



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES September 12, 2015 New London Police Department Whipple Hall

PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Edward Andersen, Police Chief

ALSO PRESENT:

Thelma Kaplan, Phyllis Piotrow, Dave Royal (?), Roger Smith, Paul Lazdowski, Jack Sheehan, Renate Kannler, Bruce Hudson, Celeste Cook, Katharine Fischer, Joe Cardillo, Will Kidder, Roger Small, Arthur McMurry, Paul Lazdowski, Sue Little, Bud Dick, Marsha Goldberg; Hank Otto, Marie Rossachaj, Rose Bernard, Kate Turcotte, Marianne McEnrue, Maureen Prohl, Robert and Emma Crane, Donn Klingler, Peter Hoglund, John Cannon

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Rollins at 7:30 AM. She thanked everyone for coming, asked that each committee member attending introduce him/ herself, and then expressed the Board's appreciation to Police Chief Ed Anderson for agreeing to host the meeting at Whipple Hall.

Chair Rollins gave a brief update on current events at the town and noted in particular that the Energy Committee met last Monday, September 7. She reported that New London now has 157 homes outfitted with solar panels. The Energy Committee mentioned there is interest in establishing a solar farm locally, and several buildings in town are also considering changing to solar.

Construction projects currently taking place are siding replacement at the Academy Building/Town Office, installation of new windows, and the addition of insulation. The construction has impacted parking at the rear of the building and Chair Rollins noted that the driveway will go from one-way to two-way for the duration of the project. Repairs are also being made to the bandstand and the cupola on Whipple Hall. The Elkins sidewalk project has begun and will continue into November, weather permitting.

Chair Rollins then turned the floor over to Police Chief Andersen. Chief Andersen gave some personal information about himself, noting that he moved to Goshen, NH when he was nine years old and attended Sunapee High School. After high school, he decided he wanted to get into law enforcement and became a police cadet. He was hired by the towns of Goshen and New London as a part-time dispatcher. He served part-time as a police officer in Sutton while putting himself through college. He later became a full-time patrol officer in New London, and ultimately, police chief.

Chief Andersen reported that the Police Department has two sergeants, one for patrol and one is administrative. The Chief would like to promote one of them to the rank of lieutenant. He discussed the different roles of police officers and noted the patrol sergeant's position is responsible for mentoring

officers. Chief Andersen feels it is very important to have an experienced officer working with the younger officers. Detective duties were explained – they handle robberies, break-ins, sexual assault cases, issue search warrants, process evidence, such as fingerprints, which helps to move cases along faster than waiting for the state to do it. There are currently four patrolmen. Chief Andersen's goal is for them to become a proactive police department, but currently there is not yet have enough staff. Patrolmen work in shifts and they almost always work weekends. When the Police Department becomes fully staffed, the officers will have more time on the road. Currently, there are usually two police cars on the road.

New London's patrolmen are part-time. Chief Andersen commented that some people say New London is "over policed." He pointed out that a part-time officer does not have to go through the Police Academy and does not get the same training as a full-time officer. It is a way for a young officer to get a foot in the door. Also, part-time officers help the police to get on the road sooner. A couple of the part-time officers are retired, but still want to work because they enjoy it, and their experience is very valuable.

Chief Andersen reported that New London is currently debating whether to keep dispatch in town, noting there has been a tremendous amount of support from the public and the Selectmen. He introduced Donna Laro, his administrative assistant. Donna spoke to the group about building security and equipment services. She said it took a great deal of effort from the Chief of Police to get people out to New London to service the equipment. The department negotiated with Hirsch (?) who now provides excellent service. Donna noted that the department's software was not properly licensed in the past, so dispatch has made sure that issue has been rectified. There are Bosch video recorders in the office. It's a good system, but the department had to supplement the recorders with a new system. The police now have the ability to record on strategically-based cameras. There are two units and recordings are stored on one of them. Dispatch's old server was not sufficient to meet the department's needs, so they installed a hyper_____ server so the database can be maintained separately. They are able to re-populate the hard drive and it can be serviced remotely. Ms. Laro said their internet service ran on residential for years. However, the State of NH said the department could no longer use a key 1 line to access the database because of security problems. The internet now has been updated from residential to business, which has given the department a really secure, state-of-the-art access. This move is also saving the department money.

New London currently dispatches for six towns – Sunapee, Newbury, Sutton, Wilmot, New London, and Crodon, according to Chief Andersen. Dispatch handles fire and police calls. In 2013, they answered 21,000 calls for service, 22,000 in 2015, and year-to date, 15,500. Since 2003, dispatch has put out 1.5 million transmissions on the policy frequency; 1.2 million transmissions on municipal. They have a very busy dispatch center. Emphasis is put on staffing for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights - dispatch has an extra person working in the office those days. If there are special events going on in town, the Police Department adds staff to dispatch.

Chief Andersen briefly touched on a radar grant being pursued by the Police Department. It would give the department additional money to catch speeders.

The Police Department will be asking for an increase in their training budget for next year. They are currently trying to determine how much is spent on training and how much on call-outs. Ongoing education is required for a police officer – at least 8 hours a year. Policemen also have to keep up with firearms training, taser training and reviewing any changes in the current laws. Supervisor training is also important. Officers are required to do accident reconstruction as part of their job, which also requires specialized training. The department has had 10,120 calls so far this year. In 2014, there were 14,169 calls and in 2014, 11,500. Chief Andersen estimates they will have about 14,000 this year. The officers deal with college issues such as noise complaints and intoxicated students. There have been 114

accidents in town and 200 calls regarding animal complaints this year – dogs, rabid foxes and skunks. Year-to-date there has been 173 arrests. In 2013, there were only 164. The department has assisted 140 motorists and attended to 114 accidents. They covered four suicides and seven criminal trespasses so far this year. The department also deals with domestic issues – there is usually at least one a month. Some other issues the police have worked on are harassment cases, illegal dumpings, missing persons, motor vehicle complaints, parking violations, and issuing protective orders. Officers removed 22 unwanted subjects, got 38 disabled cars off the road, and made 51 welfare checks. They have dealt with 5 sexual assaults already this year.

The police also participate in special fund-raising events such as “Stuff a Cruiser” where folks contribute groceries they’ve just purchased at the local grocery store, which is then is donated to food pantries; officers teach forensic science at the high school, and they work weddings and sports events. The department also educates college students about active shooters. The Police Department offers free fingerprinting on Thursdays between 1-4 PM at the Police Station. Chief Andersen noted that at the beginning of the school year, chaperones have to be finger-printed.

Questions from audience:

- Thelma Kaplan asked Chief Andersen why crime seems to have increased. Ed said there is a drug epidemic going on, employers are trying to find help, and sometimes cleaning businesses will break into a house. Big outbreak of drugs in Newport and Franklin. The Park and Ride in New London is a gateway for illegal acts.
- Question – what percentage of traffic stops result in tickets? Ed replied about 35%. He said the only thing the department receives money for is minors charged with possession of alcohol. Otherwise, all ticket money goes to the State of New Hampshire.
- The question was asked if Chief Andersen felt there was a lack of respect for officers. The Chief responded there was none from townspeople; they are very supportive. In general, he feels people are a little more aggressive these days.
- Question re: training and certification – is state certification the same for both part and full-time officers? Ed replied that it was – it is standardized throughout the state. New Hampshire still has military style preparation, where the trainees live on site for two weeks.
- Selectman Peter Bianchi asked Chief Andersen to fill in the group about where New London stands with regard to body cameras. Ed said they have purchased a system that will automatically download into the server. They are looking at Watch Guard for dashboard cameras. The police do not carry body cameras. He said that until NH changes its laws, it could become a liability for the officers to do that. They could potentially be charged with recording stuff they are not allowed to. No officers will wear body cameras until the laws are changed.
- Question about how officers handle underage drinking. Chief Andersen said they try to offer education instead of fines. If a person is respectful to a police officer, the department will try to help that person by holding a misdemeanor charge over his head for a year, which is dependent on good behavior. If the person meets all requirements, the police will not formally charge them. However, Chief Anderson emphasized that enforcement of drunken driving on the street is taken very seriously, because the police do not want anyone to drive intoxicated.

- Question was asked: how many full-time and part-time employees? Andersen responded there were 8 full-time and 5 part-time. Chief Andersen was asked if there was a resource officer in the middle school, and he replied that position has gone unfilled because of the low pay scale in Sutton. He agreed a resource officer can be very proactive and feels the kids are losing out by not having one. When asked why there couldn't be a regional pay scale for a resource officer, Chief Andersen said the School Board would have to work on that.
- Question about extent of New London Police Department's jurisdiction on the Interstate. Chief Andersen responded that the Town is responsible for part of I-89 and they occasionally run radar. Sometimes the police will have a car on the Interstate to check for intoxicated drivers, or if shots have been fired, or there is a disabled vehicle.
- Phyllis Piotrow observed that there are more and more guns available and wanted to know who is enforcing the state's gun laws? If these laws are not being enforced, she asked which ones they were, and why. Chief Andersen replied that New London enforces gun laws 100 percent. The department runs background checks on everyone, and has denied permits in the past. He noted that if someone is denied a gun permit, that person can go to a judge, who usually agrees with Ed about 50 percent of the time. Chief Anderson is trying to take any potential liability off the Town of New London and reiterated gun laws are enforced 100 percent of the time.

Bruce Hudson commented that the public display sponsored by the New London Fire Department yesterday in observance of September 11 was very impressive and well done. He was gratified to see the fifth-graders out there. All agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM and a tour of the Police Station commenced.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Work, Recording Secretary
Town of New London