



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES October 15, 2018 5:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Will Gatchell and Judy Johnson, Harriman
Bob Harrington, Public Works Director
Barry and KC Wright, New London Residents
John Raby, New London Resident
Jamie Hess, Energy Committee Chair
Peter Vedova, Energy Committee
Dorothy Baxter, New London Resident
Vahan Sarkisian, New London Resident
Debra Fuller, Ladies Benevolent Society
Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director
Joe Kubit, Planning Board Member
Minette McQueeney, *Intertown Record*
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*

Police Chief Ed Andersen
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident
Mark Vernon, New London Resident
Lisa Hess, Energy Committee
Joe Cardillo, New London Resident
Jim Wheeler, New London Resident
Bob Bowers, New London Resident
Connie Reese, Ladies Benevolent Society
John Wilson, New London Resident
Joy Kubit, Recreation Commission

Chair Rollins called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Donation of speed limit signs

Barry and KC Wright attended the meeting to discuss the donation of two speed limit signs. Mr. Wright explained that he and his wife live on the corner of Wilmot Center Road and Lakeshore Drive in Elkins. For several months they have been trying to donate speed limit signs to the town. They sent several emails and did not receive a response until they asked to attend a Board of Selectman meeting. Mr. Wright informed the Board that there is a problem with speed in the area and also heavy pedestrian traffic.

They purchased and posted speed limit signs and were told that there is liability attached to them by Richard Lee, former Director of the Department of Public Works so they took them down. Mr. Wright isn't sure what that liability is. The current Public Works Director explained that these signs are not approved signs as they do not conform with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Mr. Wright feels protecting citizens is more important than whether or not they are enforceable signs. Mr. Wright suggested the way to change behavior is to constantly reinforce it. Chair Rollins apologized on behalf of the town for the lack of response.

Ms. Hallquist explained that Mr. Lee pointed out that if a sign does not conform to the uniform traffic sign manual it's not approved. All street signs are uniform, consistently the same size and shape, so motorists will more easily recognize and understand what the sign means. Ms. Hallquist noted that Public Works Director Bob Harrington looked into the issue and was advised that since the signs do not conform with the uniform manual, they should not be installed on town roads. She noted that the town office gets complaints all over town because there are too many signs. Additionally, the more signs that are posted, the less effective they are. Adding additional signs doesn't increase effectiveness, it decreases it. The flashing speed signs around town are approved and are moved often to increase the effectiveness of them.

Police Chief Ed Andersen suggested using the 25mph signs in conjunction with the flashing signs. He also noted that as of October 1, 2018 the ninth officer was sworn in so this will allow the department to have an officer patrolling during the day. The town should see a big improvement in enforcement as a result.

There is a seasonal aspect to this as well and Chair Rollins suggested replacing a sign on Bog Road that needs to be replaced. She asked that Chief Andersen work with the Wrights on the issue of traffic signs and enforcement efforts.

Buker Study

Will Gatchell and Judy Johnson attended the meeting. Mr. Gatchell addressed information requested from the last meeting. One item was the question of assigning a dollar value to the facilities report that was created. As they look at the conceptual options, they are applying order of magnitude costs, not line item and it is ballpark per square foot. They feel it is premature to be getting into specific line items. While they haven't gone through item by item, it is all included in overall cost per square foot.

Mr. Gatchell noted that renovating and updating the existing building was identified in the matrix at a cost \$220 per square foot if it was unoccupied. ADA upgrades and site improvements were included. This is a grand total of \$3.8 million dollars. This doesn't include the cost of moving the Police department out. This tool gives enough information for a decision and a direction on how to proceed. They could also do a line by line construction cost estimate, but the Board should pick a direction before that exercise is undertaken.

Mr. Gatchell noted that option 5-1 includes no addition, just major renovation and the lower dollar amount seems better, as the cost goes down, the ability for the building to function properly and function as a police department gets worse. He discussed a recent article in the New York Times about Hurricane Michael and the last house standing. All houses around it were leveled and the people that built this house used reinforced concrete and the lower level was built above the storm surge. Pieces of the house were designed to break apart and not compromise the structure which happened. He stressed that while Harriman is not advocating for a robust and expensive way to build a police department, the structure needs to perform as it is a critical facility.

Selectman Helm doesn't feel it answers his question because at the conclusion of the last meeting, they were asking what other uses there would be for this building down the road if it was decided to build a facility at a different site. It was felt that this site was not ideal for spending that kind of money. Selectman Helm asked what repairs or upgrades would be needed to just get by for now, if the Board decides relocate the police department to a new facility elsewhere. He referenced a chart from July, noting that it appeared to be a reasonable way of looking at that question. If it takes 2-3 years to decide what to do on a different site for a police

department, what is the minimum amount of money that the town could spend to make it habitable, and then down the road to be able to use it for some other undefined town use. Selectman Helm noted that all the work that Harriman has done has been extraordinarily helpful for them to see that this building and the site have huge limitations.

Chair Rollins stated that at the last meeting it was decided that in order to come close to having what the Police Department would need, it would be cost prohibitive in this building and recognize if they took a minimalist approach it would be 2-3-year transition phase.

Ms. Johnson stated this is more of a capital improvement analysis and items need to be prioritized. They can attach a dollar amount to the priority issues.

Mr. Gatchell clarified his understanding of the hypothetical is that a new police department is being designed and built at a different location and the intent will be to just keep the existing building up and running. Once the new facility is built, the old building will be vacated, and another use will be determined for the existing facility. The Board agreed. Mr. Gatchell observed that it is difficult to identify what the needs will be if you don't know what the use and layout will be. More detailed questions will be required. His concern is they can answer the question but doesn't ultimately apply to the intended situation.

Selectman Helm stated that the Board of Selectmen need to spend more time thinking about the broader issue of what to do long term with the Police Department and the Recreation Department. He feels they should be more specific about the timeline for the Police Department or other uses that can be made of the space. Ultimately the answer may be that some or all of it should be demolished. Chair Rollins agrees and thinks they need to take a minimalist approach and prioritize the significant issues affecting the building.

Chief Ed Andersen wanted to reiterate that the air quality (air conditioning and heating) mold issues and water leaks throughout the building are the most important to address.

Peter Bianchi commented that the message he is getting is that there shouldn't be any renovation to the building and the town should start from scratch. Chair Rollins clarified that it would be cost prohibitive to make the changes necessary in order to meet the needs of the Police Department. That said, it will be a number of years before we can do something else. We are asking Harriman to take a minimalist look at what could be done to the building in the meantime and put a dollar value to that. Mr. Bianchi noted that he's heard several times that the water issues can't be solved; he observed that unless there has been a study saying it can't be solved, he thinks it can be. He doesn't think this is a legitimate concern to throw this site out and there are various techniques to solve water issues. Chair Rollins responded that it was never stated it couldn't be solved, however it would likely be costly.

John Raby asked if there had been any discussion to converting the facility to renewable energy. There is a warrant article that calls for the town to convert to renewable energy for electricity by 2030 and heat by 2050. Mr. Gatchell noted that their study of the facility did not include the cost to introduce renewal energy. Mr. Raby noted that the Inter Government Panel on Climate Change report states there are 10-12 years to act decisively to stave off the worst effects of climate change. Whatever costs evolve now will be even greater in the next generation. He is strongly recommending that conversion to clean energy be considered and done now. Chair Rollins stated they can look at it and agrees for any re-design it should be considered but prioritization will need to be considered as they take a minimalist approach.

Energy Committee Update

Jamie Hess, Lisa Hess and Peter Vedova of the Energy Committee attended the meeting. The mission of the committee is to help the town of New London and its residents save energy and money. They achieve this through the adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy in ways that make economic sense.

Mr. Hess presented on behalf of the Committee and explained that there are three ways to achieve the goal of energy efficiency:

1. Convert as much lighting as possible to energy efficient LED's. The street lights have been converted and this saves a great deal of money. They are now looking at interior lighting. They were approached by Sandra Licks, Director of Tracy Library to save money and improve safety. The library received a proposal and it will not cost anything as it is through the smart start program. It is funded through Eversource and through a combination of rebates and paying for the project through the electric bill there is zero cost until the system is paid off. After that they will save money on the electric bill every month. The way this works is they take an average of the last 12 months. You would continue to pay the average amount even though the LED's are resulting in the use of less electricity. Once the project is paid off, the electric bill would be less. Other town buildings should be looked at and upgraded to LED's. The Energy Committee would like to help with this process. Chair Rollins would like this to happen.
2. Upgrades in energy efficiency
3. Solar to provide electricity and installing wood heating systems. There is a lot of wood that can be harvested locally. This provides jobs and economic growth in our area.

With regards to the Buker building discussion, Mr. Hess noted that it would be great if the next municipal facility is net zero energy.

There are many nearby towns and institutions that have implemented wood and solar already. Proctor Academy and Kearsarge Middle School have wood chip boilers for heat. John Stark High School in Weare passed a bond to put in a wood heating system.

With regards to Solar, they are looking at two prime locations to develop solar which are the sewer pumping station and the public works building. The Energy Committee has had discussions with three different solar vendors. The most productive discussion has been with Norwich Technologies. The Energy Committee can present a proposal in the near future to do solar at those two locations. The library is also interested in solar. The cost for the system is \$250,000. There are a few options to pay for this. One is a bond issue but this is the minority choice of municipalities. Most set up a power purchase agreement. The town doesn't issue a bond but instead a group of outside investors own the system. Over a period of six years the investors can recover a large part of their investment and once this six-year period expires, they will offer to sell the system to the town for a reduced price. This is usually 40-50% of the original cost. From this point on, you get free electricity from a maintenance free system whose efficiency only degrades by about .5% per year. The Energy Committee recommends moving forward with a power purchase agreement. There was discussion about setting up a capital reserve fund for solar. If this was done and a small amount was contributed to the fund for 6 years, we would be ready to purchase the system by year 7.

Mr. Hess is willing to facilitate a presentation from the solar vendors if there is interest. Some of the incentives for solar are ramping down at the end of 2019. This could affect us if investors are

less inclined to set up a power purchase arrangement. 2019 would be the year to act to get an agreement that is most beneficial to the town.

Selectman Kidder asked how much the investors make on something like this. Mr. Hess stated it is lucrative for the investors.

Selectman Helm would like the LED analysis project started as soon as possible and stated ongoing dialogue with Norwich Technologies or other solar vendors should continue. He also recommended talking with the Kearsarge School District. Mr. Hess stated they haven't spoken with them, but they are open to it. Ms. Hallquist will provide Mr. Hess with contact information for the Superintendent.

Public Comment

Mark Vernon expressed his support for the use of renewable energy. The town has over 600 acres of conservation land and another 80 acres of wooded land, so the town has a fuel source that should be given full consideration.

Debra Fuller attended the meeting. She noted that last week there was discussion about land that the Ladies Benevolent Society owns in Elkins. The group has filed papers of dissolution with the State. In the deed and minutes of incorporation, it states the land needs to come back to the town of New London if the group dissolves. There was also discussion about the bandstand that is on the property that the Ladies Benevolent Society does not own, nor has it maintained, the bandstand on the property. The Sesquicentennial Committee owns it and has maintained and insured it over the years.

Ms. Hallquist stated that the issue of accepting the property should be taken up at Town Meeting. Prior to that, the Selectmen have asked that the bandstand structure be evaluated so the condition is known, and voters are aware of what they are taking on. Ms. Hallquist has not received anything from the Secretary of State saying the group has been dissolved. The Masons have expressed interest in taking over the bandstand. Ms. Hallquist will work with Ms. Fuller and will reach out to the State to find out what the procedure is.

The Board of Selectmen meeting was suspended at 6:15pm until the scheduled 6:30pm joint meeting with the Budget Committee could begin.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to suspend the Board of Selectmen meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The regular Selectmen's meeting resumed at 7:37pm, following the Joint meeting with the Budget Committee.

Old Business

Joe Cardillo asked how the workforce housing piece of the Continuum project is going. He has heard that there has been discussion about Crosspoint possibly putting workforce housing on the shopping center site. Mr. Cardillo observed that putting workforce housing on that site would eliminate a significant amount of retail space. Chair Rollins stated that this has not been proposed to the Board of Selectmen and Selectman Kidder stated this has not come before the Planning Board.

New Business - None

Town Administrators Report

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- Ms. Hallquist asked if the Selectmen had given thought to the Colby Sawyer College offer to use their facility for town meeting. She would like to know how to proceed. Selectman Helm asked about the details regarding fees that would be charged to use it. Selectman Kidder asked why we would want to. Selectman Helm stated for comfort and if we can save money that would be great. Ms. Hallquist is unsure if it would help or hurt attendance at Town Meeting but thought the idea was worth considering. She could do a cost analysis between the two sites if there is interest. Selectman Kidder also discussed parking, noting that this could be a deal breaker if people had to walk further. Chair Rollins doesn't feel it's the time to change the location of town meeting. Selectman Helm disagrees but Ms. Hallquist will let them know the decision was made to not use their facility.
- A resident of Pingree Road, Dorothy Baxter, would like her street light back. There was a town wide reduction in street lights several years ago. Many New Hampshire towns cut their street lighting for monetary reasons and to appreciate dark skies. This was taken under advisement.
- Ms. Hallquist will review the proposals received for the survey of the transfer station; she will forward to the Solid Waste Committee for their review and comment. There were two quotes submitted.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Selectman Kidder reported that the Planning Board met on October 9, 2018. The following was discussed:

- A tree cutting application
- Mascoma Bank had gone to the Zoning Board for a variance for an additional sign. This was denied. They removed one sign from their building and wanted a free-standing sign. This required the Planning Boards approval for the change to the site plan, but it was determined that they need to be on the one sign allotted to the shopping center property and can't have a free-standing sign. They now have to go back to the Zoning Board to get a variance for approval for a free-standing sign.
- Continuum developers attended with a new architect that will design and build the project. More units have been added. Will Davis of Horizon's Engineers was present and is working with their engineer with regards to drainage issues. They also stated they would put in sidewalks that go to Lyon Brook and will meet up with the sidewalks on Parkside Drive. This was not asked of them, but they went ahead and added it to their project.

Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2018 meeting. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next Selectmen/Budget Committee Meeting – Monday, October 22nd – 6 PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, October 17th – 8:30 AM

- Solid Waste Committee Meeting – Monday, October 22nd – 8 AM
- Planning Board – Tuesday, October 23rd – 6:30 PM @ Whipple Hall

There was discussion about upcoming meetings. It was decided that there will not be a Board of Selectman meeting on November 5 or November 12, 2018.

Other Business

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to enter into a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (d): consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.

Roll call vote: Rollins: Yes; Helm: Yes; Kidder: Yes

The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:07 PM.

The Board reentered the public session at 8:16 PM.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to seal the nonpublic session meeting minutes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Items to be signed

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Payroll Authorization Voucher
- Timber Sale Contract
- Applications To Use Town Property
 - ✓ Whipple Hall – On January 8, 2019 from noon to 3pm for the members to do flower arranging by the NL Garden Club.
 - ✓ Whipple Hall – On July 9, 2019 from noon to 3pm for the NH Audubon - Reptiles & Snakes presentation by the NL Garden Club.

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building Permits

- Wende Bohenko, 46 Burpee Hill Rd., TM 082-029-000. 8x12 Shed. BP 18-080 APPROVED
- Michael & Frances Liberty Trust, 273 Brookside Dr. TM 121-016-000. Interior renovations. BP 18-101 APPROVED

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London