished in the spring. The original estimate for the project was \$350,000 and expenditures are currently at \$300,000 with a need to complete the cupola at Whipple Hall and the air exchange system at the Academy Building (Town Offices) with an estimate of \$50,000. An estimate is being sought for insulation in the attic. The overhang on the back door of Academy Building was not in the estimate as it was not anticipated. Weather was good at the end of 2015 which allowed the work to go on into November.

The Elkins sidewalk project is going well, people are happy with the walkways. Work will start up again in the spring when snow has disappeared. There is a need to redo the parapets, put in guard rails as well as a pedestrian bridge. The grant is no longer applicable for this work (as it has expired) and any change orders will have to be paid by the Town at 100% of cost.

The bandstand will be done in the spring as they had to stop due to the cold weather. A ramp will be added to comply with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act.) The Steve Mendleson Trust will be paying for this with an estimate of \$64,000.

Board of Selectmen P: 603-526-4821 x 10 F: 603-526-9494	Town Administrator P: 603-526-4821 x 13 F: 603-526-9494	Town Clerk-Tax Collector P: 603-526-4821 x 11 F: 603-526-9494	Finance P: 603-526-4821 x21 F: 603-526-9494	Assessing P: 603-526-4821 x 20 F: 603-526-9494
Planning/Zoning P: 603-526-4821 x 16 F: 603-526-9494	Fire Department P: 603-526-6073 F: 603-526-6079	Police Department P: 603-526-2626 F: 603-526-2782	Public Works P: 603-526-6337 F: 603-526-9662	Recreation P: 603-526-4821 x 14 F: 603-526-9494

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The RFP employee compensation study is projected to cost between \$11,000 and \$13,000 and is in the budget.

Pleasant Lake Dam RFP is due on Tuesday, January 13, 2016 at noon. The state has mandated the necessity to project for a 100 year flood. This responsibility lies with the town and the possible estimate could be \$500,000. Although this is state mandated the town pays with no assistance from the State or Federal government and if the town does not correct the problem it becomes liable.

Sewer Lagoon issue is being addressed by Peter Bianchi who stated the estimate by Nobis Engineering for closing and remediating the lagoon areas will be between \$900,000 to \$1,400,000. Selectman Bianchi has met with the State lagoon specialist, Mike Rainy, who opined the town was capable of dealing with the issue by itself as is not catastrophic. Members on this committee are Peter Stanley, John Wilson, Richard Lee, Paul Currier (previously a road agent in New London) and Selectman Peter Bianchi. There is a need to ascertain the scope of the work along with necessary permits. The State is agreeable to a multi-year staging of this procedure. The process is to pump out the liquid to drain the lagoon, dry and scoop out material. Liquid to be tested so as to not pollute Keysar Lake again. Possibly can spray on land. Richard Lee has historical information about the area as he has been employed by the town for so long. Mike Rainey stated that we don't need a large company to perform this work. Marie Rossachaj asked about the algae pollution determination and Selectman Bianchi replied the volume of algae pollution can be determined by referring to a 1997 study that gave a mathematical equation for an amount per gallon.

Nancy Rollins talked about the employee compensation study and was accompanied by human resources representative from Colby-Sawyer College as well as an HR rep from Dartmouth College. Selectman Rollins expressed a desire to retain our employees as sometimes we train them and then they go on to other towns where pay is higher. The study will have an updated analysis to see how we compare to other towns. There is a need for graduated steps for employees with good employee evaluation which would require administration training for evaluators. Rob Prohl stated the importance for a good evaluator. An amount of \$100,000 is to be set aside for changes to employee compensation so that employees are encouraged to believe that the Town will abide by its promises concerning compensation changes. Selectman Rollins stated the way to attract good people and retain them is by performance evaluations and necessary compensation. The employer has an obligation to train the employee and state its expectations and then the employee needs to meet expectations. Selectman Rollins stated performance based raises are not common in government and that it is more common to have steps where all get raises.

Phyllis Piotrow expressed concern for the people at the top of scale already and have reached their top pay scale. This is a problem because this (highest) salary is not comparable to the same position in other communities.

Nancy Rollins said there is a need for a phased-in approach for these people but there is a maximum (such as a retirement bracket) and that is just the way it is.

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Rob Prohl spoke to the needs of the town going forward in the next 5 years and recent infrastructure costs which will necessitate an expected 10% rise in the taxes. Phyllis Piotrow talked to the expense of well-trained long-time employees leaving and the cost of retraining these people.

Sam Cahill was used as an example of employees leaving for what is believed a money deficiency. Peter Bianchi said there might be other reasons but New London is an attractive place to live and the factor is not necessarily money. Selectman Rollins said that as a town we need to think about the future for employees and that housing costs here are very expensive.

Selectman Rollins noted the Town Meeting date of March 9, 2016 and Town Elections on March 8, 2016 and the need for volunteers for the potluck dinner on March 9, 2016.

Phyllis Piotrow read from a newspaper about an additional \$5.00 being added to motor vehicle registration as a way of obtaining revenue but Finance Officer Wendy Johnson stated that was already done about 5+ years ago so this was not possible at this time.

Kim Halquist stated that Robin Lachance at the Transfer Station had retired and now we are now looking for a replacement.

Rob Prohl stated there is money in the proposed budget for a study of the transfer station and Kim Halquist expressed the need for a facility that is more efficient. Nancy Rollins said that there are traffic safety issues but that the staff does an incredible job given the space they have to work in. Marie Rossachacj asked if there was a way to distribute free standing barrels in parking lots that would be available for access on a 24/7 basis. Selectman Bianchi thought this was a great idea but the possibly of garbage ending up in barrel was a problem as it would contaminate the other contents. This would then involve the need for monitoring the barrels and thus necessitate the need for another staff member.

Selectman Rollins spoke to the 2 proposals from the Conservation Commission for purchasing the Cleveland-Kidder property on east (with buildable land) and west sides of Pleasant Street for \$250,000 for consideration as a recreational/community center location and/or to fulfill other needs for the town. She also spoke to the purchase of the 10 acre parcel on Davis Hill Road for \$900,000 which is adjacent to the current easement. Owners have talked of the possibly of subdivision of the property of two 4 acre sites. Current easement allows for vehicular traffic to allow for handicapped persons access to the top of Clarke Lookout. This project will not be on the town warrant this year but purchase of Cleveland-Kidder property acquisition will.

Conversation on 1941 Building has started up and Selectman Rollins stated the townspeople have shifted their awareness to the importance of the actual property (land) and away from the building issues.

Peter Bianchi talked about the Sunapee sewer spillage and the resulting fine and New London's responsible share of the fine.

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An amount of \$40,000,000 was set in the upcoming school budget and New London's share will be discussed at school board meeting following this meeting. There is a total of 1900 students in the school district. New London is responsible for 322 of these students and is paying 26% of the total enrollment when only 17% of this population are comprised of the students in our town. There are seven towns contributing and the apportionment is based on attendance and equalized valuation. The other towns are increasing in population as well.

Peter Hoglund asked who was responsible for the maintenance at the intersection Route 11 and Seaman's Road as the street is very rocky and needs maintenance. Kim Halquist recognized there is a problem because the state is filing in with cold patch which does not wear well. It will be fixed at the next major renovation as per Richard Lee. Mr. Prohl also wanted to know about the recent information reported in the newspaper concerning dispatch at the police station. Nancy Rollins and Kim Halquist said it will be discussed again in the near future with the Wilmot Fire Chief.

Schedule for next CAC meetings to be the first Saturday of the month for the following year and February 6 and March 5, 2016 were confirmed.

Phyliss Piotrow asked about CAC terms of expiration. Kim Halquist said these term limits are currently posted in the Town Report and vacancies will be advertised for the elected positions. Jack Sheehan said his term was ending and that he saw the committee drifting from being an advisory committee to a "show-and-tell for the various departments." Mr. Sheehan thought more opinion from committee members should be sought. It was noted that going forward the CAC would seek committee member's opinion. Nancy Rollins suggested a charter with a purpose spelled out so that potential committee members know what they are signing up for. Jack Sheehan thought the last CAC meeting went on too long about the recreation department. Nancy Rollins thought perhaps an agenda would keep the committee on task so that other things could be discussed. Selectman Rollins said that participation is encouraged, appreciated and needed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Vitiello,

Recording Secretary

Town of New London, NH