

Final
Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Wilson, Connie Appel, Ben Cushing, Bob Meck, Kathy Bianchi, Jim Wheeler, Bill Helm, Celeste Cook, Ann Bedard, Mark Kaplan (Board of Selectmen Representative)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tina Helm (Chair, Board of Selectmen), Peter Bianchi (Selectman), Jessie Levine (Town Administrator), Carolyn Fraley (Finance Officer), Richard Lee (Public Works Director), Chad Denning (Recreation Director), Jay Lyon (Fire Chief), Steve Ensign (Board of Fire Wards), Phyllis Piotrow (New London Resident), Linda Jackman (Administrator's Assistant), Rob Daley (New London Resident), John Ryan (Board of Fire Wards), Hardy Hasenfuss (New London Resident), Carolyn Ellison (New London Resident), Rich Stockwell (New London Resident), Bill Green (New London Resident), Joe Cardillo (New London Resident), Bruce Hudson (New London Resident), Renate Kannler (New London Resident), Linda Hardy (Town Clerk/Tax Collector), Bob Brown (Chair, Conservation Commission), Michele Holton (New London Resident), Keith Pomkoski (New London Resident), Rob Bryant (Chamber of Commerce), Jerry Coogan (Chair, Recreation Commission)

Chair Wheeler opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. The first item of business was to review the minutes from the previous meeting. After a few minor corrections and amendments, Chair Wheeler called for a motion:

IT WAS MOVED (Connie Appel) AND SECONDED (Celeste Cook) to approve the minutes of November 29, 2010, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Wheeler announced that Bob Meck would not be attending that night's meeting, as he was at home recovering from knee surgery.

Revenues and Appropriations: Chair Wheeler referred to page four of the revenue sheets. He wondered if the common fund interest was okay given the current economic environment. Ms. Fraley said that the Trustees had taken that into consideration. Chair Wheeler then asked about the interest on the CDs. Ms. Fraley said that those figures were from Treasurer Steve Theroux and she believed they were appropriate.

Chair Wheeler referred to the budget change sheet and said there was confusion over the totals for the Planning Board Planner. Ms. Levine said that the 12 month and 6 month budget, added together gave a total of \$14,349 for this position. This was a \$5,000 difference over the previous 18-month budget.

Ms. Levine noted that the operating budget is at a 1.1% increase after taking into consideration the changes from the last meeting.

Chair Wheeler asked if \$715,000 was correct for Motor Vehicle Registrations. He thought that this revenue was down from last year. Ms. Fraley noted that it had gone down from \$725,000 to \$715,000.

Page 9: Chair Wheeler asked about the overtime Holiday Pay for the Police Department. Ms. Fraley said that it depended on whether a full or part-time officer works the holiday. Ms. Bianchi asked if this was the actual budget of 2010 as of December 1. Ms. Fraley said that it didn't include the last payroll, so was the budget until mid-November. She explained that there were some things that will be carried over into the New Year.

Ms. Bianchi noted that the cruiser maintenance was budgeted at \$3,500 and to date they had spent \$1,639. Also, for the radio repair and replacement they had budgeted \$5,000 and to date have spent \$529. Chief Seastrand said that they put new tires and new winter tires (\$400) on the 2010 cruiser. For the radio repair they put \$5,000 in because in the event there is an emergency and the radio goes down, it gives them enough money to purchase a mobile radio to keep the department going. They need something without delay to replace an antenna. Minor problems and upkeep have used some of this funding, but nothing serious to date. Ms. Bianchi said that conferences were budgeted for \$3,500 and to date they had spent \$315. Chief Seastrand said that they used some of this funding for ammo recently. They try to provide officers with free training when they can, but not all training is free and is not always offered. They recently lost an officer trained in self defense tactics, so they will need to find instructors for both tactics and taser training. Chair Wheeler asked if the officer could be contracted to stay on to train the other officers. Chief Seastrand said it depended on the officer's availability and whether or not he stays in the area.

Chair Wheeler asked Chief Seastrand to describe the need for the additional firearm. Chief Seastrand said that every firearm the town owns is issued to an officer. In the event that there is a shooting, the Attorney General's office takes the firearm from the shooter. It takes a long time to get the firearm back. Also, if there is a malfunction with one of the firearms, they would be able to issue this extra one. Chair Wheeler asked if it was necessary. Chief Seastrand said that that was the one thing he put in as a "want" and not a need. He said that if necessary, the firearm from a part time officer could go to a full-time officer and then the part-time officer would not be put on the schedule. Rob Daley asked if that would impact the schedule and who can and cannot work. Chief Seastrand said that that is a real possibility and they hoped to be able to augment the schedule with their personnel to make it work.

Ms. Bianchi said that before the last person left the police department, they were putting on a part-time person. She wondered if the part-time person was now being trained as a fulltime officer. Chief Seastrand said that he was. Ms. Bianchi said that now there is a part-time position that needs to be filled. She wondered where that was shown in the budget. Chief Seastrand said that this can be seen in the training and outfitting line items. It is a new employee fund used to outfit and train a new officer. Chair Wheeler asked if what was in the fund was enough. Chief Seastrand said that they will spend it all and then borrow from other lines to pay for what they need. He said that the funds are all down very low and that it would be close.

Ms. Bianchi asked about Fire Department overtime wages. They had budgeted for \$5,000 and they are at \$2,900. She wondered if Chief Lyon had any idea if it would go to \$5,000. Chief Lyon said that he didn't know. They had a busy holiday season so far. Karl Bjorklund has done a lot of comp time instead of using overtime. His guess was that it would be doubled if Karl actually took the pay he earned instead of time.

Ms. Bianchi asked about Medical Services in the Fire Department. Nothing was spent this past year and \$2,150 was what was budgeted. Chief Lyon said that a lot of firefighters get physicals and shots and the town pays for them. It is for new incoming firefighters. Typically five new people join each year, but sometimes it is more. He said that contingent on what happens with the analysis of the hospital and the ambulance service, his guess was that there would be some medical equipment coming out of that as well as some additional medical services. He'd love to get a carbon monoxide detector (to measure CO in the blood), which is \$2,600. This tool would enable them to diagnose carbon monoxide poisoning at the scene instead of having to send people to the hospital for a blood draw.

There was a question of radio repairs. Chief Lyon said that the radios sit on firefighters' hips and after sitting down and other movement, they take a beating. They do purchase the extended warranty, but if it is a mechanical damage, they have to purchase a new one. At the end of the year, most of the radio repair

budget is going to be spent. He noted that he hasn't purchased batteries for the portable radios yet. Those will come in at some point soon and will be billed out. Chief Lyon said that the radios are \$500 to purchase and between \$75 and \$190 to repair. Out of 40, five broke this year, which is typical. They have purchased pouches and other things to minimize the damage, but things still happen to them to cause them to break or need repair.

Ms. Bianchi asked about vehicle repair and maintenance. Car 1 had \$500 spent on it under "fall/spring." Then winter tires were purchased for \$600. Chief Lyon said that the "fall/spring" was for servicing. They have two sets of studded snow tires. If it is a short winter they take the tires off. Mr. Wilson asked if they were putting new tires on the truck they were getting rid of. Chief Lyon said that they were, as the vehicle will be used in inclement weather. Mr. Daley asked if the Forestry had any other jobs during the winter. Chief Lyon said that it is their plow vehicle. It is their current utility truck and they put a plow on it to maintain the dry hydrants and station, and to gain access to properties where there is an emergency that have not plowed.

Mr. Wilson asked about "Tools & Equipment" and the request for a "Gear Drying Rack." He wondered what it does. Chief Lyon said that it is an apparatus used for drying protective clothing and increases the longevity of the equipment. He explained that fire clothing is made out of three layers of fire resistant fabric. The gear is so big and bulky that it takes a significant time to dry. They currently try to dry it by hanging it up at the station. Some of the gear that was purchased after the grant in 2007 enabled them to have some spare sets that can be used. They only have one set of gear issued to each firefighter and this apparatus will prolong the longevity of each set. Ms. Bianchi asked in terms of a want or need, where did this apparatus belong. Chief Lyon left the room and came back in with his department-issued jacket in to show them. It was wet from a fire earlier in the evening. He showed the bulkiness of the jacket and that it would take a long time for it to dry. Chief Lyon said that the apparatus was something that would help to prolong the longevity of the clothing and felt it would be worthwhile. It was both a want and a need. Ms. Bedard asked what Wilmot uses to dry their equipment. Chief Lyon said that Wilmot has a drying rack.

Ms. Bianchi said that the small tools and equipment line item had come in at \$6,500. It had increased last year due to the stabilizer but has stayed high. Chief Lyon said that he uses a zero-based worksheet to be transparent. He doesn't foresee additional expenses. The needs are different every year, and they have nothing anticipated after 2011. Mr. Wilson asked about the medical bag and the Scott Four Gas Meter. He wondered if it was new or a replacement. Chief Lyon said that it was both. The gas meter they currently have was obtained through a grant and is now nine years old. The longevity of the meter is five years. The Hydrogen Cyanide is a new meter. So many things inside homes are made with synthetic materials are polymers that give off Co₂, and cyanide when burned. 48% of all injuries to firefighters are heart attacks. Prolonged exposure to hydrogen cyanide is a contributing effect to firefighter fatalities and heart attacks.

Chair Wheeler asked if Chief Lyon had looked into getting a new computer through Dell. Chief Lyon said that the desktop is only about \$500, but once they add software and printer the cost rose to \$1,582. He said that he was open to any ideas and that if anyone could get a deal for them, they would be happy to move forward in that direction.

Ms. Bianchi asked about uniforms and safety equipment. She asked Chief Lyon to clarify the difference between a set of gear and the other items like uniform shirts, jackets, long and short-sleeved shirts. She wondered if they were provided to all firefighters. Chief Lyon said that they were. Ms. Bianchi asked how often the apparel was used. Chief Lyon said he and Karl used uniforms every day and what they wear is different than what is provided to the membership. He said that instead of a \$59 shirt they could go to \$30 or \$40 shirt but that the issue was that it would be polyester, which can melt under high heat. Regular firefighters get a blue shirt which is about \$35 and is polyester. It is worn at funeral services, pay night

dinner, Christmas Eve services, and anything they need to be appropriately dressed for. Ms. Bianchi wondered if they would be inclined to go into a fire with their dress shirts on. Chief Lyon said that he just did that day. The problem is that sparks and embers fall down their neck, and having a fire retardant shirt is a necessity. He said that typically, as a chief, he does not go into the fires. His shirt isn't fire resistant, but felt it made sense for others going into fires.

Mr. Wilson asked about the \$2,000 hazmat fee. Chief Lyon said that after 9/11 they had a bunch of white powder incidents and anthrax scares (New London had 11). They were not prepared in town or regionally to deal with this. The likelihood of weapons of mass destruction in this area was probably not high, but they might find a tractor trailer going down I-89 that would have a spill of a hazardous material nature. If they don't fund the hazmat fee, the properly trained hazmat team would not be available to the town to help with such matters. Ms. Levine said that this was regionalism at its best and they have to take advantage of the cost savings of such programs.

Joe Cardillo asked why there was a big jump in "uniforms and safety" in the first six months after the 12 month budget. Chief Lyon said that it was for replacing three sets of gear. They replace outfits every five years, which makes a significant gap. One jacket and a pair of bunker pants cost \$1,950. Four sets of gear, along with boots, pants and shirts is \$9,500.

Ms. Bianchi asked about the Highway and Streets Repair that had budgeted \$700 and hadn't been spent. Mr. Lee said that it was a contingency fund in case they need to repair something.

Mr. Wilson asked why there was an Equipment and Maintenance budget and a Maintenance Supplies budget. He wondered why the two were not combined. Mr. Lee said that the Equipment and Maintenance budget is to repair equipment. The Maintenance Supplies budget is to purchase tools, shovels, and oil. They don't have a "tools" line item.

Chair Wheeler asked about health and dental insurance in the Transfer Station budget. In 2012, January to June it didn't come down. Ms. Fraley said it is half of the year plus 10%. Ms. Levine said it might be a little high. Chair Wheeler thought she should take another look and maybe they could save a couple thousand.

Chair Wheeler asked Mr. Lee about the \$120,000 for tipping fees and if it was accurate. Mr. Lee said that they are down a bit on trash at the moment. He would probably like to leave it where it is, but maybe they could review it again at the end of the year. Ms. Fraley said that November and December weren't included in these figures yet. Mr. Wilson asked if there was an office at the Transfer Station that uses supplies. Mr. Lee said that they use paper.

Chair Wheeler said that Mr. Meck had asked him to ask Mr. Lee about the hazardous waste drive. Mr. Lee said that they put in \$9,000 for it and they haven't had one for three years. They get calls asking what to do with their waste and the town can't legally collect it unless they become a collection site. He thinks it is a good idea to have one of these collections every two or three years. Collecting it legally gets a lot of that sort of stuff cleaned out of the system. He said that 300 households took advantage of it the last time it was held. It is a cost, but they do have numerous complaints about not having it. Mr. Lee said that they find paint and things all the time in the trash because people don't know what to do with it. He said he took \$6,000 out of the street paint line item to put it towards the hazardous materials collection. They didn't paint the yellow lines in the street because there was a shortage of yellow paint. Chief Lyon noted that they have had issues with hazmat calls where people have been storing these chemicals in their basement and spills cause noxious fumes. Also, people throw the chemicals into dumpsters and they catch on fire. Construction debris caused a dumpster fire at the Transfer Station this past year and hazardous

materials were thought to be the cause. Employees acted quickly and prevented significant damage to the building. Mr. Hasenfuss asked if they could instill a fee to drop off their hazardous materials. Mr. Wheeler said that not as many people would use the service if they charged a fee.

Ms. Bianchi asked if the waterfront staff wages went up because the Board of Selectmen indicated they wanted the beaches open longer. Mr. Kaplan said that people have been staying at the beaches until later in the afternoon.

Jerry Coogan, Chair of the Recreation Commission, noted that Bob Andrews had passed away five years ago. They honor Bob with the ice skating rink and are pleased that Chad Denning has joined them. They are impressed with his energy, creativity and enthusiasm. He and the Recreation Commission feel that recreation adds value to the community and creates a community spirit that many love about the town. Their budget was up 8% because of two items: the first was an increase in hours of lifeguards to 8 PM. The second item is \$8,000 for new boats. Mr. Coogan said that for the last five years they have graciously accepted used boats from individuals. The boats they have now are aging and have not been performing the way they did in the past. The Recreation Department is seriously considering not using them this year. Mr. Coogan emphasized that the boat program was successful, well-used and recognized. The extra 1.5% increase in the budget, over and above the lifeguards and boats, are items beyond their control.

Mr. Kaplan said that there had been some damages to the building at Bucklin Beach after 5pm, as people wanted to gain entrance to the bathrooms, which were locked. He said that people stay at the beach after 5pm because it is still light out. He felt it was worth having someone there an extra hour or two to prevent such vandalism. Ms. Cook said that at Elkins Beach last year there had been some vandalism. Ms. Bianchi asked if the lifeguards would be working three extra hours per day. Mr. Denning said that the extra hours would be part of a different shift. Ms. Bedard asked if the lifeguards would be there, regardless of the weather. Mr. Denning said that if it is raining for an hour, the lifeguards go home and are not paid for the time they are not working.

Mr. Helm said there were about 549 unique users of the programs this year, and only half were residents of New London. He opined that in this tight budget time, the Recreation Department is asking for new boats to serve a very small percentage of the population. Mr. Coogan clarified that 54% of the users are New London residents and 30% of the people are children or grandchildren of residents. He felt that was a significant number of people that the sailing program catered to who were residents or people connected to residents. Mr. Helm said that from his point of view, this was the first item that has come up that he felt concerned about. Mr. Coogan said that sailing is the type of activity that gives young people a great amount of confidence about being in the water and there have been many who are very enthusiastic about the program. There have been a number of adults who have volunteered their time to give lessons. He felt having the program added to the quality of life in New London. Chair Wheeler asked if they had considered charging for the use of the boats. Mr. Coogan said that they have not; they do charge for lessons, but not for just taking the boats out for a sail. He agreed that this was something to consider. Mr. Denning said that perhaps they can look at getting potential repairs for some of the boats, but felt that some were beyond repair. The mast receiver holes have broken fiberglass on the inside that cannot be repaired. He would love to be able to invest a little to keep their program operational at this point. Mr. Coogan said that they could look for recently used boats that don't have the wear and tear of the boats they have now.

Mr. Wilson asked about the usage data. Mr. Denning said that they need to keep better track of their data so they can find out where people are from. He added that they want to do some research on the beaches for data collection, as well. Currently, they ask for people's last name to see if they have a liability form

on file. The number of users estimated is just from the forms. It doesn't figure in how many times the user has been out on the lake.

Ms. Bedard commented that she chaired the Recreation Department in the 1970's and they didn't have power in the buildings and no one could use the bathrooms at night because they couldn't see what they were doing. She didn't think they needed a guard on extra hours. She noted that they have a large amount of people on the Recreation Commission and suggested they do what she had done in the 1970's, and take turns volunteering to lock up the bathrooms at night. She is all for swimming after hours, but didn't think it was necessary to keep a guard on after 5 PM. She didn't think the vandalism occurred before the doors were locked and the lights go out and understood that it was hard to keep track of it. She opined that vandalism would continue even after they add the extra hours. Mr. Denning offered that there had been seven saves of swimmers last year, and the year before that there were two. From 5-8 PM are when the beaches are the most used. Ms. Bedard felt that this was when families are there, hopefully watching their own children.

Chief Seastrand said that officers have found people relieving themselves in inappropriate places because the bathrooms were locked at the beaches after hours.

An unidentified member of the audience asked what a full complement of lifeguards was. Mr. Denning said that at Bucklin it was three, and at Elkins it was two. Mr. Denning said they can't have fewer than 2 because if a guard needed to save someone, they would still need someone on the beach. He thought that they could have two at each beach. Mr. Coogan said they'll use common sense. If no one is there, the lifeguards will go home.

Chair Wheeler said that the 2010 actual for waterfront staff wages was \$35,687. The actual for 2009 was \$41,000. He wondered if \$45,580 was enough. Mr. Denning said that the reason the number went up and down was due to the longevity of lifeguards. Some have worked for the program for five years. This year they had a lot of brand new guards who get paid \$8/hour. He anticipated \$5,000 for the extra staff. They have been right at \$40,000 for the past several years. Mr. Denning noted that they had one waterfront director this past summer, but previously they have had two. Ms. Bianchi asked if someone got into trouble with a sailboat, that it was part of their responsibility. Mr. Denning said it was and noted that they have a rescue boat.

Phyllis Piotrow commented that she was a professor of the number one school of health in the United States. Recreation is an integral part of good health starting in childhood. It is a crucial part of continuing good health. Ms. Piotrow opined that the elephant in the room is increasing health costs. This is a huge part of all budgetary problems. While a dollar spent in recreation won't reduce health care costs by \$1, over time, more and more people participating in and having recreation available to them is a very positive way of contributing to good health. They shouldn't think of it as an added extra, like frosting on the cake after paying for the police department and the roads, but as an essential component of good health for the children, themselves and the community. She'd like to see them do more to promote more recreational activities for kids and adults of all ages. New London has a tremendous amount to offer recreationally and they should be proud of it and pleased with what Chad Denning is doing and should support him in his efforts.

Mr. Helm asked about welfare vendor payments and why it doesn't seem to go up. Ms. Cook, who is also the Town's Welfare Officer, said that they pay rent and heat mostly. If they pay for fuel, they have the people apply to Community Action for assistance. Ms. Cook said that when she took the position, they spent \$3,500 annually and it has gone up to \$16,000. She tries to be circumspect with what they approve, and she works very closely with Ms. Fraley and Ms. Levine. She sends people to the food pantry, where

she volunteers and is on their board. Most of those using the pantry are young women with children and renting families that just can't make it. She said that there really is no welfare in the State of New Hampshire. Ms. Cook said that she was satisfied with where the program is and added that she still has some money left at this point in the year. Ms. Bedard said that she thought there were people who do not rent who were not going to the town to help with heat.

Mr. Cardillo had some comments about recreation. He said that he's heard that there were some areas that could be handled more efficiently. Recreation was the biggest part of his life growing up and it is a big part of his kids' lives too. The discussion he hears is that there is a more efficient way to offer recreation in the town. There is an undercurrent in discussions about more private providers of services and fewer municipal providers of services. In the past, he had been on the board of the Outing Club. He has been in the town only 18 months but knows that the Outing Club does a lot of things. He wasn't sure if they had the appetite or interest in doing some of the things the Recreation Department is doing. If there was a place in time to have a discussion on whether the Town of New London could save some money with a better alliance with the Outing Club. Chair Wheeler said that it is a subject at hand with the Board of Selectmen and should be pursued but the discussion was not for this arena.

Conservation Commission: Bob Brown from the Conservation Commission met with the Budget Committee. They reviewed the 2011 budget request. They spent \$960.03 which leaves a balance of \$5,200. Chair Wheeler asked if there would be any further spending in December. Mr. Brown said that a forestry study was pending. His guess was that it would be under \$2,000. There were other incidentals that he would find out more about on Wednesday at their monthly meeting. They would be spending no more than \$3,000 and anything left over will go into the General Fund.

Mr. Brown said that their request is 3% less than the 2010 request. Chair Wheeler said his largest comment was regarding their request for an intern for next year. He wondered what the justification was to have someone paid for by the town as opposed to volunteers.

Mr. Brown said that as they know one of their key missions is developing the town trail system and maintaining it. They have about 30 miles of trail in town, as well as some trails that are within the town borders that they also do some work on. Right now, they rely on volunteer help. The single largest challenge in trail maintenance is people-power, which is compounded by fact that some trails find themselves in total disrepair so they present a liability. People have fallen through decayed bridges, and boardwalks disintegrate under people's feet. They replaced every piece of boardwalk and one bridge behind the old middle school. Their volunteers have an average age of 70-75.

Mr. Brown brought in miniature models of what a boardwalk and a bridge looked like, for those who may not be aware. He noted that these things are made out of rough sawn, green Hemlock, which is very heavy and is cut at 2'x8', 12' and cross members to suit. One piece of boardwalk weighs slightly in excess of 200 lbs. They don't have a lot of people who can hike them ½ a mile. They try to anticipate their needs for lumber and get it a few months in advance. He noted that they wintered some of it last year. If they put it up on sticks and cover it, it becomes almost half its original weight. Basically, Mr. Brown said that they need people. They have had limited help from the Boy Scouts, who helped with the spur out of Kidder/Cleveland/Clough trails towards Spring Ledge. They also repaired all of Lyon Brook. Every piece there was decayed and between the Public Works Department and the hospital, they repaired seven bridges and replaced quite a bit of boardwalk. They have had help from some senior volunteers, and a little help from Colby-Sawyer students who needed to do some community service. Mr. Brown noted that the Philbrick-Cricenti Bog is the most used and one of the most difficult trails. It is 95% boardwalk, and they are replacing pieces of it all the time. They replaced 900 linear feet of boardwalk this summer. They started with volunteers and it is about a mile in that the work needed to be done. The only answer is

to pick it up and carry it in. Ms. Levine wrote an article in the Intertown and requested volunteer help. People will come out once and discover that it is hard work. Chair Wheeler asked about community fundraising to pay someone to do this work. Mr. Brown said that they haven't talked about this. He noted that they have received help from the Merrimack County Diversion Program. They are young people who are in a program because they need to do some community service. They had a good start but numbers dwindled. They want to try and continue that this year.

Mr. Brown said that management was a problem. He puts in more than 20 hours per week in the warmer months, and he enjoys it. Dan Allen puts in even more time. They are getting burned out and don't have the resources to keep up with the work. He said that he has talked to Chief Seastrand and Ms. Levine about getting help from the Merrimack County Department of Corrections. Those people have not been convicted but just charged with a misdemeanor and are inmates. He has talked to the director and after the first of the year they will try to put a schedule together. There could be 8-10 people in a work detail. They would love to come here as they want to do physical labor.

Chair Wheeler wanted to talk more about the intern. He understood that it wasn't a discussion that they need more help, but who should be paying for the hired help. He felt it could be a slippery slope to pay for part-time help and he thought that they should think about the method of private funding for this position. Mr. Brown said that he had no experience with this and didn't know how it worked. They'd like to take advantage of the volunteers but they will need help to direct it. Ms. Bianchi asked if that the intern would assist with trail construction. It sounded to her like they needed someone to function as a trail boss for the Conservation Commission, itself. Mr. Brown said the position was intended to help determine what needed to be done on the trails. They have missing trail adopters, and need to prioritize the work that needs to be done, but needed someone to lead the groups. If they can get the help for 8-10 visits, it would be a shame not to take full advantage of it. It would be a hands-on person; not sitting in an office.

Ms. Bedard asked Mr. Brown about adopting roads/monitoring trails, etc. She wondered if it would be possible to have people volunteer to take a trail. Mr. Brown said that there were trail adopters and that an adopter's duty was to walk trails 3x/year. Not everyone does their inspections. They have some who inspect and do cutting and clearing, however. Ms. Bedard asked if they advertise for this type of thing. Mr. Brown said that they have. She understood that if they had someone who was reporting more reliably, that it would help them set up what they need.

Ms. Appel said that this was necessary work that needed to be done. She asked what the technical legal relationship was between the Conservation Commission and the town. Ms. Levine said that it was part of the town and appointed by Board of Selectmen. Ms. Appel said it was a reasonable thing to ask the town to pay for this position. She felt it was a reasonable request. Mr. Brown said that they worked hard on their request and to add this position, they worked to come in with a total budget less than last year's budget.

Mr. Brown said that this was a degree of catch-up and maybe they won't need to fill the position again next year. They have modeled the position around the intern program of 240 required hours. They plan to pay \$10/hour. He understood they need to keep the person busy and accountable and supervised. Ms. Bedard said that when accepting an internship, it is usually without pay. There would be a learning curve in place. If there was to be more than 240 hours expected would they be able to do all the work? Mr. Brown said that they need a person who is familiar with this kind of work.

Mr. Wilson said that under the Conservation Commission Secretary there was \$1,800 in the budget but he thought it should be \$1,080. Ms. Fraley said that it was an error. Ms. Levine noted that the money wasn't used up in previous years because they didn't have a secretary for a while.

With regards to the request for deposit into the Land Acquisition Fund, Mr. Brown noted that it was \$25,000 for 18 months. Ms. Bianchi asked if there was a particular parcel or piece for land they had in mind to purchase. Mr. Brown said that presently the way the fund is defined it is for the outright purchase of land only. Ms. Bianchi asked if the Conservation Commission had a piece of land in mind that would be coming up for purchase. Mr. Brown said that this wasn't a yes or no question. They have a list of over 40 properties that they consider important to conserve. They have no way of knowing when those will come available, if ever. They had one parcel they spoke about at a meeting last year and thought they were very close to obtaining it. Since then the owners decided not to sell. The piece was on Otter Pond adjacent to the Phillips Preserve. Five different groups were willing to participate in that acquisition. They are hopeful that it is still going to happen. The fact remains that there is approximately \$395,000 in the reserve fund, with another \$25,000 going in that Wednesday.

To answer the Budget Committee's question of why they need more money, he realized that they are "not exactly sure" wasn't comforting. They are working towards their mission. He understood that many people were showing discomfort with the request. Mr. Brown said that the bottom line was that they are lovers, not warriors. They don't want to alienate the Board of Selectmen or anyone else. They are working towards their mission to the best of their ability. It isn't a life or death situation; it is a quality of life matter. If the \$25,000 was not a good number, he wondered if there was a number other than zero that would be acceptable. Chair Wheeler said that in good faith, he could go half way. Ms. Appel said that it seemed OK to reduce the capital improvement budget and fund the intern. Ms. Bianchi said that seemed reasonable in terms of a give and take. She appreciated what it is they are trying to do. It was difficult to see that much money sitting there and to add even more to it.

Mr. Helm said that he would have trouble making a decision that night without talking about the rest of the budget. They may have room to put it all in. They could sit there for hours to figure out how much to fund or not to fund. Until they have the whole picture he didn't feel pressed to make a decision that night.

Mr. Wilson asked if the intern would become an employee of the town. Ms. Levine said that it would, but would be on a temporary basis. She said that it would be like the other interns the town has hired for the town in the last five years.

Ms. Bianchi asked how much of a bind it would put the Conservation Commission in if they did not make a decision on the internship position that night. Mr. Brown said that it wasn't life or death but it would give them a start to get thinking about the details of the position. They don't want to put a lot of effort into something that isn't going to happen.

Ms. Cook asked if this could be part of a work study position through Colby Sawyer. She said that they had a student who came to work for them and they didn't pay him. He did work and wrote up a paper about what he did. Mr. Brown said that some students stay over and do the work but need some sort of money to keep them going over the summer.

Mr. Brown added that the Conservation Commission has looked at some towns that have adopted RSA 36 (a), which speaks to the wording of the definition of the CIP fund. It expands the way the funds can be used. One change is that it not only allows the outright purchase of land, but the purchase of an easement, which gets them to the same place but at a lower price. To change this would require two warrant articles. They would like to propose it for this year. It provides a lot of flexibility and benefits to the town and would still require the town body to vote on it. Chair Wheeler said it sounded fine to him.

Mr. Cardillo asked what the last purchase the Conservation Commission made with a lump sum. It was noted that the Clark Pond property was purchased for \$220,000. Mr. Cardillo felt that a number of properties in town will far exceed their arsenal. If needed, they can go back to the voters if they need money than they have and they will figure out funding. He said he was in favor of the intern, and thought they should hold what they have in the CIP and if an opportunity is presented, they can determine how it can be funded.

Mr. Helm asked about the meeting agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Levine said that the hospital and the Council on Aging were scheduled. She wondered if they wanted the Chamber of Commerce, the VNA, CASA or the Lake Association to be present as well.

Ms. Bianchi said it was nice to know about the lakes. She noted that Lake Sunapee requested \$5,000 from the town this year, which was an increase over last year. Ms. Levine said that it was the same request but they put \$18,500 in the budget for milfoil which had to be prorated. All the lake associations are prepared to be there on January 10. CASA hasn't petitioned.

Ms. Levine asked if they would like any Fiscal Year discussion at the next meeting. It was decided not to include this but to move ahead with the education of the topic to the citizens. Mr. Wilson asked what the plan was to educate the town. Ms. Levine said that this was between her and the Board of Selectmen and was not the Budget Committee's responsibility. She has spent two months trying to educate the Budget Committee on the Fiscal Year changeover. The general public she has spoken with is fine with this change. If questions come up she is happy to sit down and talk about it with people. Her intention was to continue writing emails, sending newsletters, including articles in the newspaper, and holding forums. She didn't think that New London voters were less capable of getting their heads around the idea than those citizens of towns like Concord, Holderness, Hinsdale, and Franklin, who have already made the change. Ms. Levine said that she wants to just start educating people the best way she knows how and the way she has for the past 10+ years. If they want a written plan she would provide one, but really felt that it was a matter of publicizing the decision and not having people out there providing misinformation while the public education was going on. Mr. Wilson said he wanted to see the town constituency understand what it means to have the Fiscal Year change go through.

Ms. Appel opined that the last charts and papers that came through from Ms. Levine were very clear. The turn now is a positive one. A lot of good preparation has been done and it is no longer their role; it is Ms. Levine and the Board of Selectmen's role to promote it and for the Budget Committee to support it. She felt they should put closure on it.

Selectmen's Update: Mr. Kaplan said that the last Saturday they had a Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting and they discussed the Lamson Lane project, the Recreation Department's request of \$8,000 for boats, and milfoil funding. Basically, the sense he got was that they were for all the projects but wondered if they could be more creative in how they raise the money. One decision that was made that very morning was that they would fund \$55,000 in 2011 for the Lamson Lane project. They would take \$25,000 out of the Municipal Regional Transportation Improvement fund. The remainder (\$30,000) would come from taxes. In addition, they have received a certificate of appreciation from the Chamber of Commerce as they appreciate the work the Department of Public Works did to keep New London beautiful and for the chamber booth, which was completely redone this year.

That morning they reviewed the agenda items that had been tabled. They have scheduled a discussion on Single Stream Recycling on December 27th, a discussion on speed limits on January 10, 2011, and a discussion on town beach use on January 24, 2011. In the spring they will revisit the request to take over West Side Drive and Snow Lane as town roads.

Ms. Holton said that it was gratifying to be there to sit and hear them consider all the items in the budget. There was a general tenor in town that the town being run well in comparison to other towns. Her caution was that they have to do what they are all doing at home. They need to find out what they need and go for it. She didn't think anyone in the room wasn't having cutbacks in their own homes. The recession is happening. They don't have to be in a marathon with other towns. More people should know the detail in which they are considering all these items. She thanked them.

IT WAS MOVED (Connie Appel) AND SECONDED (Celeste Cook) to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting of December 13, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London