



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 13, 2015

New London Highway Department

PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Richard Lee, Director, Public Works Department

ALSO PRESENT:

Joe Cardillo, Hank Otto, Jack Sheehan, Sue Little, Thelma Kaplan, Katharine Fischer, Sue Little, Paul Lazdowski, Marie Rossachaj, Bruce Hudson, Renate Kannler, Rose Bernard, Kate Turcotte, Marianne McEnrue, Will Kidder, Maureen Prohl, Robert and Emma Crane, Celeste Cook, Donn Klingler, Peter Høglund, John Cannon

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Rollins at 7:35 AM. She thanked everyone for coming and expressed the Board's appreciation to Richard Lee and his staff for hosting the meeting at the Highway Garage. Chair Rollins observed that the primary focus of today's meeting was a tour of the Public Works Department, but it was also an opportunity to recognize and thank Richard and his staff for the incredible job they do. She also mentioned that Richard had recently won a state-wide Public Works award: NH Public Works Employee of the Year.

Some updates:

- With regard to the New London Bandstand, Ms. Rollins reported that the town had received two bids for the repair of the gazebo's understructure, and a decision will be forthcoming soon.
- Frank Anzalone, an architect, has been looking at the Academy Building and removing sections of the side wall to determine what the scope of work will be. He has submitted a draft report to the Board of Selectmen, which has not been formally reviewed as yet. The report contains various specifications and recommendations. Mr. Anzalone will assist with interviewing potential bidders and will go over the scope of the contracts. Maureen Prohl asked who would be overseeing the work and Ms. Rollins replied it would be both Frank Anzalone and Richard Lee, with Richard taking the primary responsibility.
- Nobis Engineering has completed their investigation of the sewer lagoons and will issue a report shortly addressing the concerns that have been raised regarding these ponds.
- Elkins Sidewalk Project – Selectman Rollins noted that the town has received two bids to wrap up the project, which will be reviewed and forwarded to the State for final approval. Celeste Cook asked whether the project would be finished this summer or next year. Richard Lee said there will be two steps, the first hopefully completed by the end of July. The final step will take place next spring, with a projected end date sometime in late May, 2016. Part of the delay is due to the fact that the guardrail will not be available for awhile, since it is being custom built.
- Selectman Rollins reminded everyone that New London is hosting its first annual Strawberry Festival on the Green on June 26, and many activities have been scheduled. She urged folks to try and attend.

Selectman Rollins asked for questions and comments.

- Jack Sheehan asked about the status of an apparent zoning violation on Lake Sunapee concerning a boat house canopy. Janet Kidder replied that she thought this issue had been resolved. The town's definition regarding boat houses does not allow canopies to be utilized, and she said the Board will contact the owners of the property in question.
- Joe Cardillo reminded committee members that the Father-Daughter Dance will be held tonight at Whipple Hall. He commended Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director, for the good job he has done in organizing the event over the last couple of years.
- Mr. Cardillo also mentioned the upcoming Cow Flop Party sponsored by New London Hospital in conjunction with Hospital Day activities.
- The K-9 project (trained police dog) seems to be moving forward according to recent committee minutes.
- Mr. Cardillo stated the 1941 Building (old elementary/middle school) issue has resurfaced and he is curious about that. Chair Rollins replied that the Board of Selectmen will be discussing this at the next board meeting on Monday, June 15. Peter Bianchi explained that the CIP Subcommittee wants the Selectboard to immediately negotiate for the building and land since there have been rumors about the building being torn down because the school district does not want to continue to heat it.
- A question was asked about the recent break with tradition regarding the rules of procedure for the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Cardillo said that, historically, every Selectman in his/her third year serves as Chair. That would be Peter Bianchi this year. However, Ms. Rollins was named as Chair instead. Mr. Cardillo wondered why. Selectman Rollins answered that it has come to her attention that there are many unwritten rules around the Selectboard. If one is not privy to them, it is difficult to understand how things should operate. She noted that if one looks at any other governing structure, there are rules of procedure that address everything from how chairpersons are chosen, how members conduct themselves, how to work with the public, and so forth, and she feels these rules are absolutely necessary. Selectman Rollins stated she wanted to leave the subject there. Mr. Cardillo replied that while he acknowledged it was important to lay out a governance structure, it appears that this change was made out of the clear blue, without the courtesy of any prior notice to Mr. Bianchi.
- Phyllis Piotrow commented that sewer bills are really high this year. She observed that most people are not using vast amounts of water, so asked the reason for the increase. Kim Hallquist noted that the new sewer bills are beginning to reflect that payments are now due on the sewer bond.
- Paul Lazdowski asked what the process was for deciding which roads in town get repaved. Mr. Lazdowski said he wanted to put in a plug for Parkside Road. Richard Lee replied that Public Works is trying to get a sense of what is going to be done about putting in a sidewalk on Parkside Road, which would narrow the street down. That would have to be done before the road is repaved. Mr. Lee said there possibly may be changes made at the assisted living facility on Parkside as well, so his team will probably wait a year or two before upgrading the road.
- Celeste Cook commented that she had noticed many new committee members at today's meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves, which they did.
- A committee member asked if the town's website is going to be updated. Kim Hallquist replied that this was on the board's list of things to do.

Chair Rollins then turned the floor over to Richard Lee. Mr. Lee noted that his department has 12 full-time and 2 part-time employees who are responsible for all the parks, wastewater pumping, the transfer station, roads, cemeteries, Newport Road and the Four Corners section. He said that every time they plow snow, they rack up enough miles to have made a trip to Boston and back. He described the functions of

the four big trucks in the garage, and noted that Public Works is in the process of purchasing a new one-ton truck this year, which will cost about \$78,000. The back hoe cost \$73,000 and the Excavator also about \$73,000. The grader they use was purchased in 1990, and a new one will cost somewhere around \$275,000 new. When voters go to Town Meeting and look at the budget for Public Works, these folks should understand why it costs so much to maintain the services Richard's department provides. Mr. Lee pointed out that in February, the department was burning 1200-1500 gallons a week of fuel for their equipment.

The Highway garage building is about 10 years old and Mr. Lee remarked that it is holding up pretty well. Cement board siding was used on the outside of the building, however, and when it gets wet, the siding deteriorates quickly. The sand and salt shed will be replaced in 2019 (? – not sure that's right?). They will use steel arches and a polyethylene cover, which should make the shed last longer. The old garage was sprayed with formaldehyde in the 1980's and it will cost about \$85,000 to treat and seal the building, and then reinsulate it. Richard observed that he talks to a lot of other road agents, and he knows and appreciates the fact that the Town of New London provides his staff with very good facilities.

Mr. Lee talked briefly about materials they use and the high cost of them. Hard pack which includes gravel costs \$7 a ton and \$12 if it is delivered. It costs \$12,000 to put down a gravel road. Hot top, with an inch and a half shim, costs \$73,000 a mile. Every foot of road costs \$14. It is double that for three inches of hot top.

Public Works does not have a difficult time keeping busy. They rebuild manholes for the Wastewater Department and are very aggressive about filtration. Richard noted that clean water should not be in the system because it is treated. Maureen Prohl asked if there was any way to make citizens aware of the problem. Richard replied that people should check to see if they have leaky faucets and ask for smoke tests to be done. Sometimes drains are left open. There could be leaky toilets or grease in the system. When grease gets into the pipes, it starts congealing. Mr. Lee noted that his employees take about three trash bags full of grease out of the Pump Station every week. Some dishwasher soaps congeal. He recommended that this information should be published in the *Shopper*, so people are made aware of what not to put down a drain. Maureen Prohl asked if Handi-Wipes contributed to the problem – the State of Maine is trying to ban them. Richard replied that New London has not had an issue with them yet.

With regard to the Transfer Station, Richard noted that all manufacturers are currently cutting back on containers, including plastic packaging. Cardboard has been cut considerably. Mr. Lee noted that recycling is moving at a slow pace and scrap metal, cardboard and paper are way down. Richard said a trailer contains 22 tons of trash, which is then hauled to Meredith. Solid waste at the Transfer Station is an issue. He pointed out that recycling has to be convenient or people will not do it. The glass is ground down to gravel consistency and Public Works gets the finished product, which they use in roads and building projects. He pointed out that Colby-Sawyer College has a new dining facility which has a floor comprised of half glass, half gravel. Public Works is always looking for markets for ground glass, since New London is a collection site. He commented that ground glass could be used as backfill around a foundation, or in a drainage system, or in pavement for sidewalks. Mr. Lee feels people should be educated about all the uses for ground glass.

A question was asked about how Sunday hours are working out at the Transfer Station. Richard replied that it was not busy on Sunday in the winter. He plans to do traffic counts in July and August. Mr. Lee said he is not sure if it is cost effective to have the Transfer Station open on Sundays - the jury is still out. Joe Cardillo commented that the Transfer Station does a wonderful job. He asked Richard if there is enough space. Richard answered that the Solid Waste Committee is looking into that at the present time.

He noted that there is no place to store aluminum cans until they get a load. The Transfer Station is cramped and storage is an issue. The site does not give them much room. A bathroom facility is located in the cottage on the property.

“Nickel returns” was briefly discussed. The term refers to income derived from bottles sold in the State of Vermont. A redemption center handles the empty bottles and pays the Town of New London a nickel for each.

Joe Cardillo asked if there was a fuel tank located at the Town Garage and Richard replied there was, noting it will probably have to be replaced in the near future because it is almost 15 years old. They have rebuilt the pump three times. Public Works will make a determination in the next 10 to 12 months about replacing the fuel tank.

Phyllis Piotrow asked for an update on the sewer lagoons. Richard related that the old treatment plant used to have six lagoons called settling lagoons, and water came out and got treated. Three upper lagoons were eventually closed. The three remaining lagoons that need to be filled have no sludge, but sediment is about a foot deep and loaded with chemicals. Nothing really bad, Richard assured everyone, but not something one would want to see in any water stream. These three lower lagoons were never closed and in 2007 or 2008, people became concerned that the nutrients might be going into Lyon Brook. The Town is now in the process of having engineering firms help it to move forward in closing the lagoons. A proposal was submitted in 2009, but the Department of Environmental Services is difficult to work with and they did not approve the plan. Mr. Lee noted that the Town is trying to come up with the most reasonable, the most environmentally correct way to do this. Engineers are doing survey work and taking test results. DES is trying to put a meeting together with Kim and Richard, with both sides attempting to work out a final closure plan. Engineering costs are \$26,000. Closure costs will depend on what the state requires the town to do.

Emma Crane asked if plastic is compacted at the Transfer Station and Richard acknowledged that it was. Plastic bottles are put under pressure all during the night and then they stay flat and do not spring back up. There was a question about plastics used for take-out food and grocery stores, and Mr. Lee said it is about impossible to get anyone to take it. No one wants plastic toys and furniture.

Selectman Kidder asked Richard to address the difference between leasing equipment and buying it. Mr. Lee replied that he is not sure leasing would work out over a large time span. A lease/purchase agreement might work, where equipment is paid for over a fixed period of years. He noted that deal is sometimes offered on trucks, although some companies charge interest. He agreed it might be something to look into.

Bruce Hudson asked if the Facilities Manager was still doing a great job at 20 hours a week and Richard answered that he was. He said Matt is very involved with everything going on and does all the maintenance work that comes in. He is responsible for upgrading the bathrooms and beach houses at Elkins Beach. He noted that the Town keeps Mr. Grimes busy.

Renate Kannler asked if Public Works was responsible for Bucklin Beach as well and Richard answered affirmatively, noting that they empty the trash and keep the buildings up. The picnic tables at Bucklin are in the process of being replaced.

Mr. Lee thanked committee members for coming to the Highway Garage for the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting this morning. He said he hoped he was able to answer everyone's questions adequately. Richard received a large round of applause.

Chair Rollins noted that the date of next month's meeting is not yet known, but once a date is set, the committee members will be contacted. (Kim – actually I'm not sure if the next meeting date has been set, so you better check on this!)

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Work, Recording Secretary
Town of New London