



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

March 1, 2010

### PRESENT:

Larry Ballin, Chair  
Mark Kaplan, Selectman  
Tina Helm, Selectman  
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

### ALSO PRESENT:

Cotton Cleveland, Town Moderator  
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector  
Debbie Cross, The Villager  
Peter Berthiaume, Emergency Management Director (joined the meeting for 15 minutes at 9:00 a.m.)

Chair Ballin called the MEETING TO ORDER at 8:00 AM.

Chair Ballin welcomed Cotton and Linda to the meeting, and said they were there to discuss the Town Meeting. Chair Ballin also thanked Cotton for her many years of service, and said it would be sad not to see a Cleveland on the podium any more.

Cotton said that the Town Meeting was opened with Town Voting Day. She said she would not be present, and that her mother would be the moderator pro tempore and would have three different assistant moderators during the day. Cotton said that she would be available by cell phone. She said the day was going to be important because although it wasn't a long ballot, there was a contested election. She said there were only four zoning amendments, and that the toughest part of the day was going to be the "write-in" for the school board position and the town moderator. Cotton said that by law a Board of Selectmen member had to be present at all times, i.e., they were part of the town's officials overseeing the election. She said typically it was divided into three shifts, but if an individual was contested that person didn't participate. She said this meant that Mark and Tina would have to divide the day between them. She said this way there was no appearance that anyone was staring at the ballots going in. Cotton told Chair Ballin that he was more than welcome to be out in the election area. She said that it would be odd though if he were to be present in the election area, and then come inside to fulfill his duties as a Selectman. She said there wasn't a law that spoke against it, and it had been done in the last 200 years, but it wouldn't be in line with the town's desire to always maintain the highest standards.

Cotton asked whether or not they wanted to do the "Thank You's" standing up. Mark said he liked to thank all committees and those who served. Linda said she thought people had found it confusing last year. Mark said he would be satisfied to just ask the committee members to stand up. Jessie said that instead of showing the slideshow, Mark had read a preamble about the budget as a whole. She asked Larry if he wanted to do that again this year. She said she wasn't sure if it had been effective. Mark said that the slideshow was more effective as it showed the numbers (visually). Jessie said that another alternative to the slide show would be a handout people could refer to with a modified version of the slide show. Tina said she would be in favor of a modified handout so people could follow along with the presentation. Chair Ballin said that was fine.

Jessie went over what should be included in the handout, e.g., capital reserves as well as capturing a few other pertinent topics.

Tina wanted to acknowledge Michelle Holton for contributing all the paper goods including plastic cutlery, and John MacKenna for contributing all of the beverages. Mark told Linda that the potluck was going to be in the elementary school, which means people would have to walk outside to get to the Town Meeting. He said this might be a problem for some people especially if the weather is bad. Linda said there was a back entrance to the gym, and that was 50 feet from the back entrance of the other building.

The group reviewed the warrant articles. Cotton said that Article 3 is a bond issue and that would mean keeping the ballot box open for an hour.

Jessie said that they had had a public hearing on the bond on February 17. The engineer and Sunapee wastewater superintendent were present, showed a video and answered questions. Jessie said it had been very informative, but that a presentation like that would not be appropriate for the Town Meeting because of time constraints. She said that the engineer would just be present at the meeting and could be used as a resource.

Cotton said Article 3 is stand up ballot, and she said that she would move on to Article 4 while the ballots were being counted.

Jessie said she thought there would be some controversy over the proposed allocation of the bond. The Selectmen have discussed it, 2/3 paid by the sewer users, and 1/3 by the taxpayers. Cotton wanted to know what the process was for registering your dissatisfaction other than voting against the full article. Jessie said there wasn't one, that there wasn't a process for people voting on the allocation. Cotton said in that case she would allow the discussion. She said people might get aggravated about that piece that they have no control over.

Regarding Article 4, Jessie didn't feel it was going to be particularly controversial. She asked the Selectmen if they still planned to present an amendment. Mark said he had an issue with Article 4. He said at the last budget meeting, a proposal had been made to add 0.5% to employee raises, which was voted down. He said he had felt badly about the outcome of that. The increase would have cost \$10,273. He said the vote at the budget meeting against an increase for the town's employees didn't seem right given the fact that these were the same employees who helped the town save money. Mark said, therefore, he would like to ask for a vote at the Town Meeting. Cotton asked Mark if that vote was on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, or his individual decision. Mark wasn't sure and asked if a vote had been taken. Tina said that it had been voted on and passed 2-1 in favor. Cotton said that what she would do is bring it out and get a second, and then turn it over to Mark for an explanation. Cotton said they (Linda and her) needed a copy of the amendment.

Jessie said that Article 18 was the Conservation Commission Article. Cotton said she would confirm with Bob Brown that he would be presenting the Article. Jessie said that the Article would be most likely be contested by a budget committee member.

Cotton said Article 19 is another petitioned article for the Red Cross. She wanted to know if the Board of Selectmen were going to speak against it. Chair Ballin said he would be willing to speak against either Article 18 or 19.

Jessie said Article 23 could generate some discussion. Cotton wanted to know if there was a dollar amount related to it. Jessie said it was revenue related, and that there was no dollar amount that the Town Meeting has to approve.

Regarding Article 25, Linda said they should let people know that it is only advisory. Cotton said that she had no one to call on to discuss the Article.

Linda said that if there was someone interested in the Town Moderator position, they should think about attending candidates' night. Linda said they had suggested that to other people who had inquired about the other open offices. She said she told them it was a good way to get their name out there as well as to let people know they want to run for office. Linda also asked what would happen if people decided to nominate Cotton again (because she's doing a good job), and she ended up getting the most votes.

Cotton said she would have to resign if that happened. She said she had too many conflicting obligations, and that she didn't feel it was fair to the town not to be present at all meetings.

Linda said that if Cotton were re-elected, and subsequently resigned, the Supervisors of the Checklist would have to appoint a new moderator. That new moderator would have to be elected next year in order to finish out the term. In other words, if someone is elected by writing they serve a full 2-year term. If they're appointed, they are only appointed until next year's election, and then serve for one more year following re-election.

Cotton thanked everyone present. She said it had been really fun working with everyone, and that she would be willing to help train and familiarize the new moderator whoever it is.

Linda reminded everyone that the ballot clerks would be meeting on Monday at 5 p.m. to discuss roles and any open issues prior to the Town Meeting.

Cotton said that on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, there would be an orientation session for the five new ballot clerks. Cotton asked the Selectmen if one of them could stop by the meeting sometime between 8-9 a.m. for five minutes to thank the group for volunteering. Chair Ballin agreed to do that.

Meeting Minutes: Chair Ballin asked about the Minutes of the February 17 Board of Selectmen's Meeting. Chair Ballin moved to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2010 Meeting, seconded by Tina Helm. The minutes were approved 3-0.

Warrant Article Review: The Board of Selectmen reviewed the presentations of each warrant article.

With respect to Article 3, Tina said there were several people at the bond hearing who were positive about passing the bond. The Selectmen discussed how to shorten the presentation of the warrant article. Tina said brevity was important. She said the townspeople had had a chance to educate themselves with the details, and the presentation should only be a summation. She said they would have a chance to elaborate as questions arise.

Jessie clarified that if the sewer user were going to pay for the entire bond, the median sewer user increase would be \$227 per year. And if they only paid for 2/3 the increase would be \$150 per year.

Regarding Article 10 Chair Ballin said any of \$1 contributions under 2010 could be amended from the floor. Regarding Articles 18 and 19, Jessie asked Chair Ballin if he would like her to prepare statements and positions. Chair Ballin said that was not necessary.

Tina said it had been brought up at the Budget Committee Meeting that the town had not been happy with the services Red Cross had provided during the ice storm. Both Tina and Chair Ballin agreed to the validity of this statement. Tina said she would emphasize the town's own emergency management

program that is in place, i.e. the town did not feel a need to spend money on Red Cross because of their own program.

Chair Ballin said that the town was able to handle emergencies on their own. Tina and Mark agreed.

Storm Recap: Peter Berthiaume, Emergency Management Director, entered the meeting to discuss the storm/power outage on 2/26/10 and subsequent emergency planning. Chair Ballin thanked Peter for all of his hard work. Chair Ballin said that the Emergency Management Committee had started meeting on Friday at 8:00 a.m. A warming center was opened at Whipple Town Hall. At 6:00 p.m. they moved it to the Ware Center. He said that there weren't any local people that required overnight shelter. Peter said they had scheduled overnight shelter volunteers, but then ended up putting a sign on the door at 9:00 p.m. stating that they should contact dispatch (and then Peter would make arrangements with the New London Inn to put them up there). He said it worked out pretty well.

Peter also said that unlike other emergencies in the past, his point of contact at PSNH was a local person (as opposed to a statewide representative). He said he had been much more responsive, and had had a better handle on what was going on locally.

Peter said that the hospital, schools, and municipal buildings had had first priority to get power back. He said at this time there were still 35 families without power. He said on Saturday they had decided to deploy personnel to find out where there were still power outages. He said he knew what roads had been closed (7 in total). He said that they had made special needs folks a priority, and that neighbors had also come forward to find out how they could help. He said that the townspeople with special needs had been identified, and that they had been checking in on those people to make sure they were okay.

Larry told Peter that he had done a great job, and that everybody had known what he or she was supposed to do by Friday at 8:30 a.m. He also said that the department heads had also done a great job and needed to be recognized for that.

Jessie said that an after action review would take place at the fire station tomorrow.

Mark asked a question about the quality of communication with PSNH. Peter said that one of the first things the EMC did was to create a list of roads they knew had been impacted (downed trees and wires) so PSNH had had that list early on. He said that PSNH could not share with the town specifically what areas had been affected and what areas were not affected. He said that it didn't really matter because the town was small enough, and that it only took the Fire Department 1½ hour to identify the affected areas. Peter said that communication with PSNH had been outstanding because a liaison had been made available, and that made a big difference. Peter said that the representative had said they had been getting a lot of positive feedback on the new "local liaison" system.

Chair Ballin said that the town had been lucky to come up as quickly as they did considering the magnitude of the storm especially the velocity of the wind. Everyone thanked Peter for the great job.

### **Committee Meetings and Reports**

NHMA Municipal Advisory Committee, February 19: Chair Ballin said MAC had gone over a ton of legislation, and nothing appeared to be of a big consequence to New London at this point. He said there is a bill to require police details on both ends of the trucks when they are working on the power lines. If they want to hold their utility as a private entity, then they can be taxed to fullest.

Planning Board, February 23: Tina read the report dated 3/1/2010 to the Board of Selectmen:

- 1) After a short discussion, the PB granted Greg Berger of Springledge Farm permission to move forward, without a Site Plan Review, with plans for a proposed Corn Maze to be constructed on Messer Farm land adjacent to Springledge Farm and to be available to the public from late August – October, accessed from Springledge.
- 2) A Final Site Plan Review took place to finalize the request of Charles and Mikko McGee, 26 Stoney Brook Road, property owners with a home business to install a small sign (approx. 4'x4') at the corner of their property and County road/Route 103A. After discussion, with questions posed by neighbors, the PB approved the installation of the sign, facing Stoney Brook Road.
- 3) A continued discussion related to a Minor Subdivision for a Condominium Development Duplex requested by John C. Akin to be built on Everett Park took place. Town Counsel has some concern that Mr. Akin should have the condominium documents reviewed by a professional, on behalf of Mr. Akin, to ensure consistency with the Condominium Act. Town Counsel offered some corrections to the originally submitted documents, and the PB, after discussion, was confident that the Town would not be liable should any challenge to the documents arise in the future. Mr. Akin seemed to want to accept the documents as he had amended them, dated February 12, 2010. Pending a few final “housekeeping” details, the PB recommended that Mr. Akin proceed with finalizing the Site Plan Review.
- 4) Colby-Sawyer College presented a Concept Site Plan Review to renovate Burpee & Abbey Halls for Student Housing.
- 5) Jonathan Feins – Stonehouse Road presented a revised plan to move forward with finalizing only one lot (LOT 1) instead of the 32-lot plan for Feins/Harborview Subdivision, which was his original proposal. After some discussion and concern that he had been approved for one proposal and was now “changing his plans midstream”, the PB did approve (though not unanimously) Mr. Feins’ plans to move forward with his revised plan, as outlined in a memo to Ken McWilliams, from Dana Bisbee representing Mr. Feins, dated February 12, 2010.
- 6) The PB decided to address the Contract between Kenneth McWilliams & Associates LLC and the Town of New London for 2010 Town Planning Services after Town Meeting.

Economic Development Committee Meeting, February 26: Chair Ballin said that they had met with Jerry Frew and Larry LeBoeuf, and had a good discussion about excellence in education. He said that both Jerry and Larry were still new to the system. He said Jerry had really laid out his plan to become not only an excellent, but also a well-regarded school system. He said Jerry showed them the steps they were taking, and they’ve got a solid plan. Chair Ballin said that from the committee’s standpoint, he felt they needed to embrace the school’s excellence, and their continued striving for that, and use that as part of their message. He said they were going to start some branding in town.

Chair Ballin said term limits had been discussed, and that Markoff was going to be a three-year seat, Doheny a two-year, and Hutchinson a one-year. Chair Ballin said they would revise that at the next meeting which would take place on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:00.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Special Events**

Chair Ballin said that candidate night would take place at the library on March 3, and that there would be a CAC Meeting on Saturday, March 6 at 7:30 a.m. (both Larry and Mark will be there). Town Elections (March 9 at 8:00 a.m.) and Town Meeting (March 10 at 7:00 p.m.) would take place next week.

There being no further business, Chair Ballin moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kaplan and approved 3-0. The Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Guyer-Almstadt  
Recording Secretary