



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN & BUDGET COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING MINUTES Monday, January 28, 2019 7:00 PM

**SELECTMEN PRESENT:** Nancy Rollins (Chair), Janet Kidder, G. William Helm, Jr.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joe Cardillo (Vice Chair), Phyllis Piotrow, Lyndsay Lund, Suzanne Jesseman, Mark Christensen, Bill Helm (Selectmen's Rep).

**ABSENT:** Rob Prohl (Chair), Lauren Snow Chadwick, Jerry Coogan, Chris Lorio

**STAFF PRESENT:** Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator; Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Police Chief Ed Andersen, Recreation Director Scott Blewitt, Fire Chief Jay Lyon, John Lewis, Peter Bianchi, Bob Brown

Joe Cardillo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### Approval of Meeting Minutes

Phyllis Piotrow noted on the last page, next to last paragraph stated the public hearing will be held at Whipple Hall. She would like it to say public **budget** hearing. And in the following sentence it should state the Annual **Town** Meeting. It will say town meeting twice in the same sentence.

**IT WAS MOVED (Suzanne Jesseman) AND SECONDED (Phyllis Piotrow) to accept the minutes from the January 9, 2019 meeting with the amendments discussed above. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

### Consider warrant articles:

#### Buker renovations/repairs

Police Chief Ed Andersen stated he had a discussion with the officers and dispatchers and their hope is that the town will spend some time looking for a piece of property and will build a police department that is built for that purpose as opposed to retrofitting what is there. They have lived through a retrofit before and it doesn't fit their needs. Instead of investing major amounts of money into the current building for a short time, they would rather the town save that money and use it appropriately down the road. They don't want to waste the money on a temporary fix.

Chair Rollins asked what that means regarding the numerous documents that have been prepared regarding what needs to happen to the space to make it livable. At best guestimate, they are three years out before a new police department would be done. Chief Andersen stated that the heating and mold issues need to be addressed no matter what the building is used for. The town wants to keep the building and it will help the environment they are in. Their concerns are that they don't want to invest a lot of money and be told it's good enough to last another ten years. They would rather live with what they have, save that money and build something correctly.

Selectman Helm went through all the documents that have been submitted and came to the following conclusions:

- The Board of Selectmen unanimously supports the development of a new police facility on land other than the existing Seaman's Road site. This project should be completed in 3 +/- years beginning with the identification and acquisition of an appropriate site.

Chair Rollins agrees that for the current facility, it would be cost prohibitive to bring it up to the standards needed and the existing site is not the best. That said, it has to be up to the taxpayers whether or not they want to do this or not. All of these building issues need to be part of the Master Plan and needs public engagement before we bring significant costs to build new buildings or purchase land so it is transparent.

- The Board of Selectmen is unanimous in support of retaining the Buker building and repurposing it for other municipal purposes. Chair Rollins stated that she doesn't want to limit it to repurposing it solely for municipal purposes. It should state just for other uses.
- Until such time as the future uses of Buker are determined, repairs should be made to Buker only to the extent necessary to make the police comfortable including heating, air condition, abatement of water infiltration and mold. Upgrades designed specifically for the Police Department should not be considered.
- Cost estimates for these basic improvements range from \$345,000 to \$890,000.
- Since prices are generally lower than estimated, and since North Branch has completed the most thorough estimate of the specific tasks needed to meet short term police use, the amount requested for a bond issue should be \$600,000 for the Buker improvements.
- In preparation for town meeting, the Town should seek at least two estimates from mechanical equipment vendors. If the amounts differ significantly from the North Branch estimates, the bond amount may be adjusted accordingly.
- Following the 2019 town meeting, the Board of Selectmen should first initiate a process for determining the future uses of Buker and select a site for the future development of a police facility and possible other uses with the expectation that acquisition of a site will be brought before the next town meeting.

Lyndsay Lund appreciated Selectman Helm's list of conclusions. She asked Scott Blewitt what his thoughts were since his department is part of this shared space. Mr. Blewitt noted that Whipple Hall is a wonderful building and the Recreation Department is ever growing and they are trying to fulfill many needs. He stated they always have a need for more space. He is supportive of the plan for the Police Department and hopes the Rec Department will be considered for an expansion within Buker and Whipple Hall.

Chair Rollins stated she wanted to be clear that as part of the master plan she would like to have a business plan that is strategic with regards to what the potential growth and future is for the Recreation Department. Whipple Hall does not take the place of a gymnasium. Whipple Hall needs to be restored to a facility used for voting and cultural events. It is not a given that the Recreation Department will take over that facility if the Police Department vacates it.

Phyllis Piotrow stated that Selectman Helm's memo is sensible and repairs and renovations to old buildings are expensive and costly. Although it seems to be a lot of money, whatever the use is going to be for the Buker building in the future means repairs need to be done to make it habitable.

Joe Cardillo expressed his frustration that again we are trying to solve this problem at the eleventh hour. Last year, a ninth officer was requested and it was stated that manpower was the most important issue and if that happened, there wouldn't be a request for a new building.

Mr. Cardillo stated what he is hearing is that there is a fear that if money is invested into the building and if space issues are addressed, it could sufficiently house the Police for a dozen more years. He isn't sure why we wouldn't look into this. He is in favor of spending money on the building as there are issues that need to be addressed. In his opinion, this forces the issue of trying to find a solution for recreation immediately if we can make this the home for the Police Department.

Suzanne Jesseman stated that the large space in Whipple Hall is not appropriate for the Recreation Department. It should be used more for cultural events and voting.

Chief Ed Andersen stated years ago, they sat down and expressed what their needs were. Over time, their needs kept getting changed to the point of where they are now and they had to settle for a building that doesn't meet their needs as a Police Department. His point is that he would rather put it off, make a plan to build an actual Police Department and invest the money correctly. He is worried they will make some changes to make it habitable but it's not functional for the Police Department.

Joe Cardillo asked Chief Andersen if he feels there is enough square footage if recreation moved out since there are many advantages to keeping the Police Department there. Chief Andersen feels it boils down to the last study done and whether the neighboring property is purchased. The square footage could be created but you are still trying to fit a square building in a rectangle space. He thinks they would be better off finding a piece of property and building an appropriate building as opposed to trying to piece meal this together.

Lyndsay Lund stated there is a need for space in town. If there is a need to spend money on a building, regardless of its utilization purpose, it would be an asset to the town. The priority of space should defer to the Police Department and the space should be adequate for the intended purpose. She has no issue with developing a space that's appropriate for police and also maintaining the space that's already available for a purpose to be determined.

Phyllis Piotrow commented that the question shouldn't be whether the building is suitable for recreation or police but rather do we want to make the building habitable. If so, we have to pay to make repairs, if not, tear it down.

Jay Lyon asked if the repair's included a sprinkler system. The answer was no.

John Lewis asked if recreation could use the building if it was fixed. Chair Rollins stated they are currently using the office space and there is no plan for where they would go, so it is conceivable that it would continue. Mr. Lewis stated if the building isn't being used for police or recreation, why don't we tear it down? Chair Rollins stated this is a potential but they are a long way away from making that decision.

Peter Bianchi asked if the warrant article would specify in a general sense what it would be used for. He feels this is critical so when people vote, they know what the money will be used for. Chair Rollins agrees that they should illustrate the intent with regards to the actions that will be taken with the building, but they also need to do it in such a way that they are not locked in.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to request a bond through a warrant article in the amount of \$600,000 for improvements to the Buker Building that are limited to those that are necessary for the comfort and safe occupancy of the Police Department. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Lund) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to accept the request for a \$600,000 bond for the stated improvements of the Buker Building. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

Road projects: Brookside, Pingree, Goose Hole

Selectman Helm stated that he had previously suggested the amount of \$750,000 even though Bob Harrington's numbers only added up to \$673,000. He wondered if he should modify it to \$700,000.

Mr. Harrington stated there could be issues related to wetlands and a temporary bridge. It was decided to leave it at \$750,000 to ensure there is enough money to complete these projects.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to raise \$750,000 through borrowing for the Pingree, Brookside and Goose Hole projects. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Phyllis Piotrow) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to approve the \$750,000 bond for Pingree, Brookside and Goose Hole projects. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

Storm Water Asset Management Plan

Kim Hallquist noted that this would be done using a \$30,000 loan forgiveness program. This is the same process as the wastewater treatment plan that is finishing up now. This project is very important to the lake protective associations.

Portion of timber proceeds to Conservation Fund

The Conservation Commission has asked that half of the profit from the Sheppard Pit timber harvest go to the general town fund and the other half to the Conservation fund. All were in favor.

Any other budget items that members want to discuss

Wendy Johnson recommended putting debt service interest into the budget. Interest is usually paid twice a year but she feels one of the payments can be pushed out into the next fiscal year. Her recommendation is to appropriate \$27,000.

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to add \$27,000 in to the budget for debt service interest. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Phyllis Piotrow) to accept \$27,000 to be added in to the budget for debt service interest. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

Approve budget totals to present at Budget Hearing (not including petitions that may be submitted)

The total budget is \$9,995,085.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the total budget in the amount of \$9,995,085. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Lund) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to approve the total budget in the amount of \$9,995,085 on behalf of the Budget Committee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM at Whipple Hall.

**It was moved (Joe Cardillo) and seconded (Nancy Rollins) to adjourn the joint meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London