



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 22, 2018 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

G. William Helm, Jr., Chairman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Bruce Hudson, Budget Committee Member
Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Vice-Chair
John Raby, *Intertown Record*
Jaclyn Goddette, *Argus-Champion*
Linda Nicklos, Tax Collector

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Public Comments: None

Finalize Plans for Search for New Public Works Director

The Board reviewed the revised want ad for the Department of Public Works Director position. Selectman Rollins requested that Project Management be added to the job description as well.

Ms. Hallquist reported that all six members of the search committee have been contacted and she is awaiting word back from one person; all the others have agreed to be a part of the committee.

Chair Helm stated that he had been contacted by a former Board of Selectman, Gordon Marshall, to be a part of the search committee. It was agreed upon that he will be added as the seventh member of the committee.

Selectman Rollins suggested having staff representation in the hiring process considering this is a significant position. She would like a senior staff member, within the Public Works Department, to be a part of the hiring committee. She feels that staff should have a voice. Selectmen Kidder felt that even someone in a different department but that worked closely with the highway department could be considered. This will be considered once the applications have been reviewed.

Chair Helm asked if this was done when hiring the Police Chief. The response was that no, this was not done for that position, but Chair Rollins feels the circumstances were different.

Discuss Capital Reserve Funds: Discontinuance and Agents to Expend

Chair Helm stated that in previous discussions, they voted to discontinue three small funds. Intersection Improvement, Pleasant Lake Dam and the Police Vehicle fund.

They also discussed the High Pines Pump Station and if it would be closed out and put into the Sewer Department. This was a separate fund for a project in 2009 and there is still a \$24,000 balance. Mr. Lee suggested closing it and putting it into the general sewer fund. This matter will be put on the warrant article.

Consider Updates to Personnel Policy

Ms. Hallquist stated that at the last meeting it was requested that more information be obtained from the department heads regarding the nepotism issue. Department heads that responded agreed that there could potentially be issues when hiring relatives, but all of the responding department heads felt if handled properly it is not a bad thing. They believe we currently don't have any problems and don't need the nepotism policy, pointing out that it is a small work pool, making hiring qualified people difficult. The important thing is hiring the right person and if the proper advertisement and selection process is enforced, they can continue without any policy. The Selectmen were in agreement to not have a nepotism policy.

With regard to overtime, Ms. Hallquist noted that the Board requested additional information regarding when the town pays time and a half for an employee that works 40 hours or less. Wendy Johnson and Ann Bedard reviewed both the Police and Highway Departments for examples. Ms. Johnson stated it is the town policy to include holiday, sick, leave and comp time towards time worked for purposes of calculating overtime. They looked at the "half" time of the time and a half. In Highway Department the additional cost paid in 2016 was \$5,400 and the Police/Dispatching was \$3,600.

Ms. Hallquist stated that many towns pay overtime only for hours actually worked in excess of 40, and some towns will count holidays as time worked. After the review, she is withdrawing her original recommendation to change the policy as the amount of additional cost to the town is not as great as she expected it to be. The Selectmen were all in agreement.

Other recommended policy changes included to sick leave: the Board asked that it be changed to allow an employee to use sick time for issues related to children and to parents, whether they reside with the employee or not. And it doesn't matter if they reside with them or not. Another change was to the donation of sick time to other employees, which will be allowed at the sole discretion of the Selectmen. Tuition reimbursement rates would be amended. With regards to leave time at start date; the years of experience that an employee brings to his/her position with the town will be considered so a new employee might start with more than 10 days of vacation.

Consider Dedication for 2017 Annual Report

Selectman Kidder suggested former Police Chief Walt Reney and longtime New London Barn Playhouse Board member Tom DeMille. After discussion, the Board agreed.

Discuss Appropriation for Potential Land Purchase

The Board discussed the recommendation in the CIP to look for a site to build a new Police Station. Chair Helm pointed out that in order to look for a piece of property, money needs to be appropriated at the Town Meeting and suggested that the Board decide if funds will be requested

at Town Meeting and if so, then a meeting will need to be held with the Budget Committee. This will be added to the budget hearing, a bond hearing and then a warrant article.

Selectman Kidder feels the Board needs to be proactive and have some money set aside to be able to negotiate if a piece of property comes up.

Chair Helm proposes the suggestion of a bond issue of \$500,000.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to include a bond in the amount of \$500,000 for the purpose of acquiring property for municipal use. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bruce Hudson asked if this would be only for the Police Department. Chair Helm stated that no, but it would be the primary reason; stating that at this time, the only use for the funds that is off the table is for the Transfer Station.

Robert Prohl stated that he could get the budget committee together for further discussion. He suggested January 31, 2018 at 6:30pm.

Discuss going back to Semi-Annual Tax Collection

At a recent budget committee meeting there was discussion regarding going back to semi-annual tax collection after statements by the tax collector who feels that going from four times a year to two times a year would reduce the workload of processing 2,800 property tax bills.

Ms. Hallquist stated this would take a vote at town meeting. The pro would be that the town would get the final year tax collection in December, instead of March, which would also be helpful for the water precinct. The con to changing back to semi-annual tax billing is that people have gotten used to paying four times a year and it might be tough to go back to semi-annual. There wouldn't be a change for the cost of mailing as they are already only done twice per year. The savings would be on the processing end in the Tax Collectors office.

Linda Nicklos, Tax Collector, agrees that it cuts the transactions being processed in half. She feels that many people still aren't used to quarterly billing and many people pay both quarters at the same time so they don't miss payments. She is in favor of going back to semi-annual billing as it will help with volume. She did comment that when it was previously twice a year, there were two full time people in the office.

Chair Helm asked how many towns bill on a quarterly basis, Ms. Nicklos was unsure but felt that it might be as few as 3 or 4 towns in New Hampshire that do quarterly billing. This issue will be voted on at town meeting and if approved by voters, a plan will be developed on how to transition back to semi-annual billing.

Phyllis Piotrow commented that two members of the budget committee were against going back to semi-annual billing because it is harder to budget. She feels it may be easier for people with lower or fixed incomes to pay four times a year.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to put the issue of going back to semi-annual tax collection on the warrant without a recommendation from the Board of Selectmen. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Town Administrator Report

Ms. Hallquist reported that there is a new direction for the remaining sewer lagoon closing. At the last meeting the Board agreed to a plan that would require testing the materials to attempt to get a waiver from DES so that the material could stay as-is. RMI is now recommending that the town does not go with that plan because the testing required for a waiver is much more extensive, which increases the chance that materials will be found that would require heightened disposal requirements. The results could also impact the lagoons that were closed over the last two years. RMI is now recommending that we close the remaining lagoon in the same way as the previous three lagoons and not seek a waiver. Richard Lee agrees with this plan as does Dennis Thompson, the person who did the work to close the other lagoons. The Board agreed with the revised plan.

Ms. Hallquist reported that the town report is being worked on and if anyone has pictures, please submit them. Hospital Days 2018 planning begins Wednesday, and the Planning Board Master Plan subcommittee will be meeting with department heads this month. Ms. Hallquist has encouraged the department heads to review the master plan and be ready to give the subcommittee information. Ms. Hallquist reported that Chief Jay Lyon attended a State House Public Works committee meeting in Concord on behalf of the town with regards to the Wild Goose boat launch issue.

Committee Meetings

Selectman Kidder attended a Tri-Town Assessors meeting. The budget came in under what was proposed for 2017 and 2018 looks to be the same or lower. New London contributes 32.78% of the budget, Sunapee 37.41% and Newbury 29.81%. This is based on the number of parcels in each town.

Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2018 meeting with one correction. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Other Business

Phyllis Piotrow asked if any consideration had been given for the need for a building inspector given that a large project for a Senior Living facility is being proposed at New London Hospital. How does the town ensure that building regulations are followed? Ms. Hallquist replied that currently, the town does not enforce the state building code, although the code applies in all towns and cities. Licensed electricians and plumbers have requirements for their license that require them to follow the state building code. Chief Lyon does check for fire safety. There is no legal requirement that the town hire someone to act as a building inspector. Selectman Rollins feels that at this point in time, she's not sure the town should create a whole new position.

Selectman Kidder stated that when representatives of the senior living project presented to the Planning Board, it was introductory and there were no concrete plans. Phyllis Piotrow stated they were planning to submit their proposal within weeks. Selectman Kidder replied that there would be a lot of questions that would be discussed once a proposal came forward. Chair Helm

stated that it would be at least a year before construction began and that topic could be considered once the Planning Board has reviewed the proposal.

Items to be signed

- Payroll Authorization Voucher
- Accounts Payable Voucher
- 2019 Street Numbering Update Contract
- Application for Land Use Change Tax-Current Use
- Applications for Veteran Tax Credit
- Application for Current Use – Good Shepherd Farm LLC, Main Street & Squires Drive
- February Birthday Cards
- Applications To Use Town Property
 - ✓ Town Common on May 19, 2018 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm for the Fly Fishing Tutorial by Michael Gelcius for the Elkin's Fish & Game Club.

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building Permits

- John & Linda Dowd, 476 Route 103A, TM 080-010-000. Add 3rd floor & move bathroom. BP 17-143. APPROVED 1/9/17
- Timothy & Lucinda Carlson, 293 Lamson Lane, TM 062-008-000. Demo/New construction 3bdrm. BP 17-147. APPROVED 1/18/17
- Scytheville Row Assoc LLC, 75 Newport Road, TM 072-037-000. Commercial interior set up for new tenant. BP 18-001 APPROVED 1/9/17
- Daniel Zayac, 493 Pleasant Street, TM 061-007-000. After the fact renovation-living space to garage. BP 18-002. APPROVED 1/9/17
- Frederick & Ann Page Stecker, 30 Prescott Lane, TM 073-021-000. Renovate existing office space in "tower". BP 18-004. APPROVED 1/9/17

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London