



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES October 24, 2016 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Bruce Hudson, Budget Committee
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident
Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair

Chair Helm opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Update on Clark Lookout – Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair

Mr. Brown noted that as of September 26th, the Town owns the trail to Clark Lookout plus land at the bottom of the trail, bringing the town's property to 14 acres. The Clark Lookout parcel was originally donated to the Town by Syd Crook, whose wish it was for all to be able to access and enjoy the wonderful views it affords. Since acquiring the additional property in September, significant work has been done by Peter Stanley who volunteered several hours and his mower to mow a large field near the beginning of the trail which hadn't been done in a long time.

Mr. Brown explained that he was there to discuss some issues with the Clark Lookout trail; he explained that there are some roots at the beginning of the trail that are an obstacle to walk over and are dangerous to drive over with a vehicle. Driving over the roots is not only bad for a vehicle with low clearance, but it is also bad for the trees the roots belong to; scuffing the roots causes red-rot and can kill the trees. It would be nice if they could fix the trail up a bit using some of the funds from the Mary Haddad Trust Fund (which was also used to purchase the trail and the surrounding acreage).

Mr. Brown said he asked Mr. Lee (Public Works Director) for his opinion on how best to address the issue. Mr. Lee suggested the use of recycled glass, topped with road gravel. They just want to make this a safe trail to walk on and have it safe for driving up to the top for those who cannot walk. The rough cost for this project is about \$6,000. It was moved and voted at the last Conservation Commission meeting to request that the Selectmen agree to use of the Mary Haddad Fund for up to \$8,000 this purpose. Mr. Brown said he was asked to come share the plan with the Selectmen and later, with the Recreation Commission (a majority of these three groups must agree before funds from the Haddad Fund can be expended).

Selectman Kidder wonders about the gate at the bottom of the trail; will it remain. Mr. Brown said the gate there is small and getting work vehicles through is a challenge. He added that hikers tend to park on Davis Hill Road either above or below the entrance, which is discouraged. It is preferable that people use the park and ride and walk across Rte 103-A to get to the trailhead. The concern about creating more parking, such as in the space where the field is that was recently mowed, is that it would create an opportunity for undesirable social activities to occur. Chief Andersen agrees with this line of thinking. Mr. Brown said there is a spur off of Rte 103-A that could be used for parking for the trail. A proper gate will eventually be installed where the current gate is. He noted that there has been some activity at Clark Lookout which is concerning, such as people starting fires there.

Selectman Kidder asked if this work to the Clark Lookout trail would complete the project. Mr. Brown said this trail has been in the works for ten years; it is a shame that some people have not been able to go to the top due to the condition of it and the restrictions applied to it by the previous owners.

Selectman Rollins thinks it is a good idea to fix the trail and also believes that this is a great location for cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the future.

Chair Helm said he didn't have trouble with walking up the trail last month however, when he got to the top there were two people on motorcycles there who had a fire going. He worries about making this "trail" too easily accessible. Chief Andersen said officers in regular cruisers can't patrol up the trail in its current state due to their low clearance, but they do patrol the area with the truck or the Expedition. If the trail was in better shape, the area could be patrolled more often by anyone on patrol in any of their vehicles.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the use of up to \$8,000 from the Mary Haddad Trust Fund for repair of the Clark Lookout Trail, as explained by Bob Brown. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion of the 2016 Tax Rate and Undesignated Fund Balance

Ms. Hallquist noted that the State Department of Revenue has issued a preliminary tax rate; the Board of Selectmen have been provided with that information along with documentation proved by Ms. Johnson showing the historical use of undesignated fund balance and potential tax rates using varying amounts of fund balance. Ms. Johnson encouraged then Selectmen to not use more than \$318,000 to lower the tax rate; this amount being what was added to the unreserved fund balance this year. Ms. Hallquist said Town Meeting can also vote to use some of this undesignated fund balance, which was done last year.

Chair Helm suggests using \$275,000, pointing out that over the next couple of years they will have some additional costs and this amount will help smooth over any tax increases to some extent. This will increase the Town taxes over last year by 7.4%. Selectman Rollins feels that is an acceptable number. She thinks they should have a discussion around how they can improve the valuation process; she is concerned with the rising costs of the County and the school and is curious about what those rates will come in at. Ms. Hallquist said the county is up \$.02, local education is down \$.06 and state education is down \$.04 bringing the total tax rate to \$15.92. Using this amount will result, subject to verification by the State Department of Revenue, in a town tax rate of \$4.35 which is 30¢ higher than 2015. The overall tax rate (including school and county) is expected to be \$15.67 (a 1.5% increase over 2015 rate of \$15.45). Selectman Kidder agrees that Chair Helm's suggestion of using \$275,000 is appropriate.

Mr. Bianchi asked what this would leave the fund balance at for the end of the year. Ms. Johnson answered that it would be \$946,352.00. Last year the fund balance was \$902,000.00.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to use \$275,000 of the unassigned fund balance to lower the Town's tax rate. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

FY2018 Budget Discussion – Public Works Department, Richard Lee – Public Works Director

Government Buildings

Mr. Lee said the Stump Dump Water line has been reduced by \$50.00 because they don't use water there anymore; they only grind up the materials with a mobile grinding unit.

Selectman Rollins asked about the Town Hall Cleaning Service as it went up 30%. Ms. Hallquist said the cleaning service amount went up because of the increased use of and need for cleaning at Whipple Hall. There are many programs that happen in that building now that the Recreation Department is housed there.

Selectman Rollins asked if the Town charges for the use of Whipple Hall. Ms. Hallquist said groups that are not part of the Recreation Department programming are charged a fee. The Selectmen have waived some fees in the past for example election activities by the League of Women Voters. Selectman Rollins said perhaps the increase in cleaning fees could be offset by charging more to use the hall. Ms. Hallquist said they could increase the rates; they could discuss this more at the next meeting. She said most of the use of Whipple is by the Town through the Recreation Department. Selectman Rollins said she would like to see a schedule of the rentals/charges for Whipple Hall.

Mr. Lee said maintenance for the Academy Building is \$1,000 less than it was last year. He added that some expenses for the painting of buildings is in a separate document and is not included in his budget.

Cemeteries

The equipment line is down \$1,000 because they are buying a new lawnmower out of this year's budget. They are trying to extend the life of the lawnmowers to two years in an effort to save money.

Highway Administration

The Uniform Service line is increased by 10%.

Uniform Safety Equipment is increased by \$100. This is to help pay for part of people's steel toed boots, and to provide safety equipment such as ear plugs, safety glasses, etc.

The Miscellaneous line has decreased by \$50.

Highways and Streets

The Gravel Road Updates has increased to hire contractors to replace culverts on Pine Hill Road. They have it on the paving plan to be paved in 2019.

Equipment Maintenance

This line has been increased by \$3,000. When equipment goes off of warranty and has a lot of electrical/computerized elements, it can be expensive and difficult to fix.

Sidewalk Maintenance

Mr. Lee said they will do some paving out of this line. He said he may have coded some paving incorrectly from this line in the previous year, as it looks like funds were not expended.

Equipment Rental

This went up \$1,100 which is for a road compacter that is used in the spring.

The above figures realize an increase of \$2,100.00.

Selectman Rollins asked about tires which used to be \$5,000. Mr. Lee said they try to keep the cost as close to \$7,000 as possible but they do take a beating and can get cut both from chains and from backing over trash at the Berlin garbage deposit location.

Diesel Fuel

Mr. Lee said he hates to cut this line down any more. Gas prices are creeping up as well. Selectman Rollins asked if the line could go down to \$40,000. Mr. Lee said they can try this but he may run out of money and he'd have to find it elsewhere. He is willing to try.

Mr. Bianchi said with regards to sidewalk maintenance, does this take into account the Elkins Sidewalks which needs to be plowed this year? Mr. Lee said the regulation says the sidewalks need to be plowed within a reasonable amount of time, which could be a matter of days. Sidewalk maintenance has nothing to do with plowing. The equipment they use for the sidewalk plowing will be transported to Elkins with a minimal expense for fuel.

Salt and Sand

Mr. Lee said the price of salt went up \$3/ton. This is for a new contract with a new company; the salt is also a different type which may do a better job and they won't use as much. The new salt is of a flake variety versus the compacted type of sea salt they have used previously.

Street Lighting

A closer estimate is available and Ms. Hallquist said she could get this.

Transfer Station

Hauling Fee

Mr. Lee said he dropped this by \$4,000. He is skeptical to go down any further as they are getting a new contract in December.

Disposal of Recyclables

Mr. Lee said right now they use their recycling revolving fund and they are paying more to get rid of newspaper than what they make per truckload. There was only about \$3,000 left in the fund now; a few years ago the fund had \$40,000 in it.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Lee said the 2016 actual is \$103,000 and they will come very close to this number. They are up about 20 ton over last year for the same length of time.

Grinding Brush

There is no change with this service but they are getting a lot more brush than they used to because Durgin and Crowell (in Springfield) are no longer grinding at their facility. He thinks they will grind for two days this time around instead of one.

Mr. Lee said the Transfer Station Budget is down about \$3,000 over last year.

Solid Waste Disposal

Mr. Lee said they will be a collection site for Hazardous Materials Day again this year.

Sewer Buildings

Mr. Lee said he has increased the water expenses for the Georges Mills Pump Station.

Sewer Building Maintenance

This has been increased by \$3,000; the boiler at the plant needs to be replaced.

Sewer Alarm Expenses

This seems to be coded in error; Mr. Lee doesn't recall seeing any bills for the alarms. Ms. Johnson said she thinks they are coming in directly from Capital Alarms.

Sewage Collection and Disposal

Mr. Lee said that this line has decreased.

Computer Support

Mr. Lee said that this was to pay Cartographics to help set up the sewer bills for Heather. It also includes the contract maintenance for the copier/printer.

Equipment Maintenance

This fund is to repair things like lines, pumps, etc.

Contracted and Professional Fees

Mr. Lee said this is to pay the people who come do the calibration of meters every two months. They also have a contract for people to work on their electronic systems. Ms. Johnson said they also charge the sewer for their share of the audit from this line.

Sewer Maintenance

Mr. Lee said he has increased this by \$20,000. This was not listed in his budget; it was at \$50,000 and should be at \$70,000. The rationale is that there are clay pipes that need to be replaced; Everett Park had an issue with roots going into the system because of these deteriorated pipes. Mr. Lee would like to do one section from one manhole to another to get the pipes replaced gradually with plastic and replace the manholes that allow for infiltration. This is another way to cut down on flows to Sunapee. Selectman Rollins wonders if this should be put into a capital reserve as this is an ongoing issue; pipes are aging.

Ms. Hallquist said the sewer expenses are paid for by sewer users. They would look into how these costs could be handled differently.

Mr. Lee said the cost to Sunapee has increased by \$35,000.

Dave Mercier, the Town's engineering representative from Underwood Engineers will meet with the Town first, prior to the meeting with Dave Bailey from Sunapee.

Project Plan

Mr. Lee distributed a list of upcoming projects that should be done within the next three years or so; he noted that these amounts have not been included in his operating budget request as last year they were removed.

One project is to repair the roof on Whipple Hall. One quote he received included taking off the bottom three layers and repairing anything there that has rotted, add ice shield, and put the slate back. The man who the Town had work on the roof in the past (with occasional repairs as needed) has warned about using ice shield on a slate roof. In his proposal, they will take care of the roof, line the cutters with copper, and install down spouts.

Ms. Piotrow asked if it makes sense to put money away for the next several years instead of purchasing things with a bond. The Selectmen agree; this is what the library is doing as well. Selectman Rollins explained that is why they like to have the project chart to anticipate costs.

Mr. Hudson asked if they keep track of fuel usage each year. Mr. Lee said although the program they use is antiquated they track all the fuel that goes into each vehicle as well as the maintenance each piece of equipment has undergone.

It was asked if Matt Grimes, Facilities Director, could help with some of the regular maintenance, such as painting. Mr. Lee said he is a facilities person, not really a maintenance person. He works 23 hours/week and is busy for the most part. He is doing a lot to upkeep things in several different departments. He is doing a good job and saves the Town a lot of money.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

Selectman Rollins said although they decided not to meet on October 31st due to probably parking and access issues to the Academy Building (due to it being Halloween evening), she suggests meeting in another location on the 31st to make decisions on the budget thus far.

It was decided that the meeting scheduled for November 7th would begin at 4:00pm to allow for additional time to work on the budget.

- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, November 7th - 4:00 PM
- 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 – Topic: Capital Improvement Program
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, November 30th – 7:00PM – Start FY2018 Budget Prep

Town Administrator's Report – Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

Ms. Hallquist reported that the town received a letter of reply from the Department of Safety Commission (John Barthelmes) regarding the Lake Sunapee sandbar issue raised by the Gordon family. The Commissioner has forwarded the letter to the commanding officer of the NH Marine Patrol for follow-up. NH Rep Karen Ebel is in contact with Marine Patrol and is trying to set up a meeting with interested parties, including the Gordon family. The Gordon family has been provided with the correspondence in the matter.

The Library budget was submitted on Oct 20th; copies have been given to the Selectmen and should be placed into Section V of the budget binders.

The NHMA Annual Conference will be held in Manchester November 16th & 17th. Ms. Hallquist and Ms. Johnson will be attending various training sessions. The current issue of *Town and City* has information on the two-day conference, or the NHMA website, should the Selectmen want to attend as well.

The Lake Sunapee Protective Association will be hosting a meeting on November 3rd at 7pm to continue discussions of better compliance of ordinances and the progress made by the various towns in this effort. Ms. St. John and Ms. Hallquist will be attending.

The Town has received Health Trust rates for the town's employee health insurance: the rates are expected to increase by 10.6%. The final rates will be known around the end of March, so the 10.6% figure will be used for budgeting purposes.

Ms. Hallquist said a response came in from the County Commissioner regarding the Lake Sunapee sand bar issue. He is sending the letter to the Commanding Officer of Marine Patrol to notify him of the issue. Karen Ebel, NH Representative for Merrimack County, is in the process of setting up a meeting with the Gordon Family, who owns the property near the sand bar on Lake Sunapee.

Ms. Hallquist noted that the library budget has been submitted.

The NHMA Annual Conference will be held November 16 and 17. Ms. Hallquist and Ms. Johnson will attend. Sign-ups are available online for anyone to sign up.

On November 3rd, LSPA will hold a meeting to discuss their various ordinances that govern what is allowed and what isn't, around the water.

Ms. Hallquist reported that the preliminary Health Trust rates for town employee health insurance has been received. The rates are expected to increase by 10.6%. Final rates will be known by the end of March; for budgeting purposes, they will use 10.6%.

Committee Reports

Selectman Rollins attended the NHMA Board of Directors meeting on Friday. They encourages all town members to attend the 75th conference. The gala is from 5:30pm to 9:30pm on November 16th. Also, there will be an increase in the NHMA dues of 4%; New London will go from \$5,759 to \$5,986 (an increase of \$221.00). This is due to the breakup with Health Trust. They are adding a Business Administrator position that will also be financial manager and IT person to their governance structure. They have decreased the number of overall staff but feel this position is necessary.

Nancy said a group in town made up of representatives from New London Hospital, COA, At Home, VNA, and the College has been working with a consultant to conduct a summit sometime next spring or summer looking at New London as an age-friendly community. Liz Meller (member of the Planning Board) has been approached to see if she would be a representative from the Planning Board. She is interested and will bring that to the Planning Board to discuss.

Chair Helm noted receipt of an invitation to the college to go to the President's Community Forum.

Chief Andersen said on October 27th there will be an active shooter drill at a house belonging to Colby-Sawyer College. The college needs to do this kind of training each year. A local TV station may be coming to film the drill. If anyone wants to observe or role play, they are welcome to. Chief Andersen said this is good training for officers and dispatch.

Mr. Lee was asked if Seamans Road was still due to be paved. Mr. Lee said it wouldn't be done this fall because it is getting too cold. They will do it in the spring.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) to discuss a real estate issue.

Roll call vote: Helm: yes, Kidder: yes, Rollins: yes.

The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:30pm

The Board reentered the public session at 7:55pm.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to withhold the minutes from public disclosure pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, III. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Election coverage for November 8th

The Board discussed poll coverage for Tuesday, November 8th elections:

7:00am-11:00am - Janet Kidder

11:00am-3:00pm - Bill Helm

3:00pm-7:00pm – Nancy Rollins

Requests to Use Town Property

- Whipple Memorial Town Hall by Patricia Denny for the Northern New England Repertory Theatre Company Inc. for 34 days in March/April/May for production/rehearsal/performance of “Basic”

Items to be signed

- Pay Authorization Voucher dated 11/02/16 by Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
- Accounts Payable Voucher dated 11/02/16 by Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

Approved Building Permits

- Jane E Todd, 50 Stanley Farm Lane, TM 070-023-000. Adding bunkroom, mudroom, porch to entrance, bathroom & kitchen modification.
BP 16-102 APPROVED 10/18/2016.
- Tyler & Kate Kipp, 9 Hillcrest Road, TM 078-034-000. Remove & replace existing shingles, repair & replace rafters & trim, replace interior ceiling.
BP 16-117 APPROVED 10/18/2016.
- Craig & Deb Langner, 1850 King Hill Road, TM 128-010-000. Renovations to barn.
BP 16-122 APPROVED 10/18/2016.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London