



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES October 17, 2016 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

G. William Helm, Chair
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Steve Ensign, Board of Firewards
Jennifer Vitiello, New London Resident
Paul Gorman, Planning Board Chair
Liz Meller, Planning Board
Ray Deragon, New London Resident
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member
Lou Botta, Emergency Management Dir.

Linda Nicklos, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Jim Wheeler, New London Resident
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Jeremy Bonin, Planning Board
Bill Dietrich, Planning Board
Bruce Hudson, Budget Committee
Jaclyn Goddette, Argus Champion
Lucy St. John, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Donna Larrow, Police Department Admin. Asst.

Chair Helm opened the meeting at 6:00pm. He noted that Selectman Kidder would not be at the meeting.

1941 Building Discussion

Chair Helm read from a prepared statement:

“At its September 19 meeting the Board of Selectmen had an extensive discussion regarding the 1941 Building and related issues of Town space needs. I indicated at that time that I needed another 3-4 weeks to solidify my position on these matters.

In the interim I have met with the Recreation Commission to discuss the particulars of its facility needs, I have met with officials of the School District to better understand the cost and timing of its potential cafeteria/library project at the old Middle School, and I have further reviewed the capital priorities of the Town.

It is now my conclusion and recommendation that the Board of Selectmen not pursue further consideration of acquiring rights to the 1941 Building. I agree with Nancy that there is not a compelling enough case for the Town use of the Building, and that the ongoing operating costs could be significant. I agree with Janet that a vote of the Town would be instructive, but I now believe that the effort to support that vote would unnecessarily distract us from establishing and funding the other capital needs of the Town.

I do believe that there continues to be a strong need for additional facilities in New London, particularly for recreation programming for all ages. In my view it will be important for the future stability of New London to offer opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in cultural, health and wellness, and physical activities that make for a sustainable community, both physically and mentally.

With the latter in mind, I will continue to suggest that we engage in a Town wide dialogue on what we want New London to be as a residential, educational and commercial center". [*prepared statement read by Chair Helm*]

Selectman Rollins agreed with the points raised by Chair Helm and the conclusion he reached.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to conclude the Board's efforts for the Town to acquire the 1941 Building. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Presentation of the Capital Improvements Plan, Paul Gorman – Chair of the New London Planning Board

Mr. Gorman said the CIP plan had included pursuing the 1941 building but since the Selectmen just decided to forego this venture, it will change their plan. To determine the plan this year, they looked at past plans and what the capital issues were. They also interviewed and talked to Richard Lee, Public Works Director. Mr. Gorman said he found it useful to go around the town with Mr. Lee to look at all the projects. The CIP Committee held a series of meetings and came up with proposals with regards to various projects in the town.

1. Complete the Pleasant Lake dam project – this is a priority due to consideration of issues that could be caused by the dam possibly breaching at some point.
2. Fund the sewer lagoon project – this should be completed for public health/safety reasons.
3. Parkside Road sidewalk – these should be upgraded for public safety.
4. Fund Goosehole Bridge replacement – This should be done because the bridge is in poor shape.
5. Fund a study of the Transfer Station – The site needs to be studied to see if there are expansion or relocation needs.
6. Continue to invest in heavy duty equipment to meet the fire/public works/transfer station needs.

Mr. Gorman thanked Bill Berger, Michele Holton and Bill Dietrich for their work on the CIP.

Selectman Rollins thanked Mr. Gorman and the Planning Board for doing this work. She noted that the Town is struggling with several space and upgrading needs as well as determining where they want to go as a town. How do they want Main Street and Newport Road to look in the future? Concord has done some thoughtful planning with regards to Loudon Road; buildings are closer to the main road with walkways in front, and parking is located in the back. The architecture is more of a colonial type and not the box-store type.

Mr. Gorman said the Planning Board is aware of the concern of the citizens regarding what the town is and what it will look like in the future. They need to balance looking like a New England town while also meeting the needs of the commercial district. They then need to plan their ordinances in ways to memorialize this design.

Bill Dietrich said they need to re-do the master plan and encourages the townspeople to get involved and come to meetings.

Jeremy Bonin said getting the public involved in the reactive work is important. From a planning standpoint, the biggest hurdle is public involvement.

Phyllis Piotrow is surprised there is no mention about Whipple Hall in the CIP, which needs extensive work. She is also unhappy about Chair Helm's movement to not take action on acquiring the 1941 building but she realizes it

is the right decision. There seems to be a lack of public interest in saving the building and no reasonable plans for doing it. Lastly, she sat through the master plan meetings before and feels there is a lack of vision and imagination in the document. They need more than just nuts and bolts.

Mr. Dietrich said the master plan is an overall vision for the town; it is a guide. Citizen input will likely make the document more interesting. He noted that the CIP from last year included Whipple Hall and the work there is continuing. The entire Whipple Hall complex is still being addressed through the CIP of last year.

Mr. Gorman said the issues of the lagoon and the dam are critical issues for the town. While they may not be exciting, they should be on the top of the list. Part of their job is to keep repeating these issues until they are on the road to completion.

Mr. Prohl said that now that the 1941 issue is put to bed, more time can be spent on the other things that need attention, including Whipple Hall, the sewer lagoons, Pleasant Lake dam, etc.

Chair Helm said they need to work together with all the groups in Town to determine where they want the town to go.

There was discussion about the Parkside Road sidewalk; there is an issue on how to get the 5' sidewalk on the already narrow road.

Chair Helm asked Mr. Gorman if he would be willing to discuss the CIP at the upcoming Citizen's Advisory Committee in November 5th. Mr. Gorman said he would.

Commuter Bus Feasibility Study – Liz Meller, Planning Board

Ms. Meller thanked Nancy Rollins and the UVLSRPC who worked with the State to get a grant to study a commuter bus from New London to Hanover. It will start at the park and ride in New London, go to Grantham, Enfield, Lebanon and Hanover. This is a feasibility study at this point. Ms. Meller said there has been input from all the towns and many other organizations. She handed out a flyer that explains the public information drop-in sessions. There has been a great response from the towns as it is a necessity. AECOM is the name of the company doing the study.

Mr. Bianchi said the park and ride by Exit 12 is extremely crowded already. He hopes the study will include a way to enlarge or move the park and ride. Ms. Meller agrees with Mr. Bianchi's sentiment about this need but said it wouldn't be part of the study. She suggests that there are other options for bus stops in the town. Selectman Rollins said she brought up this point when she was on the board at UVLSRPC. She added that this solution is to benefit commuters and alleviate traffic congestion in the Upper Valley. Chair Helm said this study is an example of what the Town can get by paying dues to and working with the UVLSRPC.

Public Comments

There were none.

Old Business

Employee Study – Finalize Pay-grade and the Possibility of Steps

Chair Helm feels his proposal to consolidate pay grades (upper levels especially), makes sense. Selectman Rollins said they have nine pay grades currently. The salary and wage study suggests they should have 11 grades. She thinks Chair Helm's proposal in this regard is appropriate.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the pay grades outlined since the last meeting.

Mr. Ensign asked if the top grade would be a lower grade level than Mr. Thornton suggested. It was. Mr. Ensign asked how this affects the higher classifications? Chiefs Andersen and Lyon, and Mr. Lee would move from grade 18 to grade 17. The police department lieutenant would go from grade 16 to grade 15. The Town Administrator would move from grade 19 to grade 18. This seems consistent with the market data in the compensation study.

Ms. Hallquist said her issue is that the new low amount would keep them from attracting new employees to fill the higher classification positions. The low must mean something but in grade 17, the low is too low to attract anyone. Chair Helm said they want experienced help so wouldn't be looking at the low end of the grade. Ms. Hallquist suggests the Chiefs and Public Works Director stay in grade 18 to keep them from maxing out in grade 17. Chair Helm said this is unlikely to happen.

Ms. Hallquist is concerned; how many raises could someone in grade 17 get before maxing out? Chair Helm said there is a \$10 divide between the bottom and the top of the quartiles. Ms. Hallquist is concerned that they have had a professional do this study and perhaps their idea to keep those positions in grade 18 is the right one. Chair Helm said he wants to put together a plan to keep the pay grades dynamic. He is frustrated that this has taken so long. He doesn't think that anyone will have a 25% pay increase over the next two years, which would mean that the plan he has come up with will sustain them.

Selectman Rollins indicated that the town of Gilford, NH has 14 grades, with 10 steps within each grade. She said while Chair Helm may be changing the grade, the dollar number is not changing. Chief Lyon asked how different New London is compared with Gilford when considering the labor grades at the top. Guilford pays \$94,000 at the top. New London pays \$91,000. New London is proposing the same amounts, but the number system is different.

Selectman Rollins said the point of doing this is to be equitable. The plan will move along and won't be stagnant. Mr. Lee agrees; the top will hopefully keep moving. Chair Helm said he foresees the plan being updated every two years or so. Selectman Rollins agrees with this idea.

Ms. Piotrow asked if they take a top grade away, will people look to leave working for the town to go somewhere else to work at a higher grade? Also, aren't they already a year behind because they didn't get all the funding last year they needed to bring employees where they should be?

Selectman Rollins said the last salary study was done in 2006. None of the positions had been rebased since then. There were periodic COLA increases. They rebased everyone in 2016 based on job function, not on grade. She and Chair Helm look to get a Town commitment to rebase and be competitive in the future. Last year they noted that what needed to happen to bring everyone up to their correct levels couldn't be done in one year. They said this from the beginning.

Selectman Rollins said it isn't the labor grade number, it's the salary that is important. It is the job function that is considered. She doesn't agree with Ms. Piotrow's belief that people would be more concerned with the labor grade level than the salary.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Notice Receipt of Donations for the K9 Project

It was noted that the amount of \$12,184 had come in for the K9 Project. The total raised so far is \$34,840. Chief Andersen said they are about half way to their fundraising goal, which includes a new vehicle. He feels they may want to get the program started earlier, making use of the old cruiser until they can raise enough money to get a new one.

Budget Discussion

Linda Nicklos – Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Ms. Nicklos said she was there to discuss the use of off-site tax vendor printed bills and the mail forwarding issues that came up at the last meeting. She said the postage they will use is a pre-sort rate which is 36 cents. Right now they pay 46.5 cents. The total cost for two bills to go out yearly is \$3,474. The last page of her budget talks about the savings on postage. They are saving about \$300 on postage.

Selectman Rollins asked about how returned mail would go. Ms. Nicklos said if proper change of address information has been filed with the post office, it will be forwarded to the address. This is NOT bulk mail, it is first class. They do all they can to have bills returned if they are undeliverable. She feels things will be good if they keep their database up to date and use the NCOA (National Change of Address) system.

Ms. Nicklos noted that Salem, NH uses this company and has a population of 29,000. The towns of Bristol and Moultonboro do as well and speak highly of it. They will save not only \$300 in postage, but also wear and tear on the copier, and the manpower of the staff to stuff the envelopes. Wendy Johnson said now that this information is clear, \$2,600 can be removed from the postage line.

They will do the November mailing in-house to use up the pre-printed tax bills they have. For May, they will use this outside service.

Emergency Management Budget – Lou Botta, Emergency Management Director

Mr. Botta said his budget includes an increase in the Equipment and Maintenance line of \$2,800, bringing the total to \$6,500. This increase is for a storage trailer to consolidate all of their emergency management equipment in one particular place. The structure at Colby-Sawyer College that used to house some of the Town's equipment was torn down, leaving them with equipment scattered in other places, such as the Fire Station and the Police Station. Mr. Botta said a used trailer costs \$2,800.

Mr. Botta said they would prefer to leave the trailer on Mr. Lee's lot and items can be transported from it. They could try to get an in-kind grant from the State to get something larger on wheels that could be driven to the location as needed. Selectman Rollins said having it mobile would be helpful and if money is available from the State, they should go for it.

Mr. Botta said he would like to get the \$2,800 approved to get a match from the State. \$5,600 will get them something with wheels. They are looking at acquiring additional items for the Syd Crook Conference Room, including televisions and plotters. This would all be included in the budget request. Selectman Rollins said she would like to see the specs of the grant.

Under Travel and Meals, Mr. Botta said with the many meetings he will need to attend on behalf of the Town, he would like to increase this line to \$100 to help pay for gas. The Selectmen were in agreement that this was appropriate.

Fire Department Budget – Jason Lyon, Fire Chief

Chief Lyon said there are no increases in his operating budget which has a decrease of \$7,800. Health and dental insurance costs went up due to a new employee.

Chief Lyon said with regards to Building Maintenance, his firefighters have done the ongoing maintenance. He has some projects he would like to have done with outside sources. Two bids have come in so far. The proposal is to replace the trim board with synthetic materials. The trim that was used initially is rotting, despite it being installed correctly and being painted several times in an effort to protect it.

In the future, Chief Lyon said he would like climate control in the conference room, and in the training room. The vehicle exhaust system may be an issue; it is used to remove exhaust fumes from the spare bay. They didn't have the funds to do it at the time of construction. He would also like to look into solar energy but not until they replace the entire roof. The roof of the old section of their building is in better shape than the 2004 section. They want to replace the roof all at once. Lastly, the red stop light in front of the fire house is not wired correctly. The State can't fix it unless they bring the entire system up to a certain standard.

Chair Helm thinks the \$37,000 for the building maintenance should be removed from this budget line and put into Capital Outlay- Town Building Maintenance.

Wages and Salaries: Chair Helm said they won't be increasing part-time wages more than what they just did. The part time wages reflected the numbers in the FY2018 column.

This is an increase of less than \$28,000 which is due to wages, benefits and a couple little things. Chief Lyon said the operating budget went down but retirement, etc. has increased.

Chief Lyon said he recently met with Harry Plummer in Concord and has a member who has applied with Homeland Security. This is with regards to a federally funded grant and is administered by Homeland Security. If chosen, the employee would remain an employee of the Town but paid for by Homeland Security. The Selectmen were happy with this opportunity.

Police Department Budget – Ed Andersen, Police Chief

Chief Andersen said part-time wages are all that are increased. He said investigation supplies went from \$1,000 to \$3,000. New crime waves are going through cell phones. A program called "Susteen" can capture the messages sent to a phone and can get into locked phones. They need their subscription updated to keep up with all the new phones coming out on the market.

It was noted that the Police Benevolent Association purchased the system initially; this is a cost to update and replace cords, etc.

Chief Andersen said each year they have tried to upgrade their equipment and hope to stay within the \$1,000 in the budget for supplies.

Selectman Rollins asked about a citizen crosswalk detail. Chief Andersen said they have an ad going in the Shopper to ask for help with this.

Chair Helm asked if the increases in part time was due to the salary study. Chief Andersen said it is due to more part time hours being added. Monday through Saturday he likes to have two officers on from morning through night and one person on the midnight shift. That totals 168 hours, covered by 4.2 officers with no time off for one officer. He feels that double coverage is necessary. This requires another 2.4 officers. In addition, the detective, lieutenant and himself work. Chief Andersen noted that time off and training make it necessary to have part time help. Just using overtime and no part time would be over \$43,000 to cover shifts for time off, not including sick or training time. He has upped the part time a bit more to compensate for this extra help which will cost less than overtime.

With regards to the cruisers, Chief Andersen said that they are usually on a three year rotation; they hit the 100,000 mile mark at this point from routine patrols. Once this mileage is reached, the warranty is up. The cruisers take heavy use. Every third year, funds for a new cruiser had been put into the Capital Reserve. Since it was always voted in, he decided to just put it into the operating budget.

Chief Andersen anticipates that the pickup truck will help the Town realize a better savings and trade in value when the three years are up.

Dispatch

Chief Andersen said the only increase in the Dispatch budget is for more training in fire calls. This increase is \$5,000.

Chief Andersen said the line for computer support/licenses is OK. They are trying to keep the budget down by doing little upgrades at a time. Right now he feels they are in good shape.

Town Administrator's Report – Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

1. **Messer Pond Protective Association:** returned \$300 to the town in unused lake host funds from their town appropriation. Weather-related ramp closures and lakehost scheduling conflicts were cited for the reduced coverage hours.
2. **Park & Ride** – Ms. Hallquist reported that she spoke twice with Assistant AG Steve Labonte. He had hoped to get a letter to the Board last week before his vacation, but he couldn't get to it. He has asked for additional information on the equipment we have at the police department. Mr. Labonte will follow-up with others to see if the State will allow the feed.
3. **Probe for Pleasant Lake Dam** – The probe has been received: Richard Lee and the repair person who will install the item feels that installation should wait until the lake level rises so the proper calibration can be accomplished.
4. **Sunapee sewer metering** – Ms. Hallquist reported that she is in contact with Dave Mercier of Underwood Engineers to discuss the ongoing metering issue. He is familiar with the issue as he helped the Board to persuade Sunapee to hold off setting new rates until September 2015 as the plant meter used prior to the upgrade was thought not to be reliable. Ms. Hallquist and Mr. Lee will speak with Dave and report back.
5. **Whipple Hall cupola windows:** Arch Weathers delivered the windows on Saturday – Jim Perkins inspected them and reports that they are in excellent shape. The painters are expected to install the windows this week and the project should be completed.
6. **Sewer lagoons:** Charley Hanson responded to a follow-up email today and said he would be in touch with Richard Lee to coordinate the work to test the material in the buried lagoon as they suggested to the Board at the end of August.
7. **NHMA Law Lecture on Saturday:** On Saturday Ms. Hallquist attended the NHMA law lectures on: a) Developments in the Law, which focused primarily on the new Accessory Dwelling Unit law and recent cases on sign regulations, b) Conflicts of Interest and c) Code Enforcement. If any of you would like to review the material, let me know. The Board asked for electronic copies of the materials.
8. October issue of *Municipal Matters* is out.
9. **Personnel policy changes** – Ms. Hallquist recommended changes to the personnel policies to remove references to Benefits Administrator and replace with Finance Officer now that the Board has eliminated the Benefits Administrator position and placed those duties with the Finance Officer. The Board was provided a copy of the proposed changes.
10. **Preliminary Tax Rate has been set by DRA:** Selectmen must now decide how much of the fund balance to be used to offset taxes. The Board set October 24th at 6pm to set the tax rate.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to adopt the changes to the Personnel Policy, as recommended by Kim Hallquist. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Committee Reports

Chair Helm said he and Liz Meller went to the UVSLRPC meeting. At this point, no Executive Director has been chosen.

Selectman Rollins thanked Mr. Lee for bringing the Budget Committee on a tour of the projects in town. It was helpful to see the projects in person.

Approval of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the minutes of October 3, 2016, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings and Special Events

After some discussion, it was determined that instead of meeting on 10/31, the Selectmen would meet on Monday, 10/24.

- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, October 24th - 6:00 PM
- Budget Subcommittee on Capital Reserve Funds – Wednesday, October 19th – 6:00PM
- Recreation Commission – Tuesday, November 1st – 5:00 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Planning Board – Tuesday, November 1st - 6:30PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, November 16th - 8:30 AM
- Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting – Saturday, November 5th – 7:30AM
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, November 30th – 7:00PM – Start FY2018 Budget Prep

Other

With regard to comments by Dave Bailey of the Sunapee Wastewater Treatment Plant, Mr. Lee said his department tests for phosphorous at the town line once a month. He reviewed the reports for the time period that the town was pumping the water off of the sewer lagoons, and the results show lower levels of phosphorous than the same three months the previous year.

Mr. Lee wonders if there might be a college student who would want to do a phosphorous level study for the Town. The college, hospital, car wash, laundromat, floor cleaning, detergents, etc. could be analyzed to see what could be done to lower the levels of phosphorous. Perhaps they could contact Bill Spear of the Energy Committee (who is a professor at the College) or Jen White (Sustainability Coordinator at the college) to see if they could suggest a student.

Items to be signed

- Pay Authorization Voucher dated 10/17/16 by Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
- Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – TM 051-015 Hunters Hill Trust, 717 Lake Shore Dr.
- Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – TM 137-19 Arnold S. Wood, 1845 King Hill Rd.

Approved Sign Permits

- Permanent Sign for New London Hospital at 273 County Road (TM 072-016-000). To move the main entrance sign back 5 feet. **APPROVED 10/6/2016**

Approved Building Permits

- Sian Owen, 38 Knights Hill Road, TM 082-003-000, Install sheetrock to improve basement. Install vinyl flooring.
BP 16-098 APPROVED 10/12/2016
- Eric & Viola Richter Family Wealth Trust, 61 Westside Drive, TM 055-012-014. Install 12'x16' Shed.

BP 16-107 APPROVED 10/6/2016

- David H Kidder, 912 Pleasant Street, TM 036-016-000. Replace old deck with new deck.

BP 16-114 APPROVED 10/12/2016

- Debra & Robert Berube, 37 Shaker Street, TM 098-017-000. New construction, house. Approx. 1900 SF with garage.

BP 16-118 APPROVED 10/10/2016

- Steven & Malaika Sidmore, 312 South Pleasant Street, TM 095-048-000. Replace existing deck.

BP 16-120 APPROVED 10/6/2016

- Paul & Linda Messer, 600 Bunker Road, TM 076-031-000. Add master bedroom/bath. Existing roof replaced and raised. Update electric, add insulation, replace windows & doors.

BP 16-123 APPROVED 10/12/2016

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a): discussion related to a public employee. Roll call vote: Rollins: yes, Helm: yes

The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:08 PM

The Board returned to the public session at 8:33PM

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to seal the minutes pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, III.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London